

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION



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Ref: DM-09-1021
Contact: A. Levin
Tel: +41 22 730 6113
Fax: +41 22 730 5853
E-Mail: tsbspd@itu.int

To:

- Administrations of Member States
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- Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Advisory Groups and ITU Sector Study Groups

Conclusions from ITU Symposium on ICTs and Climate Change - Quito, Ecuador, 8 – 10 July 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the Conclusions reached during the *Third Symposium on ICTs and Climate Change*, organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and hosted by the Centro Internacional de Investigación Científica en Telecomunicaciones, Tecnologías de la Información y las Comunicaciones (CITIC), which took place from 8-10 July 2009 in Quito, Ecuador.

This was the third symposium on climate change following successful events in Kyoto and London in 2008 (see Resolution 73 of the 2008 World Standardization Assembly (WTSA-08)). I am pleased to inform you that this event was chaired by Ing. Jorge Glas Espinel, President Fondo de Solidaridad del Ecuador, and was attended by approximately 450 participants from 20 countries. In addition, a further 60 participants, drawn from a wide range of organizations including the private sector, research institutes, international organizations and governments, took part in the event remotely.

Mr. Malcolm Johnson, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, led a team of speakers from the General Secretariat, BR, TSB and the ITU Area Office. Other speakers included key specialists in the field, including top decision-makers, engineers, hardware and software developers, government officials and regulators.

This was the first ITU symposium on climate change to take place in a developing country and the first in Latin America. The symposium focused on the key issues with respect to climate change that are most relevant to developing countries, in particular to the Americas, including deforestation, access to ICTs and financing of strategies to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. The symposium presentations, a background paper, and the summary report can be found at <http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/worksem/climatechange/200907/index.html>. ITU's activities on climate change can be found at www.itu.int/climate.

Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all the participants who attended this symposium. I am pleased to enclose, attached here within, the Conclusions reached during this symposium.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Hamadoun I. Touré
Secretary-General

Annex: Conclusions of the Quito Symposium

Annex

Conclusions of the Quito Symposium

We recognize the special characteristics and needs of Latin America and the Caribbean to combat climate change. Latin countries are only minor contributors to GHG emissions (4% of global total) but are often victims of extreme weather events and other negative impacts of climate change, such as rising oceans, changes in rainfall, species migration, harm to farmers, degradation of the Amazon regions, melting of glaciers in the Andes, and human displacement due to changes in the climate, among others. The region also is home to many of the most bio-diverse countries. A major issue for the region is deforestation, which contributes some 17% of total GHG emissions, and that percentage is much higher in some Latin American countries.

We believe that Bridging the Digital Divide and bringing the benefits of ICTs to all citizens is fundamental to tackling climate change. Equitable access and ensuring connectivity to schools, rural communities, health facilities, etc. are vital to economic development and to making effective use of ICTs to combat climate change. Increased deployment of affordable broadband is also needed.

We consider that global efforts to combat climate change should not impede the economic and social growth of developing countries.

We recognize that the ICT Sector must limit its own carbon footprint. Public corporate commitments by the ICT sector to reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions should be encouraged. Increased use of renewable energy supplies and green purchasing policies are essential parts of the solution. Global standards, including agreed methodologies to measure the impact of ICTs on climate change, can promote more energy efficient ICT products and services.

We acknowledge that e-waste from ICT products is a growing problem. Efforts must be made to dispose of mobile phones, computers, etc. in an environmentally-friendly manner and to reduce and avoid the use of toxic materials. The reuse of ICTs also needs to be encouraged.

We are convinced that ICTs can play a key role as an enabling technology to reduce GHG emissions in other sectors. It is vital to set priority areas for action, such as smart buildings and smart electric grids. Dematerialization enables ICTs to replace travel and reduce GHG emissions. Governments and the private sector each have their role to play in deploying ICTs in other sectors to maximum effect.

We recognize the importance of finding and making best use of renewable energy sources. Clean energy is a key to the future and a real opportunity in Latin America. Increasingly, we must strive for zero carbon technologies.

We highlight the importance of preserving the forests, jungles, savannas and oceans as carbon sponges for the planet. Toward that end, collaborative plans and strategies are needed that respect regional, national and local interests.

We recognize that urgent and swift action is needed for cooperation between developed countries and those countries most at risk to enable the latter to adapt to climate change, including assistance if they request it. Equitable solutions must be found so that the major contributors to green house gas emissions cooperate with the countries that are suffering most from climatic impacts and those that are making efforts against deforestation, in particular through reduction of the digital divide and the environmental divide.

We call on global and regional bodies especially ITU, in cooperation with CITEL, to provide solutions, frameworks and collaboration with countries in this region to combat climate change.

We are aware of the critical importance of the successful outcome of the pending talks on new global agreements on climate change, and the urgent need in any future agreements to fully address the adaptation needs of developing countries and to recognize the importance of the significant contribution of ICTs in tackling this global challenge. Achieving climate justice is in the interest of all countries and citizens.

We need to promote and publicize the importance of ICTs in combating climate change to all relevant actors: governments; citizens; and business; and to establish collaborative partnerships.

We recognized the necessity to sensitize people in order to ensure that cultural, administrative, academic, scientific and economic activities serve to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Therefore, it is necessary to promote the proposal that public and private entities at a national and international level include in their activities and projects the analysis and study of the impact that telecommunications and ICTs have on climate change. We welcome the commitment of The Centro Internacional de Investigación Científica en Telecomunicaciones, Tecnologías de la Información y las Comunicaciones (CITIC) to carry this proposal to all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.