countries on government-funded and private sector applications projects to promote a broader understanding of the diversity of technology that can be applied to meet various public needs;

- Encourage the assignment of a higher priority for innovative applications of information technology, which will encourage increased use of the GII;
- Encourage private sector-led efforts to develop application-level standards (e.g. data interchange formats, application program interfaces) to ensure interoperability at the application level; and
- Work constructively to assess and eliminate the barriers to the development and deployment of GII applications.<sup>8</sup>

## IV. Implementing the GII

The various approaches governments have taken in response to the technological convergence of telecommunications and information industries have resulted in the development of asymmetric markets and regulatory environments around the world. These asymmetries often impede the cross-border transfer of services and information among business users, entertainment providers, and consumers. The United States believes that these differences can be overcome, in part through the work of market forces and technological developments. but also in part through collective agreement among all countries to adopt, advance, and apply the core principles of the GII. By working through existing international and regional organizations, and engaging in bilateral efforts, government and industry can remove obstacles blocking the effective development of the GII.

Multilateral organizations will play a vital role in this effort. In particular, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) are uniquely able to contribute practical solutions to problems affecting the development of the GII.

As the preeminent international organization dealing with telecommunications issues, the United Nations' ITU was the first multilateral forum in which the GII was discussed.

With its broad membership of 185 developed and developing countries, the consensus-based ITU serves as a global forum for technical discussions ranging from voluntary standards development and frequency allocation activities to network development. Accomplishments already achieved under ITU auspices in technical telecommunications and development issues suggest that the ITU can play a significant role in the GII development process.

The OECD, an international think tank which undertakes economic research on various aspects of its members' economies and policy concerns, has been constructively addressing telecommunications and information policy issues for several years. Its policy and statistical analyses have contributed to a broader understanding of the economic benefits of liberalization in the information and telecommunications sectors.

Organizations such as the ISO and the WIPO, which deal with specific cross-sectoral issues, can serve as important fora to discuss and advance issues of open access and information policy. For example, any changes made to bilateral or regional intellectual property regimes may ultimately become issues in the WIPO.

In addition, both Intelsat and Inmarsat, the treaty-based satellite communications organizations that have played a significant role in advancing global telecommunications, are now contemplating options for restructuring. Because of these organizations' broad international memberships, they could serve as useful fora for review of commercialization alternatives.

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is a multilateral agreement setting out the rules and principles by which countries trade, primarily in the area of goods. The Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations led to the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which deals with services, investment, and intellectual property—areas that substantively affect telecommunications trade. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), under the new WTO, includes an Annex on-access to and use of—the telecommunications networks of WTO members, and includes substantive commitments from a number of parties on value-added telecommunications services. More generally, the GATS-access to and use of—telecommunications annex applies to all services for which countries have scheduled market access commitments. Now that it is in effect for the U.S. and most of its major trading partners, the

GATS can substantially reinforce the principles of the GII. In addition, there are on-going negotiations, to be concluded by April 1996, to liberalize basic telecommunications services through the Negotiating Group on Basic Telecommunications.

Regional organizations also have important roles in achieving regional consensus on issues pertaining to telecommunications and information markets. Organizations such as the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Southern Africa Transportation and Communications Commission (SATCC) and the European Conference on Postal and Telecommunications Administration (CEPT), among others, frequently serve as fora for the exchange of valuable information and as test sites for implementation of the most expedient and beneficial policies. These bodies also serve as effective vehicles for improving and enhancing network development and technical cooperation among participants on a regional basis.

Finally, plurilateral and bilateral dialogues can be arranged among and between nations to focus on particular issues. In addition to the deliberations in regional and international organizations, these discussions can become building blocks for cooperation as together we seek to construct a truly global GII. For example, the G–7 Ministerial Conference scheduled for February 1995 is one of several such opportunities for focused, high-level discussion of the Global Information Infrastructure.

As important as these international governmental organizations are, perhaps even more important are the numerous formal and informal groups within the private sector. These groups, which range from international trade organizations to professional associations to advocacy groups to industry-led standard-setting bodies, provide communication channels between the people who will actually build and use the GII. Such private sector groups facilitate the international teaming and strategic alliances that will ensure the development of a truly seamless "network of networks," rather than a patchwork of incompatible systems and services.

## V. Conclusion

As Vice President Gore noted in Buenos Aires, it is possible to create a global information network that transmits messages and images with the speed of light from the largest city to the smallest village. Through the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> A report of the Conference on Breaking the Barriers to the National Information Infrastructure can be obtained from the Council on Competitiveness in Washington, D.C. The conference was co-sponsored by the Council and the Clinton Administration's Information Infrastructure Task Force.