

UNCTAD/SDTE/ECB/2005/1

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT
Geneva

INFORMATION ECONOMY
REPORT 2005

FOREWORD and ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



UNITED NATIONS
New York and Geneva, 2005

Foreword

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have the potential to profoundly change global trade, finance and production. By making businesses more competitive and economies more productive, and most of all by empowering people with knowledge, ICTs can support faster economic growth and thus strengthen the material basis for development. Our challenge is to ensure that this potential is used to generate real gains in the global struggle against poverty, disease and ignorance – and their offspring, fear, intolerance and war.

This *Information Economy Report 2005* is being published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to coincide with the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, at which the international community is expected to agree on further steps to realize the full potential of ICTs. The Report highlights the extent to which developing countries are striving to close the gap that separates the “information haves and have-nots”. It also describes the enormous challenges the world still faces in key areas such as increasing access to the Internet and strengthening the security of the online environment. Most important, it shows that when there is awareness, political will and stakeholder involvement in national “e-strategies”, progress in the use of ICTs for development is already an exciting reality.

New technologies and applications continue to emerge. Current technologies are maturing, and old ones are finding new uses. We must ensure that developing countries are not left further behind by all these dramatic changes, but can join in and benefit from them in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. This Report is meant to contribute to that effort, and it is in that spirit that I commend its information, analysis and recommendations to participants in the Summit and to a wide global audience.



Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations

Acknowledgments

The *Information Economy Report 2005* was prepared under the overall direction of Peter Fröhler, Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD's Division for Services Infrastructure for Development and Trade Efficiency (SITE). It was written by a team led by Geneviève Féraud, Chief of the Electronic Commerce Branch, and consisting of the following UNCTAD staff members: Cécile Barayre, Dimo Calovski, Scarlett Fondeur Gil, Angel González Sanz, Muriel Guigue, Rouben Indjikian, Carlos Moreno, Marta Pérez Cusó and Susan Teltscher.

Pilar Borque Fernández and Marie Kamara provided administrative support.

Diego Oyarzun designed the cover and formatted the charts.

The UNCTAD team acknowledges the contribution of Ian Walden, consultant. The team also wishes to thank the following individuals for the information, comments and feedback they provided regarding various aspects of the Report: Jean-François Baylocq, Nelly Berthault, Gunter Fischer, Henri Laurencin, Nayana Mahajan, Lamon Rutten, Joachim Bartels, François Bédard, Noah Elkin, Vanessa Gray, John Hutchison, Karin Kosina, Esperanza Magpantay, Margaret Miller, Eduardo Moreno Lopez, Jean-François Outreville and Mondher Sahli.

Research assistance was provided by Wendy Hannan, Diana Korka and Arianna Rossi during their internship with UNCTAD.