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Note to the Secretary-General

Global Alliance for ICT on Development

Please find attached a note from Mr. Ocampo on the Global Alliance for ICT and Development. We have discussed this proposal a number of times in the Steering Committee on the World Summit on the Information Society. The Committee endorsed the proposal at its last meeting on 24 February 2006.

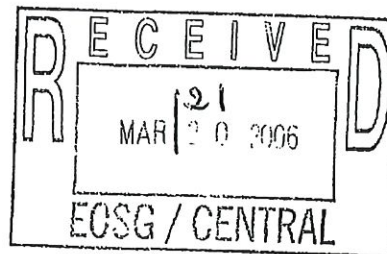
While not unanimous, there is very strong support for the Alliance among Member States, the private sector and civil society.

I recommend that you agree to endorse this proposal in its broad outlines.


The Deputy Secretary-General
20 March 2006

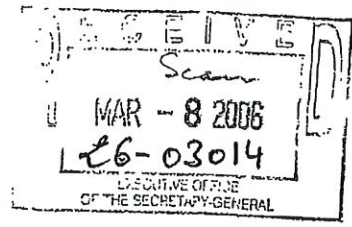
cc: Mr. Malloch Brown

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Note for the Secretary-General

Global Alliance for ICT and Development

1. The Chairman of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force, in his letter of 7 May 2004 addressed to the Secretary-General, proposed the establishment of an innovative “Global Alliance for ICT and Development”, an open and inclusive forum for policy dialogue on ICT-for-Development that would catalyze the role of information and communication technology in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In his reply, dated 2 July 2004, the Secretary-General expressed a “very positive” reaction to this initiative. The Secretary-General requested the Chairman of the ICT Task Force to submit a more detailed proposal for his consideration and approval.

2. Following this request, a comprehensive series of open world-wide consultations with governments, the private sector, and civil society was launched in November 2004. These were complemented by an active and intensive online forum. Permanent Missions in New York were polled for comments on a number of occasions. The consultations were completed during the WSIS in Tunis in November 2005.

3. The consultations identified a broad consensus among stakeholders on key issues. There was wide recognition that at present there is no global multi-stakeholder forum that would adequately and comprehensively address issues related to ICT and Development. While the four year term of the UN ICT Task Force came to an end last December, the Task Force was seen by the private sector and both developed and developing countries, as a truly innovative initiative of the Secretary-General which helped establish UN leadership on cutting-edge issues relating to ICT for development. A more broadly-based Global Alliance would reflect the continued commitment of the Secretary-General and the United Nations to providing leadership for multi-stakeholder engagement in bringing ICT at the service of development and the achievement of MDGs.

4. An inclusive, transparent and multi-stakeholder “Global Alliance” was identified as the optimal approach. All stakeholders emphasized that the Alliance should be linked to the United Nations and ECOSOC and should be under the patronage of the Secretary-General. It would not be operational in nature. Rather, it would be a platform for policy dialogue to help connect different constituencies and promote collaboration, identify emerging issues and bring them to the attention of the appropriate bodies, and link the WSIS outcome with the broad United Nations development agenda. The principal elements of this approach for the Alliance emerging from the consultations are summarized in Annex I.

5. Among developing countries, the Alliance enjoys overwhelming support, with a formal endorsement by the African group at WSIS. India, China, Pakistan and South Africa are active advocates for the Alliance. The European Commission and major European countries have expressed their support for the Global Alliance, with several key countries indicating their readiness to contribute financially.

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6. Strong support was also shown by the private sector, both in the United States and in Europe, and civil society groups participating in WSIS. The relevant specialized agencies and United Nations entities (ITU, UNESCO, ILO, FAO, WHO, WIPO, UNCTAD, UNDP, Regional Commissions) expressed support and their interest to contribute to the Alliance.

7. Major relevant networks, such as the World Federation of Scientists, the Global Knowledge Partnership, the World Summit Awards, the International Chamber of Commerce and the Global Business Dialogue, have also indicated strong support and their interest in participating in the Alliance.

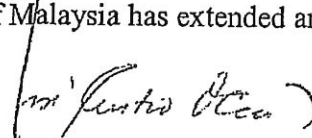
8. The Tunis Agenda for Information Society contains very strong and explicit calls for "development of multi-stakeholder processes at the national, regional and international levels to discuss and collaborate on" the diffusion and use of Internet "as a means to support development efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals". The Global Alliance for ICT and Development would be a direct response to this call. It would be linked to the United Nations and work under the authority of the Secretary-General and the auspices of the ECOSOC, reporting periodically, through the Secretary-General, to ECOSOC for assessment and guidance.

9. As a result of consultations we had with UNDP, UNCTAD, ITU, UNESCO and other agencies, we have reached a clear understanding of the respective roles of relevant United Nations entities in implementation of and follow up to WSIS. In this context, the Alliance would provide a multi-stakeholder complement to the inter-governmental (ECOSOC and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development) and inter-agency processes on a broad range of relevant issues.

10. The Alliance and the Internet Governance Forum are envisaged as distinct streams of activities, with the IFG focusing on public policy issues related to key elements of Internet Governance, while the Alliance will address a broader array of issues relevant to the use of ICT for advancing the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDG's.

11. At its meeting of 24 February 2006, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, the Steering Group on WSIS endorsed the proposal to launch the Global Alliance for ICT and Development. At its meeting on 27-28 February held in Paris, the HLCP also extended its support to the Global Alliance in the context of preparing its recommendations to CEB to set up an inter-agency UN Group on Information Society, as requested by the Tunis Summit.

12. Upon your approval, we intend to move expeditiously with a view to convening an inaugural forum of the Alliance in June. The Government of Malaysia has extended an invitation to host the forum in Kuala Lumpur.


José Antonio Ocampo
7 March 2006

cc : The Deputy Secretary-General