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**Journal Title:** ITU news

**Journal Issue:** (No. 1), 1999

**Article Title :** Hamadoun Touré : BDT at the dawn of the new millennium

**Page number(s):** pp 11-14

## Hamadoun Touré

**Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)**



*"As the new millennium beckons, BDT must play a leadership and catalytic role for development, bringing the developed and developing worlds closer together."*

### **BDT at the dawn of the new millennium**

**Watchwords:** open dialogue • partnerships • transparent management

In recent times, we have witnessed the development gap narrow, albeit slightly, in terms of access to basic telephone services. At the same time, a new gap in advanced telecommunication services and access to information is growing at an alarming rate.

At the dawn of the new millennium, it is our duty to make telecommunications available to all of the world's inhabitants, at prices that are affordable to all. We must quickly embark on the road to strengthening the multilateral foundations of international telecommunications and so promote universal access and global connectivity.

Since its inception in 1865, ITU has played an important role as an honest broker seeking to

achieve global, equitable and fair development of telecommunications. Today, this honest broker has to come to terms with the challenges of the new information age and the new services and new players that come with it, requiring new strategies.

In the case of ITU's Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D), these strategies were spelled out by the second World Telecommunication Development Conference held in Valletta in March–April 1998. They were later confirmed in the autumn by the Minneapolis Plenipotentiary Conference in the Union's Strategic Plan for 1999–2003. The Valletta Action Plan will continue to be the concrete expression of how we implement the ITU-D section of the Strategic Plan.

ITU will continue to face conflicting issues in these changing times. Its ability to solve those issues will depend on an open dialogue. For my

part, I will make sure that dialogue is maintained between the developing and developed countries, between the public sector and the private sector, and between the industry and the market. To this end, I will encourage all Member States and Sector Members to take an active part in activities such as the work of ITU-D Study Groups.

In this new environment, BDT must act as a catalyst for development, bringing the developed and developing worlds closer together. The time has come to forge a strong and equitable partnership between these two worlds, for telecommunications are viable for everyone.

*For my part, I will see to it that BDT responds effectively to requests for assistance from our Member States and Sector Members. That it develops and mobilizes resources for telecommunication development. That it creates and encourages partnership arrangements. That it collaborates with the private sector. That it strengthens the ITU regional presence, and that it constantly improves its working methods in order to streamline its operations.*

To this end, we need an efficient BDT, which calls for a multi-tier system requiring a very rigorous approach. I propose six different strands of action to enable us to achieve our objectives, namely:

- Improve the human resources management and development process within BDT.
- Strengthen communication within BDT, between BDT and the rest of ITU and between BDT and its whole membership.
- Instil a new customer-service mentality in BDT.
- Introduce and exercise transparency based on team spirit, first within BDT and subsequently with the three Sectors and the General Secretariat of the Union and the outside world. This requires making the best possible use of human resources, since it is BDT's highly qualified staff

who hold the key. The rules of the game have to be laid down and applied for the common good.

- Listen to what people have to say: in this respect, I have already begun a round of contacts with all BDT staff in order to develop a common understanding of our mission and ways of attaining it.

- Create the image of a dynamic and result-driven organization that will win the trust of both the private and public sectors and ensure the mobilization of the required resources.

I will make every effort to ensure that BDT is more active and creative in seeking and providing resource support to help meet the growing needs of developing countries in close collaboration with global, regional and national organizations and agencies concerned with telecommunication development, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. I will encourage bilateral development and donor agencies to cooperate with ITU-D in order to increase efforts towards sustainable universal access to telecommunication services.

It is important that we in ITU-D perceive development needs as an opportunity as opposed to the traditional perception of these needs as a handicap. We must therefore seize the opportunities being created by the emerging global information society to close the gaps. We will work closely with governments so that they create a stable and transparent environment to attract investment and guarantee the rights of investors, users and operators the world over.

*As a Sector, we will develop together new approaches for the provision of multilateral telecommunication assistance through partnerships, notably in the areas of restructuring, regulatory reform, finance and resource mobilization, human resources development and management, and technology applications. These applications will include: telemedicine, tele-education, electronic commerce, environmental protection, and disaster relief.*

In particular, we will seek to create partnership arrangements that benefit all parties. In so doing, we will achieve sound commercial results while creating long-term relationships. I believe that the stimulating role of ITU in general and that of BDT in particular will eventually lead to the transfer of technology from developed to developing countries. I will make serious efforts to create an appreciation of genuine common interest between the industrialized and developing Member States and their corresponding industrial sectors through the promotion of genuine strategic partnerships. It is in such partnerships that the private sectors in both parts of the world economy will see themselves as having a common interest; only then can we create a proper environment conducive to global cooperation through mutual and equitable interests.

*We must increase regional presence and make the regions into a driving force for the development of regional plans. We must establish more functional ties between the regions and head office. This will mean a progressive decentralization of the organization, as appropriate, and the establishment of proper channels for cooperation with regional organizations to avoid costly duplications.*

There are other equally important priorities such as the gender issue that need more attention. Indeed, more and more competent women are today found in all sectors of the industry and this should be reflected in ITU's management. I will endeavour to give this issue all my attention.

For our development efforts to have a real impact on the overall progress of nations, we must be more active in sharing information with our Member States, Sector Members and all other sectors of activity and partners in development: government ministries, financial institutions, training institutions, regional and international organizations, as well as the general

### **Election results**

**Hamadoun Touré** (Mali) was elected by the Telecommunications Development Sector Plenary Meeting of the Minneapolis Plenipotentiary Conference in the second ballot with 82 votes against 67 obtained by the incumbent, Ahr Laouyane (Tunisia). In all, 150 votes were cast. With one ballot blank, the required majority in this round of voting was 75.

Before the second ballot took place, the Bulgarian and Sudanese delegations announced the withdrawal of Krastu Ivanov Mirski (Bulgaria) and Ahr Mahmoud Yousif (Sudan).

In the first ballot that opposed four candidates the votes were split as follows: Mr Laouyane 54, Mr Touré 54, Mr Mirski 28 and Mr Yousif 8. In the second ballot, 151 votes were cast, the majority required being 76.

Mr Touré took up his duties on 1 February 1999.

public. Our work must also be made known and felt in rural and remote areas through tangible projects that will change the lives of the people in those communities.

With so many priorities to implement and scarce resources available to do so, we will need to coordinate our actions better. I am committed to transparent management and will see to it that BDT, in managing these scarce resources, remains attentive to the needs of its constituents. For BDT staff, this will also mean more transparency and a mentality of shareholder-customer-client relationship.

I should like to put my long experience in the three sectors (public, international and private) to good use and make a real contribution to telecommunication development. We will have to step confidently into the new millennium, providing simple but practical solutions for the implementation of development policies and strategies geared to the new environment and focused on concrete actions.

By bringing people closer together, I am convinced that telecommunications will help forge a better world.



Hamadoun Touré  
congratulated by  
Thomas L. Siebert,  
Chairman of the  
Conference,  
when taking the  
oath of office

Photo:  
Allen Brisson Smith  
(ITU 980129)

## Career highlights

**H**amadoun Touré has been Africa's Regional General Manager for ICO Global Communications since 1996. He has been spearheading the company's activities from its Africa Regional Office in South Africa, where he has laid the foundation to ensure the successful introduction and operation of ICO's regional operations: marketing and network distribution, coordination with service partners, regulators and operators of fixed, mobile and special services.

Born on 3 September 1953, Mr Touré holds a Master of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the Electrotechnical Institute of Telecommunications of Leningrad (now St Petersburg), where he studied from 1974 to 1979. Between 1973 and 1974, he attended the Faculty of Transmissions at Moscow State University.

## Management

### Regional activities for Africa and the Middle East

Mr Touré joined the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) in December 1985 where he occupied several important positions. From 1986 to 1990, he was Telecommunications Officer of INTELSAT Assistance and Development Programme (IADP). In this capacity he participated in several IADP projects including the design of earth stations, feasibility studies for domestic satellite communication systems and the implementation of technologies such as time division multiple access (TDMA) and demand assignment multiple access (DAMA) in several developing countries.

From 1990 to 1994, he was INTELSAT's Director for the Africa Region and later served as the Group Director for Africa and the Middle East from 1994 to 1996. During this time, he took an active part in the continental initiative launched by the Regional African Satellite Communications Organization (RASCOM) to pool transponders on the INTELSAT system. He pioneered studies for regional interconnectivity and worked closely with all African and the Middle East countries to enhance the development of their telecommunication infrastructure. In these positions he managed annual revenue budgets of more than USD 115 million.

He is well known for his steadfast commitment to projects such as AFROSAT, AFSAT, PANAFTEL (Pan-African Telecommunications Network), as well as for his contributions to numerous conferences and meetings of ITU, INTELSAT, RASCOM, PATU (Pan-African Telecommunications Union), PANAFTEL and CAPTAC (Conference of Post and Telecommunication Administrations of Central Africa).

### On the national scene

He was Manager of the Sulymanbougou II earth station in Bamako where he coordinated activities between the country's national *Office des postes et télécommunications* (OPT) and TELEMALI in 1985. Later that year, he joined OPT's Business Planning Department as Chief of the Satellite Communications Section.

From 1981 to 1984, he was Engineer in charge of operation and maintenance of the Sulymanbougou II earth station. He interfaced with the International Switching Centre in Bamako in 1980 and with the PANAFTEL microwave terminal from October 1979.

His sound operation and maintenance of satellite communications earth stations earned him the reputation of a committed manager.