



ITU WORKSHOP ON TAXATION OF TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES AND RELATED PRODUCTS

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OPENING ADDRESS

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of myself and my colleague Brahim Sanou, Director BDT, I am delighted to welcome you to Geneva this morning for this *Workshop on Taxation of Telecommunication Services and Related Products*. We organized this workshop just prior to the 2011 meetings of the ITU-D Study Groups next week to enable greater participation, and we are very pleased at the level of participation which confirms the high level of importance attached to this topic.

It is a very hot topic, particularly in developing countries, and especially Africa.

I am truly delighted to introduce two distinguished experts who will be leading this workshop: Prof. Martin Cave, from the London School of Economics; and Dr. Windfred Mfuh from the University of Warwick.

ITU-D has been working on issues related to pricing and tariffs for NGN, next generation access (NGA) and broadband, etc for some time.

This year it was decided to extend this work with a focus on taxation. This will contribute to the preparation of a balanced overview of the actual situation in the different regions.

Within this framework, we would like to thank to Prof. Cave for the very informative and balanced paper he developed and will present during this workshop.

This year BDT decided to include a section in the BDT tariff policies survey to start collecting information on taxation of telecommunication services.

We very much hope to continue receiving your responses which will be used to populate the ICTEye database which you can find online on the ITU website and is an excellent resource for membership and others.

Director BDT and myself are very pleased with the excellent coordination and exchange of information between the ITU-D Study groups, specially Question 12-3/1, and ITU-T Study Group 3 and its related Regional Groups. This workshop is therefore

very much a joint effort between our two Bureaux as indeed are all our workshops now which you can find listed on the ITU home page.

Following Resolution 146 of the ITU 2010 Plenipotentiary Conference, we are preparing for the World Conference on International Telecommunications 2012 (WCIT) which will be held in Dubai next December. The results of WCIT may well impact taxation methodologies. I would encourage you therefore to take an active part in the preparations for the WCIT, in particular in the Council Working group, and in the regional meetings being held by the Regional Organizations and ITU.

The objective of this workshop is to discuss factors that should be taken into account in order to strike an appropriate balance between the goals of raising revenues and facilitating economic expansion throughout the telecommunications sector.

Taxes are unavoidable, the trick is to find the least worst way to collect them.

I encourage lively discussions and I am sure hope that the summary of the workshop will inform further debate.

Thank you and I wish you all a very successful and enjoyable day.