



# THE AGE OF DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY CONNECTING THE GENERATIONS

A Contribution in Support to the World Summit on the  
Information Society (WSIS) December 2003





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### 19 Mr. William P. Underwood, Executive Director, Business Council for the United Nations.

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### 22 Mr. Alexandre Sidorenko, United Nations Focal Point on Ageing.

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“Longevity is a success: it is something human beings have wanted from the year dot. The fact that we are attaining it should not be seen as a problem; it should be seen as an achievement!”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Nitin Desai, Special Adviser for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)



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[1] Statement by Mr. Nitin Desai, at the launch of the Year, on 1 October 1998, International Year of Older Persons 1999, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/agb98236.htm>

The International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC) realized in early 2001 that the most important revolutionary force of the 21st Century, information and communication technologies, were not being fully considered for all generations by either the public or private sectors. It is interesting to note that the fastest growing global population, older persons, was often below the "radar screen" for many decision-makers. Thus, ICCC decided to add the impact of ICT to its mission centerpiece and stimulate dialogue and identify successful strategies and solutions that deal creatively with the opportunities and challenges presented by "a society for all generations."

At United Nations Headquarters, 12 February 2003, the Caring Communities for the 21st Century: Imagining the Possible: "Age of Connectivity" International Conference was organized in support of the 2003 World Summit for the Information Society. It explored ideas and programs that promote inclusive accessibility of information and communications worldwide. This event, part of a series addressing the "Age of Longevity," was organized by ICCC in coordination with United Nations partners: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); the United Nations ICT Task Force, the Information Technology for Development Division of the Sustainable Development Department of the Inter-American Development Bank and other United Nations entities including: United Nations Programme on Ageing; Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Department of Public Information; UNESCO; UNDP and participants from the private sector and other NGOs including the NGO Committee on Ageing at the United Nations in NY.

We are deeply grateful for the encouragement and honored by the support of the UN-Habitat, United Nations ICT Task Force, United Nations Programme on Ageing and the Inter-American Development Bank for making possible the publication of the Conference's INSIGHTS, thus, enabling the uniquely gathered information to be shared worldwide. We especially want to thank Ms. Enrica Murmura, United Nations ICT Task Force Public-Private Sector liaison, for her dedication, guidance and inspiration that made this "dream" possible. No words can express our gratitude to Ms. Anne Sormani for her outstanding editing, done with creative thought and perseverance, as she went through the papers and tapes of the dialogue. We are grateful to Ms. Diane Loughran and Ms. Laura Skolnik, United Nations Programme on Ageing, for their persistent efforts in researching not easily documented ICT topics requested. ICCC Board member, Ms. Gloria Starr, Kins' unique coordination and resourceful talents greatly enhanced the success of the public-private partnership endeavors for which we are most grateful. And no publication will make its mark without an attractive and meaningful design, so we are delighted that Ms. Ciara Mulvany, Reaction Publishing, after reviewing the text, created a publication for which we are all proud. The ICCC team of Richard Jordan and Alice Arvan added their "pearls of wisdom," which enabled us to present this informative publication that will stimulate your participation and activities that encourage "ICT for all generations."

The International Council for Caring Communities, established in 1994, has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. ICCC responds to the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly ageing population by stimulating, identifying and showcasing successful strategies and solutions addressing a society for all generations. ICCC's numerous endeavors encourage their adaptation and/or replication throughout the developing and developed world. The impact of the built environment and the impact of ICT are the centerpieces of ICCC's global dialogue focusing on mainstreaming ageing issues.

UN Photo 148570



"The seeds of healthy ageing are planted early in life; that is a challenge we must take up without delay" <sup>1</sup>

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

[1] <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2001/sgsm7971.doc.htm>

The creation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was an immense response by the international community to the pressing reality that there remain striking disparities in the level of development throughout the world. While the challenges faced are high, the unification of the global community for this common cause reflects a major crossroads in the path of development. Together with this strength in resolution must come choices about exactly how we are going to achieve these momentous goals, and in order to make these right choices we must come to an understanding about how our societies are changing.

The world is changing as it adapts to a number of powerful global forces. For strategies of development to succeed, clearly this new global environment must be considered. But the new environment should not be seen as a constraint; rather it should be seen as an opportunity for exploring new methods of promoting development. The revolution in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has transformed our societies, creating a new global atmosphere that has the potential to offer a wide array of tools for promoting development. At the same time, the world is changing in other significant ways; one major difference is the fact that the population is becoming older. With the transforming effects of public health and population an unprecedented maturity of the majority of the population will quickly result. How this is going to affect the development process must also be considered. Finding the right tools for development must be accompanied by understanding and capable hands for using them.

### ICT for Development in the Age of Connectivity

The last couple of decades have brought remarkable changes in the flow of information, products, capital, people and ideas. With this accelerated pace and access comes immense potential for new opportunities, previously inaccessible. If only these powerful new forces were properly harnessed, those previously excluded could have access to new levels of development. But unfortunately if left un-harnessed, their power could lead to even more striking and dramatic disparities, with the gap between the haves and have-nots widening, trapping those left behind with increasingly higher hurdles to overcome.

The close relationship between ICT and globalisation makes it essential to include ICT within the development agenda. The current debate on the importance of ICT often deals with the misconception that access to ICT is a goal that substitutes and possibly draws resources away from other essential goals. ICT should be seen as a powerful tool for development, one that can greatly support the essential MDGs.

While ICT clearly is not the complete solution for developing countries, where social and economic development is dependent on a great number of factors, the integration of ICT into national development strategies can contribute in a unique and influential manner. At both the micro and macro levels ICT can increase the effectiveness of other development strategies, facilitating implementation, improving productivity, and increasing scope and coverage, while also enhancing good governance and lower costs of service delivery. But government efforts cannot succeed alone; they must be supplemented by the involvement of other relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. Through these strategic partnerships and the involvement of both different sectors and local, regional and global actors, the design and implementation of ICT strategies that truly contribute to development

can be realized. The United Nations ICT Task Force is helping build these types of partnerships that unite different expertise and sectors to meet region-specific needs. Their regional networks and working groups help facilitate this focus and forge these necessary partnerships.

Once we have accepted ICT as a tool for development as opposed to solely the means for development, concurrently we must consider who is enabled to use these tools. Thus we turn to consider the changing structure of the world's society and how this in turn is reflected within the development agenda.

### The Ageing of Societies

The ageing of the world population will affect everyone in society, economically and socially, as well as culturally and politically. With fertility dropping, the number of children under the age of five in developing countries will decrease, both as a percent of the population and in absolute numbers. For the first time it is predicted that the world's number of older people (sixty and older) will exceed the number of the young (under age fifteen), by 2050. This presents a major challenge to development processes, which have previously addressed societies with a larger proportion of younger generations than older generations.

As society restructures, not only does the working-age population change, but also health costs expand. Questions arise over how to manage development for all generations. We must find new ways to sustain productivity as the working force ages, as well as build new solutions for how to properly care for the growing older generations. Population ageing also has an effect on many other economic factors, such as savings, investment, consumption, pensions, taxation, and labour markets and migration. If left un-addressed, not only is inequality across generations very likely to result, but also development efforts for societies as a whole will likely be stifled.

### Connecting the Generations

ICT has the potential to connect these two global phenomena, the age of connectivity and the ageing of societies. By enhancing the productivity of older generations, not only will the life styles of older persons improve but they will also contribute to the overall productivity needed for successful development. As a non-discriminating tool, both young and old can use ICT. Technology actually enables older persons to continue working without the physical restrictions that may normally come with age.

"Life-long learning" is an essential supplement to assure that this extended work-life happens effectively. The stigma that the older you are the less likely to "learn new tricks" can and should be proven wrong. There is an amazing amount of expertise that older generations bring to the work force, which needs to be combined with and passed on to newer generations. Technology has the capability to create this link between generations, harnessing the combination of both newer and older expertise. The increased active involvement of older persons has also been shown to help improve their health, which in turn contributes to a better quality of life for them and lower health costs for their countries to sustain.

While issues such as illiteracy among older populations is still quite common, with about half of all those older than sixty still illiterate, rising to about two-thirds among older women, the visual aspects of ICT as well as its educational capabilities can contribute to their learning process, and allow them to continue to contribute to society in an even more productive manner.

Culture and tradition is also greatly passed down through family linkages and as the world ages the need to document unique cultures can be efficiently done through the use of technology. This is a prime example of how to partner the generations to allow for the libraries of information and history within older persons to contribute to an enriched society that younger generations can learn from. The Internet also allows for this to be accessible to the world, preserving cultural traditions that were previously passed down through word of mouth from generation to generation.

The benefits of the Internet alone provides opportunities for lower cost services, training and support for older generations, while also allowing for better access to government facilities, health services and other social services. Family connections can also be enhanced through the Internet, and for those communities where family structure has been altered by migration, this connection between families can be quite important.

### In Conclusion

While the trend in ageing of the world population will require a variety of unique development strategies, we can see already that the inclusion of ICT in this agenda can significantly contribute in its own unique manner. In an issue such as this where efforts are being approached from many directions, conferences like the "Caring Communities for the 21st Century: Imagining the Possible 'Age of Connectivity'", held on February 12, 2003, gave some needed opportunity to consolidate efforts and allow for an exchange of ideas. The United Nations ICT Task Force can add to this process by helping foster partnerships that provide support from different sectors as well as address important regional differences. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) brings forward these efforts, providing a truly global platform for exploring them.

ICT cannot be seen as a solitary factor. If we truly understand that it is a valuable tool for development, then we must view ICT in that framework. How can ICT be linked to issues within the overall development framework, and in this case how can ICT be linked to the ageing population that is transforming our world. The WSIS is a unique global opportunity for exploring these ideas, for both developed and developing nations. This chance to contribute to the WSIS presents a major breakthrough for an integrated outlook of ICT and ageing, giving exposure to this developing theme for better understanding and further analysis. The unique ability of the WSIS to bring together Heads of State, United Nations agencies, industry leaders, and civil society into a single high-level event will allow for an in-depth exploration of this issue from all sides. There is a true opportunity to forge a clear path, bridging this issue to the future agenda of the WSIS in Tunis 2005. We look forward to the array of ideas and recommendations that will spring forward from this first phase of the Summit.

UN Photo 156339



"Trees grow stronger over the years, rivers wider. Likewise, with age, human beings gain immeasurable depth and breadth of experience and wisdom. That is why older persons should be not only respected and revered; they should be utilized as the rich resource to society that they are." <sup>1</sup>

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

[1] <http://www.un.org/ageing/>

With both fertility and mortality decreasing, and medical knowledge and technology advancing, the global phenomenon of population ageing has and will affect every person in the world. Human society will be restructured as these demographic changes transform our lives, compelling us to find new ways of living, working and caring for one another. Demographic ageing, from everybody's point of view should be celebrated, but we must also recognize the profound impact it will have on quality of life, healthy ageing, social integration, the lives of women, and the need for longer provisions of social services. Responses to these opportunities and challenges of ageing should provide unique solutions for promoting development for a society for all ages. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for development can be seen as one of these unique solutions.

It has been well documented that knowledge and technology are among the critical factors of economic growth and sustainable development, and regardless of how we live, due to the process of globalisation we are influenced by this age of information society. ICT can be a very powerful tool for human development, having a beneficial impact on jobs, health, education and commerce. Unfortunately its true potential has not yet been realized. There is still a considerable amount of concentration of knowledge and the technologies deriving from it, and a limited percent of the world population with access to it.

The Economic and Social Council has in recent years accorded the highest priority to bridging this digital divide. The Council, as a catalyst in bringing together all actors in advancing common goals for poverty eradication and development, has a clear role in integrating ICT into economic, social and environmental aspects of development. In this respect, the new opportunities and challenges that demographic ageing presents us can also be included.

The Second World Assembly on Ageing, held in Madrid in April 2002, offered us a unique chance to address the building of a society for all ages, and resulted in the International Plan of Action on Ageing. The plan called for changes in national and international attitudes, policies, and practices, so that the enormous potential of ageing in the twenty-first century could be fulfilled. It seeks to ensure that people everywhere will be enabled to age with security and dignity, and continue to participate in their societies as citizens with full rights. The plan's recommendations for action address older persons and development, and specify the commitment to the empowerment of older persons to participate fully and effectively in the social, economic and political lives of their societies. This must also be viewed in terms of equal access to technologies and their benefits.

The Millennium Summit affirmed the long-term imperative of eradicating poverty and fulfilling the social and humanitarian goals set up by the global conferences of the 1990s. Taking this a step further, in December of 2001, the General Assembly endorsed, through Resolution 56/183, the need for the World Summit on the Information Society.

"Recognizing the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology for promoting the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and to find effective and innovative ways to put this potential at the service of development for all."

The inclusion of all population groups is one of the keys to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Council is committed to helping the international community address this challenge.



## INSIGHTS ON ENHANCING GENERATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

### ICT AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE

The following section contains insights that were gathered from the conference of **“Caring Communities for the 21st Century: Imagining the Possible ‘Age of Connectivity’”** which was held at the United Nations Headquarters on February 12, 2003.

*At this point the question then becomes, what are the next steps. In response to this, the following can be proposed:*

*A range of interfaces must be created that can work across the globe for all individuals regardless of their capacities. This will enable older persons who are limited in certain physical manners to take full advantage of what ICT can offer. Once created, a market for these interfaces will follow, but the key here is to truly create a platform that can be applied on an individual level.*

*Software should address and develop subjects of interest. A successful example of this is the UNESCO's project of "Community Multimedia Centres", where the use of radio stations offered ICT as a means to address local needs. This was a self-perpetuating manner for promoting whole communities of interest. Software should also address the most practical of concerns, such as HIV/AIDS. The audience for the software must be reflected in its production so as to increase the actual effectiveness.*

*Clear and detailed economic analysis could be completed to calculate exactly what the economic value of these interventions is in comparison to other advances.*

CHAIR FOR THE CONFERENCE ON:

## "Caring Communities for the 21st Century: Imagining the Possible Age of Connectivity"

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have the ability to be a very positive agent for change. But while technology is about what is possible, the social framework is about what is desirable. The main question that then needs to be asked is whether what is possible is actually desirable, and what is desirable is actually possible. With a clear set of social objectives, innovative methods for using ICT can be applied to help meet them. The conference of "Caring Communities for the 21st Century: Imagining the Possible 'Age of Connectivity'", gave us a chance to explore innovative ways of using technology, and contemplate how they can supplement development as a whole and more specifically, how ICT can be used as a tool in addressing the global phenomenon of ageing.

We must recognize that in this Information Age we live in, ICT has become a representation of power. When comparing developed nations with less developed nations, we see that only 20% of the world consumes 80% of its resources, and similarly that the use of ICT in developed nations greatly exceeds the use of ICT in less developed nations. Still ICT has revolutionized our world as a whole, and is still in the process of becoming a more forceful power. By the end of 2002 there was already one PC for every seven people, and by 2007 there will be one PC for every three and half people. But this force overwhelming our global society is more than just beneficial to those developed nations already making greater use of ICT. ICT has an amazing ability to provide opportunities, and opportunities are the source of true equality. By allowing for knowledge, expertise, libraries and culture to be shared, ICT stands as a building block for equalizing global opportunities.

The conference of "Caring Communities for the 21st Century: Imagining the Possible 'Age of Connectivity'" gave us a chance to observe the global community unite to address this issue, offering a unique platform to explore how ICT can be this great equalizer and connect not just the global community but the generations as well. It gave an opening to stimulate thinking, demonstrating that ICT can be approached from many angles and sectors, whether public or private or the NGO sector. There were a number of concrete presentations that allowed us to see real-life projects and their use of ICT to promote development. The presentations also demonstrated the remarkable confluence of different sectors. When seeing these projects and the positive united concern for this issue, one can realize that these are initiatives that we do not have to just dream about, but that are within our grasp. Already-existing projects, such as UNESCO's "Community Multimedia Centres" Programme, demonstrate that not only are these initiatives practical, but they also can be inexpensive.

With the positivism that came forward from this conference, we look forward to what further innovations may come from the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Access to knowledge can be the greatest equalizer of all, proving that ICT offers a mountain of hope and promise. I am sure that a world summit such as this one will further create global unity on this issue.

## &gt; SUMMARY

Ms. Anna Tibaijuka emphasized that the issue of ageing would affect every individual in all societies and that the question now is how we improve the quality of life during these added years? UN-Habitat addresses this in a number of ways, responding by measures to ensure the "enabling and supportive environment" that is promoted in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002). Focusing on participatory approaches and "inclusive cities", UN-Habitat has devised programs that address the specific needs of older persons.

## Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environments

The issue of Ageing will affect every society and every individual and it should be viewed as an achievement that presents new opportunities as well as challenges.

The world population is already older than ever before thanks to merits of development and better health care. In most parts of the world the most rapidly growing segment of the population is the group age 80+.

### How do we improve the quality of life during these added years?

- Secure the economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights of older persons.
  - Empower them to participate fully and effectively in their societies.
  - Facilitate life-long learning for everyone.
  - Facilitate inter-generational integration.
- Developments in ICT contribute to the strengthening of multi-generational communities, and the integration of older persons into the mainstream of their societies.
  - Easy access to information sources provides for the better mobilization/utilization of the capacities and potential of older persons.

### Ageing and Urbanization: The Inclusive City

- The UN-Habitat Agenda describes inclusive cities and equitable human settlements as those in which all people, including older persons, have equal access to housing, health facilities and services, among many other opportunities offered by an urban environment.
- Older persons can have difficulty in coping with their daily lives in the city, but their participation in sustainable development is fundamental.
- The inclusive city will:
  - Provide equal opportunities for a life-long, freely chosen livelihood and the realization of all human rights.
  - Be governed by specific policies and measures that facilitate and ensure the participation of older persons, particularly in decision-making processes.

### UN-Habitat - Addressing the Issue of Ageing

- All UN-Habitat programmes and initiatives address vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of different ages.
- Many diverse programmes and activities are implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

Within the Madrid Plan, UN-Habitat's focus is primarily on Priority Direction III: **Ensuring enabling and supportive environments.**

- UN-Habitat defines **supportive** environments in urban settings as being those in which all urban citizens have a voice in decision-making on issues that have an effect on them.
  - Forums and processes are created where these voices can be heard, listened to with respect, and consequently reflected in the programmes and budgets of city authorities.





CCP/Photostore

UN-Habitat defines supportive environments in urban settings as being those in which all urban citizens have a voice in decision-making on issues that have an effect on them.



- UN-Habitat has devised various participatory approaches:
  - The **Urban Management Programme and the Sustainable Cities Programme** where the views of stakeholder groups such as older persons are sought out and integrated into action plans.
  - The **Urban Governance Campaign**, a global activity designed to promote the acceptance of good urban governance and participatory approaches by national and city governments. With equity at the heart of its principles, the promotion and participation in decision-making processes of less powerful groups often include older persons.
  - **Safer Cities' Programme** addresses crime prevention, which can be very pertinent for older persons. Through participatory approaches the particular problems of groups such as older persons, can be addressed by city authorities and the criminal justice system with targeted crime prevention strategies.
- The **enabling** environment focus is addressed in the Madrid Plan under the priority issue "Housing and the living environment." The objectives of this issue are:
  - The promotion of "ageing in place" in the community with due regard to individual preferences and affordable housing options for older persons.
  - The improvement in housing and environmental design to promote independent living by taking into account the needs of older persons, particularly those with disabilities.
  - The improved availability of accessible and affordable transportation for older persons.

#### Suggestion

- The monitoring of the implementation of both the Madrid Plan and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) could be integrated, allowing United Nations agencies to combine their activities related to the Madrid Plan with those being undertaken to achieve the MDGs.
- This can constitute another step toward the achievement of "societies for all".

## &gt; SUMMARY

Ms. Narelle Townsend stressed that social development can be considered a global public good, raising the awareness of the number of United Nations activities that are addressing social development, and that ICT can help facilitate the goals that resulted from these international conferences.

## The Global Public Good of Social Development: ICT as a catalyst for the MDGs

- The convergence of several United Nations events have exemplified "connectivity", impacting the efforts of UN-Habitat and its partners. Some of these events include:
  - United Nations General Assembly Second and Third Committees Ad Hoc Working Group on the Integrated and Coordinated Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of the Major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the Economic and Social Fields.
  - 41st session of the Commission on Social Development.
  - 11th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.
  - Economic and Social Council meeting with the Bretton Woods Institutions.
  - 9th meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
  - 1st session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat.

The Report of the Secretary-General on national and international cooperation for social development, (E/CN.5/2003/5, 12 December 2002), paragraph 9 states:

"Many social development programmes result in important public goods, including education, health, security, solidarity and a sense of equity and justice." (...)

"Taking the provision of public goods to its logical conclusion, it can be argued that social development may be considered a global public good in itself, with the inescapable corollary that the international community should be fully committed to promoting such development everywhere."

### ICT can become a catalyst to accelerate the implementation of the MDGs

- "Connectivity" at the local level makes it easier for local authorities to interact with their communities through a network of information centres.
- ICT can improve the design and implementation of conventional strategies that implement a "top-down" approach to information flows.
- "Information Society" supports monitoring and review by the NGO community of the many events occurring throughout the United Nations system.
- The expansion of access to knowledge and technology for all is necessary for the Plans/Platforms of Action from these events, and the MDGs to be transmitted universally.



## &gt; SUMMARY

Mr. Gary Fowle explained how the era of technology sprung from the need to satisfy human limitations, whether physical limitations of distance or capabilities; the need for a closer, more peaceful world was in the minds of the original scientists. Information is a necessity in today's society and gives power in numerous ways, but the digital divide must be addressed on a global level. Even though we cannot predict how this age of connectivity will unfold we must join together to find ways to use the tools of technology to uphold basic human principles and promote equitable development and peace.

## A Closer, More Peaceful World

- Over the last century since Guglielmo Marconi and Alexander Graham Bell began the era of modern communications, we have seen their inventions create profound changes in social and economic development.
- Their vision was not just about overcoming scientific hurdles but about bringing the world together and enabling humans to overcome their handicaps. This same inspiration touches at the soul of any caring community and at the mission of the ITU.
- In addition to the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter for caring communities, we should now include the need for "information".
- The enabling power of information is great:
  - Dispelling ignorance.
  - Empowering the oppressed.
  - Binding the global community.
  - Spreading the common ideals of peace and tolerance, and growth and development.
- But there exists a gap between rich and poor and young and old when it comes to access to information, and a global effort is needed to eliminate it.

### For example we want to ensure that:

- A farmer in a remote part of Africa or Asia can have instantaneous access to information on the global market; information that will help him to improve his ability to choose the crops he grows or to pick the day he takes his harvest to market.
- The power of ICTs can bring simple water purification techniques to villages where geriatric mortality rates are still as high as the day Marconi's first telegraph message crossed the Atlantic in 1901.

### The World Summit on the Information Society is a chance to find ways to bridge these gaps

- On this brink of a new era where we embark on fundamental choices about life in the Information Society. We may not be able to entirely predict the future, but if we wish to ensure the basic principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Millennium Development Goals, we have no choice but to embrace it.
- The best way to predict the future may be to invent it. We would ask that you join us in inventing a future where the tools of communication make all of our communities more equitable, peaceful and caring places.



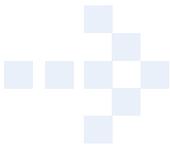
UN Photo 140713C

## &gt; SUMMARY

Ms. Helen Hamlin stressed the need for the active participation of older persons in this expanding age of technology. Equal opportunities must be given so that older persons can be integrated into the development process, sharing their wisdom and technical skills and actively participating in policies that greatly affect them.

## Active Participation in a World of ICT

- The Second World Assembly on Ageing held in Madrid in April 2002 produced the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The recommendations for action within this plan are organized according to three priority directions, with one of them entitled, "Older Persons and Development". Under this theme the Plan states that:  
**Older persons must be full participants in the development process and also share in its benefits.**
- This statement signifies the active participation of older persons in society, and mandates that older persons be given opportunities, programs and support to encourage their involvement in all aspects of life, that is, cultural, economic, political, social, and lifelong learning.
- The world of information technology must also involve older persons fully and without discrimination. With today's baby boom generation growing older, many already bring technological skills with them, and cannot only continue to learn in this expanding universe of technology but can teach as well. A number of today's persons are already online, and more are joining every day.
- In addition to the Madrid Plan, the United Nations Principles for Older Persons address five themes including, the independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity of older persons.
- Within this 1991 United Nations General Assembly resolution, what pertains most to this issue is the theme of 'Participation', which states that:  
  
**Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations.**
- This is the message for us in sharing our wisdom and thoughts in the "Age of Connectivity".



## &gt; KEYNOTE ADDRESS

## The Knowledge Economy: Creating Conditions for Caring Communities of the 21st Century in the Latin American Region

As Information Communication Technologies (ICT) become integrated throughout the global economy, the context for development has changed. ICT's empowering character and potential to accelerate development generates a new sense of hope, especially for the poor, women, youth and older persons. But for this hope to be realized, countries will not only need to adopt bold, innovative, and inclusive policies, but must adapt these policies toward a development perspective that addresses today's societal needs.

ICT is not valuable on its own but rather for the socioeconomic functions it helps satisfy. What is clear from the work carried out by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) throughout the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Region is that the value of these technologies has roots in the role they play in enabling individuals, organizations, countries and regions to adjust to the changing world environment. As economic, social and political conditions change, ICT enables both decision-making and implementation by giving the choice of when, how, and with what resources adjustments should be made. Aside from globalisation, the ageing of the world's population will also have an effect on all three of these global conditions and everyone in society, and can be seen as a key example of how ICT again can help enable us with the tools for our reaction.

In the spirit of openness, transparency, inclusiveness and dedication, the IDB supports the LAC region in the formulation of policies and initiatives for the widespread application of ICT. Initiatives are organized around the common understanding of priorities and goals, and through the coordinated efforts of not only governments, but also of industry, entrepreneurs and the social sector. A proactive policy framework that fosters a fair and open competitive environment and promotes investment is fundamental for this comprehensive development dynamic. But all of this is also dependent on a strong and compelling political resolve; the IDB is committed to supporting the translation of this political will into concrete actions toward the achievement of common development objectives.

The essential core functions of the Bank's involvement in the area of information and communication technology for development can be defined as following two areas:

- Creating new wealth and distributing it more equitably by strengthening the capacity of an economy to increase local value added of local resources.
- Strengthening the social, economic and political adjustment mechanisms that enable individuals, organizations and countries to make and implement decisions that ensure that development responds to the unique values, needs, conditions and resources of each country.

Awareness of these core functions is changing the way that the countries of Latin American and the Caribbean are deploying ICT. Regional leaders have been expressing with increasing

## KEYNOTE

Mr. Danilo Piaggese, Chief, Information and Communication Technology for Development Division of the Sustainable Development Department (SDS/ICT) Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)



IDB Photo

We are aware that remarkable changes in age structures, in economic, social and cultural life present new challenges and require new follow-up processes.

frequency their political will to participate in and benefit from these unprecedented transformations; demonstrating this will in recent years through economic, social and political reforms that have provided incentives for increasing access to ICTs. Now a comprehensive approach involving the deployment of these technologies is evolving to strengthen the reforms.

The IDB ICT initiatives and efforts are concentrating in the following three intersectoral areas:

**ICT in Sustainable Economic Growth:** International support needs to evolve to ensure that all socio-economic groups can participate in and benefit from the expansion of the information sector, and similarly, public policies need to be formulated to reflect the new conditions of development. The private sector initiative also is becoming more and more critical for a dynamic and pluralistic information sector of the economy as well as for a competitive information industry and information marketplace. (Division's programs include: ICT Innovation Program for e-Business and SME Development Program; Media Convergence Program)

**ICT in Reducing Poverty and Promoting Equity/Creating Human Capital:** Lifelong Learning in the Knowledge Economy: One of the policy areas that needs expansion involves human resource development through lifelong learning, linking early "education" and labor force transformation. Growth of the knowledge economy underscores the importance of primary, secondary and university "education" while calling for their fundamental transformation as learning environments. In response to the increasing demand for learning opportunities, public, private and civil society organizations are offering a variety of environments (classroom, workplace, and community centre). New techniques such as distance learning, methods, forms of funding such as vouchers, alternative uses of time and space are challenging traditional approaches of accreditation, construction, curriculum design and the training of learning agents (i.e. teachers, professors, trainers). (Division's programs include Virtual Classrooms Program; Education and Telematics Program)

**ICT in Governance:** Public sector reforms in the region are part of an ongoing effort to build trust in defining the terms of a social contract among the diverse groups that make up the society in each country. New forms of dialogue and collaboration among public, private and civil society organizations enhance transparency and accountability that can assist in creating conditions of fair and open competition, while expanding access so that everyone can participate and benefit from the expanding knowledge-based economy. (Division's programs include: Digital Era Parliament; Digital Regulation Program; Development of an e-government model Program; Promotion of Telecentres Initiatives Program)

### New Challenges Ahead

The IDB is in the process of devoting additional resources and capabilities to the new development perspective that is advancing across the globe, while also remaining open to the development of new initiatives and lines of action. We are aware that remarkable changes in age structures, in economic, social and cultural life present new challenges and require new follow-up processes. Given the demographic and societal changes, policies and courses of action need to be adjusted to today's society, ensuring income security and sustainable growth as well as promoting inclusion and equal opportunities for all. These demographic



UNDP/Nepal

changes have brought up several critical factors that must be recognized within a modified development agenda:

- Ageing and poverty: changing demographic patterns in many developing countries have impacted societies leaving older persons among the poorest age group.
- Ageing and gender: The majority of older people are women and they not only have a lower rate of participation in the labor market, but are also more likely to be poor.
- Retirement contributes to the social exclusion of senior citizens. Therefore the following should be addressed:
  - i. The potential contributions of older people in the labor market are great, especially as the younger generations relatively decline.
  - ii. Enabling them to continue to contribute to the economy is a crucial factor for economic and social development.
  - iii. As nations grow older, and as living and working conditions change, patterns and types of diseases also shift. This shift will hit developing countries the hardest, leaving a "double burden of disease" that will strain already scarce resources to the limit.

Older persons are among those who, so far, have not fully benefited from the potential of ICTs. ICT can effectively be used to improve the quality of life of senior citizens by both enhancing individual employability, knowledge and development (thus creating increasingly active older generations), and by creating networks of Internet based information/training, support and communication systems for social, economic and health services. Several issues in this respect that lie before us, need our attention and are vital elements of our development strategy in the Latin American region:

- Economic, social and cultural rights are fundamental for all age groups. Full equality and participation requires the accessibility of ICT's potential to all on an equal basis.
- Access to life-long learning through training, retraining and rehabilitation is an important component to ensure that skills are up-to-date and contribute to development.
- ICT can contribute to 'Active Ageing'; the process of optimizing opportunities for physical, social, and mental well-being throughout life, in order to extend healthy life expectancy, productivity and good quality of life into older age. This includes efforts to make older people part of society, allowing them to work, and allowing them to fully participate in civic affairs.
- The connectivity of ICT can contribute to the improvement of social and health services in order to better meet the needs of an ageing population.

Building upon these issues, IDB's Information Technology for Development Division of the Sustainable Development Department will operate to facilitate new approaches, to create the structure and institutional framework for matching the new demands of the region, and to act as a focal point for establishing strategic direction, policy coherence, and advocacy. Policies that encourage cross-generational opportunities, shared experiences, and the stimulation of convenient ICT access within community venues can contribute to meaningful, cost-effective development. All generations must benefit from ICT and an intergenerational approach is essential for successful development.

## &gt; SUMMARY

Mr. William P. Underwood pointed out the need for a collaborated process among governments, businesses and NGOs.

By staying focused, remaining practical and joining together in a collective effort, a greater impact can be made at the World Summit on the Information Society.

## &gt; KEYNOTE RESPONDANT

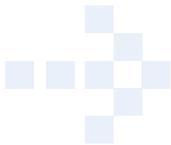
## Collaboration is the Key

- There are so many opportunities that ICT offers us, but none of them can occur by themselves.
  - The collaboration of governments, businesses and NGOs is essential for the realization of this process, and must be pushed both collectively and individually.
- ICT is an integral process of democratization, empowering citizens to have a role in their economic well-being and in the policies of their governments.
  - The translation of political will into concrete action is fundamental.
- Demographics are on the side of those creating policies that are going to benefit older citizens of the world; it is no longer just the developed world but the developing world as well.
  - But for those in the developed world, there is opportunity for organizations and senior business leaders to lend their influence and ideas, contributing to the effective flow of the process.

### Ideas for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

- It is important to have the issues of Ageing on the table and taken notice of.
- Staying focused is the key and the collaborative effort on issues is necessary.
- It is essential for us to not only work with our organizations but also with our governments.
  - With the success of the Monterrey Conference as our model, this collaborative process also helps form the best language for policy statements.
- The coordination of businesses with NGOs can have a much greater influence on governments, providing a collective approach where agreement is already in place.
- Emphasize the practical, with best practices being as important as worst practices. Share these practical policies with governments and development banks.

Demographics are on the side of this cause, the numbers are there, the money is there, but the connections need to be made; there is possibility for a great impact.



## &gt; SUMMARY

Ms. Kristin Hughes explored how global efforts can have a significant impact on local communities, with the best programs engaging local communities with development according to their specific needs. Complimenting government policies and positive partnerships between governments and businesses are also seen as key to fostering economic development.

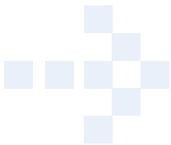
## &gt; KEYNOTE RESPONDANT

## Global Reach with Local Results

- The strengthening of economies and building of new markets in developing communities is a subject of great importance.
- Developing countries face both diverse challenges and a number of obstacles as they develop their economies, decrease their dependence on the developed world, and prepare to participate in the global economy.
- In the 21st century economies will be strengthened by innovation and creative ideas that spur economic development on the local level.
- A key tool for social and economic development is the effective use of ICT, but for the effective deployment of ICT, countries need to find efficient, enabling encouraging policies for that environment; policies that are implemented at both the country and local levels, understanding the needs of every citizen.
- To have success, innovation must run along many lines, both globally and locally.
- ICT is a valuable means to strengthening economies and improving standards of living for everyone, spurring economic growth in all communities.

### HP Initiatives that are Global in Reach with a Local Impact:

1. **e-Inclusion**, a new business strategy to broaden access to social and economic opportunities, thereby creating new markets in developing countries.
  - People obtain access to information for important decisions about their lives.
  - Economic, political and social reforms can only be built upon a foundation that begins with access to critical information.
2. HP is chairing Working Group 6 of the United Nations ICT Task Force that focuses on **Business Enterprise and Entrepreneurship**.
  - Explore ways that small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs can add value to the community and business environment, thereby strengthening the local economy.
  - Combine SME's innovation with local needs to create real solutions, while also creating jobs and local wealth.
3. **Micro-finance initiative** aimed at improving the flow of capital to entrepreneurs.
  - Catalyse an end-to-end system of formal sustainable financial services for the economic and social core.
  - Establish new global standards and procedures, while easing the availability of capital to businesses and entrepreneurs everywhere.
4. **The Development Space Network** with the United Nations ICT Task Force.
  - Use the power of technology in competitive markets to provide the average person an opportunity to change the world, thus reinventing the international aid process.
  - Create a new marketplace that breaks the bottleneck of traditional development developing country.
  - Provide a new approach to aid development with local-driven growth through individual connections.



The strengthening of economies and building of new markets in developing communities is a subject of great importance.



UN Photo 149039

#### Engaging Local Communities:

- Need to working collectively with communities to understand local needs and build local teams to drive the solutions.

#### i-Communities Initiative, works to connect the local perspective with local needs.

- Current technology might not be relevant, accessible or affordable.
- Works toward new technologies that develop fresh approaches to development.

#### Complimenting Policies:

- By addressing the regulation of ICT implementation and deployment as well as business development, governments can provide new possibilities for development.
- Policies for ICT and SMEs should be attuned so local economies will flourish.
- Each country must create policies according to their individual environment for development.
- Policy decisions should be transparent and inclusive.
- Positive policies and positive partnerships between governments and businesses should be fostered; public policy is an important tool and must go hand in hand with on the ground initiatives.

## &gt; SUMMARY

Mr. Alexandre Sidorenko stressed that both technological improvements and demographic ageing are two major forces of the 21st century, related to each other through the forces of globalisation. While they may not be directly linked they are parallel processes that can be both reciprocal and synergetic, moving towards a real contribution for development. The challenge is how to reconcile these processes to benefit the society at large.

## &gt; KEYNOTE RESPONDANT

## Synergic Relationships between ICT and Ageing

- There are two messages to relay about the relationships between ICT and Ageing
  - ICT and Ageing are related through the process of globalisation.
  - To be beneficial, these processes must be reciprocal and equitable.

### Ageing and Globalisation are two major forces of the twenty-first century.

- If ageing has the same power to shape the society as globalisation:
  - The goal is to reconcile these two forces so both will benefit the development of the society at large.
- ICT is a component and major driving force of globalisation.

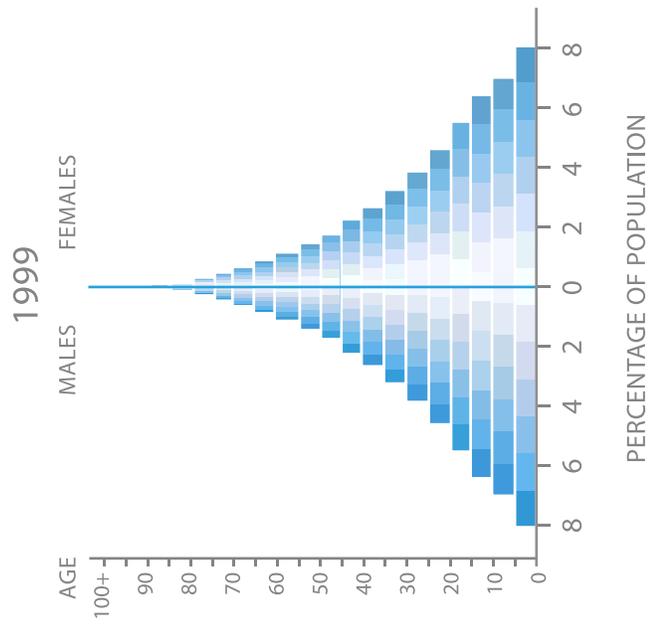
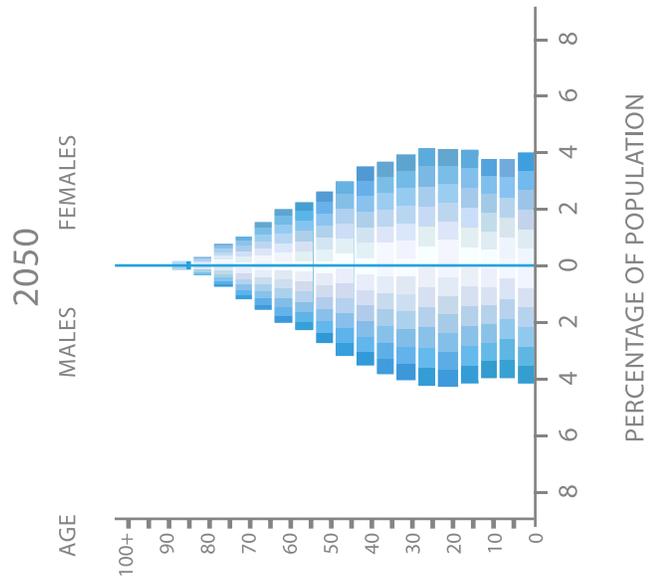
### Ageing and development are interlinked and have been throughout our existence

- Most ageing until now has occurred in the developed world.
  - France took 126 years to enlarge the proportion of its population of persons 60 years of age and older from 7% to 14%.
- In Europe, the second half of the 19th century to the second half of the 20th century was also a time of unprecedented technological progress
  - Atomic energy was first used to produce electricity.
  - Humankind was first launched into space.
  - ICT was born.

### The conclusion is that Ageing and Development, including technological development, are two parallel processes.

- There is no contradiction between them and they may not necessarily be interlinked, but they do co-exist and are progressing in parallel.
- The challenge is to make them reciprocal and synergistic!
  - Engaging individuals as partners for development.
  - Seeing people as not just consumers but real contributors to development.
- We must expand our consideration of global markets to include the global community and society for all ages.





> SUMMARY

Ms. Stella Hughes gave a concrete example of how ICT can be applied at the local level, responding to the individual needs of the community, in a cost effective manner that connects to a large audience. Community Multimedia Centres have the extraordinary capability to connect local communities to the world, while addressing their specific local needs.

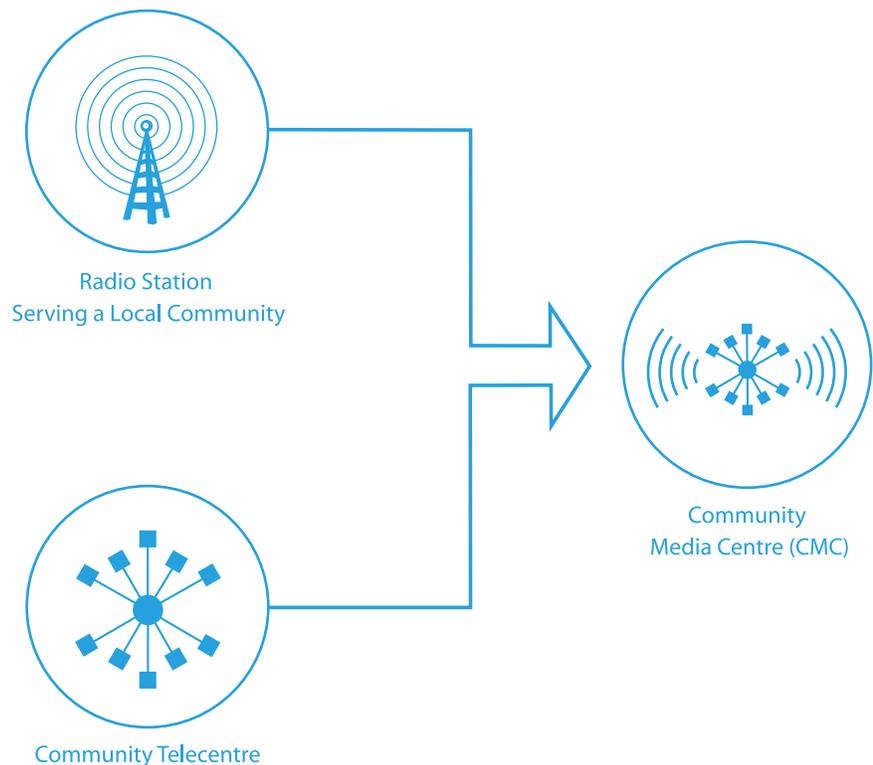
## The Power of Community Multimedia Centres

### United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

- The mandate of UNESCO is to promote the free flow of ideas and the exchange of information and knowledge.
  - In today's world of emerging knowledge societies this mandate is more relevant than ever.
- The Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs) Programme promotes these goals at the grassroots level amongst the most marginalized communities of the world.

### Programme for Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs)

- Radio programs are made by and for the local community in their own languages.
- The telecentre offers computer training, Internet access and office services, with the presence of facilitators to help the users.



#### Community Multimedia Centres

##### Cost-effective

- Building on existing facilities in the community.
- Widely shared access to technology while also reaching thousands through the broadcasting component.

##### Empowerment-oriented

- Technologies fully appropriated by the community.

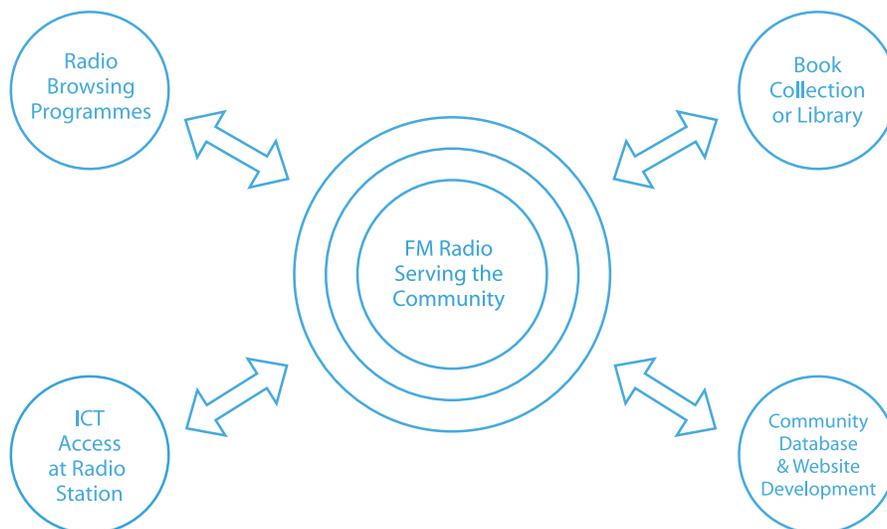
##### Country-differentiated

- Adapted to the specific context of each location.

- As the CMC develops:
  - Builds up local content on development related issues.
  - Creates new services to meet the community needs in such areas as education, health, farming and the environment.



Harvey Nelson/Photoshare



### The Concept

- Creates an information and communication platform building on existing resources.
- Offers a continuum between:
  - Spoken and written word.
  - National and international languages.
  - Local and global content.
- The whole community, literate and illiterate, can participate.

#### Radio Browsing

Offers mass indirect access to on-line resources, familiarizing the whole community with cyberspace.

- Linguistic, educational and technical barriers are overcome.
- Presenters, in response to the listener's questions, prepare the radio programs.
- By selecting and browsing reliable and relevant websites on air, they then discuss, explain and contextualize the information on the screen with a local expert, and in the local language.

#### CMC Services

- **Access to information** in a multimedia form that meets educational, cultural, social, and economic needs.
- **Training** and facilitation for the use of ICTs.
- **Content production** and information exchange.
- **Contact:** Networks, partnerships and links from local to global level.
  - Services are tailored to the needs of all groups within the community.
  - This may include literacy classes, specially developed software for specific alphabets, computer training targeting women and young girls, or activities supporting fathers and small businesses.

#### CMC Resources

- Builds up relevant resources adapted to local needs and in the languages of the community.
  - Local content may be in audio, video, print or digital form.
  - Gradually builds up a community database for development, used and enriched by the community, harnessing information and knowledge for development by the community itself.



CCPP/photosthare

Access to information should be free from discrimination, and should be based on one of the principles that are essential for the development of equitable societies, that is, universal access to information in the public domain.

## Equitable Access for the Development of Equitable Societies

- The proportion of persons aged 60 years and over is expected to double from 10 to 21 percent between 2000 and 2050.
  - Particular opportunities for older persons are needed in order to realize their potential and to provide them with appropriate conditions that will enable them to participate fully in all aspects of life.
  - These were the requirements and sentiments echoed at the conclusion of the Second World Assembly on Ageing held in Madrid in 2002.
- In this age of connectivity, older persons need to get connected, and stay engaged.
  - By using the vast information currently available on the Internet users can bring massive forms of libraries to their fingertips.
  - "Chat rooms" can easily be created and connected to enable housebound older people right into the main stream of human discourse in a manner very close to real time.
  - Older persons are enabled with an opportunity to "cross the media bridges" that otherwise they would physically not have been able to cross.
- In most **developing countries**, government and public servants have mandatory retirement when they are age 55, while their counterparts from the developed countries retire between 60-65 years.
- As they move from urban to rural areas, they still have both energy and experience to impart to their communities, and furthermore, they have contacts made over their years that can be utilized for the development of their people.
  - One sure way to remain active and to stay connected is through the use of ICTs that can be cheaply and effectively availed and installed in telecentres in strategic locations across the country.
  - With support from the local government, the private sector and in some cases from donors, each core group form a nucleus, and acquire and develop ICT tools suitable to the local environment.
  - In this manner communities gain from the retirees, while the retirees maintain active lives.
- Access to information should be free from discrimination, and should be based on one of the principles that are essential for the development of equitable societies, that is, universal access to information in the public domain.



## PANEL I: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ICT AS A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CATALYST

**Moderator: H.E. Mr. Manuel Felix, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations**

We need to encourage people to learn and have a humanistic approach toward real development, where older persons should be a great concern for government and NGOs in planning the delivery of services.

*For many years H.E. Ms. Julia Alvarez, the predecessor of H.E. Mr. Manuel Felix, had championed the issue of older persons within United Nations debates, working toward the establishment of the International Day of Older Persons (1 October) and the International Year of Older Persons (1999). She continues on spreading this message now during her retirement in the Dominican Republic.*

> SUMMARY

Mr. Zhang Zhixin provided concrete examples of caring community programs being implemented in two cities of China, Harbin and Shanghai. Both programs offer unique and vital services to older persons and show clearly how ICT can be very effective in the care and bettering of their lives.

## Harbin and Shanghai: Caring Community Programs in China

- The China National Committee on Ageing (CNCA) has conducted pilot programs in 10 cities to address the issue of community caring for older persons.
- The following are two examples of these programs and how to incorporate ICT into this process.

### Case one: Network of Safe-living Service System in Harbin

- Through the multilevel coordination of resources, of cities, districts, streets and communities, the system covers all of Harbin and has two important channels.
  - **The information channel** provides 24-hour service to older persons, where they may receive such care as emergency treatment, house keeping, health consultation, and emotional comforts.
  - **The material channel** coordinates the exchange of material according to an administration centre and already has 100 stations. It is anticipated to cover the whole city by the end of 2003.
- The system has attracted the attention of private companies who are competing to invest in it and establish their position within communities.
- At present, 343 companies have joined the system becoming a resource for services, while nearly 200,000 citizens are also within system coverage.

### Case two: The "Caring System of Older Persons in the Community" in Shanghai

- The system develops an informational network for the Internet, electronic-communications and the media, a network of community facilities, NGOs and volunteer services, as well as facilitates communication among the social-industrial network.
- It provides various services to older persons, such as—
  - **Hotline telephone service** offering consultation, free chatting and delivery of goods, as well as repair services for older persons.
  - **Hotline information net** that provides access to information for older persons.
  - **Emergency call network** that offers emergency assistance such as medical treatment, fire and safety help.
  - **Long-distance education network** delivers education and training programs through the Internet, broadcast, satellite and TV.
- The government of China is now sharing these successful experiences throughout the country.



UN Photo 156092

## &gt; SUMMARY

Ms. Radhika Lal stressed the necessity of inclusion of older persons in the creation and implementation of projects, ensuring that the opportunities that ICT offers society are not translated into limitations for older persons.

## A Knowledge Society Can Respond to the Needs of All

### ICT should be seen as a catalyst

- New opportunities are offered while at the same time, if care is not taken to be inclusive, the skills and knowledge of older persons can be rendered redundant instead of drawn upon.
  - This needs to be reflected when considering the pace at which new technology is introduced. Participation must be facilitated for all members of all different kinds of communities.
- How do you integrate these issues within the context of both community development and the provision of services?
    - The deployment of ICT can enhance the provision of government and public services both at the decentralized and centralized levels.
    - In terms of scale and efficiency there are few other options, which can match ICT's abilities.
    - But, services must be responsive to the demands and needs of local communities.
  - Only about 30% of all software projects succeed, mainly because they are designed without the interests of the users in mind.
  - It is critical that when it comes to the development of national strategies and projects that there is inclusion in terms of consultation and demands.



UNDP (sent in by Sylvia Fletcher)



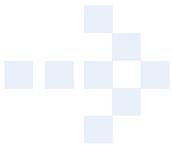
Mohsen Allam/PhotoShare

### How can ICT be integrated into projects that already address the needs of older persons and facilitate their participation?

This brings up numerous questions for discussion:

- How do you introduce ICT into projects that are already functioning quite well without it?
  - How do you truly provide value-added?
  - How do ensure that ICT will function as a catalyst?
  - How do you encourage people to learn?
  - How do you introduce ICT into areas such as Community Access Centres, where older persons are already involved in providing learning opportunities for the young?
- Countries already prove the possibilities for cross-intergenerational learning, where both older persons and the young learn from each other.
    - India and Tanzania are examples of older persons using community centres not only for computers but also for the use of online telephony to connect with long distance family members. This greater connectivity must be fostered, especially in communities with large migrant populations.
    - Mobile phones, for example, have grown in number much faster in developing countries and also faster than many other technologies.
    - Again, the question becomes how do we ensure that these devices are responsive to the needs of the population?
  - Within the context of UNDP's work with ICT, and the development of national strategies, it is important to ensure the inclusion of older persons when it comes to:
    - Determining the priority for strategies
    - The implementation of and provision for government services using ICT.
  - We must ensure that knowledgeable and experienced older persons are able to benefit from projects as well as pass on their skills.
  - We must ensure that global processes such as the World Summit on the Information Society reflect at the highest level these above listed concerns.

An information society that responds to the needs of all is a possible reality. What it involves is political will, commitment and inclusion.





## PANEL II: SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR OLDER PERSONS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

**Moderator: Mr. Sergei Kambalov, Deputy Executive Coordinator,  
United Nations Information and Communication Technologies  
(ICT) Task Force**

We hear a lot about ICT for development but not much about specifically what is being done to bring older persons into this sphere, to empower older persons through ICT, to enrich their lives through ICT. Though we often address how ICT relates to such issues as gender, there has not been the deserved amount of focus given to the issue of older people. We need to bring this vital area to the centre of attention as well. For this reason, events such as this one are very important.

> SUMMARY

H.E. Ms. June Clarke summarized the experiences that Barbados is experiencing as it not only transitions its economy toward service producing and digital inclusion, but also undergoes demographic changes. The experiences of Barbados provide an example of how the government of one country is working to confront the challenges of harnessing the potential of seniors

## Harnessing the Potential of Older Persons: The Caribbean Example

- There is no doubt that ICT's have the potential to advance the process of development, improve the productivity and nations, and the quality of life of their citizens.
- If developing countries like Barbados and those of the Caribbean are to fully capture the benefits of ICT, it is imperative to develop the required institutional and human capacity.
- All citizens including women, youth, the disabled and seniors must have the capacity to participate in the process of ICT for development.

### The Transformation of an Idea Into Meaningful Action

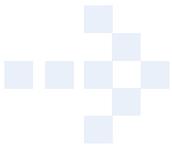
- The work of the Economic and Social Council, including the efforts of the Working Group on Informatics, and the more recent developments of the United Nations ICT Task Force are a clear demonstration of the positive contribution of the United Nations to this vital area of work.
- The importance of the multilateral approach and the engagement of the entire United Nations system, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions, will be key to the successful implementation of programs.

### In the Caribbean

- Governments are engaged in the development of an appropriate ICT agenda for the region aimed at transforming our community into an information society.
  - A regional strategy is well underway and a number of meetings covering a wide variety of aspects have been convened.
- The **Caribbean Information Action Group** is committed to fostering a coordinated approach to activity within the region.
- The **Digital Diaspora Network for the Caribbean**
  - On 24 January 2003, the United Nations ICT Task Force, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP), and supported by the permanent representatives of CARICOM member states, organized a highly successful one-day conference here at the United Nations on "*Bridging the Digital Divide in the Caribbean*".
  - 150 participants attended the meeting, committing themselves to establishing a Caribbean Digital Diaspora Network to serve as a focal point for the mobilization of financial and technical resources for ICT development in the Caribbean.
- The **EDUTECH programme** is an investment of the government of Barbados, which is geared toward the school system.

Two major reasons this topic has significance for Barbados as well as for many other middle income developing countries.

1. Over the last few decades, Barbadians have experienced longer lives and fewer children, resulting in a rise of a rapidly ageing population.
  - In its 2002 Human Development Report the UNDP estimated the life expectancy rate of



Peggy D'Adamo/CCP/Photoshare

**BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

*Digital Diaspora Network  
Latin America and the Caribbean,  
New York, 5 September 2003*

*Digital Bridge Africa: Redefining  
Africa's Future through Technology,  
Accra, Ghana, 8-10 May 2003*

*Bridging the Digital Divide for  
the Caribbean, New York, 24 J  
anuary 2003*

*Please see the UN ICT Task Force  
website for more information,  
[www.unicttaskforce.org](http://www.unicttaskforce.org).*



Barbados at 76.8 years, with 13% of the population already over age 60 (by 2050, that number is expected to increase to 35%).

2. The economy of Barbados, which has moved in recent years towards the production of services, is highly dependent on well-trained and skilled workers. As we move into areas of economic activity that are even more ICT intensive, we are preparing our workforce for competing in this new digital global environment.
  - Resources for achieving this are, presently concentrated in our educational system, with the monumental task of reeducating the entire working population of Barbados, including seniors.
- We need to embrace the concept of digital literacy, and not simply computer literacy.
  - Digital literacy is more about changing mindsets and attitudes rather than how to operate a computer.
  - This requires a dramatic change in our institutional structures and operational procedures not only in government, but also in business and educational institutions.
- These challenges are not unique to Barbados.

**Issues to consider when questioning how to harness the potential of seniors:**

- The development and design of appropriate ICT policies and strategies;
  - The timely implementation of policies;
  - The building of appropriate infrastructure to facilitate easy connectivity;
  - The mobilization of funding;
  - The development of reliable information systems;
  - The planning and development of training and other facilities to enable seniors to play an effective role in the process;
  - The provision of multiple points of access to equipment through schools, libraries, community centres;
  - The potential for opening up new vistas, new careers, and new hobbies;
  - The provision of incentives to encourage citizens to make regular use of ICT opportunities;
  - The creation of appropriate legal improvements;
  - The provision of reliable management/coordination of the process;
  - The application of ICT to health care;
  - Telecommunications reform.
- There are many potential opportunities for action, and a number of challenges.

> SUMMARY

Ms. Ester Proveller provided a detailed example of how one company, COPEL, which produces electricity for the Paraná State in Brazil, has contributed its commitment to corporate responsibility for development to reduce the digital divide and improve literacy in the community.

Through the power of collective action, the Global Compact seeks to advance responsible corporate citizenship so that business can be part of the solution to the challenges of globalisation, promoting the realization of a sustainable & inclusive global economy.

## Corporate Responsibility in Bridging the Digital Divide

### COPEL and The Global Compact

- In 2000, COPEL signed onto the Global Compact and has included the nine principles in its Corporate Ethics Code.
- With the Paraná State Government as its major stockholder COPEL aims to be a socially responsible company, providing basic electric power infrastructure to the population of Paraná.
  - Connecting virtually 100% of the state's rural population to its distribution grids.
- COPEL believes in the importance of education, which led to the development of the Luz das Letras Program.

### A Little Background on the Global Compact

- United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan first proposed the Global Compact in 1999 It was launched the following July 2000.
  - Through the power of collective action, the Global Compact seeks to advance responsible corporate citizenship so that business can be part of the solution to the challenges of globalisation, promoting the realization of a sustainable and inclusive global economy.

### The nine principles of the Global Compact are:

- **Human Rights**
  - Principle 1:* Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights within their sphere of influence; and
  - Principle 2:* make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.
- **Labour Standards**
  - Principle 3:* Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
  - Principle 4:* the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
  - Principle 5:* the effective abolition of child labour; and
  - Principle 6:* eliminate discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
- **Environment**
  - Principle 7:* Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
  - Principle 8:* undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
  - Principle 9:* encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

### The Luz das Letras Program

- The Luz das Letras program aims to develop a computer program that would help to mitigate the digital divide, and wipe out illiteracy.
  - Promoting the basic human right: Access to education.
- The program is designed to educate illiterate teenagers and adults using the computer as its main tool.

## PANEL II

Ms. Ester Proveller, Secretaria de Estado de Crianca e Assuntos Da Familia, Paraná, Brazil



- Providing for an immediate feedback facility incorporated in the program that encourages constructive, evaluative and interactive learning.
- Creating a synergy between education and technology.
- The program is also designed to be environmentally friendly.
  - It runs on Intel 486 DX2 computers so as to reduce technological "junk" that can pollute the environment.
  - It also reduces the use of paper by 90% and encourages less power consumption due to shorter learning time and alternative class hours.
- Developed with a multidisciplinary approach the software is available free of charge to interested organizations, given they have the necessary infrastructure and interested students.
- Using computer-based teaching there is no standardization of materials, allowing students to move forward as they feel ready.
  - Students feel they have more active participation in their own learning process.
- Teachers introduce the classes and organize the studies that are then conducted by the student at the time and place of their convenience.
  - Enhances the independence and self-esteem of students.
- The program adopts the Ministry of Education National Curricular Parameters and the Proposition for the Literacy Training of Adults and Teenagers.
- The project advanced the establishment of local partnerships among NGOs, city administrators and offices, churches, universities and private companies.

### Quantitative Results:

- 1,413 students are receiving an education in the States of Paraná, Santa Catarina, São Paulo, Roraima and Goiás.
- 294 older computers are being used instead of wasted.
- 7.5 tons of paper has been spared according to calculations of how much paper is normally used in teaching.

### Qualitative Results/Social Benefits:

- **Motivation** enhances the confidence, ability and status of the students.
- **The dropout rate** of the project is virtually zero, because of the communal spirit of all the stakeholders.
- **Participation** by the community is increased as a result of the flexibility of the learning process.
- **Encourages** social work and bridges the gap among individuals. Computer literate members are encouraged to return as teachers.

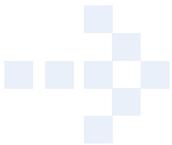
Although COPEL invested in the necessary initial investment, the program has been virtually paid for in terms of the local, regional and national media coverage of the Lus das Letras.

> SUMMARY

Mr. Yefim Malitikov discussed opportunities for distance education using the example of the Modern University for the Humanities, which is based on the cost-effective use of satellite technology. He pointed out that the use of technology in this manner could be seen as a resource for non-discriminating access and education for everyone in societies, including older persons.

## Life-long Learning Connected by Satellite

- Previously education has been thought of as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but this must change.
  - Learning must occur throughout life and governments should see this as a priority.
- Based on satellite technology, the Modern University for the Humanities grew from only six teachers and eight students to the current 150,000 students and 400 connected cities throughout the world.
- Through distance education, satellite technology offers new opportunities to combat illiteracy and compensate for a shortage of teachers.
- With satellite technology we have the ability to reach all the peoples of society including the older generations, providing a connection for them to the world.
- The general impression is that distance education is expensive, and when considering the Internet this can be true.
  - Satellite offers the chance to share costs. For example, as the number of students expands from 100 to 100,000 satellite costs can be as low as \$5 per student, while the Internet can still be as high as \$500 per student.
- One limitation is that many older people do not yet have the knowledge to work with the Internet, and this is where special schools such as this university can help.
- Modern knowledge can expand the lives of older people, making them not only longer, but also happier.





## PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

**Mr. Sarbuland Khan, Director of the Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), United Nations.**

Given the scale and complexity of the challenge and the need for a multi-pronged response that can fill the gaps and address market failures, few developing countries can be expected to succeed on their own in bridging the digital divide. There is a need for strategic partnerships at the local, regional and global levels that can bring together all stakeholders around well coordinated actions to stimulate a new development dynamic using ICT as an enabling tool to empower the poor so that they can participate productively in the new global economy.

**> NOTE**  
This is an abstract from an article written by Mr. Amir Dossal for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and is highly relevant due to its valuable content on the power of partnerships for ICT Development.<sup>1</sup>

## Harnessing the Power of Information & Communication Technologies for Sustainable Partnerships

The creative use of Information Technology for development remains one of the key challenges in the digital age. While development assistance has always been provided with sustainability in mind, all too often technology has lagged behind in this effort. The goal to realistically and practically transfer technology from north to south remains elusive. With an event such as the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) we have a useful opportunity for reflection and hopefully will generate some innovative thinking on the use of technology for achieving sustainability.

### The Case for Partnerships

The need to encourage business and industry to showcase sustainable development partnerships is a golden opportunity for the private sector to support concrete projects on the ground to bridge the north-south divide. The commitment of the scientific and technological communities to improve collaboration between scientists and policy-makers offers real impetus for progress.

Outcomes from the WSSD included a political declaration from heads of state, a plan of implementation that builds on the achievements already made and commits governments to undertake concrete measures and actions ("Type I"), and finally "Type II" partnerships and initiatives, involving business and other sectors of society, translating the "Type I" commitments into specific actions. It is clear that these two types of outcomes are closely interrelated, and that one cannot go without the other.

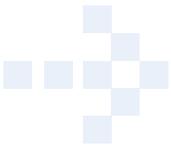
Considerable interest has been generated from business and industry in developing practical applications in developing countries, particularly in least developed countries (LDCs) and Small Island developing States as well as in countries with economies in transition, enabling some of their concerns to be placed in the world trade agenda. These understandings are obvious and basic building blocks for partnerships, and are likely to be engines of growth in developing countries.

### ICT as a key driver

"ICT should be seen as an integral component of sustainable development strategies, not merely as a valuable industry in its own right" Industry as a partner for sustainable development. Information and Communications Technology (GeSI)<sup>2</sup>.

The WSSD model for partnerships has laid out some key areas where Type II initiatives could serve as models for collaboration. The United Nations Secretary-General's call to focus on WEHAB—Water and sanitation, Energy, Health, Agriculture and Biodiversity—to develop an ambitious yet achievable programme of practical steps is a rallying cry to all of us.

In all of the WEHAB sectors, information and communication technology can be effectively utilised to implement programmes and projects. ICTs should be considered as drivers and efficiency mechanisms for delivery of sustainable technical assistance—and it does not



[1] For a full version of the article please refer to the website of Agenda Publishing, [2] Global e-Sustainability Initiative [3] The Digital Opportunity Initiative (DOI), a public private partnership of Accenture, the Markle Foundation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was launched at the G-8 Okinawa Summit in 2000, with the aim of identifying the roles that information and communication technologies (ICT) can play in fostering sustainable economic development and enhancing social equity. www.opt-init.org [4] www.gesi.org

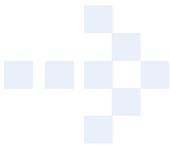
always have to be high-tech. Simple management and administrative capacity building are stepping-stones to good government and accountability. The challenge is not to see ICTs as an adjunct for development, but to integrate them into projects for maximum results.

There is a need for a bottom-up model that makes communication, information, energy sources and other self-help tools directly available to communities. Just consider the possible impact modern-day software can have, which enables modelling and simulation of waste-water treatment plants, rivers, sewers, chemical and fermentation processes to map out existing systems, detect deficiencies and provide possible solutions; or of Telecentres which, not only provide learning, health care, banking and government services, but also information on soil and environmental testing. In addition, as noted in the Final Report of the Digital Opportunity Initiative<sup>3</sup>, ICT applications can be used to reduce the consumption of energy, water and other essential natural resources through more efficient agriculture and industrial procedures. For example, precision agriculture techniques using GIS and GPS systems can facilitate weather and soil monitoring, crop forecasting and the ability to optimise farm return on investment ensuring more efficient use of scarce resources. In the future, ICT may also play an important role in the fight against pollution—not only by providing more useful metrics and information, but also by enabling population decentralization and large-scale telecommuting.

There are numerous examples and success stories of how, with minimal effort and additions of technology, development projects are able to enhance local capacity and leave something more behind for future generations. Developing countries could also take advantage of the mechanisms already tested in developed countries. The eEurope 2005 Action Plan, for instance, provides some good ideas for strengthening public institutions, which could be replicated. From the eEurope model, a case can be made for an eAfrica initiative through the New Partnership for Africa's Development, NEPAD, by twinning individual EU country successes with African country needs. For example, the EU and NEPAD could develop an eAfrica fellowship programme through Open Universities on the Internet for all of the WEHAB sectors. This way, information and technology transfer could take place on a systematic basis on a country-by-country and sector-by-sector basis.

Within the United Nations system, for example, the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics in partnership with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), has supported the creation of the Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI)<sup>4</sup> which brings together information and communications technology service providers and suppliers to address issues such as environmental management, corporate reporting, outreach and the role of information and communication technology in advancing sustainable development.

It is worth recalling the GeSI Report "Industry as a partner for sustainable development, information and communications technology" which so well states: for ICT to be an effective facilitator of sustainable development, it is essential that governments, civil society and the business community co-operate to create the conditions for the sector to help improve the competitive position of developing countries and reduce the environmental impact of developed economies.



## PARTNERSHIPS FROM THE CONFERENCE

"The United Nations is all about peace and caring and that fits the meaning of this organization. I would add the idea of health to caring, because without health, we cannot enjoy the gifts that life has to offer."

**Ms. Adele C. Smithers-Fornaci, President,  
The Smithers Foundation.**

"Through the sponsorship of literacy by computer learning, socially responsible corporations such as COPEL can directly impact the reduction of inequalities in people's existence. Opportunities and quality of life can thus be improved dramatically."

**COPEL Energy Corporation.**

"The arts and public support of the arts have always been part of my work as a public servant. Just as this organization deals with the concept of a society for all ages, art knows no bounds. It is through creative expression by young and old that we find our cultural identity."

**Senator Roy M. Goodman, President and CEO, United Nations Development Corp.**

"Incorporating policies of social responsibility in business management is becoming of critical importance on an international scale and it is a key factor of competitiveness for business."

**Mr. Joaquín Ayuso García, CEO, Grupo Ferrovial.**

"Only by working together, people with people, business with business, government with government, a combination of this, can we meet the needs of the people of the world."

**Ms. Lilia Clemente, Chairman, Lilia Clemente Capital, Inc.**

"The theme of the United Nations Charter is to bring the world's people together. ICT bring people together and makes a connection between nation states and people."

**H.E. Mr. Kishore Mahbubani, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Singapore to the United Nations.**

"Today information and communication technology has developed into a crucial factor that brings the world together and enables people to connect. It has also become one of the most powerful means that facilitates more efficient interaction between the state and its people, as well as empowers people with information and enlightenment."

**H.E. Mr. Natsagtin Bagabandi, President of Mongolia.**

"We often are on the cutting edge and we need your help to get us across."

**Professor Dianne Davis, Founding President of the International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC).**



## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND TRENDS

**Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations**

“In Africa, it is said that when an old man dies, a library disappears. This reminds us of the vital role older persons play as intermediaries between the past, the present and the future; of the veritable lifeline they provide in society. Without the knowledge and wisdom of the old, the young would never know where they come from or where they belong. But in order for the old to have a shared language with the young, they must have the opportunity to continue learning throughout life.”<sup>1</sup>

[1] <http://www.un.org/ageing>



Jean Sack/ICDDRDB/Photoshare

## A Need for Targeted and Individually-focused Research

Research on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and older persons is still sadly limited in scope. This clearly signals the need for more in depth research. When considering this endeavor it is important to review some of the considerations of those already exploring this research agenda. The following is just a few of these considerations.

### The current research in the area of ICT and older persons covers a broad range of abilities and ages:

*"This is a consequence of the sheer diversity of older people. Concentrating future studies on a particular background, social environment or age range would enable any future research to focus on particular characteristics and abilities of a comparable range of older people, without studying the diversity of age itself."*<sup>1</sup>

### It is impossible to generalize:

*"The only generalisation that can be made about these third age learners accessing new technology via the Internet, is that no generalisation can be made and attempts at formulating a general theory of older learners may be a misguided effort (Manheimer et al. 1995)."*<sup>2</sup>

*"McKeracher (1999) writes that 'defining a senior learner is problematic because no single definition satisfies everyone' (p. 260)."*<sup>3</sup>

### A framework for action cannot be too general, taking into consideration a more humanistic approach:

*"Specialists in communication for development are often accused of being too general when talking about their subject and clients. In most cases, they prescribe menu-type and pre-cooked solutions to address issues needing communication interventions. Despite the technological environment, they tend to forget that we are dealing with human condition with all its complexities and variations."*<sup>4</sup>



[1] Barton, Tracy A., *Literature Review: Information Communication Technologies and Older People*, Staffordshire University, P27. [2] *From Crystal Set to Cyberland: Third Age Learners and the Internet*, A paper written for the 6th Global Ageing IFA Conference: Maturity Matters, Perth, October 27-30, 2002, P13. [3] *From Crystal Set to Cyberland: Third Age Learners and the Internet*, A paper written for the 6th Global Ageing IFA Conference: Maturity Matters, Perth, October 27-30, 2002, P13. [4] *Report of the Ad-Hoc Expert Group on ECT for Monitoring and Evaluation of Population and Poverty Alleviation Programme: Role of ICT for Population and Development and Poverty Reduction. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on ICT for Monitoring and Evaluation of Population And Poverty Alleviation Programme: Role of ICT for Population and Development and Poverty Reduction, 26 – 27 September 2002, Bangkok. P67.* [5] *Report of the Ad-Hoc Expert Group on ECT for Monitoring and Evaluation of Population and Poverty Alleviation Programme: Role of ICT for Population and Development and Poverty Reduction. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on ICT for Monitoring and Evaluation of Population And Poverty Alleviation Programme: Role of ICT for Population and Development and Poverty Reduction, 26 – 27 September 2002, Bangkok. P4.* [6] *Report of the Ad-Hoc Expert Group on ECT for Monitoring and Evaluation of Population and*

### The perception of individual users towards ICT must be considered:

*"People perceive ICT differently; as a medium of economic gains and/or enabler of changes in their lives. Access and utilization of ICT are very much correlated with the purpose. Use of ICT is optimally grounded on the perceived purpose of the user."* <sup>5</sup>

### Surveys can supply valuable yet region-specific information:

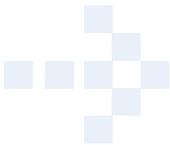
*"Surveys are one of the most important sources of Population data. Surveys provide detailed information about the current situation. But the research findings will have time limitation and be appropriate only to the area."* <sup>6</sup>

### A few suggested areas for further study

- Audience analysis, services and needs assessment in order to develop appropriate content for older persons. <sup>7</sup>
- Surrounding environments and their effect on the uptake of new technology by older persons. <sup>8</sup>
- Previous education standards and their effect on the uptake of ICT by the older persons. <sup>9</sup>
- New technology and its effect on the social interaction of older peoples. <sup>10</sup>
- CT's benefits for users with age related disabilities. <sup>11</sup>
- New information delivery channels and their use for older persons. <sup>12</sup>

### Some broader questions that might be considered

- How can ICT contribute to the greater empowerment of people as they age?
- How might ICT improve the opportunities for ageing persons to contribute to the social capital of their societies and nations?
- What are the special roles and contribution that ageing persons may make to ICT industry development.



*Poverty Alleviation Programme: Role of ICT for Population and Development and Poverty Reduction. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on ICT for Monitoring and Evaluation of Population And Poverty Alleviation Programme: Role of ICT for Population and Development and Poverty Reduction, 26 – 27 September 2002, Bangkok. P70. [7] Report of the Ad-Hoc Expert Group on ECT for Monitoring and Evaluation of Population and Poverty Alleviation Programme: Role of ICT for Population and Development and Poverty Reduction. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on ICT for Monitoring and Evaluation of Population And Poverty Alleviation Programme: Role of ICT for Population and Development and Poverty Reduction, 26 – 27 September 2002, Bangkok. P4. [8] Barton, Tracy A., Literature Review: Information Communication Technologies and Older People, Staffordshire University, P28. [9] Barton, Tracy A., Literature Review: Information Communication Technologies and Older People, Staffordshire University, P28. [10] Barton, Tracy A., Literature Review: Information Communication Technologies and Older People, Staffordshire University, P28. [11] Barton, Tracy A., Literature Review: Information Communication Technologies and Older People, Staffordshire University, P28. [12] Barton, Tracy A., Literature Review: Information Communication Technologies and Older People, Staffordshire University, P28.*

IDB Photo



- For at least the next several decades and for most countries in the developing world, the importance of the ageing trend will not so much be the emergence of older persons as the opportunity to capitalize on the working age.

- Investing in ICT will bring a myriad of benefits. Not least of these will be the empowerment of the workforce itself and the rise in productivity, now beginning to be well documented in industrialized nations, which will boost economic competitiveness.

## A Step that is Best Taken Immediately

### The Facts, as the Lawyers say, are Recalcitrant

The world is ageing, and the inexorable trend is not simply a demographic conundrum for the industrialized world. By 2030, Italy will have the world's highest median age (the age that divides a population into numerically equal halves), a remarkable 50. But, in that same year the median age of China and Thailand will be above that of the United States. And the median ages of such nations as Brazil and Mexico will approach that of the U.S. Indeed, the elderly populations of the developing world are growing faster than the industrialized world. From July 1999 to July 2000, 77 percent of the world's net gain of older individuals (615,000 people per month) took place in developing nations. The aggregate growth rates of the population of older persons in developing countries are more than double that of developed nations.

But there are deeper facts that are less well appreciated. Ageing means, as a first matter, larger numbers of workers relative to dependents (young or old). This is a huge economic opportunity for nations to invest. Only as a second matter and as those workers become older, does ageing mean the emergence of a large dependent older population.

### Through the Lens of the Ageing Workforce

In developing economies, making the most of the scarce years in which those in the workforce will have to carry a lesser burden in terms of a dependent population will be critical to long-term economic prosperity. And if recent history teaches anything about economics it teaches that information and communication have become the muscle and sinew of modern economies. For developing nations, the greater ability to invest in these years of low dependency will be choices about what to invest in.

The rise in productivity, by investing in ICT, will not only affect the competitiveness of traded goods and services, it will reduce the costs of social and public services. A U.S. survey of hospitals compared the cost trends for all hospitals and those that were "most wired" for the 1998-1999 period. The "most wired" group had a 0.6 percent increase in the expense per adjusted discharge, compared to a 2.8 percent increase in all hospitals. ICT has the ability not only to increase private sector workforce productivity, but also to maximize the return on investments in public services in the developing world.

Investing in ICT in the workforce, however, will have less well appreciated secondary benefits as the population ages. Recent research in the United States hints that ICT exposure and experience during workforce years of ageing workers may be a key toward ICT use in later years. In general, people aged 50 and over in the United States have the second lowest rate of Internet use, after young children aged 3-8. However, among those 50 and older, those in the labor force have a 46.4 percent use rate, compared to 16.6 percent for those out of the labor force. This three-fold difference in propensity for Internet use might suggest that exposure during workforce years will increase use in later years. Indeed, the use data for ages 50 and over in the workforce approximates that for younger people aged 25 to 49 (46.4% compared to 58.4%).

### Through the Lens of Older Persons

ICT's role as the ageing process begins to create a boom in the population of older persons

***If there is a problem for ICT it is not one of either technology or vision.***

*It is one of cold, hard cash. When needs are limitless but resources are finite, choices are made. For governments, ICT in support of demographic ageing may not carry either the urgency or the popular support needed to attract budget attention.*

***If there is a priority for the ICT community in economic development it is not vision, it is reality.***

*Concrete and practical research that will demonstrate the economic and welfare benefits, in quantitative and impressive terms, is an essential step to realizing the potential of technology to intersect the ageing process. It is a step that is best taken immediately. France had the luxury of 115 years before its over-60 population rose from 7% to 14% of its total population. South American has 40 years, but their path from 7% to 14% began in 1980.*

can also be significant. Assuming that initial investments in technology are made in the period of least dependency and highest productivity, the workforce, as it retires, will take these skills and this knowledge into their older years. ICT will provide the ability to access information on health and nutrition. ICT will allow older persons to continue to communicate with family and friends, to continue to be part of their communities even as or if their health deteriorates. The skills and competencies mastered during the working years become the *modus vivendi* in retirement.

But, a failure to invest in the dominant workforce years does not obviate the potential for ICT to contribute to the economic and social viability of an older population. ICT provides an independent boost to the health and well being of an older population, independent of the point at which nations or economies invest in it.

ICT allows things to be done at a distance. Two likely future trends make this a critical element for national strategy. One trend gives reason for optimism, while the other trend may not.

First, older populations become increasingly immobile as they age. Even though more and more older persons will be in urban settings, those cities will be characterized by both sprawl and congestion. The mobility of older persons will be an issue in the provision of services such as health care. A recent study at the University of Portsmouth in Britain indicated that in the surveyed population of people aged 61 to 91, 45 percent already consult their physicians by phone and 55 percent would be prepared to perform home tests for such things as monitoring blood pressure, transmitting those results to physicians using telecommunications.

In general, when enabled, older persons appear to be more than willing to join the Internet generation. In the UK, seniors are the second fastest growing users of the Internet, although the absolute number of seniors with access remains low. In the United States, Senior Net, funded by IBM and other corporations, now has 126 computer instruction sites serving 100,000 seniors in 35 states.

Second, however, the trend in what is possible does not necessarily match the extrapolation of current resource realities in developing nations. Most, if not all, governments are unlikely to find themselves beneficiaries of financial windfalls. Even where developing nations' progress economically (and progress is projected for nearly all), public budgets for social support services will be limited. There are unlikely to be windfalls of public funds to physically bring services to those in need. Weekly household visits to older persons by a phalanx of public health nurses, deployed in every street and alley of Cairo, for example, is a pleasing vision. It also has zero probability of approaching reality.

Hence, limited resources but a growing population in need of services opens the door for ICT. Enabling older persons to receive information, reminders, and education on matters of health and well being, even reporting in with medical indicators, can be done from central communications points without an expansion in the government payroll.

Of course, one has to get the technology to older persons. Therein lies the problem. It is clear that we know how to use technology to support the needs of ageing, be they workers or older persons. Both financial and social welfare benefits flow from doing so. What is not clear is how to finance the investment needed to ensure that what is possible becomes probable.



Jean Sack/ICDDR/Photoshare

## ICT Skills for Older Women

- Significant demographic shifts will have important global and national consequences for societies, communities, families and individuals.
  - With older women constituting the majority of older persons there is an important gender dimension to this issue.
- Older persons today experience widespread violations of their rights. They face, among other things, chronic poverty, inaccessible healthcare, violence and abuse, and a lack of social protection mechanisms.
  - Older women are often subject to increased discrimination, including loss of access to property.
- Older women are often excluded from income generation activities however research shows that:
  - Older women are more likely than older men to broaden their income source and;
  - Older women often use their income to substantially support their families.
  - Thus, investing in ICT skills for older women can have particular advantages.
- ICT, as a means for communications between governments and older persons, can be particularly important for:
  - Empowering women, to learn about their rights against violence or abuse by having access to relevant legislature.
  - Accessing government services such as transportation where in some countries this may be difficult, or constrained for women by cultural norms.
- For older women, who often have caregiver roles, especially in countries with high HIV prevalence rates, access to information and support groups is much needed.

"There is also a significant gender dimension to this portrait of humanity's 'coming of age'. Women nearly everywhere are living longer than men. Women are more likely than men to be poor in old age. They face a higher risk of chronic illness and disability, discrimination and marginalization. Women are also more likely to be care-givers and sometimes face a triple burden: child care; elder care; and, of course, seeing to their own well-being. But these contributions - to their families, communities and the economy-are often overlooked." <sup>1</sup>

**Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations**

[1] <http://www.un.org/ageing/prkit/olderwomen.htm>



## CONFERENCE DETAILS

The "Age of Connectivity" examines the role of information and connection technologies in influencing the quality of life of older persons in the world; it stipulates a framework of how to think about ICT as an agent of change—offering **a quality blueprint for an enriched "Society for All Ages."** When perceived with an open mind, these interrelationships offer endless opportunities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE

*Encourage* cooperative public/private efforts to make it possible for the benefits stemming from the digital revolution to be accessible to everyone in the world—including older persons, the young, the poor, and the marginalized. Strong active NGO participation was suggested in facilitating these partnerships. Successful examples: Hewlett Packard, the Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank and COPEL Energy Corporation to name a few.

*Find* effective ways to harness the ICT revolution to make a real difference in helping to empower and accelerate development of all generations. This includes bold, innovative and inclusive educational policies that will make the idea of lifelong knowledge a reality.

*Recognize* that the ageing of societies must be reflected within development agendas and that ICTs have the potential to offer a unique solution to not only increase productivity but also to improve equitably the quality of lives within societies through processes such as "Active Ageing".

*Design* ICT development initiatives that reflect specific needs and local conditions—all policies must be country—and region—specific, and help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. This means working collectively with communities to build on local needs, resulting in locally-driven solutions.

*Promote* the concept of investing in human capital by updating skills throughout life and making new information available as part of the fabric of human rights.

Examples: Global Knowledge Partnership and UNESCO multimedia centres using radio stations as an interface; The China National Committee on Ageing pilot project in Shanghai to develop information connectivity using NGOs and volunteers to communicate information on all social services for older persons.

*Stimulate* international support for developing new programs that reflect and match new conditions such as ICT Innovation Program for e-business, e-Strategies, Development and Media Convergence Programs.

*Expand* policies to link early education with labor force transformation through a variety of "classrooms" including virtual learning on PCs in places such as jails; community centres; workplace.

*Use* of new methods such as vouchers, alternative accreditations, and telematics.

*Acknowledge* that older persons are among those who have not yet fully benefited from the potential of ICT and focus on solutions and projects for their inclusion and for their retraining and skill rehabilitation.

*Encourage* cross-generational opportunities within communities, where both younger and older generations can learn from each other.

*Eradicate* the habit of mental passivity that leads to information stagnation by defining education as more than what is learned in the classroom but as education

for and about life and include this kind of sustained education concept in the Summit's Priorities along with protecting the environment and social development. Example: the Modern University of the Humanities in Russia, which has its own planetary satellite teleport.

*Explore* new directions and ways of introducing and using ICT through regional initiatives such as the already existing diaspora network models in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

*Promote* new forms of dialogue and collaboration among private, public and governmental entities enhancing transparency and accountability.

*Focus* on the appropriate and effective types of interfaces that need to be employed to make information connectivity possible around the world adjusting the changes that might occur during the lifecycle.

*Seek* to integrate local and global perspectives to provide connectivity for older persons through programs such as Global Knowledge Partnership and Community Network.

*Eliminate* e-homelessness for older people through ICT facilities. In association with this consider cost-sharing methods such as community multimedia centers that allow for joint cross-generational and community development.

*Create* "New Families" by using ICT to connect refugee or abandoned youth with

older persons, particularly older persons without children.

*Establish* an overall and comprehensive "Society for All Ages" blueprint for connectivity.

*Consider* how lifelong learning, multi-generational dialogues, oral histories and easy access to information can help shape a common future.

*Adapt* successful projects to local cultures that can provide safe-living urban environments at minimal cost. Consider the ingenious use of ICTs as in Harbin, China, and expand its initiative and applications.

*Stimulate* new ICT solutions that include the needs and experiences of older persons at universities worldwide. ICCC proposes a Student Communication Competition, which stimulates students to analyze their local regions from the point of view of achieving inclusive technology connectivity and thereby focuses global attention on the critical importance of ICTs in sustaining human development.

*Consider* the opportunities that investing today in ICT training will provide for a two-fold asset: stimulate higher current productivity from working populations, but indirectly attain valuable technological skills that can improve their quality of life in later years.

*Promote* further dialogue and practical research on the role of ICT to enhance the opportunities and challenges presented to us by the fast occurring global "Agequake."

### CARING COMMUNITIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: IMAGINING THE POSSIBLE "AGE OF CONNECTIVITY"

Wednesday, February 12, 2003, United Nations Headquarters

#### MORNING SESSION

*ICT as an Agent of Change*

- *Chair*  
Dean Urs P. Gauchat, New Jersey School of Architecture, New Jersey Institute of Technology
- *Greetings*  
H.E. Mr. Gert Rosenthal, President of the Economic and Social Council, United Nations, 2003, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations
- *Opening Remarks*  
Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).
- *Keynote Introduction*  
Mr. Sarbuland Khan, Director of the Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), United Nations.

#### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

*"The Knowledge Economy: Creating Conditions for the Caring Communities of the 21st Century"*

- *Keynote Address*  
Mr. Danilo Piaggese, Chief, Information and Communication Technology for Development Division of the Sustainable Development Department (SDS/ICT) Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

#### Keynote Respondents

Ms. Kristin Hughes, Manager, International Public Policy, Hewlett Packard.

Mr. Alexandre Sidorenko, United Nations Focal Point on Ageing.

Mr. William P. Underwood, Executive Director, Business Council for the United Nations.

#### CASE STUDY

*"Crossing Media Bridges" UNESCO's "Community Multimedia Centres" Programme*

- *Introduction*  
H.E. Mr. Bob F. Jalang'o, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, and Chairman of the Economic and Social Council Working Group on Informatics, United Nations.
- *Presenter*  
Ms. Stella Hughes, Chief, Media and Society Section, Communication and Information Sector, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- *Luncheon*  
"Public-Private Partnerships"

#### AFTERNOON SESSION

*ICT Best Practices*

- *Video Presentation*  
World Summit on the Information Society
- *Opening Remarks*  
Ms. Helen Hamlin, Chair, NGO Committee on Ageing, United Nations.
- Ms. Narelle Townsend, Chair, NGO Committee on Human Settlements (UN-Habitat).

## PANEL I: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ICT AS AN ECONOMIC CATALYST

- *Moderator*

H.E. Mr. Manuel Felix, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations.

- *Panelists*

Mr. Zhang Zhixin, Vice President of China National Committee on Ageing (CNCA), (China) (ICT projects: University for older persons and Residence Internet service)

Ms. Radhika Lal, Policy Advisor on ICT for Development, Bureau for Development Policy, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (How the United Nations/UNDP is Reaching Out to Communities in Developing Countries)

## PANEL II: SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR OLDER PERSONS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

- *Moderator*

Mr. Sergei Kambalov, Deputy Executive Coordinator United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force.

- *Panelists*

H.E. Ms. June Clarke, Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations.

Ms. Ester Proveller, Secretaria de Estado de Crianca e Assuntos Da Familia, Paraná, Brazil.

Mr. Yefim Malitikov, Chair, Commonwealth of Independent State's Interstate Committee on Knowledge Dissemination and Adult Education.

## CONFERENCE DIALOGUE

*Closing Remarks:* Professor Dianne Davis, Founding President of the International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC).

## CONFERENCE BACKGROUND

As part of a series of Interlinked Congresses addressing the "Age of Longevity" held in cities around the globe, this conference was held in support of the World Summit on the Information Society and during the 41st Session of the Commission for Social Development. It was organized by the International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC) in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Programme on Ageing, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations ICT Task Force, Department of Public Information, the private sector, other NGOs, and the NGO Committee on Ageing, United Nations/NY. The "Age of Connectivity" examines the role of information and connection technology in influencing the quality of life of older persons in the world; it stipulates a framework of how to think about ICT as an agent of change offering a quality blueprint for an enriched "Society for All Ages." When perceived with an open mind, these interrelationships offer endless opportunities.

## ADDRESSING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How can global connectivity assist in resolving the complex challenges of a Graying Society? What "blueprint" is needed?
- How can partnerships be developed that incorporate older persons' experience and augment their capacities?
- How can ICT (information communication technology) boost economic development for a Society for All Ages?

*This event was been made possible by the generosity of the Smithers Foundation, AARP and others.*

### Gary Andrews

Gary Andrews is a Professor of Ageing at the University of South Australia and a Professor and Director of the Centre for Ageing Studies, a WHO Collaborating Centre on Population Ageing and an affiliated Research Centre of Flinders University and the University of South Australia. In addition he serves as Academic Director of the Australian Centre for Community Ageing. He is the Immediate-Past President of the International Association of Gerontology. In 1999 he was appointed to the United Nations in New York as the Special Adviser on Ageing, for a period of twelve months to co-ordinate a number of global research and policy related activities during the 1999 International Year of Older Persons. Professor Andrews was the Convener of the Valencia Forum held immediately prior to the United Nations World Assembly on Ageing in April 2002.

At present Professor Andrews serves on the Board's of Help Age International, Help the Aged (UK), the United Nations Institute on Ageing (Malta) and the Novartis Foundation for Gerontology. He is also the Principal Investigator in a major on-going populations based longitudinal study of ageing in Adelaide, South Australia. Gary is a member of the National Advisory Committee on Ageing and the World Health Organization International Advisory Committee on Health and Ageing. In 2003 he was awarded a Centenary Medal by the Governor General of Australia for his outstanding contribution to research on ageing.

### H.E. Ms. June Clarke

On September 7, 1999 Her Excellency Ms. June Clarke presented her credentials as the new Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations. H.E. Ms. Clarke served as Barbados' High Commissioner to Canada from 1995 to 1999 and in 1998 was also designated as the Non-Resident High Commissioner of Barbados to New Zealand. Prior to that appointment, from 1992 to 1995 she was Chief Executive Officer, Women and Development Ltd. in Barbados. From 1990 to 1992 H.E. Ms. Clarke was the Assistant Vice President, Group Life and Health, Barbados Mutual Life Assurance Society. Before that, from 1966 to 1987 she was the Administrative Manager, Eastern Caribbean, American Life Insurance Company. H.E. Ms. Clarke was also the Director of a number of Corporations in Barbados including Barbados Rediffusion Service Ltd. from 1978 to 1981; Barbados National Bank from 1978 to 1982 and from 1985 to 1986 the National Petroleum Corporation and the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company Ltd. Barbadian-born H.E. Ms. Clarke was educated at Queen's College, Barbados and is a Fellow of the Life Management Institute.

### Dianne Davis

Dianne Davis is the founding President of International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC), a non-profit organization in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. An international public speaker and consultant, she specializes in integrated products and services for the hospitality, healthcare and educational industries. Currently her work focuses on the impact of the "longevity factor" on society. She has developed unique "Cross-Sectorial" Dialogues for local authorities and international decision-makers. The book, *Hospitable Design for Healthcare*

and *Senior Communities*, written with Dr. Albert Bush-Brown, initiated the concepts reflected in ICCC's mission and "Better living...Adding Life to Years" programs.

Professor Davis received her graduate degrees from Columbia University and since 1966 has been cited in "Who's Who of American Women." She serves on United Nations NGO Committees and various international boards. Known as an industry catalyst, change agent, and futurist, her goal is to develop "cross over" ventures and stimulate traditional "sleeping" organizations or programs to move into the forefront of performance and impact.

### Nitin Desai

Since July 2003, Nitin Desai has been the special adviser for the World Summit on the Information Society. In February 1993, the then United Nations Secretary-General appointed Nitin Desai, at the Under-Secretary General level, to head the newly created Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. The substantive work of this Department supported the various United Nations intergovernmental bodies, including the Economic and Social Council, and the Commission on Sustainable Development. Other functions of this Department included the follow up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, the World Summit for Social Development, and the Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

In March 1997, Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Mr. Desai to coordinate, and subsequently head, the consolidation of the three economic and social Departments. The consolidated Department provides substantive support to the normative, analytical, statistical and relevant technical cooperation processes of the United Nations on the economic and social side. Mr. Desai is also the Convenor of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs which brings together the heads of all the UN Secretariat entities directly concerned with economic, environmental and social issues.

From 1990-1993, Mr. Desai was the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In that capacity one of his primary responsibilities was to coordinate the work of the UNCED Secretariat related to the development of Agenda 21, the principal programmatic outcome of the Conferences. From September 1985 to March 1987, he served as Senior Economic Adviser for the World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundlandt Commission). Before joining the United Nations, Mr. Desai was Secretary and Chief Economic Adviser in India's Ministry of Finance, beginning his government career in 1973 in the Planning Commission of the Government of India where he served in various capacities. In 1983 he served concurrently as the Secretary of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India. Mr. Desai received a Bachelor's degree from the University of Bombay in 1962 and, in 1965, earned a Master's degree in Economics from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

### Amir A. Dossal

Amir A. Dossal is the Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships and a Member of the United Nations Information

and Communication Technologies Task Force. He oversees the partnership between the United Nations system and the UN Foundation for programmes and projects financed by the \$1 billion contribution from Ted Turner.

Mr. Dossal is responsible for developing alliances with corporations, foundations and philanthropists for implementing the Millennium Development Goals. He promotes innovative partnerships that make use of technology for development and has been key in facilitating a number of UN partnerships with entities such as Cisco Systems, Hewlett-Packard and Ericsson. Mr. Dossal also led the establishment of the Digital Response Diaspora for Africa, as well as the Digital Diaspora Network for the Caribbean, bringing together private sector, academia and civil society to bridge the digital divide.

His previous UN assignments have included Deputy Resident Representative for Jamaica and the wider Caribbean (1990-1992), Chief of Financial Management for the Department of Peace-keeping Operations (1993-1997), which included responsibility for oversight of \$3.0 billion in 24 peacekeeping missions worldwide, and in 1997, Mr. Dossal established the Management Policy Office to oversee management reform in the United Nations, for which he served as Director until 1999. Before joining the UN, he spent nearly 15 years in the private sector in management positions in consulting, engineering and business development. Mr. Dossal has lived and worked in Asia, the Arab States, the Caribbean, Europe and North America.

#### **H.E. Mr. Manuel E. Felix**

H.E. Mr. Manuel E. Felix is the Alternate Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations and has held that post from 1982-1986 and from 2000 to the present. H.E. Mr. Felix has a B.A. in sociology and an M.A. in Economic and Human Resources. He is an educator and a member of several social and civic organizations, and has lectured in international educational and civic organizations. Currently he is in charge of the social and humanitarian affairs of the Dominican Delegation to the UN.

#### **Gary Fowlie**

Gary Fowlie is the Chief of Media Relations and Public Information for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations specialized agency for Telecommunications. Prior to joining the United Nations system two years ago, he worked as a business journalist and as a consultant in the area of technology marketing, economics and communications. He received his degrees at the University of Alberta in Canada and the London School of Economics.

#### **Urs Peter Gauchat**

Urs P. Gauchat is an architect, innovator and instigator. As a professional and academic he has a long-standing interest and expertise in the field of housing and community building worldwide. He is Dean of the New Jersey School of Architecture at New Jersey Institute of Technology and a practicing architect. He formerly taught at the Harvard GSD and was president of the Boston Architectural Center. The New Jersey School of Architecture is one of the largest in the country. He transformed the School into an internationally recognized leader in the area of CAD (computer aided design) and community development. His focus is on results not just theory. The School in the

past few years has been involved in over 65 community projects.

Dean Gauchat is particularly interested in creating a bridge between the considerable resources of universities and the needs of communities. He serves as an advisor to academia, governments, communities and industry.

#### **Helen Hamlin**

Helen Hamlin has represented the International Federation on Ageing at the United Nations since December 1991. She has been Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing at the United Nations since September 1997. A social worker for over fifty years, she received her M.A. from the Columbia University of Social Work and has worked in the field as a family social worker, specializing in gerontology for the past thirty-five years. After retirement, she became the Project Director for the Retired Faculty School Initiative, an inter-generational program based at the Institute on Aging for the Columbia University School of Social Work.

Ms. Hamlin is on the boards of several agencies serving older persons and a statewide intergenerational organization. She has published articles on a variety of topics in national and international journals. She is a Fellow of the Brookdale Center on Aging at Hunter College of CUNY.

#### **Kristin Hughes**

Kristin Hughes manages International Public Policy for Hewlett Packard, including e-inclusion initiatives, customs and trade regulations, as well as relationships with foreign governments. In addition, Ms. Hughes manages the relationships between HP and international, governmental and multi-sectoral organizations, including US Federal Agencies, the World Economic Forum, USAID, the United Nations, the Global Business Dialogue on e-Commerce and the continuation of the Dot Force Implementation Network. Prior to joining HP's Washington, D.C. office in 2000, Ms. Hughes spent four years on Capitol Hill, working for Senator Mark Hatfield (R-OR), and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole (R-KS). Ms. Hughes received her B.A. from Willamette University and her J.D. from American University's Washington College of Law.

#### **Stella Hughes**

Stella Hughes is Chief of the Media and Society Section in UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector. A former journalist, she joined UNESCO as a speechwriter to the Director-General in 1997. In 2000, she moved to the Communication and Information Sector to launch UNESCO's new Community Multimedia Centre Programme and continues to coordinate this programme. Ms. Hughes' journalistic experience includes working as an international broadcaster covering current affairs and the arts in Africa and for several years she was a Paris correspondent for the Times Higher Education Supplement and New Scientist magazine.

#### **Radhika Lal**

Radhika Lal is a policy advisor on ICT for Development with the UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy. She is trained as a development economist with a focus in technology, trade and economic development policies and issues. Most recently her focus has been on issues relating to the potential of ICT to create new development opportunities, enhance access to information

and facilitate participation in decision-making. She has worked on issues related to relating to the democratization of social and economic policies and capacity building and was co-author of the "Budgets as if People Mattered: Democratizing macroeconomic Policies". Prior to working with UNDP, she undertook research and taught economics and worked with civil society organizations around issues relating to economic policy, technology related restructuring and emerging choices.

#### **Sergei Kambalov**

Sergei Kambalov is Deputy Executive Coordinator of the Secretariat of the United Nations ICT Task Force. Prior to that he was Chief of the Policy Coordination Section in the Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Mr. Kambalov is a graduate of the University of Moscow and has a Ph.D. in International Economics from the Diplomatic Academy in Moscow. Before joining the United Nations in 1989 he worked in academic research and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

#### **H.E. Mr. Bob F. Jalang'o**

H.E. Mr. Bob F. Jalang'o has served both in the private sector and as a member of Parliament in his native country of Kenya. From November 2000 to date he has served as Kenya's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. From July 1993 to April 1997, he served as Ambassador to Zambia, Malawi and Botswana. From April 1997 to November 2000 he served as Ambassador to Italy, Greece and Poland and was Permanent Representative to FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP) and to IFAD.

#### **Sarbuland Khan**

Sarbuland Khan is the Director of the Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Among his twenty-one years of professional experience within the United Nations, he has held positions as the Branch Chief for the Policy Coordination and Interagency Affairs, Chief for the Office of the Under-Secretary-General of the Department for International Economic and Social Affairs, and Special Assistant to Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Decolonization. From 1979-1981, he served as delegate to the Second Committee in the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations.

Prior to joining the United Nations, Mr. Khan was the Director for Economic Coordination in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. Mr. Khan holds an M.A. in economics and has authored a number of publications and various articles in economics for books, journals, newspapers and magazines.

#### **Yefim Mikhailovich Malitkov**

Yefim Mikhailovich Malitkov was elected in 2000 by the Fourth International Congress of the International Association "Znanie" as its President for a new five-year term. The International Association "Znanie" is the regional coordinator and main non-governmental organization of the United Nations for Eastern Europe and the first operator of the Global Electronic Forum of non-governmental organizations of the world with United Nations status.

Globally supporting the UN Agenda for the 21st Century and the United

Nations Programme for Sustainable Development, the International Association "Znanie" has become the organizer and participant of many public international events and initiatives around the world. Academician Malitkov was the initiator of a unique intergovernmental experiment combining governments and NGOs in the CIS countries for creating a new non-budgetary sphere – adult education, and became the first Chair of the CIS's Interstate Committee on Knowledge Dissemination and Adult Education. Professor Malitkov is a member of the World Economic Forum, the Vice President of the Russian Association of the Club of Rome, a member of the International Union of Economists, and a member of the management of the Free Economic Society of Russia.

#### **Danilo Piaggese**

Danilo Piaggese has been Chief of the Information and Communication Technology for Development Division of the Sustainable Development Department (SDS/ICT), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Washington, D.C., since 1999. The Division is in charge of structuring and implementing the Bank's policy to introduce ICT in the Bank's portfolio, of providing technical assistance to borrowing member countries, and of better informing government decisions regarding ICT and its applications.

From 1981-1991, Mr. Piaggese worked for the United Nations FAO at different duty stations in Africa and Latin America. From 1992-1998, he was part of the technical staff of TELESPAZIO, Societa per Azioni per le Comunicazioni Spaziali, TELECOM-Italia Group in Rome, where he was in charge of the Strategic Alliances and International Activities Division.

Mr. Piaggese holds a Masters degree in Physics with a diploma in geophysics, cum laude, from the University of Rome (1980), and an Executive International Business Certificate from Georgetown University/John Cabot University, Washington, D.C.-Rome (1996). His professional training is in remote sensing (1981); digital image processing and analysis (1986); technical cooperation project formulation and appraisal (1989); telecommunications (1995-6) and technology transfer.

#### **Ester Proveller**

Ms. Proveller is the Coordinator of the "Curitiba Capital Americana da Cultura", within the Fundação Cultural de Curitiba. She served as the Secretary of the "Estado de Crianca e Assuntos Da Familia" in Paraná, Brazil. She has also served as the President of UNIART, Open University for Handcrafts and Popular Culture since 1998. She has been an advisor in the field of community development, with a special emphasis on projects to promote individual, family and social development. Ms. Proveller has also served as a consultant in public policy making for older persons, infancy, adolescence and family, the coordination of multidisciplinary working teams within the social area, as well as for companies on the subject of social responsibility. Ester Proveller received a post-graduate level degree in both Cultural Anthropology and Philosophy and Languages.

#### **Susan Raymond**

Dr. Raymond is the former Director of Policy Programs at the New York Academy of Sciences. She has provided primary technical support to the

Carnegie Commission Task Force on Development Organizations, co-chaired by President Jimmy Carter and Rodney Nichols. She has also been a Senior Vice President at the Center for Public Resources, a project officer at the World Bank, where she oversaw health lending projects in Africa and the Middle East, and a Congressional staff member in the U.S. House of Representatives. Currently she is a member of the Project Team for the Project on Macroeconomics and Non-Communicable Diseases at the Center for Global Health and Economic Development at Columbia University. Susan Raymond earned her Ph.D. jointly from the School of Advanced International Studies and the School of Hygiene and Public Health of The Johns Hopkins University.

#### **H.E. Mr. Gert Rosenthal**

H.E. Mr. Gert Rosenthal, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations, has served as Permanent Representative since 1999, and currently holds the Presidency of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

H.E. Mr. Rosenthal has held a number of positions for his country, including Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (1988-1997) and member of the oversight Commission of the Guatemalan Peace Accords. He holds an Honorary Ph.D. in Social Sciences, Universidad de San Valle de Guatemala, 1996.

#### **Alexandre Sidorenko**

Presently, Alexandre Sidorenko is the Focal Point for Ageing at the United Nations. Since October 1998, he has been Coordinator, International Year of Older Persons. From 1988-1993, Mr. Sidorenko was Officer-in-charge, Ageing Unit, Developmental Social Welfare and Social Integration Branch, Social Development Division, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Office in Vienna. And since September 1993, he has been Officer-in-charge, United Nations Programme on Ageing, Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Headquarters. Alexandre Sidorenko received his Ph.D. (Candidate of Medical Science) in Immunology from the Medical Institute, Kiev.

#### **Anna Tibaijuka**

In December 2001, the Secretary-General named Anna Tibaijuka as the new Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), at the rank of Under-Secretary-General, effective 2 September 2002. From 1993 to 1998, when she joined UNCTAD, Ms. Tibaijuka was Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Dar-es Salaam. During this period she was also a member of the Tanzanian Government delegation to several United Nations Summits, including HABITAT II, the World Food Summit, the Fourth World conference on Women, and the World Summit for Social Development. At these conferences, Ms. Tibaijuka was an active member of the Civil Society and NGO Forums.

At the World Food Summit in Rome, she was elected Coordinator for Eastern Africa in the Network for Food Security, Trade and Sustainable Development. Ms. Tibaijuka has also been a Board Member of UNESCO's

International Scientific Advisory Board since November 1997. Anna Tibaijuka holds a Doctorate of Science in Agricultural Economics from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala.

#### **Narelle Townsend**

Narelle Townsend is the Chair of the NGO Committee on Human Settlements (UN-Habitat). Ms. Townsend is an architect and urban planner in private practice devoted to international development research, training and information exchange. Prior to 18 years service with the United Nations, she was engaged with architectural and planning firms (Australia, Britain and USA) on projects ranging from housing, hotel and resort planning, hospitals, neighborhood health centres and vest-pocket parks. She has also worked on historic restoration projects in New York.

Ms. Townsend served with the United Nations at duty stations in New York, Nairobi and Bangkok on human settlements programmes involving slum and squatter upgrading, construction standards, building materials and technologies, coastal zone development and training programmes. Ms. Townsend is a former Chief of Planning and Design at the United Nations Buildings Management Service, New York. Her first assignment with the United Nations Centre for Housing Building and Planning was the initial World Housing Survey and the Cumulative List of Documents in the field of Housing Building and Planning. This was followed with preparation of documentation for the Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Vancouver, 1976.

#### **William P. Underwood**

William P. Underwood was appointed Executive Director, Business Council for the United Nations, on January 1, 2001. His expertise is in building working links between the worlds of business, government and policy. He was Vice President and Director of Programs for the Business Council for the United Nations from 1995-2000.

From 1994-5 he served as Regional Director, Asia-Pacific for International Media Partners/The CEO Institutes, the publisher of Emerging Markets, the daily newspaper at the annual meetings of the IMF/World Bank and four regional development banks. Mr. Underwood organized the company's first CEO Institutes investment conference in China. Mr. Underwood served as Advertising Manager of Foreign Affairs magazine at the Council on Foreign Relations from 1989-1994. Mr. Underwood received his B.A. in International Relations at the University of Pennsylvania in 1982, and a J.D. in international law from Brooklyn Law School in 1987, where he served as editor of the Brooklyn Journal of International Law.

#### **Zhang Zhixin**

Zhang Zhixin is the Vice President of the China National Committee on Aging (CNCA), dealing with international cooperation and training within the organization. He was a professor of Mathematics at the Lanzhou University, wester of China from 1985 to 1995, and then became the Director of China's Civil Affairs College until 1999. He was also the Director of the group preparing for the three delegations of China, which participated in the Second General Assembly on Ageing.

## SELECTED AVAILABLE WEBSITES AND LINKS

[www.unictaskforce.org](http://www.unictaskforce.org) - United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force.

[www.international-iccc.org](http://www.international-iccc.org) - International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC).

[www.iadb.org/ict4dev](http://www.iadb.org/ict4dev) - Inter-American Development Bank's (IDB), Information and Communication Technology for Development Division of the Sustainable Development Department (SDS/ICT).

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## FINAL REMARKS

From Geneva to Tunisia, the road chosen depends on both the inspiration and commitment of all of us.

We must consider the future that lies before us, realizing that a tool applied today enables us for addressing a challenge tomorrow.

## Thinking "Outside the Box"

The field of emerging technologies has always had a unique manner of approaching a situation by thinking "outside the box". By truly analyzing not only the diversity of an audience but also the diversity of their needs, gathering both their current requirements and their future ones, considering what is available now and how to use it, and thinking ahead, questioning possible future challenges. The key to thinking "outside the box" is not accepting current capabilities as a constraint, but embracing them as a challenge. By taking a step back and reassessing a situation with a fresh outlook, the application of current technology can be addressed in a new unique manner, and a future of creative possibilities can be opened up.

If we approach ICT for development in this same manner, than we must accept that the audience before us is even more diverse, and the world around us contains an array of evolving challenges. We should truly understand the individuals that compose our societies, both female and male, both from developing and developed nations, and as this publication stresses, both young and also increasingly older.

ICT can be a powerful tool for every one of the individuals that make up our societies, with the great potential to support the overall promotion of vital development goals. But, we must consider the future that lies before us, realizing that a tool applied today enables us for addressing a challenge tomorrow.

With a fresh outlook, an approach from "outside the box", we can embrace this great challenge of how to apply ICT both more effectively and more equitably, both among and within our societies, both now and in our changing future. The creative minds of this conference offer a wonderful opportunity for this reflection.

"The Inter-American Development Bank is aware of a new global development process. We are devoting additional resources to this evolving development perspective that will create new wealth and distribute it more thoroughly and equitably. This is how we are accompanying the countries and the peoples in the region down their path of continued development."

**Mr. Danilo Piaggese, Chief, Information and Communication Technology for Development Division of the Sustainable Development Department (SDS/ICT) Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).**

"The International Conference on Caring Communities for the 21st Century: Imagining the Possible: "Age of Connectivity" was designed to stimulate dialogue, adding another element to caring communities, namely the challenges and opportunities presented by the "Age of Connectivity". Having inspired the beginning of this dialogue, as well as presented our conference recommendations to the World Summit on the Information Society, it is now up to each of us to integrate this emerging knowledge into public policy and our personal lives."

**Professor Dianne Davis, Founding President of the International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC).**

"What is important is that these discussions have some practical outcome. How do we put our priorities in place so that they really respond to the needs of this huge segment of humanity? How do we structure a meaningful set of activities that can bring tangible and early benefits to the people that we so much care about. We need to channel your guidance, your experience, in a practical way addressing these vital issues."

**Mr. Sergei Kambalov, Deputy Executive Coordinator United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force.**

"The first aspect of this partnership [between the IDB and the countries of the region] is the growing understanding that expansion of the knowledge economy is a crucial bridge between promoting sustainable economic growth and reducing poverty while fostering equity. Applications of these technologies increase local value added, productivity and competitiveness while developing human resources through expanded lifetime access to an increasing number of high quality opportunities for learning."

**Mr. Enrique V. Iglesias, President,  
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).**

# THE MARCH FORWARD TO TUNISIA

**Mr. Nitin Desai, Special Adviser for the World Summit on the Information Society**

*"There is no limit to what I think the human person has the potential for, and I don't think we should accept the notion of limits – ever." <sup>1</sup>*

Information and communication technologies are transforming the world economy. The World Summit on the information Society provides not only a unique opportunity for the participation of a multitude of key stakeholders to develop a common vision, but it also allows for the common understanding of an array of important issues that are related to the Information Society. Information communication technologies can provide unique solutions for many issues that traditionally may not have been considered in this manner. The global phenomena of ageing must be recognized as an issue that goes beyond concerns of social security and health, but must be connected with the other development agendas in the international process, and of these information communication technologies has become a key and vital component.

In many ways the World Summit on the Information Society is tackling issues, which will define how our century evolves. During a high-level Summit such as this one we must realize and reaffirm our commitment to sustainable development. We need to create a vision of how technology can contribute to sustainability, questioning ourselves on what practical steps should be taken to realize the great potential of technology. What concrete partnerships must be formed in order to best implement these steps? The notion of sustainability has to enter into technology planning for the full and equitable development of a knowledge economy.

As we move forward to Tunisia, we must bring forward our commitment to this agenda, realizing on the promises we have made in our agreements through the development of concrete partnerships, turning our Geneva Agenda into the Tunis Action Plan.

[1] Statement by Mr. Nitin Desai, at the launch of the Year, on 1 October 1998, International Year of Older Persons 1999  
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/agb98236.htm>



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