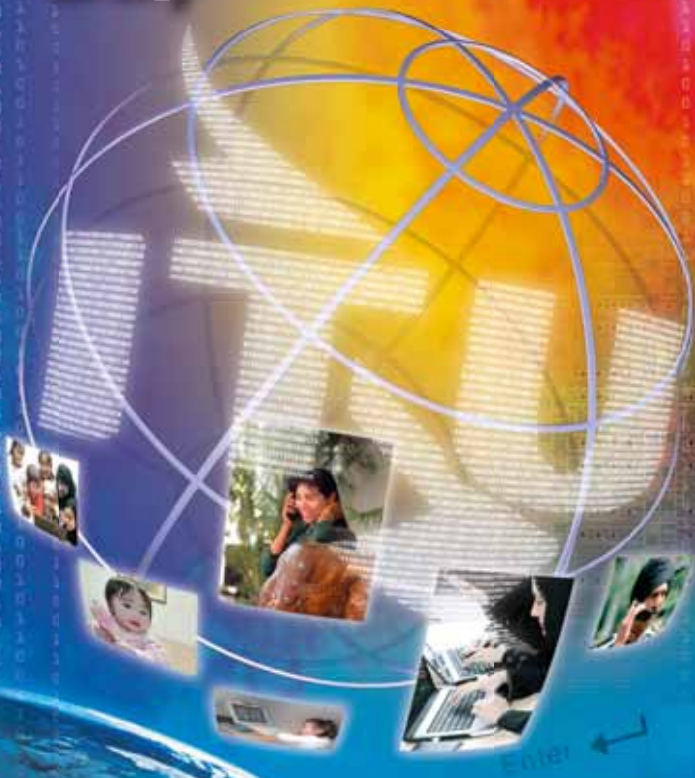


# World Information Society Day



**17 May 2006**

"Raising awareness of the possibilities that the use of the internet and other information and communication technologies can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide" UN General Assembly.



**International  
Telecommunication  
Union**



## Message from the Secretary-General International Telecommunication Union

On 17 May 2006, ITU commemorates the first World Information Society Day. For more than 140 years, ITU has been the global focal point in developing ICT networks and services for all the world's inhabitants. As the UN agency specializing in helping the world communicate, ITU has taken the lead in the cyberspace to connect the unconnected so that everyone can benefit from the vast potential of the digital revolution.

Recognizing this evolution, the World Summit on the Information Society called upon the United Nations to declare 17 May, which marks World Telecommunication Day, as World Information Society Day to raise awareness of the importance of ICT in bringing enormous possibilities to societies and economies. It also highlights a global commitment to contribute to an emerging people-centred and development-oriented Information Society that aims to meet the aspirations of all humanity.

I commend the vision and commitment of all who have striven to further the goals and objectives of the Information Society and help close the digital divide. I welcome all participants in the events clustered around these celebrations and urge you to take concrete action aimed at implementation and follow-up of the important agenda of the World Summit on the Information Society.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Yoshio Utsumi".

Yoshio Utsumi  
Secretary-General  
International Telecommunication Union

## **ITU World Information Society Award Programme of the Ceremony**

**Wednesday 17 May 2006 – Room I**  
Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG)

- 10:30 Guests to be seated by 10:45
- 11:00 Arrival of officials and laureates
- 11:05 Musical Interlude by the Orchestre  
de la Suisse Romande Quartet
- 11:10 Address of the ITU Secretary-General
- 11:15 Presentation of the Award
- 12:15 Laureates meet with the Press
- 12:30 Reception (by invitation only)



## **His Excellency Mr Abdoulaye Wade President Republic of Senegal**

*For his outstanding personal contribution towards building a global Information Society for the benefit of all.*

Abdoulaye Wade, Senegalese lawyer and statesman, has been the President of the Republic of Senegal since 1 April 2000.

As one of the main promoters of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and particularly as the coordinator of the ICT sector, President Wade has spoken out actively for Africa and the Information Society.

Throughout the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process he vigorously championed the concept of digital solidarity and emphasized the potential that information and communication technologies harbour for development, with the desire that WSIS might lead to a true dialogue on the subject.

The principle of digital solidarity has been embodied in Paragraph 61 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles, which invites "all stakeholders to commit to the Digital Solidarity Agenda" set forth in the Geneva Plan of Action.

An optimist and visionary, President Wade has worked assiduously to make the concept of digital solidarity a reality through the creation of the Digital Solidarity Fund, a new voluntary funding mechanisms aimed at supporting local development projects.

The Digital Solidarity Fund was inaugurated in Geneva in April 2005, and was welcomed by the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva 2003 – Tunis 2005) as well as by the Millennium Summit meeting in New York in September 2005.



## **Professor Muhammad Yunus Managing Director Grameen Bank, Bangladesh**

*For his outstanding personal contribution towards building a global Information Society for the benefit of all.*

Professor Muhammad Yunus' innovative approach to poverty alleviation in Bangladesh has inspired the global microcredit movement reaching out to millions of poor women.







A noted economist, Professor Muhammad Yunus started the Grameen Bank Project in 1976. Today, Grameen Bank provides collateral-free loans to 5 million clients in Bangladesh, of which 96% are women. Over the last two decades, Grameen Bank has loaned over 5 billion dollars to the poorest of the poor, while maintaining a repayment rate consistently above 98%.

Besides Grameen Bank, Prof. Yunus has created a number of companies in Bangladesh to address diverse issues of poverty and development. Among the companies are Grameen Phone (a mobile telephone company), Grameen Cybernet (Internet Service Provider), Grameen Communications (Rural Internet Service Provider), Grameen Software company, and Grameen Information Technology Park.

The Grameen Phone (Village Phone) programme, through which women entrepreneurs can start a business providing wireless payphone service in rural areas of Bangladesh, has become a legendary success. In doing so, Grameen created a new class of women entrepreneurs who have raised themselves from poverty. Moreover, it improved the livelihoods of farmers and others who were provided access to critical market information and lifeline communications previously unattainable in some 28'000 villages of Bangladesh. More than 55'000 phones are currently in operation, with more than 80 million people benefiting from access to ICTs.

	Organizer	Event
<b>9 May</b>	ITU/UNESCO	Global Symposium on Promoting the Multilingual Internet
<b>10 May</b>	ITU/UNESCO	Global Symposium on Promoting the Multilingual Internet
<b>11 May</b>	ITU/UNESCO	Global Symposium on Promoting the Multilingual Internet
	UNDP	C4, Capacity Building
	UNDP	C6, Enabling environment
<b>12 May</b>	UNESCO	C8, Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content
<b>15 May</b>	UN-CSTD	Ninth session of the CSTD*
	ITU	C5, Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs
	UN-DESA	C11, International and regional cooperation
<b>16 May</b>	UN-CSTD	Ninth session of the CSTD*
	UN-DESA	C1, The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
	UN-DESA	C7, E-government
	ITU	C5, Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs
<b>17 May</b>	UN-CSTD	Ninth session of the CSTD*
	UN-DESA	Multi-stakeholder Meeting on Parliaments and the Information Society: enhancing cooperation and Building Partnerships
	<b>ITU</b>	<b>ITU World Information Society Award Ceremony</b>
	ITU	Launch of World Information Society Reports
	UNCTAD/ILO/ITC	C7, E-business and e-employment
<b>18 May</b>	UN-CSTD	Informal Panel on the Future Role of the CSTD in the system-wide follow-up to WSIS
	UN-CSTD	Ninth session of the CSTD*
	ITU	C2, Information and Communication Infrastructure
<b>19 May</b>	UN-CSTD	Ninth session of the CSTD*
	IGF	Second round of informal consultations on the setting up of the IGF

\* The meeting is open only to members of the Commission and observer entities in consultative status with ECOSOC

	WSIS Action Line Facilitation meetings
	Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) meetings
	Global Symposium on Promoting the Multilingual Internet
	Meeting on Parliaments and the Information Society
	Internet Governance Forum Meeting (IGF)
	Launch of World Information Society Reports

**For more information for participants, visit us at [www.itu.int/wisid](http://www.itu.int/wisid)**

Venue	Time
CICG	09:30-18:00
CICG	09:30-18:00
CICG	09:30-18:00
ITU, Room K2	10:00-13:00
ITU, Room K2	15:00-18:00
Palais des Nations, Room XX	10:00-13:00 15:00-18:00
Palais des Nations, Room XVIII	10:00-13:00 15:00-18:00
ITU, Room B	09:30-12:15 13:30-17:30
Palais des Nations, Room XXV	15:00-18:00
Palais des Nations, Room XVIII	10:00-13:00 15:00-18:00
Palais des Nations, Room XXIII	10:00-13:00
Palais des Nations, Room XXIII	15:00-18:00
ITU, Room B	09:30-13:00 14:00-17:30
Palais des Nations, Room XVIII	10:00-13:00 15:00-18:00
Palais des Nations, Room XXV	10:00-13:00 15:00-17:00
<b>CICG, Room I</b>	<b>10:45-12:00</b>
Palais des Nations, Room XXII	14:30-15:15
Palais des Nations, Room XXIII	15:00-18:00
Palais des Nations, Room XVIII	Morning
Palais des Nations, Room XVIII	10:00-13:00 15:00-18:00
ITU, Room H	15:00-18:00
Palais des Nations, Room XVIII	10:00-13:00 15:00-18:00
Palais des Nations	

## About World Information Society Day

The World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva 2003 – Tunis 2005) has achieved a common global understanding of the key principles that will determine peoples' ability to harness the potential of ICTs. The Summit has also created a unique impetus towards a more inclusive Information Society and has set forth an Agenda for Action.

To keep up this momentum, the Summit called upon the United Nations to proclaim 17 May as World Information Society Day. A resolution to this effect was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 27 March 2006.

Celebrating the first World Information Society Day, a series of events related to the implementation of the WSIS action lines will take place from 9 to 23 May.

On this important occasion, ITU will present the ITU World Information Society Award to His Excellency Mr Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, and to Professor Muhammad Yunus, Managing Director of the Grameen Bank, Bangladesh.

## About the ITU World Information Society Award

The ITU World Information Society Award has been created to honour individuals or institutions that have made a significant contribution to promoting, building, or strengthening a people-centred, development-oriented and knowledge-based Information Society. Achievement may take the form of social accomplishment, mobilization of public opinion, or a key technical innovation.

The ITU World Information Society Award is presented on 17 May, World Information Society Day, which is also World Telecommunication Day, commemorating the founding of ITU in 1865.

With the support of

