



MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR ICT AND DEVELOPMENT

Intel Headquarters, Santa Clara, California, 27 February 2007

Informal Summary

The Third meeting of the Steering Committee of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID), the executive body of the Alliance, was held at Intel Headquarters on 27 February 2007. The meeting was chaired by Craig Barrett, Chairman of the Alliance and Chairman of the Board of Intel Corporation.

Present were: Titi Akinsanmi, Programme Manager, Global Teenager Project, South Africa; Philippe Dam representing Renate Bloem, President, Committee on NGOs; Walter Fust, Director-General, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; Jamaludin Jarjis, Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation, Malaysia; David Lewis representing John Bernander, Director General, Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, and Vice-President, European Broadcasting Union; Danilo Piaggese representing Luis Alberto Moreno, President of the Inter-American Development Bank; Guy Sebban, Secretary-General, International Chamber of Commerce; and Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union. Sarbuland Khan, Executive Coordinator of the Secretariat of the Alliance, participated *ex-officio*.

The participants addressed three items: (I) implementation of the Global Alliance business plan, (II) the 2007 and 2008 GAID Global Forums, and (III) funding of the Global Alliance.

I. Implementation of the Global Alliance business plan

Mr. Sarbuland Khan introduced the GAID progress report as a prelude to a discussion on the implementation of the business plan. He reported that the Alliance has accomplished its initial objectives, namely: developing and operationalizing an organizational structure with a number of networks and Communities of Expertise (CoEs), defining its areas of priority, developing its business plan, starting to create a sense of community by building collaborative links, and raising awareness and brand recognition. He indicated that the Secretariat has been the central mechanism for this, but that all Steering Committee and Strategy Council members have contributed to this success.

Mr. Khan also stressed that the Alliance is at a turning point. It needs to focus on action and results in order to position itself as a major platform for UN system, private sector and civil society partnership formation in several strategic areas, and to make a meaningful contribution to harnessing the technology-driven WSIS process to advance common development goals. Mr. Khan added that financing and outreach are major challenges for the Alliance. Sustained effort also needs to be put into securing new partnerships and collaborations, sending the clear message that GAID adds value to its participants and to global UN processes.

Mr. Touré expressed his commitment that ITU would contribute to GAID, since he sees the Alliance as an opportunity to contribute to the attainment of the development goals and an important platform for partnership. He also added that, if the Alliance is to succeed, it needs to be bold and have a high level of ambition. In his view, a bold “Marshall Plan” is needed for ICT-for-development in Africa.

Mr. Piaggese asked for clarifications on the process set up by the Alliance in the selection of Flagship Partnership Initiatives (FPIs) and CoEs and, on this matter, reported a concern among some of the participants of the Alliance. Mr. Piaggese urged the Alliance to develop a stronger, more continuous dialogue and to aim at real deliverables and enhanced accountability. Mr. Lewis voiced some concern on the lack of congruence between the FPIs presented in the Strategy Council meeting and the initial focus areas agreed in Kuala Lumpur and urged more coherence.

In response to the intervention by Mr. Piaggese, Mr. Khan explained that GAID initiatives were chosen based on a set of criteria that had been decided in consultation with GAID membership. Efforts would be made to make these criteria and the process of selection more widely known and transparent. Mr. Barrett reiterated the call to keep GAID’s work focused on a small number of topics and build on them; He also noted that in his view both telecentre.org initiative and better connectivity via broadband to Africa are consistent with the Kuala Lumpur focus areas, as telecentres are one important model to get educational, health care and government content and services delivered to citizens, typically based on efforts of a local entrepreneur. And, without connectivity, there are no means to deliver services and content. Mr. Barrett asked that the Secretariat ensure that all FPIs provide consistent, concise and clear information on the objectives, partners, timelines, deliverables and associated resources.

Dr. Touré supported Mr. Barrett’s observations and reiterated that GAID should keep the focus on two to three key projects such as the telecentre.org and broadband for Africa FPIs and the school access advocacy initiative. Within these, he further suggested, real partnerships should be created that can deliver results. He also cautioned the Alliance against independently conceiving projects instead of listening to the needs of countries and stressed the need for country ownership. GAID should also serve as a think-tank for the UN Secretary-General. Ms. Akinsami also underscored the importance of identifying concerns and perceptions on the ground and using them as a basis for action.

Amb. Fust wanted to see the Alliance as a body with strong convening power but not a “branding organization” that simply lends its name to others’ initiatives. He also said that GAID would differentiate itself if it were successful at mobilizing interest in ICT-for-development issues, assisting development banks and other institutions in showcasing initiatives and establishing a clear monitoring process in order to make a real difference on the ground for the people.

II. The 2007 and 2008 GAID Global Forums

Mr. Khan said that preparations are underway for the first GAID Global Forum and that, even though there was no decision on the location and time of the meeting, the Secretariat had already established a Partners’ Committee and finalized a concept paper on “Youth and ICTs as Agents of Change” in order to highlight issues to be addressed. He stated that in these initial preparations, the Secretariat had reached out broadly to stakeholders and youth organizations and attempted to reflect their views.

Mr. Khan said that the Secretariat was aiming at about 400-500 participants and had planned to hold it during the Information Week in Geneva from 17-25 May. [NOTE: Due to the shortage of preparatory time and in order to take advantage of synergies with another youth event, it was subsequently decided, at the request of the Chairman, to **postpone the Global Forum to September 2007.**] He added that the Forum would be a youth-driven and -organized event. Each youth organization should identify and sponsor its representatives to attend the meeting. He also hoped to include decision-makers responsible for formulating youth policies among the participants.

Dr. Touré offered the support of the ITU, provided that sufficient funding was pulled together for the event. Mr. Piaggese offered his help through the IDB Fund on Youth and ICT.

It was agreed that the GAID Global Forum in 2008 would be on the topic of connectivity and access instead of gender, as previously proposed by the Secretariat. Ms. Akinsanmi emphasized that the theme of connectivity and access would be a better and larger umbrella under which other cross-cutting issues, such as youth or gender, could be discussed. Amb. Fust suggested that the Alliance could also consider holding a regional meeting prior to the Global Forum on “Connectivity and Access in Africa,” likely during the second half of 2007.

III. Funding of the Global Alliance

Mr. Khan expressed gratitude to Finland, Switzerland and Intel Foundation for their generous contributions and support. He indicated that the Alliance had raised about half the funds necessary to finance its first year of activities and that an additional \$750,000 is urgently required to cover the expected costs of meetings and core expenses of the Secretariat. He thanked Malaysia for its contribution to the Secretariat with the

secondment of a staff member. Mr. Khan added that additional contributions have been pledged by Cisco, IDRC, Germany, Armenia, India, Azerbaijan, Inter-American Development Bank, STMicroelectronics Foundation and others. He appealed to the members of the Steering Committee to assist in closing the funding gap and to meet the resource level that the Steering Committee had agreed.

Mr. Piaggese announced that the Inter-American Development Bank will contribute, through the Division of Information and Communication Technology for Development, an initial amount of US\$148,000 for the establishment of the GAID Latin American Regional Network and related activities.

The Chairman said that, together with Mr. Khan, he would send out forceful requests to stakeholders within Strategy Council to request support for the Global Alliance through financial contributions. Amb. Fust highlighted the fact that the Alliance will have to establish a “graduation” of funding that takes into account real capacity of members to contribute. Mr. Khan requested that Amb. Fust speak with Mr. Wolfowitz to request a contribution. Other members of the Steering committee also reiterated that financial contributions may be difficult for some participants, e.g. NGOs from developing countries.

Decisions

A significant focus for the Global Alliance at this stage will be the topics of connectivity and access with special attention to Africa.

In order to ensure effectiveness, the Alliance will focus on a limited number of initiatives with a clear articulation of themes, partners and milestones.

Within the next two weeks, the Secretariat will solicit from all FPIs two-page overviews presenting consistent, concise and clear information on their objectives, partners, timelines, deliverables and associated resources.