

<b>Session Title:</b> ITU-UNESCO Open Forum
<b>Date:</b> 8 December 2016
<b>Time:</b> 9:00-10:00
<b>Session Organizer(s):</b> ITU, UNESCO
<b>Chair/Moderator:</b> Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Chief, Strategic Planning and Membership, ITU
<p><b>List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:</b></p> <p><b>Opening remarks :</b> Mr. Frank La Rue, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Indrajit Banerjee, Director, Knowledge Societies Division, UNESCO</li> <li>• Mr. Manu Bhardwaj, Senior Advisor on Technology and Internet Policy, Global Connect Initiative (GCI), US Department of State</li> <li>• Mr. Alex Wong, Head, Global Challenge Partnerships, WEF</li> <li>• Mr. Paul Mitchell, Senior Director, Tech Policy, Microsoft</li> <li>• Mr. Jose Ayala, Head of Government and Industry relations for Latin America, Ericsson</li> </ul>
<p>The session provided useful insights into the role and work of the ITU-UNESCO Broadband Commission, which was first launched in 2010 to look into issues of digital development, connectivity, infrastructure, education and capacity building, while bringing in the expertise of a broad range of stakeholders. With the adoption of the 2030 Development Agenda in 2015 the Broadband Commission was reconstituted as the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, and as such is now focusing on the realization of the 17 SDGs and 169 Targets through a digital lens.</p> <p>This Open Forum further provided a platform for Members of the Broadband Commission and other stakeholders to present existing initiatives, such as the US Government’s Global Connect Initiative, the WEF’s Internet for All and Ericsson’s “Connect to Learn” programme, as well as UNESCO’s Internet Universality concept.</p> <p>Speakers agreed that expanding connectivity to the unconnected areas of the world is essential for accelerating the implementation of the SDGs and for allowing all countries and individuals to be part of the new digital era. Specific mentions were made <i>inter alia</i> to ICTs supporting SDGs on education, women’s empowerment, social and financial inclusion, accessibility, eradication of poverty, and peace and justice.</p> <p>Participants further discussed a number of different aspects, which were considered as important in the global efforts for connecting the unconnected and achieving the SDGs, <i>such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not focusing solely on connectivity, but also on access and inclusion. Rolling out infrastructure is important, but making sure that communities see the value of ICTs and</li> </ul>

know how to use them is key for increasing the positive impact of ICTs;

- Creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment to encourage investment and innovation;
- Encouraging grass-root solutions tailored to the needs of the local and rural communities;
- Identifying ways to increase affordability;
- Increasing collaboration among existing initiatives, involving also other sectors, such as education, banking, health etc., in order to address the specific implementation needs of each SDG;
- Leveraging existing platforms and venues for continuing work.