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Ubiquitous Networks: a need for the users, a challenge for the Society
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Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and an honor for me to address such a distinguished audience. On behalf of International Telecommunications User Group (INTUG), I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Global Business Dialog on e-Commerce for the organization of this important High-level Summit.

Ten years ago, in October 1998, I participated, as a Member of the Italian delegation - representing Italian private industrial companies, in the first Ministerial Meeting on Electronic Commerce in Ottawa, Canada.

Industrialized Countries were starting to recognize the importance of ICT – Information and Communications Technologies - for the substantial development of the national and international commerce, also as a consequence of the fall of the time and space barriers, traditional defense of local monopolistic privileges.

Immediately after, the Global Business Dialog on electronic commerce (GBDe), started its important activity, reaching, this year, its tenth Summit.



Today, I represent INTUG - International Telecommunications Users Group, the organization of Associations of Customers (mainly, business) of ICT of the five continents.

INTUG has a network able to provide accurate and deep information, being originated by persons with great professional experience, on what is happening in the various parts of the planet.

Moreover, we are credited to important international bodies (ITU, OECD, APEC, Citel, ETSI, CTO, etc) and we supply directions, comments and suggestions to decision makers.

In these 10 years many things have changed and the usage of advanced technologies has modified the behavior models for hundreds million people and has supported, substantially, the birth and growth of economies that, before, were at the margins of the process of development of our planet.

Phenomena, in fact, are not limited by frontiers: every point is the center of the world and every event involves everybody.

The paradox of the flap of a butterfly's wing at Central Park in New York triggering a typhoon in the Philippines is ever less a paradox.

In the latest weeks we have witnessed the financial tsunami hitting all the Stock Exchanges around the world.

A Country like the Iceland, considered a wealthy island for its 300,000 inhabitants, is going bankrupt.

Someone begins to say that communication technologies, by which, in few seconds, an enormous amount of money can be transferred, has had an important role in triggering or, at least, in making the crisis more serious.



We cannot certainly deny that the data communication interconnecting Stock Exchanges and Operators, either the large financial institutions or the single private investors, is a factor of acceleration of the phenomena.

The virtual economy based more on bits than on papers, has generated an enormous bubble that, at the end, has exploded.

But, as all the instrumental assets, technologies are substantially neutral: if properly used, they generate also great advantages.

I'm not an economy expert and, therefore, I don't enter the discussion of the causes of this disaster.

All observers, however, agree that a very important element is the factor "confidence".

Here too, the dramatic reduction of distances and times owing to ICT has had an amplifying effect.

The risk of recession is incumbent on the economic system and could carry to a reduction of the trade flows with negative effects for the e-commerce, too.

But, if we believe that electronic commerce can give a positive contribution in reducing the time for recovery, we must design actions having the objective to make the advantages of the ICT usage clear and understandable, to Governments and to the public at large.

The key-word is therefore "trust". Trust must work for making everybody understand that trade transactions are more sure and under control when ICT is used in a smart way.

Many economists put the blame on the lack or inefficiency of the rules: in fact, current rules allowed people having resources real and, unfortunately, also virtual, to carry out risky transactions not guaranteed by tangible assets.



In effects, we must acknowledge that it is not sufficient to define precise and rigorous rules.

It is necessary to make them applicable and, above all, subject to rigorous checks for fulfillment .

Here, the ICT characteristics can play a crucial role.

The bit flows that are involved, for every transaction, for material as well as for immaterial goods ,can be:

- stored on magnetic memories for having proofs of what happened,
- monitored continuously during the various steps (tracking),
- processed in real time in order to verify the compliance with rules defined by control Authorities
- processed in order to point out anomalies that could generate problems.

In order to allow what previously stated, it seems, therefore, even more important the availability of access as well as transmission networks having high quality, good performance and a solid security level.

INTUG considers the timeliness critical, since major investment decisions are being made by both the supply and demand side of the industry and improvements in growth of productivity and job creation for the whole economy (not just the telecommunication sector), become of paramount importance in a time when the world's economy is heading recession.

Fixed and wireless networks now complement each other and will be used more and more for e-commerce transactions.

A very simple example is the use of SMS for confirming, in real time, electronic transactions.

Receiving, within seconds, information about the amount, the beneficiary, the



geographical location for each transaction done via credit card or ATM, boosts the trust on those technologies.

In addition, fraud possibilities are reduced and it allows savings much larger than the cost of the SMS service.

Instant Messages, e-mails, i-mode services can be used, as well.

Today, few Banks and Credit Card Companies have implemented such a service, marketed as an add-on option.

For improving the trust on e-commerce transactions the alert service should be considered a basic service, not an option.

Regulatory and technical solutions should accommodate those facts.

The artificial disparities in charges between equivalent services depending on the underlying technology, when costs are not dissimilar, must be eliminated, as should disproportionate charges for "crossing" more than one network of either type.

INTUG believes that the business user community has the potential to generate a step change in GDP in regions where more efficient networks are implemented in a way which:

- ◆- facilitates open international competition
- ◆- eliminates bottleneck facilities and resources
- ◆- encourages innovation and long term investments
- ◆- generates harmonized solutions between public and private networks
- ◆- enables both vertical and horizontal integration of business processes
- ◆- acknowledges the specific needs of business users

The Internet of "things" in which equipments communicate each other seamlessly, is the next challenge.



RFID pervasiveness can improve not only the growth in volume of transactions, but the “trust”, too.

In a time of reduced financial resources, it becomes necessary to identify and implement all the mechanisms allowing a reduction in costs.

e-commerce is one of such tools as it shortens the distribution chain and reduce the unit cost of the transaction.

The availability of reliable, high quality, secure and integrated networks becomes crucial.

Therefore, what we call “ubiquitous networks” is not simply a need for some sophisticated users, but a real challenge for the entire society.

Thank you for your attention.