DOCUMENT FOR INFORMATION

FINAL COMMUNIQUE
3RD FORUM ON TELECOMMUNICATION
REGULATION IN AFRICA

ITU/BDT

COMMUNIQUE FINAL

The third Forum on Telecommunication Regulation in Africa was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 19 to 21 November 2002, at the invitation of Burkina Faso.

The Forum, which was placed under the high patronage of the Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Paramanga Ernest YONLI, Prime Minister and Head of the Government, was opened by His Excellency Mr. Justin T. THIOMBIANO Minister of Posts and Telecommunications.

Burkina Faso was elected as Chairman of the Forum, with Ghana as Vice-Chairman and Togo and Botswana as Rapporteurs.

The Forum heard and discussed around 30 papers submitted by regulators, representatives of ministries and international organizations, operators and consultants, focusing specifically on the following topics :

- Internet and VoIP,

- New services and electronic commerce,

- International an regional cooperation.

In the light of the debates which took place over the three days, the Forum laid particular emphasis on the management of domain names and addresses (ccTLD), recognizing that it is imperative for ITU to take on a leadership role in terms of international cooperation and development and harmonization of policies in this area.

With respect to e-commerce, although in Africa the development of e-commerce applications has not reached a sufficient level of visibility, the Forum believes that it is imperative that legislation be implemented in line with world trends, and in particular, as expressed in the UNCITRAL texts.

Accordingly, the Forum recommends:

1) ITU to provide assistance to regional associations and African countries, by supporting the implementation of legislation on e-commerce, working in coordination with other agencies.

2) ICANN to cooperate fully with ITU in the implementation of Resolution 102 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, Marrakech, 2002.

3) African regulators to put in place a coordinated strategy to defend their interests within ICANN in coordination with ITU, in particular in respect of the allocation and recovery of domain names (ccTLD), by the end of 2003, and the creation in Africa of at least one primary route server.

4) ITU/BDT to convene a conference for African countries with a view to preparing the revision of the WTO General Agreement of Trade in Services, in particular the part relating to telecommunication services.

The Forum is pleased to note the creation of the database of the African Telecommunication Regulators Network that is financed by the World Bank and recommends to the ANRT (permanent Secretariat) to promote the Web site of the network and the data base.

The Forum is also pleased with the management training actions carried out in 2002 and requires that the bureau of the Network continues in this direction.

The Forum accepts the invitation of Ghana to host the next Forum on Telecommunication Regulation in Africa. The date will be decided in agreement with the ITU.

On the occasion of the Forum, the meeting of the West African Regulators was held on 17 and 18 November 2002. At the conclusion of the meeting the participants adopted the Statutes of the West African Telecommunication Regulators' Association (WATRA).

The Forum congratulates West African regulators on this initiative.

The Forum expresses its sincere thanks to the Government and people of Burkina Faso and to the organizers and sponsors.

The Forum requested the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications of Burkina Faso to transmit an official message of thanks from the participants to His Excellency Blaise COMPAORE, President of Burkina Faso, President of the Council of Ministers, and to the people of Burkina Faso for all the facilities made available, which significantly contributed to the success of the meeting.

Done at Ouagadougou on 21 November 2002.