

**The MDG eNabler: Implementing the UN Secretary-General's mandate to “Move from Advocacy to ACTION”**

## **GAID Preparatory and High-level Meetings on the MDG eNabler**

1-2 September 2010  
and  
21 September 2010  
United Nations Headquarters, New York

*Chairman’s summary*

The Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) Preparatory and High-level Meetings, held respectively on 1-2 and 21 September 2010, reviewed the progress and launched the **MDG eNabler** – a “one-stop shop” for helping Governments, development practitioners and other users to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The initiative was conceived at the GAID Annual Meeting held in September 2009 in Monterrey, Mexico. In February 2010, the initiative was endorsed by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and the Board of the Alliance decided that the ICT for MDGs Matrix, as the Project was then called, would be the paramount focus of work for GAID in 2010 and beyond.

The Preparatory meeting, chaired by Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman of GAID, was attended by over 140 participants representing 44 countries, including representatives of United Nations agencies, the private sector, civil society, academia and other experts in the field of ICT for Development. It was a truly multi-stakeholder event as 29% of participants represented governments, 20% business, 16% civil society, 14% UN agencies and 10% represented other international organizations.

The High-level Meeting, also chaired by the GAID Chairman, was attended by more than 80 top Government representatives, CEOs and top executives of major private sector companies, senior United Nations officials and ICT experts and leaders from academia and civil society.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> More information, including the list of participants at the High-level meeting, is available here:  
<http://www.un-gaid.org/Newsevents/UpcomingEventsCalendar/GAIDHighlevelPlenaryMeeting/tabid/1406/Default.aspx>

At both events the MDG eNabler received overwhelming support from all participants who commended the progress that had been made in its development and made valuable suggestions to help refine and advance it in its next implementation phase.

In a message addressed to the High-level meeting, the United Nations Secretary-General **Ban Ki-moon** welcomed GAID's efforts to launch web-based knowledge tools and information resources that provide tangible and practical benefits to developing countries in their efforts to advance the MDGs. The Secretary-General also emphasized that GAID can make a great contribution to assisting developing countries in achieving the full potential offered by ICT by "moving from advocacy to action" and invited all stakeholders to join the GAID community in this noble endeavour.

In his remarks, United Nations Under-Secretary-General **Cheick Sidi Diarra**, Special Adviser on Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, congratulated GAID for its tireless efforts and commitment during months of consultations, collaboration and consensus building. He stressed that this initiative is particularly encouraging for Africa and other developing countries, given that a major reason that poorer countries are lagging behind in the pursuit of the MDGs is their lack of easily accessible information to enhance development.

Mr. Diarra suggested that the MDG eNabler could include a feature which tracks the performance of developing countries in their endeavours to reach their goals. This disaggregating exercise would afford retrieval of pertinent information so that we can closely monitor and advocate more effectively on behalf of these vulnerable groups of countries as we progress towards 2015. Mr. Diarra also mentioned that this could serve as a useful blueprint for the development of country-specific portals of a similar nature. Finally, he reaffirmed his confidence that the MDG eNabler will provide fresh ideas and guidance for development practitioners, and that he looked forward to working closely with GAID and all stakeholders in its development.

**Mr. Choi Soon-hong**, Assistant Secretary-General and United Nations Chief Information Technology Officer, in his remarks at the High-level meeting, saluted GAID's work and efforts and expressed his full support to the initiative. He applauded the interesting and useful discussion on the MDG eNabler and highlighted its potential as a unique United Nations-affiliated initiative. Mr. Choi also reasserted the Secretary-General's call to move from advocacy to action in order to achieve our shared goals.

In his video message addressed to the participants of the Preparatory meeting of 1-2 September, His Highness **Prince Hassan** of Jordan expressed support for the work being done by GAID and emphasised the importance of a long-term, comprehensive and integrated view of world development, taking into account the rapid pace of change in technologies and societies.

H.E. Mr. **Ivo Ivanovski**, Minister of Information Society of the Republic of Macedonia, the first government official to test and use the prototype of the MDG eNabler, reiterated his country's support to the initiative and urged for a multi-stakeholder effort in its

implementation. Minister Ivanovski highlighted the continuous challenges his Ministry encountered due to the fragmented information channels available and stressed the importance of ICT in overcoming these challenges and in the growth and progress of his country. He emphasized the importance of a “system” that could consolidate the wealth of information, projects and best practices available around the world and offer Governments the tools and practical connections to implement projects faster and at lower cost.

**H.E. Mr. Sachin Pilot**, Minister of State for Communication and Information Technology of India, pledged India’s full support for the MDG eNabler and expressed his commitment to partner with GAID in its implementation and to share his country’s best practices and experiences. He continued by stating that India’s development and growth in education, healthcare and employment systems have been driven by the use of ICT. He underlined the current evolution of India into a “knowledge society” as ICT has given citizens previously unattainable access to information and connectivity.

**Dr. Hans Erik Vestberg**, President and CEO of Ericsson, pledged the support of his company to GAID and the MDG eNabler. Mr. Vestberg stated his strong belief in the power of ICT to tackle the world’s biggest development challenges. He also underlined the important synergies between GAID (the MDG eNabler) and ITU’s Broadband Commission and recommended that they collaborate moving forward to ensure that the collective work of the two entities makes the most significant impact on development.

**Dr. Bruno Lanvin**, Executive Director of eLab, INSEAD, in his statement expressed his support for the initiative and underlined its importance as a vehicle for providing the developing world with the excellent ICT content. Dr. Lanvin applauded the Global Alliance and stressed its importance today because of the knowledge it has gathered, the political awareness gained and the advancements in technology that are now available to so many. Mr. Lanvin observed that the prevalent perception of the ICT for Development as two-dimensional - infrastructure and equipment, on one side, and content on the other - is wrong since there is a third dimension: people, skills, capacity. All three dimensions need to be addressed.

**Mr. Sebastian Muah**, Deputy Minister of Economy and Planning of Liberia, in his statement to the Preparatory meeting expressed his support to GAID and the MDG eNabler and stated that "this innovative initiative is long overdue. Its timing and execution is very crucial to become mainstream, successful and impactful".

## **The MDG eNabler**

In his statement to the High-level meeting, GAID Chairman, Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, expressed his gratitude to all those who had worked on this initiative and had supported it. He recalled that since its inception the concept of the MDG eNabler has rapidly taken shape as a real web-based innovation. Extensive on-line and physical consultations with all stakeholders fed the work, including at the WSIS Forum in Geneva, a Gulf Cooperation Council Regional Seminar in Riyadh and a country seminar in Bahrain. The

MDG eNabler received overwhelming support as a virtual strategic set of tools and resources, and as a truly multi-stakeholder project. It draws on the experience and expertise of government officials, the private sector, civil society and a multitude of international organizations and diverse development practitioners, and unlike other initiatives, it is not just a knowledge repository but rather a set of tools that converts raw data and information into useful and user-specific knowledge to help development practitioners address various development challenges.

These unique features make the MDG eNabler the first of its kind, a potent instrument in advancing progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh outlined a timeline and the way forward for the implementation of the MDG eNabler, and indicated the upcoming regional seminars and meetings that will lead to the launch of the fully operational online set of tools in 2011.

The Chairman saluted the many members of the Broadband Commission who participated in the High-level meeting and said that GAID and himself personally identified with and supported the important objectives of the Commission. He reiterated his belief that the two entities had strong complementarities and synergies, and expressed the willingness of GAID to collaborate in any future endeavour.

Mr. Sergei Kambalov, Executive Coordinator of the GAID Secretariat, presented at both meetings the core component of the MDG eNabler – the Matrix of ICT Solutions for MDG Advancement. At the Preparatory meeting, Professor Amjad Umar made a detailed presentation on the features and functionalities of the Strategic Planner.

The concepts and objectives of the project received overwhelming support and endorsement from all participants. In particular, strong statements of support were made by representatives of relevant government entities of Bahrain, Brazil, Cuba, Germany, Egypt, India, Italy, Jordan, Liberia, Macedonia, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman and Syria, as well as private sector, civil society and academia representatives from Portugal, Russia, Turkey and the Republic of Korea. Official representatives of the African Union Commission, World Bank, Islamic Development Bank, International Chamber of Commerce, GCC, League of Arab States, WITSA, ESCWA, UNCTAD, FAO, WHO, WFP, La Francophonie, WSA, the Organization of South-South Cooperation, and such leading private sector actors as Intel, Ericsson, Microsoft, IBM and Telefonica strongly supported the MDG eNabler and expressed their interest in cooperating in its development and implementation.

### **Outcomes of the discussions**

Participants offered numerous valuable suggestions and proposals to help refine, enhance and develop the MDG eNabler in its next phase of development. Most salient points are outlined below.

1. The MDG eNabler should draw upon and coordinate with other institutions and on-going activities, including development banks, UN Regional Commissions, InfoDev, Development Gateway's aid management platform, FAO's IMARK and eAgriculture Platform and CETI-D, among others.
2. Gender aspects should be adequately mainstreamed.
3. The energy and creativity of youth should be fully tapped.
4. A social community approach and social networking tools should be employed to ensure sustainability and long-term development.
5. Marketing and outreach efforts to raise awareness should be scaled up significantly.
6. A simplified version of the MDG eNabler should be developed with easy-to-use tools to enhance buy-in, confidence and capacity building; the interface should be user-friendly.
7. A clear identification of the target audience should be made so that governments, development practitioners and end users could all make the best use of it.
8. The use of games and simulations to foster capacity building was strongly supported and it was suggested that this component should be further developed.
9. The large numbers of tools currently available in the area of ICT for development should be included in the resources.
10. GAID should coordinate and collaborate with other MDGs-related programmes and processes, including financial and field-oriented programmes, to ensure maximum uptake and use.
11. An information guide and an operational manual should be prepared.

## **Conclusions and Decisions**

The following conclusions and decisions were adopted by consensus:

1. GAID will have full ownership of the Project. The MDG eNabler will be built and maintained in full compliance with the relevant rules and regulations of the UN and its agencies.
2. The name "MDG eNabler" was adopted.
3. An advisory committee will be established for the management and further development governance of the MDG eNabler.
4. Thematic coordinators will be designated to cover specific MDGs sectors for the MDG eNabler. The support of the relevant UN agencies will be sought to lead the sectorial coordination.
5. Regional – and where appropriate, national - nodes will be set up in collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions to support the Project.
6. The MDG eNabler should be built and maintained in accordance with the principle of multi-lingualism.
7. GAID will reach out to the broader global development stakeholder community to seek their commitment and participation.
8. A web-based social collaboration culture and tools will be developed to ensure sustainability and growth.

9. Increased financial support will be needed to ensure sustainability. To this end, a five year budget will be developed.
10. Capacity-building and training programmes will be developed to enable governments and other institutions to make effective use of the MDG eNabler.
11. The intellectual property ownership of the MDG eNabler will be vested in GAID.
12. An annual progress report starting Dec 2010 through 2015 should be published.
13. The MDG eNabler should act as a multi-stakeholder platform that provides unanimous content so that developing countries can make best use of plans, best practices, and tools provided by the developed world.
14. The MDG eNabler will have sectoral MDGs coordinators to oversee content. In a second phase the initiative should also include coordinators at country and/or regional levels.

### **Offers to support the development of the Project**

1. African Union expressed the wish to organize two regional meetings in the African continent.
2. Nigeria will organize a workshop to encourage African nations to synergize, collaborate and partner at a regional level.
3. Russia and CIS region are ready to establish a partnership with GAID.
4. ICVolunteers offered its assistance via its network of volunteer workers around the world..
5. Bahrain invited the audience to the Bahrain International Forum, 16 May 2011, for a dedicated workshop on the MDG eNabler.
6. Bahrain offered to establish an African Capacity Building Center for the MDG eNabler
7. Korea University offered to provide academic support and to organize a session in Seoul, Korea in 2013-2014 in collaboration with GAID.
8. Brazil offered to host a live launch of the MDG eNabler during a LAC Regional Conference in Sao Paulo in March 2011, in conjunction with the launch of the Center of Excellence in Technology and Information for people with Disabilities (CETI-D) of the “Secretaria de Estado dos Direitos da Pessoa com Deficiencia”.
9. Microsoft on its part offered its full technological, marketing and logistic support and invited the MDG eNabler technical team to its Campus for that purpose.
10. Brazil and Bahrain offered to co-host the MDG eNabler website.
11. G3ict offered to support the project by providing contents related to e-accessibility for persons with disabilities.
12. The Government of Qatar offered to translate the MDG eNabler website into Arabic.
13. The Foundation for Mobile Communication offered to lead the translation of the MDG enabler website into Portuguese.
14. India expressed the wish to partner with GAID in this project and offered full support to build the eNabler in accordance with the principle of multilingualism
15. WHO expressed interest in joining this initiative and offered its resources to the knowledge asset of the eNabler and to make the content provided multilingual.

16. The League of Arab States offered to integrate an enabler created by the Arab League in collaboration with various UN agencies (UNDP, ILO, ESCWA, WHO) which gathers data and information useful to ensure development.
17. The South-South Network offered to integrate a portal to the eNabler that provides data of 10,000 IT companies.

GAID will continue to build upon the outcomes of these important meetings and will strive to make this initiative a truly multi-stakeholder and dynamic platform for development practitioners and other users around the developing world.