

**Opening Address: Innovations in NGN – Future Network and Services, Geneva 12
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Ladies and gentlemen

I am very happy to see so many of you here today, you are all most welcome.

This is our first Kaleidoscope conference. The concept was born just over a year ago after a consultation meeting with a number of universities. I congratulate all those hard working members of the steering committee that have been able to organise this event in such a short time, and thank all those that responded to our call for papers – over 140 contributions. I am so pleased that it has generated such great interest from around the world, and we have already started planning for a similar event next year.

Standards are essential for international communications and global trade. Without standards from the likes of ITU and our esteemed partner in this event – IEEE – we would not have the Internet or the telecommunications system we enjoy today.

Standards reduce technical barriers and promote compatibility between systems, avoid costly market battles over preferred technologies, and reduce costs. They aid developing countries in building their infrastructure and encouraging economic development. Globalisation requires global standards, and a global standards body like ITU clearly has a major role to play. Developing global standards is hard work. Long hours are spent by ITU delegates from around the world working out the complexities to everyone's satisfaction. But looking around you can see they enjoy their work. It brings people, businesses, functions, economies and societies together. In a world constantly growing in complexity, the satisfaction of agreeing common standards to make things easier is their reward.

I hope that you will join us!

We have formed an informal discussion group with universities to discuss ways to increase cooperation between ITU and academia. If you are not a member, please join us. I believe it is producing some interesting ideas.

Forging closer links with academia is a key objective of ITU.

University professors from around the world play an important role in the development of ITU-T Recommendations, with some taking leading study group positions. And, as well as direct contributions, ITU-T Recommendations (our name for standards) are often cited in academic work.

ITU is very open to academia and in terms of participation ITU is a very flexible organization. Academic institutions wanting to become involved in the work of ITU-T, but not wanting to take full membership have often come to study group meetings, under the

banner of another organization. Alternatively becoming an Associate allows academia to participate in the development of Recommendations in a specific study group for around one third of the cost of full membership. Our Focus Groups – which often initiate important new standardization work – exist on various topics and participation is free.

Academia of course attend our workshops, much like this one. We organize a number of events during the year to progress existing work areas and explore new ones. The events cover a wide array of topics in the field of ICT and attract high-ranking experts as speakers, and attendees from engineers to high-level management from all industry sectors. Details can be found on our website.

I believe that universities can benefit enormously from joining the standards making process, and we can certainly benefit from your participation. Participation means becoming part of an international 'club' of ICT experts. ITU is a bit unique as a standards body in that we have as our members 191 governments as well as over 700 private sector entities. I call it an international public/private partnership. All major ICT companies are our members. There can be no more enlightening window on the world of ICT development than to be part of a team that creates a worldwide standard. It's an exciting opportunity for any university. For these reasons and many others Universities can gain major advantages from participation here. We welcome you with open arms!

Before I go I would like to thank our technical co-sponsor IEEE Communications Society. Special thanks go also to Cisco which has very generously donated the best paper prize fund. My thanks to Intel, the International Communications Foundation of Japan, and Sun Microsystems, for their kind assistance in supporting this event.

It's an honour and a pleasure for me to be able to open this meeting today. I am sure you will have a very enjoyable day. I look forward to meeting many of you during the day, and at our reception in the ITU building across the road this evening.

Thank you for your attention.