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World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2016 (WTISD 2016) *ICT entrepreneurship for social impact*

Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon

The international community is now mobilized around the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes the great potential of information and communication technology (ICT) to accelerate human progress, bridge the digital divide and advance knowledge. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals specifically call for employing ICTs to realize the overall vision of a life of dignity for all people.

These technologies provide smart solutions to address climate change, hunger, poverty and other global challenges. They are key instruments for providing mobile health care and access to education, empowering women, improving efficiencies in industrial and agricultural production, and safeguarding the environment.

Start-ups and technology hubs in the ICT sector are the drivers of innovative and practical solutions that can contribute to inclusive growth. Small to medium-sized enterprises make up more than 90 per cent of all businesses worldwide, and represent a path out of poverty for many developing countries.

Young people are especially fluent in the use of ICTs. Leaders should invest in young innovators, who are part of the largest generation of youth in history. As entrepreneurs, they can pioneer transformative technology, create jobs and benefit whole economies.

I call upon governments, businesses and civil society leaders to develop new technologies that have a lasting social impact. ICTs can create more inclusive societies for persons with disabilities. They can help children to learn and the elderly to stay active. And ICTs can connect people around the world in common cause.

On this World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, let us resolve to harness the power of technology to create a better future for all.

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