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 their design and implementation, 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 African Development (NEPAD).

As a 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. By 2015, 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.

In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, on either a national or international scale, the "mainstreaming" of information technology is critical – not only within project planning and design but even more importantly within development thinking at the strategic level. Fundamentally, this is the value and legacy of the DOT Force, which has focused the development paradigm around sustainable, community-oriented ICT-based initiatives rather than isolated, uncoordinated, technology-driven projects. There is a need for continuing pressure on the international development community to "mainstream" ICT in development strategies.

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 the DOT Force 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 information and communications technologies to all forms and levels of development. Examples of the enabling power of these technologies are now emerging such as community radio stations in Africa providing vital information on weather disaster warnings, health and nutrition, and HIV/AIDS prevention; and the innovative use of cellular phones in villages in Bangladesh resulting in the empowerment of women and better market information.

The DOT Force Formula for Success

The key factor in the success of the DOT Force has been the close co-operation, on equal footing, among representatives from G8 governments, developing nations, international organisations, non-profit and private sectors. The DOT Force approach has been acknowledged and is now serving as a model for other "ICT for development" initiatives by international organisations and the private sector.

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 focused on results. Canada, as current Chair of the DOT Force, 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.

Implementation Teams
National e-Strategies
Access and Connectivity
Human Capacity
Entrepreneurship
Global Policy Participation
ICT for Health
Local Content and Applications

The Genoa Plan of Action also called upon bilateral and multilateral development assistance (ODA) 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 ear -- several bilateral and multilateral donor agencies have released or are in the process of developing their strategies on how to mainstream ICTs into development programming. The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) can play a key role in sensitizing donors to the catalyst role of ICTs in development and poverty reduction and in mainstreaming ICTs into OECD Members countries' ODA 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, producing an impressive array of initiatives addressing key building blocks for the advancement of the information society, such as strengthening readiness for e-development; increasing access and connectivity; developing skills for the information economy; as well as fostering local content and applications.

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, designed to strengthen the institutional capacity which 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), a specific commitment in the Genoa Plan of Action, 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. The Markle Foundation and the UNDP, with other partners, have launched the Global Digital Opportunity Initiative (GDOI), providing 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 initiative on "e-Government for Development", a major contribution towards the awareness, planning, and implementation of e-government programs in developing and emerging economies.

Similar forms of support are also required to strengthen the participation of developing countries in international ICT decision-making, specifically in those 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 that identifies the key bodies and issues currently driving global ICT policy, details current barriers faced by developing nation stakeholders, and outlines priority actions that can be developed to enhance participation. Following this work, DOT Force partners have formed the Partnership for Global Policy Participation, which will immediately commence work to: continue awareness raising of and consultation on the importance of effective participation by developing nation stakeholders; further develop and implement key recommendations surfaced in the study produced; suggest equity enhancing mechanisms within global policy making and, seek out and coordinate resource mobilization toward this end.

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 on "e-Government for Development", to contribute towards the implementation of e-government in countries that have not – or have only partially – exploited the use of ICT 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 – for the implementation of specific government applications of a reference model of functions and services of a digital public administration in priority areas defined by those countries. As part of this initiative, Italy has hosted in Palermo (10-11 April 2002) an international conference on "E-Government for Development" where participants from 96 countries have exchanged knowledge and information on e-government best practices. The Government of Italy is strengthening its internal capabilities and resources in order to progressively extend to new beneficiary countries the reach of this initiative starting from the second semester of 2002.

Global Digital Opportunity Initiative (GDOI)

"*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 Global Digital Opportunity Initiative (GDOI) is a public-private partnership between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Markle Foundation and a broad range of North-South experts and organizations 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

http://www.opt-init.org/

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 underway in the areas of access for underserved areas, public access points, adaptation of cost-effective technologies and the development of national network information centers. Most projects specifically target Africa, including a Community Access Centers Network (ADEN) for French-Speaking Africa; the Catalyzing Access to ICTs in Africa Project (CATIA); and a Telecentre Infomediary/HelpDesk Project.

* Graphic to be inserted

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 essential for economic development. In this respect, the DOT Force has completed planning work aimed at determining and specifying which additional programs should be implemented in order to cover urgent demands of developing countries in the area of ICT human capacity building, notably in the area of e-literacy for students.

Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

The private sector plays a leading role in the development of information and communications networks in the information society. It is therefore crucial to promote the development of a dynamic entrepreneurial environment. Plans have advanced to provide a source of policy advice and expertise for business entrepreneurs in developing countries, through the proposed DOT Force Entrepreneurial Network (DFEN). The DFEN would support developing country entrepreneurs and enterprises engaged in the business use and societal applications of network and computer technologies.

The DOT Force Entrepreneurial Network (DFEN)

The DOT Force Entrepreneurial Network (DFEN) is a private-sector led partnership of public, private and civil society organizations aimed at supporting entrepreneurs and enterprises in developing countries that are maximizing the business use and societal application of ICTs and helping drive wider take-up of digital opportunities. The DFEN will support business projects through a combination of funding assistance and in-kind support through a range of products and services. DFEN will work with and alongside other entrepreneur support organizations to help meet entrepreneurs' needs by providing them mentoring, incubating and networking assistance, as well as provide seed capital through a new investment fund. The DFEN will work with local enterprise support organizations (ESOs) to identify African entrepreneurs and address their specific needs.

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 character code sets standardization and representation of language on computers, can also assist in making information technology more relevant to local needs and simpler to use.

Promoting ICT 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 by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. ICT offers powerful tools to address and improve health and in the fight against HIV/AIDS by offering innovative solutions, raising the visibility of issues and enabling the potential for knowledge development and information-sharing across boundaries. However, the health needs of the beneficiaries and users must remain the drivers for any solutions. Information needs must be clearly defined with local context, content and language as essential components to create valuable, trusted and useful information.

The Open Knowledge Network (OKN)

The Open Knowledge Network 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 realisation of its value by facilitating its exchange as widely as possible across the South. The concept was piloted in villages in the Pondicherry area, India, in early 2002, and in an open workshop in Chennai, India. Based on the pilot, a model for the OKN has been developed based on five key approaches: 1) connect to Internet content off-line; 2) encourage and support local content creation; 3) agreeing standards for exchanging digital content worldwide; 4) networking knowledge workers and translators worldwide; and 5) developing new forms of copyright license.

www.dgroups.org/groups/okn

Digital Opportunities in Africa

"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 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 a full participant 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 their 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 region.

The International e-Development Resource Network (IeDRN); the Global Digital Opportunities Initiative (GDOI); and the Italian initiative on "e-Government for Development" address the NEPAD's desire to improve Africa's policy and regulatory frameworks. Africa is being regarded as a location of choice for the IeDRN, while 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 the NEPAD's objective to improve connectivity and increase access to ICTs, including a Community Access Centers Network (ADEN) for French-speaking Africa; and the Catalyzing Access to ICTs in Africa project (CATIA).

The DOT Force Entrepreneurial Network (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 Open Knowledge Network (OKN) specifically addresses the NEPAD's ICT goal of developing local content software based especially 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 : The Government of France is launching a 6.5 million $ US projet to create a network of Internet public community access points in Africa. It will focus on training and capacity building of managers and practionners; North/South and South/South experience sharing and the developement of services responding to local community demand.

Twinning Promotion and Facilitation Through ICT Project : Initiative aimed at incorporating the use of ICT to improve the communication of lessons learned and best practices with respect to AIDS programming in Africa and facilitate twinning partnerships among AIDS service organizations in developed countries and similar organizations in Africa.

CAR Project : Initiative that will seek to implement Edu-Telecentres across districts in Malawi to be mirrored in Kenya, Uganda and Zambia. In concert with HIV/AIDS, the CAR Project will provide programs to address women's empowerment, teacher training, distance learning and skills development.

CATIA : The Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa programme aims to : significantly increase affordable access to ICTs across the continent (both Internet and radio); act as a strong catalyst for a positive reform process; increase Africa's influence in international decision-making; and catalyse a thriving exchange of local African content.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

NEPAD is Africa's remarkable new vision and programme 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 relationship of partnership between Africa and the international community.

NEPAD clearly recognizes the role of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in the African development agenda. ICTs are defined 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. These 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. In order to meet these objectives, NEPAD launched the e-Africa Commission.

Future Agenda

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 a catalyst 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, and supporting industry and small business. The continuing challenge going forward is how to sustain the energy and creativity of the DOT Force and to 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 has 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 ICT for development. Secondly, given the numerous initiatives underway 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, 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 who could carry on the leadership role of the DOT Force within the international community. The United Nations 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 effective involvement of developing countries in future implementation work. In the private sector, organizations such as the World Economic Forum and the Global Business Dialogue on Electronic 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 – innovative models of development which are scalable and replicable; they involve partners from developing countries in all phases from design to delivery; they rely on public-private partnerships; and involve minimal overhead, allowing for speedy implementation. Their autonomy and operational flexibility are key values to nurture in the deployment of projects while at the same time seeking the high level support from global organizations.

The Teams and their initiatives are important agents to carry forward the work of the DOT Force and to complete the implementation of the Genoa Plan of Action. They will seek other additional partners and put in place an informal Network to coordinate their work, facilitate 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 (WSIS) that will take place in two phases – Geneva, December 2003; Tunis, 2005 – will provide a good opportunity to take stock of progress achieved towards fulfilling our vision of an inclusive global information society.

DOT Force Partners

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