



**Regional preparatory process for ECE Region  
of the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development 2012 (UNCSD)**

**Statement made by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**

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Mr. Co-Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our colleagues from the Economic Commission for the European Region for hosting us today at this last regional preparatory meeting for the UN Conference for Sustainable Development (also referred to as “Rio+20”). In addition I would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to bring to this process new elements to enrich the discussion.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is pleased to join the collective efforts of the international community in renewing the global commitment and vision towards achieving a *new development model* based on strong sustainability criteria and encompassing societal concerns, such poverty eradication and growing inequalities.

ITU has promptly submitted its *input for the compilation document* to serve as basis for the preparation of a zero draft of the outcome document of the conference.

ITU has also provided a submission as Chair of the UN Group on the Information Society, an interagency mechanism under UNCEB to coordinate substantive and policy issues facing the United Nations system’s implementation of outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, thereby contributing to improving policy coherence in the UN system.

Through its submissions ITU comments on the progress to date, underlines the potential key role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the transition to a greener and fairer development model, and shares its expectations for the outcomes of the Conference and the future sustainable development agenda.

Drawing *lessons from the outcomes of the major conferences* on sustainable development, ITU notes the need for concrete and measurable targets to be defined at the Rio+20 Summit. In addition, ITU emphasizes the need for greater coordination of actions at all levels, and deeper integration of policies, in particular cross-sectoral national strategies.



Among concrete outcomes expected from the Conference, ITU supports the *development of a Roadmap*, which could take the form of a focused political document to be agreed upon and an action-oriented framework setting specific goals and a set of measures and tools to achieve them.

It is of high importance to focus on concrete strategies and specific tools and sectors to facilitate and accelerate the transition to a green economy and sustainable development pathways. The role of enabling regulatory frameworks, green or resilient technologies and applications, as well as the active involvement of the private sector, are undeniably crucial to succeed in these efforts.

With regards to the theme of the *Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication*, ITU highlights the transformational potential and positive impact of ICTs in multiple areas such as:

- measuring, monitoring and accounting schemes;
- technical standards and regulation policies;
- capacity building and technology access regimes;
- engagement of the industry and ICT sector;
- communication, mobilization and education dynamics;
- social progress, empowerment and inclusive governance; and
- sharing best practices and developing innovative partnerships.

**In a few words, ICTs are a unique cost-effective, environmentally friendly and inclusive tool to spur green growth and create jobs, promote social progress and the MDGs, and ensure environmental protection and a sustainable future. Thus, ITU reiterates that ICTs should be recognized as one of the *major cross-cutting drivers of sustainable development*. ICTs help reinforce, converge and integrate all three pillars of sustainable development, and they also support and facilitate attainment of its fundamental underlying principles of efficiency, effectiveness and equity.**

In addition, ITU promote synergies between Rio+20 and other relevant processes, such as the *World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)*, a major UN process which discusses the deployment and use of ICTs as enablers of development.



The outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) provide an overall strategic framework for the deployment and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as an enabler for sustainable development, by enhancing access of vulnerable populations to education, health care, information, finance and knowledge, protecting the environment, mitigating natural disaster risk, ensuring sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable food production, which falls in line with internationally-agreed development goals in general and with environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources in particular, as mentioned in both the Rio Principles and Agenda 21.

In our modern interconnected global community, ICTs serve as a multi-media window to the world enabling widespread access to information and reinforcing the human need to communicate. This invokes *Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which guarantees freedom to hold and express opinions across all frontiers and all media. The Internet, wireless connectivity, mobile devices and social media are leading the digital revolution. But most importantly, they are proving to be powerful tools to narrow the knowledge divide, enhance access to services and information, shift behavioral patterns, empower individuals and help reduce poverty as well as assist transforming several sectors and ensuring a sustainable future. ITU together with UNESCO is forging ahead with the Broadband Commission initiative the above challenges and opportunities, advocating for broadband networks and mobile technologies as catalysts for faster progress in achieving the MDGs.

**The ECE region is already pioneering in supporting smart grids and other ICT-enabled solutions in modernizing several sectors, in particular the energy, transport, manufacturing and services sectors. It is also in favor of information-based instruments, assessment and management networks, progressive standards regulations in the context of green economy policy mixes. ITU encourages the ECE region in *highlighting the role of ICTs as a solution provider* for achieving sustainable development and eradicating poverty, providing optimal overall low carbon, low cost and enhanced human well-being outcomes.**

**ITU believes the time is right to make the best use of all the opportunities at our hands to move together the sustainable development agenda forward, with and through ICTs.**

Thank you Mr. Co-Chairman.