Circular to Member States

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Subject: **World Telecommunication Day 2006**
"Promoting Global Cybersecurity"

Dear Sir/Madam,

World Telecommunication Day (WTD) commemorates the founding of ITU on 17 May 1865. This year, WTD could carry added significance as 17 May has been identified by the Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society as "World Information Society Day".

While World Information Society Day is yet to be proclaimed, ITU, as the leading ICT agency of the UN system, upholds the idea and looks forward to its members to raise awareness of the role of ICT in achieving the development goals of all people.

For WTD 2006, the ITU Council chose the theme *Promoting Global Cybersecurity* to highlight the serious challenges we face in ensuring the safety and security of networked information and communication systems.

In today's interconnected and increasingly networked world, societies are vulnerable to a wide variety of threats, including deliberate attacks on critical information infrastructures with debilitating effects on our economies and on our societies. In order to safeguard our systems and infrastructure and in order to instill confidence in online trade, commerce, banking, telemedicine, e-government and a host of other applications, we need to strengthen the security practices of each and every networked country, business, and citizen, and develop a global culture of cybersecurity.

The urgency of promoting cybersecurity has been called for by the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in 2002[i], the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-2004)[ii] as well as the United Nations General Assembly (resolutions 58/199, 2004[iii], and 57/239, 2002[iv]).

WTD 2006: action lines

Against this background, a number of initiatives are underway at ITU. For example, ITU is compiling an online reference source of national cybersecurity initiatives and websites. Details on this and other initiatives will be available on this website on 17 May.

To ensure that your national agencies and organizations active in network and information security are included on the website along with their related initiatives, **please fill in the [form online] or send it to the ITU Secretariat before 30 April 2006**.

At the national level, you may wish to consider organizing programmes to mark WTD 2006 with a focus on the theme of *Promoting Global Cybersecurity*. It would be useful to involve all sections of society to formulate awareness and consensus on the issues underlying the

theme, with a report on the discussions to be fed back to ITU and the rest of the membership.

More specifically, one or more of the elements below could be considered in the development or reinforcement of national initiatives to promote global cybersecurity:

- Continue to promote awareness of ICTs as a tool for economic and social development, while sharing information on the threats and vulnerabilities resulting from their misuse. At the same time, it would be necessary to promote legislation to deal with cybercrime;

- Consider ways to increase cybersecurity awareness for the young and elderly by working with national or regional initiatives dedicated to creating a safer internet experience, such as setting up discussion forums on television, radio, web chat rooms, internet cafés, schools, and special supplements in newspapers;

- Establish cybersecurity-related websites where citizens, businesses and other entities can learn more about best practices and initiatives in your country and find out where to obtain information in local languages on safer ICT usage including laws that deal with abusive uses of ICTs and how to report these abuses.

- Take appropriate actions and preventive measures, as determined by law, against abusive uses of ICTs and take measures to ensure respect for privacy and the protection of personal information and data.

On World Telecommunication Day, let us resolve to promote a safer and more confident environment for ICTs and cyberspace in order to ensure that their benefits and opportunities can be enjoyed and made accessible to all. *Promoting global cybersecurity* needs both national action and international cooperation that cuts across traditional sectors and responsibilities. Let us be creative!

I wish you a very successful World Telecommunication Day 2006.

Yoshio UTSUMI
Secretary-General

- World Telecommunication Day Message
- Order Form

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i   Resolution 130 on strengthening the role of ITU in information and communication network security

ii Resolution 50 on cybersecurity

iii UN resolution 58/199 on the creation of a global culture of cybersecurity and the protection of critical information infrastructures

iv UN resolution 57/239 on the creation of a global culture of cybersecurity