

Outcome of GAID Kuala Lumpur Inaugural Meeting

Statement by co-organizers

The Inaugural meeting of the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Development took place on 19-20 June in Kuala Lumpur. The meeting was generously hosted by the Government of Malaysia and organized by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of Malaysia and the secretariat of the Global Alliance. More than 700 participants from all corners of the world, representing governments, businesses, international organizations, civil society organizations, gender and youth groups, media, the Internet, technical and academic communities came together to launch the new initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General, aimed at harnessing the potential of the information revolution to advance development and promote the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Inspired by the vision presented to the meeting in addresses by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General and the first Chairman of the Alliance, Dr. Craig Barrett, the participants affirmed their commitment to and support of the Alliance. They engaged in a rich two-day dialogue, debate and exchange of views on the mission, substantive focus and modalities of work of the Alliance. "We are gathered today for a common course", said Prime Minister Badawi, "motivated by a vision of a truly united global community brought together through the power of ICT. A vision where every nation, every society and every individual is a participant in development that is people-centered, people-oriented and people-driven".

"The Alliance", said Mr. Malloch Brown, "provides the platform and network of international experiences on which partnerships can be based". Information technology never developed in a vacuum. It should be part of a strategy involving people and institutions, and should be accompanied by investment, human capital, entrepreneurship and infrastructure. Dr. Barrett stressed that while information technology has become a powerful force in our lives, accelerating the ability to access, process and exchange information, technology is necessary but not sufficient.

All the participants agreed that the time has come to translate declarations and commitments made at the WSIS into action that would indeed make a tangible and sustained difference in the lives of billions of people who currently do not share in the benefits of the information revolution. The irony of the present situation is that those who are currently with the least access to technology are precisely the ones who would benefit the most if wonders of modern information and communication technologies become indeed accessible and relevant to all of humanity. The Alliance will strive to overcome the social and digital divides by promoting policies and partnerships that can help create an "arc of digital opportunity".

Effective integration of ICT into development strategies and programmes can help achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, within the agreed timeline – by 2015. For this to happen, however, ICT must not remain a privilege for the rich, but must become a potent tool for empowering the poor. We must pursue approaches that by anchor our policies on the problems and needs of the poor and help devise appropriate technological solutions. We must think big while remaining solidly rooted in the real needs of real people, communities and countries.

In the area of ICT, the best minds of the world are busy solving the problems of the rich. The Alliance will help put the problems and needs of the majority of humanity onto the “radar screens” of thinkers, business executives and government decision-makers. To this end, the Alliance will inspire and inform, advocate and catalyze, initiate and support ICT-for-Development activities. The Alliance will foster multi-stakeholder partnerships, help strengthen collaboration among existing initiatives and programmes, and will help scale up and replicate best practices. To be effective in its work, the Alliance must focus and produce results. It must promote end-to-end solutions and develop programmes for early harvest through multi-stakeholder cooperation – governments, the private sector including large corporations, entrepreneurs, development and financial institutions.

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The participants in the GAID KL Inaugural Meeting have recognized the following:

- i. The multi-stakeholder approach should be a key principle of GAID and that of all ICT4D programs;
- ii. The potential of ICT as a transformative development tool was recognized, but the efforts should now be challenged to support effective and rapid implementation;
- iii. That ICT4D must be placed within a comprehensive development strategy and programmes focused on social development and economic growth using ICT with a systematic transformation process of the socio-economic structure towards the knowledge society and economy;
- iv. ICT4D programmes should be localized and community-driven and not technology-driven;
- v. We need to realign and recalibrate existing policies and strategies for development with a dimension on ICT as a strategic enabler for all development programs nationally and globally;
- vi. The focus should be on key priorities areas that are considered most impactful:
 - Education;

- Health;
 - Governance; and
 - Enterprenuership
- vii. We need to “Think Big” and thus address the issue of sustainability, scalability and replicability upfront;
 - viii. We recognize the different needs and capacities of the target communities in formulating and implementation of ICT4D;
 - ix. A total solutions orientation should be adopted to produce sustained results and impact;
 - x. Capacity building for ICT as an enabler for development should be addressed in a holistic manner;
 - xi. Content development and applications should be addressed as strategic challenges driven by grass-root and community based approaches;
 - xii. To measure, monitor, recognize and recommend initiatives among stakeholders participating in GAID towards achieving MDGs;
 - xiii. Large private sector companies, small and medium scale enterprises and entrepreneurs should be actively engaged in ICT4D policies & programs;
 - xiv. Major development banks and donor agencies should be encouraged take an active role in the Alliance;
 - xv. The pivotal role of youth both as providers and targets for ICT4D initiatives, and the need for gender mainstreaming.

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The following are some of the initiatives proposed at GAID KL Inaugural Meeting:

- i. To consider establishing a Cyber Development Corps (CyDevCorps) under the umbrella of the UN, based on the multi-stakeholder approach and with the south-south collaborative dimension;
- ii. To consider promoting the establishment of resource centers to promote programmes to build human capital through multilateral and multi-sectoral cooperation and to facilitate sharing of best practice, information exchange and discourse for GAID;
- iii. To consider setting up thematic and regional networks and working groups with a view to enhancing outreach and promoting partnership for action.

As a next step, the Steering Committee will consider inputs from the Kuala Lumpur meeting and establish a business plan for the Alliance.

June 20, 2006
Kuala Lumpur