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Author: Yoshio Utsumi

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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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World Telecommunication Day 17 May 2005

Creating an equitable Information Society: Time for Action

Human communication has always been a combination of intellect and emotion — a characteristic that helps to define our shared humanity. Our information society has a way of reminding us of this reality, often in a dramatic fashion. A recent example is the Asian earthquake and tsunami disaster when information and communication technologies (ICT) brought the tragedy home to us in a manner unimaginable in the not-so-distant past and produced a surge of unprecedented global sympathy and humanitarian action.

From the birth of the telegraph, through radio and television broadcasting to satellite communications and the Internet, the work of ITU has been essential in harnessing the power of technology to fulfil a human basic need for communication. May 17th 2005 marks 140 years since ITU took on this important mission.

The year 2005 also marks another important anniversary for ITU. The release of the Maitland Report 20 years ago helped the world realize that it was not right that only a minority of the human race should enjoy the benefits of ICT while a majority lived in comparative isolation. The ITU report, prepared by the Maitland Commission, is a landmark in identifying the digital divide between information “haves” and “have-nots” and



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in proposing concrete solutions to bridge it. Since its publication, ITU has been working in earnest to bring the benefits of ICT to all of humanity.

In 2003, ITU held the first-ever World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva. At the Summit, world leaders from 175 countries endorsed a Declaration of Principles and a Plan of Action that embraced the idea of universal, accessible and affordable access to ICTs. The Declaration of Principles has set the stage. The Plan of Action points the way forward. Discussions at the Summit also highlighted the fact that the digital divide is not only among countries, but also within countries. Access to ICT also varies greatly between urban and rural areas, between

the rich and the poor, between the educated and the illiterate and between men and women. This multiplicity of divides is a major impediment to the emergence of an equitable and viable Information Society.

The second phase of the Summit, to be held this November in Tunis, will measure progress made in fulfilling the specific objectives set in Geneva and will call on all stakeholders to transform the political will expressed at the first phase into long-term commitments. To help focus the world's attention on the importance of this mission, ITU members selected as the theme for World Telecommunication Day 2005, “Creating an Equitable Information Society: Time for Action”.

Looking ahead to Tunis, the true test of an equitable information society will be the extent to which today's powerful knowledge-based communication tools are able to connect different peoples across all geographic, economic and information divides. As the members of the Maitland's Commission stated 20 years ago: “Neither in the name of common humanity nor on grounds of common interests, is such a disparity acceptable.” Clearly, the time for action is now!

Yoshio Utsumi

Secretary-General
International Telecommunication Union