



HIGH-LEVEL MEETING - 21 SEPTEMBER

(transcript of audio recording)

Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs delivering a message of the **UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon**

“It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all on behalf of the United Nations to this important meeting. The Millennium Development Goals are the principal vehicle for securing a better future for those who suffer in poverty, hunger and disease today. We must achieve them by 2015.

I have no doubt that if given the opportunity every human being has the potential to better his or her life. Information and Communications Technologies can provide access to unlimited knowledge and opportunity for those who do not have it. They can help level the playing field.

ICT can empower farmers to have better access to the market, increasing their opportunity to be part of the global supply chain. ICT can enable students to get better access to education materials. Doctors can use ICT to provide health care to those in need, including in remote areas. ICT is also an essential tool in protecting our environment and monitoring global change. More and more ICT is being used to track public finance for MDG related projects.

The potentials of ICT for MDGs and for sustainable development are vast and remain untapped. The digital divide between developing and developed countries is narrowing but it remains wide. GAID can make a great contribution to assisting developing countries in achieving the full potentials offered by ICT by moving from advocacy to action.

I welcome the GAID membership, under the leadership of its Chairman, Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, to launch web-based knowledge tools and information resources providing tangible and practical benefits to developing countries in their efforts to advance MDGs.

I invite all stakeholders to join the GAID membership in this noble endeavour. “

Chairman

Thank you very much for this inspiring message. I would like to come back to the words “moving from advocacy to action”. I am coming from the private sector, and we love actions. Here is a multi-stakeholders effort, action-oriented to deliver results on the ground in the developing world, by the developing world, for the developing world.

I now give the floor to H.E. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Special representative of the Secretary-General, who represents to us everything good in Africa. I would like to say that when we

developed this eNabler, we had Africa in our heart and in our mind. We are very delighted and honoured that you have been able to join us, H.E. Mr. Cheick Diarra.

H.E. Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa and High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS

Honourable Ministers; Excellencies Distinguished Guests: Ladies and Gentlemen.
A very good morning to all of you. Firstly, I would like to thank Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh for the kind invitation he extended to me to address you this morning. Also, I would like to congratulate him and the Global Alliance for ICT and Development for their tireless efforts to ensure that innovative ideas are part and parcel of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Today we come together to launch the MDG eNabler – an initiative that seeks to build a ‘one-stop shop’ for helping Governments and other development practitioners use ICT to achieve the MDGs. This High Level Breakfast is a culmination of months of consultations, collaboration and above all, consensus building. I am glad to see that the endeavour has borne fruit.

From the discussions and inputs during the preparatory meeting held earlier this month in New York, it was evident that the idea behind the project was both timely and much-needed. With over 140 participants representing 44 countries, the meeting was truly multi-stakeholder and received broad buy-in. At the conclusion of that meeting, several countries and regional groups have expressed interest in participating in the project or co-hosting the portal.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Abu Ghazaleh and his team will integrate the suggestions highlighted at that meeting to ensure that the final product is tailored to the needs of the very constituencies it is meant to serve. As suggested, the eventual outcome should be simplified, with easy-to-use tools. This will boost confidence and capacity building.

Personally, I find the MDG eNabler to have a great potential in advancing progress towards the MDGs, especially in Africa and in the Least Developed Countries. As many of you are aware, these countries are lagging far behind on so many of the targets.

I would like to conclude these brief remarks by saying that this innovative initiative is long overdue, but its success relies on the extent to which the needs of the most vulnerable countries are taken into consideration.

It is my sincere wish that today marks the occasion which launches a potent instrument in the fight against poverty.

Chairman

Before my statement, I would like to recognize Mr. Choi Soon-hong, Assistant Secretary-General and Chief IT Officer of the UN who has been overseeing our work through all this process. Since we started, we have been reporting to Mr. Choi on development and we have been guided and supported by him.

We are also grateful to UN-DESA for their support. I recognize Mr. Haiyan Qian who represents DESA today as a valuable partner of this exercise and we have been working closely with DESA.

I know that you have plenty of things to do, so I would like to thank you Mr. Choi and Mr. Diarra for your presence. We will circulate the statement of His Excellency the Secretary-General because it provides excellent marching orders for us. We will be guided by it and we will do exactly what the Secretary-General ordered us to do. So, please convey to His Excellency that we will be complying with his guidance and we will respond to his expectations.

Statement by Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman, GAID

Excellencies, Distinguished friends and colleagues,

I would like to thank you all for coming for this historic endeavour. I am convinced that if there is one enabler that can accelerate the achievement of the MDGs, it is ICT. And if there is one Force that is needed to ensure that achievement, it is the leadership of the United Nations Secretary-General, which we are very honoured to have.

It is in this conviction that I proposed to the Secretary-General last February an initiative adopted by the Board of UN GAID in its Monterrey meeting in September 2009: to develop a new web-based Matrix of ICT tools and solutions for advancing the MDGs. The Secretary-General with his sagacity and vision immediately saw the value of the initiative as a change maker for the MDG agenda. He graciously agreed to become the Honorary Chairman of UN-GAID and gave us the “go ahead” to build the eMatrix under his patronage.

As most of you know, I have worked ceaselessly with the UN-GAID community and with UN-DESA and through worldwide consultations to develop the Matrix to become a unique and innovative instrument, the MDG eNabler. A powerful free-use engine for enabling governments of developing countries to take charge of their own development by using ICT for access to vital information on best practice, finding ICT solutions and applications for their health, educational and other development needs and planning and implementing their programmes and projects in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

We identify with and support the objectives of the Broadband Commission. As the co-chair of the UN ICT Task Force, the predecessor of GAID, I recall that the High-level Panel that proposed the creation of the Task Force, recommended that the “United

Nations, at its Millennium Assembly in September 2000, should proclaim the right of universal access to information and communication services, such as the Internet, as an important new component of the UN principles and conventions on human rights and development.” The Alliance, as the successor of the UN ICT Task Force, followed up on that recommendation contained in that report of the Panel and presented to the United Nations Secretary-General in August 2010 a draft of a Declaration on the Right to Information for All in the Information Society. The achievement of that goal would facilitate the universal use of the eNabler. I salute the many members of the Broadband Commission who are here at our meeting. Their participation testifies that they, too, believe that there is strong complementarity and synergy in what we both are doing.

Distinguished delegates, I am glad to announce that, although we are launching the eNabler today, Macedonia is already successfully using it. And under the patronage of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, plans are already under way to make it available in Arabic for the 22 Arab countries. Furthermore, under the leadership of Cheick Diarra and in collaboration with the African Union, we plan to make the eNabler available to the 52 African countries out of a support center hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain, and we thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for their generosity in their offer to host and manage this center.

A Preparatory meeting for the presentation of the MDG eCenter in the context of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly was held on 1-2 September 2010, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The meeting was attended by some 140 experts representing 44 countries as well as UN agencies, business, civil society and academia. It was a truly multi-stakeholder meeting with 30% participation from governments, 20% from business, 16% from civil society, 14% from UN agencies and 10% each from international organizations and academia.

The purpose of the meeting was to further refine and develop, through an interactive discussion and exchange of ideas and suggestions among high-level representatives of all relevant stakeholders, the design, features and title of the ‘MDG eCenter’ as it was called then - in preparation for today’s presentation of a further developed version to Member States. The organizational and governance structure of managing and maintaining the content for the project was also a major topic of discussion throughout the meeting.

There was broad recognition of the positive and dynamic impact that the new initiative could have on accelerating progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The expert participants engaged in an interactive and lively discussion on all aspects of the initiative. The concepts and objectives of the project received overwhelming support and a positive response from all participants. While there was not a single objection to the project, many important suggestions and proposals were made to help refine, enhance and develop it. This morning, I am seeking your valued support for the sake of the developing world.

I count on you to lend us your support to come up with the most viable and effective solutions that can move us forward. I urge, in particular, our colleagues from the United Nations agencies who have vast knowledge and experience in the key MDG areas to help lead the way and set the pace to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

I myself come from the developing world and hence am extremely eager to deliver this eNabler to help developing countries help themselves. And although my term expires in December 2010, I want to ensure that by December, my successor will have a living being capable of continuous growth.

In conclusion, today we are announcing the birth of a development enabler, a unique innovative approach to advance MDG achievement, a web-based dynamic enabler composed of a matrix as its core, a portal of portals as its resource and a strategic planner for specific country planning and virtual tool kits for implementation, training and monitoring performance.

As the Deputy Minister of Economy and Planning of Liberia said during the PrepCom meeting, “this innovative initiative is long overdue. Its timing and execution is very crucial to become mainstream, successful and impactful.”

The time is short and our task is great. But we must seize the moment and succeed because we cannot afford to fail.

Presentation of the MDG eNabler by Mr. Sergei Kambalov, Executive Coordinator of GAID

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

We have today a MDG eNabler to present to you.

We are all concerned about the pace of MDG achievement. We are all determined to do our best to achieve these goals by 2015. We are all looking for a lever to boost development and to speed up the process. We believe that we have found a lever that we can use, and this is ICT for Development.

If we look at the situation now, we can identify multiple factors that lead to the present difficulties and uneven pace towards the MDGs. The two major ones are: resources and capacity. We cannot do anything about resources because it is up to governments, but we believe that we can address capacity constraints for boosting the MDG process.

There are two factors that constraint capacity: inadequate access to knowledge and inadequate ability to use this knowledge. What we are presenting today is a set of tools and resources to address these two constraints. Access to knowledge is addressed by the Matrix of ICT solutions for MDG advancement, by a Meta-portal - a “yellow pages” tool

that helps people find what is available today on the web and transform information into useful knowledge for those who need it most.

Once you have knowledge about the tools that are available today, the Strategic Planner helps you use this knowledge to achieve your objectives. The analogy that we like to use is that this set of tools is a “GPS” for using ICT for Development, which means that you still need a vehicle and a driver. It also means that it does not do the job for you but it tells you how you can get to the point you want to reach in the most efficient way, as well as where you can get coffee for yourself or petrol for your car. It does not instruct you, and you can always choose another road - but it does help you get where you want to be.

Another important thing to note is that this tool is not intended to be used by ultimate beneficiaries, rather by development practitioners who are working day and night to help the ultimate beneficiaries.

The Matrix for ICT Solutions for MDG Advancement

To achieve each MDG, a government needs to undertake a large number of specific actions. There are thousands of ICT-based tools available on the market today to help in this task. Our main objective is to deliver them to those who need them, to link people with these tools. This is what the Matrix is going to be doing. We use the analogy of Amazon.com, where instead of MP3 players and other gadgets, on the virtual shelves of this Matrix we have ICT-based tools and solutions for very specific problems and tasks that development practitioners are facing every day.

The tools and solutions proposed are not something “potential” - they are available in the market today, and are proven, scalable and replicable. Of course, the UN cannot recommend a particular technology, we cannot be seen as a vehicle for promoting commercial interests of producers. For this reason, we are not going to endorse or recommend, we are going to present a tool and help the potential user with reviews by previous users and experts. Development practitioners will make their own decisions and choices.

We are going to provide links to existing initiatives and programmes of many institutions, such as UN agencies and others, who are already working on specific development issues today. We are not inventing, we are not producing this knowledge, we have no capacity to do this, rather we are consolidating this knowledge and making it available in a very user-friendly way for those who need it most.

This can only be done in a grand collaboration with the industry, civil society, academia and development practitioners of all types. We are going to organize it as a sort of a “managed wiki” process: we are going to receive information and vet it through a process of experts and peer review so that the information presented is credible.

We believe that the only way this project can succeed is if it brings together everyone out there who is engaged in this area. It is not duplication or competition - it is engagement,

collaboration and consolidation of all our efforts. In this context, and the Chairman referred to our support to the Broadband Commission: we believe that the Broadband Commission is about a medium, our project is about content to be delivered through this medium, so it is a perfect complementarity and potentially a powerful synergy - if we do it right.

Once you have knowledge about tools that are available on the market today, the next step is that you need to know how to use them. This is where the Strategic Planner comes in. It is a tool that is developed for us by a group of academic researchers led by Professor Umar from the University of Pennsylvania. It is an intelligent agent guiding someone through the process of selecting appropriate tools for a specific area, country, condition and project. If your country is not ready for the solution you choose, the Planner will tell you about the steps you have to undertake before you do what you wanted, and how much it will cost you, etc.

Those who wish to test it, following the example of H.E. Mr. Ivanovski, Minister of Information Society of Macedonia, who was the first tester of the tool, can get access to the prototype. Let us know if you are interested.

This set of tool is unique for four reasons. It is unique because its home is the United Nations, which embodies universality, legitimacy and neutrality, it is a product of a multi-stakeholder approach, it is a “one-stop shop”, and it is free.

We are presenting this tool to you because, as stressed by the Secretary-General today, it can only be done as a common effort of all development practitioners. The success of the project is predicated on your contribution, your collaboration and this why the Chairman invited you here and why this Project is presented to you.

Chairman

I want to go back to the message from the Secretary-General, in particular to the need to “move from advocacy to action” as he stated, because this is what makes this engine unique. Everything that is made at the UN, such as conferences, meetings, reports, is important and valuable, but this is not a report or an overview, this is a machine, an engine, a living animal that we can use to advance development and the wish of the Secretary-General is that we move from Advocacy to Action. It is action-oriented, to the extent that any country can go and develop its own development strategy using this eNabler.

I want to recognize my good friend from the Arab League for being here with us and take the opportunity to say that we are already working to launch the project in the Arab region. Qatar is willing to translate the eNabler in Arabic and the Government of Bahrain offered a specially-oriented center for development in Africa. And I would love to work with South America, Eastern Europe - all parts of the world.

We are moving to action, the eNabler is already in place (even if we need to continue to develop it). We want to move to action, and action is already started in Arab World, in Africa and I received the support and commitment from the First Lady of Sao Paulo, Brazil who wants to launch an event for Latin America.

We are now looking at the future and to how to implement. This day is a historic day because we are launching the project and we should be implementing it by December. This is the timeframe I promised to the Secretary-General, we are on track and we have been complying with the directions given by the SG.

H.E. Mr. Ivo Ivanovski, Minister of Information Society of the The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Macedonia is a small country in Eastern Europe, which started the Information Society revolution in 2006. We started by implementing a programme for ICT Development which is very challenging, especially in the context of economic crisis like it has been in the past two years. For this reason, it is really difficult to deliver all what we have promised. However, our Prime Minister, Nikola Gruevski, strongly believes that ICT is a resource that can bring the most growth in our economy. And this has been proven by the UN, the EU, World Bank and many other international organizations, which are encouraging countries to continue investing in ICT even in difficult times.

Macedonia is a country which is trying to catch up with European Union 15 top developed ICT countries and we thought that what is needed is a system that has at one place all the solutions, which have been implemented in that particular field, starting from education, healthcare, legislation, agriculture, eGovernment services and many others. For the developed countries, who are at the point where the ICT solutions are saturated, starting from the Scandinavians, USA, Slovenia, Austria, Estonia and others, the competition among them is so tight that organizations like the UN and the EU are changing the criteria for grading the performance every year because the IT solutions are already there and everyone of them has hundreds and hundreds of solutions implemented, which can be used by their citizens daily. And by introducing ICT, we talk about introducing transparency, efficiency and more responsibility from the Government institutions to the citizens.

One thing that we lacked in the past four years was a system where we can compare what other countries have done. We started the electronic healthcard two years ago and by the end of the next year, every citizen of Macedonia will have this electronic healthcard and all the health medical records will be stored in a system where regardless whether the doctor is in a rural or urban area, he will be able access information of every patient. This system has been implemented by many other countries but unfortunately, there has not been one institution which has all of these examples. It is true that the World Bank has very large projects, which they started many years ago, the EU has started projects, other organizations that are present here have similar systems but there is not one system that can be used by the governments, the private sector and by the NGOs.

For the developing countries, it has been great support and help by UNDP, USAID and NGOs such as the German GTZ, Austrian and many associations which are coming to support developing countries to realize this dream, to realize the ICT solutions and to minimize the digital divide. But for the Government on the other side, it is really difficult to verify that the solution they are proposing is truly the best solution that is out there in the world. It is always challenging for developing countries to create a solution which is based on their legislative system. Sometimes, it is even necessary to grab the best solution that is out there and change the legislation in order to jump five years in advance. The developing countries need to make drastic changes in order to catch up with the developed countries because with the technology getting cheaper every day and changing so fast, the developed countries will continue to move faster and faster. The developing countries need to make dramatic changes to jump five years in advance.

I just want to say that I hope everyone at this table will participate in this eNabler because it is very crucial for this system to be populated properly, which means that it will get some time to get all the information of the solutions that exist in your country.

So, thank you for giving the opportunity for Macedonia to be the first country to test the eNabler because, as the latest report of UN and the WSIS of Geneva showed, Macedonia made the best improvement in 2010 jumping 12 places, which no other country has done in the world. We need system like this and we need support of multinational organizations to give support to the developing countries.

Jim Poisant, Secretary-General, World Information Technology and Services Alliance

On behalf of the WITSA, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak. WITSA is a consortium of leading ICT associations from around the globe, we have 74 members and we represent over 90% of all the IT companies in the globe.

As you know, we are in the midst of a digital revolution. It is having a profound impact to every aspect of human life, from government services to healthcare, to the education and the environment. We know that ICT is a key driver of the world's economy. It is also a key driver for the MDGs.

I do not want to talk this morning about all the promises of the digital age. What I would like to stress this morning is whether or not the digital age is going to fulfil its promises. Is it possible that the digital age is an empty promise? Is it possible that like in other revolutions before, not everyone will benefit from it, that billions of people would be left out of this revolution too?

One interesting note regarding the industrial revolution is this great invention called the telephone. In 1876, it held the promise of allowing anyone on earth to communicate with anyone else, any time and in any place. Today, there are approximately 1 billion landlines connected, as opposed to mobile lines. The 48 least developed countries, however, only have access to 1.5 million of these lines. The result is that 15% of the world's population

has access to over 70% of all the landlines. This leaves an unimaginable reality and this reality is that 50% of the world's population never made a phone call.

Today, approximately 28.7% of the world has internet access. What we do not know is who, how, when and where are the remaining 71.3% going to get connected. In a so-called developed country, ICT development is evolving to a very high degree of sophistication, where more and more citizens, institutions, governments and industries are benefiting. In these countries, Government policies are favourable to ICT development, they have strategic ICT plans, their procurement and procedures are in place, infrastructure is being provided and there is no lack of qualified people having the ability to install this infrastructure or apply the applications. This set of conditions is also fostering and leading to a number of new businesses and economic opportunities for many nations.

In the so-called developing world, ICT development is at very low stage of sophistication, many countries are lacking public policies and strategic plans that foster development. They have inadequate procedures in terms of procurement, they lack technical expertise and - and this is the most important part - the result is in many cases very costly, wasteful, uninformed and ineffective ICT decisions. What makes matters worse is that while the developed world is progressing, the developing world is falling further and further behind.

According to a report from RAND, for the past 30 years, advances in biotechnology, nanotechnology, materials technology and information technology have advanced at an accelerated rate. The technology in 2020 will integrate development from multiple scientific disciplines in ways that will dramatically impact the quality of human life even more than we are imagining it today. It is surely going to change the face of work, education, economics, energy, the environment, medical care and the global political power. The report points out that this technology revolution will play out differently around the world because a number of countries are not going to be ready to absorb the application. To make matters worse, this rapid rate of change is making it more difficult to catch up: the longer the country is delayed, the more difficult it will be for them to catch up.

Last year, the WEF reported that ICT is increasingly moving to the core of national competitiveness: unless every country embraces ICT as a key enabler and centers ICT at the core of its operation, it will not be able to compete. Is there anything that can be done to help them avoid this collision? Is there a way for ICT decision makers to make the most informed, effective, reasonable economic decisions? Can developing countries learn from the developed countries in order to avoid the impending digital divide, which is going to get worse? Questions like these led to the MDG eNabler being established under GAID.

The vision for this initiative was to share plans, best practices and tools from successful developed countries to the developing countries so that they will not fall further behind. The stakes are way too high to leave the promises of the digital revolution to chance. If it

is left to chance, it is near certain that the digital revolution is going to benefit a selected few.

There has never been, and perhaps will never be, a better time for a small group of thoughtful committed citizens, like those of us in this room, to change the world. If in fact, there is an opportunity to make the world a better place, what would history report about us? So let it report it that we made a difference, not only for the privileged few but for everyone, for generations to come. We know what countries have transformed and are transforming their societies, we know the countries that are a little bit behind. We have access to numerous resources and successful strategic plans, collectively we know hundreds if not thousands ICT-related success stories, as well as countless lessons and best practices. What is needed is to collect this knowledge and wisdom, place it in one easily accessible location where decision makers can use it to make intelligent informed ICT decisions.

Margaret Mead, one of the famous cultural anthropologists, once said: *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”*.

In my concluding remarks, I have two questions for us in this room: If not, when? And if not us, who?

Chairman

I would like to express my thanks to Intel for its consistent support, and in particular to Craig Barrett, the first Chair of UN-GAID who build the foundation of what we have today.

I would also like to thank Mr. Pietro Sicuro, member of the Board of GAID, and La Francophonie for generously sponsoring this breakfast meeting.

Dr. Hans Erik Vestberg, President and Chief Executive Officer, Ericsson

Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests, excellencies. It is a fantastic opportunity to be part of GAID meeting this morning. Ericsson has been very committed to this initiative on MDGs and we strongly believe that ICT has a very big role in actually addressing several of those really big challenges that we have on Earth today.

One thing that we need to recognize is that 85% of the earth’s population today has mobile coverage, which means that 5 billion people can use mobile phones today. Furthermore, our progress will not stop there. We are certain of the infrastructure development ongoing in the private sector, and therefore we believe we will have more subscriptions by 2015, probably ending up with some 80-85% of the earth population actually having a phone And we believe that by 2015, 3.5 billion people will have broadband access, and that will be, of course, a great advancement that we want to see. A

lot of access will be through mobile broadband, due to the easier deployment and also the cost efficiency on it. However, fixed access will remain a very important enabler.

The Broadband Commission has discussed some important things. First of all, frequency harmonisations and low frequencies will enable us to penetrate even further in rural areas, in Africa, South America and in Asia. Another point is the use of standard technologies: we have all seen what GSM, a standard technology bringing the cost down for the chipset, did for the world, for the infrastructure. Today, 4.5 billion of the 5 billion people that have a mobile phone are using GSM. Today, one chipset to make a phone costs 10 dollars, and I promise to you that in a couple of years it might be down to 1 dollar. This is the way to get the infrastructure created, and the private sector will do it because there is a solid business case, even in the most rural areas and because people want to be part of the digital divide solution.

What we need to do is to discuss how we share the knowledge about the broadband and the mobility. And then we need to build platforms together, as the MDG eNabler, for eHealth, mHealth, education and all these important areas that we need to address to actually deal with the big Millennium issues that we have. I think that we are on the right path here, we just need all relevant stakeholders to consider the importance of building infrastructures that are based on ICT. And then we need to make the platform together and think of how to get coherent information, whether it is regarding health, education or other important areas. We need to agree upon it because then we get its cost down. It is definitely moving from advocacy to action, showing that we have it and sharing our knowledge around this table.

And finally, I would like to say, as mentioned before, that the Broadband Commission and GAID have a very important role to play and must work together so that we have as much strength as possible when we go out to share our best practice, ideas and actions. So this is Ericsson's position: we support this initiative very much.

Chairman

I would like to express my profound appreciation to Ericsson. I am proud to say that in addition to Ericsson and Intel, other giants are joining us as well: during the PrepCom meeting, Microsoft offered their full support, facilities and resources worldwide to help in this exercise. Similarly, IBM came with an offer to support this project. As we say, nothing succeeds like success. Therefore, the founding fathers of this project, among them actors from the private sectors and ICT giants, can take pride that they are involved in this area of corporate social responsibility for the benefit of the world.

Bruno Lanvin, Executive Director, eLab, INSEAD

I want to focus on two simple questions:

- 1) Why is GAID so important?
- 2) Why it is so important now?

I will start with the term “now”:

Two decades were spent on finding out how ICT can serve the mankind.

Some initiatives have been successful, others not. What is important to know, is what is different between “now” and the period of 1995-2000, the time when the G8 (now G20) have created the Digital opportunity Task Force. During this period, the G8, governments and IOs, started to create ICT taskforces, such as the World Economic Forum that created ICT councils and taskforces, as well as the UN that established the UN ICT taskforce. The Network Readiness Index was also developed during this time and is still one of the highest-regarded instruments to monitor the ways countries are using ICT to stimulate competitiveness, higher standards of living and fight poverty.

What is the difference from then (1995-2000) to now with UNGAID?

There are three major differences:

1. The Knowledge we have gathered from our past experiences and what we learned from our failures. In the past years we didn't know where we were going with ICT. We had no idea about the effect of ICT for Development. You always get more than you expect to get from an ICT 4D projects, because people give you more, people invent things you have not thought about. Usage is what drives innovation today. The focus on usage is the major difference between the “then” (1995-2000) and the “now”.
2. The Awareness is there. We have governments and intergovernmental organizations that are giving priority and superior attention to the power of ICT to face global issues and to face the problem of development.
3. The Technology. We have broadband; we have 80% of the world population within reach of the mobile signal. We can't ignore that mobile has been truly revolutionary for development in the last 15 years. Therefore, we don't have to re-invent all of that. It is there to be used.

This was the first point about why and why now. The second point about why and why not.

We are missing one dimension. We think about ICT & MDGs, development & MDGs as a dual pole, a two-sided world. On one side we have infrastructure and equipment and in this case there are ITU and the Broadband Commission. The second pole is content and UNGAID that can contribute to the content. However this is not a duo pole, it is rather a triangle. In the triangle, the third pole is people, talent, skills, education, and know-how. I would like to add another key word “innovation”. Let's not forget the third pole.

I would like to summarize what needs to be done and address this using the first five letters of the alphabet:

A for Access and Affordability. The cost of connecting will be key. If you look at the latest projections made by a number of companies on the future of internet, the cost of access to broadband within 15 years from now will be at zero dollars. The affordability is part of access.

B for Buy-in. This ICT revolution does not need to be led by ICT people; it needs to be led by the users, (e.g. farmers, fishers, people living in rural areas), by individuals whose life will change.

C for Content. Content is what will make the difference. Right now, “content” flows very much north to south and this needs not only to be balanced out, but also reversed. If you take the Arabic language as an example, less than 2% of the content on the internet is in Arabic. In addition, there are other languages that are totally missing on the map of the internet.

D for Development. We can not think about Global ICT revolution/transformation without Development. The “D” can also stand for **Desire**, because if we have the desire to change, we can mitigate the fear of change.

E does not stand for eHealth, eGovernment, not even for egos, but stands for **Engagement**. It is about the opportunities and chances that the UNGAID initiatives can give to people so that they can make the best out of them for themselves. Further it is about what their industry, their company or their organization can contribute to these efforts. The E for Engagement will not exist without the E for **Excellence**. There is not a second grade solution; there is no technology for the developing world that will be second grade compared to technology and services for the first world.

H.E. Mr. Sachin Pilot, Minister of State for Communications & Information Technology of India

India is fully behind this initiative.

India has had a Pan African e-network which has been in operation for the last 3 years. India so far spent US\$ 125 million and 47 countries became partners with India on this effort which are leading to telemedicine and tele-education projects. India is planning to train 10,000 students in the next 5 years and 4,000 have been already trained. Regarding the MDGs, India takes serious efforts to mitigate poverty; India has developed a national rule guarantee employment programme using ICT technologies which add transparency to the Indian system and mitigates the loop holds.

As many speakers have mentioned, the difference is the intensity of proliferation of IT, mobile connectivity, broadband and internet. India is trying to convert itself into a knowledge society and this digital divide can be bridged by the efforts that we can make here in this multilateral platform as well as back in India.

India has 250,000 villages where people live in poverty and where issues regarding healthcare, education, sanitation and child mortality have to be taken care of. The Government of India is planning to establish optical fibre networks all the way down to the village, giving people access.

My ministry has developed software for free phones in all 22 Indian official languages. I am happy that Arabic will now be used in the eNabler and I am happy to extend all the support of my Ministry and Government. It must be able to encompass all parts of our global society - Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The other point I want to share with you this morning is about mobile phones. That can be the empowering agent for the next generation. In India, we have about 673 million mobile phone users and the use of mobile phones with local content languages available gives access to health and education. The call rates are cheap and we have a national broadband policy in place. However, the broadband penetration is currently at 1%.

We are happy to partner with GAID and we have our best practices and examples in India in different states and areas. We are happy to make this effort, a truly global effort in this neutral platform that the UN provides, giving us a real opportunity and make sure that everybody here becomes a collective stakeholder. We will support this initiative.

Dr. Hesham Youssef, Chief of the Cabinet of the Secretary General of the League of Arab States

We will be more than happy to collaborate and partner with UN GAID to see this project, the MDG eNabler, being implemented in the Arab world. There is one issue in relation to a project that the Arab League is working on and can complement this effort. We have been working with the UN System in particularly with ESCWA, ILO, UNDP, WHO in order to create an enabler to gather all the data and information that are gathered under one portal and we believe that these two projects can work together to assure development. The Arab League expresses its support for your effort.

Chairman

I would like to address the need of multilingualism of the Portal. I think that the Portal should be provided in Spanish for Latin America and the Caribbean, in Arabic for the Arabic world and in French for the French-speaking countries of the developing world. I also would like to underline the importance to partner with the developed world to help the developing world help itself.

We have no reason nor excuse to fail: we have a mandate from the Secretary-General and so far, we have delivered. We have a product and we have received a message from the Secretary-General. He wants an action-oriented project and we have no excuses for not delivering. This is a user-driven exercise, in which we have involved civil society, governments, etc. Today we are launching the eNabler and from now on the project will start a new stage: one of implementation.

Ms. Evelyn Oputu, Managing Director, Bank of Industry (Nigeria)

I support this initiative and I am happy that Africa and in particular my country will receive the benefits. Nigeria has already benefited from the use of ICT. As the managing director of a developing country financial institution which is responsible for meeting at least some of the MDGs, we are pleased to know that this is an action- and result-oriented project.

I agree with the “ABCDE” conclusion delivered by Bruno Lanvin, because all the aspects he mentioned affect the various areas of what concerns an African. We want to be partners. ICT is more expensive in Africa. We are those who could least afford it and we pay the highest price. We want to be treated fairly. We want to be partners and we want to have our talents recognised.

Professor Peter Bruck, Chairman of World Summit Award

The eNabler should be called the Smart United Nations. I want to echo the enthusiasm of the Minister from India. We are in the process of an ICT revolution. Example: in India, 15 to 16 millions mobile connections are added every month. There is a roll out happening and it needs to be structured. GAID is offering a scenario-building tool of how to leverage that kind of possibilities. This tool can say what works, under what conditions, for what cost.

We are talking also about sharing; an intelligent sharing in terms of feeding into the tool content. GAID provides the platform but only what you put in you will get out. This is a very important aspect in terms of seeing the eNabler moving us towards a smart UN MDGs.

As you know, WSA looks at the conditions of excellence, and we observe that unfortunately the conditions in Africa are 15 times worse in any of the condition compare to Europe. I give examples: If you are in Ghana and you have a software company and you need 100 megabyte connection to the backbone you pay US\$ 12,000 a month, but in Austria you pay EUR 400. If we don't address those issues, there is no way that the promise of ICT4D can be delivered.

Dr. Najeeb Al-Shorbaji, Director, Knowledge Management and Sharing, World Health Organization

Thank you Mr. Chairman, we congratulate you for this initiative.

Health has been late in adopting ICT. Health is a knowledge intensive sector, we think that using ICT for health, which is tagged /described as ehealth is of great value. This

kind of initiative can help people to find out what has been done and how it was done, what needs to be done and what are the lessons learned. It is clear that ehealth can improve equity, quality of health services and reduce cost. Having a portal of this nature will strengthen our position vis-à-vis member states and other stakeholders and we can share with them what we have done so far, examples, guidelines and what we have done in terms of resource mapping of the up take of ehealth in countries using the global ehealth observatory we developed. So we want to join this initiative. We want to make our resources available and to be part of the knowledge asset within the eNabler, so that people can see the progress already made.

The multilingual aspect is also important and strategic; we are willing at least to make our content multilingual so that will be an integral part of the portal.

One of our GAID plans is to have sectorial coordinators, to address all the MDGs, by having a coordinator for each sector, for example on health the coordinator will be the liaison, and the focus and contact point for all health related content and implementation processes.

Dr. Rafee Yusoff, Director of the Strategic Planning Department, Islamic Development Bank

I was involved in the first GAID meeting that we had in Kuala Lumpur and then I was with the Malaysian government. So I'm happy to know the progress we have made and I would like to congratulate the team.

We welcome the effort. One of my functions is to help member countries and we have 56 of them. Half of them are poor countries and obviously we are very interested in MDGs targets. Beyond that we have our own development goal and I am hoping that the eNabler will allow me to learn a little bit more on how we can develop something similar for our own development agenda as well.

In that process of helping other countries, I hope to be a user and maybe even a contributor to the eNabler centre. I will not talk about the infrastructure or the indicators that in itself is a huge debate and a different discussion. I wanted to support Bruno's suggestion that it was not about infrastructure, it is not about content, but it is about the society and for that in all cases we have been promoting innovation and all its societal problems. I am hoping I will have the chance to share with that later, but that essentially is a different environment for which to look at eNabler. It is not addressing the infrastructure per se, it is not addressing the content, but how do you then develop some environment about societal transformation. I wanted to share three challenges and I thought that would be a challenge for which we can build and enhance further the eNabler.

Number one is that as I go into member countries helping them formulate transformational program on the strategic plan, we recognize the three key players now

emerging: the government for sure, the private sector and also the community sector. The changing role is what I am grappling with. The government itself is moving from central-based (if you look at the poor countries controlled central government) one that becomes facilitated, private sector now has to be unleashed to become the power and life of development and now the emergence of community-based sector, that itself has different features and elements of which we will want to build into the eNabler and I think that is the first challenge that we need to worry about instead of just sharing of best practices: How are they evolving? How do they transform themselves from one role to another?

The second challenge: we have been promoting the concept of country-led strategies and that requires, that translates to ownership, buy in and all of that. The second challenge is to build the eNabler of country-led strategy environment. The second challenge within that for which I have been trying to facilitate many member countries is to produce an implementation and action plan. That is a key challenge and that challenge has to do with the kind of partners they can identify. It's easy for us to come up with a high-level, five year, ten years and fifteen years strategic plan; but how then do they translate into implementation? Who are the partners? How best can they partner with them and what are the different modalities? This is the key issue and information that we need to build into the system. Within that of course, the issue of ICT for D, when you are going to the poor countries, talking about agriculture and you realize how then is ICT used in agriculture? That leads me to the second issue within that challenge: to build a sector-based strategy, it is not enough to talk about national strategy, you have to build sector strategy and then build it into a program for implementation. That needs to be put together in the eNabler.

The third challenge I found in that and I am still struggling with that issue. When you think about the three actors that I talked about, including the private sector and the community groups, the instrument by which we talked about the partnership between the public and private sectors is much clearer now and it has been a best practice: PPP. So we all are familiar with that. But the challenge is with the community engagement. How then do you talk about the top-down intervention or the bottom-up intervention and harmonise these in that sort of partnership modality? That is still something that is not quite clear and maybe that is something we can work on and build it together.

Chairman

I want to explain why the eNabler is designed such way: e stands for electronic and for enabler. And if you want to use Bruno's suggestion, also for excellence.

Mr. Mario Franco, President, Foundation for Mobile Communications

I will try to be very short and very operational oriented. I will only make two proposals. You know we support this project and we think it is very useful.

Now, the first proposal is that we want to announce that we will lead and take responsibility to translate at least part of it to Portuguese and we will be open to cooperate with other countries or other organizations because I don't know if it is a huge work, but I like to risk. Then, I say we assume at least part of the responsibility.

The second point is after some exchanges of views with Ramon, because this idea is not exactly mine., I will like to suggest that you should study a way to create some kind of coordination or implementation at country or regional levels and not only at sectoral levels; because I think, in line with the proposal of the representative of the Islamic Bank, that you need to create a national eco-system and partners to do this. This would be I think a way to study better implementation. In the third point and the last proposal is, I think it is very important to find a way to allow the individual participation, the way a single person can come to the website and give more active participation. I think today we are in the world of U: Youtube, you have your pages and then I think the personal participation should be one of our criteria.

Chairman

Number one: we take it and we thank you. Number two: I always listen to my co-chair Ramon because he is a man of wisdom. We will take up this proposition at the Board meeting this afternoon. Number three: the eNabler includes games and simulations, although I was not interested in them, but it was the opinion of the experts that games are useful to encourage the youth and the individuals, and not only the policy-makers and the strategic planners.

Mr. Angus Friday, Senior International Climate Policy Specialist, World Bank

On behalf of the World Bank President's Special Envoy on Climate Change, I would like to say thank you for having us here today and congratulations on this excellent effort and the visionary efforts that have gone on to bring this to where it is today. We certainly recognize that ICT needs to be at the centre of development. We recognize that ICT and mobile communications have to some extent been a discontinuity with unintended consequences, as one colleague said and certainly benefits for farmers and fishermen and so on. The key point we want to make here is that the World Bank is operating in developing countries around the world. We see this sort of initiative as being absolutely essential. World Bank is spending about four billion dollars in ICT, 1.7 billion dollars in Africa and we certainly want to give as much support as we can and to this, we want to share the experiences and learning that we have and to work with you to make this a success.

Chairman

Thank you. We need your leadership, as a bank of knowledge. I also invite you to join the new Board of Directors of GAID in 2010-2011.

Mr. Georges A. King, President of South to South Network (Global Capacity)

I am representing the South to South Network, which is a project of the South-South News and a consortium of public, private, academic and NGOs that came together to create a portal of content that we would like to also contribute to your wonderful project. We have created a portal where the ICT Ministries of the countries of the South Hemisphere can come and be connected with a data-base of 10,000 private sector companies that have parts of the global infrastructure of connectivity. Our vision is that a South to South Network can be a super highway for the southern hemisphere, that the northern hemisphere has roads and physical infrastructure that create super highway but because of the unique geography of regions like Latin America or Africa, the unique circumstances and history of the southern hemisphere, that in many ways the super highway of the southern hemisphere could, should and can be a digital super highway.

When that vision got connected to the MDG Goals through the initiative of Mr. Khan and of Ambassador Francis Lorenzo, these two gentlemen were able to pull in people and make them come together and create this South to South network as a way to bring public and private actors together.

We would like to say that we will support 100% what you are doing and I think that one of the main challenges is that your successor, Mr. Chairman, is going to have big shoes to fill and we will contribute everything that we have to help that. I would also like to say that one of my closest friend the Minister of Education and Scientific Research in Saudi Arabia and I am sure that you look for leadership in 2011, he would be there. I said that last night to the Foreign Minister of Bahrain, the Foreign Minister of Kenya and Ambassador Lorenzo and everyone is with you and behind you, so you are leading the way and we are all supportive of you. Thank you for what you are doing.

Chairman

Excellencies, distinguished participants. I am overwhelmed with your statements of support and this is so notable that this whole thing started with a meeting that was honoured by the Secretary-General in February. I believed that His Excellency would grasp the vision and the concept that I presented. You know, we usually think that the Secretary-General of such a political organization with the responsibility of the whole world would not have time for this small thing of developing an eNabler to help developing countries. However, I was not surprised -- because I had known the vision and the leadership qualities of the Secretary-General -- when he immediately said "I approve it, go ahead; do it" and I said "I need your leadership". He said "you have it". I said "I need your presence" and he said "you've got it." I said that's all I want. With your leadership, with your support and with your endorsement, we will work. Then I gave him the timeline for the process and he endorsed it. Then I asked for every possible support and I got it. So, here we have a Secretary-General who -- and we heard this very clearly morning -- who says: "from Advocacy to Action". Some people were saying "GAID should take no action", but here is the Secretary-General who says "I want action and I

want to deliver on the promise by the year 2015". I have committed on behalf of GAID and of my wonderful co-chairs: Ramon, Kamran and Richard. I promised that with the entire Board of Directors, we will do everything we can to deliver.

Now, I take the responsibility straight away because with this support of giants and leaders from all over the world, we feel more under obligation and I find myself in a very difficult position in the sense that we can't tell the Secretary-General that we didn't do it, because he has given this opportunity, the mandate, the patronage, the entitlement, the leadership, the support and the international community represented by the greatest giants of governments, business, academia and the civil society with all their support.

So this is a great day, this is the launch day, this is a historical day today and we are today at the beginning of what will be a change maker. As the Secretary General said "we want a change maker for the process for the development program". And I like the statement made by the South-South and maybe I could convince the Board of Directors to change the Developed and Developing world to the North and the South. It sounds better, I don't mind the talk about being developing or underdeveloped, but I think it would be more respectful if we described us in a geographical context, because many of the countries in the South are developed and so the generalizing is not really better. I think it would be more respectable for the developing world if we call it the South or the North. It so happened that the North, maybe because of the climate, was ahead of us. We have a much nicer weather in the South but basically the genes are the same. I think if we change the terminology for the North to the South it would be more appropriate. That is my point of view and I cannot impose it on anyone; but we feel proud in the South. I am a very proud person. The South is younger in many respects but the rest of the South are new-born communities. My Arab world is young after long years of occupation and isolation. We do not feel any lack of pride in the developing world, which I would like to call the South. We are pride of our history, morals, principles and contributions. The developing world was at the basis of all civilizations, cultures and religions and we speak with power and confidence that we are going to make the difference, be equal partners and close the digital divide.

GAID was born as a result of a recommendation of the World Summit on the Information Society, with the Secretary-General deciding to establish a multi-stakeholder organization that addresses ICT and Development. The WSIS process determined what it is our mandate and this is exactly what our name is. We have been working under our great leader Craig Barrett from Intel who helped us formulate the policy and strategy of GAID and laid the foundations. Now we have the foundations, we need to move to action because we want to implement our mandate.

I am very lucky to have a very competent leader, in the person of Sergei Kambalov, as my Executive Coordinator as well as my senior advisor, Mr. Sarbuland Khan. I want also to recognize the other members of the quartet: Dr. Jim POisant and Professor Amjad Umar.

We now have a product, we are not in the conception period anymore, the conception period was the time when I met the Secretary-General and I gave him my vision. Since

then, we developed this virtual engine and it is very similar to GPS. You need a driver, a car and you need to go where you are going. Similarly here, we need to know where we are going, we need a strategy leader and a policy maker and we need the engine. We developed the engine for the leaders to get there. To simplify, we can say we developed the GPS of Development. We want to demonstrate to the world that United Nations is also about action and we have the leadership and the support of the SG for an action-oriented project that the world needs.

I would like to thank you for your patience. Before we close, I propose to combine the outcomes of PrepCom and this HLM and consider all the participants of both meetings as the founders of this project. This will not only add value to us but it will send a strong message to the world that we have important organizations which are behind this exercise.

I will ask the Secretariat to provide a summary of conclusions for this meeting. And then, I would like a founders Declaration on behalf of the PrepCom and this meeting to announce to the world that is project is born as well as to report to the Secretary-General that his wish is executed and that the order has been done.