



2nd World Telecommunication Indicators Meeting

(Geneva, 1999)

Speeches

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Opening Remarks
H. Touré, Director, BDT
World Telecommunication Indicators Meeting

Monday March 29 1999, 9:15 am, ITU Salle B

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the second World Telecommunication Indicators meeting. This reunion arises from resolutions of different regional telecommunication development conferences—endorsed by the 1998 World Telecommunication Development Conference—to convene a global meeting dealing with the main indicators used to analyze worldwide telecommunication development.

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 universal service, 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. Finally, the BDT has initiated several projects for assisting developing countries to improve the collection, dissemination and presentation of telecommunication indicators.

I am particularly impressed by the interest in this subject as manifested by the number of participants to the meeting. I would also like to thank those regulators, national statistical offices, operators and international agencies that have agreed to make presentations about the collection and use of telecommunication statistics in their organizations and countries. This is the true spirit of collaboration where others can learn about problems and success in order to enhance their own national telecommunication statistics.

I wish you utmost success in this second 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 recommendations arise from your deliberations over the next few days.