



VII INFOPOVERTY WORLD CONFERENCE
Under the High Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic

REPORT

The VII Infopoverity World Conference was held at the United Nations Headquarters on 19-20 April 2007 to discuss the theme "Harnessing the use of ICTs towards the Millennium Development Goals." It was organized under the patronage of the President of the Italian Republic and co-organized by the Observatory for Cultural and Audio-Visual Communication (OCCAM), the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (G@ID), the University of Oklahoma, the European Parliament Office in Milan and Politecnico. Following the successful scheme of past editions, the event was organised as a parallel videoconference connecting the UN Headquarters in New York, the Politecnico di Milano and the European Parliament Office in Milan, the European Space Agency and UNESCO in Paris, the National Congress of Peru in Lima, the Ministry of Communication of Honduras in Tegucigalpa.

After six years since the first edition of the Infopoverity World Conference, the following results have been individuated:

1. in 2001 speaking about ICT as instrument to fight poverty was indeed unheard of, as main development aids concentrated on humanitarian aspects or on charity.
2. now it has been understood that the digital revolution, with its innovation flow can had has to successfully face development needs in emerging countries with the creation of specific products.
3. in 2001 the villages of San Francisco Lempira and San Ramon, in Honduras, where the sole ICT Villages, created by OCCAM as world premiere, provided not only with broadband satellite connectivity, but also powered by solar power and endowed with water sanitization devices.
4. now telecentres and similar projects have become mainstream, with thousands of villages connected. Moreover, investments and participated development are being discussed, with the direct involvement also of private stakeholders, attracted by new and profitable markets.

Building on its tradition of visionary speakers and concrete measures taken, the Infopoverity World Conference, in its 2007 edition, tackled some of the main issues that are currently at stake and can make the digital revolution become a crucial development instrument:

- thanks to the diffusion of broadband, the opportunity to provide **advanced digital services** will spur development in emerging countries and disadvantaged communities, making them leapfrog, while even industrialised countries will improve their quality of life.
- the risk is that of an economic rather than social exploitation, which should be regulated and oriented by superior entities, such as those represented by the UN.
- internet 1 is obsolete, insecure, not reliable and its governance is not clear, as indicated by the results of the WSIS. Now the debate is moving towards internet2 and the **Next Generation Network (NGN)**, able to solve the above mentioned aspects, if convergence can be found among major stakeholders and governance granted by the UN system.

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- **Connectivity** is jeopardised for the presence of too many lobbies which are not technology neutral: it is clear that only complementarity among various systems and standard homologation can solve the need for a rapid and affordable connectivity.
- A **roadmap on networks and connectivity** elaborated within the UN could be a useful instrument also for investors and final users, especially if connected to a bulk financial plan for e-services for development.
- **e-services** are currently of two types – B2B and P2P. The NGN will be more P2P. Services such as telemedicine need thorough innovations in medical practices and in the structure of sanitary systems, which have to become open worldwide and not refer only to their territorial constituency, and have to be provided with innovative devices, which industry has not yet produced – for lack of consolidated praxes and uncertainties in standards.

The two-day Conference was attended by:

Dr. Bernardino Hopffer Almada, Cape Verde
H.E. Zina Andrianarivelo-Razafy, Permanent Representative of Madagascar to the UN
Claudio Avella, Ingegneria Senza Frontiere Milano
Dr. Elena Badalamenti, Vice Honorary Consul Burkina Faso
Giulio Ballio, Dean, Politecnico di Milano
Guido Bertucci, Director, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, UNDESA
Otto Bitjoka, President, Fondazione Ethnoland
Renate Bloem, President, Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN - CONGO
Giuseppe Bonsignori, Geologi senza frontiera
Paolo Bozzacchi, Marketing and Communication, TILS
Mercedes Cabanillas Bustamante, President, National Congress of Peru
Dr. Emile Butoyi, Consul Burund
Cristina Castelli, Director Master Emergenze, Università Cattolica
Arthur Cole, Infopoverty Institute, The University of Oklahoma
Emanuela Colombo, Politecnico di Milano
Renato Cortinovis, Rotary 2040
Vittorio Craxi, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy
John E. Davies Vice President, World Ahead INTEL
Maurizio Decina, Professor, Department of Electronics and Information, Politecnico di Milano
Staffan De Mistura, Director, UN System Staff College
Luigi De Vecchis, President and CEO, Nokia Siemens Networks Italia
Davide Diamantini, Università Milano Bicocca
Chiara d'Imporzano, Associazione Monserrate
Gianluca Di Pasquale, Ingegneria senza frontiere;
Amir Dossal, Executive Director of the UN Fund for International Partnerships
Fulvio Falcone, Rotary 2040
Silvano Falocco, Ecosistemi
Agostino Faravelli, Patologi oltre Frontiera
Alessandro Frigiola, Policlinico S. Donato IRCCS
Marina Gersony, Giornalista, Saggista - Internet ed immigrazione
Umberto Guidoni, Interparliamentar Delegation, UE-USA; European Parliament
Ziad Haddara, Senior Programme Officer, UNDP/ ICT for Development in the Arab Region
Carolyn Hannan, Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, UNDESA
Terri Hasdorf, USAID
Carlo Iantorno, Microsoft
Hiroshi Kawamura, DAISY Consortium
Sarbuland Khan, Executive Coordinator, UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development

Motoo Kusakabe, Senior Advisor to the President, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Natale Lettieri, Head of Operations and Customer Service, Skylogic
H.E. Francis Lorenzo, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the UN
Anton Mangstl, Director of the Library and Documentation Systems Division, FAO
Mario Mantovani, Vice President Assembly ACP- UE, European Parliament
H.E. Ismael A. Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola to the UN
Myriam Mejia, Minister of the COHCIT of Science and Technology
Mariolina Moioli, Responsible for Social Policies, City of Milan
Cristiana Muscardini, Vice President Commission of International Trade, European Parliament
Bjarke Nielsen, Djursland International Institute of Rural Wireless Broadband
Joseph O. Okpaku President, Telecom Africa Corporation for Good Governance
Antonio Panzeri, Vice President Commission for Work and Social Affairs, European Parliament
Carlo Petroni, Pianeta Agile Energy Systems
Hugh Peterken, Head, IT Department, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Guido Podestà, Delegation for relations with Afghanistan, European Parliament
Carlo Pretara, Council of Students, Politecnico di Milano
Art Reilly, Senior Director for Strategic Technology Policy CISCO Systems
Steven Rockefeller, Rockefeller Foundation*
Stefano Rolando, Secretary General, Fondazione IULM
Alfredo Ronchi, Medici Framework
Alberto Rovetta, Politecnico di Milano
Dr. Ernest Sanga, Director, CERAD
Pierpaolo Saporito, President, OCCAM
Alberto Schiraldi, Rotary 2040
Stefano Scotti, METID
Guy Olivier Segond, President, Digital Solidarity Fund
Joe Shirley Jr., President, Navajo Nation
H.E. Marcello Spatafora, Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN
Fred Tipson, Director for International Development Policy, Microsoft
Rasel Antonio Tomé Flores, President, National Commission of Telecommunications CONATEL
Giuseppe Viriglio, Director of EU and Industrial Policies, European Space Agency
Cream Wright, Chief of Education Cluster, UNICEF
Gerardo Zepeda Bermudez, Vice President, OCCAM

The outcome of the Conference were synthesized into the:

FINAL DECLARATION

Considering:

1. The Conference underlines: (i) the current imbalance between those who have access to new technologies and those who have not, in particular fields such as connectivity; (ii) energy gap; (iii) environmental emergencies; (iv) lack of products fit to the needs of new users; (v) financial structures that are too centralised and expensive; (vi) fragmentation in actions promoted by stakeholders; (vii) lack of interoperability of systems and standard; (viii) absence of primary health services; (ix) lack of coordination among programmes and projects.
2. The very effective concrete actions to improve conditions in disadvantaged communities indicated a strong convergence on the importance of the social use of ICTs; the solutions on renewable energies, connectivity, e-learning and telemedicine opening new perspectives at affordable costs for high level technologies. See Annex II.

3. The successful outcomes of last year edition of the Infopoverty World Conference, whose Final Declaration, as per the report that was submitted by OCCAM, has been widely implemented in regard to:
 - (i) The creation of a GRID of centres of excellence and the satellite platform of e-services for development
 - (ii) The duplication of the ICT Village model in communities in developing countries
 - (iii) The realisation of the Infopoverty Exhibition, held on February 6-10, 2007 at the Milan Fairground
 - (iv) The formulation of a strategy towards the bulk of users.
4. Reaffirming the call of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to transform the spirit and vision of its Plan of Action and Agenda for the Information Society into reality, and to promote multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnerships in promoting the use of ICT for the achievement of internationally-agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The participants in the VII Infopoverty World Conference

Appreciate the continued patronage of the President of the Italian Republic for the realization of the series of the Infopoverty World Conferences;

Appreciate the continued support of the European Parliament;

Appreciate the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development for facilitating the Conference and leading the whole process, making all stakeholders converge to achieve the Millennium Development Goals;

Invite the stakeholders to promote partnerships for the following mentioned projects whose objective fall in line with the ECOSOC initiative on the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development (UNPPA):

- (i) In Madagascar to strengthen further the Sambaina ICT Village inaugurated in 2006 which has already demonstrated promising and tangible results under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of Madagascar;
- (ii) In the Dominican Republic to implement the ICT Village at Constanza;
- (iii) In Angola to launch a plan for ICT for development activities;
- (iv) In Honduras to strengthen the activities in San Francisco Lempira and San Ramon, inaugurated in 2000;
- (v) In Liberia to develop a strategic platform to fight poverty harnessing the use of ICTs;
- (vi) In Navajo nation to sustain their best practices for dissemination through the Indigenous People Program.

Sustain the programme *Feeding the Planet* presented by the City of Milan

Promote a research on specific needs in ICTs of civil society/NGOs and United Nations system organizations, to search the common requests and create a market critical mass of bulk users to grant higher value and quality.

Adhere to the Infopoverty Community of Expertise under the Global Alliance for ICT and Development to make the Platform of e-services for development more effective.

Approve and **encourage** all stakeholders to be coalition partners for the creation of a Permanent UN-ICT Village labs and exhibits, proposed by OCCAM, in the light of the success of the Infopoverty Exhibition– aimed at testing and showcasing innovative solutions at affordable costs for the needs of emerging countries and disadvantaged communities to facilitate the wide and integrated implantation of new technologies for development.

Invites OCCAM, with the support of all stakeholders and organizations mentioned in Annex 2 to prepare a report to the VIII Infopoverty Conference on progress achieved in mobilizing support and its impact on the identified countries for partnership.

Decide to hold the next Infopoverty World Conference in April 2008 proposing the following theme: ‘Low Cost – High Technologies: a new approach for development’, requesting all stakeholders to actively support the above mentioned initiatives and facilitate the organization of the Infopoverty World Conference 2008.

The follow up to the Infopoverty World Conference has already begun, with the participation of the OCCAM delegation to the 10th Session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) 21-25 May 2007, Room XIX Palais des Nations, Geneva, where it was presented the first draft of the survey on the assesment of needs of NGOs in regards to ICTs (item 3 of the Final Declaration). Moreover talks have started with relevant stakeholders for the creation of a permanent UN ICT Village Lab and Exhibit where to showcase the most useful technologies for development.