

Report to Prepcom-3 on the ITU WSIS Thematic Meeting on Cybersecurity

Presented by Robert Shaw, ITU Strategy and Policy Unit

It is my pleasure to report on behalf of ITU on the WSIS Thematic Meeting on Cybersecurity that was held recently here in Geneva.

At the start of the 21st century, our societies are increasingly dependent on information and communications technologies (ICTs) that span the globe. Communication networks are the lifeblood of modern societies. They are responsible for a growing share of national wealth, as well as offering hope for greater prosperity. Yet this dependency has also brought new risks. We have growing concerns that we are making ourselves increasingly vulnerable — which is reinforced by a growing number of attacks in cyberspace. And we are particularly worried about protecting critical infrastructures that are dependent on ICTs. These are systems and assets whose incapacity or destruction would have a debilitating impact on national security and the economic and social well-being of our citizens.

During the first phase of WSIS, a number of recommendations were made in the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action that relate to building confidence and security in the use of ICTs and the promotion of a global culture of cybersecurity. In the framework of its activities to implement the Plan of Action, ITU recently hosted a **WSIS Thematic Meeting on Cybersecurity**, which took place from 28 June to 1 July 2005, in Geneva. The four-day meeting was structured to consider and debate six broad themes in promoting international dialogue and cooperative measures among governments, the private sector and other stakeholders. These included information sharing of national and regional approaches, good practices and guidelines; developing watch, warning and incident response capabilities;

technical standards and industry solutions; harmonizing national legal approaches and international legal coordination; privacy, data and consumer protection; and addressing the particular issues that developing countries face. In addition, the first day of the recent meeting focused on countering spam, as a follow-up to the ITU WSIS Thematic Meeting on Countering Spam, held in July 2004.

Cyberspace does not respect national borders and no country alone can solve the world's cybersecurity problems. The Chairman's report from the meeting, which has been posted on the WSIS website, stresses the need for improved national, regional and international cooperation in the field as well as adopting the "technology, processes and people" of cybersecurity. During the event, the "development paradox of cybersecurity" was highlighted in that while we promote ICT adaptation and internet penetration in developing economies, at the same time we warn of the very real dangers of cyberspace. This implies that we must make special efforts to facilitate the participation of developing economies in policy discussions so that their particular interests, needs and concerns are understood.

The event website, which can be accessed through www.itu.int/cybersecurity/ provides links to the final agenda, all background papers, presentations, electronic contributions, the Chairman's Report and complete audio archives of the meeting. Furthermore, a special CD-ROM has been prepared and is being made available here to Prepcom-3 participants. The content provides materials from both spam and cybersecurity thematic meetings as well as a related materials from ITU's daily work programmes, including information on recent ITU world standardization assembly resolutions directing our ongoing work on cybersecurity and spam. Considering its broad membership of both public and private entities, we believe that ITU can play a positive role by offering a platform for encouraging technical and policy discussions and for

the dissemination of information, including for developing countries, on spam and cybersecurity issues.

Finally, I am also pleased to announce that, following a decision in July of the ITU's governing Council, World Telecommunication Day in May 2006 will focus on the theme of "promoting global cybersecurity". In preparation, ITU plans to raise awareness amongst its membership and other stakeholders as well as highlighting areas where ITU expertise could be further maximized through cooperation with other entities involved in promoting global cybersecurity and countering spam.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and this concludes the ITU's report.