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■ Three laureates honoured for their leadership

**Dr Hamadoun I. Touré,
ITU Secretary-General**



ITU/P.M. Virost

Each year, ITU celebrates World Telecommunication and Information Society Day on 17 May to mark its founding in 1865. The event includes designating laureates of the World Telecommunication and Information Society Award. This year's theme "ICTs and Improving Road Safety" is in line with the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety, which dedicates the period 2011–2020 to improving global road safety.

I was very pleased to present this year's award to three laureates from government, industry and civil society in recognition of their leadership and dedication to promoting information and communication technologies as a means of improving road safety.

For government, the award went to **Ueli Maurer, President of the Swiss Confederation**, who was represented at the ceremony by Ambassador Alexandre Fasel, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Office of the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva. Switzerland is a country known for its innovation and its precision engineering. This tradition has made Switzerland among the safest countries for road users in the world. In the 2001–2010 decade, Switzerland recorded a significant decrease in road traffic mortality. The Swiss Council for Accident Prevention has been actively involved with ITU in developing standards for driver assistance systems and intelligent systems for accident prevention in road traffic.

"I was very pleased to present this year's World Telecommunication and Information Society Award to three laureates: Ueli Maurer, President of the Swiss Confederation; Volkmar Denner, Chairman of the Board of Management of Robert Bosch GmbH; and Jean Todt, President of the International Automobile Federation, in recognition of their leadership and dedication to promoting information and communication technologies as a means of improving road safety."

“Every year, nearly 1.3 million people die in traffic-related accidents. Beyond road deaths, another estimated 20–50 million people are injured, mainly in developing countries. As a result, governments and individuals suffer around USD 518 billion in global economic loss. That is why it is essential to focus on the role of ICT in improving road safety.”

For industry, the award went to **Volkmar Denner, Chairman of the Board of Management of Robert Bosch**, one of the leading suppliers of automotive components. The company has pioneered innovations in the areas of vehicle safety systems, in-car information and communication systems, as well as driver-assistance and other guidance functions. Many safety functions in vehicles, such as antilock braking system, traction control and electronic stability come from Bosch, whose experts are currently working with ITU on standards to improve both transport efficiency and road safety.

For civil society, the award went to **Jean Todt, President of the International Automobile Federation (FIA)**, a world figure and household name in motorsports. Mr Todt has engaged with global road safety on a professional and personal level, making it a priority of FIA. In support of the United Nations Decade of Action, and under the banner of the FIA Action for Road Safety, Mr Todt has tirelessly lobbied leaders and decision-makers around the world, urging them to commit to tangible, affordable and verifiable measures aimed at reducing road deaths and injuries. Mr Todt is also President of the eSafetyAware campaign, which focuses on promoting smart vehicles and new safety technologies.

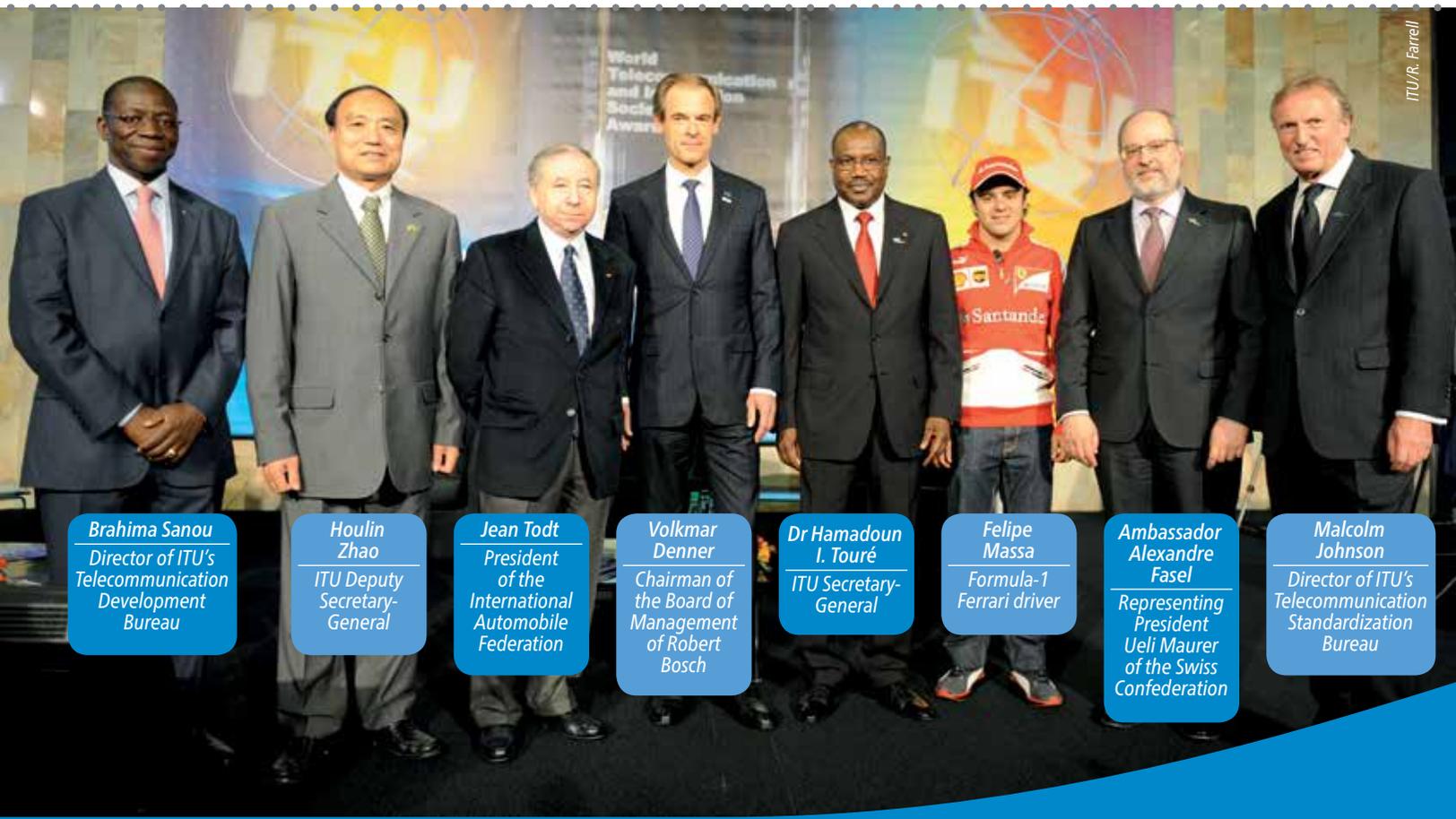
Road traffic safety is a global concern for public health and injury prevention. Every year, nearly 1.3 million people die in traffic-related accidents. Beyond road deaths, another estimated 20–50 million people are injured, mainly in developing countries. As a result, governments and individuals suffer around USD 518 billion annually in global economic losses. That is why it is essential to focus on the role of information and communication technologies in improving road safety. These technologies play a catalytic role in creating opportunities for people in every walk of life — but we must use them responsibly, especially while driving in order to avoid accidents and injury.

Driver distraction and road-user behaviour, such as “text messaging” and interfacing with in-vehicle navigation or communication systems while driving, are among the leading contributors to road traffic fatalities and injuries — and now account for more deaths than drunk driving.

My message is clear: Don’t be distracted by technology when driving, whether calling from your mobile phone, or setting the navigation system. Sending a text message or tweeting while driving is extremely dangerous and should be avoided at all costs.

I was very pleased to hear the laureates reiterate the message: “Don’t text and drive” (see related stories on pages 8–19). This was reinforced by a practical demonstration by Formula-1 Ferrari driver Felipe Massa. More than 10 years ago he entered the Formula-1 arena with Sauber, the Swiss team based near Hinwil, the hometown of President Maurer. And ever since, he has been at the pinnacle of motorsports.

I call on ITU Member States and industry partners to promote the use of safe interfaces and hands-free devices in vehicles, and take action to eliminate technology-related distractions while driving. Along with promoting national policies to encourage the use of ICT in enhancing road safety, we must also promote the development and use of intelligent transport systems. These measures will not only help prevent traffic accidents, but will also improve efficiencies in traffic management as a means of combating the effects of climate change.



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**Ambassador
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Director of ITU's
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“ITU has been leading worldwide efforts in developing state-of-the-art ICT standards for intelligent transport systems and driver safety that use a combination of computers, communications, positioning and automation technologies, including in-car radars, for collision avoidance.”

ITU has been developing standards for safe user interfaces and communication systems in vehicles, designed to optimize driving performance by eliminating unsafe technology-related distractions. ITU has also been leading worldwide efforts in developing state-of-the-art ICT standards for intelligent transport systems and driver safety that use a combination of computers, communications, positioning and automation technologies, including in-car radars, for collision avoidance. I am also pleased to note that the allocation of harmonized, globally available frequency ranges for automotive radar applications is on the agenda of ITU's World Radiocommunication Conference in 2015 (WRC-15).

ITU will continue to work with the automotive sector and automobile associations worldwide — under the FIA banner — to take forward the theme of using ICT to improve road safety in order to meet one of the most urgent global challenges of our times.