

Sight lines to far horizons

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■ This edition of *ITU News* looks — both metaphorically and literally — at far horizons, starting with “The Optical World”, a *Technology Watch* Report published by ITU in June 2011. The report provides an overview of the optical world, and surveys standards and ongoing research that will lead to a new generation of Internet and computing devices. Some of the challenges the world faces in energy, health and the environment may be solved with the help of optics and photonics. Today, optical technologies are the driving force behind the bandwidth growth of the Internet. These technologies have opened the way for new business models such as YouTube, allowing users to share video clips.

A Geneva Dialogue on m-health, held on 27 June 2011, highlighted the prospects of using mobile technology to advance public health in the developing world. Some basic approaches are needed to spread the benefits of m-health. These include anchoring e-health and m-health in government priorities and strategies, and moving ahead with standardization in these areas.

On 30 June 2011, amateur climbers from ITU reached the summit of Mont Blanc, 4810 metres above sea level. The climbers immediately established radio contact with ITU’s amateur radio station. They tell us how they faced up to such a great challenge. Each of us will draw our own lessons from this tale of teamwork and achievement. What it says to me is that we all can look for, and climb, our own Mont Blanc. Risk

and achievement are part and parcel of our dynamic telecommunications world — take a moment to enjoy your team’s summit achievement.

On independence and recognition by the United Nations General Assembly, a country can apply to ITU for a country code. On 14 July 2011, ITU officially assigned the international dialling code 211 to the world’s newest nation, the Republic of South Sudan, following the country’s formal recognition as a United Nations Member State.

On 24 July 2011, as planned, Japan switched off its analogue television network in all areas, except those worst hit by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami. Because of damage from the disaster, the Japanese government has postponed the move to digital terrestrial television in the prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima until the end of March 2012.

As we prepare for ITU Telecom World 2011, to be held in Geneva on 24–27 October, I encourage our members to register for the event, including the Technical Symposium, which will take an in-depth look at cutting-edge technological developments that are defining and influencing the future of networks and services in areas such as e-health, e-government, and next-generation wireless standardization and deployment. Participating delegates will also have the chance to be part of the high-level networking and knowledge-sharing taking place throughout the week in Geneva. Be there! ■