Report of Chair of Standing Committee on Developing Countries

Activities related to the Committee scopes have been carried out at the Abdus Salam International Center for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy. They were mostly devoted to the training of scientists from developing countries in topics linked to the use of radiocommunications for information technology. These yearly activities were:

- "School on Data and Multimedia Communications Using Terrestrial and Satellite Radio Links", 7 - 25 February 2000
- "School on Digital and Multimedia Communications Using Terrestrial and Satellite Radio Links", 12 February - 2 March 2001
- "School on Radio Use for Digital and Multimedia Communications", 11 February - 1 March 2002.

Directors of the Schools were Professors S.M. Radicella and R. Struzak, both members of the URSI Committee. One of the lecturers of these Schools was Prof. O. Ajayi, also member of the Committee.

Also at the Abdus Salam ICTP two activities were carried out in topics closely related to URSI interests with a significant participation of scientists from developing countries. These activities were:

- "Workshop on Physics of Mesosphere-Stratosphere-Troposphere Interactions with Special Emphasis on MST Radar Techniques", 13 - 24 November 2000
- “School on the Physics of the Equatorial Atmosphere”, 24 September - 5 October 2001

An important activity carried out in Africa with the Committee involvement has been the Fourth Regional Workshop on Radio-Communication in Africa (Radio Africa 01) that was held in Cape Coast, Ghana, 15-19 October 2001, being local organizer Dr. P. K. Buah-Bassuah.

The interaction with several radio scientists from developing countries and essentially with Prof. R. Struzak during the activities indicated above have contributed to produce the following proposal for future actions by the URSI Standing Committee on Developing Countries.

The Committee should organize a small ad-hoc URSI working group to produce an URSI statement on Global Telecommunication Infrastructure for Developing Countries. The proposed statement would be aimed essentially at assisting academic and scientific communities in developing countries in contributing to the solution of problems related to the "telecommunication development gap" between the wealthy and poor countries and between cities and remote/ rural areas.

The self-contained document should:

1. Recapitulate why a global wideband telecommunication infrastructure is needed for a developing country
2. Compare various available technologies/ systems and explain why, when, and where each one is more appropriate than others.

3. Give examples of possible practical applications and benefits.
4. Recommend practical steps to be undertaken by a developing country (nationally and on the international arena) to assure access to it.
5. Indicate ways how the academic and scientific community in a developing country could contribute to the practical implementation of solutions for the problems of communication infrastructure in the country.

The proposed document should be based on selected statistical data collected recently by ITU, UNDP, and UNESCO. It would provide a critical analysis of these data and of earlier findings published in Donald Maitland's Independent Commission for World Wide Telecommunications Development Report ("The Missing link"), and the First (Buenos Aires 1994) and the Second (La Valetta) World Telecommunication Development Conferences. It would also provide an assessment of the progress made towards the declared goals.

This suggested document should take into account the fact that previous URSI statements have been used as guidelines by investors, operators, and governments. The statement on the effects of nuclear EM pulse (NEMP) has contributed indirectly to the development of a new branch of telecommunication industry. The proposed statement on telecommunication infrastructure could play a similar role in the case of developing countries.

S.M. Radicella
Chairman
28 June 2002