



*Participants from governments worldwide, and many organizations, attended the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen*

## Going forward from Copenhagen

- ITU attended the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 7–19 December 2009. A high-level delegation from the Union succeeded in raising the profile of information and communication technologies (ICT) as uniquely powerful tools for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions across all sectors of industry — while also contributing to sustainable economic development.

The Copenhagen event is also known as “COP 15”, or the 15th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It marked the culmination of a two-year negotiating process to strengthen international cooperation on tackling this challenge. More than one hundred world leaders attended, as well as some 40 000 people from all kinds of organization and representing many governments and international bodies. Among them were ITU Secretary-General Hamadoun I. Touré and Director of ITU’s

Telecommunication Standardization Bureau Malcolm Johnson.

Dr Touré made an urgent plea to delegates not to miss the opportunity of harnessing advanced technologies to dramatically reduce greenhouse-gas emissions across all industrial sectors. “At Copenhagen, we have a real and reachable opportunity to help save the planet through astute deployment of modern ICT,” he said. “Studies clearly show that more effective use of ICT can deliver tremendous CO<sub>2</sub> savings. I therefore urge delegates to look to the high-tech sector, and take maximum advantage of the power of ICT to reduce emissions worldwide”.

The Secretary-General met with many world leaders at Copenhagen, including presidents and ministers in charge of environmental issues. At a meeting on 16 December, Dr. Touré held talks with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and with the Directors-General of other United Nations organizations. He also took part in a side event on “The

United Nations System delivering as one on climate change," as well as in other activities.

Malcolm Johnson participated in the side event "Advancing work on adaptation to climate change: a United Nations system perspective" which showcased good practice, as well as one on "The effective use of ICT and the intellectual property system for mitigating climate change," which was jointly organized by ITU and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). At the latter he talked about

how a mechanism is needed if investment in smart technologies is to be stimulated in developing countries in return for carbon credits. To achieve this, "a common approach to measuring the positive impact of ICT on greenhouse-gas emissions is needed. This is why ITU is developing a methodology in cooperation with many other organizations, governments and the private sector," said Mr Johnson. "Interoperability and standardization are vitally important," he concluded.

Other ITU staff attended some of the many events held during the conference, and presented information on work throughout the Union on ICT and climate change. The ITU programme itself also included 11 sessions at the "iseeT@the Climate Change Kiosk," within an exhibition organized by UNFCCC. These sessions featured a wide range of speakers from the world of ICT, including those (such as Stephan Scholz from Nokia Siemens Networks — see article on pages 25–26) who reduced their carbon footprint by appearing via videoconferencing.



*"Interoperability and standardization are vitally important"*

*Malcolm Johnson,  
Director of ITU's Telecommunication  
Standardization Bureau*

## Onwards to Bonn

ITU's delegation targeted the key players at the conference and raised awareness of the fundamental importance of ICT in the climate change issue — and how investing in it can also help narrow the digital divide and promote economic sustainability. There was strategic coordination with other key players, including other United Nations agencies. Representatives from all stakeholder groups, and both the public and private sectors, expressed interest in work-

ing with ITU in this field.

However, as has been reported extensively in the world's press, the discussions at the conference resulted in a *Copenhagen Accord* — a political consensus on the long-term, global response to climate change, rather than a binding agreement. The next step will be taken at Bonn, Germany, at the 32nd session of the UNFCCC subsidiary bodies, held from 31 May to 11 June 2010. ITU has observer status and will continue pressing for full recognition of the role of ICT in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change.

Many people hope that at COP 16, scheduled for 29 November to 10 December 2010 in Mexico City, Mexico, a treaty can be concluded that can replace the Kyoto Protocol at the termination in 2012 of the period it set for committed reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions. ITU will continue to take part in the process and make known how vital it is to put ICT at the heart of solutions to this major challenge of our times: climate change.