



**Meeting on ICT for Sustainable Development
“Green Technology & Sustainability: The Global Highway to Sustainable Business,
Economic and Social Development,”
7 October 2009, Delegates Dining Room, 4th Floor
United Nations Headquarters, New York
9:00 am – 5:00 pm**

**H.E. Ambassador Sylvie Lucas
President of the Economic and Social Council and
Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the United Nations**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Economic and Social Council, I would like to welcome all of you to this “Meeting on Green Technology & Sustainability”.

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to AIT Global for organizing this timely event and to the Global Alliance for ICT and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for its continued support to advancing the United Nations development agenda by promoting dialogue and discourse with business leaders on how information and communication technologies can be fully leveraged for development.

I also would like to thank all of you for your participation and for taking a strong interest in today’s most urgent global agenda.

The global agenda of sustainable development – which integrates the goals of economic growth, social development and environmental protection – has received renewed and vigorous attention in the United Nations. The Economic and Social Council which I have the honour of chairing this year, is the principal organ of the United Nations responsible for economic and social issues and the main

coordinating mechanism for development policy. The Council is composed of 54 member Governments, elected for a 3 year period. ECOSOC's focus in 2009 is to explore key challenges in achieving the international agreed development goals and commitments in the area of global public health. We strongly believe that information and communication technologies are playing a vital role for the health care systems around the world. Virtual and mobile technologies provide health care advice and services, and raise awareness. Distance-learning and telemedicine enable communities to access practical medical information in real-time, and educate the health care professionals that are urgently needed, especially in the developing world.

Indeed, the world today is struggling with new and emerging challenges, such as soaring world food and energy prices and the onset of global warming and climate change, which are threatening our efforts to lift people out of poverty. These challenges become even more severe for developing countries, particularly the least developed countries and small-island states.

As the effects of climate change and global warming are being felt around the world, for many small island countries, it is now becoming a threat to their very existence. Many countries in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, have also become vulnerable to more extreme weather, and these are the same countries which have very limited capacity and capability to cope.

The current turmoil in the world economy risks furthermore to reverse the modest progress and development that have been achieved in many of these countries, and to be detrimental to our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The challenges we face today are complex and we need to be creative and innovative in our responses. In this age of technological achievements, we see unparalleled growth in the capacity of technology to address today's development problems – to increase productivity in agriculture and industry; to help fight diseases and illiteracy; and to communicate across great distances and create seamless systems for the flow of information and knowledge for sustainable development.

New technologies are now moving towards building agricultural and industrial applications that are more sustainable. ICT can be useful in management and monitoring of soil through remote sensing. They can also help manage water demand through drip and advanced irrigation. They can be used in monitoring and

assessment of air pollution, forest fire management and in various meteorological applications. They can also help establish new paradigms for educational systems to open up the world of knowledge to events in the remotest corners of the globe.

ICT allows us to understand the environment and the impact of climate change fully. They can be useful tools to help arrest and ultimately reverse the adverse effects of greenhouse gases. They can help in making electricity load and energy management more efficient, thereby reducing CO₂ emissions. They help modernize mass transit, reducing the impact of urban transportation on the environment. And they can also be instrumental for providing information on climate change and disaster management.

But we need to keep in mind that the ICT sector itself (excluding the broadcasting sector) contributes about 2.5% of global Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG), and as the ICT industry is growing faster than the rest of the economy, it is likely that this share will increase over time. The main constituent (40%) of this is the energy requirements of PCs and data monitors, with data centers contributing a further 23%. Fixed and mobile telecommunications contribute an estimated 24% of the total. ICT can contribute significantly to finding a solution to reducing the remaining 97.5% of global emissions from other sectors of the economy, but at the same time it is essential that we develop more sustainable and green technologies in order to decrease the Greenhouse Gas emission and the enormous amount of e-waste that ICT produce at the moment.

The Economic and Social Council attaches great importance to the issues of sustainable development, environmental protection and climate change, and recognizes the strategic role of information and communication technologies in addressing these questions. In 2006, the Council requested the United Nations Secretary-General to launch the Global Alliance for ICT and Development with a view to fully exploiting the potential of ICT for sustainable development. Important contributions have meanwhile been made through multi-stakeholder partnerships and dialogue.

In the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN is also working hard to build a common ground and to mobilize political will across the globe to conclude an ambitious, global and binding agreement on climate change in Copenhagen in December.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On addressing the complex issues of sustainable development, no one can do the job alone. Today's global challenges require a collective response. Partnerships and collaboration among all stakeholders – governments, private sector and civil society – have become more crucial than ever. Indeed, development is no longer the sole responsibility of governments. The private sector has a critical role to play. Not only does it contribute to employment generation and wealth creation, it can even help lay out the structure of a low-carbon economy and promote sustainable and renewable energy. The private sector is at the forefront of creating innovations and new green technologies, which, when used effectively, can have tremendous impact on the lives of people around the world suffering from poverty or natural calamities, and help lay the foundation for a sustainable future for us all.

I am confident that this meeting will provide an important opportunity for all of you and the United Nations community to exchange views and ideas on how new technologies, in particular green technologies can be placed at the service of sustainable development. I look forward to benefiting from your exchange of experiences and views during the discussions that are taking place today. I call on each and every one of you to be actively involved in the development efforts of the United Nations and that of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development.

With these remarks, I would like to hand the floor to Mike Lackey and Sarbuland Khan.

Thank you.