REPUBLIC OF LEBANON

"Abstract of the Lebanese National Strategy and Policy Paper for ICT (LBN-NSPP-ICT)"

In accordance with the terms of the *Declaration of Principles* and the *Plan of Action* to be adopted by the Heads of States who are participating in this first phase of the *World Summit of Information Society (Geneva, 10-12 December 2003)*, Lebanon has elaborated its National Strategy & Policy Paper for ICT.

This paper articulates the main guidelines that Lebanon intends to follow in order to implement a knowledge-based society and to become an active member of the *Global Information Society (GIS)* that is being spearheaded by this Summit.

The Lebanese Stakeholders that have contributed to the elaboration of this paper include the public administration, the business sector, the civil society and the academic sector. Each operates within its own scope of interests and strategic plans.

Lebanon has fought to overcome the burdens of the past decades. All stakeholders in our country are now convinced that proper coordination among each other will lead to proper planning and implementation of our ICT strategy. These will represent concrete first steps towards achieving our long-term objectives for the benefit of our country and our people.

In order to ensure a successful implementation of this strategy, Lebanon will establish a permanent and transparent framework of dialogue among stakeholders. The aim here is to improve and update annually the content of this national paper as well as to produce an annual survey showing the progress achieved in the course of implementing our national strategy. In association with the Lebanese stakeholders are the international and regional organizations such as the UN agencies as well as all the traditional partners that Lebanon shall request assistance from in the implementation of its national strategy.

A) INTRODUCTION

ICT and Globalization

Globalization is recognized as being the dynamic process aimed at bringing the international economy to a point where trade of goods and services are universally harmonized and where the entire world becomes a unique market. The World Trade Organization (WTO), in association with the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank, IMF), are acting within the framework of the United Nations to elaborate and implement the legal and regulatory framework under which this dynamic process should evolve. All developed countries, members of the OECD have joined this framework. Developing countries are, however, being admitted gradually within the WTO framework. For this move to occur, concrete implementation of administrative and economic reforms are required as pre-requisites. The critical success factors for stakeholders in instituting national strategies and policies for the development of Telecommunications and IT programs in developing countries is to adopt a well structured and methodical approach towards the implementation of such projects. There must be no

hesitation to formulate ambitious goals to achieve. It is not a far fetched goal to implement resilient and redundant broad-band wireless or wire-line, transmission networks.

Such networks would offer the ability to connect, on-demand, a diversified set of information and communication services. In turn, these services will run on application platforms capable of handling the convergence of services over scalable systems. Digital technologies have brought today all forms of information to a common denominator. It is now possible to optimize investments in telecommunication infrastructure and to open the way to the huge development opportunities of application software and content development. It is obvious that these developments are creating an environment in which a variety of sectors, such as governance, health, education, environment, business, agriculture, industry, services and banking can equally benefit from converged and integrated platforms with pooled technology resources. The development of ICTs could enable all peoples of the world, in particular those living in developing countries, to leapfrog decades of stagnation and lift themselves out of poverty. This explains why ICTs are considered a tool for fast reach, growth, and development and not simply as a reward or outcome of growth and development.

The process towards globalization, however, is not a new one and has started in some regions of the world over a century ago under varying forms and schemes. The culmination of this process of globalization results in the Global Information Society.

Lebanon and the Global Information Society

Lebanon will soon become a member of the WTO. It is, however, taking a long period of time to complete the required process to become a member! It is interesting to note here that, Lebanon, throughout the millenniums and through the instinctive trading culture of its people, has always had an economy open to international commerce of goods and services. This is a society where financial dealings are second nature to its people! Lebanese are truly international citizens with more than 70% of its nationals (12 million) living in all corners of the world and enjoying tremendous cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. For this reason, Lebanese offer all the necessary ingredients for their country to become a strong member of the global trading communities.

In fact, after a very difficult period of civil strife where the basic infrastructures of the country were destroyed and the public administration strongly damaged, Lebanon felt concerned by the new domestic divides that would have appeared had it precipitated its entrance into the framework of WTO. Today, there is a general consensus within the country, and especially among all stakeholders, that Lebanon cannot really prosper without using its fundamental resources, i.e. its human resources to build a knowledge-based society that would improve our governance, boost our economic development, allow Lebanese companies to acquire regional and international market shares and to enter into profitable alliances with foreign partners.

Lebanon is strongly determined to be part of the Global Information Society. All stakeholders in Lebanon, as well as the public and private sectors, and the civil society with the academic sector are willing and well-prepared today to assume all their responsibilities in this regard. It is this evolution in our thinking process in regards to the GIS that brought our country to give greater attention to the large debate engaged by the *World Summit on Information Society (WSIS)* framework where all the issues related to the Information Society are being addressed by the international community. Lebanon has decided to become a strong participant in this debate and is naturally looking at the WSIS as a unique opportunity to achieve its objective of entering the Global Information Society. This is done through the adoption of a broad vision of GIS and through the elaboration and implementation of a national strategy for the development of telecommunication and IT activities which we are bringing to the attention of the participants of the Summit.

Vision of the Global Information Society

In Lebanon, elaborating a national strategy to enter the Global Information Society has faced a number of challenges. The first and most important challenge that was overcome was to unify all the stakeholders to the same vision of what could represent the entrance of Lebanon in the Information Society. This common vision is based on some basic facts facing the country that are widely acknowledged:

1. Lebanon has very specific geographic characteristics. It is a territory of 10,452 square kilometers with a population of roughly 4 millions inhabitants, 72% of this population live along the coastal area which does not exceed 4,000 square kilometers. Lebanon is considered to be densely populated when compared to neighboring countries. Having the business sector (both public and private) deploy local or national telecom infrastructures, including broadband networks, providing access to services that cover the entire territory should neither be technically difficult nor costly.

2. Lebanon faces various problems with some rural and indigenous communities as well as with the disabled and elderly people. These problems are, however, not as critical as they are in other developing countries due to the fact that these Lebanese communities have generally a good-level of education and are by nature demonstrative due to their tradition and their mobility. For this reason they are not abandoned or excluded communities. Connecting disadvantaged communities and moreover bridging the Digital Divide from within should be neither technically difficult nor costly.

3. Lebanon is a country at the confluence of different geographic spaces (Mediterranean, North Africa and Near East) and at an arm's length of Europe. Lebanese communities living in almost every country in the world are distinguished by their great talent of adaptability which stems from their cultural, linguistic and religious diversities. They are good communicators and enjoy a natural freedom of expression. The Lebanese are world class citizens! .

4. Lebanon is a country that is over-dimensioned with ICT human resources with a critical emphasis on the potential of our youth. The proportion of young ICT graduates, in particular women, represent a proportion that is far beyond any other, even when compared to other developed countries. Lebanese trainers and representatives of the academic sector working in the ICT field are serving almost everywhere in the world. Therefore, elaboration of human resources & training programs, incorporation of Gender & Youth perspectives as well as capacity building programs bringing awareness for all categories of the Lebanese population in using ICT is something that should not be technically difficult.

5. Lebanese private sector or business entities working in the field of ICT in Lebanon and elsewhere in the world are recognized as efficient and dynamic. Analysis, Design and Implementation of ICT projects particularly in the Software industry and Content Production & Elaboration, for outsourcing purposes or otherwise, is a facet of the business that the private sector is perfectly capable of undertaking successfully.

The second but also very important challenge was to precisely and sincerely assess the elements that are weakening the ability of Lebanon to progress towards the Global Information Society. It has been recognized that essential pre-requisites have been missing in Lebanon for decades and it is at the core of Lebanon's ICT Strategy to bring these pre-requisites into reality:

1. An **enabling environment** consisting of a two-prong approach.

   Starting with the legal framework, Lebanon intends to elaborate its legal texts (Laws and Decrees) related to Telecom & IT in a manner that would associate rationale with fairness. In this respect, we are confident that the legal framework that is going to be created in Lebanon shall be efficiently targeted to develop the economy in encouraging the entrepreneurship spirit to focus on advanced technologies that are sought by the industrial countries, hence creating employment and reversing the brain-drain trend!

   The second aspect of an "enabling environment" is related to the need for a strong, ambitious reform of the national administration that would allow good-governance procedures to become the norm and adopt best-practices in particular with regard to the treatment of ICT projects by the administration. This "enabling environment" is the focal point that this national strategy will address! We believe that the great number of proposed actions related to it represent a great and sincere effort towards reaching satisfactory results.

2. **Transparent and non-discriminatory mechanisms** for the allocation of funds originating from International funding organizations or from the public sector to ICT projects. We believe that the proposed recommendations & actions outlined in this policy paper represent a great and sincere effort that would help eradicate most of the existing corruption, nepotism and favoritism practices.

3. The low level of development of the **E-Economy** in our country is something that Lebanon considers as absolutely artificial and unjustified noting our real capabilities to use ICT in all sectors of our daily life and it is one of the important aim of the National Strategy for ICT to make up for lost time in boosting E-Economy in the country.

4. The lack of existence of an **ICT Culture** at the political and individual levels due largely to a generation gap and lack of knowledge on the merits and benefits in steering the country towards the knowledge economy has led to behaviors that have prevented or limited the development of Telecom & IT activities. Aware that the development of such an ICT Culture is a long-term process, Lebanon is proposing in this national paper a set of actions that would certainly and irrevocably engage our country in this direction.

5. The adoption of an appropriate level of **standardization** policies that govern the various facets of our existing vital national networks and their evolution, not only in telecommunications and high speed internet, but also in managing our Electrical, Water and Transportation networks. Quality of Service standards and agreements ought to be adopted, particularly concerning ICT System deployment. This paper provides a relevant guidance in this respect.

A common vision of the Global Information Society will be formulated by the Heads of State participating in the phase 1 of the Summit. Lebanon will share this vision and the aim of our National Strategy is to implement it in our country.

B) ROLE OF LEBANON'S STAKEHOLDERS

As stated previously, Stakeholders are represented by the public administration, the business sector (private or public or joint entities) and the civil society including the academic sector. In addition to Lebanese stakeholders, UN agencies, International or Regional organizations, funding institutions and all other traditional partners of Lebanon will remain beside our country and will be playing a great role for the implementation of this ICT strategy.

The WSIS Declaration of Principles as well as the WSIS Plan of Action on which the international community will agree during Summit-Phase-1, are providing developing countries with relevant material what could be the broad objectives that developing countries should target in order to enter the Global Information Society. Naturally, each country should look at these objectives while keeping in mind its specificities and its local priorities. Lebanon has opted to establish its own order of priorities and set its own time-frame for the targeted objectives. These are:

1. Enabling Environment
2. Telecom & IT infrastructures
3. Software & Content industry
4. ICT applications & ICT manufacturing capabilities
5. Capacity Building
6. Access to Knowledge & Access to Information
7. Media Development
8. ICT Security

Considering the fact that Lebanon has already crossed-over some of the milestones that are mentioned in the WSIS Plan of Action, we have decided to immediately address, through the various stakeholders, all these issues in parallel This underscores the fact that strong dependencies exist between an enabling environment that provides a critical legal and fiscal framework and immediate

actions that are needed to set the foundations and the rules for the development and expansion of the economy!

In this context, Lebanon is resolute on adopting a market-driven approach for the related Telecom & IT projects or programs. Given the strong capabilities of the Lebanese our ambition is to reach these objectives in a shorter timeframe than is mentioned in the WSIS Plan of Action. For example, our goals are to:

a. Complete all actions related to the "enabling environment" within the first half of 2004. The worst case scenario would be before the WSIS-Phase2 (16-18 November 2005)
b. Connect all the Lebanese villages to Telecom & IT infrastructures using fixed, satellite or wireless technologies, through community access points to be completed by the end of 2006.
c. Establish in Beirut a Broadband Network to provide access to high-speed Internet and to ICT Services starting in mid 2004 and later to cover the entire territory by 2005.
d. Interconnect the various public institutions (government agencies, schools, universities, libraries, hospitals) shall be completed by 2005
e. Interconnect all universities, secondary schools and scientific research centers shall be connected to broadband networks by 2006 and all primary schools by 2010.
f. Interconnect all public libraries and museums by 2008.
g. Interconnect all hospitals by 2006 and all health/social centers to by 2010.

All individual stakeholders have specific roles to play and actions that they are expected to execute in the process of building the information society. Some of these actions can be exclusive to one stakeholder. Others require setting dependencies, for instance, between the private and the public sectors or do necessitate either coordination or partnership among them. Stakeholders' responsibilities are set as follows:

a. **Multi-Stakeholders partnership**

- Elaborate and Implement the National Strategy and Policy for Telecommunications and IT respectively including means to gauge annually the progress,

- Elaborate Telecom & IT projects, facilitate their implementation, search and negotiate the required funding, include Capacity Building and Human Resources programs,

- Implement secure communication,
- Launch Lebanon Based International Call Center as a new service whereby international companies can move their call centers to Lebanon,
- Develop a National Tourist Network (Tourist-Net) in order to facilitate access and processing of tourism related information and to facilitate tourism-related e-Business activities,

- Manage Internet Addressing other than ccTLD names,

- Invest in R&D,

- Contribute actively with papers for Telecom & IT to be presented at Local, Regional or International conferences.

b. **Government of Lebanon** has the leading role concerning the following activities:

- Define the legal framework for Telecom & IT activities; Regulate these activities; Define fiscal measures to create incentives for foreign companies to use Lebanon as a hub for their business, Protect User's Rights; Protect Intellectual Property Rights; Protect the Environment from negative impacts due to the use of ICT; Protect the freedom of the Media, Protect the security of the ICT networks; Fight against cyber-crime and Enforce the Law. These are key activities since they set the appropriate environment that encourages foreign enterprises to invest in Lebanon and foreign donors to sense our commitment in developing our economy!

- Manage ccTLD names and market the .lb (or the .pound) domain on a global basis.

- Implement a new national public sector administrative reform program aiming to improve the national administrative procedures and bring the administration to become an e-model user through the implementation of e-government services.

- Adopt cost cutting practices on ICT Systems and Licenses without jeopardizing quality, productivity, security and system reliability.

c. **Private Sector and Business entities**. In Lebanon, the business activities are conducted mainly by the private sector. However, there is still an important space for public action including investments in the field of Telecom and IT activities

- Build and deploy Telecom & IT infrastructure including Broadband fixed and mobile networks (Liban-Telecom, Private Operators, ...)

- Build an e-commerce portal acting as a virtual connection among the business sector, whose main functions are to:
  a. Act as a virtual connection among business sectors
  b. Publicize and give access to a range of information about e-commerce, its benefits, its implications and its business models
  c. Disseminate information about best practices, legal issues and policy developments
  d. Promote regional and national sector initiatives
  e. Promote case studies and pilot projects
  f. Design and implement a helpdesk and call center. For example, establish an online automated helpdesk and call center service for companies and individuals requiring advice on related issues. This will serve as a valuable feedback mechanism to Ministry of Economy and Trade regarding the implementation of the overall framework at company and consumer level

- Develop ICT applications, ICT manufacturing capabilities, a strong local software industry and a multi-lingual Content industry using the latest available technologies.

- Adopt internationally recognized inter-operable open standards.

- Focus on the Service Capabilities to be made available in the next generation or 3G networks to come up with innovative services

- Establish targeted foreign partnerships and initiate sub-systems implementation outsourcing activities.

In addition to business enterprises, Lebanon depends on a number of high level specialists and expert consultants that enjoy world class reputation in telecommunications and information technology embracing broad expertise in all facets of the underlying technologies. Lebanese stakeholders will continue to rely on this expertise while building the Global Information Society.

C) **PROGRAMS, PROJECTS AND ACTIONS**
Lebanon considers the implementation mechanisms of the National Strategy & Policy for ICT as being the deliverables from a set of Business Plans that have owners (or champions) that can stand up and defend the various aspects of the program, through ICT Metrics, along with its economics, particularly, when it is tagged as "National". Whether, the stakeholders are the Public or the Private sectors, the National programs will have to undergo a quarterly review by competent authorities and/or the funding organizations, in order to assess the implementation progress as well as the disbursement of funds and any associated budget or legal constraints, all for the sake of greater transparency and efficiency.

These Business Plans, generated by the Private sector and the Public sector, should be the driving force that will attract funding for ICT Programs and Projects. These are part of the global picture of programs and projects that play a role along with other programs and projects in fueling the country's economy.

The non-exhaustive list of actions displayed in the tables below represent some vital programs, some of which are key enablers of Lebanon's National Strategy for ICT.

After having clarified the respective roles of stakeholders and notwithstanding the importance of competition among them, it is clear that, there should be no policy decision or administrative decision that would delay or interfere in any way. Furthermore, no policy decision should impose unnecessary constraints or limitations on an ICT program or project in Lebanon. Any such interference that affects the transparency or causes undue discrimination on such a program or project should not be tolerated because it may prevent or have a negative effect on the development of ICT in Lebanon. Our country is determined to adopt severe accountability processes, including sanctions, on those responsible of creating such a situation.

The challenge of Lebanon's leadership today is to nurture the ICT culture. It is through it that we will be preparing a strong base for our youth to thrive and to aid in advancing Lebanon in becoming a part of the knowledge economy based on a strong, sustainable vision and values to communicate to Lebanon's next generations!

I- As mentioned in the document, creating an "enabling environment" is Lebanon's first priority and all actions mentioned herein shall be completed by November 2005. This includes: the Legal and Regulatory framework; the Protection of Rights (User's; Intellectual Property; Freedom of Communication); Protection of the Environment from negative impacts due to the use of ICT; Protection of the freedom of the Media; Cyber-crime Policy.

Actions
<u>Legal & Regulatory Framework</u>. The actions that Lebanon shall undertake are the following:
- Issue Implementation-Decrees related to Law# 431 with regard to the creation of the Telecom Regulatory Authority, the restructuring of the MOT and to the creation and the incorporation of LIBAN-TELECOM (end of 2003)
- *Spectrum Management*: Issue a Law and/or amend accordingly Law#431 for the creation of the National Spectrum Agency independent from the TRA and from the MOT in charge of managing the national spectrum resources (1st Q.2004). The Law shall allow the NSA to define its proper working methods including financing and funding resources, Internal Regulation and Rules of Procedures (1st Q.2004)
- Issue a new ICT Law that would compose a trustworthy, transparent, pro-competitive and non-discriminatory National Legal & Regulatory framework for ICT and be also the legal basis for the development of *E-Economy* activities. The Law shall cover various aspects among which: Incentives for investment in ICT including Fiscal Policy; User's Rights; Intellectual Property Rights; Media Development, management of the National Internet Register for Addresses and Domain Names (1st Q. of 2004), E-Banking, ICT security, Individual & Consumer Data protection. The Law shall also include articles related to: *anti-corruption measures* aiming to criminalize the corruption practices, transparent and non-discriminatory mechanisms in particular for projects with public or international funding, *set of good-governance procedures* aiming to determine the obligations of parties when dealing with filings and ICT projects and *accountability mechanisms* enforcing the sanctions against any person who would have taken decisions or adopted behaviors preventing or limiting the development of Telecom & IT projects. The Law shall put on the Government, represented by Ministry of Economy, the obligation to present a yearly report on E-Economy "E-Economy Annual Report" that would serve as assessment of the implementation of the ICT Strategy and as guidance for future actions
- Establish officially a joint public-private-sector-entity to be responsible for implementing the national ICT Strategy in particular: create a *National Standardization Institute (NSI)*, manage the National Internet Register for Addresses and Domain Names, create and manage a Telecom & IT National Fund aiming to finance projects managed by local innovative local SME as well as R&D and Human Resources programs. The Board of this entity should be composed half with representatives designated by the GOL and half with representatives of the Stakeholders. It shall define its proper working methods, Internal Regulation and Rules of Procedures (1st Q. of 2004)
<u>Administrative Reform</u>: The actions that Lebanon shall undertake are the following:
- Reconfigure the governmental organizations & structures presently dealing with ICT, clarify the legal basis of their action, define their respective roles, improve their methods of work and provide them with increased

financial and human resources means

- Ensure a legal basis for the total independence of governmental agencies dealing with regulation of ICT activities

- Noting the good-governance procedures and accountability mechanisms set for in the Law, Establish a set of directives & rules that top-managers as well as employees of the public administration should necessarily abide by when dealing with and treating Telecom & IT files submitted to their respective departments with a particular focus on the obligation put on the public administration to answer, using electronic means or any other available mean, written requests from stakeholders using a reasonable delay that couldn't exceed, in no case, a maximum of thirty days

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E-government: The actions that Lebanon shall undertake are the following:

- Launch short-term Human Resources programs aiming to train Public Managers & Employees in using ICT, in particular, Training Programs targeting senior officials and specialized staff.

- Review the "e-government strategy" approved by the ICT Ministerial Committee, push it through the Council of Ministers for a formal government endorsement and prepare a detailed implementation plan to effectively launch and/or continue work on e-government projects (1st Q. 2004).

II- Relating to the issue of "Telecom & IT infrastructures", it is important to mention the central role of the forthcoming incumbent telecommunication operator created by Law#431. Here are some examples of projects in which LIBAN-TELECOM will be engaged in. Also recall that Lebanon has very high targets in terms of penetration of telecom services in the country. For instance, by end of 2006 Lebanon should have (based on a projected population of 4.7 Million):

- 50% of Mobile penetration which represents 2.380.000 millions, noting that GSM shall remain as the dominant service until 2014 although 3^{d} generation mobile services will be introduced at start of 2007
- 60% of Internet *users* (almost 18% will be *subscribers*) representing 2.756.000 millions among which about 1.350.000 will be connected through broadband networks using terrestrial technologies (cable or fiber) + mobile + satellite infrastructures
- 70-80% of households will be connected to the Fixed Service managed by LIBAN-TELECOM
- 100% of households will be connected to the Broadcasting Service with a migration from analogue to digital broadcasting to be completed by 2012

Although these are relatively high figures, they represent objectives that are certainly reachable.

Actions

Universal Access. The actions that Lebanon shall undertake are the following:

- Launch a multi-stakeholder partnership project aiming to build Community Access Points using combination of technologies: wireless + cable + satellite for all the Lebanese villages where access to Telecom & IT services including access to Internet is ensured (end of 2006)

- LIBAN-TELECOM shall coordinate a multi-stakeholder program with the support of interested municipalities, aiming to install telecommunication infrastructures in the following disadvantaged areas: South-Lebanon, Baalback-Hermel and Akkar following a cost approach for the selection of the technology to be used

- LIBAN-TELECOM, in partnership with other companies such as LIBANPOST and/or Electricite Du Liban (EDL) and with the support of interested municipalities, shall develop a network of local agencies managed by local entities which would be outsourcing some basic telecommunication & IT services such as: connection, billing and customer care

Broadband. The actions that Lebanon shall undertake are the following:

- LIBAN-TELECOM shall launch the building of a national broadband network covering all the national territory that it is going to manage and operate (2nd Q.2004)

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority (TRA) shall grant a 20 years Universal Mobile License to LIBAN-TELECOM according to Law#431 (45.d) including Broadband Internet access through Mobile (IMT-2000)

- The TRA shall grant Licenses for local or national, multimedia-broadband networks built and operated by the private sector

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Bandwidth. The actions that Lebanon shall undertake are the following:

- LIBAN-TELECOM shall elaborate a study and submit it to local, regional & international partners related to the building of a regional IP-based network using combination of technologies submarine fiber optic + terrestrial + wireless (2004)

Taxes & Tariffs: BroadBand Taxes and Tariffs in particular cost of bandwidth have to be brought at a level in line with International practices and that would allow Lebanese operators to compete valuably with foreign operators and allow Lebanon to attract foreign entities in investing in the country

III- Regarding the issues of "Software & Content Industry" and "ICT applications & ICT manufacturing capabilities", Lebanon enjoys a large number of Small to Medium Enterprises that are represented in professional associations such as PCA (Professional Computer Association), ALSI (Association of Lebanese Software Industry), and ITIA (Information Technology & Internet Association) and are engaged in the implementation of a number of projects aimed at bringing Lebanon to the position of a Regional ICT Leader.

IV- Regarding the other issues listed in the National Strategy & Policy Paper for ICT which are: Capacity Building, Access to Information & Access to Knowledge, Media Development & ICT Security, Lebanon is already engaged in many projects and this trend will continue to grow. The important milestone that has been reached in this regard is that Lebanon has definitely adopted the multi-stakeholder partnership approach for the implementation of all these projects, including those which are using public funds or which are benefiting from international funding or assistance.

D) CONCLUSION

Lebanon cannot base its economy on natural resources or raw materials. Therefore, it needs to develop its services sector, through Telecom & IT activities, much more than any other country in the Middle East & African regions. The foundations of our national strategy are based on a triple commitment by stakeholders with a strong leadership shown by the Lebanese Government through Responsibility, Accountability and Transparency.

The elaboration of a national strategy for the development of Telecom & IT activities that is submitted to the consideration and analysis of the international community is a necessary milestone. It will demonstrate that a new policy is about to be implemented in our country and that this strategy shall be kept flexible and adaptable in order to facilitate permanent assessment, as well as updating and revision when necessary.

The Lebanese market has great potential and with the commitments mentioned above, it is assured that important investments shall be brought for the implementation of Telecom & IT projects in our country involving Public institutions, LIBAN-TELECOM, Lebanese private sector entities, Foreign Direct Investors and international partners for the implementation of economic and industrial projects. These projects will benefit an enabled environment conducive to the development of highly-skilled and trained workers and of a generous and hospitable people.

There is no doubt that the chances of success in our implementation of this National Strategy & Policy for ICT are great. The International community should be confident about the determination of Lebanon's people in this regard.