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World Information Society Day 17 May 2006

Message by Mr Yoshio Utsumi Secretary-General International Telecommunication Union



On 17 May 2006, ITU celebrates the first World Information Society Day to mark its inception more than 140 years ago. 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 commemorates 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 close the chasm separating those who have access to information and knowledge and those who are denied the benefits of the digital revolution.

On this momentous occasion, I am pleased to announce the presentation of the inaugural ITU World Information Society Award to two distinguished and eminent personalities who have made outstanding personal contributions to creating a more just, equitable and inclusive Information Society: His Excellency Mr Abdoulaye Wade, President of Senegal, and Professor Muhammad Yunus, Managing Director of the Grameen Bank, Bangladesh.

On this first World Information Society Day, I take this opportunity to thank all our partners and stakeholders who are actively engaged in furthering the aims and objectives of the Information Society. I also wish to reaffirm our dedication to take concrete action aimed at implementation and follow-up of the important agenda of the World Summit on the Information Society.

Yoshio Utsumi
Secretary-General
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
