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Doha Action Plan

The *Doha Action Plan* is the key outcome of the fourth World Telecommunication Development Conference, organized by ITU in Doha, Qatar, on 7–15 March 2006. The plan sets out six programmes covering: regulatory reform; information and communication infrastructure and technology development; e-strategies and ICT applications; economics and financing, including cost and tariffs; human capacity



building; and least developed countries, Small Island Developing States, and emergency telecommunications. Two cross-cutting activities were also reaffirmed, and deal with statistics and information on telecommunications/ICT and partnerships and promotion. In addition, five global initiatives were endorsed that focus on women, youth and children, indigenous people and communities, people with disabilities and communities living in rural and under-served areas.

The study group work programme has been expanded to include four new questions in the areas of access to telecommunication services for people with disabilities; the impact of telecommunication development on the creation of employment; securing information and communication networks, including best practices for developing a culture of cybersecurity; and ICT and space-based systems for disaster prediction, detection and mitigation. The plan includes a new regional approach to development where each

region defines the framework of action for all stakeholders, based on region-specific priorities. Almost 1000 top-ranking officials from government, the private sector, as well as international and regional organizations attended the conference. More details will appear in the May 2006 issue of *ITU News*.

Geneva event focuses on RFID

Radio-frequency identification (RFID) enables data to be transmitted wirelessly by a tiny portable device, called a tag, that can be attached to almost any object. Analysts predict that RFID will revolutionize such areas of industry as supply chain management and mobile telecommunication services. ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) organized a workshop on *Networked RFID: Systems and Services* in Geneva on 14–15 February 2006. The workshop concluded



that a unified approach is needed on RFID standards for the technology to progress on a global scale, and that ITU can play an important role in international standardization efforts, as well as in raising awareness of the new technology.

Call for global standards to shape the digital home

More and more, digital electronic information and media devices are being used in the home, along with remote control of home lighting, heating and security systems. International standards that allow interoperability and se-

curity in the field of home networking are seen as the key to bringing the full potential of these services to consumers: this was the key conclusion of a World Standards Cooperation (WSC)



workshop, held in Geneva on 2–3 February 2006, that brought together some 100 experts from industry, academia and standards development organizations. The purpose of WSC is to reinforce and promote the voluntary standards system that is formed by consensus among the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and ITU.

Date set for Internet Governance Forum

The inaugural meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) will take place in Athens on 30 October – 2 November 2006. This decision was reached following consultations with the Government of Greece and representatives of stakeholder groups at a February meeting in Geneva. The meeting discussed the IGF's scope of work and priorities, as well as its structure and functioning. The IGF is to be convened by the United Nations Secretary-General, under a mandate set out in the Tunis Agenda that resulted from the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society last November. Its purpose is to act as a "new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue" on questions of internet governance. ■