GREEN.4 : THINKING GREEN: POLICY AND PRACTICES FOR ICT INNOVATION

By some accounts the ICT contributes to 2-3% of carbon dioxide emissions-equivalent to that of the aviation industry. Yet by the same token, it is also a tool to reduce the carbon emissions of other industries. For Green ICT, as a tool, to become a reality, it is important to see how governments and businesses can pave the way to ensure a strong business case for Green ICT. Whilst going green clearly has an impact on operational costs, it is sometime not clear if a return on investment greater than 3 years can justify an increased capital expenditure for going green. This is especially so for businesses that runs on a quarterly reporting structure. Added to that, renewable energy is often costlier than burning fossil fuels. The right policies and practices can enhance the business case to go Green for the ICT industry. For example, incentives can be in the form of government and business procurement policies which help ensure a market for big and small suppliers to grow their base and continue to innovate. Meanwhile, governments can lead the way with the right policies. Some governments such as Canada have introduced the concept of "Green bandwidth" i.e incentivizing people to be more energy efficient and they are rewarded by broadband connections"- meets the need to grow a renewable energy industry and the broadband industry in one swoop. These and many more innovative policies, including carbon taxation, cap and trade, cap and dividend etc, will be explored.

Key questions:
–   Is there a clear business case to go green or should governments step in to help businesses go green e.g. carbon taxation, or the use of green ICT as a vendor selection criteria in procurement practices?
–   Are there innovative business or government policy and practices that have been shown to lead the way for green innovation in ICTs?

Summary of debate
One of the panelists started taking about "Energy Divide". From the point of view of the developing countries, this means a challenge of power supply in