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Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on their efforts in 2010 to implement the outcome of the WSIS

Submission by

UNDESA

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U N I T E D N A T I O N S   **N A T I O N S U N I E S**

Report on the Implementation of the
World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)
by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
(for the period from 2005 to 2010)

I. Executive Summary of Activities

During the indicated reporting period, DESA, as the leading facilitator for Action Lines C1, C7eGov, and C11, and administrator of the IGF[1] and GAID[2] Secretariat Units, focused its efforts to ensure the comprehensive exchange of views, information and experiences, to promote policy dialogue and advocacy for the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes by a variety of United Nations bodies, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and partners through a number of modalities and initiatives listed below.

Activities of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

Besides organizing Five Facilitation Meetings of Lines C1, C7eGovernment and C11 of the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda (20 May), two Expert Group Meetings (EGM) on 'E-Government and Public Private Partnerships for Better Public Service Delivery and Millennium Development Goals Implementation' (2009) and 'E-Government and New Technologies: Towards better citizen engagement for development' (2010) was organized by DESA in Geneva, during the 2009 and 2010 WSIS Forums in cooperation with ITU. Such unique combination of the events provided a platform to create synergies among different stakeholders for more effective knowledge sharing and collaboration to ensure the WSIS and MDGs implementation at the international, regional and national levels.

With the aim of promoting policy dialogue and supporting the building of policy making capacities and technical skills of government officials and practitioners from developing countries in knowledge management for effective electronic and mobile government, in the past five years, DESA has organized over dozens of regional workshops in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America that provided a forum for countries to exchange ideas, learn form each other and form e-government networks among themselves. In addition, over 50 advisory and technical assistance missions have been initiated and taken place to support governments in implementing their respective e-strategies that dealt with e-content, citizen-engagement, online services, e-participation, infrastructure development, e-government policies and guidelines, thus bridging the digital divide and institutional frameworks in the following countries: Albania, Bahrain, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ethiopia, Ghana, Grenada, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, St. Kitts and Nevis, Tunisia, and United Arab Emirates. As a result of, developing and emerging economies gain. These advisory missions have empowered Member States to strengthen their respective strategies, policies, content development, citizen engagement, a better understanding of e-government, and use of social networking tools, while building their capacities at the national and regional level.

DESA has also strengthened its partnership with several international institutions to develop a coherent e-government support mechanism to countries in Latin America through partnerships with the Gateway Foundation, Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank. A network in Belgium,

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[1] Internet Governance Forum
[2] Global Alliance for ICT and Development

Republic of Korea with assistance of United Nations Project Office on Governance, and the United Kingdom to support developing and emerging economies to undertake study tours to improve their e-government capacity was developed. Bahrain, Lesotho and Tunisia have benefited from these study tours.

METER, a ready-to-use interactive web-based tool aiming to assist governments to monitor and identify areas for further development within the national e-government environment was developed by DESA in partnership with the Centre for Technology in Government (CTG), University at Albany-SUNY, and the Microsoft Corporation. Bahrain, Brunei, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Singapore have benefited from the METER workshops organized by the Department.

DESA also continued to strengthen the technical capacity of the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) Online Training Centre with a governance and public administration learning content management system encompassing and 10 interactive online capacity-building courses and 13 pdf-based learning materials on various topics in public administration and management under a multi-language environment. Since 2005, the UNPAN Online Training Centre delivered online courses for more than 8,200 practitioners and learners from developing and developed countries. During 2010, more than 2,500 people enrolled in the courses, which represents an increase of 7% over the number of participants in 2009.

In further support of Member States efforts to improve performance in public administration, development management and e/m - governance DESA has created the United Nations Public Administration Country Studies (UNPACS) to underpin the importance of public sector reform initiatives. The UNPACS aims to provide accessible e-information in the area of public sector institutional development, public sector human resource management, e-government, citizen engagement and knowledge management, the use of ICT for public administration effectiveness and transparency, innovative practices for public sector development, and an Internet-based shared knowledge platform for information sharing and dissemination.

During the reporting period, DESA has produced three Global E-Government Surveys assessing the e-government readiness of the Member States according to a quantitative composite index of e-readiness based on a website assessment, telecommunication infrastructure, and human resource endowment.

The 2005 Survey called 'Global E-Government Readiness Report 2005: From E-Government to E-Inclusion' underlines that the majority of the developing country populations face a grave challenge from the new technological revolution. Whereas some of the developing countries which have in place the right mix of reforms, institutions and programmes will no doubt benefit from the ICTs, most are likely to be mired in a cycle if low income, poverty and a growing disparity in access to modern technology. Expanding the concept of real access into e-inclusion, the Survey presents the Socially Inclusive Governance Framework, which is a multi-prolonged approach to ICT-led real access, with a special focus on the need to promote access and inclusion to the disadvantaged groups in the society.

The United Nations E-Government Survey 2008: From E-Government to Connected Governance posits that ICTs can help reinvent government in such a way that the existing institutional arrangements can be restructured and new innovative arrangements can flourish, paving the way for a transformed government. Whilst the technology is increasingly resilient and 'fit for purpose', the evidence indicates that success or failure is less a technological issue and more a people issue – in particular, the ability to change public service cultures and motivate public sector workers to new ways of working, address trade union concerns, and provide adequately skilled and competent management and leadership.

The United Nations E-Government Survey 2010: Leveraging e-government at a time of financial and economic crisis presents a systematic assessment of the use and potential of information and communication technology to transform the public sector by enhancing transparency, efficiency, access to public services and citizen participation in all countries and at all levels of development. The Survey also argues that e-government technology, while no substitute for good policy, may provide regulators with a much-needed means of grappling with the speed and complexity of financial markets. Similarly, e-government can add agility to public service delivery and help governments respond to an expanded set of demands even as revenues fall short and deficits soar.

As a recent member of the Partnership Task group on E-government (TGEG) DESA collaborated with the ITU, UIS and WHO on a quantitative review of the WSIS goals and targets, and identification measurable indicators that could be applied by national and international stakeholders to further monitor the targets.

In February 2010, DESA coordinated the multi stakeholder meeting of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development comprising World Bank, International Telecommunication Union, UNCTAD, UNESCO and the Economic Commission for Latin America & the Caribbean (ECLAC). The discussion focused on how to take forward the development of the analytical framework on measurement of ICT statistics, including e-government indicators.

DESA remained a key player in the Partnership for Measurement of ICT for Development. As Member of the task Group on E-government Indicators, DESA along with other stakeholders, continued to work towards the preparation of the Report on E-government Indicators with the objective of identifying a set of measurable indicators that could be applied by national and international stakeholders. The Report focuses on developing a set of global indicators together with their scope, definition, applicability, data collection, and to provide broader context of e-government measurement.

To support the efforts of the Broadband Commission, launched in June 2010, DESA took an active role in the development of the framework of the Broadband Commission, especially its relation to e-government. DESA prepared a comprehensive report entitled 'Rethinking e-government with broadband' as part of DESA input into the Secretary General's Report on Broadband Commission.

Activities of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament

Since 2005, the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament has enhanced inter-parliamentary cooperation and facilitated the establishment of partnerships and collaboration among parliaments, international agencies and donors in support of parliamentary institutions in the ICT domain. It has enabled the creation of a global community of parliamentary ICT professionals that is able to operate virtually or face-to-face. It has in particular encouraged parliaments from the developing world to share their experiences with their peers, while also providing a forum for the most technologically advanced parliaments to be in contact and to work together.

The Centre has drawn the attention of parliaments and the international community to the crucial linkage between technology, parliament and democracy. Political leaders, senior parliamentary staff and experts have shared their views on technology through four World e-Parliament Conferences (Geneva in 2007, European Parliament in 2008, U.S. House of Representatives in 2009, and South African Parliament and Pan African Parliament in 2010), and on the ways parliaments can promote Information Society policies through four Parliamentary Forums (Chamber of Deputies of Italy, Rome, 2007; Palais des Nations, Geneva, 2008, ITU, Geneva, 2009 and ITU, Geneva, 2010). These high-level events have become a venue where political goals, policy issues, management challenges, and technical opportunities can be discussed at the global level among peers. More than 100 parliamentary delegations participated in

the World e-Parliament Conference in 2008, 115 parliamentary delegations in 2009, and 95 parliamentary delegations in 2010. Legislators from over 40 countries gathered in Geneva to discuss the development of the information society at the Parliamentary Forum in 2010.

The Centre has being undertaken deep and comprehensive research and analytical activities. The World e-Parliament Reports 2008 and 2010, prepared by the Centre and released by the United Nations and the IPU, have highlighted the significant gap between the parliaments in different regions and different income levels. The reports are based on the results of a worldwide Survey of ICT in Parliament conducted in 2007 and 2009 to which, respectively, 105 and 134 national assemblies responded.

The Centre have also come new or updated recommendations and guidelines for the use of technology to address specific challenges that confront today's parliaments. The guidelines were developed though the creation of Working Groups composed of experts from different parliaments and institutions around the world who worked as virtual teams. The value of the guidelines was acknowledged by the community of parliaments and international organizations. The Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites prepared in 2009 were used by the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) to formulate specific recommendations to the website designers, developers and managers of parliaments in Europe. Three additional Working Groups are currently developing handbooks on ICT Strategic Planning in Parliament, ICT-based Parliamentary Libraries, and Capturing and Reporting Parliamentary Proceedings.

The Centre leveraged on partnerships at the national, regional, and international levels to train parliamentary staff of developing nations. Ten workshops have been organized in collaboration with partners such as the European Parliament, the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the ITU, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in South-East Europe. A regional parliamentary knowledge network has been established in Africa and some first steps have been taken towards the creation of a similar network in Latin America.

The Centre initiated technical assistance to parliaments through advisory missions in cooperation with various partners including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). The Centre conducted the advisory missions to seven parliaments in developing nations and emerging democracies to asses their state of ICT and make recommendations on its future development. In South East Europe the Centre has built on the work of the Regional Secretariat for Parliamentary Cooperation in South-East Europe, while in Latin America it has collaborated with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to raise awareness on ICT in parliament. In Africa, the Centre has coordinated its work with the activities of the programme Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan (www.parliaments.info), funded by the Italian Development Cooperation.

Activities of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID)

Since its launch in 2006, the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) has emerged as a global platform for policy dialogue and partnership building and for mainstreaming ICT into the broader UN Development Agenda.

GAID Flagship Partnership Initiatives, Communities of Expertise and Regional Networks GAID has launched *Flagship Partnership Initiatives* (FPIs) to spur visible actions toward attaining the Alliance's objectives including *Communities of Expertise*, web-based networks that bring together motivated and capable actors to address ICTD problems in a results-oriented manner and to identify and disseminate good practice. GAID has also established Regional Networks for Countries with economies in transition, Asia Pacific, Europe, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Arab States to assure the open, inclusive, participatory and truly global character of the Global Alliance.

Together with the Global Compact and other UN entities, it co-organized on 24 September 2008 at UN Headquarters, High Level Session on the MDGs, the first ever "*United Nations Private Sector Forum*", which provided a platform for securing specific pledges of support from technology and business leaders in developing a long-term response to the global food crisis and endemic poverty.

At the Conference on Financing for Development in November 2008 in Doha, Qatar, GAID was responsible for drawing attention to the exciting potential of new web-based, distributed, and viral modes of mobilizing financing for development, by convening a "*High-Level Working Session on Innovative Financing for Digital Development*".

On 5-6 December 2010, the Global Alliance held its 5th annual Global Forum *"Information and Communication Technologies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Moving from Advocacy to Action"* at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu-Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Past forums were held in Geneva (2007), Kuala Lumpur (2008) and Monterrey (2009).

Throughout 2010 the Alliance focused on the promotion of its major initiative, the MDG eNabler, a free "one-stop shop" for ICT-based tools and solutions to address specific development issues and advance MDG progress. This multi-stakeholder initiative was launched at the regional and international level to invite all the relevant partners from private sector, civil society, international organization and academia to engage in the design and development of its architecture.

The virtual tool was *presented at the WSIS Forum held on 12-13 May 2010 in Geneva and at the High-level Segment at the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development held on 18 May 2010 in Geneva.* GAID convened *Preparatory and High-level Meetings on the MDG eNabler*, held respectively on 1-2 and 21 September 2010, which reviewed the progress on the initiative. At both events the MDG eNabler received overwhelming support from 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 2009-2010, a major effort was initiated to drive the growth of the Global Alliance by enhancing its online presence. The GAID website serves now as a major tool for network development along with the GAID online community on the Ning platform. The community has been highly successful in generating lively moderated discussions around key priority issues related to ICT for MDGs. It has grown significantly to over 1900 active members and has now become one of the largest online based communities on ICT4D. GAID also introduced the use of new social media channels as part of its new community outreach strategy.

GAID, together with relevant partners, has contributed significantly to mainstreaming ICT into the United Nations development agenda and has helped raise awareness by producing numerous publications on critical and emerging issues in ICT for Development.

Activities of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and enhanced cooperation on international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet.

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) ended the first five years of its original mandate with its annual meeting held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 14-17 September 2010. The previous meetings were held in Athens, Greece; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Hyderabad, India; and Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

The overall theme of the Vilnius meeting was 'Developing The Future Together and

1451 participants attended the event. The remote participation greatly aided in providing the opportunity for 1300 people in 32 remote hubs, from 107 countries to participate in the discussions. 48.2% of all stakeholders participating in Vilnius either physically or remotely were from developing countries. The meeting was generally praised for further improvements made in the IGF format such as stronger linkages between workshops and main sessions, a better involvement of children and young people, a stronger participation of parliamentarians, and an improved integration of the national and regional initiatives.

There continued to be differences of views on the very nature of the IGF. While some held the view that the IGF should be more results oriented, others were pleased with the IGF as it is, that is as a platform for open discussions, free from the pressure of negotiations. The multistakeholder model was seen as a useful vehicle in the advancement of the IGF process. This model allowed for further capacity building allowing dialogue and sharing of information and good practices proving the IGF's viability.

The spread of national and regional IGF initiatives was found by many to be the most important legacy of the first five years of the IGF in Europe, East and West Afrca, Latin America, the Caribbean, and, in 2010 for the first time in Hong Kong for the Asia-Pacific Region and in the Russian Federation. In addition, other national IGF type meetings were held in Eastern and Western Europe, in East Africa and the US. The holding of regional and national IGF type meetings has contributed to promoting the open and inclusive multistakeholder approach as a new form of a participatory democratic process of decision shaping and decision making.

Enhanced cooperation

The paragraph 35 of the Tunis Agenda for Information Society calls for enhanced cooperation on Internet-related international public policy issues among governments and other stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, the Internet technical community and intergovernmental organizations, in their respective areas of competence and mandate. DESA has initiated open and inclusive consultations for all Member States and all other stakeholders with a view to assisting the process towards enhanced cooperation on international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet consultations. A meeting to discuss the consultative process will take place in December 2010 and its outcome will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration at its sixty-sixth session in 2011. Member States, in their informal consultations of the GA Second Committee on ICT for development, have welcomed the launching of the open consultations by DESA.

II. Lessons learned, obstacles and difficulties encountered and initiatives and important measures needed for future implementation of the Summit outcomes

E-government, as a means of realizing the vision of a global information society, has become a powerful tool of development and essential to the achievement of the internationally agreed development agenda including the Millennium Development Goals. Countries that have embraced e-government have experienced its transformative power – in revitalizing public administration, overhauling public management, fostering inclusive leadership and moving civil service towards higher efficiency, transparency and accountability. Countries that have not tend to remain mired in the typical institutional pathologies of supply-driven services and procedures, remoteness between government and citizen, and opaque decision-making processes.

Policy makers in the e-government arena have over recent years been very much interested in global trends in e-government. Global trends allow policy makers to comparatively assess their country's standing, particularly vis-à-vis other countries in the region. The watchword of e-government is 'citizen-centric practice' and for a country to be assessed favourably in relation to its peers there needs to be solid evidence of a citizen-centric approach to e-government development. This means, among other things,

implementation of strategies that are sensitive to technological progress. The explosive growth of broadband access in developed regions and mobile cellular subscriptions in developing countries are trends that governments cannot easily ignore.

A notable progression of the last few years is seen in the adoption of national e-government strategies and multi-year action plans. From the most to the least developed, countries can be seen responding to expectations that governments both participate in and enable the information society by communicating and interacting more effectively with increasingly technology-savvy citizens. However, there is a relatively new emphasis that goes beyond the internal workings of e-government, where processes and technologies can directly engage the citizen with greater information and improve transparency, accountability and participation. Research shows a dramatic increase in mobile telephony around the world, which includes developing nations. The devices themselves are becoming smarter and feature-rich with major advances coming to market each year. Social media platforms, originally designed for personal use, are now being embraced by national and local governments across the globe. Popular social network sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter now contain the tools for citizen engagement features and opportunities.

On the issue of how governments engage citizens in their decision-making process through ICTs, few have sponsored discussion forums or blogs, or posted information to social networking sites although many governments have included polls and feedback forms on their websites. This is especially true for the least developed countries. Governments may need to be more creative about the ways in which they interact with the public, for example by creating integrated 'one-stop-shop' portals or actively soliciting views that can either be used in the design of public services or in shaping public policy. Here, the governments of Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States have been leading the charge.

There is both a need and an opportunity to share best practices and explore ways governments and citizens can be better connected for efficient public administration. Further, governments will be able to take better advantage of new applications as well as study what is involved by way of training, capacity building, knowledge management and resource planning.

Consider the case of Ethiopia. A landlocked country with limited access to international telecommunications lines, low adult literacy levels, and a resource-poor public sector, on the surface it seems ill-equipped to profit from the information revolution. Yet in 2005, the Government of Ethiopia adopted a national information and communication technology policy and, in 2006, a five-year action plan to help diversify the country's economy, promote public sector reform and improve opportunities in education, health, small business development, and agricultural modernization. Nearly 600 local administrations have since been connected to regional and federal offices, 450 secondary schools are tied to a national education network, while some 16,000 villages have obtained access to broadband services.

The need for continued research and work in the area of the evolving e-government initiatives and now citizen engagement applications – not as a luxury but as a necessity in trying to earn and restore public trust in government.

Even in small, least developed countries with limited economies of scale, the mobile revolution and growth of high-speed broadband and wireless access have begun to have a measurable economic impact, reinforced by expansion of e-government capacity in the public sector. Rwanda is a case in point. The country has reaped the benefits of systematic application of ICT in upgrading its overall economic performance, Cabinet members use the Internet to interact with the President, and government processes have become more efficient and transparent. Similarly, the introduction of electronic identification cards in Uganda has helped the poor to open bank accounts, have access to credit and government services.

There was a growing recognition that broadband can enable e-government to utilize effective inter-organizational linkages and consolidation of government systems. This emerging e-government paradigm, allied to the twin objectives of efficacy in government functioning and achieving improvements in service delivery, was bringing about new perceptions of the inter linkages between broadband, government and governance. Since one of the challenges in building effective e-government was how to employ broadband and other networking technologies to ensure effectiveness and transparency in public sector governance, by promoting broadband, e-government initiatives could further reinforce accountability, strengthen community oversight of resource allocation, reduce corruption, and increase the competitiveness of the procurement processes. In this context the development of the monitoring framework of   WSIS mandated e-government indicators including a focus on identifying a set of measurable indicators that could be applied by national and international stakeholders to monitor progress in achieving the WSIS targets is needed to be further explored and developed in collaboration of all stakeholders.

Even with technological progress, human capital remains a major shortcoming in both middle- and low-income countries. Few civil services are able to compete with private sector salaries with the inevitable result that top information technology personnel in developing countries tend to gravitate towards commercial firms. Even in cases where governments are able to recruit highly skilled information technology workers, these young men and women tend to stay only long enough to acquire enough experience to make them marketable in the private sector then quickly leave their government jobs for more lucrative employment. Similar capacity gaps exist at the management level. Developing country governments often find themselves in the position of having to hire expatriate management consultants and other information technology professionals to develop domestic e-government services.

Despite the significant results achieved so far in the area of ICT and Parliament there are still challenges.   Few Parliaments are in the forefront of establishing national ICT policies, as well as national consultative mechanisms, which can benefit their own use of technology and help narrow the digital divide. Most legislators still underestimate their pivotal role in the development of an equitable, people-centred Information Society and are not actively engaged at the national and international level, through the WSIS process, to represent their citizens' needs and views. Without the active involvement of parliaments on these issues, it will be difficult to establish national and international policies that will encourage the growth and benefits of the modern information society and narrow the digital divide and the democratic deficit.
Moreover, ICT utilization in legislatures poses significant problems for most parliaments. The implementation of technology by most parliaments is uneven, while parliaments in developing countries face considerable challenges both in terms of resources (financial and human) and knowledge. Results from the 2009 survey show that although there has been some progress, parliaments in most developing countries are still far behind.

On the other hand, by developing a good understanding and practices on the benefits of information and communication technology, parliaments will be able to better respond to the WSIS principles and become more active in providing a legislative environment conducive to the dissemination, development and secure use of the ICTs, such as in the field of e-government, e-learning, e-commerce, etc. Legislative and regulatory reform is in fact one of the critical issues that has often been overlooked in countries promoting the use of ICTs and the development of a national ICT sector, particularly in the areas of telecommunication markets and services, investments, digital exchanges and transactions, privacy and security issues.

It is generally felt that the IGF has found its place in the constellation of international institutions dealing with Internet related public policy issues. There was some scepticism to begin with, but now there is a broad recognition that there is a complementarity of functions between the IGF and international organizations and institutions dealing with Internet related policy issues. While at first sight there might

be some apparent overlap in terms of substance, there is no such overlap in terms of functions, as the IGF is not a decision-making body. It is more like an incubator for ideas and policy initiatives that will be brought to maturity elsewhere. In this way the IGF prepares and helps shape decisions that are taken by other institutions.

This division of labour has been widely recognized and is seen as beneficial by Intergovernmental Organizations and by Internet institutions alike. In addition, the approach taken within the IGF is always to look at an issue from multiple angles and by all stakeholder groups, whereas most of the existing institutions have a more narrow focus and examine issues through the lens of one specialized group of experts.

There was no ready template to use when convening the first IGF meeting as a platform for multistakeholder policy dialogue. With hindsight, this absence of established procedures proved beneficial, as it allowed the IGF to experiment and develop a new format of an open and inclusive international meeting that allowed all interested stakeholders to participate as equals and promote dialogue, foster partnerships, exchange information and experience and share good practices and lessons learned.

Despite significant progress, a lot more needs to be done. The Global Alliance has yet to make full use of the knowledge and resources embodied in its vast network. Its stakeholders need to be more fully engaged in concrete actions. Both developing countries and the donor community could take greater advantage of this platform, to promote both policy reform and public-private- people partnerships for investment in ICTD.

In the coming year, GAID is poised to build on and leverage the networks that have been created, to focus on action and result-oriented policy issues and partnership-building in the ICTD domain with a special focus on helping achieve the MDGs through the use of ICT, particularly in Africa, the Least Developed, Land-locked and Small Island Developing Countries which are the furthest behind, and the disadvantaged and marginalized groups and regions.