WSIS Forum 2011: Preparatory Meeting - WSIS Action Line C2 (ICT Infrastructure)
Speech: Gregory Linn – Project Officer for WSIS Action Line C2 - ITU/BDT

Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have been given a reinforced mandate by our 192 member countries at our latest Plenipotentiary Conference to give high priority to WSIS Action Line C2, as it consists of the backbone of most of the other WSIS Action Lines, namely the ICT infrastructure that will enable their deployment. WSIS recognized that universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to ICT infrastructure and services constitutes one of the challenges of the Information Society. If we are to connect the unconnected to the information society and all the benefits it offers, development of ICT infrastructure must be a priority.

ITU was given the role of facilitator and implementer of action line C2 and within the ITU, it is the Telecommunication Development Bureau that carries out the work of implementing infrastructure development, which consists of a majority of it’s work and contribution to WSIS targets.

• We are looking to interact with regulators and policy-makers around the world to harmonize policies and help establish regulatory frameworks conducive to investment in telecommunication infrastructure development.
• We also are seeking to work with aid organizations /donor communities as well as beneficiary countries to connect the unconnected people to the knowledge based society. In this aim, we have identified several initiatives under which we are either implementing projects or are in the process of negotiation with some potential sponsors to mobilize required resources. These initiatives include: deployment of Wireless Broadband networks, connecting villages, connect a school-connect a community and many more
• For Least Developed Countries we are giving direct assistance in development of infrastructure, but also looking for partners to accelerate and enhance this aid
• Emergency Telecommunications has been an important activity for ITU over the last few years, notably in Haiti, Indonesia, Pakistan and many other countries in need of quick and efficient emergency intervention. Partners in this field are also actively called upon.
• To ensure that infrastructure development is sustainable, it is essential that the right skills are available locally. That is why we attach great importance to human capacity building activities, for which we are on the lookout for skilled individuals and stakeholders to help achieve this
• In the area of digital broadcasting, there is more and more demand from developing countries for ITU’s assistance in ensuring the smooth transition from analogue to digital. To this end we have developed guidelines and deployed a pilot system to assist developing countries in the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting.

In its role as facilitator ITU is promoting partnerships for infrastructure development. For large-scale national infrastructure related initiatives, bringing relevant players together for joint projects is the most realistic way forward. If you are a strategic partner active in this field, please let us know as this will help our facilitation role in coordinating new partnerships.

Considering that we are halfway towards 2015 and the implementation of WSIS Action Line C2 goals, and considering the time left, a roadmap as been drawn out by ITU and will be maintained for future activities.

Finally, we also consider the collection and analysis of statistical information on ICT development to be an important element in helping stakeholders to define appropriate strategies and focus their efforts where they are most needed. In this view, let me highlight the need for multi-stakeholder contribution of any ICT Infrastructure projects to the WSIS Stocktaking platform to assess progress towards the goals set for 2015. We are also looking for speakers and case studies to present at the WSIS Forum in 2011.

Thank you.

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