

## Press Release

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# **MORE THAN 60 TELECOM OPERATORS AND BROADCASTERS' CEOs TO CONVENE AT SAMENA COUNCIL EVENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ETNO TO DEFINE COOPERATION SCHEMES AND EXPLORE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**

**Brussels, May 10, 2013** - The South Asia – Middle East – North Africa's SAMENA Telecommunications Council will be holding its 4th flagship Annual CEO & Chairmen Leadership Dinner in Venice, Italy, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2013. The event, held in co-operation with ETNO, will gather more than 60 chairmen and CEOs of some of the most important telecommunications operators and broadcasting companies worldwide. Telecom Italia will host this leaders' gathering in Venice.

The Leadership Dinner will comprise several discussion sessions, exploring prospects of cooperation and collaboration among telecom operators, broadcasters, and Internet players. The discussion will focus on the creation and convergence of new ecosystems, and on the development of innovative and sustainable business models involving all stakeholders across the digital value chain.

The SAMENA Council and ETNO are both calling for an enhanced global and cross-sector cooperation on several issues related to the digital economy. This is particularly important in a context where both geographic and business boundaries are blurring. Co-operation across the broadcasting, telecommunications and Internet sectors is vital and no one segment can act in isolation.

The existence of synergies between telecom operators and broadcasters is already a reality, and will take on increasing importance in the future. Just to give an example, according to recent estimates, the average share of European telecom operators' residential fixed revenues deriving from IPTV will increase between 10% and 30% in the forthcoming years.

This new scenario raises topics such as possible new market definitions, the emergence of new forms of competition among players, the debate around how to better address the increasing spectrum needs, how to improve users' access to content, as well as the sustainability (or the financing) of the digital market. Moreover, issues related to media freedom and fundamental rights protection, including privacy and IPRs, are also of extreme importance.

Mr. Bocar A. BA, CEO of the SAMENA Council, affirmed that “the legacy of the SAMENA Council’s Leadership Dinner in 2013 is a recognised need for further relationship building and new business development, as well as the identification of some high-priority telecommunications issues, all of which was discussed among world-class industry leaders. Participation in the SAMENA Council’s Leadership Dinner has increased since its inaugural launch in 2010 in Dubai. We attribute the continual success of this executive initiative by the SAMENA Council to the depth of knowledge that is exchanged among our participating leaders and to the support provided by our gracious hosts and strategic partners. This year, we are indeed thankful to Mr. Franco Bernabè, Chairman and CEO of Telecom Italia and to Mr. Luigi Gambardella, Chairman of the ETNO Executive Board, for facilitating our Leadership Dinner’s planning process, which we believe will contribute to the global dialogue on industry issues, which has a direct bearing on the success of the business in this converged world.”

Mr. Luigi Gambardella, Chairman of the ETNO Executive Board, declared: “We are very honoured to host this year’s SAMENA Council annual gathering in Venice. Both Telecom Italia and ETNO believe that common reflections between players from different regions of the world will help develop a shared vision on the challenges that the telecom sector is facing and the possible synergies that the convergent scenario may offer to telcos, fixed and mobile, and broadcasters. The borderless nature of on-line services requires more and more that the debate on future business models and investment challenges takes place at a global level. We therefore hope that both the workshop and the SAMENA Council’s CEO & Chairmen Leadership Dinner will provide a useful platform for a successful exchange of ideas on how to best respond to market evolution for the benefit of citizens both in the EU and in the SAMENA region”.

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#### **About SAMENA**

SAMENA Telecommunications Council is a tri-regional, non-profit telecommunications association that represents over 40 telecommunications operators in 25 markets, representing an aggregate subscriber base of 790 million mobile users, including mobile broadband users, 79 million fixed-line users, and 22 million fixed broadband users. The Council’s membership embodies a community of telecom operators, manufacturers, government bodies, academia, and leading global management consultancy organizations. SAMENA’s Board of Directors and member companies include the largest regional operators and global multi-network operators as well as new competitive entrants. SAMENA focuses on digitization and broadband investment policies, and aims to promote beneficial regulation and governance that further industry evolution, as well as cooperation among key ICT industry stakeholders. For further information, visit [www.samenacouncil.org](http://www.samenacouncil.org) or contact SAMENA Communication at +971 4 364 2700 or email to [communications@samenacouncil.org](mailto:communications@samenacouncil.org).

#### **About ETNO**

ETNO’s 37 member companies and 12 observers, including leading telecoms operators and equipment manufacturers, from Europe and beyond represent a significant part of total ICT activity in Europe. They account for an aggregate annual turnover of more than €600 billion and employ over 1.6 million people. ETNO companies are the main drivers of broadband and are committed to its continual growth in Europe. For more information, please consult [www.etno.eu](http://www.etno.eu) or contact Thierry Dieu, ETNO Director for Communications and Public Policy ([dieu@etno.be](mailto:dieu@etno.be)) or at +32 2 227 10 82.