

Digital Opportunity Task Force
June 2002



REPORT CARD

Digital Opportunities for All

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Leadership for Change

"We will review the implementation of the Genoa Plan of Action at our next Summit on the basis of a report by the G8 Presidency."

— Genoa Summit Communiqué

In July 2001, G8 leaders endorsed the Genoa Plan of Action, a product of the work of the Digital Opportunities Task Force. The DOT Force, which was formed following the 2000 G8 Summit in Okinawa, represented both a unique model of international cooperation and a new way of responding to the challenges of development. It brought together committed leaders from government, industry and civil society, drawn from G8 member countries and from the developing world, to conceive a forward-looking action plan designed to expand the use of digital technology and to universalize its benefits. Its report, *Digital Opportunities for All: Meeting the Challenge*, contained a vision of global development based on the power of information technology to promote sustainable growth, advance social justice and strengthen democratic governance.

Less than one year later, the DOT Force vision has moved dramatically closer to realization. Participation has reached well beyond its original membership to include almost 100 stakeholder organizations, spanning more than 30 countries. Through the work of its implementation teams, the DOT Force has generated more than 20 major bilateral and multilateral initiatives, operating across a broad range of areas crucial to balanced development — access, governance, entrepreneurship, health and education. In designing and implementing these initiatives, DOT Force members have also given special attention to the needs of lesser developed countries, and particularly to Africa, responding directly to the requirements articulated in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

As a DOT Force member and its current Chair, it is my honour and privilege to forward this report on the accomplishments and the ongoing work of the DOT Force in preparation for the G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada.

V. Peter Harder

"... We renew our commitment to the principle of inclusion: everyone should be enabled to participate in and no one should be excluded from the benefits of the global information society."

— Okinawa Charter on the Global Information Society, July 2000

New Tools and Partnerships for Development

At the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, world leaders set a series of targets for the reduction of poverty, known as the Millennium Development Goals. They pledged to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; to achieve universal primary education; to promote gender equality and empower women; to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health; to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; to ensure environmental sustainability; and to develop a global partnership for development.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) provide a powerful tool to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, the "mainstreaming" of information technology within project planning and design and, even more importantly, within development strategies is critically important, both nationally and internationally. The value and legacy of the DOT Force is clear — it has focussed global attention on sustainable, ICT-enabled development, and has encouraged the international development community to mainstream ICTs in its bilateral and multilateral assistance programs.

Over the past two years, DOT Force partners have worked with great passion and dedication to broaden the understanding that ICTs are a fundamental tool for reducing poverty and for spurring sustainable

development. As stressed in its first report to G8 leaders: "access to knowledge and information is a prerequisite for modern human development." This central premise underlies the continuing work of the DOT Force and the commitment of its members to expanding the contribution of ICTs to all forms and levels of development. Examples of the enabling power of these technologies are now emerging. Community radio stations in Africa are providing vital information on weather disaster warnings, health and nutrition, and HIV/AIDS prevention. The quality of life of many poor women in Bangladesh has improved through the innovative use of cellular phones. In Bolivia, Internet centres have been set up to provide farmers with timely information on crops, production and processing, as well as policies and regulations.

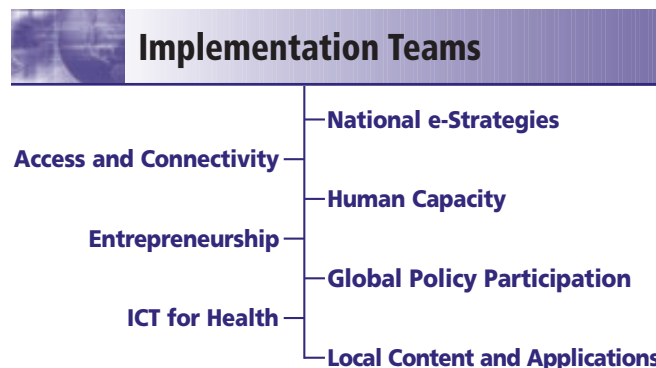
The Formula for Success

The success of the DOT Force has relied on the close cooperation among representatives from G8 governments, developing nations, international organizations, and the non-profit and private sectors. Each participated fully and equally in its work. The multi-stakeholder approach of the DOT Force now serves as the model for other global "ICT for development" initiatives that follow in its footsteps.

Advancing the Genoa Plan of Action

Soon after the July 2001 Summit, DOT Force partners organized a series of action-oriented implementation teams to design and carry forward initiatives addressing the priorities of the Genoa Plan of Action. The teams, each of which is led by one or more DOT Force champions, consist of governments, development agencies, developing country representatives, civil society, industry and international organizations, drawn from both within and outside the formal membership of the DOT Force. Like the DOT Force itself, the teams operate in an independent and decentralized fashion, stressing an informal, practical approach focussed on results. As current Chair of the DOT Force, Canada has coordinated the work of the various teams, with a view to reporting on progress at the 2002 Summit in Kananaskis. All of the implementation teams were also mandated to develop projects of particular relevance to least developed countries, with a special emphasis on Africa.

The Genoa Plan of Action also called upon bilateral and multilateral development assistance programs to better integrate ICT for development as a strategic, cross-cutting theme in their own development efforts and country strategic plans. This call did not fall on deaf ears — several bilateral and multilateral donor agencies have released or are in the



process of developing strategies for mainstreaming ICTs into development programming. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has begun to play a key role in sensitizing donors to the catalyst role of ICTs in development and poverty reduction and in mainstreaming ICTs into OECD member countries' development assistance programs.

Building on Success: DOT Force Achievements

In less than a year, the work of the DOT Force and its implementation teams has progressed rapidly. This work has produced an impressive array of initiatives to address key building blocks in the advancement of the information society, such as strengthening readiness for e-development; increasing access and connectivity; supporting skills development; as well as fostering local content and promoting ICTs for health care.

Strengthening Readiness for e-Development

Through the development of national e-strategies and increased global ICT policy participation

The starting point for e-readiness is the development of enabling national e-strategies. The DOT Force has piloted three major, interrelated initiatives, which are designed to strengthen institutional capacity and can be used to support the development of national e-strategies. The framework and initial partnerships necessary to establish the International e-Development Resource Network (IeDRN) are now in place. The IeDRN, with the support of national governments, the private sector and international organizations, will facilitate the supply of regulatory, policy, and strategy expertise from both North and South. For its part, the Global Digital Opportunity Initiative (GDOI) provides developing nations with pro bono expertise and resources to create e-strategies that advance development goals. Earlier this year, the government of Italy announced its E-Government for Development initiative, a major contribution toward the awareness, planning and implementation of e-government programs in developing countries.

Global Digital Opportunity Initiative

"New technologies, deployed appropriately, offer an unprecedented opportunity to meet global development challenges."

— Zoë Baird, President of the Markle Foundation

Launched on February 5, 2002, the GDOI is a public-private partnership between the UNDP, the Markle Foundation and a broad range of North-South experts and organizations. The partners are committed to increasing the impact of ICTs in the development and implementation of national strategies that are most likely to generate growth and capacity. Bolivia and Mozambique were the first two countries identified through their active involvement with the DOT Force and the UN ICT Task Force. Over the next two years, the GDOI will provide assistance to a dozen developing countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. In addition to supporting the achievement of each country's development targets, the GDOI will seek to create demonstration models and analytical tools for the benefit of all developing countries.

www.undp.org • www.markle.org • www.opt-init.org

Plan of Action: E-Government for Development

"E-government is a crucial factor for narrowing the gap between the developing countries and the industrialized world."

— Lucio Stanca, Minister for Innovation and Technology, Italy

The government of Italy, together with the private sector and civil society, has launched a comprehensive initiative, E-Government for Development. The initiative will contribute toward the implementation of e-government in countries that have not — or have only partially — exploited the use of ICTs to transform public administrations into efficient, transparent and enabling instruments for social and economic development. Italy has started working with five initial countries: Albania, Jordan, Mozambique, Nigeria and Tunisia. The aim is to implement specific government applications of a reference model of the functions and services of a digital public administration in priority areas defined by those countries. As part of this initiative, Italy hosted an international conference in Palermo (April 10 and 11, 2002) on E-Government for Development, where participants from 96 countries exchanged knowledge and information on e-government best practices. The Italian government is strengthening its internal capabilities and resources in order to progressively extend the reach of this initiative to new beneficiary countries, beginning in the second half of 2002.

Similar forms of support are also required to strengthen the participation of developing countries in international ICT decision making, specifically in areas where policy, regulatory guidelines and standards strongly influence the nature and effectiveness of countries' evolving national e-strategies and development priorities. DOT Force partners have completed a study on key bodies and issues currently driving global ICT policy, which details current barriers faced by developing nation stakeholders and outlines priority actions that can be developed to enhance participation. Following this work, the Partnership for Global Policy Participation was formed. It will continue awareness raising and consultation on the importance of effective participation by developing nation stakeholders; further develop and implement key recommendations from the study; suggest equity-enhancing mechanisms within global policy making, and seek out and coordinate the mobilization of resources toward this end.

Increasing Access and Connectivity

Through community access and improved network connectivity

Community access and improved network connectivity are the primary means of spreading the social and economic benefits of information technology. Concerted efforts are now under way in the areas of access for under-served areas, public access points, adaptation of cost-effective technologies and the development of national network information centres. Most projects specifically target Africa, including a Community Access Centres Network (ADEN) for French-speaking Africa; the Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa project (CATIA); and a Telecentre Infomediary/HelpDesk project. Such initiatives provide the basis for ICT capacity building in support of education, health and culture at the community level.

Developing Skills for the Information Economy

Through initiatives to support technical training, entrepreneurship skills and e-literacy

Information technologies are also an integral component of human capacity building and knowledge creation. The acquisition of technology skills at all levels, and the spread of e-literacy in particular, are critical to attract the investment and nurture the entrepreneurial activity that are essential for economic development. In this respect, the DOT Force has completed planning work aimed at determining which additional programs should be implemented to address the urgent demands of developing countries in terms of building human capacity in ICTs, particularly e-literacy for students.

Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

A vibrant local private sector is critically important to creating digital opportunities in developing countries. Plans have been made to support developing country entrepreneurs and enterprises in making full use of ICTs. The proposed DOT Force Entrepreneurial Network would marshal private, public and civil society resources to provide tailored support for entrepreneurs and businesses with high potential. This would include low-cost finance, business and technology expertise, and advice on government policies.

Fostering Local Content and Applications

Through the generation of local content and the development of ICT tools to combat HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases

The generation of local content and applications allows developing countries to adapt information technologies to their own social and economic situations. The proposed Open Knowledge Network (OKN) would make local information widely available through local, regional and international access points. Work on the issue of the standardization of character code sets and representation of language on computers can also assist in making information technology more relevant to local needs as well as simpler to use.

Promoting ICTs for Health Care

Access to current and appropriate information, training and collaborative exchange are fundamental to reversing the downward health trends facing developing countries, particularly the HIV/AIDS pandemic. ICTs offer powerful tools to address and improve health and fight against HIV/AIDS. ICTs can offer innovative solutions, raise the visibility of issues, and enable knowledge development and information sharing across boundaries. However, the health needs of the beneficiaries and users must remain the focus of any solutions. Information needs must be clearly defined, and local context, content and language are essential components for creating valuable, trusted and useful information.



The DOT Force Entrepreneurial Network

"There is an abundance of entrepreneurial potential in the developing world; the real issue is the lack of basic business resources preventing its realization."

— Vernon J. Ellis, International Chairman, Accenture

The DOT Force Entrepreneurial Network (DFEN) is a private sector-led partnership of public, private and civil society organizations. It aims to drive economic and social development in emerging economies by enabling entrepreneurs to make full use of digital opportunities. The DFEN will be a not-for-profit organization that will operate in a commercial manner. It will work collaboratively with established organizations on the ground to identify and assist target businesses. It will provide low-cost financing, plus a mix of in-kind products and services, including mentoring, incubation, networking and policy advice. It will also serve as a centre of expertise encouraging the exchange of best practices. The DFEN will begin operating in Africa, but is expected to become a global undertaking.

The Open Knowledge Network

The OKN is a proposal to create a new network formed from existing knowledge centres in developing countries. The aim is to promote both the creation of local content and the realization of its value by facilitating its exchange as widely as possible across the South. The concept was piloted in villages in the Pondicherry area, in India, in early 2002, and in an open workshop in Chennai, India. As a result of the pilot, a model for the OKN has been developed based on five key approaches: connecting to Internet content off-line; encouraging and supporting the creation of local content; agreeing on standards for exchanging digital content worldwide; networking knowledge workers and translators worldwide; and developing new forms of copyright licence.

www.dgroups.org/groups/okn

"Encourage joint stakeholder efforts to address the unique ICT dilemmas faced by Africa, with a view to sustainable solutions."

— Genoa Plan of Action

The development needs of African countries, and the ICT goals set forth in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) have established an important benchmark for the implementation of the Genoa Plan of Action. Several major DOT Force initiatives are designed specifically to strengthen the capacity of African countries to seize the benefits of ICTs for all aspects of development and to become full participants in the global information society. In particular, DOT Force efforts in support of national e-strategies, more effective participation in global ICT policy making, access and connectivity, and entrepreneurship have directed much of the initial focus toward Africa. Such initiatives are aimed at complementing the work already undertaken through existing Africa-led efforts, such as the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) and the e-Africa Commission, and offer an excellent basis for building new partnerships within and outside the continent.

The IeDRN, the GDOI, and the Italian E-Government for Development initiative address NEPAD's desire to improve Africa's policy and regulatory frameworks. Africa is being regarded as a location of choice for the IeDRN, and the GDOI and E-Government for Development initiatives are collaborating with such countries as Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania and Tunisia. Several other projects developed by DOT Force partners specifically address NEPAD's objective to improve connectivity

and increase access to ICTs, including ADEN, CATIA, and the Telecentre Infomediary/HelpDesk project.

The DFEN, aimed at supporting entrepreneurship in developing countries, will directly respond to NEPAD's call for international assistance in developing a favourable regulatory environment, promoting small and medium-sized enterprises and establishing micro-funding mechanisms for Africa's domestic entrepreneurs. The OKN specifically addresses NEPAD's ICT goal of developing local content software based particularly on Africa's cultural legacy. DOT Force partners, in cooperation with key UN agencies, are also developing ICT tools aimed at addressing HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases through prevention and education, monitoring and effective care and support.

DOT Force Initiatives for Africa

■ **ADEN** is a US\$6.5-million project by the government of France to create a network of Internet community access points in Africa. It will focus on the training and capacity building of managers and practitioners, the sharing of North-South and South-South experience, and the development of services responding to local community needs.

■ **Twinning Promotion and Facilitation Through ICT** is a project that uses ICTs to improve the communication of best practices with respect to AIDS programming and to facilitate partnerships between AIDS service organizations in Africa.

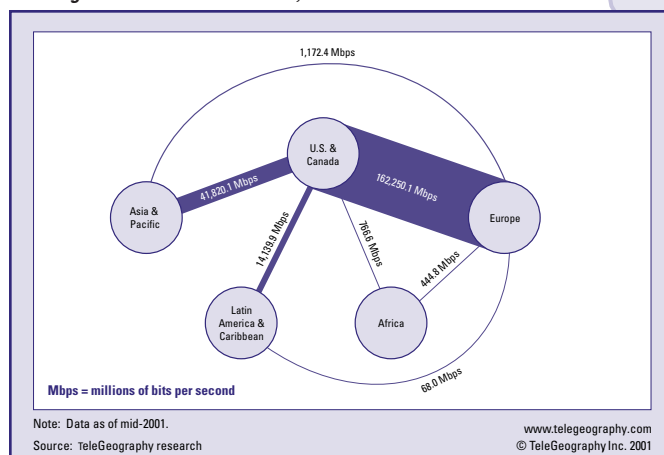
■ The **CAR Project** will implement Edu-Telecentres in Malawi, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia. Along with programs on HIV/AIDS, the CAR Project will provide programs to address women's empowerment, teacher training, distance learning and skills development.

■ The **CATIA Project** will increase affordable access to ICTs across the continent (both Internet and radio), increase Africa's influence in international decision making, and promote the exchange of local African content.

■ The **Telecentre Infomediary/HelpDesk**, run by "digital pioneers" in Africa and developing countries in other regions, will provide practical help and advice to technology professionals and managers of community-based telecommunications facilities.

■ The **Health InterNetwork** will strengthen public health services by providing public health workers, researchers and policy makers, access to high quality, relevant and timely information, through an Internet portal.

Interregional Internet Bandwidth, 2001



The New Partnership for Africa's Development

NEPAD is Africa's remarkable new vision and program of action to halt the marginalization of the continent and bring it back on the path of sustainable growth and development. It is a comprehensive development plan that addresses key social, economic and political priorities in a coherent and balanced manner. While recognizing Africa's own key role in eradicating poverty and actively participating in the world economy and body politic, NEPAD calls for a new partnership between Africa and the international community.

NEPAD clearly recognizes the role of ICTs in the African development agenda. ICTs are identified as a priority area that can help all African countries achieve economic and social development objectives. NEPAD also asserts precise and ambitious objectives in terms of accelerating Africa's integration in the global information society. In order to meet these objectives, NEPAD has launched the e-Africa Commission. The objectives are:

- to double teledensity to two lines per 100 people by 2005, with an adequate level of access for households;
- to lower the cost and improve reliability of service;
- to achieve e-readiness for all countries in Africa;
- to develop and produce a pool of ICT-proficient youth and students from which Africa can draw trainee ICT engineers, programmers and software developers;
- to develop local-content software, based especially on Africa's cultural legacy.

Under the auspices of the G8, the DOT Force has emerged as the primary instrument for harnessing the potential of information technology for global development. Through its leadership and sense of strategic purpose, it has successfully mobilized the international community behind a common goal of broadening the participation of countries and peoples in the information age. As catalysts for action, its products and partners have demonstrated conclusively the crucial role of ICTs in addressing basic development needs — in promoting good governance and democratic values, improving health care, education, and government services, as well as supporting industry and small business. The continuing challenge is to sustain the energy and creativity of the DOT Force and ensure the full implementation of its future agenda.

The first and most essential task is to maintain the sense of political leadership and accountability that have characterized the mandate and work of the DOT Force to date. The mobilization of political leaders, industry captains and civil society requires a suitably high-level forum to provide strategic direction to, and promote the cause of, ICTs for development. Secondly, given the numerous initiatives under way at the global level, a focal point is required to provide policy coherence and coordination in the design and implementation of ICT-based development initiatives. This focal point should also act as a strong catalyst in the formation of partnerships between countries and organizations of all types, based on an all-inclusive approach that involves governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations.

As a process conducted under the G8, the DOT Force formally sunsets with this report. Its agenda, however, has now become the business of a number of other bodies that will carry on the leadership role of the DOT Force within the international community. The UN ICT Task Force, established by the Secretary-General in November 2001, shares the DOT Force vision and approach, and provides a focal point for establishing strategic direction, policy coherence,

and advocacy in relation to the global, ICT-based development agenda. Through its regional networks, the UN ICT Task Force provides an effective means for broader outreach and the effective involvement of developing countries in future implementation work. In the private sector, organizations such as the World Economic Forum, the Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce, and the International Chamber of Commerce have also accepted the challenge of widening digital opportunities within the developing world.

The DOT Force implementation teams have become the primary means of implementing the Genoa Plan of Action. Their initiatives illustrate the key elements in the DOT Force formula — they include innovative models of development that are scalable and replicable; they involve partners from developing countries in all phases, from design to delivery; they rely on public-private partnerships; and they carry minimal overhead, allowing for speedy implementation. Their autonomy and operational flexibility are key values to nurture in the deployment of projects, while seeking high-level support from global organizations.

The teams are important agents to carry forward the future work of the DOT Force and to complete the implementation of the Genoa Plan of Action. They will seek other additional partners and establish an informal network to coordinate their work, facilitate the exchange of information and combine forces on “ICT for development” advocacy. As part of their ongoing work, DOT Force partners also invite G8 governments individually to continue their involvement in the implementation of the Genoa Plan of Action, including support for specific initiatives.

The upcoming World Summit on the Information Society, which will take place in two phases (in Geneva, December 2003, and in Tunis, 2005), will provide a good opportunity to take stock of progress made in achieving the goal of an inclusive global information society.

DOT Force Partners

Accenture	Government of South Africa	Panos London
Agence de la francophonie	Government of Sweden	ResourceLinC
Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation	Government of Tanzania	Siemens
Deutsches Institut Für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)	Government of the United Kingdom	Telesystem
European Commission	Government of the United States of America	Telecommunications Executive Management Institute of Canada
Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce	Hewlett-Packard	Thomson Multimedia
Global Information Infrastructure Commission	International Chamber of Commerce	UN ICT Task Force and its members
Center for Global Communications (GLOCOM)	International Institute for Communication and Development	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
Government of Bolivia	Inter-Agency Coalition on AIDS and Development	United Nations Development Programme
Government of Brazil	International Development Research Centre	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
Government of Canada (Chair)	International University of Japan	United Nations Economic and Social Council
Government of France	International Telecommunication Union	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Government of Egypt	Markle Foundation	Veille européenne et citoyenne sur les autoroutes de l'information et le multimédia (VECAM)
Government of Germany	Microsoft Russia	World Economic Forum
Government of India	M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation	World Bank
Government of Indonesia	NEC Corporation	Zentrum für Entwicklungsforsch (ZEF), University of Bonn
Government of Italy	OneWorld Africa	
Government of Japan	OneWorld International	
Government of Russia	Open Economies, Harvard Law School	
Government of Senegal	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	