



## WSIS Forum 2011 Outcome Document



### Action Line C7 e-Environment (ITU/UNEP/WMO)

Wednesday 18 May, 16:30 – 18:00, Room V

#### 1. E-Environment day at WSIS Forum 2011

For WSIS Forum 2011, the co-facilitators for this action line (*ITU, UNEP, WMO and the Basel Convention*) organized a full day of events under the heading “*e-Environment day at WSIS Forum 2011*”. This thematic day included two workshops, an action line facilitation meeting, a publication releases session and a joint stand, offering participants several opportunities to exchange knowledge and network with each other.

#### 2. ICT Sector Engagement Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Energy for ALL

The first workshop of the day looked at the efforts of the ICT industry to increase energy efficiency in the sector, where energy savings are particularly envisaged for the operation of infrastructure, equipment and services. The session also provided an overview of energy efficiency in all areas of production and consumption, and looked at ways in which ICTs can help to achieve more effective energy production and distribution as well as energy consumption by end users.

The session highlighted the set of methodologies currently being developed within ITU-T Study Group 5 to measure the life cycle impact of the ICT Sector, both in terms of its own greenhouse gas emissions and the savings created through ICT applications in other industry sectors. These methodologies will be instrumental to green the ICT industry and encourage the adoption of ICTs as enablers of a low carbon economy.

Finally, participants underlined the positive transformative potential of ICTs to de-carbonize the economy. Examples of this include the promotion and wide deployment of new smart technologies, such as smart grids or intelligent transport systems, as well as ensuring that energy efficient or alternative energy solutions are accessible and affordable for all. This last aspect will be much discussed during 2012, the “*International Year for Sustainable Energy for All*”.

#### 3. Avoiding e-waste. Moving to environmentally sound life-cycle management of ICTs

The second session of the “*e-Environment day*” was focused around the hot issue of e-waste. The session brainstormed on possible ways of establishing partnerships that link environmentally sound management of end-of-life computing equipment with ICT development programmes, including financing, infrastructure strengthening and education on national, regional and international levels.

The session highlighted the challenges that the accelerated adoption of ICTs will present for human health and the environment if the environmentally sound management of ICT equipment is not applied. From the life-cycle perspective, the engagement of the sector in addressing e-waste is of paramount importance. The link between the ICT and environment sectors at the national level needs to be strengthened to enjoy the benefits of the Information Society without compromising health and the environment.

A multi-stakeholder approach to this issue equipment engaging governments, the private sector, academia, and NGOs was accentuated by all panelists. Practical examples further underlined the value of this approach. In particular it was highlighted the role of governments to set up legal frameworks and standards, undertaking capacity building activities (in particular directed to the informal recycling industry), issuing licensing, and adopting green public procurement. The private sector should also further embrace social corporate responsibility and improve performance in terms of energy consumption and recyclability.

As follow up actions to this session, participants proposed to intensify awareness raising activities directed to the general public, encourage standardization and optimization of the ICT equipment and promote cooperation between the ICT and environment sectors among international organizations and on the national level to more effectively deal with the increased usage of the end-of-life ICT equipment

#### 4. From WSIS to Rio+20: The role of ICTs in sustainable development and the green economy transition



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The action line facilitation meeting session focused on the issue of sustainable development as an alternative model for growth and prosperity as suggested within the framework of the Rio+20 process. Participants in this session highlighted the enormous power of technological innovation and the ICT sector in particular in catalyzing the transition to a “*green economy*”. As in the previous sessions, it was recognized that the active involvement and cooperation of all stakeholders will be necessary to move the sustainable development agenda forward.

The ICT industry from its side can leverage the speed of this transition and provide tangible ideas and solutions towards a lower carbon economy through dematerialization, standardization, innovative design of products, new IT-enabled services and applications. At the same time, the private sector needs to adopt a comprehensive approach to secure that innovation is a solution provider and not a problem creator. Behavioral attitudes of consumers as well as policy planning and practices of governments also need to be influenced in order to mainstream environmental concerns and promote ethical consumption. To this end, all stakeholders will need to be actively involved to overcome the obstacles found since the first Earth Summit in the implementation of the major environmental conventions and treaties.

Other issues highlighted during this discussion was the role of the UN system in ensuring both development and inclusion in the modern Information Society or the need for holistic approaches grasping all aspects and levels of planning, policy and practice. For instance, IT-enabled and climate systems can greatly improve better management of resources; however it is critical that the information they provide are relevant to the needs of each actor.

As a conclusion to this session participants agreed that the Information Society has many lessons to share with the sustainable development community. To this end a call to action was launched to look at the lessons learned from WSIS process to prepare an input that can be presented throughout the preparatory process of the Rio+20 conference. Such input would highlight the key role of ICTs in the promotion of sustainable development and assist in the success of the conference. WSIS Forum 2012, which will take place a few weeks before the conference, could be a good platform to present the results of this exercise and to promote the launching of new multi-stakeholder partnerships during Rio+20 to promote concrete ICT applications for a sustainable future.

### **5. E-Environment day at WSIS Forum 2011**

Summarizing, the “*e-Environment day*” brought together experts from the ICT public and private sectors, civil society, as well as experts from the environmental community, looking together at the key role of the information society in the protection of the environment. The three sessions of the day identified several activities to be followed up for WSIS Forum 2012, in particular the invitation to produce an input for the Rio+20 conference. The co-facilitators for this action line invite other action-line co-facilitators to participate in this task.

Finally, one of the success stories of the day was the involvement of the civil society in the organization of the sessions. On the other hand, an aspect to improve for the future was the participation of the public sector, which was in general terms low throughout the sessions. Summarizing, the event moved forward on creating bridges between the ICT and the environmental communities, a bridge that will need to be strengthened in the future.