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**Author:** Ban Ki-moon

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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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## Message from United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Information and communication technologies have transformed the global landscape. They power the world economy and have become the great enablers of modern society, helping people communicate across distances and cultural divides, facilitating trade and commerce, and providing access to critical resources such as health care and education.

Recent events around the world, in particular in North Africa and the Middle East, have also highlighted the catalytic role that mobile phones and social media can play in galvanizing public opinion against repression. And in the aftermath of natural disasters that have struck with greater frequency and force, we have seen how these technologies are a vital part of the aid response, establishing lines of communication that can save lives, reunite families and help emergency relief reach people in need.

The theme of this year's World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, *Better life in rural communities with information and communication technologies*, highlights the need to harness the full potential of these technologies for the benefit of the world's rural population. Of the developing world's 1.4 billion extremely poor people, 70 per cent live in rural areas. Their lives can be transformed as we connect village

schools to information and knowledge on the Internet, bring telemedicine to far-flung rural health centres, provide accurate weather information to farmers and fishermen, and supply up-to-date market information to producers.

The International Telecommunication Union and its partners continue striving to connect the world. I welcome these efforts, especially the drive to bring broadband to every community. Broadband telecommunications will make it possible to deliver content to the remotest rural districts.

As we bridge the digital divide, we narrow the chasm that separates those with and without access to information and knowledge, thereby broadening opportunities for a better life. Greater access means earlier achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. It means less poverty and hunger, and more environmental sustainability. And it translates into greater equality and empowerment for women and the underprivileged.

On this World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, let us resolve to connect rural communities and the entire world to the digital revolution as a means of achieving our development goals and fostering peace and prosperity for all.