15ᵗʰ Infopoverty World Conference

"Next Sustainable Development Goals: the challenge before the Digital Era"

9-10 April 2015, Conference Room 12, United Nations Headquarters, New York

FINAL DECLARATION

The participants of the 15ᵗʰ Infopoverty World Conference:

Appreciating

- the high patronage of the President of the Italian Republic;

- the patronage of the Italian Chamber of the Deputies, the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Regione Lombardia, the European Parliament, and CICT-UNESCO;

- the support of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations;

- the messages of the Executive Office of the UN Secretary General and of the European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development;

- the participation of representatives from Permanent Missions to the United Nations of UN Member States; of representatives from UN-OHRLLS, UNCCD, ITU, FAO, UN-CRPD, IDLO, UN-Habitat, UN-SIDS, UN Global Compact, UN-NGLS; and of numerous non-governmental stakeholders active in the process of sustainable and digital development;

- the support provided by sponsors (Affecting Change International, Alessandro Rosso Group, BASF, Dedalus, Eco Building Products, Fondazione CARIPLO, iMedcare, NEC, NGE Solutions, Society & Diplomatic Review, Sony, United Methodist Communications); and the role of OCCAM, the Observatory for the Digital Revolution, founder and main organizer of the Infopoverty Conference with the Infopoverty Institute at the University of Oklahoma;

Decided to issue this Declaration, to be finalized through consultations following the Conference, and to cooperate closely in the follow up of the Declaration.

DECLARATION

2015 marks the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cycle and the launch of a new, post-2015 Development Agenda, rooted in a comprehensive set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) intended to be "transformational" as well as "universal" in scope and spirit. It should also mark the beginning of a new era of digital innovations, geared to supporting effectively the attainment of the SDGs and their capacity to have a real, transformational impact on the lives of the poor, and to helping realize the "road to dignity" prefigured by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

It is in this perspective that participants at the Conference considered essential that the United Nations should provide over all leadership in this process of innovation, leading to the creation of a **Universal Platform** ensuring free access to information and supporting the provisions of services essential for human life: health, food security, education, as well as e-governance and e-commerce.

Such a Platform would complement and add value to the essential work of the UN system and related NGOs and would be geared to the delivery of key services to countries and communities, exploiting the great potential that ICTs carry to make a direct, significant contribution, in an inclusive, peaceful and participatory way based on principles of equity and free access, to a range of critical objectives – from poverty alleviation to food and health security; from combating illiteracy to promoting gender equality; from addressing desertification to providing access to drinking water; from climate change to the sustainability of human settlements.

Participants appeal to the international community and the main stakeholders in the economic cultural and social sectors of the development system to join hands in pursuing actively the feasibility of such a Global Platform, to serve as an operational instrument in support of the transformational objectives of the post 2015 Development Agenda and of sustained progress for the attainment of the SDGs that will feature in that agreed Agenda.

T<small>O</small> THESE ENDS, PARTICIPANTS AGREED:

- To host a Task Force aimed at defining the feasibility study for a SDG-Oriented Universal Platform, operating in a transparent and value-based manner, sharing the results with all concerned UN system and private and public stakeholders, under the guidance of the United Nations as the "custodian" of the post-2015 development agenda (see Annex I);

- To include and support the following projects and initiatives in the Infopoverty Programme 2015-2016:

  - **eMedMed**, presented by **Luigi De Vecchis** (OCCAM Scientific Director, eMedMed Project), **Francesco Sicurello** (President, International Institute of Telemedicine) and **Giorgio Moretti** (President, Dedalus), intended to build an e-health service without boundaries and fulfil the "right to cure" for all citizens, while simplifying procedures, making use of innovative technologies and driving out existing inefficiencies; key targets are: training the trainers and learners with high professionalization, boost the capacity of the national healthcare service, and ensure economical sustainability by reducing costs;

  - **Timor-Leste Business intelligence and Digital service Centre plan**, presented by **John Steffens** (Infopoverty Institute, Oklahoma University), **Abraham Joseph** (Special Advisor, NITL Foundation, Timor-Leste) and the team directed by **Amjad Umar** (Professor of ICTs - Director, Center for Next Generation Enterprises, Harrisburg University). This centre can be used by governments to empower the Samoa Pathway for purposes such as information sharing, e-Government, budget management in order to provide smart, citizen centric, ethical, efficient and effective governance, working on the shared governance model, for services such as tourism, agriculture and disaster management;

  - **World Food Security E-services Centre**, presented by **Pierpaolo Saporito** and **Luciano Gutierrez** (Director, Desertification Research Centre, University of Sassari, Italy), which will allow the worldwide application of innovative and exclusive digital services in order to assist countries with adequate, timely and effective developing policies for food security and safety, which can be supported by the Digital Services Global Platform. This could work as a legacy for EXPO Milan 2015; moreover the current Infopoverty network can ensure forms of e-Working, e-Consultation, e-Diagnosis, e-Learning, and assistance to remote communities and local institutions;

  - **LifeBox Educational Model**, presented by **David Neely**, (President, Affecting Change International, USA), a classroom solution suited to take advantage of the convergence of cloud computing technology and inexpensive tablets in order to create educational centres in remote areas and locations where building materials are in short supply. Furthermore, it can also be employed for learning, commerce or communication;

  - An e-governance initiative presented by **Ali Omar** (President, Tanzania Diaspora Council), implemented in the spirit of the Conference, to be realized in Zanzibar in cooperation with local institutions, which are already active in the experimentation of new technologies for development.

- To hold the 16th Infopoverty World Conference in the first half of April 2016, focusing on progress in the implementation of the present Declaration;

- To invite OCCAM, as the acting agency of the Infopoverty Programme, to continue serving as the Permanent Secretariat of the Conference and the Programme, and to help steering the application of their recommendations.

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

1. The Conference noted with appreciation the statements of:

- **H.E. Sebastiano Cardi** (Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN), who stressed the key contribution that ICTs can make to the implementation of the post-2015 agenda; recalled that these technologies are now much more available throughout the world, providing a basic infrastructure that did not exist 15 years ago when the MDGs were launched and that needs now to be further enhanced especially in developing countries; and called for joint efforts by the whole international community, in close collaboration with civil society and private sector, to seize the opportunities and tackle the challenges posed by the ICTs;

- **Laura Boldrini** (President, Italian Chamber of Deputies), who, in her message, emphasized the development opportunities that the digital innovations present for most developing economies by facilitating their integration in the world economy and a more equitable spread of wealth; and noted that it was the duty of developed countries to support this integration process, and to help further progress towards bridging the digital divide through the diffusion of cultural and information tools that would enable developing countries to fully seize the opportunities offered by the new technologies;

- **Amina Mohammed** (Special Advisor of the UNSG on post-2015 Development Planning), who, in her message delivered by **Joe Colombano** (Economic Advisor, Executive Office of the Secretary-General) highlighted the significance of the negotiations underway at the United Nations to frame a comprehensive, interrelated set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), accompanied by specific targets for their attainment, which will constitute the core of a new, "transformational" Sustainable Development Agenda, cutting across, and seeking an effective integration of policies, that affect the three dimensions – economic, environmental and social – of sustainable development; and stressed the key role that ICTs and the digital revolution can play by helping "shape" the follow up to the new Agenda and spread its benefits, and contribute to an effective system of accountability for its implementation;

- **Neven Mimica** (European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development) who in a message to the Conference stated that current negotiations in New York to frame a comprehensive set of sustainable Development Goals for the post 2015 period, provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to re-shape the way nations work together to establish a new ambitious, universal Agenda, but that, to implement such a transformative Agenda, the international community could not rely simply on traditional tools: innovative solutions, harnessing the countless possibilities offered by ICTs will be essential; emphasized that the European Union was committed to fostering innovation - both within the Union itself and in its international activities cooperation - and to supporting the deployment of digital technologies in developing countries as an enabler of inclusive and sustainable growth; noted that digital technology can generate profound changes in a relatively short period of time, can improve the capacity of national tax administrations, can help respond more rapidly and effectively to pressing needs in key socio-economic sectors including health crises and is fundamentally the key to more inclusive and democratic societies; and observed that it was EU's awareness of the importance of making this pivotal year a success that had led it to designate 2015 the "European Year for Development";

- **Pierpaolo Saporito** (OCCAM President and founder of the Infopoverty World Conference) who summarized the results of the last 15 years of the Infopoverty Conference and related Programme, stating the pathway to explore new virtual world capacities and rules, able to transform the real world using the

digital paradigm to fight poverty and to open a new era of democracy, equality and prosperity for all. To this end, he illustrated the architecture of the Global Platform for Digital Services as elaborated in the previous edition of the Conference, integrating it with a knowledge sharing process which would lead to a global partnership, as a tool for the achievement of the SDGs;

- **Melchiade Bukuru** (Chief, UNCCD Liaison Office in New York), who recalled that the map of poverty and hunger coincides with that of degraded lands, drylands, and lands affected by drought, that are, thus, the most food insecure; underlined the importance of achieving food security through proposed SDG 15 and Target 15.3 on achieving land degradation neutrality by 2030; and called on the Info Poverty Conference and OCCAM to support the UNCCD processes by helping monitor that Target and using ICTs to provide data to assess land reclamation progress and strengthen early warning for drought;

- **H.E. David B. Dunn** (Ambassador, U.S. Senior Advisor for Economic and Social Affairs), who underlined the importance of ICTs to connect people and communities, spread information, ideas and solve problems, and thus to serve not only as agents of economic growth but also as drivers of cooperation for sustainable development; recalled, that in the G7 countries, the digital economy has already surpassed the traditional sectors for its impact on GDP's growth, but that a similar phenomenon is occurring in emerging and developing markets, allowing even the smallest firms to become part of the global market; and concluded by emphasizing the fundamental contribution of ICT to help people achieve their full potential;

- **Noboru Sekiguchi** (Minister, Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN), who stressed the need to address the disaster risk reduction in order to protect the lives of people and achievements of development, as resulted in the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai. He also stressed the "Precision Farming" showcase at the EXPO Milan, as the potential applications of information technology in agriculture to feed the world population of 9 billion by 2050;

- **Sharon Brennen-Haylock** (Director, FAO Liaison Office in New York), who recalled the active role being played by FAO in promoting the use of ICTs for agriculture and food security, with a focus on rural communities and vulnerable populations, through a wide range of projects and public-private partnerships;

- **Gary Fowlie** (Director, ITU Liaison Office to the UN), who referred to ICTs as key enabling instruments for the exercise of human rights; emphasized the role of these technologies as tools of "empowerment" for people to gather information, be more effective in what they do, and implement new solutions to address their needs; noted that, among the SDGs, there is not a specific Goal on ICTs, but that there are at least 4 Goals concerning equitable education, achieving gender equality, promoting resilient institutions, and strengthening the means of implementation, in relation to which ICTs provide essential enabling instruments; recalled World Bank data whereby a 10% expansion of broadband networks, can lead to a 1,38 % growth in GDP; and stressed the importance, from the view point of economic growth and employment, of guaranteeing to all access to ICTs;

- **Eleonora Evi** (Member of European Parliament, Commission for environment, health and food security), who pointed out the environmental approach on the fight against poverty. It is pivotal to use in a better way the resources we have around the world, as we are not going in the right direction, and changing it is the only way to defeat hunger. A holistic approach is fundamental, with shared knowledge and best practices all around the world;

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- **Silvia Costa** (Member of European Parliament, President of the Commission on Culture and Education), who underlined the fundamental role played, beside access to water, food and health, by education as a basic human right for boys and girls. It is in fact the principal instrument to pursue individual growth, social inclusion, employment and equal opportunities, but also to fight against any kind of discrimination, including digital divide. Fighting poverty is impossible without the active engagement of NGOs, institutions, schools and welfare systems, with a particular focus on families and children, taking into account two aspects: poverty and social exclusion.

- **H.E. Heidi Schroderus-Fox** (Director, UN-OHRLLS), who recognized the great potential and transformative power of ICTs, even though their benefits were not always widely acknowledged; stressed the importance of moving towards a multi stakeholder approach, accelerating solutions and creating networks of cooperation; emphasized the imperative of stepping up the transfer of new technologies to vulnerable countries, especially in the fields of health, food security, education and job creation; and noted that, along with adequate social services, freedom of expression and access to information, and the possibilities of interactions with policy makers allowed by ICTs were essential components of the drive for change and of the transformation of lives that the post 2015 agenda should seek to achieve;

- **Yamina Djacta** (Director, UN-HABITAT New York Office), who emphasized the importance of data, including geospatial data and disaggregated data, in the process of formulating strategies for the Post-2015 development agenda and SDG at her agency, UN-HABITAT;

- **H.E. Denis Antoine** (Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Grenada to the UN), who reaffirmed the concept of "ICT4ALL"; noted that the march towards the SDGs would simply not succeed without an adequate ICTs infrastructure; and added that poor people have "rich minds" and, given the opportunity to access the tools and become involved in the process, they could become key drivers of progress not only for themselves, but for the whole of the societies in which they live;

- **Peter Kenilorea** (High Level Advisor, UN-SIDS), who brought up the results of the Samoa Conference on Small Island Developing States and pointed to ICTs as the essential bridge to contrast the isolation of small islands and a key agent of change and progress across all the agendas the UN is looking at;

- **H.E. Serge Telle (**Ambassador, Chairman of AVITEM, France), who asserted the need to provide new forms of cooperation empowered by ICTs, able to share primary services for the disadvantaged communities, underlining the best practices indicated by the eMedMed project for the South-Mediterranean region;

- **Steven H Shaha** (PhD, DBA, Centre for Public Policy & Administration, USA), who focused on the fact that health information remains the foundational basis for all best-care and vigilance for individuals and for the populations. Information vacuums and the overwhelming variety of health-related systems have been overcome by proven technologies, unifying enormous geographies for better outcomes, health vigilance and access to care (e.g. rural Canada and Australia).

- **Gloria Starr-Kins** (Editor-in-Chief and publisher of Society & Diplomatic Review, Government liaison and Protocol OCCAM), who underlined the importance of human contact, relationship and honesty in this new world of technology; and emphasized on the fact that IT is important for health advancement and for those suffering who need to see the reality of what can be done;

- **H.E. Carlos Garcia** (Ambassador, Founder and CEO, CG Global Consultants, New York), who presented his comments also on behalf of **H.E. Francis Lorenzo** (President, South-South News); They both agree on the contribution of education to open doors to the job market, reduction of inequalities, improvement of maternal health, reduction of child mortality, fostering solidarity and the promotion of environmental stewardship. In this regard, South-South News actively promotes ICTs for development by highlighting and sharing best practices and relevant news related to the implementation of the MDGs and the upcoming Post-2015 Development Agenda;

- **Naoko Kimura (**Relationship Manager Asia and Oceania, UN Global Compact), who recalled through the alignment of priorities and effective partnerships with the UN, Government and civil society, business has the potential to become a transformative force in the post-2015 era;

- **Masahiro Ikeno** (Vice President, NEC Corporation), who noted NEC's focus on the provision of "solutions for society" through social infrastructure sophistication with ICT to ensure the safety, security, efficiency and equality of society and enable people to enjoy fulfilled lives;

- **Susan Alzner** (Officer-in-Charge, UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service), who underlined the essential and productive function of ICT in her just three people NGLS office to facilitate constructive relationship between UN and civil society organizations in the Post-2015 development agenda formulation process;

- **Toshihiko Murata** (Representative of OCCAM to the UN), who reaffirmed the important contribution made for the ICTs for Development issues through the Infopoverty World Conference for the past 15 years. He called for the renewed support from UN Member States, UN agencies, civil society and private sector for the 16th Infopoverty World Conference in April 2016;

- **Jasmina Bojic** (Stanford University, UNAFF Founder and Director), who reaffirmed the relevance of cinema and audiovisuals at this stage of the digital revolution, giving continuity to the annual Signs of Change Film Festival – in partnership with the UNAFF Travelling Film Festival – in the context of the Infopoverty World Conference by screening three documentaries: Growing Home by Faisal Attrache; White Earth by J. Christian Jensen; The Well: Water Voices From Ethiopia by Paolo Barberi and Riccardo Russo.

   2. *Conference participants agreed to support follow up to the following proposals:*

- To ensure that the outcomes of EXPO Milan 2015 and the participatory processes leading to the Milan Charter will be built upon in the definition of national and international political agendas focused on food security and food education, as advocated by **Valentina Aprea** (Regional Minister to Education, Training and Employment, Regione Lombardia). In order to do so it is pivotal to underline the excellency of the scientific and academic institutions operating in Lombardy and in Italy, able to empower the green revolution going on in the emerging countries and to support the Zero Hunger UN Campaign;

- To take advantage of new opportunities given by the digital era to achieve the SDGs thanks to the legacy of Expo Milan, in order to introduce the new paradigms that will be vital to guarantee to everybody an healthy nutrition, with the contribution of every country attending the Conference. It will be a duty of the Municipality of Milan and all the local authorities to implement with OCCAM such initiatives for the post-Expo strategy, as stressed by **Ruggero Gabbai** (President, EXPO Municipal Commission);

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- To actively pursue the wide range of possibilities that exist to leverage ICTs as powerful "means of implementation" of the Sustainable Development Goals that will feature in the post 2015 Development Agenda, including in relation to the objectives relating to the promotion of "peaceful and inclusive societies" and access to justice embodied in SDG 16 , and in pursuing applications, such as providing free access to public legal data and harnessing ICTs in support of the exercise by Parliaments' of their law-making and oversight functions, that can have a multiplier effect across the development spectrum, as advocated by **Patrizio Civili** (IDLO Permanent Observer to the UN);

- To take into account the rights and needs of the disabled across all sectors covered by the post 2015 Development Agenda and in harnessing ICTs in support of that Agenda, as stressed by **Akiko Ito** (Chief, Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Division for Social Policy and Development, DESA);

- To pursue a policy of aggregation of ICTs projects into an enterprise platform of structured data, in order to show their over-all impact on development, in real time, with credible metrics for donors and for the partner communities, as suggested by **Frank Williams** (Director and UN Representative, World Vision);

- To underline, as the post 2015 data revolution takes hold, the need for transparency and for providing citizens and all stakeholders in the fight against poverty with the access and the tools they need to exercise accountability and to participate fully in co-creating a sustainable and dignified future, as said by **Jean-Louis Sarbib** (Development Gateway);

- To take into account the importance of an ecosystem approach to private health micro insurance and global health finance that uses ICTs to empower human capital, as suggested by **Georgia Sambunaris** (USAID, Retired Senior Adviser and Independent Consultant). This will, in turn, increase income and economic growth that is key to implementing cost-effective solutions to health outcomes through 2030, supporting the "health and wealth" benefits in sustainable development for resource poor settings that is necessary to control disease and increase income and economic growth for the poor in a holistic manner, rooted in health finance by the private sector;

- To urge a call for better communications in this new age of instant communications, as issued by **Firdaus Kharas** (Chairman, Chocolate Moose Media). Using the recent Ebola crises in West Africa as an example, Mr. Kharas called for greater emphasis on visual media in the development process to overcome barriers to receiving life-saving information such as a low literacy rate.

  3. *Conference participants also expressed appreciation to the following:*

- **IBM Smarter Planet Solutions**, represented by Robert St Thomas (Delivery Executive), who introduced the "Digital Transformation" project: the new digital infrastructure has been built, fusing analytics, big data, and mobility solutions to allow information to be accessed more effectively and with less infrastructure by the right social needs around the world: in education, health, agriculture, security, and economic growth. More thought must now be given to cultural considerations and new business models to better access the massive private sector IT investments that have already been made;

- **BASF,** represented by Dan Harris, for its contribution to cleaning areas polluted by industries with strategies and methods involving local populations and industries themselves, in order not only to solve pollution issues, but also to train the locals on how to clean up and keep cleaned up polluted areas;

- **iMedcare,** represented by Ying Zhang (President), who underlined how visualization technology involves technologies like computer graphic, image processing, streaming media, CAD and human-computer interaction. It enables the sharing and interaction of information such as images, audio, video, vital signs and electronic medical records. Literally, visualization technology is changing the traditional medical service mode.

- **United Methodist Communications,** represented by Neelley Hicks (Director, ICT4D Church Initiatives) who shared the importance of ICTs in times of crisis, as the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has made evident; urged the expansion of mobile network coverage in rural, underserved communities in developing countries and the adoption of solar power to overcome the lack of electricity. Outside of network coverage, ham radio networks can disseminate critical information – saving lives, and sparing economies from total devastation.

- **Eco Building Products,** for its commitment to sustainable and modern building technologies to support global housing needs, especially in situation of emergency and natural disasters such as earthquakes. The fact that opinions supported by science say concrete is a major contributor to climate change and the fact that it is that hardest product to deliver on site engineering values may support that it's time to explore other proven methods and product for these types of rebuilds;

- **Iron Bow Technologies**, represented by Matthew Jansen and Naiyer Imam (respectively Chief Business Development Manager and First Medicine's Operations Officer), who underlined the necessity in sourcing the paradigm shift in healthcare. By creating international partnerships, physicians will be able to support communities in building clinical standards to meet local needs while applying global resources to fill in the healthcare service gaps.

   5. *<u>The participants approve the results of the proceedings of the Conference.</u>*

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ANNEX I – PROPOSAL OF A UNIVERSAL PLATFORM MODEL
As discussed during the Conference