

SOURCE: Ministry of Communications and Informatization, Republic of Belarus

The Administration of the Republic of Belarus is submitting the following information within the framework of the preparations for the Global Symposium for Regulators, to be held from 21 to 23 September 2011 in Armenia City, Colombia.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus has approved by decree a National Programme for accelerated development of services in the sphere of information and communication technologies over the period 2011-2015. The main outcome of the National Programme's successful implementation will be to enhance, by 2015, the positions held by the Republic of Belarus in the rating of European States under the International Telecommunication Union's assessment systems (becoming one of the thirty leading countries in terms of level of ICT development).

Among the main components of this rating system are the indicators relating directly to infrastructure development, particularly data transfer networks (percentage of households with Internet access, number of Internet users, number of subscribers having broadband Internet access).

It is to be noted in this regard that the active development of telecommunication networks, and of data transfer networks in particular, is found only in the major cities (Minsk and the regional centres), whereas rural communities are more often than not served solely by the national telecommunication operator, generally providing telephone services. In view of the Europe-wide development trend, it is considered appropriate for the Government to be directing its efforts towards eliminating the "digital divide" that exists between urban and rural areas.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus has approved by decree a state public service target of ensuring the availability of access to broadband Internet services in all communities with a population exceeding 1 500 inhabitants.

In the interests of stimulating the development of modern information technologies in rural areas, it is considered expedient to cease the construction of conventional telephone networks in favour of the construction of data transfer networks and establishment of data transmission nodes. This will ensure that it remains technically possible to provide the population with telephone services (through the use of IP-telephony technologies), while at the same time providing the various additional services that are now in demand, such as broadband Internet access and IP-television services.
