

ITU Statement for UNECE WP.1, 25 September 2013

Thank you Madame Chair.

Distinguished colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

ITU appreciates the opportunity provided to participate in this Working Party 1 meeting and to speak to you this morning.

ITU is the International Telecommunication Union, the UN-specialized organization for telecommunications and information and communication technologies, ICTs for short.

ITU¹:

- plays a vital role in the global management of the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits, both limited natural resources;
- develops standards (xDSL, optical fibre and optical networks, video encoding standards, the “bump” on the key “5” of your phone); and
- gives advice to developing countries to build up their ICT infrastructure

The interplay between ICTs and the transportation sector has become a major focus in ITU in recent years.

ITU is putting increasing efforts in developing state-of-the-art standards for Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and driver safety, using a combination of information technology, telecommunications, navigation positioning and automation technologies, including in-car radars for collision avoidance.

The radio frequency spectrum necessary for ITS is high on the agenda of ITU’s next World Radiocommunication Conference in 2015.²

ITU is developing standards for safe user interfaces, and communication systems in vehicles, as well as optimizing driving performance by eliminating unsafe technology-related distractions while driving.

The UN Secretary General has recently called upon ITU to promote national policies that encourage the use of ICT to enhance road safety.³

In recent years ITU initiated the Fully Networked Car@Geneva Motor Show an event which brings together key players in the ICT and car industries. Some of you may have participated there and I encourage you to join us in 2014.

¹ <http://itu.int/>

² <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-R/conferences/wrc/2015/>

³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pj4Ch8m5Jio>

In addition, in 2010 ITU produced a Technology Watch report on Driver Distraction⁴, and initiated work in a Focus Group on the topic. The output of the Focus Group is now being turned into internationally recognized standards, which are known in ITU as Recommendations.⁵

Earlier this year ITU hosted an event to mark World Telecommunication Information Society Day with the theme “ICTs and improving road safety”.⁶

The 2013 World Telecommunication and Information Society Award was presented to three eminent personalities: Mr Ueli Maurer, President of the Swiss Confederation; Mr Volkmar Denner, Chairman of the Board of Management of Robert Bosch GmbH; and Mr Jean Todt, President of the International Automobile Federation (FIA); in recognition of their leadership and dedication towards promoting ICTs as a means of improving road safety.

ITU has since formed a partnership with FIA to promote ways of decreasing driver distraction caused by ICTs, and to promote the important role that ICTs can play in reducing the numbers of accidents on our roads.

ITU and the UNECE Inland Transport Committee jointly organized a workshop on ITS in emerging economies held in June 2013.⁷ Workshop participants adopted an action plan calling upon standards makers, governments and industry to “[...] *accelerate the development and adoption of standards that address the growing dangers of technology-caused driver distraction.*”⁸

ITU understands that the use of mobile devices by drivers in moving vehicles creates risks of vehicle accidents. Mobile devices continue to increase in numbers and capabilities. This trend is increasing the risk of driver distraction issues from mobile devices in moving vehicles.

ITU expects that the issues of driver distraction by mobile devices will be addressed by legal promulgations in various jurisdictions prohibiting certain actions by drivers with their mobile devices, regulations by various vehicle and telecommunications regulators to prescribe requirement for new vehicles and new mobile devices, and technical implementations to enforce legal prescriptions and regulations covering the use of mobile devices by drivers in moving vehicles.

ITU believes that best solutions to driver distraction by the use of mobile devices in vehicles by drivers can be created by the vehicle community and the telecommunications and ICT community working together.

ITU invites UNECE WP.1 to formally establish a cooperation with ITU for the joint development of solutions to reduce the misuse of mobile devices by drivers in moving vehicles.

⁴ Available at <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/techwatch/Pages/driverdistraction.aspx>

⁵ The Focus Group reports are available at <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/focusgroups/distraction/>

⁶ <http://www.itu.int/en/wtisd/>

⁷ <http://itu.int/go/ITSworkshop>

⁸ The action plan is available at <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/its-em/201306/Documents/ITS%20workshop%20-%20action%20plan.pdf>

In closing, let me reiterate my gratitude to all of you and the UNECE secretariat for the opportunity to share this information with you.⁹

⁹ Please contact Mr Martin Adolph (martin.adolph@itu.int) for any further information.