25 June 2007
English only

Economic and Social Council
Substantive Session of 2007
Geneva, 2 – 27 July 2007
Items 6 and 7(f) of the provisional agenda[1]

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Coordination, programme and other questions: Information and Communication Technologies Task Force

First annual report of the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development

Summary

The Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development (GAID) is an inclusive, cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder platform promoting the use of information and communication technologies for enhancing the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, notably the reduction of poverty. It was created by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 28 March 2006, and recognized by the Economic and Social Council in decision 2006/251. The Alliance was launched in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 19 June 2006. Since its founding, the Alliance has focused on developing its networks and modalities of functioning, defining its areas of priority, formulating its business plan, building collaborative links and raising awareness.

GAID has acquired strong brand recognition as an innovative and open United Nations initiative, bringing together all key stakeholders around a single networking platform in support of the United Nations development goals. It has secured the partnership of many competent and committed organizations from all stakeholder groups.

It has launched five Flagship Partnership and Advocacy Initiatives – to accelerate connectivity and access for Africa, enhance and scale up the telecentre movement, create a Cyber Development Corps based on south-south and triangular cooperation, promote assistive technologies for persons with disabilities and advocate for free Internet accessibility for schools – and a number of Communities of Expertise.

GAID is now positioned to be a key contributor to the achievement of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, especially by bringing multi-stakeholder input to the Economic and Social Council, and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. It is also well placed to further the United Nations Development Agenda. A new level of commitment to work towards bringing broadband connectivity into Africa has been expressed by membership of the Alliance.

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[1] E/2007/100 and E/2007/100/Corr.1

Contents

I. Introduction

1.   The Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development (GAID), an inclusive, cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder platform promoting the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for enhancing the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, notably the reduction of poverty, was created by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 28 March 2006, and launched in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, at a meeting held on 19-20 June 2006. Economic and Social Council decision 2006/251 took note of the initiative of the Secretary-General to launch the Global Alliance.

2.   This report, covering the period April 2006 through May 2007, outlines GAID's efforts to establish its mission, objectives and areas of focus; governance and advisory mechanisms; and framework for partnerships. It briefly describes GAID events and outreach activities, as well as future activities. The report concludes with an assessment of progress.

II. Mission, objectives and areas of focus

3.   The mission of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development is "to contribute to transforming the spirit and vision of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) into action and promoting the use of ICT for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)."

4.   The Alliance works toward fulfilling this mission by providing an inclusive, multi-stakeholder global forum and platform for cross-sectoral policy dialogue and advocacy and by catalyzing multi-stakeholder, action-oriented partnerships under the GAID umbrella. In itself, GAID, which is largely a network of networks, does not have any operational or implementing role. It provides multi-stakeholder input to intergovernmental bodies, including the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Commission for Science and Technology for Development (CSTD).

5.   Six broad objectives support its mission:

- Mainstreaming the global ICT agenda into the broader United Nations Development Agenda;
- Bringing together key organizations and other stakeholders involved in ICT for development (ICTD) to enhance their collaboration and effectiveness for achieving the internationally agreed development goals;
- Raising awareness of policy makers on ICTD policy issues;
- Facilitating identification of technological solutions for specific development needs and goals, and launching pertinent partnerships;
- Promoting the creation of an enabling environment and innovative business models for pro-poor investment, innovation, entrepreneurship and growth, and for empowering people living in poverty and other marginalized communities; and
- Acting as a think-tank on ICTD-related issues and as an advisory group to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

6.   GAID's initial focus is on the use of ICT in promoting: (1) education, (2) health, (3) entrepreneurship and (4) governance (specifically, enhancing citizens' participation and promoting accountability, transparency and efficiency in

governance processes). Significant attention is being paid to the topics of connectivity and access, with special consideration given to Africa.

7. The 2007 GAID Business Plan provides strategic direction and a framework for the work of the Global Alliance.

III. Governance and advisory mechanisms

8. The Global Alliance was established on the basis of the principles and elements[1] that emerged following one-and-a-half years of international, multi-stakeholder consultations undertaken by the United Nations ICT Task Force[2].

9. A 60-member Strategy Council, composed of 30 governments and 30 representatives from the private sector, civil society and international organizations, was selected from among candidates named in an open nomination process. The Council provides strategic guidance and vision for the Alliance, contributes to policy dialogue, undertakes awareness-raising and promotes multi-stakeholder cooperation in the field of ICTD. A 12-member, multi-stakeholder Steering Committee, led by Chairman Craig Barrett, Chairman of the Board of Intel Corporation, was also established to provide executive direction to, and priority setting for, the Alliance, as well as oversight and guidance to the secretariat.

10. A panel of High-level Advisers was constituted to provide a pool of policy and expert advice to the Global Alliance. Furthermore, the GAID Network of Champions is a growing group of practitioners, experts and activists created to inform policy discussions at the annual GAID Global Forum and in the Steering Committee and Strategy Council.

11. The roles and responsibilities of each of the governing and advisory bodies have been defined in their terms of reference.

IV. Framework for Partnership

12. In order to create a structure supporting the achievement of GAID's objectives, the Global Alliance, through the collaborative efforts of the Chair, the secretariat, the Steering Committee, Strategy Council and other partners, is building a framework to foster policy debate and partnerships for action, as laid out in the business plan. The framework is composed of multiple, complementary networks: Flagship Partnership Initiatives, Flagship Advocacy Initiatives, Communities of Expertise, Regional Networks and Stakeholder Networks.

13. Procedures through which competent individuals and organizations can express their interest in contributing to the work of the Flagship Partnership/Advocacy Initiatives and the Communities of Expertise are available on the GAID website, as is the process to propose new initiatives and communities.

A. Flagship Partnership Initiatives

14. The three FPIs formed under the umbrella of GAID in its inaugural year are multi-stakeholder activities leveraging joint resources to spur visible action toward attaining the Alliance's objectives across its four focus areas.

Title	Lead organization(s)	Partners
Better Connectivity with Broadband to Africa	ITU, World Bank	European Commission, the African Development Bank, the E-Africa Commission/NEPAD, bilateral and multilateral donor organizations, telecommunications operators associations, and representatives of users and civil society
telecentre.org	IDRC (Canada)	Microsoft, SDC, GKP, Inter-American Development Bank, network and knowledge-sharing partners at the national and international levels
Cyber Development Corps	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (Malaysia)	UNDP, UNCSTD, telecentre.org, Philippines Resources for Sustainable Development, Inc., Islamic Development Bank, Digital Opportunity Trust, Microsoft Malaysia

1. Better Connectivity with Broadband to Africa

15. As a key enabler of the four priority areas of the Global Alliance, this initiative supports African efforts to accelerate the roll-out of communication infrastructure and increase broadband access across Africa. GAID is playing a role in convening major stakeholders, including development banks, operators, potential investors, government agencies, donors and user associations, with the objective of helping to forge a common understanding of the merits of different investment and management models, and the complementary and synergistic roles that each stakeholder can play in achieving the goal of accelerated connectivity. A core group composed of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Bank and Intel, supported by the GAID secretariat, has been constituted to develop a shared vision or framework and achieve practical results.

16.   In order to support competitive markets in sub-Saharan Africa, a policy analysis for backbone networks has been initiated under the auspices of the World Bank. This analysis will examine the current situation on the continent and study the impact that backbone networks would have on the national infrastructure and economies. It will provide the decision-makers with a better understanding of policy options. It is expected that by indicating a clear policy approach to the development of backbone networks, the initiative will encourage interest and investment in broadband infrastructure and services in Africa. A major African regional conference will be organized in October 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda, under the leadership of ITU and the World Bank, with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), to bring together African leaders and policy-makers along with members of the domestic and international private sector, financial institutions and other donors to develop and launch a comprehensive programme in this area.

2.   telecentre.org

17.   Telecentre.org aims to scale up the successes of the telecentre movement by helping telecentres become stronger, more sustainable and more numerous. The initiative helps telecentres move beyond simply providing access, focusing on e-learning, training and skills development, local content generation, financial services, e-government and other locally relevant services. Partners rallying under the telecentre.org banner work in four areas: (i) building telecentre networks, (ii) developing content and services, (iii) documenting knowledge and learning, and (iv) convening events for telecentre leaders.

18.   At present, the telecentre.org umbrella includes networks in at least 10 countries serving thousands of centres. The initiative also provides a platform for over 36 partners focused on telecentre networking, training, content and services. In addition, telecentre.org has begun work with governments in a number of countries, helping them build stronger and more inclusive national telecentre strategies. The core social investment partners - Microsoft, International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) - have contributed $CDN 21 million to date to support these activities.

19.   With the support of GAID, telecentre.org plans to grow significantly over the next two years. At the core of this growth will be a new "affiliate partnership" programme that will allow any organization strengthening and promoting telecentres to become a part of this FPI. In addition, telecentre.org plans to expand its umbrella to include networks in 24 countries, a worldwide training academy network and a programme to invest in services that can be offered via telecentres. It is expected that more social investors will join from both the private and public sectors and that the overall resources committed to programming will grow to at least $CDN40 million.

3.   Cyber Development Corps

20.   The Cyber Development Corps is being developed to promote capacity-building through South-South cooperation. This initiative will establish a global outreach programme based on the spirit of volunteerism to help lesser-developed nations and communities benefit from global ICT infrastructure and resources and help enhance their national development plans towards becoming equal participants in the global information/knowledge society.

21.   Cyber Development Corps has developed a three-year plan and was finalizing a detailed work plan by 31 May 2007. The lead organization, the Malaysian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, hopes to be able to formally launch this initiative in late 2007. Commitments have been received from telecentre.org and the Philippine Resources for Sustainable Development to collaborate. Discussions are also taking place with two countries from the Latin American and African regions to make Cyber Development Corps a working model.

B.   Flagship Advocacy Initiatives

22.   Multi-stakeholder advocacy campaigns spearheaded by GAID partners that encourage national-level action are being built in two areas: ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and free Internet access for schools.

Theme	Lead organization(s)	Partners
Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communications Technologies	Wireless Internet Institute and World Times, Inc.	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), UN Enable, IBM, UNITAR, Air France, NIIT, Georgia Institute of Technology and additional private sector participants
Free Access for all Schools to the Internet	Proposed by SDC	GeSCI and other appropriate international and national organizations

1.   Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communications Technologies (G3ict)

23.   G3ict was launched by GAID under the leadership of the Wireless Internet Institute and World Times, Inc. to promote ICT solutions for people with disabilities, to encourage best policy practices among governments in the context of the new United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (adopted by the General Assembly on 23 December 2006), and to accelerate the development by industry and civil society of the scientific, industrial, standardization and economic conditions to make such solutions affordable worldwide.

24.   G3ict has developed a programme of global and regional multi-stakeholder forums and established five multi-stakeholder working groups to identify and promote core ICT opportunities for people living with disabilities, standardization priorities, industry-cooperative initiatives in support of mass promotion, research and development opportunities for public funding, and best practices among national governments and local authorities. It held a highly successful kick-off event on 4 December 2006, and an equally successful first Global Forum at the United Nations Headquarters on 28 March 2007.

25.   G3ict will also create dissemination and research tools, including a compendium of best practices, a manifesto and resource guide, a bi-monthly electronic update, research programme, the Digital Inclusion Index establishing metrics, benchmarks and

rankings for countries, a global award for inclusive technology and a web-based media resource centre.

2. **Free Access for all Schools to the Internet**

26.   This initiative is founded on the premise that schools present particularly fertile ground to foster the development of a new generation of innovative and capable citizens possessing the skills to become actively engaged in the global knowledge society. Thanks to the Swisscom initiative "Schools to the Net," all primary and secondary schools in Switzerland now have broadband access to the Internet, subsidized by mobile phone companies and users. Under GAID's umbrella, this initiative advocates similar efforts to secure free or affordable access for schools to the Internet in other countries. It is envisioned that governments will implement policies and actions promoted by this initiative through creative multi-stakeholder partnerships, using innovative financial solutions to minimize or avoid the cost burden for schools. Additional cumulative effects are anticipated, such as the decline of overall connectivity costs through increased competition.

C. **Communities of Expertise**

27.   Thematic CoEs are web-based networks, which bring together motivated and capable actors to address specific, well-defined ICTD problems in a results-oriented manner and to identify and disseminate good practice. An open call for proposals for CoEs was met with impressive worldwide response and, on 31 May 2007, 17 had begun operation within the four GAID focus areas and four cross-cutting themes (gender, youth, local content and rural development). Information on all CoEs can be found in the GAID website.

Community of expertise	Lead organization(s)
Governance cluster	
E-governance for Development	DPADM, UN/DESA
E-services for Development	Observatory for Cultural and Audiovisual Communication
Information and Communication Technologies for Peace	ICT4Peace Foundation
Entrepreneurship cluster	
ICT Policy and Finance for Social, Community and Public Entrepreneurship	Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
Expanding Financial Services to the Un/Under-banked	Intel Corporation
Enterprises' Competitiveness through the use of ICTs	ILO, ICC, UNCTAD

Education cluster	
ICT Competencies for Teachers	UNESCO
Enhancing Access to and Application of Scientific Data in Developing Countries	Chinese Academy of Science
Beyond Distance Research	Leicester University
ICT for Education	GeSCI
ICT Integration and Pedagogical Engineering	WITFOR Education Commission
Health	
ICT for Country Health Strategies	WHO
Rural development	
E-agriculture	FAO
Gender cluster	
Gender, Development and Information Society Policies	IT for Change
International Taskforce on Women and ICT	Centre for Women and Information Technology
Youth	
Youth Social Technopreneurship	Philippine Resources for Sustainable Development
Local content	
e-Content and Creativity – World Summit Award and Network	International Centre for New Media

1. Governance cluster

28. **E-Governance for Development:** Led by the UN/DESA Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), addresses the challenges of improving government front-office services and government back-office management through ICT and encourages ICT access for all and ICT for citizen participation. The CoE provides an Internet-based networking platform that facilitates access to information on e-governance activities of the United Nations system (UNS); organizes regular forums for the community; provides a knowledge-base of innovative practices on e-governance; and delivers off-line and online training on e-governance. It contributes to the implementation of WSIS Action Line C7: ICT Application (e-government) and will organize relevant meetings in this area during the WSIS Week in Geneva in May 2007.

29. **E-Services for Development:** Led by the Observatory for Cultural and Audiovisual Communication (OCCAM), the CoE aims to create an open, universal platform for broadband e-services, based on new Internet protocols that are reliable and interoperable, which can provide concrete solutions to primary needs in health, education, governance, labour and other areas. The platform will be tested in ICT

villages in Madagascar and the Dominican Republic. A preparatory meeting of the CoE was held on 9 February 2007, in Milan, Italy, and an annual conference connecting several locations around the world through the Internet was held on 19-20 April 2007.

30. **Information and Communication Technologies for Peace:** Led by the ICT4Peace Foundation, the CoE focuses on research, advocacy and networking on how ICT can be used to promote peace and prevent conflict. Its activities include targeted networking through regular meetings and workshops; original research and collaboration with academic and policy institutions; policy development in ICT4Peace; and advocacy on key issues. The CoE organized a planning meeting on "International Process on Crisis Management" on 30 March 2007, in Geneva.

2. Entrepreneurship cluster

31. **ICT Policy and Finance for Social, Community and Public Entrepreneurship:** Led by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), the CoE explores the implications for development policies and regulatory policies for enabling broad-based entrepreneurship. It also examines the effectiveness of national financing and implementation strategies, with a view to identifying how gaps can be addressed and impact enhanced by enabling relevant social actors to contribute. APC's founding partners are IT for Change, UNDP, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), the LINK Centre, Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), and Nexus Research.

32. **Expanding Financial Services to the Un/under-banked:** The CoE was formed under the leadership of Intel Corporation, in partnership with the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), Grameen Foundation, Mercy Corps, Microsoft, Visa and the World Resources Institute. Its goal is to make people's lives better by improving the delivery and availability of financial services through ICT. Community members have defined the objectives, mission and value-add, and committed funding for the first year. The community developed a two-phase work plan, focusing first on researching business models and value chains of financial services in emerging markets and on implementing pilot projects based on the recommendations. The community is tentatively targeting the release of published results by 1 December 2007.

33. **Enterprises' Competitiveness through the use of ICTs:** The objective of this CoE, led by the ILO, is to facilitate entrepreneurs, public authorities, NGOs, academics and other actors to identify the barriers faced by enterprises in investing in ICTs and to share knowledge about policies and actions that bolster enterprises' – particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises' – competitiveness through the use of ICTs. The community seeks to address these issues through the compilation of experiences and other relevant documentation and the creation of dialogue spaces to discuss existing approaches to the problem. An interactive, online platform on "ICTs, innovation and entrepreneurship" has been developed in partnership with the Development Gateway, UNCTAD and the International Chamber of Commerce, and additional online activities are being explored.

3. Education cluster

34. **ICT Competencies for Teachers:** Led by UNESCO, with founding partners GeSCI, Intel, Microsoft and Virginia Tech University, this CoE's objective is to integrate ICTs in traditional education models to achieve Education for All by 2015.

The output of the CoE will include an online environment for information exchange, facilitating a structured and guided discussion around the desired elements of teacher training, in order to equip teachers with the appropriate skills to use the technology in an optimal fashion; a draft set of standards for ICT competencies for teachers; guidelines for training curriculum developers to ensure compliance with the foregoing standards; and establishment of an international supervisory board to monitor global efforts in teacher training.

35. **Enhancing Access to, and Application of Scientific Data in Developing Countries (e-SDDC)**: The mission of the community is bridging research, education and policy on scientific data in developing countries under the GAID umbrella and creating a platform for dialogue for all stakeholders to: (1) identify and evaluate different mechanisms and policies for promoting greater access to, and use of, digital science and technology resources for meeting the needs of developing countries in policy reform in scientific data management and applications; and (2) help build a distributed and decentralized network of networks in scientific data and information resources for innovative research, sustainable development and better quality of life in the developing world. Led by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), 29 organizations from 17 countries have already been invited to participate in the community. It was launched in Sao Paolo, Brazil, on 7 May 2007 where the e-SDDC implementation plan was reviewed and discussed. Some 80 members of the COE participated in the event.

36. **Beyond Distance Research:** The University of Leicester's Beyond Distance Research Alliance leads this CoE, in partnership with the University of Wolverhampton (UK), the University of New South Wales (Australia) and the University of Colombo (Sri Lanka). This virtual community of educational researchers is analyzing existing and on-going research, programmes and practices in e-learning and distance learning, with a view to identifying best practice and developing guidelines, standards or templates for dissemination; sharing knowledge and findings of research studies on cutting-edge, new or emergent issues in higher education; identifying technological or organizational transformational solutions, in order to overcome barriers to development using ICT in the higher education sector; and seeking opportunities for, and facilitating, multi-stakeholder partnerships and resource sharing in research into e-learning and distance learning education. Online training programmes will be made available in specific aspects of e-learning. A community web-portal with designated areas for information dissemination, resource sharing and discussion is being developed.

37. **ICT for Education:** Based on the premise that there is a clear link between competent use of ICTs for teaching and learning and the development of knowledge-based economies, this CoE, composed of educators, public authorities, NGOs, academics and other stakeholders, aims to highlight gaps in the effective use of ICT for education, provide a platform for sharing experiences, and mobilize support and expertise. Led by the Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI), the CoE has also identified connectivity and infrastructure issues, particularly in Africa, to be critical and will enjoy synergy with the ITU/World Bank-led FPI on Better Connectivity with Broadband to Africa.

38. **ICT Integration and Pedagogical Engineering:** Led by WITFOR Education Commission, in partnership with the University of Mauritius; Lund University (Sweden); the University of Botswana; the University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and BBC Worldwide Interactive Learning, this CoE aims to focus on education for sustainability and collaborative e-learning to empower citizens with knowledge and skills. Through 2007, this CoE will be engaged in several events and onsite

workshops for empowerment and capacity-building through ICT integration in Botswana, Ethiopia (WITFOR 2007), Malaysia (ICOOL 2007) and Mauritius. The community will also participate in, and benefit from, the establishment of regional resource centres, such as the Virtual Centre for Innovative Learning Technologies (VCILT) of the University of Mauritius.

4. **Health**

39. **ICT for Country Health Strategies**: Led by the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with United Nations agencies and regional commissions, academia, independent forecasting and research groups and country experts, the CoE aims to implement, through GAID, a collaborative process to improve ICT access in the health sector, which represents a contribution to WSIS action line C7: ICT Applications (e-health). The initial deliverables include the creation of an analytic model/framework, the preparation of strategy assessments and the organization of workshops with key sectors and actors, in order to refine strategies and share results. A cross-sectoral workshop is planned for November 2007.

5. **Rural development**

40. **E-agriculture:** Recognizing that the ICT revolution can have a tremendous positive impact as an instrument of sustainable development, the CoE aims to enhance the contribution of ICT to agriculture and rural development through a multi-stakeholder, people-centred, cross-sectoral platform that will bring together all stakeholders from relevant constituencies. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which leads this community of expertise and facilitates WSIS Action Line C7: ICT Applications (e-agriculture), completed the *Analysis of Global e-Agriculture Survey*[3] in March 2007. The CoE and members of the FAO e-Agriculture Forum will respond to issues raised in the survey. Its e-agriculture platform began operation in late May 2007, with the official launch in September 2007, in conjunction with e-Agriculture Week in Rome, Italy.

6. **Gender Cluster**

41. **Gender, Development and Information Society Policies (GDISP):** The CoE is a network of organizations engaged in gender and ICT advocacy, as well as non-ICTD groups with a history of engagement in global policy advocacy on gender, development and rights. It has begun to synthesize perspectives on gender and the Information Society (IS) emerging in the work of its constituent members, covering themes such as globalization and work, education and skills, digital spaces and identity, media and community, and institutional and structural changes. Members will meet in August 2007 at a workshop to analyze current policy frameworks of global and regional agencies implementing WSIS action lines and to make concrete recommendations to meet gender equality goals. This meeting will also be a first step to systematize inputs into IS-related policy bodies in the future.

42. **International Task Force on Women and ICT (ITF):** The goal of ITF is to ensure that the participation of women in engineering, education and employment in ICT is measurably and significantly increased globally within five years. The ITF is led by a steering committee and has three working groups: education, workforce development and entrepreneurship. An advisory committee is being formed. The ITF has supported/pursued a number of important initiatives for women and girls in engineering, science, ICT and other technologies around the world. The steering committee will meet in June in Tunisia at the World Federation of Engineering

Organizations and the full committee will be invited to the Third Global Knowledge Conference (GKIII) in December 2007.

7. Youth

43. **Youth Social Technopreneurship:** The CoE, led by the Philippine Resources for Sustainable Development (PRSD), Inc., recognizes the potential of capitalizing on enterprising youth and their affinity to technology for socio-economic advancement. It aims to train young people in social technopreneurship and gather, support and deploy young entrepreneurs in developing countries to use ICT in community development and social empowerment. It has 13 active institutional members, most of which are based in sub-Saharan Africa. At present, the CoE is collaborating with the Korea Agency for Digital Opportunity and Promotion to deploy ICT specialists to the community's member organizations in Burundi and Uganda through its Internet Volunteers Programme.

8. Local content

44. **e-Content and Creativity – World Summit Award and Network (WSA-net):** The CoE aims to strengthen the impact and to sustain an inclusive global platform and foster multi-stakeholder activity in the selection and promotion of best practice in e-content. International road shows bring visibility to some of the best content identified through the World Summit Award process. Several other ICT-and-development awards have been approached by the GAID secretariat to devise a more coherent and concerted approach to the promotion of best practices in the use of ICT to achieve the development goals.

D. Regional Networks

45. Once fully established, GAID Regional Networks will ensure the open, inclusive, participatory and truly global character of the Alliance and the adequate reflection of regional perspectives and specific needs in its activities along the four focus areas. In May 2007, the networks were in various stages of formation.

Region	Lead organization(s)	Status
Transition countries	Azerbaijan	Launched in Baku, 2 October 2006
Asia Pacific	UNESCAP, Shanghai Municipal Authorities	Launched in Shanghai, 19 October 2006
Europe	Germany, AMD	Launched in Dresden, Germany, 16 January 2007
Africa	UNECA, NEPAD	Launched in Addis Ababa, 23 March 2007
Latin America and the Caribbean	Inter-American Development Bank, Argentina	To be launched in Buenos Aires, October 2007
Arab States	UNESCWA	In consultation with lead organizations, Fall 2007

1. **Transition Countries**

46.   The network for transition countries was formally launched in conjunction with a GAID regional Ministerial meeting on "Governance, partnership and regional networks in transition countries" on 2 October 2006, in Baku, Azerbaijan. Participants discussed the interrelations, roles and functions of government and non-governmental actors in the process of formulation and implementation of ICT strategies and programmes for development to achieve the internationally agreed development goals in conditions of transition to a market economy. The Government of Azerbaijan hosts the network. A second meeting of the network is being planned for October 2007.

2. **Asia Pacific**

47.   The Asia Pacific Regional Network was officially launched at a session on "GAID and its regional networks and activities", alongside a regional meeting on e-governance on 19 October 2006, in Shanghai, China, which was held as a complement to the Sixth Annual Forum on City Informatization in the Asia-Pacific Region (CIAPR VI). The meeting was convened in cooperation with UN/DESA's DPADM and UNESCAP. A Steering Group composed of the Shanghai Regional Cooperation Office for City Informatization (RCOCI), UNESCAP, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation was established. The Asia Pacific Regional Network now serves as a platform to disseminate information and knowledge and share best practices. A regional meeting is being planned in conjunction with the Global Knowledge Partnership's GKIII meeting in Kuala Lumpur, in December 2007.

3. **Europe**

48.   The GAID European Network was launched on 16 January 2007, in Dresden, organized by the Government of Germany and hosted by AMD Saxony. Approximately 30 representatives from European governments, companies and NGOs participated. GAID Europe aims to connect European initiatives (especially those coordinated by the European Commission and that are EU-based) that are working toward the internationally agreed development goals. The regional network promotes the use of ICT for reducing poverty worldwide and encourages concrete, multi-stakeholder projects furthering this overarching aim. A GAID Europe Steering Group has been established to coordinate the network's activities and a website is under development.

4. **Africa**

49.   Hosted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the launch and first meeting of the Africa Regional Network took place on 23 March 2007, alongside the African Civil Society Forum (22-24 March) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. More than 50 representatives from African governments, civil society and other stakeholder groups took part in the event, which was supported by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relations with the United Nations (CONGO). The meeting created an African Regional Network Steering Committee composed of three facilitators, one each from academia, government and civil society from West, Central and North Africa sub-regions to steer the GAID African Network, with the assistance of ECA, which hosts the secretariat.

5. Latin America and the Caribbean

50. The Inter-American Development Bank and the Government of Argentina will host a meeting in October 2007, in Buenos Aires, bringing together organizations from various sectors and stakeholder groups based in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to advance GAID outreach and to set up a regional network. It will serve as a hub for discussion of subjects related to ICTD. The LAC network will strengthen synergies, complementarities and mutual awareness-building among the regional and national initiatives, support the replication and scale up of successful experiences and help to launch ICT application strategies for development.

E. Stakeholder Networks

51. Stakeholder networks will build on existing groups and generate new synergies among constituents with shared interests. The Alliance will reach out to maximize participation by all interested entities, extend the outreach of GAID and promote channels for smooth communications and collaboration. By May 2007, the networks were at various points of formation.

Constituency	Lead organization(s)
Civil society	CONGO
Youth	ATHGO International, Global Teenager Project, Pace University, ILO Youth Employment Network
Gender	IT for Change, Centre for Women and Information Technology, Centre for Feminist Research and Action
Persons with disabilities	W2i, Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Division for Social Policy and Development, UN/DESA), IBM
Parliamentarians	International Parliamentarians Association for IT (supported by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, Rome)
Local government and regional authorities	IT4All (Bilbao)

1. Civil Society

52. CONGO is leading the formation of a Civil Society Stakeholder Network to provide a channel for bottom-up input from, and engagement by non-governmental organizations and grassroots communities into GAID processes. Such participation was instrumental in the launching of the African Regional Network, which was held in conjunction with the African Civil Society Forum in Addis Ababa.

2. Youth

53. A number of youth networks and organizations are being tapped and galvanized in the preparatory process for the first GAID Global Forum on Youth and ICT for Development, planned for September 2007 (see "Future events"). The joining up of these various groups and their continued engagement in GAID focus areas and activities is envisioned to be one of the key outcomes of the Forum.

3. Gender

54. A Gender Stakeholder Network is being formed under the leadership of IT for Change, the Centre for Women and Information Technology and the Centre for Feminist Research and Action that would ensure that gender issues perspectives are adequately addressed in GAID events, initiatives and output. The network will be complementary to the gender CoEs, and constitute a pool of experts to bring gender issues to the forefront of GAID activities. The stakeholder network will hold its first meeting in December 2007 during GKP's Third Global Knowledge Conference.

4. Persons with Disabilities

55. The international network of the disabled and advocates for the disabled that is being built through the G3ict Flagship Advocacy Initiative will be leveraged not only to engage members in the work of the Initiative and to transmit knowledge and make available tools that will contribute to making ICT accessible to the disabled, but also to incorporate the views and needs of persons with disabilities in the work of the Alliance in all focus areas.

5. Parliamentarians

56. At its Fifth Assembly, the International Parliamentarians Association for Information Technology (IPAIT) decided to lead GAID's network of parliamentarians, building on IPAIT's work and experience. IPAIT is supported by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, based in Rome, which cooperates with the Association to promote the role of parliaments in advancing the IS and hosts its webpage and online network[4]. IPAIT will hold its next annual Assembly in Sofia, Bulgaria, in June 2008, on "Ethics and the Information Society". This network, in particular, will be critical to GAID in promoting its objectives at the national level.

6. Local government and regional authorities

57. A stakeholder network of local and regional authorities is being formed under the leadership of Bilbao-based IT4ALL, a network of local authorities created with the dual purpose of ensuring that local authorities contribute to the WSIS implementation and of systematizing and sharing the knowledge available on matters concerning the IS by designing and implementing mechanisms for cooperation in this field. Through this network, GAID hopes to be able to promote its objectives at the local and regional levels.

F. Other partnerships

58. In addition to the valuable partnerships that make up the FPIs, CoEs, and Regional and Stakeholder Networks, GAID has formed a number of additional mutually beneficial partnerships with important organizations from a variety of stakeholder groups (see annex). A few examples are highlighted in this section.

59. Intel Corporation was selected as the first chair of the Global Alliance in recognition of its commitment to leveraging the creativity and innovation pervasive in the ICT industry to further contribute to economic and social development. This significant partnership has deepened Intel's relationship with the United Nations. GAID Chairman, Mr. Craig Barrett, also Chairman of the Board of Intel Corporation, is a strong advocate for improving education around the world and a vocal spokesman for the value technology can provide in raising social and economic standards globally. Intel is also participating in several GAID FPIs and CoEs.

60. Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) and GAID have developed a close working relationship, aligning their objectives and ensuring that their activities are complementary. GAID benefits from GKP's broad and deep experience with, and networking reach among, practitioners, activists and grass-roots organizations dealing with ICTD. GKP is represented in the GAID Steering Committee by the Chair of the GKP Executive Committee.

61. The Government of Malaysia has played a key role in the establishment of the Global Alliance. The launch meeting was held under the patronage of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, who is a member of the GAID Steering Committee. In addition to its support of the launch event, the Malaysian Government has contributed in-kind to the GAID secretariat and is spearheading the Cyber Development Corps FPI.

62. Working from within, the Global Alliance effectively leverages the relevant parts of the United Nations system working with ICT and development issues. Dr. Hamadoun Touré, the Secretary-General of ITU, has extended his full support to, and cooperation with, GAID. With ITU's powerful networks and extensive technical and development knowledge, GAID offers an even stronger proposition for creating real improvement in infrastructure and access to benefit development, especially through the FPI on connectivity to Africa.

63. Another special partnership has been formed between GAID and UNITAR. GAID supports the Continued IT Education (CITE) programme for diplomats to strengthen their IT skills and the Web Seminar Series on ICT Policy Issues for Development. UNITAR and GAID also plan to collaborate on regional work.

64. As a multi-stakeholder entity, the Global Alliance works closely with the International Chamber of Commerce and the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations, which are both represented in the Steering Committee, to ensure engagement from, and outreach to, the private sector and civil society.

65. Generous support from Canada, the Cisneros Foundation, Finland, Intel Foundation, IDRC, Sweden, Switzerland, Talal Abu-Ghazaleh International and UNESCO has contributed greatly to the Alliance's success in its first year. Pledges have also been received from Cisco, Germany, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Inter-American Development Bank, Italy and STMicroelectronics Foundation.

V. Events organized and outreach activities

66.   In its first year of operation, GAID convened its Strategy Council twice and the Steering Committee three times and co-organized a number of thematic events. These activities were complemented by an outreach programme that aimed to establish the GAID brand and widely promote the new entity.

A. Events

1. Inaugural meeting of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, and First Meetings of the Strategy Council and Steering Committee, Kuala Lumpur, 19-20 June 2006

67.   More than 500 participants from all regions, representing all stakeholder groups came together to launch the Global Alliance at an event hosted by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of Malaysia. Participants engaged in a rich two-day dialogue on the mission, substantive focus and modalities of the work of the Alliance and examined multi-stakeholder frameworks for developing effective policies and sustainable partnerships in the GAID focus areas. A showcase organized in parallel to the Inaugural meeting exhibited ICTD initiatives by Malaysian and international technology companies and development organizations. A statement by the co-organizers was released at the Closing session of the meeting, summarizing the highlights of the event and key elements around which a broad consensus had emerged.

68.   The First meeting of the Strategy Council was held in the morning of 19 June. Members of the Council agreed upon the four focus areas of the Alliance, discussed its modalities of operation and reaffirmed its focused and action-oriented approach.

69.   The Steering Committee met in the evening of 20 June. There was strong agreement among the members to expeditiously translate GAID's intentions into action, in order to produce tangible results. Several proposals for activities by GAID and its partners were discussed, as well as how the various networks of the Alliance would interact.

2. Second Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 27 September 2006

70.   The Secretary-General, the ECOSOC President and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs addressed the GAID Chairman and principal members of the Steering Committee at this high-level strategy meeting. Decisions were taken on refining the business plan; terms of reference for the governing and advisory bodies were approved; a voluntary funding strategy was devised; and the date, venue and theme for the first GAID Global Forum were discussed.

3. Our Common Humanity in the Information Age: Principles and Values for Development, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 29 November 2006

71.   This unique event broadly addressed the challenges of globalization and the common destiny of human beings. The event was structured around six values highlighted in the Millennium Declaration: freedom, solidarity, equality, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. Over 1,100 multi-stakeholder

representatives participated in person. Through live webcast and interactive chat rooms, the larger public around the world had an opportunity to listen and participate in real time. A youth forum on the same theme had been held on 28 November.

4. **UN Meets the Silicon Valley, Second GAID Strategy Council Meeting and Third GAID Steering Committee Meeting, Silicon Valley, California, 27-28 February 2007**

72.   Intel organized a special event "The UN Meets the Silicon Valley" on 28 February 2007, at the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, California, bringing together more than 200 participants from United Nations organizations and members of the GAID Strategy Council and the local IT industry, academia and venture capital community. The event explored how technology and industry can bolster development and how to promote partnership in ICTD between the public and private sectors. Panel discussions were organized on the contributions of Silicon Valley innovators to the development agenda, the relationship between venture capitalism and the MDGs, and developing locally relevant content.

73.   On 27 February 2007, approximately 130 participants – members of the Strategy Council and the Panel of High-level Advisers – met at Intel Headquarters in Santa Clara, California. During the meeting, the GAID Flagship Partnership and Advocacy Initiatives and Communities of Expertise were presented by their lead organizations and discussed.

74.   The members of the Steering Committee met for the third time in the afternoon of 27 February, when they reviewed the implementation of the GAID Business Plan, the 2007 and 2008 GAID Global Forums, and funding of the Alliance. It was decided that the work of the Alliance should focus on the overarching issues of connectivity and access with special attention to Africa and that the Alliance should pursue a limited number of initiatives with a clear articulation of themes, partners and milestones.

5. **ICT for Development – A follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society, Tenth Session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, 22 May 2007**

75.   This multi-stakeholder event, organized in collaboration with the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, was held during the Tenth Regular Session of the CSTD as a follow-up to the WSIS. Approximately 200 individuals participated. Four panels examined innovative uses of ICTs in achieving development goals and targets; stimulating and supporting ICT innovation in developing countries; information and communication technology (ICT) innovations that make "value at the bottom of the pyramid"; and innovative uses of ICT and partnerships in delivering e-government services. Participants expressed appreciation for the organization of this event as an important platform for multi-stakeholder inputs into the policy dialogue of the Commission, and called on the UNCTAD Secretariat and GAID to continue the organization of similar events during future sessions of the Commission.

B.   Outreach activities

76.   GAID pursues a three-pronged awareness-raising and outreach programme to: (a) influence policy at international, regional, national and local levels, with a view to promoting an enabling environment for the effective use of ICT to stimulate or accelerate economic and social development, (b) strengthen capacity of policy- and

decision-makers to formulate effective and sustainable ICTD policy; and (c) build brand recognition of the added value of the Alliance among all relevant stakeholder groups; promote awareness of its mission, objectives and role in the follow-up to WSIS; and attract contribution and participation.

77.   Much effort went into the third prong in this first year. With the aim of building awareness of the GAID brand, an online portal and marketing materials were developed. The GAID website provides background information on GAID and its activities and events, as well as a growing database of ICTD resources to serve as a reference for practitioners and researchers. An online collaborative platform allows GAID networks to conduct their activities, share resources and interact virtually. WSIS-online, a powerful portal developed for the Geneva and Tunis phases of the WSIS, was donated to GAID and is being integrated into its website. Finally, a publication, *Foundations of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development*, compiles the Alliance's guiding documents and provides information on how interested actors can contribute to the attainment of its mission and objectives.

78.   The Intel-sponsored "UN Meets the Silicon Valley" event on 28 February 2007, garnered particularly impressive worldwide press coverage, especially among industry and developing country media but also mainstream global titles, such as the *Financial Times* and *Foreign Policy,* and was distributed widely through the Associated Press.

VI.   Future activities

79.   By end-May 2007, the GAID secretariat and its partners were actively preparing for a number of significant events and initiatives to take place in its second year and beyond. A large number of events are anticipated to be organized by FPIs, CoEs, Regional and Stakeholder Networks and other partners. Some of GAID's major scheduled[5] events appear below.

Date	Organizers	Location	Theme
4 June 2007	AIT Global and GAID	New York	19th Annual Information and Cyber Security Conference
5 July 2007	GAID and ECOSOC	Geneva	"ICTD: Post-WSIS Scenarios"
16 July 2007	GAID and ICT4Peace Foundation	Geneva	"ICT for Crisis Management"
19 July 2007	Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), UNCTAD,	Geneva	"Building a Knowledge Society for All: The role of Science, Technology and Innovation and the Importance of creating Trust to foster

	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), GAID, Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP)		Partnerships"
13 September 2007	UNITAR and GAID	New York	Preparatory meeting on Youth and ICT for Development
24-26 September 2007	GAID and ITU	Geneva	Global Forum on Youth and ICT for Development
29-30 October 2007	GAID, SDC, ITU, World Bank	Kigali, Rwanda	Access and Connectivity in Africa

VII. Assessment of progress

80.   In its first year, with the intent of laying the foundations for future substantive work, GAID aimed to (a) develop its networks and modalities of functioning; (b) define its areas of priority; (c) formulate its business plan; (d) build collaborative links; and (e) raise awareness of the Alliance. Its governing and advisory bodies are fully functioning, its areas of priority identified, its Business Plan approved, three Flagship Partnership Initiatives and two Flagship Advocacy Initiatives are underway, its regional and stakeholder networks as well as thematic communities of expertise are gathering momentum, and its secretariat is preparing for a full programme of activities and events for its second year.

81.   GAID has acquired strong brand recognition as an innovative and open United Nations initiative, bringing together all key stakeholders around a single networking platform in support of the United Nations development goals.

82.   GAID has succeeded in securing the partnership of many competent and committed organizations, among them the ITU, World Bank, SDC, GKP, IDRC and the Malaysian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation; and major United Nations agencies and entities, which are leading the networks and initiatives of the Global Alliance. In reaching out to the Silicon Valley's industry, investors and think-tanks and to Europe's private sector and civil society, GAID is bringing some new and influential actors into the ICTD arena and encouraging the private sector to leverage ICT to help attain the internationally agreed development goals while positively impacting their bottom lines.

83.   GAID is now positioned to be a key contributor to the achievement of the outcomes of the WSIS, especially by bringing multi-stakeholder input to ECOSOC and CSTD. It is also well placed to further the United Nations Development

Agenda, which includes the MDGs, and to make a meaningful contribution to harnessing the technology-driven WSIS process to support the broader United Nations development goals. It has already emerged as a spring-board and a major platform for the United Nations System, private sector and civil society partnerships in the strategic areas of education, health, entrepreneurship and governance, serving to advance common goals. A new level of interest and commitment to work towards bringing broadband connectivity into Africa, in particular, has been expressed by membership of the Alliance.

84.   The activities and progress of the Global Alliance will continue to be monitored by the secretariat and reported periodically to the Steering Committee and the Strategy Council. An external evaluation will be conducted in 2008, to provide a comprehensive assessment of the activities undertaken by GAID, in accordance with its areas of focus and the Business Plan and their value added. The results of this evaluation will provide the basis for determining the activities of the Global Alliance during the period 2009-2010. Subsequent evaluations, every two years, will be undertaken systematically to assess progress and impact and to ensure that the Alliance continues to add value to overall ICTD work.

ANNEX

Organizations with collaborative arrangements with GAID completed or in progress

As of 31 May 2007

1. ATHGO International
2. Azerbaijan Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
3. Capacity Development Fund
4. CDI International
5. Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization (CTO)
6. Development Gateway Foundation
7. Digital Alliance Foundation
8. Digital Opportunity Trust
9. Enterprise Incubator Foundation
10. Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce (GBDe) secretariat
11. Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP)
12. Google
13. Inter-American Development Bank
14. International Commission on Workforce Development
15. International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC)
16. International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
17. Islamic -World Academy of Sciences (IAS)
18. IT4ALL - Network of Local Authorities for the Information Society
19. Organisation internationale de la Francophonie
20. Panos South Asia
21. Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Development
22. Peace Corps (United States)
23. RiOS Institute
24. United Nations Foundation
25. United Nations Fund for International Partnerships
26. United Nations Institute for Training and Research
27. United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developing Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
28. Universal Education Foundation
29. USAID
30. Wireless Internet Institute (w2i)
31. World Federation of Scientists
32. World Summit Award (WSA)

Alliance partners also include, but are not limited to, relevant organizations with the UN System (ITU, UNDP, UNESCO, WIPO, UNCTAD, the World Bank, Regional Commissions and others), regional development banks, private sector organizations (GBDe, GIIC, ICC, WITSA), civil society, Internet community, media organizations including regional broadcasting unions, and others.

Notes

"Principles and elements of a Global Alliance for ICT and Development"
http://www.unicttaskforce.org/perl/documents.pl?id=1583

[2] The United Nations ICT Task Force, 2001-2005, was honoured by the United Nations Secretary-General in December 2006 with a UN21 Award for innovation, efficiency and excellence in the delivery of its programme and services.

[3] http://www.itu.int/wsis/c7/e-agriculture/docs/survey-analysis-2007.pdf

[4] http://www.ictparliament.org/ipait/

[5] Refer to GAID website (www.un-gaid.org) to confirm dates and venues.

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