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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO WSIS FORUM 2010

Geneva, 10 May 2010

I am pleased to greet the ministers, businesspeople, civil society groups and other stakeholders participating in the WSIS Forum 2010. Thank you for your efforts to promote the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society.

You meet as the global financial crisis and economic slowdown continue to endanger progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Vulnerable and poorer communities are also coping with the growing risks associated with climate change and natural disasters.

Information and communication technologies are already part of the response; they can and must play an even bigger role moving forward. The links between socio-economic development and the empowerment made possible by ICTs are increasingly clear, especially in remote, rural and marginalized urban areas. Yet there is still a long way to go before gains in access will significantly narrow the “digital divide”. I urge world leaders and all partners to follow through on the commitments they made at the Summit.

I also encourage you to focus more attention on the new and emerging issues of the information age, including risks to privacy, identity theft and the abuse of ICTs for acts motivated by racism and xenophobia, or for child abuse and child pornography. The United Nations must continue to do its part to make cyberspace safer for young people.

I welcome the inclusiveness with which UN agencies are working with each other and with the private sector, civil society, academia, Governments and others to leverage their capacities and know-how. Please accept my best wishes for the success of your efforts to uphold the principles and implement the plan of action adopted by the Summit. I look forward to welcoming the WSIS Forum to UN Headquarters in New York next year.