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May 12, 2000

FCC Commissioners Ness and Furchtgott-Roth Advance U.S. Interests at World Radiocommunication Conference

As the first week of the International Telecommunication Union's World Radiocommunication Conference winds to a close, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Commissioners Susan Ness and Harold Furchtgott-Roth continued an extensive series of bilateral and multilateral meetings with key countries at the Conference. Ness and Furchtgott-Roth also met with the ITU leadership, including Secretary General Yoshio Utsumi, and several regional organizations. In addition, the Commissioners engaged in detailed consultations with American industry and other governmental groups to further U.S. spectrum interests. The Commissioners and FCC staff have worked diligently in a number of ITU committees and forums addressing such diverse issues as new spectrum for third generation (3G) wireless services and creating new opportunities for high density fixed wireless and fixed satellite services.

Commissioner Ness, attending her third World Radio Conference, held bilateral discussions with a multitude of countries spanning five continents. "It is vital that the United States get its message out to the World. This is a global conference in search of global solutions. Because the ITU operates largely on consensus, it is extremely important for the U.S. to have an open dialogue with each of these countries. We must understand their concerns, and vice-versa, if we are to achieve the world-wide ubiquitous seamless communications and information network we all desire," Ness said. "Each conference has its own personality and issues. From Day One, WRC-2000 has been extremely fast-paced. I feel confident that we will achieve our goals." To that end, Commissioner Ness is prepared to return for the third week of the Conference.

Commissioner Furchtgott-Roth, attending his first Conference, teamed with Ness in the Americans' outreach efforts. Furchtgott-Roth met with dozens of delegates including those from Greece, Finland, Nigeria, Egypt, and Germany. Furchtgott-Roth pointed out: "This conference is very important to American interests. Thousands of businesses and jobs back home depend on allowing free telecommunications markets to develop and thrive. Harmonizing international spectrum policy is an important part of that equation. I have truly enjoyed the opportunity to listen and learn from our international colleagues and to share the views of the United States and the FCC on these significant issues."

Each Commissioner praised the work of the head of the U.S. Delegation, Ambassador Gail Schoettler. Ambassador Schoettler has done a remarkable job of bringing together diverse interests both at home and abroad,” Furchtgott-Roth said. Commissioner Ness voiced similar sentiments: “The Ambassador’s strategic vision and diplomatic skills have already had a tremendous impact.”

The Commissioners will return to Washington this weekend in advance of the FCC’s open meeting on Monday, May 15. “We leave the delegation in good hands. The FCC’s team of policy and technical experts provide the Ambassador and the delegation with vital support as they continue to advance the interests of the American people.”

The Conference continues through June 2, 2000 in Istanbul, Turkey.

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