



Greening the Future: Bridging the Standardization Gap on Environmental Sustainability

**Opening Speech
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Mr. Lalith Weeratunge, Secretary to the H.E. the President & Chairman of the TRCSL, Sri Lanka,

Mr. Anusha Palpita, Director General, TRCSL, Sri Lanka,

Mr. Paolo Gemma, Chairman of Working Party 3 of ITU-T Study Group 5,

Ladies and gentleman, distinguished guests,

On behalf of Mr Brahima Sanou, Director of the Development Sector and Mr Malcolm Johnson, Director of the Telecommunication and Standardization Bureau of ITU, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Colombo for this workshop on “Greening the Future: Bridging the Standardization Gap on Environmental Sustainability”.

First let me take this opportunity to thank the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka for their kind support and collaboration. I would also like to thank our distinguished guests for your commitment and dedication to the mission of furthering the green agenda.

Ladies and gentleman, distinguished guests,

To begin this workshop, I would like to give you some brief background information.

As it stands, more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas, and the number is only set to increase. By 2020, 60 percent of the world's population will be urban dwellers. On the upside, cities offer significant advantages such as employment opportunities, cultural diversity, and good living conditions. However, the rise in urban populations will result in global economic, social and ecological imbalances. From production to consumption, waste, traffic and pollution, the increasing toll of urbanization will have significant impacts on the wellbeing of the world's population.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the rate of urbanization will increase at an unprecedented rate, transitioning from a 10 to 50 percent urban population by 2025. And by 2050, the United Nations Population predicts that the population of the Asia-Pacific region will increase from 4 billion to 5 billion which will predominately take place in cities. This means that Asia's urban population growth will outpace that of other regions, with an estimated 1 billion people city dwellers forecasted by 2040.

However, the 21st century can not only be characterized as a century of urbanization and emerging cities, but also that of technological innovation, where ICTs have revolutionized the way we communicate, work, and live our lives. And in the light of the urgent need to steer global economic development onto a path that is sustainable and mindful of future generations, ICTs could very well hold the key to enabling sustainable growth, climate change mitigation and the protection of our precious resources.

With regards to city planning, ICT solutions could maximize energy and water distribution through smart grids and smart meters, reduce urban traffic and carbon emission as well as optimizing the efficiency of other vital services of a sustainable city. ICTs can also play a pivotal role in climate change adaptation and mitigation, through infrastructures that monitor the global environment and ecosystems, which could go a long way in addressing food security, health and the sustenance of livelihoods.

On top of that, ICTs enable information to be created, accessed and shared, allowing for quicker delivery of services, in a cost effective and timely manner. But as significant as ICTs can be, measures must also be taken to ensure that the devices used have minimal impact on the environment. In addition, standards must be created to provide clear implementation guidelines and compliance globally.

Ladies and gentleman, distinguished guests,

In these next two days, we will converge to discuss the importance and opportunities of using ICT standards to foster green growth and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. And I look forward to engaging with you in what will undoubtedly be a very informative and fruitful set of discussions.

I have the pleasure to welcome eminent experts from and outside our region including Mr. Takafumi Hashitani, Fujitsu, Japan, Ms. Shuguang Qi, Associate rapporteur of Q17 WP3/SG5, Mr. Sekhar Kondepudi, National University of Singapore, Mr. R.K. Bhatnagar, Advisor, Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications and IT, India and our local experts from Sri Lanka and I am sure that their contribution will enrich all the participants.

I thank you once again for your attendance/participation and look forward to very interactive and successful workshop.
