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To: All Member States and Sector Members of ITU

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Contact: A. Sebgarshad

Pages: 03

Telephone: +41 22 730 6302

Telefax: +41 22 730 5969

E-mail: pressinfo@itu.int

Subject: World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) 2013:
"ICTs and improving road safety"

Dear Sir/Madam,

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, celebrated each year on 17 May, marks the anniversary of the signature of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865 which led to the creation of the International Telecommunication Union.

I am pleased to inform you that this year World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD-2013) will focus on the theme: *"ICTs and improving road safety"*.

Road traffic safety is a global concern not only for public health and injury prevention but also to improve efficiencies in traffic management as a means of combating the effects of climate change. ITU has been leading worldwide efforts in developing state-of-the-art ICT standards for Intelligent Transport Systems and driver safety that utilize a combination of computers, communications, positioning and automation technologies, including in-car radars for collision avoidance. ITU has also been developing standards for safe user interfaces and communication systems in vehicles as well as optimizing driving performance by eliminating unsafe technology-related distractions while driving.

ITU Council adopted the theme *"ICTs and improving road safety"* for World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2013, in accordance with Resolution 68 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010). The theme is also in line with the UN General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/64/255) on improving global road safety which proclaims the period 2011-2020 as the "Decade of Action for Road Safety".

I invite you to organize activities in your country to mark WTISD-2013 and I encourage you to involve all sections of society to formulate awareness and consensus on the issues underlying the theme *"ICTs and improving road safety"*. Please consider my Call for Action in the Annex.

I join you in celebrating the 148th anniversary of ITU and wish you a very successful World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2013.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed)

Dr Hamadoun I. Touré
Secretary-General

ANNEX

ITU Secretary-General's Call for Action

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2013

As the leading specialized agency of the United Nations for information and communication technologies (ICT), ITU looks towards its Members to harness the catalytic role of ICTs in improving road safety and traffic management systems.

According to the Report of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration (UNRSC) released by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 1.3 million people die each year in traffic related accidents and another 20-50 million people are injured mainly in developing countries around the world. As a result, Governments and individuals suffer an estimated USD 518 billion in global economic loss.

Driver distraction and road-user behaviour, which includes “text messaging” and interfacing with in-vehicle navigation or communication systems while driving, are among the leading contributors to road traffic fatalities and injuries.

Council 2010 Resolution 1318 states that ICTs, including intelligent transport systems (ITS), provide mechanisms for vehicular and passenger safety; and the development of in-vehicle architecture and a Vehicle Gateway Platform (VGP) requires cross-sectoral collaboration within ITU and among World Standards Cooperation (WSC) partners.

Accordingly, I invite all Members of the Union to take practical steps to further national and domestic policies, programmes and/or educational initiatives in the use of ICTs to improve road safety, taking into account the risks associated with the unreasonable use of ICTs and driver distraction, as well as the benefits of ICTs and vehicular safety technologies, in order to improve global road safety.

Call for Action: “ICTs and improving road safety”

- **Promote national policies to encourage the use of ICTs in enhancing road safety.**

Call for action: Relevant government ministries and agencies should prioritize the implementation of policies that take into account ICT standards to enhance road safety and promote awareness among road users of safety imperatives, particularly in avoiding distractions as a result of the proliferation of integrated in-vehicle ICTs and nomadic devices, including navigational information and electronic data communications devices.

ICT standards should also be leveraged to improve situational awareness of drivers by enabling roadway hazard warnings, in-vehicle signage, and other safety-related capabilities.

Governments should promote awareness through public service media of the dangers of driver distraction arising from the in-vehicle use of communication, entertainment and positioning devices, especially “texting” while driving.

- **Promote the development and use of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)**

Call for action: Government agencies should promote the use of ITS to improve the safety, management and efficiency of terrestrial transport, and to reduce the environmental impact of road transportation.

Adopt globally accepted standards in the ITS field to be able to provide multiple services, over multiple different platforms, while maintaining a simple-to-use interface that requires minimum intervention from the driver. Provide regulatory and financial incentives to industry for the development of vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) and vehicle-to-infrastructure communications that will help prevent accidents.

- **Action to eliminate unsafe technology-related distractions while driving**

Call for action:

- Develop new ICT-related techniques and technologies that can be used to reduce collisions associated with driver distraction.
- Promote mechanisms that can be used to manage information flow and message formats between the driver and the automotive cockpit.
- Develop mechanisms for coordination of components, subsystems, and applications to minimize driver distraction and workload.
- Develop design guidance for applications, devices, and systems that interact with drivers of road vehicles.

- **Advocate harmonization of the 79 GHz frequency band for automotive radars**

Call for action: Governments and industry worldwide should advocate adoption of a harmonized 79 GHz frequency band for automotive short-range high-resolution radar operations when the World Radiocommunication Conference 2015 considers allocation of the band 77.5-78 GHz to radiolocation services.

- **Promote the development and use of safe user interfaces in vehicles**

Call for action: Governments should promote awareness of safe user interfaces and hands-free devices in vehicles and promote quality standards for in-car communications.

The automotive industry should improve and enhance in-car communications, focusing on quality parameters.
