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(ITU) للاتصالات الدولي الاتحاد في والمحفوظات المكتبة قسم أجراه الضوئي بالمسح تصوير نتاج (PDF) الإلكترونية النسخة هذه والمحفوظات المكتبة قسم في المتوفرة الوثائق ضمن أصلية ورقية وثيقة من نقلًا.

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ICTs: Leading the way to sustainable development

Message from Mr Yoshio Utsumi
Secretary-General
International Telecommunication Union

It is often said that if you don't like the way the world is, you should change it. Fortunately, many of the things we do not like about our world – poverty, ignorance, hunger – could all be changed through better communications. This belief was shared by the 11 000 delegates, including nearly 50 Heads of State and Government and 80 ministers and vice-ministers who attended the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva last December.

The Summit was organized by ITU to ensure that social and economic development, which is increasingly driven by information and communication technologies (ICT), will result in a more just, prosperous and equitable world. It is this promise that lies at the heart of our information society and it is the reason we have chosen to celebrate the 139th anniversary of the founding of ITU with the theme *ICTs: Leading the way to sustainable development*.

Reliable and affordable communications can be used effectively as part of the toolbox for addressing global problems. ICTs alone may not feed the hungry, eradicate poverty or reduce child mortality, but they are an increasingly important catalyst that spurs economic growth and social equity. ICTs allow for more efficient agricultural production, diversity and distribution. They offer the possibility of delivering basic health services to those in dire need living in areas with little or no access to healthcare facilities. They can extend the reach of educators allowing them to bring knowledge to the most remote corners of our planet.

Access to information technology can boost the creation of small companies and groupings of artisans in the poorest and most isolated areas of the world and help them join the mainstream of national and even global markets. Information technology makes it possible to leapfrog poor infrastructures so that distance from markets is no longer a drawback and poor distribution channels a thing of the past.

ICTs can also be extremely effective in improving governance. They give a voice to people who have been isolated, or have been invisible and silent, allowing them to speak out regardless of their gender and where they live.

Given their enormous power to improve people's economic, social and cultural well-being, ICTs must be at the centre of any development strategy.

The global commitment of world leaders at the Summit is no doubt a historical recognition of the importance of ICTs in addressing many of the major social, political and economical problems. But the successful outcome of the first phase of the Summit is only the start of a long process. We now need to transform the vision and plans adopted in Geneva into concrete action. And above all, we need to enlist the long-term commitment of all stakeholders to ensure that ICTs truly lead the way to sustainable development.

Yoshio UTSUMI