19th meeting of the Global Standards Collaboration

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ITU Headquarters, Geneva

*Welcome Remarks*

Malcolm Johnson

Deputy Secretary-General  
International Telecommunication Union

Director TSB

Distinguished colleagues

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning and welcome to this 19th meeting of the Global Standards Collaboration, GSC-19. I bring you the best wishes of ITU’s Secretary-General, Houlin Zhao, as well as those of François Rancy, Director of ITU’s Radiocommunication Bureau, who were unfortunately unable to join us today.

It’s a pleasure to welcome Colin Langtry to the podium, Chief of the ITU-R Study Groups Department, to speak on M. Rancy’s behalf.

I had the pleasure of welcoming you to this event in 2009. Those of you who were here will remember the boat cruise that we enjoyed that year, on what was an excellent summer’s evening. Although we have not secured a boat cruise this year, in the spirit of the GSC, Geneva’s weather has again agreed to cooperate with us for a welcome reception on the terrace of the Palais des Nations which has a wonderful view of the lake and the Mont Blanc.

Distinguished colleagues,

As we all know the demand for interoperable ICT standards is on the rise, with standardization required to support an increasing diversity of ICT applications, in a widening variety of vertical industry sectors.

So collaboration in standards development continues to grow in importance, and consequently the role GSC can play in achieving this is ever more significant.

A strong commitment to collaboration has become one of the most important attributes of a successful ICT standards body. Collaboration helps us to understand other bodies’ standards processes, business models and strategic priorities. Understanding the workings of the ecosystem leads to efficient cooperation, and ‎thus coordinated standards development. These meetings provide an important opportunity to gain that understanding and coordination.

This year ITU is celebrating its 150th anniversary. This anniversary has been a tribute to the remarkable innovation of the ICT community and the crucial role that ITU plays as a platform to bring cohesion to this innovation.

In many ways, our celebrations have highlighted how much more inclusive the ICT community has become. We have celebrated the extraordinary engineering feat that is the global ICT ecosystem, but our celebrations have also highlighted the optimism that ICTs will be key to addressing the challenges of social, economic and environmental sustainability.

This optimism is the result of many years of technical work and related advocacy undertaken by ITU and others.

ICTs are now being recognized as central to the future of healthcare, transportation, education, energy efficiency, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The worldwide move towards smart cities is a particularly encouraging development. ITU and the City of Dubai recently entered into an agreement in which Dubai will be the world’s first city to trial ITU’s key performance indicators for smart sustainable cities. A number of other cities have expressed interest in conducting similar trials, and I believe that the relationships that ITU is building with municipalities, and our participation in the UN Habitat Conference, will be of great assistance to the ICT standards community in its work to support the standards needs of the cities of the future.

As negotiations continue on the UN post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, ITU is making every effort to advocate ICTs as the means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and I encourage GSC participants to work with us to ensure that UN Member States recognize this at the Summit in September.

It was well recognized at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference last year which adopted the new ITU Connect 2020 Agenda, through which ITU Member States commit to work towards the shared vision of "an information society, empowered by the interconnected world, where telecommunication/ICT enables and accelerates socially, economically and environmentally sustainable growth and development for everyone".

The Connect 2020 Agenda includes a specific goal to promote sustainability in the ICT sector. It is a framework for collaboration that will unite ITU’s public and private sector membership in supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The topics on the agenda of this GSC meeting will keep our organizations busy for the coming five years and beyond!

I look forward to furthering our collaboration in coming years, and to the meeting’s conclusions on how that can be affected to our mutual benefit.

Thank you. I wish you a very successful meeting and enjoyable stay in Geneva.