

GLOBAL TELECOM WOMEN'S NETWORK (GTWN) POWER 3G BY ENLIGHTENED ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES AND MAKING 3G PAY

18 October 2006, 3GSM World Congress Asia, Singapore: At their traditional GTWN Power Breakfast Meeting on Tuesday 17 October, global senior women executives from mobile operators, regulatory and financial agencies and industry initiated a "Call to Action" to support the drive to get more handsets with more features into the hands of more people around the world. The traditional event organized by the Global Telecom Women's Network now in its 14th year, was sponsored by Intel and included high-level representatives from such operators as Belgacom, Celcom Malaysia, DiGi Malaysia, Maxis, SFR, Smart Communications, and Turkcell as well as from Accenture, Cisco, Ericsson, Gartner, GSM Association, IDA of Singapore, IFC, Motorola, Neustar, Nortel, Novare Technologies, Palm, Radius, and Russell Reynolds Associates.

GTWN President Asia Myla Villanueva, also Managing Director of Novare Technologies, and GSMA EMC Member spearheaded the "Call to Action" after keynote presentations by Craig Ehrlich, Chairman of the GSM Association and Alexander Izosimov, CEO of Russian mobile operator VimpelCom.

In particular, Alexander Izosimov highlighted how VimpelCom has managed to grow its business since the challenging times of the late 90's to be the most successful mobile operator in Russia today by offering customers more services and more value. "It's not about chasing market share," declared Izosimov, "it's about enhancing customer service and expanding the value of the services that the consumer wants to use." VimpelCom's ventures in the greenfields markets in central Asia, including Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, are providing valuable experience in developing handsets and services that consumers in such low-income countries can afford, with download speed of 3G being in many cases a sought-after application in itself. These services are providing new economic and social opportunities in these less developed countries, in a win-win environment for businesses and for users.

Craig Ehrlich further stressed the role of mobile and wireless services in bridging the digital divide and in bringing communication for the first time to many of the world's under-served and un-served communities. It is now planned, he said, to develop a 3G handset for these markets for under \$100. "Fibre and ADSL will not be the answer for many of these countries", he said. "Wireless solutions will be the least cost and most efficient way of bringing the benefits of new communication technologies and broadband services to the 2/3 of the world's population who do not have any means of communication." Currently more than 1 million users are being added every day worldwide. The aim was to double the coverage of mobile communications around the world, from the current 2 billion, to at least 4 billion, over the next few years.

Following these presentations, the GTWN forum unanimously decided on a "Call to Action" by all those present to individually and corporately champion ways to bridge the digital divide, and simultaneously, make 3G services pay. They will co-operate with the GSMA Development Fund and all GSMA Members to bring about this goal.

For more information about the Global Telecom Women's Network, please visit: <http://www.gtwn.org>
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