

Mohamed Al Ghanim – Director General, TRA UAE

First, I would like to welcome:

His Excellency Mr. Sultan Bin Saeed Al Mansouri, UAE Minister for Development of Government Sector

Dr. Hamadoun Toure/ Secretary General – International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Mr. Sami Al Basheer/ Director – ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

And all our guests.

I would like to welcome you again in the United Arab Emirates hoping that you will enjoy your stay in your second home. On the behalf of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, I am pleased to congratulate both Dr. Hamadoun Toure and Mr. Sami Al Basheer for their new roles in the International Telecommunication Union.

Distinguished Guests,

I am honored to be part of the 7th Global Symposium for Regulators being the most important and successful activity related to the development sector held by the International Telecommunication Union.

I am glad to meet the country members of the International Telecommunication Union, members of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority and members from the telecommunication sector from all over the world.

The symposium will discuss this year the best methods in setting strategies and organizational measures for implementing Next Generation Networks (NGN) and we expect positive results which will encourage using NGNs more and more to help developing telecommunication sectors around the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to present you a brief on the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority in the United Arab Emirates:

The Telecommunication Regulatory Authority was established mid 2004 and since then the organizational outlines for the telecommunication system were set to create the right environment for competition within the sector attested by the launch of the new telecommunication operator in the UAE in the next couple of days.

Many organizational strategies are expected to be delivered during this year and it is worth mentioning that the UAE will lead the Arab network of the telecommunication regulatory authorities.

We have high expectations that projects in the pipeline will play a major part in enhancing the regional cooperation in the telecommunication sector and other sectors as well. Yesterday's meeting among telecommunication regulatory regional authorities was a step forward to exchange expertise and views concerning the telecommunications sector, IT and the best organizational methods and regulations.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like now to talk about what I hope we can achieve in the coming days. First, I hope we can bring some clarity and common understanding to the subject of NGN because, at the moment, the term NGN means different things to different people. To illustrate this point, according to Canada's inputs into the Best Practice Guidelines for Next Generation Networks Migration paper,

Some years ago, the International Engineering Consortium defined NGN as seamlessly blending the public telephone and data networks into a multi-service network in which central office functionality was pushed to the network's edge.

The ITU defines NGN as a packet-based network of multiple broadband Quality of Service (QoS)-enabled transport technologies and in which service related functions are independent from underlying transport related technologies. It offer unfettered access for users to networks and competing service providers.

A simpler definition from BT is a network able to carry any application.

According to the European Regulator's Group, it is a packet-switched architecture fostering provision of existing and new/emerging services through a loosely coupled, open and converged infrastructure.

The Canada paper surmises that If one adds these definitional variances to the ever-increasing pace of change, one could theorize that no definition of "NGN" can be fixed.

But no matter how you define NGN, one thing we can all agree on is that NGN is coming. That much is certain.

Another certainty is that NGN will be deployed in countries that are in various stages of liberalization and regulation. Take the UAE for example. We are at the beginning stages of liberalization. The second operator will launch its business in the coming days and the

Telecommunications Regulatory Authority has been in business for only two years. Yet in the first year alone, the TRA put into place a regulatory framework, licensed a second operator and initiated interconnection negotiations. One of the ways we were able to do this so quickly was because of the world-wide regulatory experience. We didn't have to re-invent the wheel. We just had to make the wheel fit the UAE circumstances.

And I think NGN is something like that. We don't have to make a new wheel for NGN. We just have to make sure the wheel we have will work with the new circumstances. We regulators have to make sure we understand what is going to change and how we need to adapt our wheel around it. However, that is easier said than done.

Nonetheless, we in the telecom industry have faced evolving technologies and principles for a very long time and in recent years, these changes have occurred over increasingly faster speeds. In each case, regulators have stepped up to the challenges facing them. I have every confidence this will be the case for NGN.

I wish you all a successful symposium. Thank you