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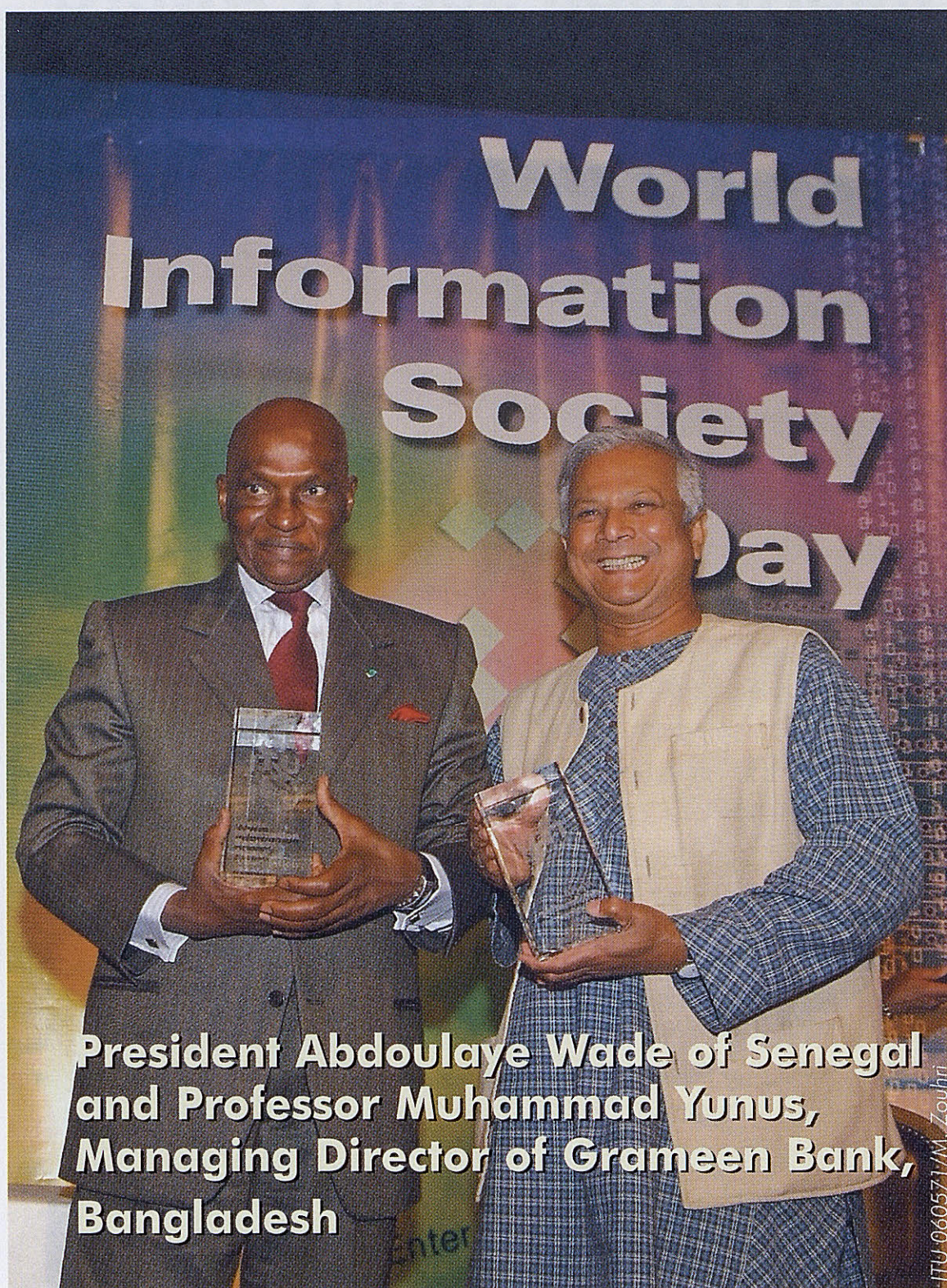
(ITU) للاتصالات الدولي الاتحاد في والمحفوظات المكتبة قسم أجراه الضوئي بالمسح تصوير نتاج (PDF) الإلكترونية النسخة هذه والمحفوظات المكتبة قسم في المتوفرة الوثائق ضمن أصلية ورقية وثيقة من نقلاً.

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## Recipients of the first ITU World Information Society Award



**President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and Professor Muhammad Yunus, Managing Director of Grameen Bank, Bangladesh**

■ **Abdoulaye Wade**, a lawyer and statesman, has been the President of the Republic of Senegal since 1 April 2000.

As one of the main promoters of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative, President Wade has spoken out actively for Africa and the information society.

Throughout the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process, he vigorously championed the

concept of digital solidarity and emphasized the potential that information and communication technologies hold for development. The principle of digital solidarity was embodied in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Geneva Plan of Action that resulted from the first phase of WSIS.

An optimist and visionary, President Wade has worked assiduously to make the concept of digital solidarity a reality through the creation

of the Digital Solidarity Fund, a new voluntary funding mechanism aimed at supporting local development projects.

The Digital Solidarity Fund was inaugurated in Geneva in April 2005 and welcomed by the second phase of WSIS in Tunis in November 2005.

■ **Muhammad Yunus'** innovative approach to poverty alleviation in Bangladesh has inspired the global microcredit movement, reaching out to millions of poor women.

A noted economist, Professor Yunus started the Grameen Bank Project in 1976. Today, Grameen Bank provides collateral-free loans to 6 million clients in Bangladesh, of which 96 per cent are women. Over the last two decades, Grameen Bank has loaned over 5 billion dollars to the poor.

Professor Yunus has also created a number of companies in Bangladesh to address diverse issues of poverty and development. Among the companies are Grameen Phone (a mobile telephone company).

Its Village Phone programme, through which women entrepreneurs can start a business providing wireless payphone service in rural areas of Bangladesh, has become a legendary success. It has created a new class of women entrepreneurs who have raised themselves from poverty. Moreover, it improved the livelihoods of farmers and others who were provided access to critical market information and lifeline communications previously unattainable in some 28 000 villages of Bangladesh. More than 55 000 phones are currently in operation, with more than 80 million people benefiting from access to ICT. ■