



# World Telecommunication Day

May 17<sup>th</sup> 2005

The Equitable Information Society in the Making in Mauritius

The theme for this year's World Telecommunication Day is "Creating an Equitable Information Society: Time for Action."

In choosing this theme for World Telecommunication Day 2005, the members of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) have shaped the vision of making Information and Communication Technologies accessible to all by paving the way towards implementation of the commitments enshrined in the Declaration of Principles adopted in the first ever World Summit on the Information Society held in Geneva in 2003.

In Mauritius, the creation of such a society where information and knowledge is equitably spread is already underway especially in accessibility. Enhanced accessibility can be illustrated by some Key Performance Indicators (KPI). For example, fixed line telephone subscription has increased from 305,000 lines in 2001 to 350,000 in 2004. Mobile phone subscribers have increased from 280,000 in 2001 to 525,000 in 2004. International accessibility for its part has been facilitated by a dramatic drop in charges both in conventional telephony and Internet telephony.

from 280 000 to 525 000

Action taken has been at the level of policy, infrastructure development and regulation:

#### POLICY:

- > End of monopoly in telecommunications sector brought forward by a year to January 2003.
- > Establishment of a conducive legislative framework.  
Enactment of  
Electronic Transactions Act 2000  
ICTA Act 2001  
Postal Services Act 2002  
Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act 2003  
Data Protection Act 2004
- > Publication of the National Telecommunication Policy (NTP 2004) intended to be a blueprint for ICT sector development up to 2008
- > Introduction of technology-neutral licensing regulation

#### INFRASTRUCTURE:

- > Commissioning of SAFE/SAT3/WASC undersea optical fibre to provide reliable international connectivity
- > Setting up of satellite earth stations to increase international circuits for enhanced international connectivity
- > Introduction of optical fibre in the national core public network
- > Deployment of ADSL to provide wireline broadband access of up to 1Mbps
- > Establishment of digital terrestrial television broadcasting (DTTB) platform
- > Upgrading of mobile infrastructure to support 2.5G and 3G mobile services
- > Deployment of GSM mobile network in Rodrigues
- > Setting up of Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSATs) by private enterprises
- > Introduction of hotspots to deliver Internet services

#### REGULATORY ACTION:

- > Tariff rebalancing Phase I and Phase II
- > 18 new commercial licenses issued for international telecommunications, mobile services, fixed services and ISPs
- > Enforcement of direct peering resulting in (a) 50% drop in call charges between competing mobile operators and (b) exchange of SMSs between subscribers of different mobile operators
- > Designing of National Spectrum Allocation Chart in accordance with the requirements of ITU
- > Drawing up of National Numbering Plan to cater for industry requirements over the next 20 years
- > Facilitating interconnection between operators by: (a) defining a Reference Interconnect Offer model (b) determining cost-oriented IUC and (c) establishing a dispute resolution mechanism
- > Prescribing an under-cost (10 cents per minute) interconnection rate for dial-up internet access
- > Implementation of Calling Party Pays (CPP) principle (incoming calls free of charge)
- > Introduction of per-second billing in the consumer's interest
- > Process established for regular consultations with stakeholders and open-house sessions
- > Setting up of Community Access Points
- > Facilitating introduction of new services (3G, MMS)

#### What next ?

#### IN PROGRESS:

- > Promotion of Internet access for an Equitable Information Society through Community Access Points in Mauritius and Rodrigues
- > Ensuring safe and secure on-line transactions within a Mauritian Public Key Infrastructure framework for the promotion of e-commerce
- > .mu country code top level domain (ccTLD) to be redelegated to Mauritius
- > Creating opportunities for broadband wireless access services

The above actions have been possible through the concerted efforts of the policy-maker, industry and consumers, amongst other stakeholders.