



Tomorrow's Network Today

**Welcoming remarks by Dr Tim Kelly, Head, ITU Strategy and Policy Unit
Saint-Vincent, Valle d'Aosta, 7-8 October 2005**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Secretary-General and membership of the International Telecommunication Union, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this workshop on “Tomorrow's Network Today”.

This joint initiative was born out of an ITU New Initiatives Workshop, on ubiquitous network societies, that was held in April this year in Geneva when a case study of the development of ubiquitous network societies in Italy was presented. That event was futuristic and visionary and it presented a view of a society in which information and communication technologies were as ubiquitous as the air around us.

But we were challenged to make that vision more practical, and more accessible. It is all very well to talk about tomorrow's network, but what about today's network? How will the transition from today's network to tomorrow's “next generation network” take place? And how will it impact on particular countries and particular regions?

In this workshop, over the next two days, we hope to take up that challenge of making the vision of a ubiquitous network society more practical. In particular, we hope to show that tomorrow's network cannot start with a blank sheet of paper, but has to start from today's network. To borrow a term from political science, tomorrow's network is “path dependent”. In other words, our trajectory and our ultimate destination depend crucially upon our starting point.

The reality is that each country, and each individual region, starts from a different point and will follow a different trajectory, even if the overall direction is the same. The key elements in the mix are:

- the relative levels of diffusion of the main bearer networks for fixed-line telecommunications, mobile communications and broadcasting;
- the number of players and their relative market shares;
- the regulatory environment and the policy environment, including the role of local and regional authorities; and
- the degree of involvement by users and other interest groups.

Here, in the Valle d'Aosta, we have a combination of those elements which is probably unique and which will certainly prove to be an excellent laboratory for the creation of "tomorrow's network today."

In the first of today's sessions, we will have a series of presentations on international visions of tomorrow's networks, from Korea, from ITU and from the European Commission. This will be followed by a series of presentations from players on the Italian market. This afternoon we will be looking at creating an enabling environment for tomorrow's networks and tomorrow, in the final section, we will focus once more on "Being digital in the Valle d'Aosta".

Such an opportunity as we have here—to gather together a renowned set of world experts in such a privileged location—is rare in the increasingly frenetic world in which we live. I would like to extend our thanks, therefore, to our co-organisers – the Ministry of Communications and the Ugo Bordoni Foundation -- as well as our hosts, the Valle d'Aosta region, for making this event possible.

I hope we will all work together to take full advantage of this opportunity to gain a glimpse into our common future.

Thank you