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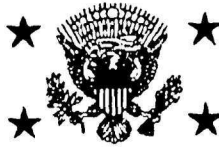
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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON



On the important occasion of the fifteenth Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), I wish to warmly welcome the distinguished delegates gathered here to the United States. On behalf of President Clinton and the American people, I would like to express our deep feelings of kinship with the international telecommunications community and our abiding commitment to the goals of this distinguished institution.



The frontiers of telecommunications have been fundamentally transformed since the United States last hosted this supreme conference of the ITU in Atlantic City fifty-one years ago. We had then, in 1947, just invented the transistor. As we gather together in Minneapolis, we are engaged in creating a global information infrastructure (GII) that holds the promise of bringing the world closer together in a community connected by technology and a desire to share ideas. This Plenipotentiary Conference provides an opportunity for us to reaffirm our common commitment to create an information infrastructure that is truly global in its reach. As we strive towards global connectivity, let us keep in mind that we are creating a GI that will improve access to health care and education, strengthen democracy and promote economic development for people all across the globe. As I said four years ago at Buenos Aires, we are on the verge of an information revolution as profound as the Industrial Revolution.

Today, we must seize the opportunities unleashed by the forces of liberalization, including competition, privatization and deregulation. We must ensure continued liberalization of the world's telecommunication markets. Consumers worldwide must have access to the technologies of their choice. We also must take advantage of the tremendous opportunities created by new technologies, such as the Internet, wireless local loop, and emerging satellite technologies. The convergence of these technologies with pre-existing technologies also will further promote infrastructure development. Together, new and existing technologies have limitless potential to improve social and economic conditions for all people and all nations. Now, more than ever, government policy-makers, legislators, and regulators, in conjunction with the private sector, must work together in true partnership so that all people can enjoy the benefits of the GI.

The United States is committed to working with our international partners to realize a new global vision that meets the challenges of the 21st century. Let us work together to achieve a digital economy and a networked global society where communications can continue to promote health, education, employment, environmental protection, and worldwide peace and stability.

Al Gore

MINNEAPOLIS



A word from the Governor of Minnesota



Welcome to Minnesota and thank you for pursuing improved telecommunications and personal connectivity worldwide. Together, through cooperation and collaboration, the International Telecommunication Union has facilitated the development of agreements and networks that allow global communication and information exchange.

Today, we use telecommunications in nearly every aspect of our daily life. The transmission of voice, data, and video occurs from vehicles, homes, workplaces and educational and government institutions.

The existing telecommunications infrastructure enhances our quality of life through electronic commerce, digital libraries, distance learning, telemedicine, environmental monitoring and interactive entertainment. Minnesota has an international reputation as an industry leader in many of these areas.

The global economy of the future requires that we provide our children with an education that allows students to become technologically literate. Our State has invested millions of dollars in information technology through public and private partnerships to outfit classrooms with computers, provide technology training to teachers, and link students to the Internet. These investments will move Minnesota from fourth in the number of computers available to students to number one in the United States by the year 2000.

In State government, we are continually working to integrate technology so that citizens have

better government services and instantaneous access to information. While you are in Minnesota, I invite you to visit our State government information and services Web site at <http://www.state.mn.us>.

As the centre of North America, Minnesota is proud to be one of 173 centres around the

world that is a gateway to the United Nation's Global Trade Point Network. With farming, logging, mining, shipping, manufacturing and academic resources, our State holds great promise for trading partners around the world.

Many advantages can be gained for people throughout the world from expanded telecommunication opportunities. I hope that you will reinforce this message when you return to your home country. The ITU has a very important role to play in helping governments in least-developed countries understand the benefits of an information society and interconnected world.

Again, on behalf of the citizens of Minnesota, I welcome you to the fifteenth Plenipotentiary Conference. This conference is an occasion to discuss new and ongoing initiatives that will serve the international market-place even more effectively in the future. I hope that you have a productive and enjoyable stay and that you return again someday.

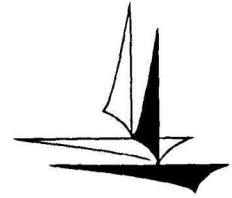
May your conference be a milestone in international cooperation and progress.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Arne H. Carlson".

Arne H. Carlson

MINNEAPOLIS

... and the Mayor of the City of Minneapolis



City of Minneapolis

On behalf of our citizens and business leaders, it is with pleasure that I welcome you to the City of Minneapolis. This is the first time in half a century that the ITU has held its Plenipotentiary Conference in the United States. We are deeply honoured that you have chosen our city as the site of the 1998 Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union.

In addition to providing state-of-the-art conference facilities at the Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis offers comfortable hotels, a variety of retail shopping, entertainment and fine dining all within walking distance of the conference site. While completing your official duties, I hope you find time to enjoy these amenities.

Minneapolis is the financial business centre of the Upper Midwest region of the United States. We are home to eight *Fortune 500* companies, including major international corporations such as Cargill, Pillsbury, General Mills and Honeywell. We have a vibrant



economy and low unemployment.

A culturally diverse city, Minneapolis is home to museums, art galleries and more theatre seats per capita than any United States city outside of New York! We boast a world-renowned public park and trail system, including six lakes and the mighty Mis-

issippi River. These attributes are reflected in our motto, *The City of Lakes*. Autumn is a beautiful time of year with moderate temperatures and extraordinary fall colours.

Whether its business or pleasure, you are sure to have an exciting, productive stay in Minneapolis. Again, welcome to the City of Minneapolis.



Sharon Sayles Belton