



6th Global Symposium for Regulators (Yasmine Hammamet, 2005)

Developing a new regulatory framework to promote broadband deployment and access in developing countries

Speeches

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Opening address

Sixth annual Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) Yasmine Hammamet, Tunisia, 14-15 November 2005

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you here on the occasion of the sixth Global Symposium for Regulators, which is being held by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in collaboration with the Tunisian Regulatory Authority. It is also a pleasure to welcome you to Hammamet, this beautiful city of Tunisia, the land of tolerance, security and openness; the cradle of civilizations and place of encounter.

It is also an honour to welcome among us today H.E. Mrs Khadija Ghariani, Secretary of State to the Minister of Communication Technologies, and to thank her for graciously accepting our invitation to sponsor the opening session of this meeting.

The new technological developments have, in a relatively short time, transformed the world into a global village. Digital networks, the internet, seamless connectivity, enhanced and new applications and protocols, together with liberalization of the communication market, globalization of trade and the adoption of a market economy by many countries, have, aided by the rapid dissemination of, and access to, information, created a tremendous impact and new challenges throughout the world. We have embarked upon an era in which virtual reality is progressively becoming the actual reality for conducting transactions in almost all fields.

Thus, the information revolution that the world has been witnessing for over a decade now has generated major changes that have transformed communication among individuals and groups, deeply affecting the nature of interrelations and creating new cultural, economic and educational patterns based on knowledge. All indications show that this is no longer a temporary phenomenon, but rather a turning point in the path of humanity, creating a new society: the **information society**.

According to many experts and forward-looking authorities, it is not just a matter of technological innovations and new tools enhancing the competitive power of institutions, but rather a genuine revolution affecting the whole range of human activities and social relations. It is similar to, but even more rapid and extensive than the industrial revolution that humanity witnessed at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, which ushered in considerable changes in the economic, social, cultural and political arenas as a result of the transition from tribal, rural societies to industrial urban societies with new characteristics.

Knowledge, with all its components of control, management, operation, security, storage, access regulation and content production, has increasingly become the mainstay of the information society. Its share in the cost of almost all products has increased tremendously in many instances. Just as the production of agricultural and industrial machinery was the main driver of the economy during the industrial revolution, the information industry and consequent development of the service sector are now an additional driver, if not the main driver, of today's economy.

However, an overview of the developments in the field of ICT and their applications reveals that the benefits are not shared equitably either between the developed and developing countries or within the same communities.

In the context of this new reality, the digital divide has emerged as a new concept. There are different positions and points of view vis-à-vis the digital divide as a yardstick for measuring the developmental divide between the developed nations that control new technologies and the poor and underdeveloped nations that have not been able to keep pace with technological progress.

New ICT technologies and applications have provided an opportunity to build the information society and imbue it with new economic concepts and contents that are capable of undoing the legacy of the wide gaps between countries and peoples that are associated with traditional economic patterns. The potential is now there for developing countries to rise to the traditional standard of developed nations, but in order to do so they must adapt, both speedily and effectively, to the changes brought about by this technological revolution.

It is within this context, and in recognition of the instrumental role of the regulatory bodies in securing a favourable environment for the development of the ICT sector and applications, that the annual GSR initiative was launched. This year's meeting has special significance since it coincides with the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, which will be addressing the different options and challenges. The holding of such fora in our country is a source of gratification to us. The international community's selection of our country to hold such important meetings is a mark of recognition of our achievements in the fields under consideration and of our capacity to host such important events, thanks to our relentless efforts and a strong political will to provide an appropriate environment for Tunisian society to assimilate such fundamental changes with confidence. We have made it a top priority to develop our national skills and self reliance, especially in regard to the development of human resources as the driving force for achieving development objectives through efficiency and inspiring innovation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is against this backdrop that we have come together here to discuss a number of important issues relating to high-speed broadband communications, spectrum management, VoIP and the efforts being made by the international community to combat spam.

A major objective of this meeting is to agree on best practice guidelines for spectrum management to promote broadband access. Because of the increasing importance of radio technology, it is our responsibility as regulators to create an appropriate environment for promoting the use of such technologies as a tool for improving the economic and social life of all people worldwide, thereby minimizing the digital divide between the developed and most of the developing countries.

The holding of this annual meeting will, as usual, provide an opportunity to exchange views and experiences and a space for discussion of the main issues that are of concern to us all. You are all encouraged to contribute to this important debate, and I should like to acknowledge the contributions that many of you have made in preparing the main topics for this meeting. I have had the honour of editing the contributions that you now have before you, in cooperation with the Telecommunication Development Bureau of the International Telecommunication Union.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Two important events have taken place prior to our meeting today:

The first was the Executive-Level Training for Regulators, ably directed by Professor Wigglesworth. We hope that all those who attended have benefited from the comprehensive seminar.

The second event was the third meeting of the Regional Regulators' Associations that was held yesterday and which provided an opportunity for all participants to exchange views and share experiences.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I hand the podium over to Mr Hamadoun Touré, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, I should like to reiterate my appreciation for your presence here and for your having supported the Tunisian Regulatory Authority's proposal to hold this event in Tunis. It is a personal honour for me to preside this meeting, and I am confident that you will lend me your support and understanding in order to achieve a successful conclusion of our symposium. I should also like to take the opportunity to express my thanks to ITU officials and staff, and especially to Mr Hamadoun Touré, for their excellent preparatory work for this symposium, as well as to the media for covering this important event. Finally, on behalf of all participants, I wish to thank the interpreters for their patience and professionalism. We recognize that the nature of their work requires strenuous efforts, special skills and a high degree of concentration.

I wish you all a pleasant stay with us and a successful symposium. Thank you for your attention.

Ali Ghodbani

President, Instance Nationale des Télécommunications de Tunisie



**GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM FOR REGULATORS
MEDINA CONFERENCE CENTRE
YASMINE HAMMAMET, TUNISIA
14-15 NOVEMBER 2005**

Opening Remarks
ITU BDT Director Hamadoun I. Touré

Distinguished Guests, Her Excellency Mme. Ghariani Khadija, Secrétaire d'Etat auprès du Ministre des technologies de la communication chargée de l'Internet, l'informatique et logiciel libre de la Tunisie, our gracious host, Mr. Ali Ghodbani, President, Instance nationale des télécommunications, distinguished Chairmen, Directors General and Presidents of the Regulatory Authorities, members of the private sector, invited guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my greatest pleasure to welcome you to the 6th annual Global Symposium for Regulators. I would like to extend a special word of thanks to our host, Mr. Ghodbani, for inviting us to hold the GSR here in Yasmine, Hammamet, and for his kind acceptance to chair this year's GSR. He and his entire staff have gone out of their way to welcome us with true Tunisian hospitality. These are certainly the most palatial premises at which we've ever held a GSR.

The world now numbers 140 regulatory bodies and the majority of them are here today, including some of the most recently established regulators. We would like to extend a special welcome to the newest regulators from Liberia, TFYR Macedonia, and extend my support to those that are on the verge of creating your regulatory institutions, in particular Samoa and Guinea. Today, we are more than 420 participants, including over 120 CEOs and Members of the Board of regulatory authorities.

I think we can safely say that this year's event promises to be the best GSR ever, given the hospitality, the level of participation and the rich content prepared for this event.

But before we leave Hammamet, we have a lot of hard work to do! We have many opportunities and challenges to face. The telecommunications industry that I started working in over 25 years ago, bears little resemblance to the ICT sector of today. In fact this sector has changed even over the past seven years that I have served as Director of BDT. When I first joined BDT, our main focus was meeting the challenge of the Maitland Commission. We used to say we were looking for the missing link to connect all the peoples of the world to basic telecom services. In 2002 we declared we had found the missing link—mobile cellular services. And in GSR 2003 we heralded the mobile miracle that brought basic voice services to more people than the Maitland Commission could ever have imagined possible, enabling many countries to meet, if not surpass, their national teledensity goals. This gave rise to the 2003 GSR Best Practice Guidelines to achieving universal access, recognizing universal access as an opportunity rather than an obligation. The 2003 Best Practice Guidelines showed that regulatory reform — creating an enabling environment to allow businesses to meet the demand for service — is the first step in achieving universal access.

In 2004, GSR participants said they wished to go beyond ensuring universal access to basic voice. You recognized that broadband is unleashing an array of new opportunities for business, government and consumers alike. The global community of regulators said its goal was now to ensure that all citizens of the world have access to broadband communication services.

Technologically this is now possible. We will be discussing this in our first session today as we examine the GSR Discussion Paper on broadband provisioning which boldly claims that “There is not a significant environment on the planet today in which broadband internet does not make commercial, social, and institutional sense, given the political will to foster an enabling environment to drive demand for broadband by a full range of stakeholders.” Low cost technologies exist to promote broadband. Many businesses stand ready to start providing broadband services—just like the 2G mobile service providers that had awaited market entry in many of your countries in the 1990s. I am very pleased that ITU-D private sector members including Cisco, the GSM Association, Intel, ITSO, Qualcomm and TE DATA answered our call to the private sector to make presentations to the GSR showcasing promising broadband technologies for rural access to ICTs in developing countries. Many of these companies are already deploying broadband technologies in developing countries and will share their experiences in the first session today.

By the end of 2004, there were 159 million fixed line broadband subscribers. While the majority of these are in the wealthier countries, twenty-five percent of today’s fixed line broadband subscribers are in DEVELOPING countries. Broadband growth rates are highest in Africa, the Arab States and two Asian countries, India and Pakistan.

This is a very promising trend. The pace of broadband take-up, however, hinges on the regulatory framework. In many countries, today’s broadband missing link is the regulatory framework. As we gather on the eve of the World Summit for the Information Society, we face the challenge and opportunity of developing an innovative regulatory paradigm that will enable us to harness the potential of broadband. Regulators have an unprecedented opportunity to speed the uptake of broadband to enable the Information Society. Are we up to the challenge? This will require new thinking, and an end to business as usual. What’s at stake?

What do I mean by an end to business as usual? Service providers are now offering the triple play of voice, internet and broadcast. Among my own family members, children download songs from the internet onto their MP3 players, working parents order their groceries on line and come home at night to watch their favorite TV shows broadcast over the internet. And everyone of us here at the GSR likely reserved their hotel room online. Broadband is about more than travel and entertainment. BDT offers its broadband-enabled e-learning platform to our Members as part of our capacity building services. We are also working with governments to deploy broadband-enabled e-government services. Recently ITU reported about the use of wireless broadband links between a local hospital in a remote province in Viet Nam and an urban medical college where X-ray data and medical records are scanned and transmitted for review by a doctor at a distant location. These broadband-enabled health services are being used in developing countries from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Peru.

Wireless broadband technologies offer the prospect of faster rollout of services, portability and mobility. Many broadband technologies can also be deployed incrementally, as demand develops, rather than requiring expensive network-wide upgrades. This means that a full range of players, large and small, private and public, can harness the power of these technological developments to become ICT service providers and close the broadband divide that exists between developing and developed countries, and between rural and urban areas within countries. We have already seen

two nations, Mauritius and TFYR Macedonia, have announced plans to become entirely wireless broadband nations.

Of course, broadband also poses new challenges. The rapid rise of voice over IP (VoIP)--hastened as it is by the spread of broadband--is turning the old telecom business model on its head. I'm sure many of you in this room are already using VoIP services like Skype. We'll hear later today from Skype and Verizon about the new business model of providing voice services for free or bundled as a package with other services. What does that do to traditional telecom operators? And what does that mean for the current regulatory framework designed for the old business model? We will address the challenges and opportunities of VoIP in two sessions, one today and one tomorrow.

VoIP is not the only challenge the industry faces. There is also the scourge of spam which clogs our email inboxes. And spam is just the tip of the iceberg for larger cyber-security concerns. These issues will be addressed in today's session on spam and cyber-security.

In short, the ICT sector has changed forever. Increasingly it's a sink or swim world. Many people are asking whether all the rules governing telecoms have now changed? We hope that this year's GSR will start to provide some answers and enable regulators to harness the potential of broadband to build the information society.

In preparation for this year's global gathering of regulators, we have prepared a series of discussion papers examining:

- technologies for broadband provisioning,
- the role of regulators in promoting broadband,
- voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP),
- spectrum management to promote broadband and
- enforceable ISP codes of conduct to combat spam.

We have invited the authors to share their thoughts and conclusions with you. The goal is to enable the world's regulators to identify innovative pro-broadband regulatory frameworks. The bottom line message of all of these discussion papers is that today's new broadband opportunities require a new vision by all potential broadband providers, and a new paradigm for policy makers and regulators. In this fast moving sector, no one can be left standing still.

How will regulation change? Broadband regulation means a new vision of reduced regulatory burdens, innovative incentives, and coordinated efforts by all links in the broadband value chain to unleash commercial deployment opportunities. Regulations will be carefully tailored to open the door to both large and small-scale broadband providers. Broadband-promoting regulators will aim to make local communities and non-governmental organizations aware of the technologies and broadband provision opportunities they could seize and also coordinate with other government and public institutions, such as universities, to drive demand for broadband-enabled health, education and government services. At the same time, regulators will strive to revise outdated regulatory frameworks designed for an earlier era. The new regulatory framework could be described as a less means more, old meets new approach. Less regulatory intervention means more business opportunities. Time-tested regulatory principles such as transparency and open competition will be applied to new technologies and the new regulatory issues they raise.

Promotion of wireless broadband technologies will require flexible and innovative spectrum management practices. That is why we launched a consultation on a set of Best Practice Guidelines for Spectrum Management to Promote Broadband Access, that participants in this year's GSR are expected to agree on Tuesday. More than 30 countries and regional regulatory associations submitted contributions on this year's guidelines. Mr. Ghodbani has consolidated these

contributions into a single set of best practice guidelines. He circulated these to all of you by email, as part of an electronic working group. We thank those of you who have provided your comments as part of this working group exercise. A revised version taking into account all the comments made will be circulated tomorrow morning so that we can reach agreement in Session VI on Tuesday afternoon and provide the contribution from the world community of regulators to the WSIS.

As you can see by this year's rich GSR programme and the GSR Discussion Papers, we have had a very busy year, trying to prepare products and services to meet the needs of today's growing regulatory community. But of course, we cannot do this work alone. I am therefore also extremely delighted to extend a particularly warm welcome to one of our special invited guests, Mr. Mostafa Terrab and his team from *infoDev*. As you may know, ITU and *InfoDev* launched a special partnership this year to develop the joint ITU *infoDev* ICT Regulation Toolkit. This online Toolkit is designed to provide information and support for regulators especially in developing and least developed countries. This evening, we are holding special breakout sessions to showcase the four modules under development this year.

Allow me to provide a little more information about these breakout sessions. They are inspired by my good friend Ernest Ndukwe of Nigeria. A couple of years ago my staff organized a very informal gathering among a handful of regulators on the fringes of the World TELECOM event. Ernest was one of the participants. He sat with his counterparts from about five different countries and talked, informally and openly, about the challenges they faced as regulators. This meeting apparently sparked new ties between the participants that continue to this day. Ever since, my friend from Nigeria has asked that we organize a similar event. So, tonight we plan to do just that. I will let the Master of Ceremonies give you further details.

Before closing, I would like to thank the private sector sponsors of the coffee breaks, lunches and dinners, in particular Telecom Tunisia, Tunisiana, Siemens, ZTE, and the GSM Association.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, I don't want to take any more of your valuable time. I am looking forward to our discussions so that we can continue to learn from you and respond to your urgent needs.

Thank you very much.