INFORMAL MEETING FOR REGIONAL REGULATORY ASSOCIATIONS

Beirut, Lebanon
9 November, 2009

Chairman's report

Introduction

At the invitation of the BDT Director, this year's informal meeting for regional regulatory associations was held at the Habtoor Grand Hotel Convention Center, Beirut, Lebanon.

Organized by the ITU in collaboration with the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of Lebanon (TRA), and the Association of Communications and Telecommunications Regulators of the Portuguese Speaking Countries (ARCTEL-CPLP), the Informal Meeting of Regional Regulatory Associations was held to reassess the role of the regional associations, the common drivers, problems and challenges that face these associations, and what future actions could be undertaken to promote regional cooperation and effectiveness.

The meeting was attended by 28 participants, representing regional regulatory associations, international organisations and national administrations, including AREGNET, ARCTEL, ARCTAC, EACO, FRATEL, REGULATEL and WATRA.

The ITU was represented by Mr Sami Al Basheer Al Morshid, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, Mr Mario Meniewicz and Mr Makhtar Fall. A full list of participants is available a the following ITU web address: http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/treg/Events/Seminars/GSR/GSR09/rras09/index-en.html

Dr Abdulrahman Bin Ahmed Al-Jaafari, Governor of the Communications and Information Technology Commission of Saudi Arabia (CITC), and President of AREGNET, acted as chairman of the meeting, and Mr David Gomes, Chairman of ARCTEL-CPLP, acted as moderator for the discussions.

Welcoming remarks

Opening statements were made by Dr. Abdulrahman Bin Ahmed Al-Jaafari, Mr Sami Al Basheer Al Morshid and Mr David Gomes. These opening remarks emphasised the importance of sharing information and experiences, and highlighted the common objectives of regional associations. Their remarks also underlined that the main role of regional regulators is to help national regulators with issues such as tariff regulation, international telecom rates, regional roaming rates, spectrum management, quality of service, and consumer protection, but above all to promote connectivity for all. It was suggested that the aim of this meeting should be to come up with new ideas on information sharing and best practices in order to achieve this objective and to promote the role of the regional regulator associations.

Presentations, discussions and conclusions

Presentations were made by ARCTEL, ARAGNET and REGULATEL.

Each presentation described the role of the regional association, the main objectives, as well as present and future focus. Many of these were common goals, and which included above all the need to;

- exchange information and share experiences;
- coordinate efforts to achieve harmony in frameworks, developing new regulation models and legal frameworks of each member state;
- coordinate and carry out studies and publications (common subjects included international roaming, number portability, broadband, and cybersecurity);
- organize and coordinate meetings in their region and meetings with other organizations;
- create working groups;
- promote capacity building through training, exchange of human resources and expertise;
- build a common agenda and best practices.

ITU representatives underlined the ITU mandate to help in these areas, indicating where work is on-going and where it could be useful to the goals of the regional associations such as the preparatory process for WTDC, the work of the RME division, especially the G-REX forum, and the GSR. It was also stressed that regional associations should encourage participation of national regulatory authorities in the forum and that G-REX is already translated into three languages and backed up by the opinions of technical experts.

All participants agreed that, although a new formal structure was unnecessary, ITU could help to set up a secretariat which would have a role of helping the flow of information which would in turn help to generate consensus on policies, frameworks and best practices.

The meeting ended with a summary of the proceedings by the Chairman and future actions to be taken:

1. Organize annual meetings in parallel with GSR.

2. Establish a Regional Association Secretariat Network in collaboration with ITU.

3. Use the G-REX forum as a platform for a Regional Association Secretariat Network.