

The Declaration recognizes that effective regulation of ICT is “crucial to development, both economic and social, especially in the light of the global financial crisis”. It stresses that “the needs of users should be the driving force for all regulations, to promote safe, affordable and widespread access to ICT”. Regulatory guidelines should be “based on common basic principles that can be followed by all countries of the world,” it adds. “We want to see open markets for telecommunications and ICT, in order to stimulate competition, and at the same time motivate local ICT companies in each country, to ensure affordability.”

Finally, the Youth Forum called for sustainable ICT projects and initiatives. To achieve this, local people must be actively involved from the start, and be offered training in “managing, financing and maintaining projects after external experts have left”. Echoing the principle behind ITU’s Connect a School, Connect a Community initiative, the Declaration says that schools should be at the centre of efforts because they bring communities together — “communities that have the knowledge and skills to manage and finance projects on their own, as well as initiate their own projects”.

### **A promise of continuing engagement**

The Declaration ends with a promise to work towards achieving all these goals. “We are dynamic individuals, representing different nations, religions and cultures, yet united in our commitment: a commitment to global change and increased awareness,” the document states. “We, the Fellows of the Youth Forum, commit ourselves to continued engagement with governments and other stakeholders” in order to “educate people, unite countries, and connect the world.”