

Closing address

**Malcolm Johnson, Director, ITU Telecommunication Standardization Bureau
ITU Regional Development Forum 2008 for the Commonwealth of Independent States
(CIS), Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Baltic States
“Bridging the ICT standardization gap in developing countries”
Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 10-11 June 2008**

It has been a pleasure to participate in this ITU Regional Development Forum for CIS, CEE and the Baltic States on Bridging the Standardization Gap.

My sincere thanks, on behalf of ITU and all the participants, go to the government of Uzbekistan, and in particular the Communications and Information Agency of Uzbekistan, for the generous hosting of this forum. The arrangements and facilities have been excellent, and we will not forget the tremendous hospitality for which of course Uzbekistan is famous.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Radio, Development, and Telecommunication Standardization Sectors, and the ITU Regional Office. I am very grateful that we have been able to count upon the full support of the RCC and many thanks to Mr Mukhitdinov for being with us this week.

The fact that we had more than 150 delegates to this meeting shows the extent of interest of countries in this region to participate in our standardization activities.

I am sure you will agree with me that the presentations have been very informative, and our thanks go to all the speakers and the moderators. By listening to the presentations, discussing with colleagues from other countries, and by sharing our experiences, we are going a long way towards bridging the standardization gap.

I am sure that the excellent ideas that have been generated, not only in the forum but also in the discussions over coffee, lunch and dinner will prove an excellent basis for consideration of common proposals in the WTSA Preparatory Meeting which will start tomorrow morning.

A number of issues that could be considered in your preparations have been identified in the presentations including: telemedicine; security; quality of service; interoperability and the ITU Mark; use of regional groups; and the desire to hold more meetings in the region.

I have long been a supporter for regional preparations, having proposed the first ITU Resolution on the subject in 1997. Solidarity is the key to regional success. In some regions this can require difficult negotiations and willingness to compromise. However, from my experience of RCC it does not seem to be so difficult to reach common positions in this region.

So in conclusion, I hope that the discussions we have had over the last two days provides you with an excellent platform to develop these common positions in plenty of time for Johannesburg in October 2008. And I look forward to seeing your proposals, and seeing you all in Johannesburg.

Thank you all for your participation.