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OPENING REMARKS

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the first World Telecommunication Indicators meeting. This reunion arises from resolutions of different regional telecommunication development conferences—endorsed by the 1994 World Telecommunication Development Conference—to convene a global meeting dealing with the main indicators used to analyze worldwide telecommunication developments.

We are all aware of the growing importance of telecommunications and the need for relevant, up-to-date and comparable statistics for analyzing the industry. This includes measurements for comparing network progress and performance as well as macro-economic measurements to gauge the impact of telecommunications on social and economic development.

There is also an urgent need to gauge the benefits and costs of liberalization, privatization, competition and globalization taking place in the sector in order to inform policy makers and others about the effects of the growing number of options. Ironically, these same trends are complicating the availability and comparability of the statistics. This meeting might want to consider how to improve the coverage of the statistics in an era of growing liberalization.

Convergence is blurring the boundaries of the telecommunications, broadcasting and computing industries, making it difficult to determine exactly what it is to be measured. Perhaps telecommunication indicators should be expanded to cover information-communication indicators. Here too, this meeting might want to provide some guidelines.

The ITU's involvement with telecommunication statistics goes back a long way. The exchange of

statistics goes back through the ITU's preceding organizations to the beginning of international telegraph networks in 1848. The ITU's mandate for disseminating telecommunication information is outlined in the International Telecommunication Convention as well as the ITU's agreement with the United Nations. However it is really since the establishment of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) that the ITU has begun to regularly use statistics in an analytical way in order to gauge network developments worldwide.

The BDT is intimately involved in telecommunication indicators. It launched the telecommunication indicator series in 1990. These publications, including the World Telecommunication Development Report, as well as regional and topical studies, have become the global source for comparable telecommunication indicators. The BDT also works closely with national, regional and international organizations on the definition, exchange and collaboration of telecommunication indicators. Indeed the BDT has collaborated on several of the indicator projects to be presented over the next few days at this meeting. The BDT has also organized regional telecommunication indicator meetings which serve as the foundation for this global encounter. Finally, the BDT has initiated several projects for assisting developing countries to improve the collection, dissemination and presentation of telecommunication indicators.

I wish you utmost success in this first World Telecommunication Indicators meeting. Furthermore, I can assure you that the BDT remains firmly committed to this area and will endeavor to assist implement whatever goals arise from your deliberations over the next few days

Ahmed Laouyane

Director

**Telecommunication Development Bureau, BDT
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)**