

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO THE BYND 2015 GLOBAL YOUTH SUMMIT
Costa Rica, 9 September 2013**

Delivered by Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

I am pleased to send greetings to the BYND 2015 Global Youth Summit – to those here in person and those participating online throughout the world. I thank President Chincilla of Costa Rica for hosting and Dr. Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, for engaging young people in this important discussion on how best to use information and communication technology for social good.

Young people, perhaps more than anyone, understand how ICTs can help make a difference in people's lives. In recent years we have seen how youth-driven social media platforms can help disseminate ideas and generate momentum for change. Information technology has a growing role in connecting friends and families, teachers and students, doctors and patients, farmers, traders and markets.

ICTs are increasingly important to the work of the United Nations, promoting efficiency, transparency and accountability. I am the first Secretary-General to use platforms such as Weibo, Facebook and Twitter, but I will certainly not be the last. Modern communications technologies are also supporting new and exciting initiatives such as the Global Pulse – our effort to harness the power of digital data to advance economic and social development and better listen and respond to the citizens of the world.

ICTs will play a central role in our efforts to enhance our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and define and pursue a post-2015 sustainable development agenda. They give us immense power to accelerate progress on education, employment, poverty reduction, access to health care and the empowerment of disabled persons, women and youth.

Over the past year, these new tools have enabled the UN to initiate an unprecedented global conversation on people's aspirations for the coming decades. –More than one million people from all regions and backgrounds contributed, half of whom were under 30 years old. The report, "*A Million Voices: The World We Want*" will be published tomorrow and will provide valuable guidance to the deliberations of the General Assembly in September and beyond. This Summit can do the same. I hope it also invigorates your own commitment to using ICTs to enrich your lives and benefit your communities and the world.

I wish you an inspiring and productive meeting.