III Infopoverty World Conference

Infopoverty: New tools and best practices.

The role of ICTs in reaching the Millennium Development Goals

June 19th - 20th, 2003

Milan, New York, Washington

Agenda

Thursday June 19 2003

Opening session, welcome from the authorities, Inauguration of the Infopoverty Exhibition

Plenary session on ICT role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals set forth by the United Nations in 2000. In particular, this plenary session will be devoted to economic growth and building human capital.
Growth is essential if poverty is to be overcome, but creation of new wealth will not contribute to development objectives unless more and more people become more competitive, productive and their purchasing power is enhanced.

Plenary Session 1

ICT role in reaching the Millennium Development Goals
In 2000 the Millennium Summit set forth a series of goals that the international community as a whole was committed to reach in the near future. So far the situation has improved, but not as dramatically as it could have done. Poverty has decreased, as well as child mortality and maternal health, but the ratio of reduction is very different from what expected.
ICT could play a major role in speeding up the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: new technologies in general can improve productivity and enhance growth, making it easier to halve people living on less than 1 $ per day. New approaches to medicine, like tele-medicine, could be very important in reducing child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS malaria and other diseases. Distant learning as well as other ICT-based teaching techniques will be instrumental in achieving universal primary and secondary education.
Thus it is important to dedicate the opening plenary session of the Conference to the role of all players in the field of ICT in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
In particular, this plenary session will be devoted to economic growth and building human capital. Growth is essential if poverty is to be overcome. The issue of economic growth is not one of dividing the economic "pie" among more and more people but increasing the size of the "pie" by changing the recipe, involving more cooks and making each portion more nutritious. We believe that expansion of the knowledge economy is essential for this type of growth to be sustainable since it enhances the capacity of an economy to add value and create wealth. Its expansion also can change the volume and character of supply and demand for all goods and services so that growth and respect for the environment can both be achieved. As part of a plenary session on this subject the role of ICT will be addressed by focusing on the following major themes:

- Integrating the informal sector into the informal society
- Respecting and expanding the local knowledge base through access and use of ICT
- Value added in the economies of "poor" communities
- New ICT-based models for economic development

Creation of new wealth will not contribute to development objectives unless more and more people become more competitive, productive and their purchasing power is enhanced. The emergence of economies based on the construction and application explain the expanding trend to increase access to non-traditional learning environments and the blurring of distinctions between educational transformation and transformation of the labor force. In response to the

increasing demand and growing diversity for learning opportunities, public, private and civil society organizations are building an infrastructure for lifelong learning and growing a human capital industry. This session will also focus on how ICT helps ensure that the most disadvantaged are participating and benefiting from these opportunities:

- Non-traditional Learning environments
- New approaches to working and learning (with particular attention to distant learning)
- Quality Control: Accreditation and certification for non-traditional learning paths
- Learning agents: The changing role and enhanced value of teachers, trainers, professors, et al.

Friday June 20 2003

4 Thematic Seminars. Main areas of interest are: E-government, Handicap, Technologies, Finance

Plenary session with reports from the chairman of the morning seminars and eminent interventions in order to illustrate the common guidelines for all partners and constitute an important preparatory work for the World Summit on Information Society to be held in Geneva in 2003.

Final round table with eminent speakers and approval of the final declaration.

The second plenary session will try to define a common plan of action in fighting Infopoverty. The Digital Divide in the last years has been tackled from many points of view: international institutions see the abridgment of the divide as a great opportunity to abate poverty all over the world and grant all communities a better standard of living. On the other hand, private institutions try to open new markets for more investment and a better allocation of their resources. Fighting Infopoverty on the one hand can be seen as a way to grant disadvantaged countries a leap-frog development, but on the other hand is an opportunity for the private institutions and corporation to rethink of their products.

The UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, has recently launched the so-called "Global Compact", a pact among all players in order to find common goals and act accordingly: "If all countries are to benefit, we need more and better strategic public-private partnerships". In the very field of the Digital Divide this need is strongly felt, as scattered projects, programs and actions often overlap, if not contrast or collide.

In order to find a common plan of action, it is important to define:

- the situation
- the needs
- the expected results of all actors involved
- Communities in the least developed and in developing countries
- Local and National Governments
- International Institutions
- Private Institutions and Corporations

Without dialogue among possible partners, the ICT could well be unfit to fight Infopoverty because of a lack of hardware, software, application and practices suitable for the needs of many communities. Abridging the Digital Divide does not mean that disadvantaged communities should yield to the interests of rich countries, as this would be a new form of colonialism: rich and poor countries have to cooperate in order to create a union of intent, notwithstanding the fact that positions at the beginning might be very different.

In this framework, the chairmen of the 5 morning sessions will give a brief but thorough description of the outcome of the meetings, underlining all aspects that can be useful in defining a global strategy to fight Infopoverty.

After this introduction, the session will give voice to the experiences and needs of all communities, from rich to poor, from advanced to disadvantaged.

The session will be followed by a final roundtable where all main speakers will discuss – on the basis of the previous sessions - key elements of the fight against the Digital Divide.

The Conference will be closed by the approval of the Final Declaration, a document in which all partners of the Infopoverty Network will outline the common goals of their action in fighting Infopoverty.

Milan - European Session (broadcast live via teleconference to Washington)

European session, on the new digital services for development.

Milan will host the European Session, devoted to New Digital Instruments for Development. At the European Council held in Lisbon in 2000,the European leaders agreed on a new strategic goal for the Union: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.

Overall conditions have dramatically changed since 2000: the events of September 11 2001 and the simultaneous economic crisis have shown how difficult it is to reach that goal by the year2010. Europe, though, has all the means and capabilities of reaching it. Moreover, Europe, as world leader, has the strength and the will to expand its stake in the market of Information and Communication Technologies, also through a wider presence in developing markets as well as in presently depressed economies of the world. The European Union as institution is involved in many projects about the information society in many developing countries, but the amount of actions taken in this field by national governments, private institutions, non governmental organizations and other players is countless.

The European session of the III Infopoverty Conference will devote particular attention to the services that European institutions can offer in the field of e-government, telemedicine, distance learning and all other forms of service that can give a substantial contribution for the development of countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

As for e-government, the growing integration in the world economy and the increasing importance of knowledge in people's work and life create new expectations and demands with relation to government operations. The Italian model developed in the framework of the DotForce-G8initiative has proved to be an innovative project that can be implemented in a growing number of countries.

As for e-learning and telemedicine, those service scan have a major impact in the lives of thousands of people living in developing countries, where a small effort can lead to great changes. E-learning is very effective in many areas of the world, where it has led to the valorization of cultural diversities and local knowledge. Telemedicine is very successful in the fight against diseases - such as diarrhea - that the rich world has defeated many years ago.

It is now time to define how those services can be organized in a more structured fashion, in which no single effort is lost, and all actions are focused - as a laser beam - for the achievement of the fixed goals. Development can be greatly helped by those services and Europe can play a major role in this field, as long as it is clear that ICTs and the related services can only serve as means for development, and that the diffusion of ICTs is not a goal in its own.

Best practices in E-learning & Telemedicine:services for the future digital society

Face to face between representatives from the European Parliament andthe Congress and Senate of the United States

Final Declaration

Institutions and participants to the III Infopoverty World Conference propose, and hereby approve, the adoption of the following Declaration:

Bearing in mind that:

- New communication technologies are deeply changing peoples' lives, creating new opportunities as well as new disparities
- Reaching the UN Millennium Development Goals is the first target in order to guarantee human rights, freedom , democracy and well-being to our society
- The new Information Society must be focused on Citizens and their Communities
- The plurality of different cultures assures a balanced development of our civilization, in full respect of the environment
- The right to education is at the basis of social and economic growth
- Most of the population of the world is still at the edge of this growth, afflicted by poorness and diseases, and cannot take advantage of the opportunities arising from the technological development

Affirm:

- The necessity to improve the jointed work to grant to these communities, through the best existing technologies, a free, universal and cheap access to the world wide web, in order to participate to the technological, social and economic development
- The urgency to find applicative solutions for web services, strictly useful for the socio-economical and cultural development, as, for instance, the e-learning, the tele-medicine or those service which attempt to promote the handicraft and the e-commerce on wider range, to facilitate the conditions of disabled people and to increase the value of different kinds of cultural identities
- The interest to participate and sustain the INFOPOVERTY NETWORK, launched by OCCAM, as a tool for working to multiply effects of single actions or programmes and translate them into a global vision, promoted through this Conference
- The necessity to promote and advertise the values, which affirm the human dignity and give the society a unity, without which it is not possible to have a renewed social peace
- The necessity, as for the other instruments of mass communication, to establish rules for the Internet able to guarantee democracy

Recommend:

- To favour jointed actions by international institutions, both public and private, governments, NGOs, research foundations and Universities, considered as an alliance which joins ethical and market instances, as foreseen by the Global Compact, launched by the UN General Secretary

- To receive the call of Staffan de Mistura, Personal Representative of UN General Secretary to South Lebanon, for the development of initiatives aimed at widespread diffusion of new technologies in Palestinian Refugee Communities
- To sustain the e-communidad programme undersigned by the Forum of Vice-Presidents of Central America, planning the creation of more than 500 telematic villages
- To strongly sustain similar experiences launched, or under consideration, in other African, Asian, Latin American and Oceania countries
- To support research and information activities promoted by the Observatory for a constant evaluation of the most innovative and effective projects in order to fight Infopoverty, supported by an analysis of the practical results

Appeal:

- To the President of the Italian Republic, Mr. Ciampi, who honoured us with his Patronage, so that, during the six-months Italian Presidency of the European Union, Italy could pilot initiatives to strongly aid developing countries in fighting the digital divide
- To the World Summit on Information Society, which will be held in Geneva at the end of 2003 and of which this Conference represent a preliminary meeting, to solve the problem of disparities in records and copyrights related to connectivity, transmissions, sw and hw systems, so that communication, wealth of the humankind, could be free and accessible to all
- To the European Commission, in order to improve its efforts to fight digital divide, with adequate support actions, appropriate to overcome the existing gap and revitalize the European technological market through the empowerment of exchanges and investments with developing countries
- To the G8 countries, in accordance to the Evian summit's guidelines, in order to develop concrete and helpful policies toward emerging economies, and destining a relevant quote of these funds to the diffusion of new technologies in these countries

It gives mandate to the Promoting Committee to put into effect these principles and to transmit this declaration to the President of the Italian Republic, to the Italian Prime Minister, thanking them for their Patronage, to the United Nations Secretary General, to the UNESCO General Director, to the IFAD President, to the FAO General Director thanking them for the support from their institutions, to the Heads of State and Government, to the responsibles of public and private Organisations and Foundations, which are involved in the fight against the world Infopoverty

It proposes the convocation of the IV Infopoverty World Conference on April 29th and 30th, 2004, with the title: **"New Frontiers of the ICTs: Services for Development"** hoping that next year the participation of partner institutions could be improved and ameliorated by hosting some videoconference sessions.