

ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference 2014

Media backgrounder

WTDC-14 (www.itu.int/itu-d/WTDC)

Highlighting the overarching theme, ***Broadband for Sustainable Development***, the sixth World Telecommunication Development Conference will take place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 March to 10 April 2014.

WTDC-14 will focus on development priorities in telecommunications and information and communication technologies and agree on the programmes, projects and initiatives to implement them.

It will assess progress in implementing the Hyderabad Action Plan set in motion in 2010 along with other key areas of activity such as the World Summit on the Information Society, the series of Connect the World Summits held since 2007, and strengthening ITU's regional presence.

The expected outcomes of the WTDC-14 are:

- the Dubai Declaration
- the ITU-D contribution to the Strategic Plan of ITU
- the Dubai Action Plan
- resolutions and recommendations

In particular, the Dubai Action Plan – which will be built on result-based management principles – is expected to set the agenda for telecommunication and information and communication technologies development over the next four years.

The dialogue, which will shape the future of the telecommunication and information and communication technologies sector and its contribution to social and economic development, will focus on:

- Sound policies and regulatory frameworks that will foster investment and further develop telecom/ICT networks;
- Improved access to ICT applications to provide the needy people with services such as education, health, etc.;
- Increased safety and security in the use of telecoms/ICTs;
- Capacity building in the area of ICTs;
- Emergency telecommunications.

During the dialogue there will also be a working group dedicated to follow-up action on the World Summit on the Information Society: WSIS-10 and beyond.

Focus of Study Groups:

Study-group 1: Enabling environment, cybersecurity, ICT applications and Internet-related issues

Study-group 2: Information and communication infrastructure and technology development, emergency telecommunications and climate-change adaptation.

They will present a total of 19 reports on the questions determined at WTDC-10.

WTDC Preparatory Meetings:

In preparation of WTDC-14, six regional preparatory meetings were held in 2013.

Press releases:

Geneva, 27 January 2014 - Arab Region

- [ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference set to meet in Dubai, UAE, 30 March – 10 April 2014](#)

26 November 2013 - Europe Region: 'Fostering Growth and Innovation in the ICT Ecosystem'

- [Serbia hosts regional preparatory meeting for ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference 2014](#)

29 October 2013 - Arab States Region: Arab States rise steadily on ITU's ICT Development Index

- [Bahrain hosts regional preparatory meeting for ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference 2014](#)

2 October 2013 - Africa Region: Push for ICTs as agents of development and empowerment in Africa

- [Ghana hosts regional preparatory meeting for ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference 2014](#)

20 August 2013 - Americas Region: Policy-makers and industry leaders in Americas push ICTs as catalyst for development

- [Uruguay hosts regional preparatory meeting for 2014 ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference](#)

30 April 2013 - Asia-Pacific Region: Asia-Pacific ICT policy-makers plan tech smart, green societies

- [Cambodia hosts regional preparatory meeting for 2014 World Telecommunication Development Conference](#)

19 February 2013 - CIS Region: Moldova meeting focuses on CIS inputs and regional development of telecommunications and ICT

- [Preparations launched for ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference 2014](#)

EXECUTIVE STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

This year, WTDC will be preceded by an Executive Strategic Dialogue on Broadband for Sustainable Development. This Dialogue will take place on Saturday, 29 March, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the Dubai World Trade Centre and will provide an opportunity to exchange views on the trends, challenges and opportunities of the telecom/ICT sector.

This strategic dialogue will provide a platform for an interactive debate on the trends, challenges and opportunities of the telecom/ICT sector. In particular, it will focus on strategies and policies directed towards broadband development worldwide, while discussing the challenges and opportunities offered via high speed networks and e-services provided over the modern infrastructure, including e-learning, e-government, e-health, etc.

The keynote speaker will be Mr Gerd Leonard, Futurist and CEO of The Futures Agency (Switzerland). Panellists include Mr John Nasasira, Minister of Information and Communication Technologies (Uganda); Mr Mohamed Nasser Al Ghanim, Director General, Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (UAE); Mr Yoon Jong-Rok, Vice Minister, Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning, Republic of Korea; Ms Kathryn C. Brown, Chief Executive Officer, Internet Society (ISOC); Mr Samer Halawi, Chief Executive Officer, Thuraya; Mr Luigi Gambardella, Chairman of Executive Board, 'European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (ETNO); and Ms Lobna Smida, Policy Expert in Accessibility (Tunisia).

Moderated by BBC journalist Karen Bowerman, the event will be webcast live.

KEY DATA HIGHLIGHTS

- 6.8 billion mobile-cellular subscriptions, almost as many as there are people on the planet
- As global mobile-cellular penetration approaches 100 per cent and market saturation is reached, growth rates have fallen to their lowest levels in both developed and developing countries
- 2.7 billion people – almost 40 per cent of the world's population – are online
- Fixed-broadband prices drop by 82 per cent between 2008 and 2012
- There are close to 1.4 billion household with television

CHALLENGES:

At WTDC-14, the international community will gather to work out an action plan for the next four years. Despite the successes mentioned above, challenges remain:

- About 4.4 billion people still remain unconnected. About 60 per cent of the world's population, and almost 92 per cent in the 48 UN-designated least developed countries, representing home to some 890 million people

- In the developing world, 16 per cent fewer women than men are Internet users
- Despite the expanding deployment of ICT networks, many women and girls, persons with disabilities, youth, children and indigenous peoples remain excluded from the information society.

ICTs AS CATALYSTS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Today, every aspect of modern life depends on ICTs. Universal and affordable access to ICTs provides significant opportunities and is essential for the world's economic, social, and cultural development.

We live in a fast-paced world led by ICT innovation. We have been experiencing an exponential growth in data traffic, M2M communication, cloud computing, social networking, and ICT applications for a smarter world. This growth is powered by affordable and ubiquitous broadband. Access to the high-speed networks becomes ever-so-more important, particularly in light of big data emerging as new infrastructure, necessary to accelerate transition from information to knowledge society.

There were an estimated 6.8 billion mobile-cellular subscriptions by the end of 2013 - almost as many as there are people on the planet. We have experienced the spectacular rise of mobile broadband, which is bringing Internet access to more people than ever before, and which continues to show the fastest growth of any technology in human history, with growth rates of over 30% per year. It took 125 years to reach the first billion fixed line phones, but just nine years to reach the first billion mobile broadband subscriptions. By end 2013, there were an estimated 2.7 billion people using the Internet worldwide.

Broadband access and the growing use of broadband-enabled services offer new opportunities for interaction among people, for transforming people's lives and for contributing to inclusive and sustainable development across the world.

The level of access to ICTs has improved dramatically across the world. The mobile revolution is m-powering people in developing countries by delivering ICT applications in education, health, government, banking, environment and business.

The development of an enabling environment that fosters a transparent legal and regulatory framework is essential to stimulate investment and promote universal, ubiquitous and affordable access to ICTs.

ICTs' contribution to development:

- They enable access to information and exchange of information and services;
- They improve the provision of public and private services, making them much more effective, efficient, accessible and affordable;
- They facilitate access to markets, improve disaster management and accelerate direct democratic participation.

- They contribute to monitoring, mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change;
- They play a critical role in emergency telecommunications.

Moreover, ITU has been a leader in providing efficient tools for spectrum management to its Membership.

The collaboration and engagement of multiple stakeholders is a growing necessity as ICTs impact numerous aspects and facets of our lives.

KEY ITU-D ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PAST 4 YEARS

- For the first time ever, in 2013, the real size of digital gender gap and the digital native population were quantified by ITU-D. The gender gap is more pronounced in the developing world, where, on average, 16% fewer women than men use the Internet, compared with only 2% fewer women than men in the developed world. As for digital natives, they represent just over 5% of the world population and 30% of the world's young population.
- Over 920,000 women at the bottom of the development pyramid have been trained to become digitally literate since ITU and Telecentre.org Foundation launched their joint Women's Digital Literacy Campaign in 2011. The partners are on target to reach their goal of training 1 million women to become digitally literate.
- ITU-D continues to convene the world's largest gathering of regulators and to track the changing ICT regulatory environment. In 2013, the Global Symposium for Regulators attracted 664 participants from 131 countries, including around 110 regulatory agencies. Over the past four years, an important work has been carried out to accompany ITU Member States in embracing the opportunities delivered over broadband networks.
- ITU-D continues to act as catalyst and facilitator in achieving a global culture of cybersecurity, through initiative and programmes aimed at improving national cybersecurity as well as facilitating international cooperation. Relevant projects are currently being undertaken in more than 100 countries, including conducting national cybersecurity assessments in 50 countries, training 2700 security professionals in 52 countries, and facilitating the establishment and improvement of Computer Incident Response Team (CIRTs) in 60 countries.
- Since 2011, ITU-D has provided emergency telecommunication equipment to countries that experienced natural disasters including the strongest ever typhoon that hit the Philippines in Nov 2013. On that occasion, ITU-D provided solar panels and VSAT equipment in addition to the satellite mobile phones.

- The “National e-Health Strategy Toolkit” is the most substantial and significant collaboration between the ICT and the health sector - represented by ITU and WHO - to respond to the need of growing specialized skills and capacities to adapt and employ the latest ICT in health for the benefits of citizens.
- A global partnership platform called “Be He@lthy, Be mobile” was launched by ITU and WHO to focus on the use of mobile technology to improve Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) prevention and treatment.
- ITU-D is implementing the Broadband Wireless Networks Project for Africa and developing ICT applications to provide free or low-cost digital access for schools and hospitals, and for underserved populations in rural and remote areas in selected countries. ITU-D also produced the first global interactive online terrestrial (optical fibre and microwave) Transmission Map.
- Updated versions of the Guidelines for the digital broadcasting transition were released and more than 30 countries were assisted in preparation of their roadmap.