Examples of Debate Speech Introduction

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished delegates,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 13th annual Global Symposium for Regulators, in Warsaw, the city where the famous composer Frederic Chopin and physicist Marie Curie spent their childhood. I hereby wish to reiterate our sincere gratitude to His Excellency Mr Bronislaw Komorowski, President of the Republic of Poland, for placing GSR13 under his honorary patronage.

I wish to thank His Excellency Mr Michal Boni, Minister of Administration and Digitization of Poland and Ms Magdalena Gaj, President of the Office of Electronic Communications for inviting us to hold GSR13 in Poland, bringing the event back to Europe after nearly 10 years of rotation around the globe.

Ms Gaj, I would especially like to thank you for your kind acceptance to chair this year's GSR. Your entire staff has worked closely with my staff in the preparation of this unique global regulatory event and has welcomed all of us with the warmest hospitality.

I am delighted and honored to moderate our first session, the Opening Debate, on "Building the Future Digital Society". A topic at the heart of ICT stakeholders' considerations as the decisions we take now will impact future generations and shape the society of tomorrow.

The ICT industry is facing today many changes from the transition in technologies, to the emergence of new players, the displacement of revenues, and changes in business models. The spillover effect of ICTs on many aspects of people's life throughout the world puts additional pressure on us, ICT stakeholders, to ensure we do it right, in a coordinated and informed manner, thus paving the way to a safer digital future.

Sharing experiences and learning from each other is a key building block in developing sound policy and regulatory frameworks tailored to address the needs of the future society.

I am pleased to have on this distinguished panel, enablers, promoters and believers in the opportunities of the digital world to share their views on building tomorrow's digital society. We have here with us this morning:

- H. E. Mr Michal Boni, Minister of Administration and Digitization of Poland
- Ms Mignon Clyburn, Acting Chairwoman, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), United States
- Mr Pierre Louette, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Orange
- Mr Mohammed Al Amer, Chairman, Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), Bahrain (GSR14 Chair)

- Ms Anne Bouverot, Director General & Member of the Board, GSM Association (GSMA), United Kingdom
- Mr John Davies, Commissioner, Broadband Commission
- Mr Richard Allan, Director of Policy, Europe, Middle East and Africa, Facebook (tbc)

We will be honored by the presence of Ms Neelie Kroes, Vice-President of the European Commission, who will join us at the end of the debate to deliver a concluding keynote address.

Tremendous changes are shaking up the sector. The advent of next-generation mobile cellular technologies and the wider adoption of increasingly sophisticated broadband-enabled mobile devices have made access to the digital society more ubiquitous and universal. More smartphones were sold during the first quarter of the year, worldwide, than feature phones. Smartphones, netbooks and tablets are now facing competition from mini tablets and phablets. Consumers are increasingly owning multiple devices turning the anytime, anywhere and always-on experience of an interconnected world into a new way of life.

Adaptability, instantaneity and ubiquity are now part of consumers' common requirements in addition to affordability, availability and accessibility.

Thanks to technological convergence, a multitude of new ICTs services and applications can now effectively and efficiently be delivered over the same platforms allowing users to experience an ever-expanding variety of services and applications to serve their information, communication and entertainment needs. Cloud services, for example, facilitate real-time access to data over multiple devices that interconnect and work together, enriching the user's personal and business online experience. Social media have influenced changes in business practices, consumer behaviors and reach out to citizens, and this is happening both in developed and developing countries. Data traffic is growing rapidly putting additional strains on infrastructure providers while stimulating innovative solutions from new players.

And I believe this is just the beginning.

It is estimated that by the end of 2013:

- The number of mobile-cellular subscriptions will increase to 6.8 billion worldwide, representing a penetration rate of 96 %, but slower growth rates as markets are globally reaching saturation.
- The number of active mobile-broadband subscriptions globally will reach 2.1 billion.
- The numbers of mobile broadband subscriptions in developing countries will double the 2011 figure to reach 1.16 billion, surpassing those in developed countries.
- 2.7 billion People will be using the Internet, corresponding to 39% of the world's population, bringing 31% of the population in the developing world online, compared to 77% of the population being online in the developed world.

- Affordability will remain an issue, even though fixed-broadband prices (as a share of GNI per capita) dropped by 82% globally, fixed broadband remains more expensive than mobile broadband services, in particular in developing countries.

While these figures are encouraging, more still needs to be done to get all the world population online and connected to reap the benefits of living in a digital society.

Over the last decade, most countries throughout the world have embarked on reforming the sector and continue to do so to adapt to change. In addition to establishing a separate regulator, liberalizing the market and facilitating market entry, and as competition is now the norm in a vast majority of ICT markets, policy makers and regulators need to ensure that consumers can actually benefit from greater choices and effectively switch operators/providers, which remains a concern in many liberalized markets.

As we've seen these last years, the growth of broadband services over wireless networks is putting enormous pressure on radio spectrum. A growing number of regulators are introducing market-based mechanisms such as in-band migration, spectrum sharing and spectrum trading. The predicted wide spread use of machine to machine (M2M) communications will only further call upon innovative and smart regulatory measures. Reviewing their spectrum policy to address the changes in market behaviors is likely to push forward the implementation of national digital agendas.

To date, more than 145 countries have adopted or planning to adopt a national broadband plan, strategy or policy. Of these, 36 have also included broadband in their universal service definition. Ensuring effective implementation of these digital agendas and broadband plans, requires as well a more flexible regulatory framework as recognized by regulators themselves.

To adapt to the changing market conditions, the 161 established national telecom/ICT regulators are seeing their mandate expand to include, depending on the country, information technology and broadcasting, electronic content, cyber security, data protection and privacy issues, adding to the complexity of regulation.

Ensuring sustainable development of the sector puts additional pressure on the 4th generation regulator to enable, facilitate and drive digital communications ahead.

In an era where access to the digital online world (Internet) is becoming vital to find a job, to pay bills, to get a salary, to pay taxes, to vote, to take business decisions, in short, to organize your life, and where e-learning can bring education at the fingertips of every child (boys and girls), where a patient can get specialized advice or alerts on a treatment without moving from home, and without time and location constraints, bringing the experience of the digital lifestyle to all cannot be missed!

Of course there as some challenges that needs to be addressed. Setting the right conditions and foundations to build the future society raises a host of questions:

- Once the infrastructure is there, will there be a need to shift the focus towards a more human centric approach targeted at empowering people? How can smart and sustainable development of ICTs contribute to this goal?
- In a fully digital world, will there be a need for a greater emphasis on consumer protection, consumer empowerment and consumer confidence in addition to achieving digital inclusion of all?
- Is it time to rethink regulation? What measures will be needed? Will 4th generation regulation be geared towards more flexibility, adaptability and less regulatory intervention? Will we see greater stakeholders' empowerment through co-regulation and self-regulation measures? Will the role of regulators be redefined?

I believe in the power of ICTs as a driver of social and economic change. Expanding broadband to all can truly change the lives of many, not only by laying the foundations for the future generations, but for all of us now. The adoption of 4th generation policies and regulations will contribute to smart and sustainable development of tomorrow's digital society!

By working closely together, we can drive digital communications ahead and create the conditions to ensure that no one is left aside of the digital society!

I now look forward to hearing from our distinguished panel lists.