

**5<sup>th</sup> Annual Global Forum of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development: ‘Information and Communication Technologies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Moving from Advocacy to Action’**

5-6 December 2010  
Yas Marina Circuit, Abu-Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

## **Summary of Proceedings**

On 5-6 December 2010, the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) held its 5<sup>th</sup> annual Global Forum ‘*Information and Communication Technologies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Moving from Advocacy to Action*’ at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu-Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The Forum convened relevant stakeholders for an action-oriented dialogue on emerging issues and challenges in the field of ICT for development. Throughout the two days, the participants performed a collective ‘reality check’ on the progress made thus far in using ICT to achieve the MDGs and what still needs to be done to ensure that ICT fulfil their vast potential for accelerating development.

During the Forum the Alliance also presented, for discussion and feedback, its major recently launched initiative – the MDG eNabler, a free web-based set of ICT-based tools and resources designed to assist governments and all development practitioners in their work towards achieving the MDGs.

The Forum, chaired by Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman of GAID, was attended by over 250 participants including high-level government officials, representatives of United Nations agencies, the private sector, civil society, academia and experts in the field of ICT for development. The forum was also broadcast live to the world using ‘livestream’ technology, allowing those who could not travel to the event a chance to engage in the proceedings remotely<sup>1</sup>.

### **I. Opening Session**

In his welcoming remarks, H.E. **Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan**, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, UAE, congratulated GAID for its successfully organized event and spoke at length about the importance of ICT in all areas of development. He urged participants of the Forum to continue their work towards finding new innovative ways to use ICT and make them available to everyone, especially those living in the developing world. He reminded participants that empowering people using ICT is just as important as providing them with basic human needs and that ICT must be deployed and used at the local level. Finally, he urged the participants to move from the discussion phase to the achievement phase after the Forum was over.

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<sup>1</sup> The web-cast was attended by more than 700 unique online visitors with top participation from UAE, USA, Nigeria, India and Pakistan.

In his opening statement, **Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh** reaffirmed the Alliance's and his own personal commitment to deliver the MDG eNabler to development practitioners around the world. In doing so, he stressed, GAID will be addressing one of the greatest challenges of our time, which is harnessing today's cutting edge technologies to create a more humane and equitable, more peaceful and sustainable world for all members of the human family.

In his message to the participants, delivered by Ms. **Haiyan Qian**, Director of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, UNDESA, **Mr. Sha Zukang**, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, conveyed, on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General **Mr. Ban Ki-Moon**, his greetings and thanks to all participants of the meeting and thanked the Government of Abu-Dhabi for hosting the Forum. He commended GAID for focusing on the strategic role of ICT to achieve the MDGs and urged the Alliance to support the United Nations in this regard through its network of stakeholders.

**Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra**, Under-Secretary-General, Special Advisor for Africa, and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, in a message delivered by **Mr. Patrick Hayford**, Director of the Office of the Special Advisor for Africa, expressed his thanks to the Alliance and stated his confidence that GAID will play a strategic role in developing ICT in Africa specifically. He also stated that the United Nations stood ready to partner in this process.

In her keynote address, H.E. **Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Al Qasimi**, Minister of Foreign Trade, UAE, praised GAID for organizing the important event and tirelessly advocating the optimum use of ICT to meet international development goals. Her Excellency urged participants to find ways to align ICT activities with economic and social development and take concrete and sustainable actions to move towards the world's shared aspiration, echoing the Forum's title. The Minister also highlighted that the United Arab Emirates fully understand the catalysing effect of technology on the economy and society and reiterated the full support of UAE to GAID's call towards the achievement of the world MDGs.

In his keynote address (delivered as a recorded video statement) Professor **Jeffrey Sachs**, Director, The Earth Institute at Columbia University and Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary-General on MDGs, highlighted the various ways that ICT were transforming the way development practitioners at all levels were going about working towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. He urged the Alliance to facilitate action and offered to partner with GAID in the areas of Education (on an existing connectivity for schools project together with Ericsson and other partners), Health and Youth, among other areas, in joint efforts to facilitate progress towards the MDGs and thanked GAID for all of the work it is doing.

## **II. Plenary Discussion. Reality Check – Information and Communication Technologies for Development: what is holding us back?**

Moderator: Mr. **Sarbuland Khan**, Senior Advisor to GAID Chairman.

Panelists: Mr. **Stephen Dukker**, Chairman and CEO, NComputing (USA), Mr. **Drupad Mathur**, Director, S.P. Jain Center of Management (UAE), Mr. **Ali AlMashat**, Chairman, SRC SAT (France), Ms. **Evelyn Oputu**, Managing Director, Bank of Industry (Nigeria), Ms. **Graciela Chichilnisky**, Professor, Columbia University (USA), Mr. **Allam Ahmed**, Department of Municipal Affairs (UAE)

During the lively plenary session, the expert panelists, together with the Forum participants, discussed the current status of the role that ICT is playing in development and performed a ‘reality check’ to identify what barriers were holding back ICT from fulfilling their vast and widely recognized potential to spur economic and social development. The diverse panelists each gave unique perspectives and offered strategies for the Alliance and the broader development community to address the issue moving forward.

New market strategies to increase the access to markets for developing countries, especially for infrastructure development and general ICT expansion, were identified as a crucial step that needed to be taken at the global level to help mainstream ICT into development for those that need it most. It was agreed that an action-oriented road map towards MDG advancement through ICT, taking into consideration the complex development ecosystem and value chain, must be established and that the Alliance could play a major role in this.

Accessibility to the technologies by people living in rural areas and others living without the necessary connectivity to benefit from ICT, was also identified as a major barrier. Cloud computing and the reduction of cost to basic technologies were presented as key solutions to this problem.

Representatives from the African continent were especially vocal about the realities of the digital divide, especially in Africa. The benefits of ICT are not perceived by those who really need it and there was a universal call from participants that awareness and appealing to the consciences of people living in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world was necessary to address this issue. Young people must champion the use of ICT if it is ever going to be mainstreamed and become sustainable.

Governance issues and the high costs of technology were also identified as major hurdles for the effective use of ICT in development – technology licensing, it was said, needs to be addressed in many countries to ensure local control and empowerment

through ICT is given to officials ultimately responsible for bottom-up development efforts.

It was widely agreed that effective progress required collaboration amongst all stakeholders, and GAID was applauded for its role in such collaboration and for its increasing focus on action-oriented activities towards achieving the MDGs.

### **III. Plenary Discussion. MDG eNabler: A Call for Action – Share and Collaborate to reach the MDGs**

Moderator: H.E. **Ivo Ivanovski**, Minister of Information Society (Macedonia)

Panelists: H.E Dr. **Elham Ibrahim**, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, African Union, Mr. **Mohamed Al-Qaed**, CEO, eGovernment Authority (Bahrain), Dr. **Jim Poisant**, Secretary-General, World Information Technology and Services Alliance (USA), H.E. **Linamara Battistella**, Secretary, State of Sao Paulo, Brazil (represented by Mr. Danilo Piagessi) , Mr. **George King**, CEO, Global Capacity (USA), Ms. **Sarah McCue**, Founder and President, Blumail (USA).

The second plenary discussion focused on the development of the MDG eNabler. Building upon the outcomes of discussion at the previous meetings and seminars with similar focus, the panelists and participants reviewed the current status of the project and identified what needed to be done to further and strengthen its progress. Many vital pledges of support and substantive contributions were made throughout the discussion, as well as important suggestions on ways in which the project's development could be improved.

The MDG eNabler initiative was introduced to the Forum by H.E. Ivo Ivanovski, Minister of Information Society of Macedonia, who shared with the participants his own positive experiences using the MDG eNabler for planning projects and implementing services in his country.

Panelists agreed that the initiative had been very successful in gaining support from relevant stakeholders and that it was now time to move towards building a working, usable product. It was suggested that a clearer project management mechanism should be put in place to assess progress and set and monitor targets and goals for achievement.

The African Union Commission reiterated its previously pledged commitment and support for the initiative and stated its willingness to work together with all stakeholders to ensure its success. The Commission stressed the importance of public-private partnerships and cooperation, especially in Africa, in making ICT for development a sustainable solution.

Bahrain also restated its support for the MDG eNabler, and updated the participants on their progress in creating a capacity-building center for Africa on the MDG eNabler.

In addition, the eNabler was lauded for being a vehicle to help achieve social inclusion for persons with disabilities. Participants agreed that continued collaboration

amongst all stakeholders was necessary for the eNabler to be a sustainable and successful tool for development practitioners.

#### **IV. Solution Salons**

Held in the afternoon of the first day of the Forum, the Solution Salons allowed participants to break into thematic groups of their choice for focused sessions. Led by various organizations and companies, each session's participants worked to identify the key issues and problems of their respective Salon subjects, design and present solutions to these issues and problems and then report back to the larger Forum group the following day on their results and recommendations for GAID and the broader development community. These recommendations will be used to guide the work of the Alliance moving forward.

##### **ICT for Poverty Alleviation and Hunger and ICT for Health**

**Lead:** *Najeeb Al-Shorbaji, World Health Organization and Anton Mangstl, Food and Agriculture Organization*

**Summary:** This Solution Salon focused on the role of ICT in Poverty Alleviation and Hunger eradication and on ICT for Health. Synergies and partnership building around technology solutions for both hunger and health were explored as well as the importance of using ICT for capacity building and knowledge management both for civil society and the public sector.

##### ***Outcomes and Recommendations:***

- GAID should continue its partnership building activities.
- The Alliance can play an important role in facilitating the collection and dissemination of local knowledge, and should get involved in collaborative ways to support local institutions.
- GAID could support or host seminars focused on ICT at the ministerial level to increase awareness in the public sector at the policy level.
- The Alliance should explore business models that would allow these activities to move forward without reliance on outside funding.

##### **ICT for Entrepreneurship**

**Lead:** *Armen Orujyan, ATHGO International*

**Summary:** This lively session discussed the broad role of entrepreneurship in all areas of development and the various ways that ICT can support entrepreneurship efforts at all levels. Some of the solutions that participants identified to support and increase entrepreneurship activities were: to create incubators, mentorship programs, and centres of excellence, replace intermediaries, increase funding, share success stories, create a free virtual environment for entrepreneurs to find solutions and resources for their causes.

***Outcomes and Recommendations:***

- GAID could promote or create a virtual environment to support entrepreneurship amongst its members and the global development community.
- The Alliance should continue to promote policies which accelerate entrepreneurship activities.

**ICT for Education**

**Lead:** *Jānis Kārklīš, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and John Davies and Richard Hall, Intel Corporation*

**Summary:** This well-attended session attracted expert stakeholders from the fast-growing field of ICT for Education. The discussion was centred around a “four-pillar model” framework consisting of: 1. PC/devices, 2. Broadband, 3. Training (Teacher Professional Development) and 4. Content. The dialogue focused on how government-dictated policy frameworks shape each of the four pillars. Participants were in agreement that regardless of the policy decisions that are made, the technology should remain neutral.

***Outcomes and Recommendations:***

- Teacher professional development and ICT training are essential for progress to be made in the field of ICT for Education, and GAID should focus on this through, for example, support for the *ICT Competency Framework for Teachers* which is being developed through a partnership between UNESCO and private sector companies.
- GAID can support programs such as Intel Teach, which trains millions of teachers around the world how to appropriately use available technologies inside and outside of their classrooms.
- Content and accurate data are also critical to advance progress and thus GAID should support appropriate data collection methodologies and the sharing and dissemination of best practices in ICT for Education content.

**ICT for Sustainable Development / Climate Change and  
ICT for Disaster Relief / Post-Conflict Zones**

**Lead:** *Graciela Chichilnisky, Columbia University and Dag Nielsen, ICT4Peace Foundation*

**Summary:** Participants of this Solution Salon explored the numerous ways that ICT can support sustainable development and disaster relief. General consensus was that the use of ICT for anticipation and communication during remediation of catastrophes is extremely crucial and potentially critical for human societies in an era of volatile weather

events. Participants also discussed the use of marketing strategies to improve universal service and access, as well as competitive prices.

***Outcomes and Recommendations:***

- The Alliance could establish a taskforce that would report possible suggestions for GAID in terms of policies such as trade access to market for infrastructure development and the creation of a multilateral global spectrum market.

**ICT for Gender Equality and ICT for Development and Youth**

***Lead: Gloria Bonder, FLASCO (Argentina) - Mohammed Fathy, ICT eLeaders***

***Summary:*** This Solution Salon focused on the integration of Gender Equality and Youth in the MDG eNabler. In this regard, participants reiterated the need for the MDG eNabler to ensure an ongoing process of dialogue, communication, and collaboration among all stakeholders. Furthermore, it was agreed that the MDG eNabler should be planned and implemented using participatory approaches and strategies.

***Outcomes and Recommendations:***

- The Alliance could activate the existing networks and task forces working on gender and ICT4D in order to enrich the framework of the eNabler, collate its contents, indicators, and methodologies.
- GAID could play a role in emphasizing research on gender and collaboration within local, regional, and international agencies and provide education in STEM programmes, careers as well as in leadership and decision making.
- GAID should reinforce its existing Youth committee and its activities where youth visions and needs are reflected.
- The Alliance should exchange ideas and information on youth. A GAID-university relations section should be established in order for students and youth to promote GAID and MDG activities around the world and create student volunteer initiatives.

**ICT for People with Disabilities**

***Lead: Axel Leblois, G3ICT***

***Summary:*** This Solution Salon focused on the importance of mobile phone accessibility to people with disabilities, due to the fact that mobile phones are the best ICT tool to break isolation and provide access to services. Participants also discussed the possibility of using successful existing solutions to serve persons with disabilities and the importance of having a multi-stakeholder approach in order to have sustainable solutions. Policy steps that need to be incorporated into the MDG eNabler were also explored.

***Outcomes and Recommendations:***

- GAID should continue the partnership-building activities using its important network.
- The Alliance could look for funds to help people with disabilities.
- Since there is a very successful network in GAID today, there should be a way to channel what GAID does into the MDG eNabler.

**A Start-up Strategy for Developing Countries to Harness Cloud Computing**  
**Lead: *Stephen Dukker and Alan Yates, NComputing***

**Summary:** NComputing, one of the fastest growing desktop virtualization companies in the world, educated participants about the emerging field of Cloud Computing and, in particular, the ways in which this technology is impacting development and education in the developing world. Desktop virtualization technology, via cloud computing (small, medium and large scale clouds) is being rapidly deployed and streamlined throughout the world.

***Outcomes and Recommendations:***

- The Alliance can use its networks and convening power to create awareness of this growing field to ensure its sustainability and to help connect the public and private sectors.
- The public sector must be held accountable and provide leadership and investment to ensure that the costs of the technology continues to drop, and that the scale of the projects and benefits to those who need it most continue to increase.

**Reliance on ICT in governance: how much is too much?**

**Lead: *Sebastian Muah, Deputy Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs, Liberia***

**Summary:** The participants of this Solution Salon identified the appropriate steps and partners for future work towards building capacity of decision makers in developing country governments to comprehensively evaluate ICT policy options and their long-term consequences. Participants were in agreement that Government policy makers must have a dedicated “trusted” platform in order to share experiences, have an honest dialog on Governance issues, build capacity about ICT and support national champions.

***Outcomes and Recommendations:***

- GAID could use the MDG eNabler to provide a knowledge platform for ICT4D in order to establish a solution and innovative dialogue among Government policy makers.
- The Alliance should also begin to build on the Bahrain project by extending its scope from just the MDG eNabler towards an ICT in Governance policy dialogue.
- GAID could play a role in regionalizing policy dialogues, especially in the Southern Hemisphere.

### **ICT for Financing Development and the MDGs**

**Lead:** *Barbara Samuels, Global Clearinghouse for Development Finance*

**Summary:** This Solution Salon focused on specific applications of ICT in advancing the critical need to mobilize more cost-effective financing for development and achieving the MDGs. Topics of the discussion were the relation between finance and the eight MDG goals, and examples of ICT applications that have been developed for finance, potential development and MDG impact. Participants also exchanged views on ways to improve existing applications as well as GAID strategies and action plans.

#### ***Outcomes and Recommendations:***

- GAID partners can donate their experts and cover related expenses as needed in order to create global team of experts that can respond to needs from the private sector and governments.
- The Alliance could issue “GAID White Papers”, which will mobilize key experts from private and public sector and set priority actions.
- GAID needs to incubate new partnerships as well as champions in governments and the private sector. GAID could organize, for example, an ICT Innovation & MDG Awards with categories including government leadership, new services and products, dissemination or MDG impact.

### **Demonstration of the Computer-aided Strategic Planner**

**Lead:** *Professor Amjad Umar, University of Pennsylvania and Harrisburg University*

**Summary:** This Solution Salon focused on the actual implementation of the computerized and web-based Strategic Planner that will be a core component of the MDG eNabler. The session highlighted the planning process and functionalities of the MDG eNabler. It gathered optimum feedback and suggestions in order to add value to the planner and eventually to the MDG eNabler.

#### ***Outcomes and Recommendations:***

- The GAID Community should establish other capacity building centers similar to the one already created in Bahrain.
- The MDG eNabler and the different capacity building centers should provide a common set of vocabularies, methodologies and tools in order to ensure a consistent implementation around the world.
- The MDG eNabler should be run as a project including deliverables deadlines in order to be monitored in the efficient way.

For further details on the proceedings and outcomes of the Solution Salons, including submitted outcome documents and presentations and archived video footage of the entire report-back session, visit the GAID website – <http://bit.ly/i9Is8w>. You can also participate in the ongoing discussion on each Solution Salon on our online community network - <http://bit.ly/eQO7RZ>

## **V. Closing**

H.E. Mr. **Rashed Al Mansouri**, Director-General of the Abu Dhabi Systems and Information Centre (ADSIC), addressed the Forum expressing his thanks and appreciation to GAID and all participants. He stated that the Forum, which brought experts and leading decision makers in the ICT for Development field under one roof, was a huge success and that Abu Dhabi was very grateful and benefited significantly by hosting it.