

## MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION, BBC WORLD GLOBAL TV DEBATE AND A STATE-OF-THE-ART REVIEW ON “MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE MDGS”



### **Summary:**

*A televised debate on the emerging agenda for the second World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS II) was staged on 30 September 2005 at the International Telecommunication Union Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. An invited audience of 30 information and communications technology (ICT) movers and shakers fired questions at a distinguished panel of global experts. Questions were also received from the global community via the Internet.*

*The debate was broadcast on BBC World TV on 22-23 October 2005 in advance of WSIS II (to an estimated 275 million viewers) and on Eurovision on 14 November 2005. By request of national broadcasters, it has also been redistributed across the Asia-Pacific region.*

*The entire global communication and knowledge sharing initiative was funded and coordinated by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); UNDP Asia Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP), and Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP). This initiative provided the conceptual basis for the TV Debate that was organized by Dev.tv, a non-profit association founded by media professionals based in Geneva.*

## 1.0 THE PROJECT

### 1.1 Project Title

*Multi-Stakeholder Discussion, BBC World TV Debate and a State-of-the-Art-Review on Meeting the Challenges of the MDGs*

### 1.2 Context

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was held in two phases. The first phase of WSIS took place in Geneva hosted by the Government of Switzerland from 10 to 12 December 2003. At the Geneva Phase of WSIS nearly 50 Heads of state/government and Vice-Presidents, 82 Ministers, and 26 Vice-Ministers and Heads of delegation from 175 countries as well as high-level representatives from international organizations, private sector, and civil society provided political support to the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. The second phase took place in Tunis hosted by the Government of Tunisia, from 16 to 18 November 2005. 46 Heads of State and Government, Crown Princes and Vice-Presidents and 197 Ministers/Vice Ministers and Deputy Ministers attended the Tunis summit.

As a lead up to WSIS Tunis, UNDP Asia Pacific Development Information Programme (UNDP-APDIP) in collaboration with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) developed a global ICT4D Communications and Knowledge Sharing Initiative with the key objective of raising issues on ICT4D and the ongoing inequalities of ICT access and application between rich and poor countries, as well as the role of ICTs in poverty alleviation and achieving the MDGS.

This Communications Initiative also specifically took note of SDC's preparatory work to take stock of ICT4D issues and challenges. These include *Global ICT for Upscaling Poverty Reduction Workshop: Geneva* (September 2005); *LAC Regional Event: Bolivia* (August 2005), Geneva Workshop (Sept. 2005<sup>1</sup>); *BCO PRSP Event: Zambia* (July 2005); and also the side event by SDC, GKP and MS Swaminathan Research Foundation at *WSIS PrepComm II: Geneva* (February 2005); and the *Expert Group Meeting: Chennai* (November 2004) organized by MSSRF/SDC in cooperation with GKP and UNDP. It was noted that each of these SDC sub-regional initiatives took stock of the situation on the ground and presented a unique platform for the various stakeholders to raise their unique and respective challenges in utilizing ICT for poverty alleviation. The above-noted SDC sub-regional meetings also presented an excellent starting point from which the concerted and coherent communications strategy was developed.

In addition, the communication initiative took note of the work and lessons learnt emanating from SDC and GKP's publication entitled '*ICT4D – Connecting People for a Better World: Lessons, Innovations and Perspectives of Information and Communication Technologies in Development*, and also SDC/PANOS' '*Information and Communication Technologies and Large-scale Poverty Reduction: lessons from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean*'. This initiative also took into consideration the recommendations as outlined by the SDC initiated '*Chennai Statement on Up-scaling Pro-Poor ICT Policies and Practices*'.

### 1.3 Project Summary

Building upon the success and demand generated by UNDP-APDIP's *Communicating for Change's* Live Debate from WSIS Geneva 2003, UNDP-APDIP in collaboration with SDC and GKP undertook to develop a similar broad-based strategy of mobilizing the capacity of global media networks and supplementary media channels, to increase the awareness on the role of ICTs in Development and more specifically on the positive contribution of ICTs in helping nations achieve the Millennium Development Goal.

### 1.4 Project Duration

- The period of pre-production, planning, recording and broadcast via BBC World was six months (June - November 2005).
- The period of 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of dissemination to regional broadcasters and civil society was also six months (December 2005 – May 2006).

1 Ref. [www.panos.org.uk/PDF/reports/ICT\\_poverty.pdf](http://www.panos.org.uk/PDF/reports/ICT_poverty.pdf) SDC/Panos (2005): Information and Communication Technologies and large-scale poverty reduction. Lessons from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean

## 2.0 OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

This joint UNDP-APDIP, SDC and GKP collaboration aimed at recording a high level debate at an international ICT for Development event and disseminating the content for global broadcast before WSIS Tunis, and redistributing the content across the Asia-Pacific region. The first technical meeting took place on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2005 at ITU headquarters with ITU staff and the technical service providers. It was followed by 4 other meetings in August and September 2005.

### **2.1 State-of-the-Art Review on Meeting the Challenges of the MDGs**

UNDP-APDIP and SDC specially organized a high level panel discussion in Geneva on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005. The date was selected to coincide with the presence of the international community attending the third meeting of the WSIS Preparatory Committee (PrepCom-3 of the Tunis phase). The composition of the meeting was a high level panel and studio audience of globally renowned ICT4D practitioners.

In ensuring adequate research towards the above mentioned meeting, APDIP commissioned a separate exercise on analysis of select reports since 2002 that highlight the use of ICT for poverty reduction. It looks at the conditions required for making ICTs effective anti-poverty tools and notes the gaps in current research and reporting. The study entitled "ICT for Poverty Reduction: Necessary but Insufficient - A State-of-the-Art Review" is available at <http://www.apdip.net/resources/ict-poverty-reduction/21paperreview.pdf>

A policy briefing note summarizing the above noted review is available at: <http://www.apdip.net/apdipenote/6.pdf>

#### **2.1.1 Panelist and Studio Audience**

The debate took place at the ITU office in Geneva in front of an invited audience of 30 individuals representing government delegates, private sector, international development agencies and civil society representatives.

Seven high level panelists from across the globe were selected for the debate. They were:

- Mr Walter Fust, SDC Director-General and Chair, GKP Executive Committee
- Mrs Namrata Bali, General Secretary, Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)
- Dr. Gillian Marcelle, Principal Consultant, Technology for Development (TfDev)
- Mr Louis Dominique Ouédraogo, UN Joint Inspection Unit
- Mr Martin Sandelin, Nokia, Senior Vice President Corporate Marketing
- Mr Rory Stear, Chief Executive, Freeplay Group
- Mr Kenn Cukier, Technology Columnist, The Economist.

To ensure greater interaction between the high level panel and the audience, questions were taken from the studio audience and directed to the panelist. The composition of the panelist and audience was a process managed over a span of 4 months. This extensive consultative process by UNDP-APDIP and SDC was undertaken to ensure an equitable geographical, gender and sectoral balance and input. Broadcast personality Anita McNaught, who moderated the debate, helped the participants and panelists to raise many of the right questions – even if all the answers were not immediately found within the make-shift studio at the headquarters of ITU where the debate was recorded.

#### **2.1.2 Content**

The Debate was designed by UNDP-APDIP and SDC to ensure that the principal WSIS/ MDG issues are covered and particular attention paid to the issues emerging from the WSIS Round-tables; UNDP-APDIP and SDC related events and state-of-the-art research, and other related side events. The debate critically discussed the ways in which ICT-driven projects are addressing sustainable/human development and overcoming the "digital divide", and specifically on how ICTs could help address the issue of poverty alleviation and the MDGs. Specifically, topics covered included: bridging the knowledge gap; why investment in ICTs are so low on the international agenda; contribution of the private sector vis a vis government; ICTs as a tool for education; neglect of the traditional communications technologies, mainly radio; lack of energy as a main barrier to the spread of ICTs; ICTs for human rights and free expression; and outlook for what Phase 2 of WSIS will achieve. To strengthen the appeal to the viewers, clips of specially-shot relevant footage was aired at strategic points in the Debate.

## **2.2 Context Setter and Localized Stories**

Three specially recorded short video clips were shown to the panelist and global television audience during the panel debate. The videos highlighted several key issues identified and derived from UNDP-APDIP and SDC's sub regional thematic meetings and state-of-the-art research. This approach enabled a more focused panel debate. Footage emanated from on-location recordings in Bolivia, India, and Rwanda and an exclusive interview with Global IT entrepreneur and Infosys Chairman and Founder, Mr Narayanan Murthy.

The three featured video clips highlighted three separate issues related to ICTs, namely poverty alleviation; indigenous communities and access to information via radios:

- ICT and Poverty Alleviation with an exclusive interview with Professor MS Swaminathan, Founder of MS Swaminathan Research Foundation Founder;
- ICT and Indigenous communities in Bolivia;
- Access to information via community radio in Rwanda.

## **2.3 Global Audience Input**

Apart from the studio audience questions, the TV Moderator (Anita McNaught) also posed questions received from the audience on the World Wide Web. A month before the debate took place; APDIP widely circulated a request for questions from the global audience online. The public was encouraged to send their questions to moderator. This process enabled a conduit for the input and participation of concerned individuals and organizations that might not be able to be present at the scheduled WSIS Prep Com meetings and, therefore, the Panel discussion.

For further details, please see:

- Pre-Debate Announcement: <http://www.apdip.net/news/ictpovertydebate> and
- Press Release: <http://www.tveap.org/news/0509ict.htm>

## **3.0 TELEVISION BROADCAST AND DISSEMINATION STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Broadcast and Dissemination Strategy**

A four-tiered strategy was implemented:

- via direct to home broadcast on BBC World;
- via cable and terrestrial relay of BBC World;
- via regional broadcasters, e.g. European Broadcasting Union and Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union;
- via distribution of DVDs to civil society organizations and academic institutions.
- via the Internet.

#### **3.1.1 Global Broadcast: BBC World**

The above mentioned panel discussion and the three short video clips resulted into a specially packaged programme entitled *Digital Dividend*. The programme was broadcast on BBC World Television on 22 and 23 October 2005 in advance of Phase II of WSIS, which took place in Tunis, Tunisia, on 16-18 November 2005. The initial broadcast was on *BBC World* to an estimated 275 million households. Transmission times on BBC World Television were:

Saturday : 22 October 2005 - 12:10 GMT  
Saturday : 22 October 2005 - 19:10 GMT  
Sunday : 3 October 2005 - 07:10 GMT  
Sunday : 3 October 2005 - 17:10 GMT

For more information, please see: Debate on BBC: <http://www.apdip.net/news/ictpovertydebateonbbc>

#### **3.1.2 Sub Regional Broadcast: European Broadcasting Union**

The *Digital Dividend* was also provided to the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) for re-broadcast across Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The Union has 74 active Members in 54 countries of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Transmission time for Eurovision broadcast was:

Monday, 14 November 2005 - 13:30 GMT. For further information, please see: Debate on Eurovision: <http://www.eurovision.net/net/content/worldfeeds.php>

### **3.1.3 Asia-Pacific Broadcast: Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union**

In addition, concerted and systematic efforts were undertaken to duplicate and release the debate to national broadcasters within the Asia-Pacific region to the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union's (ABU) 100+ members and TVE Asia Pacific's Video Resource Center's throughout Asia.

On behalf of UNDP APDIP, the ABU undertook a concentrated marketing, promotion and dissemination effort. The distribution strategy included offering the programme rights-free to ABU's national television broadcast members across the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to additional local or sub-national broadcasters within its national networks and regional/international channels carried on cable and satellite systems. All promotional marketing brochures incorporated the logos of SDC and GKP.

The promotion began with the dissemination of marketing materials, including mailers/flyers and order forms, followed by emails, faxes and telephone calls. Further marketing efforts included the featuring of the offer in the ABU newsletters and website. A promotional CD was developed and approximately 90 copies were distributed to broadcasters. This was followed by further emailing, faxing and telephone follow-ups.

ABU Newsletter:

[http://www.abu.org.my/public/dsp\\_page.cfm?pageid=247&contentid=826&specialsection=FULL\\_TEXT](http://www.abu.org.my/public/dsp_page.cfm?pageid=247&contentid=826&specialsection=FULL_TEXT)

ABU Order Form:

[http://www.abu.org.my/public/dsp\\_page.cfm?pageid=247&contentid=824&specialsection=FULL\\_TEXT](http://www.abu.org.my/public/dsp_page.cfm?pageid=247&contentid=824&specialsection=FULL_TEXT)

### **3.1.4 Dissemination via the Internet and to Civil Society Organizations**

To ensure wider dissemination, UNDP-APDIP has a permanent streaming of the *Digital Dividend* on its website available at <http://www.apdip.net/videos/Digital%20Dividend%28Modem%29.wmv>. The programme was also included in APDIP's ICT4D publications and Videos DVD, circulated at WSIS Tunis. In addition, UNDP-APDIP also actively responds to requests of tapes from civil society organizations for the programme.

UNDP-APDIP also engaged TVE Asia-Pacific (TVEAP) to actively promote and pursue the distribution of the content to civil society organizations. During the month of January and February 2006, TVEAP began promoting the film with broadcasters and in DVD format amongst civil society and educational groups. The programme was included in a special promotional offer to Asia Pacific broadcasters in Jan-Feb 2006.

TVEAP is also promoting the programme through the TVEAP website to civil society groups who are working on ICT issues. The programme will also stay on the online searchable film information database for at least a year, and probably even longer. Furthermore, TVEAP also distributed DVDs of the programme to all the participants of the *South Asia ICT Policy* workshop convened by the Association of Progressive Communicators held in April 2006 in Dhaka and at the annual meeting of the Global Knowledge Partnership held in Colombo in May 2006. As the programme is less time sensitive, the educational value of the debate will remain for a year or two.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This development-communications initiative by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; UNDP Asia Pacific Development Information Programme, and Global Knowledge Partnership has successfully raised and strengthened general awareness on the positive roles that ICTs can play in contributing towards the Millennium Development Goals. It has also raised pertinent issues and challenges emanating from across the globe to global policy makers and development practitioners.

The systematic and coherent planning of dissemination of the broadcast tapes and DVD/Video targeted specifically to national broadcast stations and civil society organizations have and will continue to ensure the wider dissemination of the message.

As this initiative offers broadcasters rights-free usage of the programmes, we hope the partnership with regional institutions will ensure that the uptake will continue to grow in the future. The underlying logic of creating tangible and reusable communication materials has successfully proven itself to enhance the possibility of a multiplier effect in ensuring the message on the role of ICT to assist in addressing poverty alleviation is heard meaningfully across the globe.