

Editorial

Enabling ICT to Meet Development Goals and Achieve Ubiquity

A cursory review of the two major themes in this issue – Enabling ICT High Millennium Goals and Ubiquitous Network Societies might lead to the conclusion these have only a distant relationship. It is the skillful design and good judgment of the organizers of the second World Conference on the Information Society (WSIS) that driving digital technologies to achieve basic access to communications resources as well as delivery of pervasive broadband always on, anywhere, anytime services are conjoined under the WSIS flag. While the digital divide is an ever present challenge, the focus of WSIS planning for the Tunis conference is far more positive and dynamic than the earlier event in Geneva.

Millennium Goals extend far beyond the digital divide leading authors of the InFocus report to state “the potential for mass-market penetration with wireless and broadband networks is transforming not only its own but all industries and sectors.” This is not to lessen the importance of directing priority attention to the digital divide as the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) does in its annual national indices.

Benchmarking the extent of ICT development is an important tool for policy-makers, UNCTAD stresses. In view of the common technical roots as well as driving E-Government and E-Commerce applications, it is clear why senior political lead and private investors alike are giving priority attention to ICT.

Ubiquity is not a commonly used word by many involved in ICT but thanks to initiatives in Japan and support by the Japanese government, a The Ubiquitous Network Society Conference with participants from most Asian countries and involvement of UN University, was a big success in mid-May. The presentations represent a valuable in-depth view of this fascinating concept that is already becoming a reality in Japan, Korea and other countries.

The UN, by strongly promoting ICT as perhaps the key development tool as reflected in the reports highlighted in this issue of I-Ways, has identified and doing all it can to accelerate progress toward information-service economies and societies.

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