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## Global Summit Roundtable Seeks Ways Information, Communications Technologies Can Upgrade Lives

**Geneva, December 10** – Global government, industry and NGO leaders will debate ways to harness technology's use for a more peaceful and prosperous world in roundtables this week, and address the challenges of connectivity.

The high-level forums are a key pillar of the World Summit on the Information Society, a worldwide meeting which aims to upgrade lives through a more egalitarian sharing and shaping of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Roundtables help meet a primary Summit goal of forging practical partnerships for global progress by allowing leaders to share their vision of an engaged and empowered information society.

On 10 and 11 December, up to thirty Heads of State, ICT ministers, leaders of international and non-governmental organizations and CEOs from countries ranging from Azerbaijan to Senegal will meet in roundtables to discuss global ICT investment strategies, Internet law and ethics, and ways that today's powerful information tools can serve higher goals. WSIS is the first-ever high-level forum focusing exclusively on the information society.

Topics to be tackled in discussions include:

- **“Creating Digital Opportunities”** or ways to boost investment in ICT infrastructure such as transectoral cooperation and pro-active ICT policies with a focus on access, funding and building partnerships  
10 December, from 1700 to 1900
- **“Diversity in Cyberspace”**, or striking a balance between culturally and linguistically appropriate Internet content - and freedom of the press and expression, cybergovernance and cybersecurity  
11 December, from 1100 to 1300
- **“ICTs as a Tool to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals,”** or how today's powerful information and communications technologies can help promote democracy and eradicate hunger, poverty, disease and homelessness, and other global goals set by Heads of State at the UN Millennium Conference  
11 December, from 1500 to 1700

The three two-hour sessions will be chaired by a Head of State. CEOs on panels include Giuliano Beretta of Eutelsat; Bombardier's Robert Greenhill; Worldspace's Noah Samara and KDDI Corporation's Tadashi Onodera.

Among participants from international organizations are Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, Peter Woicke, managing director of the World Bank's funding arm, the International Finance Corporation and Rubens Ricupero, UNCTAD's Director-General.

As a first for a global UN Summit reflecting WSIS's focus on a truly inclusive information society, civil society representatives will participate in the debate. They include Cassio Taniguchi, mayor of Curitiba,

Brazil; Richard Stallman, president of the Free Software Foundation and Law Chi-kwong, of Hong Kong's Social Service.

Roundtables are a key but evolving component of a multi-stakeholder dialogue and negotiating process culminating at the Summit, which is also a springboard for further action.

At WSIS Heads of State will sign a Declaration of Principles and Action Plan on ways to forge a more inclusive information society. The Action Plan is a road map for target-setting and measuring at a follow-on Summit in 2005 in Tunisia.

WSIS's goals include connecting all villages, schools, governments and hospitals by 2015, ensuring that ICTs serve higher global goals, and building confidence, trust and security in today's powerful ICT tools.

### **About WSIS**

The World Summit on the Information Society provides a unique opportunity for all key stakeholders to develop a common vision and understanding and to address the whole range of relevant issues related to the Information Society. It aims to bring together Heads of State, Executive Heads of the United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, civil society entities, industry leaders and media representatives to foster a clear statement of political will and concrete plan of action to shape the future of the global information society and to promote the urgently needed access of all countries to information, knowledge and communication technologies for development.

The Summit has been endorsed by the UN General Assembly and will take place under the high patronage of Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, with the International Telecommunication Union taking the lead role in its preparation.

The Summit will be held in two phases: Geneva (10-12 December 2003) and Tunisia (16-18 November 2005).  
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