

## New Year Message from ITU Secretary-General



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**I**t is always a great pleasure to have the opportunity to communicate with our Japanese community through ITU Journal.

ITU has a particularly close relationship with the ITU Association of Japan (ITU-AJ), an organization which, for over four decades, has made an invaluable contribution to ITU's extensive work, particularly in technical standardization and radiocommunications. The tireless efforts of membership associations such as the ITU-AJ make ITU even more effective in its role of helping to bring the benefits of modern communication technologies to people everywhere.

The year 2013 has been perhaps the busiest yet on the ITU calendar. We have seen major events in all world regions, from the very successful Connect Asia Pacific and ITU Telecom World events held just a month ago in Thailand, to the Transform Africa event in Kigali (in which ITU proudly partnered), to the Global Symposium for Regulators in Poland, and of course a host of events at our Geneva headquarters, including the WSIS Forum, World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, and the 2013 World Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF).

This important event was held just a few months after the complex and, at times, strained negotiations in Dubai over the new International Telecommunication Regulations. So it was very encouraging indeed to see delegations put their differences aside and come together in the spirit of true constructive discussion, under the very capable chairmanship of Minister Ivo Ivanovski of Macedonia. The event welcomed over 900 delegates from 126 Member States, including over 40 Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Ambassadors.

True to our commitment to accessibility, all sessions were captioned, allowing the entire forum to be as open and inclusive as possible. And true to our 'green ITU' policy, despite considering 900 pages of documents, the event was managed in an almost entirely paperless manner.

The output of the WTPF was an improved understanding of international Internet-related public policy matters, and the six Opinions agreed by the forum will serve as a solid framework to support further discussions on the shape of the ICT sector as it continues to evolve.

The Broadband Commission for Digital Development also continued its highly successful advocacy work throughout the year, punctuated by two annual meetings. In March, Commissioners were generously hosted by Co-Chair Carlos Slim Helú in Mexico City. This meeting also saw the first face-to-face meeting of the Commission's new Working Group on Gender – the most popular working group ever established by the Commission, with broad representation across the UN family, the private sector, government and civil society.

In the following month, ITU hosted a Girls in ICT Day event at its Geneva headquarters, while at the same time I joined European Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes and others in Brussels at a special session of the European Parliament to highlight this issue, where we were delighted to hear a talk from Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg on the highly rewarding career opportunities open to talented young women in the ICT industry.

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day this year focused on the theme of driver safety, highlighting the catalytic role ICTs can play in improving road safety and traffic management. ITU was proud to award three distinguished laureates for their outstanding work in promoting increased use of technology to improve the driving experience: Ueli Maurer,

President of the Swiss Confederation; Volkmar Denner, Chairman of the Board of Management of Robert Bosch GmbH; and Jean Todt, President of the International Automobile Federation (FIA).

Another highlight of the year was the chance for ITU to join President Laura Chinchilla of Costa Rica at the BYND2015 Global Youth Summit, an exciting and energizing event that welcomed some 600 young people from around the world to San José, Costa Rica, for three days of discussion, debate and activities around key issues of relevance to today's youth, from Child Online Protection to climate change to unemployment. The event attracted a huge number of partners, including UNICEF, the Kofi Annan Foundation, One Young World, Microsoft, América Móvil/Claro, Cisco Systems, Telecentre.org, Ooredoo, The Walt Disney Company, the government of Azerbaijan, PricewaterhouseCoopers, ICTQatar and Intel. President Chinchilla proudly presented the Manifesto developed by the youth at this summit to the UN General Assembly meeting a few weeks later.

Around the same time, the eighth meeting of the Broadband Commission in New York released the Commission's annual State of Broadband report – the only comprehensive global snapshot of the state of broadband development worldwide. This meeting also saw the launch of the report of the Working Group on Gender, presided over by screen actor Geena Davis, whose advocacy around the issue a year earlier had been the catalyst for the establishment of the group, which was most ably led by UNDP Administrator Helen Clark.

October saw the launch of ITU's own flagship analytical report, Measuring the Information Society, which was simultaneously launched in six locations globally, receiving unprecedented media coverage worldwide. The report revealed that 40% of the world is now online, with an additional 250 million people joining the online community in 2012 alone. ITU remains the primary statistics-gathering agency for ICT data, and I am very proud that our statistics are widely recognized as the world's most reliable and impartial global data on the state of the industry, and are used extensively by leading intergovernmental agencies, financial institutions and private sector analysts.

November was of course the month for the ITU Telecom World and the Connect Asia Pacific events, and we closed the year with a bigger and better version of our annual statistics meeting, which is renamed the World Telecommunication Indicators Symposium (WTIS), and features not just data experts but high-level thought leaders from industry, government, the global analyst community, and of course our sister UN agencies. The meeting, generously hosted by the government of Mexico, welcomed around 400 delegates and an impressive number of prominent figures from the global ICT community.

And so, with the year now at an end, ITU is already busy preparing for what will undoubtedly be the highlight of 2014, the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, which will take place in Busan, Republic of Korea, from October 20 to November 7.

This promises to be the biggest Plenipot yet, with our Korean hosts planning a great many exciting side events and activities. I look forward to seeing a large contingent of delegates from the ITU-AJ at that conference, which Korea is pitching as 'the Olympics of ICT'!

In closing, may I also take this opportunity to wish all those at the ITU-AJ and their families a peaceful and prosperous 2014, and I look forward to engaging with many of you not just at PP-14, but at the many other exciting annual ITU events scheduled throughout the coming year.