

an entirely different dynamic.” Mr Sayed-Khaiyum cited a recent example in Fiji, where, he said, a leading mobile phone manufacturer had refused to serve the island State, due to its small size. On the issue of climate change, Mr Sayed-Khaiyum warned that some island States could soon disappear from the face of the Earth due to rising sea levels. He challenged industry leaders to bring much-needed technology to these countries.

Speaking of the recent disaster, Samoa’s Minister of Communications and Information Technology Safuneitu’uga Pa’aga Neri stated that even though her country was going through some very difficult times, recovering from the shock and damage caused by a devastating tsunami on 29 September 2009, “I thought that I needed to be here at this time to convey my message on the importance of having efficient and reliable alert and warning systems in place to help save lives, and to request our partners for some assistance in this area”.

She stressed that “Samoa, being a small island developing State located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, we truly believe in the importance of having a good telecommunication and ICT infrastructure and network, to assist the nation at times of natural disasters and other emergencies”. She commented that least developed countries, and most developing countries, are still far behind in terms of connectivity and broadband access. “Lack of broadband infrastructure and high connectivity costs are the main challenges we still face. With limited resources available, we continue to rely on our partners and assistance to help us put in place the appropriate and relevant infrastructure,” the minister said.

International efforts

Francis Gurry, the Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) underlined that the answer to climate change is, ultimately, technology — and that ICT provide an enabling platform. “At WIPO, we try to provide an open innovation platform, which can signal the availability of the various technologies that can be of assistance to meet the challenges of climate change,” he said.