**Telecommunication
Development Bureau (BDT)**

Ref.:   BDT/IEE/RME/DM/498   Geneva, 9 December 2014

To
—   Administrations of ITU Member States
—   National Regulatory Authorities
—   Regional and International Organizations

Subject: 15th Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR), Libreville, Gabon, 9-11 June 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to invite you to participate in the 15th Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR-15) on 9-11 June 2015, organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in collaboration with the Government of Gabon. The event will be held at the Conference Centre of the *Stade de l'Amitié*, Libreville, Gabon and chaired by Mr Lin Mombo, President of the Regulatory Council of the *Autorité de Régulation des Communications Electroniques et des Postes (ARCEP)*.

GSR brings together heads of national telecom/ICT regulatory authorities from around the world and has earned a reputation as the global annual venue for regulators to share their views and experiences. The meeting also fosters a dynamic global dialogue among regulators, policy-makers, industry leaders and other key ICT stakeholders, where ITU Sector Members can share their views on major issues facing the ICT sector.

The first two days (9-10 June 2015) will be dedicated to the Global Regulators-Industry Dialogue (GRID) with regulators, policy-makers and ITU–D Sector Members. The third day (11 June 2015) will be open to regulators and policy-makers only.

As part of the GSR series of pre-events, thematic workshops and the closed "by invitation only" meeting of the Regulatory Associations (RA) will take place on 8 June 2015.

Programme

Under the overarching theme of GSR-15, "**Mind the Digital Gap: Regulatory incentives to achieve digital opportunities**", participants will explore ways to ensure that citizens can benefit from the social and economic opportunities brought about by the digital economy. For digital opportunities to fully materialize, an adaptive, consultative and innovative approach to policy and regulation is now, more than ever, required.

Participants will discuss the kinds of regulation needed to close the digital gap, innovative mechanisms that regulators can use to address the funding gaps, incentives to support financial innovations, facilitate new business models and secure infrastructure investment. They will examine regulatory initiatives that include reviewing fiscal measures, promoting interoperability of online services, widespread use of mobile payment and preparing for the Internet of Things (IoT) in a world where humans and things are being increasingly connected.

On the last day, regulators will focus on how to foster e-accessibility, concrete measures they can take and their role as enablers, identifying smart regulation to facilitate m-services and applications for all. In addition, the impact of regulation on broadband uptake will also be showcased.

GSR will also include two debates, the Leadership debate "Mind the digital gap — funding an inclusive digital society" and the Mobile payment debate. The detailed provisional programme is attached.

GSR Best Practice Guidelines consultation

I will be consulting you prior to the meeting in order to identify best practice guidelines on facilitating the uptake and widespread use of m-applications and services through targeted regulation.

Panel participation

In line with our past procedures, there will be no formal presentations apart from those made by authors of GSR discussion papers and other ITU documents to open each session. Active participation of all executive level participants in panels is welcome and encouraged. Those wishing to participate as panellists in one of the sessions identified in the provisional programme are kindly requested to complete the online panellist registration form by 20 February 2015. Selected participants will be informed by 17 March 2015**.**

Online networking platform

GSR offers unique networking opportunities in the run-up to, and during, the event through the online interactive networking platform to be made available on the GSR-15 website at www.itu.int/gsr15**.** This platform will provide registered users with the opportunity to set up their appointments using their tablet or smartphone, and they even will be able to book a meeting room.

Documentation and interpretation

GSR is a paperless meeting and relies on web transmission of documents. The documents prepared for the events, and other information, can be downloaded from the GSR-15 website. Interpretation will be provided in the six ITU official working languages.

Registration

Registration will be carried out exclusively online, starting on **8 January 2015** through Focal Points designated by each Administration/Entity. The role of a Focal Point is to handle registration formalities for his/her respective Administration/Entity. The list of Focal Points available here can be accessed using TIES login credentials.

Designated Focal Points can find the registration form here.

If your Administration/Entity does not have a Focal Point, or wishes to modify the contact details and/or change a focal point, you are kindly requested to provide details of his/her last name, first name and e-mail address and submit this information on letterhead by fax to: +41 22 7305484 or by e-mail to BDTMeetingsRegistration@itu.int.

Practical information

Please note that participants shall cover their own travel and accommodation expenses. Practical information on accommodation, including logistical details, is also available on the GSR-15 website.

Due to visa requirements, and in order to ensure that your visa is processed in time for the meeting, I encourage you to follow the visa instructions available on the GSR-15 website.

The Regulatory and Market Environment Division, e-mail: gsr@itu.int or telephone: +41 22 730 6100/5709, is at the disposal of participants who require assistance.

I hope that you will be able to participate and make a valuable contribution to the Global Symposium for Regulators 2015.

Yours faithfully,

[Original signed]

Brahima Sanou
Director

Annex : Provisional Programme

MIND THE DIGITAL GAP – REGULATORY INCENTIVES TO ACHIEVE DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES

9-11 JUNE 2015, LIBREVILLE, GABON

GSR15 | 9-11 JUNE 2015 | LIBREVILLE, GABON | ITU

Tuesday 9 June 2015 - Global Regulators-Industry Dialogue (GRID) sessions

09h00-10h00	**Opening Ceremony**

10h00-10h15 COFFEE BREAK

10h15-12h00 **Leadership debate: Mind the Digital Gap**

Funding an inclusive digital society – from infrastructure to data

This high-Level debate will examine the various investment opportunities and funding challenges in deploying ICT networks, providing access and supporting the development of new services and applications to bolster access to knowledge in the digital world and reduce the digital gap.

- o How should the investment gap be addressed, and how should the development of the knowledge society be sustained?
- o Setting favorable conditions for investment in ICTs to flourish: whose responsibility is it? Who are the investors today?
- o What are the new strategies for industry players?
- o Market consolidation from infrastructure to content
- o Financial inclusion: defining a gender inclusive approach to investment and funding in the digital world
- o What are the policy and regulatory requirements to secure funding in all layers? What can regulators do?
- o How can international cooperation facilitate investment and funding?

12h00-14h00 LUNCH

14h00-15h30 **Session 1: Innovative investment strategies: what's new?**

This session will explore innovative investment strategies developed to support the deployment of broadband and access to the digital economy.

- o How can investment be attracted in all layers, and in particular infrastructure?
- o What are the financial innovations out there?
- o Community projects for infrastructure, crowd sourcing for applications and services
- o Learning from new strategies in public-private partnerships and open access
- o What incentives can regulators take to facilitate infrastructure funding?

15h30- 15h45 COFFEE BREAK

15h45-17h00 **Session 2 - Mobile payment debate: an empowering tool**

This debate will see panellists share their views on mobile money and financial inclusion.

- o How can the costs of digital transactions and mobile payments be reduced?
- o Why is mobile money important for consumers? Financial inclusion through mobile services
- o Domestic and international payments, cooperation between telecommunication and

banking regulators (central banks) and the need for international cooperation
- o What standards are available to secure transactions?
- o What is the role of consumers? Mobile payment, an empowering tool for women?

Wednesday 10 June 2015 - GRID sessions

9h00-10h30 **Session 3: Spotlight on network sharing business models**

This session will examine network sharing models that have been developed among various utilities.

- o What are the successful models out there? Sharing, co-ownership, infrastructure owners?
- o Innovative business models for sustainable development: the case of smart cities
- o Cooperation with other utility providers
- o Fiscal incentives and other regulatory measures as a business game changer
- o Managing risks: regulatory options

10h30-10h45 COFFEE BREAK

10h45-12h00 **Session 4: The impact of taxation on the digital economy**

This session will examine how taxation affects the deployment and take-up of services in a digital environment.

- o Understanding the impact of fiscal charges on competition and innovation in a digital economy
- o Taxation: a tool for social development or a business inhibitor?
- o How can taxes affect demand and broadband uptake?
- o What fiscal regime applies to over-the-top services and applications?

12h00-14h00 LUNCH

14h00-15h30 **Session 5: Internet of Everything: are we ready?**

This session will examine how convergence, cloud services, sensors, big data and data analytics are leading the way to the Internet of Things (IoT), what does it mean for the future and how should we prepare for it from a policy and regulatory standpoint?

- o What is it all about? From human-to-machine communications to machine-to-machine communications and everything-to-everything communications
- o Are we there yet? Understanding the regulatory implications: data protection, privacy, lock-in, switching, interoperability, spectrum, etc.
- o IoT, data analytics and smart cities
- o What investment is needed to sustain IoT?

15h30-15h45 COFFEE BREAK

15h45-17h00 **Session 6: Interoperability in the digital ecosystem: a layered approach**

This session will discuss the importance of interoperability to prevent consumers from being locked-in when using apps and services and understand its effects on innovation and competition.

- o Defining ICT interoperability in the marketplace, its impact on consumer choice, quality of service and the advent of IoT
- o The need for interoperability of equipment, devices and operating systems as a market and legal prerequisite in a digital world
- o Interoperability to avoid lock-in effects

- o How can interoperability spur innovation and competition
- o The drawbacks of interoperability: security, privacy, etc.

Thursday 11 June 2015 - Regulators' Day

10h00-11h15   **Session 7: Fostering e-accessibility: The regulator as an enabler**

This session will examine measures regulators can take to foster accessibility to ICT services for all to achieve digital inclusion.

- o How should accessible ICTs be defined?
- o How should accessibility for all be guaranteed? Extending universal access policy beyond availability and affordability to include accessibility
- o What measures can the ICT regulator take?
- o Extending accessibility features to m-services and applications
- o Regulators' success stories and lessons learned

11h15-11h30   COFFEE BREAK

11h30-12h45   **Session 8: Smart regulation to facilitate m-services and applications for all**

This session will examine the role of the regulator and the regulatory measures needed to facilitate the deployment and diffusion of m-services and applications to achieve social development goals.

- o M-services: a tool to achieve social development in the digital society by promoting key services such as m-health, m-education, m-agriculture, m-payments, m-investment (m-donations, crowd funding, etc.), m-of everything
- o Lifting barriers related to the costing of short codes, taxation, privacy, content regulation, standards, traffic management, etc.
- o M-applications and services: a tool to empower consumers and citizens
- o Regulation in a cross-sectoral environment: a balancing act
- o Regulators' experiences and success stories

12h45-14h15   LUNCH

14h15-15h30   **Concluding discussion: How does regulation impact broadband uptake?**

The session will include a presentation of the ITU ICT Regulatory Tracker and the outcomes of the analysis on the impact of regulation on broadband uptake. It will further offer regulators the opportunity to share their experiences on regulatory measures taken to foster broadband access, ensure quality of service and stimulate broadband uptake.

- o Overview of incentive regulations to achieve the triple A (Accessibility, Availability and Affordability)
- o How does the quality of service influence consumer satisfaction and the uptake of services? What measures should be taken to ensure quality of service?
- o A focus on the role of the regulator, its mandate, powers and regulatory tools
- o What works? What doesn't work?
- o Learning from regulators' experiences

15h30-15h45   COFFEE BREAK

15h45-17h00   **Way forward and closing**