

Welcome Remarks

**Mrs. Jettie Olf, Director of Telecommunication Authority Suriname
Second Consultation for HIPCAR Working Groups 2 & 3
Paramaribo, Suriname, April 12-16, 2010**

The Honorable Minister of Transport, Communications and Tourism,
Ms. Richel Apinsa,

Mrs. Thelma Douglas-Pinas, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of T.C.T.
Mr. Sandro Bazzanella, ITU Project Manager of the ITU/EC Project
Mr. Philip Cross, Representative of the ITU Area Office, Barbados
Ms. Kerstin Ludwig, ITU Project Coordinator of the HIPCAR Project,
Mr. J.P. Morgan, Chairperson
Ladies and gentlemen.

I welcome you all to this second meeting of the HIPCAR Working Groups 2 and 3 on Universal Access, Universal Services, Interconnection and Licensing.

It is our real pleasure to have you here in Suriname to discuss policy issues on Licensing, Interconnection, Universal Access and Universal Services.

As a member of the CARICOM, Suriname participates in the project on enhancing competition in the Caribbean through the harmonization of ICT policies, legislation and regulatory procedures known as the HIPCAR project.

Looking at the developments globally, there is indeed a clear and urgent need for CARICOM to harmonize its policies, legislations and regulatory frameworks.

The state of affairs in Suriname regarding the above-mentioned issues is as follows:

If we look at interconnection we see that the most important aspects to realize interconnection between public telecommunications networks are included in the Telecommunications Act, in the State Decree on Interconnection and in the RIO.

It is worth mentioning that the TAS has established a working group consisting of representatives of the providers to formulate the annexes of the RIO. This approach has given us among other things the opportunity to close the interconnection agreements within a short period of time. Suriname is one of the few countries where the regulator

sets the mobile termination rates based on costs of the operators. This authority is based on the Telecommunications Act.

With regard to universal services I would like to bring the following to your attention. Our Telecommunications Act is based on Universal Services. The Minister of Transport, Communication and Tourism has assigned certain service areas by ministerial order to the concession holders. These providers were obliged to provide such services within two years after assignment in their respective areas.

It is worth mentioning that on request of the operators the USO fund has not been established as yet because that would be a burden on their operational costs. Two of the operators have invested in the interior and many persons in these areas make use of mobile telephony which has made their lives much easier.

According to Hank Intven, high expenses such as license duties, spectrum fees and annual compensations limit concessionaires' resources with respect to establishing telecommunications infrastructure.

This year we will perform a consultation on establishing the USO fund. Dependent on the results of this consultation we will decide how to proceed, because we also have to take into account the examples where the USO fund didn't reach the expectations.

Regarding licenses the following can be said:

The TAS grants licenses for regulated and non regulated services. Regulated services are for example voice services. Non regulated services are data services.

We from the TAS took the initiative to make draft amendments to our Telecommunications Act, which we will then present to the Minister. Looking at the ratings given by the experts to our legislative and regulatory framework we still have to work on some of the listed items which are included in the building blocks. We will take these items into account in the process of drafting our new Telecommunications Act.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a fruitful meeting and we look forward to the outcomes and follow up of these working groups of the HIPCAR project.

Thank you.