

Opening Address
Innovations for Digital Inclusion
ITU-T Kaleidoscope event, Mar del Plata, Argentina, 31 Aug
Malcolm Johnson, Director, ITU Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

Ladies and gentlemen

I am very pleased to welcome you to this – the second Kaleidoscope event.

Firstly I would like to thank the Ministerio de Planificación Federal Inversión Pública y Servicios and in particular my friend Carlos Lisandro Salas, Secretary for Communications and Ceferino Namuncura, Head Communications National Commission, Argentina.

We are very grateful to the Argentinean administration for hosting this event here in the beautiful city of Mar del Plata.

Many new technologies originate in the minds of academics.

Likewise academia has made great contribution to many standards for information and communications technologies (ICTs).

ITU has a long and profitable history of engagement with the world's universities and academic institutions.

I strongly believe that the profit that we gain from this is reflected in the benefits that academia can gain from attending our meetings, networking with world-class engineers and getting a unique perspective on the development of ICTs.

In recent years we have begun to explore how to increase our engagement with academia.

One of the most significant things that we have done is to make our standards available for free download. This has made a significant difference to the availability and use of this material by academia, especially in the developing world.

Our resolve to increase academic input was given greater impetus at the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-08) held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in October 2008.

WTSA-08 passed Resolution 71 which instructed me to pursue increased collaboration with and direct participation of academia, universities and related research establishments and invited the ITU Council to consider the admission of academic institutions, universities and associated research establishments to ITU-T at reduced cost.

Perhaps, the most visible example of ITU's cooperation with academia are these Kaleidoscope academic conferences.

The theme this year is *Innovations for Digital Inclusion*. I am glad to see the high-level of interest in this important topic.

Over 80 paper proposals were submitted for strict peer-review by some 110 experts, resulting in the papers accepted for inclusion in the proceedings.

I appreciate very much the hard work of the review panel in selecting, from the very high quality contributed papers, some of the most visionary papers for presentation here.

I am sure that discussions that start during the conference will continue after the event, and consequently assist us in the development of standards for future networks and services that will foster digital inclusion.

Bridging the digital divide is, after all, one of the key missions of ITU.

I would also like to draw attention to our Technology Watch initiative in which we very much encourage the contribution of academia. I am pleased to report that in 2008/9 we have published a number of very interesting reports and I encourage you to seek them out. The initiative aims to foster the efficient development of international standards in new and emerging technologies by identifying those technologies as early as possible.

As well as the Kaleidoscope events and Technology Watch there are many other opportunities for the academic community to take part in the work of ITU-T. Notably our workshop programme offers free of charge events that aim to progress existing work areas and explore new ones. The events cover a wide array of topics in the field ICT and attract high-ranking experts as speakers, and attendees from engineers to high-level management from all industry sectors.

ITU greatly appreciates and welcomes the contribution of academia. We welcome you with open arms.

Now, in place of a standard power point presentation I would like to propose a more entertaining illustration of the standards work of ITU. This short video was produced with the support of NTT, Cisco Systems and NHK.

Thank you

Malcolm Johnson

Director, ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector