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World Telecommunication/ICT
Policy Forum 2013



Geneva, 14-16 May 2013

OPINION 2: Fostering an enabling environment for the greater growth and development of broadband connectivity

The fifth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (Geneva, 2013),

recalling

- a) Resolution 71 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010), The Strategic Plan for the Union;
- b) Resolution 101 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) on the subject of Internet-Protocol based networks;
- c) Resolution 139 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010), Telecommunications/information and communication technologies to bridge the digital divide and build an inclusive information society;
- d) the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcome documents;
- e) the third World Telecommunication Policy Forum (Geneva, 2001), Opinion A on the general implications of IP Telephony for the ITU membership,

taking into account

the Report of the fifth World Telecommunication Development Conference (Hyderabad, 2010), highlighting the importance of telecommunication infrastructure and technology development, particularly developing countries, and adopting regional initiatives and the Hyderabad Action Plan to assist developing countries achieve, to a greater degree, universal access to telecommunications,

considering

- a) the Geneva Declaration of Principles adopted by WSIS;
- b) the potential benefits of the rapid introduction of new and diverse telecommunication services, including those highlighted in Resolution 66/184 of the UN General Assembly, and consistent with § 54 of the Tunis Agenda, to “provide new solutions to development challenges and foster sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, development, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help to integrate all countries, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, into the global economy”;
- c) the role of broadband connectivity in attaining the UN Millennium Development Goals;

d) the importance of broadband capacity to facilitate the delivery of a broader range of services and applications, promote investment and provide Internet access at affordable prices to both existing and new users,

recognizing

a) that, pursuant to § 22 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles adopted by WSIS, a well-developed information and communication network infrastructure and applications, adapted to regional, national and local conditions, easily accessible and affordable, and making greater use of broadband and other innovative technologies where possible, can accelerate the social and economic progress of countries and the well being of all individuals, communities and peoples;

b) the importance of competition in promoting investment, as presented in the Report of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development¹ ;

c) the policy recommendations in the Report of the ITU/UNESCO Broadband Commission for Digital Development² encouraging broadband infrastructure development and for creating a favourable environment for investment in telecommunications infrastructure by encouraging all Member States to:

- i) provide policy leadership for investment, including open consultations on necessary policy and legal frameworks;
- ii) open telecommunications markets to competition through licensing and taxation reforms, including transparent licensing regimes;
- iii) enable government services that will stimulate demand for and investment in telecommunications, especially in developing countries;
- iv) establish a universal service program to support telecommunications infrastructure investment; and
- v) encourage efficient and innovative mobile broadband practices for new market entrants and consumers,

noting

a) that progress has been made in access to information and communication technologies, including the steady increase in Internet access to the world's population, and the availability of multilingual content, as well as Internet addresses, and that the international community affirmed its

¹ "Broadband: A Platform for Progress". A Report by the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, September 2010. (Available at http://www.broadbandcommission.org/Reports/Report_2.pdf).

² "The State of Broadband 2012: Achieving Digital Inclusion for All". A Report by the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, September, 2012. (Available at <http://www.broadbandcommission.org/Documents/bb-annualreport2012.pdf>).

commitment to turning the digital divide into digital opportunity, and to ensuring harmonious and equitable development for all, in § 49 of the Tunis Agenda;

b) the establishment of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development at the invitation of the Secretary-General of the ITU and the Director General of UNESCO, and taking note of the Commission Report entitled “A 2010 Leadership Imperative: The Future Built on Broadband”, which calls for broadband-friendly practice and policies towards the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the UN Millennium Development Goals,

is of the view

that Member States, Sector Members and other interested stakeholders should undertake all efforts to foster an enabling environment for the greater growth and development of broadband connectivity,

invites Member States,

a) to create and promote widespread affordable access to telecommunication infrastructure by enabling legal and regulatory environments, and develop policies that are fair, transparent, stable, predictable and non-discriminatory; and that promote competition, foster continued technological and service innovation, and encourage private sector investment incentives;

b) to review their current regulatory frameworks with a view to adopting a competition-oriented approach with respect to IP-based networks in order to achieve clearly defined public policy goals, taking into account, *inter alia*, the concept of technology neutrality,

invites Member States, Sector Members and all interested stakeholders,

to continue to work, as appropriate, in the activities of ITU, and in all relevant international, regional and national forums considering the subject of broadband connectivity, to share best practices regarding the implementation of progressive regulatory regimes designed to liberalize markets, promote competition and stimulate investment,

requests the Secretary-General

to ensure the effective implementation of the relevant ITU programmes and activities, including the WSIS outcomes, through the promotion and strengthening of cooperation in the development of broadband connectivity.
