Background Information

The World Telecom Development Conference (WTDC) in brief

The objective of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) is to provide a framework for the examination of issues, plans and programmes relating to Telecommunication Development and to establish priorities for the work of the Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D). The World Telecom Development Conference (WTDC) is convened every 4 years.

WTDC-06 in Doha will take into account the WSIS Geneva Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. The expected outcome of WTDC-06 – the DOHA Action Plan – shall recognize the need for congruence between the ITU-D future programme of work and the WSIS outcome documents. It will set out ways for ITU to implement the WSIS goals over the next four years. WTDC will promote, in particular, international cooperation, regional initiatives and multi-stakeholder partnerships that can sustain and strengthen telecommunication infrastructure and institutions in developing countries.

What is the *Connect the World* Initiative?

The *Connect the World* initiative is a global multi-stakeholder platform launched in June 2005 by the Secretary-General of ITU and founding partners within the context of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). *Connect the World* was established to promote existing projects and encourage new partnerships to bridge the digital divide. By showcasing development efforts now underway and by tracking progress and identifying areas where needs are the most pressing, *Connect the World* will help create a critical mass that will generate the momentum needed to "connect the unconnected by 2015."

The Challenge

At present, ITU estimates that around 800'000 villages — or 30% of all villages worldwide — are still without any kind of connection. It would take an estimated 1 billion USD to connect each village through a shared community access point such as a school, hospital or post office. From there, villages could expand access through various local solutions.

Achieving the Connectivity Goals set at WSIS

The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted at the second phase of the Summit in November 2005, encourages strengthened and continuing cooperation between and among stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes, for instance through the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships including Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), and the promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms, in a joint effort and dialogue with developing and less developed countries, development partners and actors in the ICT sector.

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By bringing committed partners together to empower people through communications and information, *Connect the World* serves as a catalyst for achieving the connectivity goals set at the World Summit on the Information Society, outlined below:

WSIS Commitment	*Comments*	*Prospects for achieving goal by 2015*
a) to connect villages with ICTs and establish community access points.	There are around 2.7 million "villages" worldwide of which around three-quarters already have telephone service. However, coverage of community access points is not so widespread and, in many cases, there is no formal measurement of their number.	**Good** prospects for connecting all villages by 2015. **Poor** prospects for putting community access points in each village.
b) to connect universities, colleges, secondary schools and primary schools with ICTs.	Data are not widely available on a consistent basis, but for countries where data is available, around 100% coverage of universities and colleges, 95% of secondary schools and 90% of primary schools are ICT-connected.	**Very good** prospects for connecting all universities, colleges and secondary schools by 2015. **Good** prospects for primary schools
c) to connect scientific and research centres with ICTs.	Assuming that most scientific and research centres are associated with universities, then around 100% coverage is already achieved.	**Excellent** prospects for connecting all scientific and research centres by 2015.
d) to connect public libraries, cultural centres, museums, post offices and archives with ICTs.	There are around 41'000 museums worldwide of which around 37'000 have websites. There are around 660'000 public postal establishments. The percentage of those offering online services ranges from 26% (Africa) to 88% (industrialized countries), according to UPU.	**Excellent** prospects for connecting public libraries, museums, and archives. **Very Good** prospects for post offices and cultural centres.
e) to connect health centres and hospitals with ICTs.	Data are not widely available on a consistent basis, but it estimated that there are more than 40'000 hospitals worldwide.	**Excellent** prospects connecting hospitals. **Very Good** prospects for health centres.
f) to connect all local and central government departments and establish websites and email addresses.	Out of 191 UN Member States, 178 had a central government website by 2004. Measurement by local government and central government departments is not consistently available	**Excellent** prospects for connecting central governments and departments. **Very Good** prospects for local government.
g) to adapt all primary and secondary school curricula to meet the challenges of the Information Society, taking into account national circumstances.	This target does not lend itself readily to measurement. Within Europe, only in two countries for which data is available is ICT not included in the minimum core curriculum.	**Very good** prospects for ICTs in the curricula in secondary schools. **Good** prospects for primary schools.
h) to ensure that all of the world's population have access to television and radio services.	In 2002, global population coverage was around 95 per cent for radio and 86 per cent for television.	**Excellent** prospects for radio coverage. **Very good** prospects for TV.
i) to encourage the development of content and to put in place technical conditions in order to facilitate the presence and use of all world languages on the Internet.	There are over 6'000 languages in the world, many of which do not have a written alphabet and are spoken by small groups of people. Nevertheless, progress is being made on implementing multilingual domain names and linguistic diversity is increasing on the Internet.	**Very good** prospects for achieving technical conditions for all languages to be available on the Internet, but **poor** prospects for all languages to be in use.
j) to ensure that more than half the world's inhabitants have access to ICTs within their reach.	Around 80% of the world's inhabitants are within range of a mobile signal. Household ownership of phone service (fixed or mobile) stands at around 40 per cent worldwide. Personal ownership of mobile phones stands at around 30 per cent.	**Excellent** prospects for achieving 50% household coverage. **Very good** prospects for achieving 50% personal ownership of ICTs.

Source: Based on ITU (2003) *World Telecommunication Development Report: Access Indicators for the Information Society*, and World Bank (2005) *Tracking ICTs: World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Targets.*

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Three key areas of activity

Connect the World has identified three key areas of activity that, together, constitute the primary building blocks needed to reach the goal of connecting the unconnected by 2015: enabling environment; infrastructure and readiness; and, applications and services:

BUILDING BLOCK 1	BUILDING BLOCK 2	BUILDING BLOCK 3
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE & READINESS	APPLICATIONS & SERVICES
▪ good governance ▪ fair, technology-neutral policy & regulatory frameworks ▪ intellectual property protection ▪ consensus building / dispute resolution mechanisms ▪ national e-strategies ▪ national business and social development models ▪ standardization	▪ network infrastructure development ▪ capacity building ▪ national ICT awareness raising ▪ funding of universal service / access ▪ local content development	▪ e-governance ▪ e-health ▪ e-learning ▪ e-business ▪ e-employment ▪ e-environment ▪ e-agriculture ▪ e-science ▪ disaster preparedness and response systems ▪ child and youth initiatives ▪ cultural and linguistic diversity and local content

By emphasizing the need for development efforts in each of these three areas, *Connect the World* takes a holistic approach to the complex problem of bridging the digital divide.

And by showcasing activities and tracking progress in these areas, *Connect the World* also helps provide a truly global picture of what's being done where – and where more effort is urgently needed.

Each ***Connect the World*** partner is directly involved in activities in one or more of these three Building Blocks. In areas not adequately covered by current *Connect the World* partnerships, new partners are actively sought.

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Levering Partnerships

Connect the World recognizes the key role played by ALL stakeholders and places a strong emphasis on the importance of partnerships between the public and private sectors, international organizations and civil society. At the time of its launch, *Connect the World* included 22 partners from government, business, international organizations and civil society. It is an open initiative and new partners continue to join. Several new partners will be announced during the WTDC to join the list of existing partners below:

Industry	Government	International Organizations	Civil Society
▪ Alcatel ▪ Huawei ▪ Infosys ▪ Intel ▪ KDDI ▪ Microsoft ▪ Telefónica ▪ WorldSpace ▪ GSM Association ▪ SUN Microsystems – Global Education and Learning Initiative ▪ SES ASTRA ▪ OnSat Native American Services ▪ Nokia	▪ Egypt ▪ France ▪ Senegal ▪ Korean Agency for Digital Opportunity and Promotion (KADO) ▪ Japan ▪ Romania	▪ UNESCO ▪ Universal Postal Union ▪ UN Fund for International Partnerships ▪ United Nations Development Programme ▪ International Telecommunications Satellite Organization ▪ European Commission ▪ RASCOM ▪ ITU	▪ Child Helpline International ▪ MS Swaminathan Foundation ▪ Télécoms Sans Frontières ▪ Grameen Foundation USA ▪ One Laptop per Child ▪ OneWorld International Foundation /OneWorld South Asia ▪ Development Gateway Foundation ▪ Bibliotheca Alexandrina ▪ APWKomitel ▪ Aidworld Humanitarian ICT

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