



**Harnessing ICTs for Development:
Opportunities and Challenges for LDCs**

Thursday, 12 May 13:15 – 14:45
(Room: Topkapi B, Lutfi Kirdar)

Moderator: *Mr Brahima Sanou, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU*

1:15-1:25	<p>Opening remarks and introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO UNGIS Chair 2010-11</i>
1:25-1:50	<p>ICT4D: Lessons learned (5min per statement)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Dr Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General, ITU</i> <i>Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General, UNCTAD</i> <i>Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Director of BDP's Democratic Governance, UNDP</i>
1:50-2:20	<p>Concrete examples: Discussing key opportunities and challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>H.E. Mothejoa Metsing, Minister of Communications, Science and Technology, Lesotho (tbc)</i> <i>H.E Wahabuddin Sadaat Deputy Minister, Finance and Administration, Afghanistan</i> <i>Mr Md. Khandker Anwarul Islam, Additional Secretary and e governance focal point, Cabinet Division, Bangladesh</i> <i>Mr Pasi Hellman, Deputy Director General of the Department for Development Policy (MFA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland</i>
2:20-2:40	<p>Open Discussion on ICT4D Opportunities and Challenges</p>
2:40-2:45	<p>Closing remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the UN and Executive Secretary of ESCAP (tbc)</i>

Event Description

New information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become critical enablers for sustained human development. There are now numerous examples as to how ICTs have contributed to eradicate poverty and bring to the most vulnerable and marginalized populations basic services for the first time in history. In addition, ICTs have also fostered the dissemination of knowledge for development and promoted good governance by enhancing transparency and accountability. For many areas of development, it has become almost unthinkable not to use these new technologies and deploy innovative solutions on the ground.

We should not assume that LDCs have been excluded of this process. On the contrary, in Haiti, the radio plays an important role in community outreach, including raising awareness about specific problems faced by women, such as sexual health, childcare, education and gender issues.¹ In Bangladesh, the national Access to Information programme is in the midst of deploying over 4,000 common service centers to bring public services closer to local and rural populations.² And in many LDCs, farmers, fishermen and micro-entrepreneurs are quickly adopting mobile phones to access vital information and to stay in touch with suppliers, customers, friends and family.³

In terms of the availability and use of Information and Communication Technologies, data suggest that by the end of 2009, the LDCs accounted for 4.6 per cent of the world's mobile cellular subscriptions but only 0.7 per cent of all fixed telephone lines. Their Internet users represent 1.1 per cent of the world's total, compared to 0.2 per cent and 0.4 per cent of all fixed and mobile broadband subscriptions respectively.⁴

With this in mind, the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) is inviting policy makers, practitioners and donors to share experiences and highlight the opportunities that ICTs offer in fostering development agendas and the challenges that LDCs and poor countries must confront for successful implementation. Representatives from LDCs that are currently undertaking large scale ICT for Development programmes and projects will share experiences in a panel, where donor countries and international experts will also provide inputs and expertise.

By the end of the session it is expected that meeting participants have captured the critical potential that ICTs can have in fostering development agendas. In addition, it is expected that LDC representatives can network among themselves and continue to learn from those who are already in the way to furnish ICT-enabled solutions to traditional development gaps.

The length of the meeting is one and a half hours.

1 http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=30699&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
 2 http://www.undp.org.bd/projects/proj_detail.php?pid=31
 3 <http://www.unctad.org/ier2010>
 4 ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database



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