

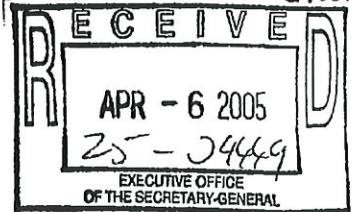
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Note to the Secretary-General

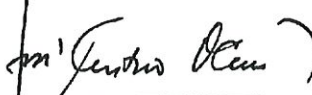
Message to the UN ICT Task Force Meeting, Dublin
13-15 April 2005

The Eighth meeting of the UN ICT Task Force will take place in Dublin on 13-14 April 2005. A Global Forum on Education will be held on the first day as part of the meeting. The focus at the Forum will be on advancing education in developing countries with the application of ICT. The Forum has been designed to advance the Secretary-General's overall agenda of promoting the MDGs and contribute to the MDGs campaign. As such, Mr. Jeffrey Sachs will be a keynote speaker at the opening of the Forum.

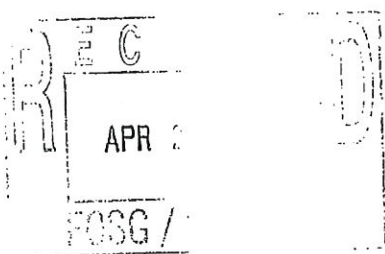
The Forum has attracted worldwide participation, including several ministers of education from developing countries and practitioners from major institutions including the World Bank, UNESCO and others. It promises to be an impactful event which can mobilize support for our MDG campaign.

In addition, an open consultation on the proposed Global Alliance on ICT and Development will be held during the meeting with participation from the private sector, civil society and other interested stakeholders. This forms part of a series of consultations, both virtual and physical, that have taken place in New York, Geneva and in the various regions. The results of these consultations will be consolidated and the Task Force is expected to formulate its recommendations in Dublin, which will be submitted to the Secretary-General thereafter.

I strongly recommend that, as on past occasions, the Secretary-General may wish to send a message to the UN ICT Task Force meeting in Dublin which I will read out on your behalf. A draft message is attached for your approval.


José Antonio Ocampo
6 April 2005

cc: Deputy Secretary-General



HJB
cc: YM
DSG

**Draft Message by the Secretary-General
to the UN ICT Task Force and the Global Forum on Education**

(Dublin, 13-14 April 2005)

- Over the past three years, the UN ICT Task Force has made an important contribution to promoting a broad understanding of the potential and opportunities offered by information and communication technologies to advance development and eradicate poverty. The Task Force has also brought the key stakeholders on a common platform to confront the many challenges that we face in this endeavor. It has helped strengthen our common resolve to harness the potential of ICT, and place the tools brought forward by the information revolution in the hands of people everywhere.
- The need for innovative, bold and action-oriented approaches in this field is now more acute than ever. Without the widespread and sustained use of ICT, the internationally agreed development goals contained in the Millennium Declaration will be very difficult to achieve within the intended timeline.
- This year, the United Nations is undertaking a major effort to achieve a breakthrough towards making the MDGs achievable. The year 2005, with the coincidence of the Millennium Summit +5 and the World Summit on the Information Society, has the potential to be a watershed in integrating the global ICT agenda into a broader UN development agenda. We have a unique opportunity to bring about strategic coherence in the follow up actions from these important meetings.
- If these objectives are to be realized, the United Nations itself needs to reinvent itself and enhance its capacity to respond better to the challenges of the 21st century. I have proposed a comprehensive set of actions that outline much-needed changes in our organizational and management practices. I strongly believe that the use of ICT can be a transforming factor in the way our organization works and relates to the world at large. ICT must be one of the pillars of institutional change. We must, finally, bring the Organization's collective mindset and methods of work into the digital age. I welcome the work the Task Force is doing in this regard.
- Let me say that I especially welcome the focus of the Dublin Forum. Education is the prerequisite for inclusion in the knowledge economy and information society. It is the foundation of all our efforts to make life better for people living in poverty.
- We must advance education in all of its many dimensions: it is about a little girl in Afghanistan as much as about a university student in Uganda and a worker in Brazil. Education, learning, access to global knowledge - this is the way to productive employment, empowerment, enrichment of life, promoting human dignity.

- There have been quite a few initiatives, notably the Global e-School project, as a multi-stakeholder initiative spearheaded by Ireland and other Task Force members, to strengthen and improve the systems of education in developing countries, by using ICT. These are welcome examples of action. But we need to do much more now, if the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015 is to be realized. I encourage this Forum to help identify the most promising approaches for the way forward and wish you every success.