

MOBILE WORLD CONGRESS (MWC 2012)

GOVERNMENT MOBILE FORUM

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MOBILE BROADBAND VISION AND THE BROADBAND COMMISSION

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Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen

- It is a great pleasure to be here with you in Barcelona this morning, and to have this opportunity to discuss with you our mobile broadband vision, and to present the work of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development.
- Over the past twenty years or so we have seen an extraordinary transition from a world where most people did not have access to even basic telecommunications, to a world where we have six billion mobile cellular subscriptions, and where 2.3 billion people use the Internet.
- The key to this extraordinary communications miracle has of course been mobile, which has conquered the globe and brought ICTs within reach of virtually all of the world's people.
- It is now time to take the next step, and to ensure that everyone – wherever they live, and whatever their circumstances – has access to the benefits of broadband Internet.
- In the 21st century, broadband networks must be considered as basic infrastructure, just like roads, railways, water and power networks.
- In a more populous, ageing world, broadband will be vital in helping to deliver essential services such as health, education and good government.

- It will help us address the biggest issues of our time – such as climate change and environmental sustainability – and it will revolutionize the way goods and services are created, delivered and used.
- In the process, broadband will also help us accelerate progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals, now only just three years away.
- Clearly, one of the keys to massively increased access to broadband – as it was with massively increased access to basic communications – will be mobile, and already there has been very impressive progress in this regard, with well over a billion mobile broadband subscriptions globally.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- This is not just about delivering connectivity for connectivity's sake – or even about giving people access to the undoubted benefits of social communications.
- It is about leveraging the power of connected technologies – and especially mobile technologies – to make the world a better place.
- We are already seeing this with the extraordinary wealth of apps which are available for mobile devices and whose number increases by tens of thousands every day.
- In the area of mobile health, for example, medical practitioners can now have patients' ECGs sent straight to their smartphones or tablets, while patients can download an app to manage diabetes online in real-time.
- Or take the 'Epocrates' app, which provides information on thousands of prescription medications and hundreds of over-the-counter drugs, as well as other capabilities, such as medical calculators.
- There are also amazing apps designed especially for the developing world, and I was impressed to see one which can be used to diagnose malaria on the spot.
- The app processes a picture taken by the phone of a blood sample; detects malaria parasites; quantifies how much malaria is in the sample; and even points out the parasites in the photo. Once the data stored in the phone is uploaded, it can be used to spot and monitor disease trends.

- None of this could have happened without ICTs and broadband, which have brought two crucial new forces into play: the death of distance, and the democratization of information and knowledge.
- This is the true beauty of the Internet – and particularly the mobile Internet – it finally makes the world’s riches accessible to everyone, at any time, and wherever they are.

Distinguished colleagues,

- There are those who argue that we do not need high-end technology at all to solve the world’s most pressing issues – such as hunger and poverty – and that these can be addressed by having enough people willing to help, and the use of simple technology such as 2G mobile phones.
- But without the broadband infrastructure humming away in the background, and without the power of large servers and big data storage capabilities, we can achieve very little.
- SMS messages to remote and rural patients only work if there is a proper broadband network – and powerful computers – running in the background.
- The same is true for enabling applications such as mobile banking, which is proving so successful in many parts of the developing world.
- The innovative use of ICTs will also play a crucial role in ensuring the world’s seven billion people have affordable and equitable access to adequate food supplies, at every step of the process – from delivering the right information to farmers; to helping them improve yields and prices; to improving supply chain efficiencies; to ensuring that consumers understand nutritional needs, both for themselves and for their children.
- Today 40-50% of all food ready for harvest in the United States never gets eaten, and in many developing countries, post-harvest losses of food grains can reach as high as 50%.
- With broadband and other mobile technologies we can do so much more to reduce this wastage.

- Similar principles apply to smart water management and distribution, and here too, ICTs will play a vital role in the 21st century, as water resources become more scarce, and much more valuable. This applies to remote sensing, weather forecast and soil moisture level measurements, etc.
- ICTs – and of course this includes mobile broadband – will also play a critical role in helping to create a more sustainable world in the 21st century.
- Through smart grids, environmental sensors, intelligent transport systems, dematerialization and digitalization of goods and services, and new ways of improving energy efficiency, we can help drive the transition to a low carbon economy, while better adapting to the effects of climate change.
- With political will, a strong social conscience, and a profound desire to fulfil a humanist mandate, we are fully capable of making the world a better place for all – and I am absolutely confident that together, by leveraging the power of broadband, we shall do so.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- This is why ITU, in conjunction with UNESCO, launched the Broadband Commission for Digital Development in 2010 – to encourage governments to implement national broadband plans and increase access to broadband applications and services.
- The Commission is co-chaired by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Carlos Slim, President of the Carlos Slim Foundation. We have over 50 Broadband Commissioners – all top-level leaders in their field – representing governments, industry, academia and international agencies.
- Last October, at the Broadband Leadership Summit, held in Geneva in conjunction with the ITU Telecom World 2011 event, the Broadband Commission set ambitious but achievable targets for broadband development – focusing on policy, affordability and uptake, in an attempt to ensure that we avoid creating a world of broadband rich and broadband poor.
- We will measure progress annually and publish country rankings to quantify and evaluate broadband progress around the globe, and the first

report will be issued at the Broadband Commission's meeting this year in September in New York.

- Since the creation of the Broadband Commission, we have seen broadband successfully pushed to the top of the political agenda around the world – and I am delighted to report that broadband is becoming more widespread and more affordable everywhere.
- I believe the key is 'light regulation' – and this is something which will also be very important at the World Conference on International Telecommunications, WCIT-12, which is being held in Dubai in December, to review the International Telecommunication Regulations, the ITRs.
- In terms of bringing the benefits of mobile broadband to more of the world's people there are of course a number of other issues, and most notably that of spectrum policy and allocation – and I am very pleased to report that we are making good progress on this front at ITU, which has just concluded the 2012 World Radiocommunication Conference, WRC-12.
- My colleague, Fabio Leite, who is the Deputy Director of ITU's Radiocommunication Bureau, will shortly be giving you more details about the specifics of the results of WRC-12.
- In the meantime let me close by saying how much I am looking forward to seeing a world where we have successfully replicated the mobile miracle for broadband, and created a world where individuals rich and poor can be connected to the global knowledge society.
- Thank you.

