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ASHOKA INNOVATORS FOR THE PUBLIC

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March 4, 2002

IB DKT. 01-185

Mr. Donald Abelson
Chief of the International Bureau
FCC
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

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Dear Mr. Abelson,

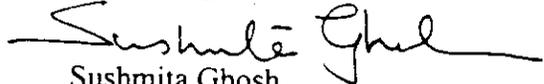
**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

Attached is a copy of a letter we are sending simultaneously to Chairman Powell regarding the current petition to allow MSS Operators to use Ancillary Terrestrial Components. In our twenty years of existence we only now have felt compelled to write to a U.S. agency on a matter that relates directly to the social sector.

These satellite systems will be able to bridge growing communication gaps in our global society. This matter has important implications both to our national security and humanitarian interests.

Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss this issue further with you or your colleagues.

Sincerely yours,


Sushmita Ghosh,
President

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March 4, 2002

Mr. Michael Powell
FCC Chairman
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Powell,

The decision before you and your colleagues regarding the petition to allow MSS operators to use a portion of the 2 Ghz band assigned to them for Ancillary Terrestrial Components (ATCs) will, we believe, probably have enormously important social consequences.

Therefore, for the first time in our twenty-one years of helping to launch and support the world's leading social entrepreneurs and also of organizing this rapidly maturing profession on every continent, we have decided to write a public agency on a matter of policy.

As you know, half the world's people have never used even a telephone. The promise of ATC strengthened global satellite services is that everyone -- and the myriad of organizations of all types and sizes that serve or would serve them -- will quickly be able to leap this profoundly debilitating communications chasm.

The importance of doing so -- and doing so very quickly -- is hard to overstate:

- ❖ There are unavoidable and enormously dangerous national security consequences that flow from a world where the richest 20 percent of the planet's people have 83 percent of world's income and the bottom 60 percent only 5.77 percent. Such an income distribution also poses an ethical issue.

It is hard to imagine how to close this gap as long as billions of humans remain cut off from, or only crudely linked to, the world's knowledge, one another, markets, and the rest of the world.

- ❖ Nor can business, government, or citizen organizations now easily reach or serve this two thirds of humankind.
- ❖ Even in wealthy countries, rural and other disadvantaged regions cannot compete on equal terms with areas favored by heavy mobile and other communications investments.
- ❖ ATC reinforced satellite service will allow, for example, Brazilians and rural Americans to offer services and learn market needs from distant clients, check prices without spending the day traveling on a guess, see where they can find a dentist willing to treat a child with cerebral palsy (most refuse), and seize a hundred otherwise hidden opportunities. Study after study has made the enormous leverage of access clear.

Closing this communications chasm is enormously important for everyone: This is the classic case where the value of a network grows geometrically with increasing coverage.

Let me briefly discuss the implications for the rapidly emerging competitive citizen sector we serve. I do so for two reasons. First, the implications are important and are not likely to have been much discussed in the comments you have received. Second, the great value to our organizations and the people and social issues we serve of the effective and quick global access that this ATC enhanced satellite proposal promises is a good example of why it is good public policy to ensure such universal access.

Ashoka's own network of over 1200 leading social entrepreneurs and their organizations on every continent, major business partners ranging from McKinsey & Company and Cummins Engine headquartered in the U.S. to Infosys in India and Natura in Brazil, 45 offices, and thousands of other stakeholders has long since driven home to us that effective information flows are critical organizationally and to both social and economic development.

Over the last two and a half decades the social half of society has, in most of the world, passed the tipping point in the transition from bureaucratic/monopolistic to entrepreneurial/competitive. This change is reflected in dramatic growth in the numbers of citizen organizations: For example, from a few thousand in 1980 to an estimated 1 million in Brazil last year; from a dozen in 1989 in Slovakia to over 10,000 a decade later; and from 460,000 registered 501 (c)(3) IRS certified nonprofits in 1990 to 735,000 in the U.S. in 1999. Average organizational size, skill, and competitiveness has also grown rapidly. In the OECD countries, employment in the nonprofit sector is growing two and a half times as fast as the economy as a whole.

These organizations are human, not capital intensive. Access to information and internal and external communications are proportionately more critical to them. Moreover, they are heavily focused on serving those who are less favored -- i.e., precisely those least served by the current information infrastructure.

Simply put, ensuring early universal access is critical to our work.

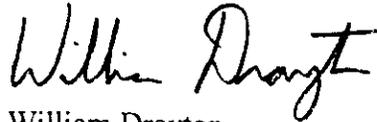
American public policy has repeatedly and wisely ensured universal access before. The telephone industry was, for example, structured during its formative half century to have the most commercially profitable services subsidize affordable residential and rural access -- with enormous social and economic benefits.

That principle should apply here. It will help many in America and, in the process, strengthen both our economy and our social health.

It is also critical internationally, which in turn is critical for America. As a matter of national security -- at a time when we can have no excuse for not seeing the risk. For our ability to strengthen democracy and civilized behavior everywhere, which serves our values as well as our interests. And for our ability to both contribute and lead by making it possible for all the world's people to learn and reason together.

Our thanks to you and your colleagues for your thoughtful consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Drayton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William Drayton,
Chair and CEO