

**Opening address
For the Workshop on ITU-T and its activities
Kasane, Botswana, 24 –26 July 2002**

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**Honourable Mr. Bahiti Temane, Deputy Speaker
of the Assembly and MP for Maun-Chobe,
Mr. LeKaukau, Executive Chairman of BTA
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning!

**It is an honour and a pleasure for me to be here
with you this morning for the opening of the ITU-T
workshop. I am grateful for the presence of the
honourable Mr. Bahiti Temane, Deputy Speaker of
the Assembly and MP for Maun-Chobe, and Mr.
LeKaukau, Executive Chairman of BTA. I would
like to thank Her Excellency
Mrs. Tebelelo Seretse, Minister of Works,
Transport and Communications, whom I met
yesterday, who not only supported the
organization of our workshop in her country, but
also presented her good wishes for the success of
our meeting. I wish to thank most sincerely the**

Botswana Administration for their kind agreement and support for hosting this workshop.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) was founded in 1865. After the United Nations was established, the ITU became a UN specialized agency for Telecommunications. The purposes of the Union are given in the ITU Constitution. Essentially, the ITU is to provide a forum in which the Union's membership can cooperate for the improvement and rational use of telecommunications of all kinds. There are three major Sectors in ITU, including Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R), Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T), and Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D).

With the rapid growth of the Internet and mobile telecommunication, and with the worldwide trend of liberalization, globalization and the convergence of technology and services, standardization plays a more and more important role in making telecommunication accessible to all, thus fostering development and growth in all domains. The main functions of ITU-T are to study technical, operational and tariff questions and to adopt Recommendations

on them with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a worldwide basis. Among many areas of its study, the IP-related issues, mobile technologies and tariff and accounting issues are topics of high priority for ITU-T. The others include optical fiber transmission technologies, local access technologies, multimedia, TMN, signaling, numbering and addressing, global interconnectivity and interoperability, security, etc.

ITU holds a World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly every four years. The last World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-2000) was held in Montreal, Canada from the 27th of September to the 6th of October 2000. Among the instruments adopted by WTSA-2000, Resolution 17: Telecommunication standardization in relation to the interests of developing countries, is a very important document to guide ITU-T in cooperating with developing countries in the international telecommunication standardization work. Since its last Assembly WTSA-2000, the ITU-T has been more active than ever: the AAP (Alternative Approval Procedure) process was officially launched at the end of January 2001. By the end of

2001, about 190 technical Recommendations were approved by AAP, with more than 60% approved in less than two months after a Study Group identified the texts as mature. Following Resolution 17, ITU-T organized several Study Group meetings and workshops in different regions of the world, including the last SG 12 meeting and a workshop on Quality of Transmission, which were held in Dakar, Senegal in October 2001, in addition to two TAF Group meetings in Africa during 2000 and 2001. From January 2001, the ITU has provided, on a trial basis, free online access of its products, including the ITU Recommendations, to its Members and to the general public. Statistics show that out of 60,000 web accesses to the ITU products, 80% were used on a free basis. I am pleased to report that around 18 % of the access was used by students and researchers. ITU-T began accepting a new membership status, that of “Associate”, in 2001. More than 30 were registered by March 2002. The ITU-T has a wide membership including 189 Member States and about 450 Sector Members, of which 90 are new Sector Members and Associates, joining ITU-T during 2000 and 2001. We are also pleased with an increasing participation of experts from developing countries. In 2001, around 24% of the total number of

delegates who attended the ITU-T meetings in Geneva were from developing countries.

There is positive awareness that amidst the rapid changes of the technological environment, it is vital that developing countries are not left behind. In electronic communications, there is no reason why developing countries should not participate. I am pleased with the increasing participation of developing countries in the ITU-T activities over the past few years. I noted the increasing interest of African experts who follow the T-Sector's activities. However, I would like to raise a particular plea to you that, although Africa becomes more active in the ITU-T activities, it is still far behind the other regions. There are many ways to come to ITU-T, through your own membership, or through the Administration, physically present or virtually present by email consultation. People frequently talk about market-driven forces. Correct. But, where are the potential markets? Who are the owners of the markets? It is in the developing countries that huge markets exist! One of the ITU's strengths is the participation of developing countries. With the introduction of market competition, the operators in this region need information on new technologies, new measures to run businesses, a

good strategy and a good national plan, the knowledge of organizational structure, etc. Active participation in the ITU-T's meetings will help African countries reach these goals in a more efficient manner. It is often said that developing countries need ITU. It is true. It is equally true that the ITU work needs developing countries. You have knowledge of your markets and business requirements, you have your own concerns and interests, and you have well-educated experts. When you come to ITU to share information with colleagues from other countries, you will develop more and more confidence in yourselves and others will benefit from your experience. Active participation of developing countries in ITU activities is beneficial to both developing countries and ITU. I would like to see you more often in ITU-T activities.

This workshop will provide a good opportunity for our African experts to understand the ITU-T's situation, how it works, and how we can participate in the meetings. The TSB staff and an invited expert on tariff issues will share in-depth knowledge with you. This workshop also provides a good opportunity for ITU staff, or particularly TSB staff, to understand the real situation as well as the difficulties of the African telecommunication

community. I hope this workshop will prove useful to both sides.

I would like to talk now about ICANN Reform. In February, the President of ICANN issued a report which provides an in-depth analysis of the serious situation and the problems that ICANN faces. He asked for a significant reform of ICANN, and invited a public consultation. I found it to be a great opportunity for ITU to assist ICANN. After some intense internal and external consultations, I submitted a paper to ICANN on 17 April to meet their deadline for public consultation. In my paper, I provided information on our new current environment and our competence, offered to assist them in the areas they had failed, particularly regarding governments' deep concern on specific issues. I also expressed my desire to further discuss with them any issues of common interest, and to explore new ways to cooperate. My paper, although marked as "personal opinions but not an official ITU position", has received a lot of attention both inside and outside ITU. I was very pleased with the strong and unanimous support of ITU Council-2002 as well as of TSAG. However, it is still not very clear how ITU can find its position in this very important ICANN reform process. Your valuable support is critical. I would be

pleased if you could demonstrate your support at all possible occasions such as the forthcoming East African Internet Forum to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 6 to 8 August, and the forthcoming ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in September/October.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude my speech, I would like to reiterate my thanks to our hosts for allowing this workshop to take place here in Kasane. I would also like to thank the ITU Regional Office for assisting the ITU-T in organizing this workshop. Finally, I express my appreciation to the participants for their efforts, exchange of views and any advice they may put forward. I would be very pleased to receive your comments on this workshop for any further improvements that can be made.

Thank you for your attention.