

The Secretary-General



Geneva, 23 November 2009

Subject: Message from Dr. H. I. Touré, ITU Secretary General to Parties of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Dear Parties of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

I am writing to you, on behalf of ITU Member States, to highlight the unanimous decision by the 2009 session of the ITU Council regarding the importance of the role of telecommunications/ICTs in combating climate change, contained in ITU Council 2009 Resolution 1307 "Information and communication technologies (ICTs) and climate change".

I am pleased to attach the Submission from the International Telecommunication Union to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Collaborative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA) for your consideration.

Please do not hesitate to contact ITU at climate@itu.int should you need any further information.

Information on ITU's activities on climate change can be found at www.itu.int/climate

Please allow me to thank you in advance for your attention on this extremely timely and important issue.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and curves, representing the name of Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré.

Dr Hamadoun I. Touré

Submission from the International Telecommunication Union to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Collaborative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA) and the Bali Plan of Action

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in accordance with Article 7.2 (l) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change welcomes the opportunity to submit this supplemental input concerning the important role that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can play to tackle climate change in the framework of the AWG-LCA and the Bali Plan of Action.

ITU is the UN specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs) including telecommunication issues. ITU Council 2009 at its ninth Plenary Meeting by unanimous decision adopted Resolution 1307 "Information and communication technologies (ICTs) and climate change." In this Resolution, ITU has been asked by its Member States to significantly enhance efforts to raise public and policymaker awareness of the critical role of ICTs in addressing climate change in the run-up to COP-15.

ICTs are now embedded in almost all parts of the world society and economy. The digital revolution and proliferation of ICTs has changed people's lives dramatically and boosted economic growth. ICTs themselves are growing contributor to climate change. This is mainly due to the fact that the ICT industry is growing faster than the rest of economy. It is estimated that the ICT sector will contribute up to 8%¹ of total GHG emissions by 2050.

Although ICTs are part of the problem, they can also be an important part of the solution. Studies have shown that the application of telecommunications/ICTs can reduce total greenhouse gas emissions by at least 15 per cent by 2020 (GeSI 2020 report²). Some estimate reductions of over 40%³ can be achieved through the application of ICTs by 2050, i.e. five times as much as the sector contributes.

ICTs provide means for virtual meetings (to replace/reduce travelling), smart grids, e-governance, e-health, intelligent transport systems, dematerialization (for example electronic publications rather than paper, downloading videos instead of buying DVDs etc), as well as providing for early-warning and disaster relief communications.

Radio-based remote sensing applications on the board of satellites are the main global observation tools employed by the Global Climate Observation System (GCOS) for climate monitoring, disaster prediction, detection and mitigation of negative effects of climate change. ITU as the steward of the global framework for spectrum, the necessary radio-frequency spectrum and orbit resources for GCOS and develops international standards for effective, non-interference operation of observation systems based on radio-based technologies.

ITU develops global ICT standards (mandatory – international treaties and voluntary) for environmentally sound information-communication technologies. As an example, ITU recently approved a global standard for an energy-efficient mobile phone charger to fit all future mobiles saving up to 82,000 tons of redundant chargers a year and at least 13.6 millions tones CO₂ a year.

ITU is developing, together with more than 20 organizations and major ICT companies, a common methodology to measure the life cycle impact of the ICT Sector, both in terms of its own emissions, and the saving through ICT applications in other industry sectors.

¹ Technology Actions to Support the Smart Economy Report, June 2009

² The Climate Group, SMART 2020 report, researched by McKinsey and Company.

³http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sustainable_growth/docs/com_2009_111/com2009-111-en.pdf

One of ITU's major goals is to bring the benefits of the information society to all citizens of the world. Including a reference to the ICT sector in the sectoral part of the negotiating text, the adoption of a methodology for the ICT sector, and its inclusion in National Adaptation/Mitigation Plans, would provide an incentive to the ICT industry to invest in developing countries, help reduce the digital divide, and at the same time help fight climate change – a win-win scenario.

Suggestion:

Reviewing the current revised negotiating texts called "non-papers" (available at: http://unfccc.int/meetings/ad_hoc_working_groups/lca/items/5012.php) we have noted that the critical role of ICTs in combating climate change is not currently reflected in the draft sections on: Shared vision, Cooperative sectoral approaches and sector-specific actions; Enhanced action on development and transfer of technology; and Adaptation.

In this regard and building on this mandate, ITU respectfully requests, in order of priority, consideration of the following input for inclusion in revisions to the following "non-papers":

Contact group on a shared vision for long-term cooperative action

See **Non paper 52⁴ page 15 (content of Non paper 43) (issued on 6/11/09)**

Add reference to "information-communication technologies" to paragraph 9 as shown below:

9. Realizing that harmonizing sustainable development while addressing climate change and demands for a more equitable utilization of the global atmospheric resource necessitate a paradigm shift that adjust global economic growth patterns towards a sustainable climate-resilient development, based on innovative technologies, in particular information-communication technologies, and more sustainable production and ...

Contact group on enhanced action on mitigation and its associated means of implementation, Subgroup on paragraph 1 (b) (iv) of the Bali Action Plan (Cooperative sectoral approaches and sector-specific actions)

See **Non-paper No. 49^{5*} (issued on 06/11/09)**

Add reference to "ICT sector" in list of sectors:

[What cooperative sectoral approaches and sector-specific actions (CSAs) should do]:1

1. [[Cooperative sectoral approaches and sector-specific actions [shall][should][enhance the][be focused on the enhanced] implementation of Article 4.1 (c) of the Convention, on:]

(a) [The development, application and diffusion, including transfer, of technologies, practices and processes that control, reduce or prevent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, applicable to all relevant sectors, including, but not limited to, the energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry, health, tourism, waste management, information and communication technology sectors];]

⁴ http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/ad_hoc_working_groups/lca/application/pdf/awglcasvnp52061109.pdf

⁵ http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/ad_hoc_working_groups/lca/application/pdf/awglca1bivnp49051109.pdf

Contact group on enhanced action on Development and transfer of technology

See Non-paper No. 47⁶* (issued on 6/11/09)

Add reference to "information-communication technologies" to paragraph 5 of Annex II as shown below:

5. Using latest information-communication technologies and telecommunication systems facilitate the information sharing on technologies for adaptation among parties [through, inter alia, the technologies information platform as referred in paragraph 11]

Contact group on enhanced action on adaptation and its means of implementation

See Non paper 53⁷ page 30 (Content of Non paper 41) (issued on 6/11/09)

Add reference to "information-communication technologies" to indent (d) of Annex III as shown below:

(d) Generating and sharing knowledge; exchanging lessons learned and best practices; collecting,

analysing and disseminating information, using the most advanced information-communication technologies and telecommunication networks, on past and current practical adaptation actions and measures, including projects, short- and long-term strategies, and local and indigenous knowledge;

It would be also very desirable to add references to telecommunications/information-communication technologies (ICTs) to other parts of the convention you consider to be relevant.

Please note that the Submission from the International Telecommunication Union to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Collaborative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA) and the Bali Plan of Action is available in French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese at: <http://www.itu.int/themes/climate/events/un-climate.html>

⁶http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/ad_hoc_working_groups/lca/application/pdf/awglcattnp47061109.pdf

⁷http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/ad_hoc_working_groups/lca/application/pdf/awglcaadaptnp53061109.pdf