**Dr. Stephen Mncube's Address to the USTTI Board of Directors on the occasion of the ICASA Delegation Visit, 09 May 2011**

Mr Michael Gardner, Chairman of the United State Telecommunications Training Institute,

Mr Julius Genachowski, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission,

Commissioners and directors of the USTTI and the FCC, representatives of the United States Trade and Development Agency as well as captains of the United States communications industry.

I would like to extend my gratitude to all of you for the swift and prompt arrangements made in hosting the delegation from the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa.

Its only a few months ago when I met with Chairman Genachowski and his colleagues in Guadalajara, Mexico at the time of the ITU 2010 Plenipotentiary.

That afternoon meeting was short and to the point, in identifying areas of cooperation between ICASA and the FCC particularly in relation to the exchange of know-how and expertise in the regulation of the communications sector.

The quest for best regulatory practice for the communications sector in South Africa is guided by our national socio-economic developmental goals.

Universal access to communications and postal services is a great challenge to South Africa and to sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. This applies to both the urban and the rural areas.

The cost of communications is still inhibitive, and thus acts as a barrier to local and foreign direct investment.

Consumer protection with regard to communications and postal services remains a priority for millions of consumers.

For the benefit of all the colleagues around the table, I would like to share with you what ICASA stands for.

ICASA is a product of statute, and a sector-specific regulator for the communications and postal sectors. It is mandated to regulate the two sectors in the public interest, without fear or favour.

Our **Vision** is to advance the building of a digital society, and our **Mission** is to ensure that all South Africans have access to a wide range of high quality communication services at affordable prices.

Our key Strategic Objectives are as follows:

## 1.Ensure effective participation by HDIs in the industry

•Promote the empowerment of historically disadvantaged persons, including Black people, with particular attention to the needs of women, youth and persons with disabilities.

## 2. Ensure the provision of broadband services

•All South Africans should have affordable access to reliable high speed broadband services.

•Regulatory policies must promote open access, technological neutrality and investment to ensure that broadband service providers have sufficient incentive to develop and offer broadband services as well as harness the capacities of the state in support of the provision of broadband services.

## 3. Optimise the use of the radio frequency spectrum to support the widest variety of services

•Efficient and effective use of frequency spectrum promotes the growth and rapid deployment of innovative and efficient communications technologies and services.

## 4. Promote the protection of consumers and accessibility for persons with disabilities

•Ensure the continued protection of consumers in the ICT and postal sectors, through advocacy and awareness raising programmes and a streamlined complaints handling system.

•Ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are provided for and that there is compliance by operators to meet their requirements.

## 5. Promote the development of public, community and commercial broadcasting services in the context of digital migration

•ICASA will promote the development of public, commercial and community broadcasting services which are responsive to the needs of the public, competitive, diverse and which promote a plurality of news, views and information and provide a wide range of entertainment and educational programmes, a proportion of which are locally produced.

## 6. Ensure compliance with legislation and regulation

•ICASA will advocate for compliance with applicable laws and regulations in South Africa.

•ICASA will also investigate and audit activities by licensed and unlicensed entities to ensure compliance.

## 7. Strengthen and modernise ICASA

•ICASA will be an efficient and highly productive regulator that maximises benefit to stakeholders, staff and management from effective systems, processes, resources and organisational culture.

•The Authority will promote internal and external service quality standards.

•ICASA will also:
•Continue the Authority-wide capacity building programme focusing on staff development;

•Maintain a close partnership with the Department of Communications and National Treasury to address funding shortfalls; and

•Demonstrate financial viability and good governance throughout the organisation.

## 8. Promote competition

•Promote competition in the provision of electronic communications, postal and broadcasting services that supports the Nation's economy and the developmental goals of the Republic. The competitive framework should foster innovation and offer consumers a reliable meaningful choice in affordable services.

As to the purpose of this visit, it has been pointed out already that working relations existed before between our respective institutions, and all we need to do this time around is to revive that relationship, tailor-make it to benefit it us all.

With the benefit of communications technologies, some of our interactions and exchange of skills and expertise will take place via video conferencing, for example.

But I think for courtesy purposes, certain critical engagements need real time, person-to-person interaction.

Finally, let me thank the FCC, the USTTI and the USTDA for making our trip to your shores possible, and I believe that the next four days we are going to spent here we really be of benefit not only to my delegation but to ICASA as a whole.

I Thank You