Building the Global Information Society

— Bridging the Digital Divide: Trends and Challenges in the International Community —

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With the progress in information and communications technologies (ICTs), the gap has been expanding among countries in ICT use, which has created economic disparities. This gap is called the digital divide. The international community recognized this digital divide as a global challenge, and started to work together to eliminate this inequality.

At the G8 Summit in 2000, the Okinawa Charter on Global Information Society was adopted to study specific measures toward bridging the digital divide. The United Nations included ICT support in the United Nations Millennium Declaration as one of its assistance measures for developing countries, and set up ICT-related indicators in the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations decided to address the elimination of the digital divide as a global challenge in the new millennium, and held the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in two phases, with the initiative taken by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Based on the WSIS outcomes, implementation and follow-up meetings for the eleven items of Action Lines and other agreed objectives were to be held every year to facilitate reduction of the digital divide. In 2008, the third meeting took place.

The issues facing the international community to bridge the digital divide are to have deep and extensive recognition of the usefulness of ICTs and to promote the active utilization of such technologies. The issues facing international organizations are to increase the priority of the information and communications field. The issues facing Japan are to develop a system that enables strategic assistance and, based on such a system, to implement measures contributing to bridging the digital divide.
What is the Digital Divide?

As a high-level conference hosted by the United Nations, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was held in two phases. The first phase took place in Geneva in December 2003 and the second phase in Tunis in November 2005.

During these conferences, agreement was reached that each member country and related international organizations would respectively make efforts and cooperate with each other to turn the digital divide (explained later) into digital opportunities and to develop international society as a global information society principally by means of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

In the past, United Nations summits have generally been held under the initiative of the United Nations Headquarters to discuss issues that must be dealt with on a global scale such as environmental problems including climate change and food issues.

It was quite epoch-making that the issue of bridging the digital divide, i.e., gap in ICT utilization, was recognized as an issue that must be dealt with on a global scale, and that the WSIS was held in the form of a United Nations summit with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), which is an established group of traditional telecommunications engineers, serving as a leading UN agency for the WSIS. In addition to the ITU, the United Nations Headquarters and many other related international organizations have participated in WSIS conferences.

It is evident that the progress that has been made in recent years in ICTs is quite remarkable. In the past, telephones could be used only via wired lines and only between fixed destinations. The introduction of new technologies in wireless communications enabled people to carry telephones and make calls wherever they were, such as when outside and/or while in transit. Moreover, the use of the Internet enabled people to instantly acquire information from all over the world, and to freely exchange information beyond country borders with people throughout the world who have access to the Internet via electronic mail.

The utilization of ICT in such a wide range of fields has been playing a major role in the development of economic and social activities in most every country.

In the past, a major interest in regions was whether a telephone could be used. Currently, the criterion has been shifted to whether mobile phones can be used and whether the Internet can be used under a broadband environment. Facilities to use ICTs including mobile phones and the Internet have already been positioned as key infrastructural elements for economic and social activities.

According to the ITU, the number of Internet users throughout the world has been sharply increasing from 489 million in 2001 to 1.467 billion in 2007. During these seven years, the number of Internet users has increased at an annual average rate of 17.0 percent (Figure 1).

The world’s average Internet penetration rate is 8.2 percent. If the rate is viewed by region, we see that the highest rate of 31.7 percent is in Oceania, followed by 20.3 percent in Europe and 11.8 percent in North and South America. The rate in Asia is low at 6.6 percent and is also low in Africa at 1.1 percent.

The ratio of the broadband subscriber base to the overall Internet subscriber base (hereinafter referred to as the “broadband ratio”) is high in North and South

Figure 1. Subscriber Base of Fixed Telephones and Mobile Phones, and Number of Internet Users

America at 82.5 percent and in Europe at 68.3 percent (Figure 2).

On the other hand, the broadband ratio in Oceania where the Internet penetration rate is high is 52.3 percent; the broadband ratio in Asia where the Internet penetration rate is low is 51.0 percent. In 2007, the number of fixed telephone lines throughout the world was 1.284 billion (the annual average growth rate between 2001 and 2007 was 3.1%), and the number of mobile phone subscribers was 3.285 billion (the annual average growth rate between 2001 and 2007 was 19.2%).

If the telephone subscriber base for both fixed and mobile phones is viewed by region, we find the largest subscriber base in Asia with 2.05 billion subscribers, which accounts for 45.8 percent of the total, followed by 1.19 billion (26.5%) in Europe, 920 million (20.5%) in North and South America, 280 million (6.3%) in Africa and 40 million (0.8%) in Oceania.

A comparison was made in the penetration rate of information and communications services by classifying countries into high-income countries (per-capita gross national income (GNI) of $11,116 or more; 35 countries), middle-income countries (upper-middle income countries, per-capita GNI of $3,596 – $11,115; lower-middle income countries, per-capita GNI of $906 – $3,595; 87 countries in total) and low-income countries (per-capita GNI of $905 or less; 48 countries). The results indicate major gaps in the use of such services between high-income countries and low-income countries, creating considerable gaps in ICT utilization internationally (Figure 3).

In 2007, the penetration rates of all these three services in high-income countries were at high levels with 45.6 percent for fixed telephones, 113.1 percent for mobile phones and 57.6 percent for use of the Internet. In contrast, those in low-income countries were at low

![Figure 2. Internet Penetration Rate and Broadband Ratio by Region](http://www.johotsusintokei.soumu.go.jp/whitepaper/eng/WP2008/2008-index.html)

![Figure 3. Penetration Rates of Fixed Telephones, Mobile Phones and Use of the Internet by Income Group (2007)](http://www.johotsusintokei.soumu.go.jp/whitepaper/eng/WP2008/2008-index.html)
levels with 2.5 percent for fixed telephones, 17.2 percent for mobile phones and 4.9 percent for use of the Internet. The gaps in penetration between high- and low-income countries were 43.1 points (49.8 points in 2006) for fixed telephones, 95.9 points (75.2 points in 2006) for mobile phones and 53.6 points (49.0 points in 2006) for use of the Internet. In comparison with the rates in 2006, while the gaps narrowed somewhat for fixed telephones, the gaps have expanded for mobile phones and use of the Internet.

As such, the gaps between the ICT “haves” and “have-nots” are referred to as the digital divide, which was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The differences in living environments and regional gaps lead directly to the gaps in the opportunities to use mobile phones and access the Internet through PCs. Because mobile phones and the Internet have become essential to economic and social activities, gaps in the opportunities to use such technologies lead directly to disparities in income and economic power.

While such gaps also exist as domestic problems within high-income countries, this issue is more prominent between high-income and low-income countries. Accordingly, the need to bridge such a digital divide has come to be treated as a priority issue that must be addressed on a global scale.

Such intention to give priority to the issue of the digital divide was reflected in the fact that bridging the digital divide was one of the themes at the Kyushu-Okinawa G8 Summit (meeting of the heads of the world’s leading nations) in July 2000 in Japan, and was included in the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted at the summit to hold the WSIS in 2000.

In line with these moves, WSIS conferences were held under the initiative taken by the ITU and in which member countries, related international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participated. During these conferences, an agreement was reached among participating countries and organizations on their making efforts to bridge the widening digital divide and to create the global information society.

This paper looks back at moves after the WSIS decisions in 2003 and 2005 on the elimination of the digital divide and the creation of the global information society that are positioned as important issues that must be addressed on a global scale, and also considers the activities of the international community.

II Trends in the International Community

The term “digital divide” was first used in the report entitled “Falling through the Net,” which was issued by the United States Department of Commerce in July 1995, and started to be commonly used.

In November 1999, the US Department of Commerce held the Digital Divide Summit, which focused on expanding access to ICTs for underserved populations and areas. In January 2000, then President Bill Clinton touched on closing the digital divide as a policy issue in his State of the Union address. Through such increased use, the term “digital divide” has come to be widely accepted throughout the world.

On the part of the ITU, preparations have already started to hold meetings to discuss the elimination of the digital divide in the resolution adopted at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis in November 1998.

Subsequently, the ITU took the lead in facilitating the holding of meetings on the issue of the digital divide and in coordinating the related international organizations for this purpose. At its April 1999 meeting, the Administrative Committee on Coordination of the United Nations expressed its support for the ITU initiative concerning the organization of such conferences in the form of United Nations summit meetings.

At the ITU Council in 2000, instructions were issued to the Secretariat to set the date, duration and venue of the summit to hold the WSIS in 2003. However, the governments of Switzerland and Tunisia each submitted an offer to host the WSIS. Through coordination by the ITU with the two countries, it was decided at the ITU Council in 2001 to hold the first phase in Geneva, Switzerland in 2003 and the second phase in Tunis, Tunisia in 2005. The holding of the WSIS in two phases was officially decided and approved at the United Nations General Assembly in December 2001.

1 G8 Summit

In July 2000, the G8 Summit was held in Japan, and the bridging of the digital divide was one of the themes discussed.

In the Okinawa Charter on Global Information Society (Okinawa IT Charter) adopted at the summit, bridging the digital divide was recognized as having a critical importance on respective national agendas, and the principle that “Everyone should be able to enjoy access to information and communications networks” was reaffirmed.

Based on this Okinawa IT Charter, the Digital Opportunity Taskforce (DOT Force) was established to integrate the efforts into a broader international approach and to examine concrete steps to bridge the international digital divide.

The DOT Force was composed of multi-stakeholders including governments, private sector entities and non-profit organizations (NPOs) of the G8 countries, and a total of 27 international organizations, including seven international intergovernmental organizations—i.e., the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), the World Bank, the United Nations Economic and Social Council...
(ECOSOC), the ITU, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)—and three international business organizations—i.e., the World Economic Forum (WEF), the Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce (GBDe) and the Global Information Infrastructure Commission (GIIC). In addition, nine developing nations have been invited to participate. The DOT Force was to prepare a progress report for submission to the next G8 Summit scheduled for 2001 in Genoa, Italy.

After holding meetings three times, the DOT Force prepared the Genoa Plan of Action containing nine action points in June 2001, and presented it to the G8 Genoa Summit in July 2001. At the same time, an implementation team was set up for each of the nine action points. Each implementation team was to prepare its progress report and to present it at the next G8 Summit. At the Kananaskis Summit in Canada in June 2002, a report on the state of implementation of the Genoa Plan of Action was submitted.

2 Actions of the United Nations

In deep recognition of the importance of overcoming the digital divide, the United Nations has also embarked on various activities to this end. A high-level panel of experts on information and communications technology was held in April 2000. At this panel, the establishment of the ICT Task Force and the Trust Fund (fund to support developing countries) was proposed.

In July 2000, in the ECOSOC’s high-level segment, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations issued a ministerial declaration emphasizing the importance of ICTs by stating that “we recognize a wide consensus that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are central to the creation of the emerging global knowledge-based economy.” In addition, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations sent letters to the G8 leaders who were to participate in the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in Japan during the same month calling for cooperation in addressing the digital divide issue.

In September 2000, many world leaders gathered at the United Nations Headquarters for the Millennium Summit and adopted the UN Millennium Declaration. In Item 5 of Paragraph 20 of the UN Millennium Declaration, it was stated, with the aim at closing the digital divide, that “We also resolve to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications, in conformity with recommendations contained in the ECOSOC 2000 Ministerial Declaration, are available to all.”

In November 2000, a meeting of the Advisory Group (AG) was held to discuss the establishment of the ICT Task Force. In February 2001, the Advisory Group submitted a report to the Secretary General of the United Nations containing the role, overall objectives, general strategic framework, principles of composition and other necessary matters with respect to the task force to be established. Upon receiving this report, the report of the United Nations Secretary General was submitted to ECOSOC, based on which preparations were started to establish the ICT Task Force.

In September 2001, the Report of the Secretary General was submitted to the United Nations General Assembly as the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. This report was entitled “Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.” In this report, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were stated. The MDGs consist of 8 goals and 18 targets that are to be achieved by 2015.

The issue of bridging the digital divide is addressed under Goal 8 “Develop a Global Partnership for Development” and Target 5 “In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.” Specific indicators are also set for the number of telephone subscriptions (fixed telephone lines and mobile subscribers) and Internet connections (users) per 100 people.

After these indicators of the MDGs were set, the ICT Task Force was officially inaugurated by holding its first meeting in November 2001 where short-term actions and medium-term objectives were decided. While eight items are included in the medium-term objectives, seven items other than “advisory services to the UN Secretary General” were copied from the Genoa Plan of Action proposed by the DOT Force.

The major objective of the ICT Task Force was to link ICT and MDGs to contribute to the WSIS outcomes. The term of this task force was set at three years.

3 First Phase of the WSIS in Geneva

On December 21, 2001, the United Nations General Assembly officially endorsed the holding of the WSIS in two phases. In July 2002, the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for WSIS took place in Geneva. After holding three Preparatory Committee meetings, the first phase of the WSIS was held in Geneva in December 2003.

The objectives of the Geneva Phase of the WSIS where many world leaders attended were to establish a common vision about the information society and to form a consensus among countries, related organizations and those concerned in realizing such a vision.

About 20,000 persons from 176 countries, including heads of state/government of 54 countries and 83 ministers of information and communications, participated in this conference, adopting the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action.
Under the title of “Building the Information Society: a global challenge in the new Millennium,” the 67-paragraph Declaration of Principles encompasses three major items: (1) Our Common Vision of the Information Society, (2) An Information Society for All: Key Principles, and (3) Towards an Information Society for All Based on Shared Knowledge16.

Item (1) declares the common desire and commitment among the participants to “build an information society that enables individuals, communities and people to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life,” and states a common vision that ICTs “can be a powerful instrument, increasing productivity, generating economic growth, job creation and employability and improving the quality of life of all.”

Item (2) states the 11 key principles agreed by all participants for building an information society (Table 1). These 11 key principles are:

1) The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
2) Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for an inclusive information society
3) Access to information and knowledge
4) Capacity building
5) Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs
6) Enabling environment
7) ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life
8) Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content
9) Media
10) Ethical dimensions of the Information Society
11) International and regional cooperation

Item (3) expressed the commitment of all stakeholders to strengthening cooperation to seek common responses to the implementation of the Plan of Action, and further commitment to evaluate and follow-up progress in bridging the digital divide so as to reach internationally agreed development goals. The last paragraph of Item (3) says, “We trust that these measures will open the way to the future development of a true knowledge society.”

Based on the common vision and guiding principles of the Declaration, the Plan of Action17 contains six items (“A” to “F”). It consists of 29 paragraphs as specific methods to realize the development-oriented Information Society by promoting the use of ICTs through cooperation among all stakeholders and by advancing the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals including those in the UN Millennium Declaration.

As the introduction, Item “A” indicates the positioning of the Plan of Action in which the common vision and guiding principles of the Declaration are converted into specific actions. Item “B” lists ten ICT-related development targets to be achieved by 2015. Paragraph 6 of Item “B” states that “these targets may be taken into account in the establishment of the national targets, considering the different national circumstances.” These ten targets are as follows:

1) To connect villages with ICTs and establish community access points
2) To connect universities, colleges, secondary schools and primary schools with ICTs
3) To connect scientific and research centers with ICTs
4) To connect public libraries, cultural centers, museums, post offices and archives with ICTs
5) To connect health centers and hospitals with ICTs
6) To connect all local and central government departments and establish websites and email addresses
7) To adapt all primary and secondary school curricula to meet the challenges of the Information Society, taking into account national circumstances
8) To ensure that all of the world’s population have access to television and radio services
9) To encourage the development of content and to put in place technical conditions in order to facilitate the presence and use of all world languages on the Internet
10) To ensure that more than half the world’s inhabitants have access to ICTs within their reach

Item “C” shows specific Action Lines for each of the 11 key principles indicated in the Declaration of Principles, which are outlined in Table 1, to achieve the established targets.

Item “D” touches on the Digital Solidarity Agenda with the aim of putting in place the conditions for mobilizing human, financial and technological resources, and stresses the importance of close national, regional and international cooperation to overcome the digital divide in the Information Society.

For the follow-up and evaluation of the Plan of Action, Item “E” notes the need for the development of systems to monitor, analyze and report the progress of the implementation of objectives, goals and targets in the Plan of Action by developing a realistic international performance evaluation and benchmarking, while taking different national circumstances into account.

Item “F” mentions the holding of a Preparatory Committee meeting for the second phase of WSIS in Tunis, and lists the items that the Tunis phase should consider. They are: preparation of final appropriate documents based on the outcome of the Geneva phase of the WSIS with a view to consolidating the process of building a global Information Society and reducing the digital divide and transforming it into digital opportunities; and
the follow-up and implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action by respective stakeholders at national, regional and international levels.

In adopting the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action as major outcomes of the first phase of the WSIS in Geneva, the issues that were most difficult to agree upon were “Internet Governance” and “Digital Solidarity Fund.”

With respect to Internet Governance, there were differences in opinions: one viewpoint was to deal with this matter under the current system led by the private sector, i.e., the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)\(^8\), and the other was to establish an international inter-governmental organization to manage this issue. The compromise reached was to establish a working group to continue to discuss this issue by including the following statement in the Plan of Action: “We ask the Secretary General of the United Nations to set up a working group on Internet Governance in an open and inclusive process that ensures a mechanism for the full and active participation of governments, the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries, involving relevant intergovernmental and international organizations and forums to investigate and make proposals for action, as appropriate, on the governance of the Internet by 2005” (Paragraph “C6, 13 b” of the Plan of Action). Discussions on this issue were again to be held during the second phase of the WSIS in Tunis.

With respect to the Digital Solidarity Fund, opinions were divided between those in favor of effectively utilizing the existing schemes such as the World Bank, UNDP and bilateral cooperation programs to implement projects to overcome the digital divide and those advocating the need to establish a new fund. Finally, agreement was reached on the following expression: “While all existing financial mechanisms should be fully exploited, a thorough review of their adequacy in meeting the challenges of ICT for development should be completed by the end of December 2004. This review shall be conducted by a Task Force under the auspices of the Secretary General of the United Nations and submitted for consideration to the second phase of this summit. Based on the conclusion of the review, improvements and innovations of financing mechanisms will be considered including the effectiveness, the feasibility and the creation of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund, as mentioned in the Declaration of Principles” (Paragraph “D2, f” of the Plan of Action).
As a result, a task force to be established under the auspices of the Secretary General of the United Nations was to undertake studies on the problems of using existing financing mechanisms by December 2004. Based on the results of these studies, it was decided to consider the efficiency, feasibility and the creation of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund.

4 Second Phase of the WSIS in Tunis

Following the holding of three Preparatory Committee meetings, the second phase of the WSIS took place in Tunis in November 2005.

During this Tunis phase, discussions were held on specific methods of implementing the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action that were adopted during the Geneva phase, as well as on the pending issues of the Digital Solidarity Fund and Internet Governance.

According to the statistics announced by the ITU, more than 19,000 participants from 174 UN member countries, including 46 heads of state and government and 197 ministers, vice ministers and deputy ministers, attended the Tunis phase, where the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society were endorsed at the closing plenary session of the summit.

(1) Digital Solidarity Fund

With respect to the Digital Solidarity Fund, which was one of the two pending issues brought over from the Geneva phase, based on the discussions held in the Geneva phase, a Task Force was established to study the current status of existing financial mechanisms. This Task Force prepared its final report after holding two meetings. The final report was submitted to the Second Preparatory Committee meeting of the Tunis phase of the WSIS that was held in Geneva in February 2005.

This report emphasized the importance of cooperation among governments, the private sector, civil society and international development organizations, and indicated the following as a common recognition on the existing financial mechanisms:

1) Concerning “fully exploiting” existing mechanisms, the benefits of the existing mechanisms have not been fully leveraged; for infrastructure development and enhanced access to ICT, policies to promote open access and fair competition and to reduce investment risks and financial burdens are important.

2) Concerning the “adequacy” of existing mechanisms, there are a number of areas in which current approaches are not sufficient; these include ICT capacity-building programs, communications access and connectivity in remote rural areas, regional backbone infrastructure and coordinated assistance for small islands and countries to lower transaction costs.

3) Concerning “improvements and innovations” relative to existing financing mechanisms, discussions and considerations are necessary in the future for the following: coordination at the national, regional and international levels, multi-stakeholder partnerships such as for the establishment of a “virtual” financing facility, new emphasis on domestic financial mechanisms, and private sector support for locally relevant applications and content.

Through unofficial coordination among the European Union (EU), African countries, the United States and Japan with respect to the Digital Solidarity Fund, it was agreed to include an expression to such effect as, “we welcome the Digital Solidarity Fund established with the objective of transforming the digital divide into digital opportunities as an innovative financial mechanism of a non-compulsory nature that complements existing mechanisms.”

Based on such agreement at the second Preparatory Committee meeting of the Tunis phase of the WSIS, it was decided to endorse the improvements and institutional reforms of the existing financial mechanisms and the Digital Solidarity Fund newly established with the following expression: “We welcome the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) established in Geneva as an innovative financial mechanism of a voluntary nature open to interested stakeholders with the objective of transforming the digital divide into digital opportunities (omitted). The DSF will complement existing mechanisms for funding the Information Society (omitted).”

(2) Internet Governance

In the Plan of Action adopted at the Geneva phase, the Secretary General of the United Nations was asked to set up a Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) as an agreement reached at the Geneva phase. Based on this agreement, the WGIG was established in November 2004. The WGIG held four meetings during the period from its inauguration to June 2005 and submitted a report to the Secretary General of the United Nations and publicly announced it in July 2005.

The report considered different organizational models for Internet governance and set out four models ranging from one in which a UN organization directly oversees ICANN to one in which the current ICANN functions are left as-is and a totally separate forum for discussion is established.

In response to these moves, on June 30, 2005, the Department of Commerce of the United States expressed its four principles on the domain name and addressing system of the Internet, including its intention to maintain its historic role in authorizing changes or modifications to the authoritative root zone file and to continue to support the ongoing work of ICANN.

Under these circumstances, the Tunis Agenda expressed a recognition that all stakeholders must
commit to ensuring the stability and security of the Internet within their respective roles and responsibilities. It also recognized that as a means of preventing the misuse of ICTs such as cybercrime and spam as well, the needed scope of Internet governance includes social, economic and technical issues including affordability, reliability and quality of service.

In order to act on these principles, it was agreed that the UN Secretary General would start a process by the end of the first quarter of 2006 to establish a new forum—called the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)—to discuss wide-ranging issues related to the key elements of Internet governance. The first meeting of the IGF was to be convened by the second quarter of 2006. A compromise on the other pending issue brought over from the Geneva phase was reached in such a way that involved holding meetings of the IGF for five years since then25.

(3) Follow-up of the Plan of Action

The Tunis Agenda emphasized the importance of the implementation and follow-up of the Plan of Action adopted during the Geneva phase through the participation of all stakeholders as the key to realizing the development-oriented Information Society.

For this purpose, it was decided to establish a mechanism for implementation and follow-up at national, regional and international levels. At the same time, the UN Secretary General was requested to establish a United Nations Group on the Information Society. In implementing each theme of the Action Lines listed in C1 through C11 of the Plan of Action adopted during the Geneva phase, consideration was to be given to the experience of, and activities in the WSIS process undertaken by ITU, UNESCO and UNDP in selecting lead agency(ies) of this group.

Through discussions on the measures to overcome the digital divide at the G8 Summit, the United Nations Summit, the WSIS and other opportunities, agreement was reached on the Plan of Action during the Geneva Phase of the WSIS. In order to turn these principles into actions, in the Tunis Agenda, it was agreed to determine a moderator/facilitator for each of the individual themes to bridge the digital divide and conduct follow-up activities every year.

III Implementation and Follow-Up of the WSIS Outcomes

Unlike the United Nations summits held in the past, the agreement documents of the WSIS included provisions for the implementation and follow-up of outcomes of the summit. More precisely, Paragraph 99 of the Tunis Agenda includes a decision to establish a mechanism for implementation and follow-up at the national, regional (among countries in the neighboring region) and international levels to continue to pursue the achievement of WSIS goals even after the completion of the WSIS.

At the national level, the government of each country was encouraged to set up a national implementation mechanism in which (1) national e-strategies should be an integral part of national development plans and (2) ICTs should be fully mainstreamed into strategies for Official Development Assistance (ODA) (Paragraph 100).

At the regional level, the agenda notes that WSIS implementation activities such as exchanging information and best practices at the regional level and facilitating policy debate on the use of ICT for development should be conducted with a focus on attaining the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals (Paragraph 101 “a”).

It further states that UN Regional Commissions may organize regional WSIS follow-up activities in collaboration with regional and sub-regional organizations (Paragraph 101 “b”).

It was further considered that a multi-stakeholder approach and participation in regional WSIS implementation activities by the private sector, civil society, and the United Nations and other international organizations are essential (Paragraph 101 “c”).

At the international level, the agenda mentions that bearing in mind the importance of the enabling environment (the development of the information environment), each UN agency should act according to its mandate and competencies within existing approved resources; implementation and follow-up should include intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder components (Paragraph 102).

With respect to activities among UN agencies, the UN Secretary General was requested to establish, in consultation with members of the UN System Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB), a UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) with the mandate to facilitate the implementation of WSIS outcomes, and to suggest to CEB that, in considering lead agency(ies) of this Group, it takes into consideration the experience of, and activities in the WSIS process undertaken by ITU, UNESCO and UNDP (Paragraph 103).

The UN Secretary General was further requested to report to the UN General Assembly through ECOSOC by June 2006, on the modalities of the inter-agency coordination of the implementation of WSIS outcomes (Paragraph 104).

In Paragraph 105, ECOSOC was requested to oversee the follow-up of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes of WSIS. To enable ECOSOC to institutionally oversee such activities, ECOSOC was further requested to review the mandate, agenda and composition of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), which is its subsidiary body.
In response, ECOSOC adopted a resolution on July 28, 2006, on the follow-up of WSIS outcomes and the review of the CSTD.

The Tunis Agenda attaches great importance to multi-stakeholder implementation at the international level for the 11 Action Lines (C1 – C11) included in the Geneva Plan of Action. It notes that the experience of, and the activities undertaken by UN agencies in the WSIS process—notably ITU, UNESCO and UNDP—should continue to be used to their fullest extent, and that these three agencies should play leading and facilitating roles in the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action and organize a meeting of moderators/facilitators of action lines (Paragraphs 108 and 109, Table 2).

Based on these statements of the Tunis Agenda, moderators/facilitators were determined for each action line, and it was decided to hold follow-up meetings in Geneva in May every year with the initiative taken by the relevant moderator/facilitator.

1 Follow-Up Meetings on Action Lines

Based on the Annex to the Tunis Agenda, facilitation meetings have been held for 11 action lines in Geneva every year since the first meeting in May 2006. In May 2008, the third meetings were held.

This section describes Action Lines C2 (Information and communication infrastructure) and C5 (Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs), for which ITU was designated as the moderator/facilitator.

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### (1) Information and communication infrastructure (Action Line C2)

In line with Paragraph 108 and the Annex to the Tunis Agenda, the ITU invited all WSIS stakeholders to hold a consultation meeting on implementing WSIS outcomes related to Action Line C2, i.e., information and communication infrastructure.

On May 18, 2006, the first meeting was held at the ITU Headquarters in Geneva. At this meeting, the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and the World Bank were designated as co-facilitators.

Three initiatives were presented at the meeting. First, the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) initiative advocated by Professor Negroponte of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which aims at developing a US$100 laptop, which can be deployed everywhere, was introduced.

Second, the European Commission, together with the Member States of the European Union, outlined its priorities in the field of telecommunications development throughout the WSIS process: setting up e-strategies such as e-government, e-health, e-learning and e-commerce; establishing stable and predictable regulatory frameworks that give incentives to private sector investment, including human capacity building in regulatory affairs; and emphasizing the importance of international cooperation in the field of Research and Development.

Third, ITU introduced Resolution 17 by which 25 regional initiatives were adopted by the 2006 edition of the World Telecommunication Development Conference.

### Table 2. Role Sharing for Action Lines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Line</th>
<th>Possible Moderators/Facilitators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Information and communication infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Access to information and knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Capacity building</td>
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<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs</td>
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<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Enabling environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>C7</td>
<td>ICT applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>C8</td>
<td>Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content</td>
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<tr>
<td>C9</td>
<td>Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>C10</td>
<td>Ethical dimensions of the Information Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C11</td>
<td>International and regional cooperation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annex to the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.
As to future plans, proposals were made regarding how this group sees the continuation of its work. They include: taking stock of demand-driven initiatives at the global, regional and national levels; building partnerships around major initiatives; and further developing online ICT development assessment tools.

Finally, the meeting highlighted the need to urgently develop online tools in order to facilitate the moderation of the work of the virtual group and of its possible sub-groups.

The second consultation meeting took place on May 16, 2007, at the ITU Headquarters. The ITU reported on the activities directly related to the facilitation of Action Line C2 that were undertaken since last year’s meeting.

Specifically, the virtual working space has been launched. The function abilities of the new WSIS Action Line C2 Portal provide fully transparent communication means for interaction among all stakeholders. Furthermore, the Plan of Action for WSIS Action Line C2 has been elaborated and submitted for internal discussion within the ITU. The plan aims to facilitate the activities in six fields: (1) promotion of national ICT strategies; (2) harmonization of the ICT policies in the different regions; (3) development of regional and large-scale national initiatives; (4) launch of global thematic ICT infrastructure initiatives for “public access,” “ICT applications for development,” “broadband connectivity through the wired and wireless technologies” and “large-scale ICT backbones”; (5) development of a virtual financing platform; and (6) deployment of an online tool for ICT development assessment.

A number of large-scale projects have also been identified as potential projects to be facilitated under WSIS Action Line C2. The list of projects includes harmonization of ICT policies in 43 Sub-Saharan countries (organizations involved: the EC and ITU); in 17 Caribbean countries (organizations involved: the EC and ITU); capacity building of ICT policies in 14 Pacific Island States (organizations involved: the EC and ITU); international optical fiber “Infinity Project West Africa” (organization involved: Infinity Worldwide Telecommunication Group of Companies (IWTGC)); and ICT applications and satellite diversity in Pacific Island States (organization involved: ITU).

It was reported that the ITU Secretariat sent a query to member countries on national e-strategies and the coordination mechanisms for WSIS implementation at the national level. As of April 25, 2007, approximately 40 countries had reported to the ITU.

Simultaneously, the ITU circulated a new request for updating information and submitting new project descriptions to the WSIS Stocktaking Database. The progress of 25 regional initiatives adopted at the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2006 was also reported.

The third meeting was held at the ITU Headquarters on May 19, 2008. At this meeting, the ITU Secretariat reported on the progress in the development of ICT infrastructure in each country since the 2007 meeting for each of the six fields described above. Following this, a panel discussion was held on the development of ICT infrastructure from a diplomatic viewpoint with ambassadors stationed in Geneva serving as panelists. In addition, discussions were held among stakeholders on the theme of the mechanisms that bring about success to ICT projects.

Finally, ITU Global View, which was jointly developed by the ITU and Microsoft, was demonstrated. This online platform enables anyone to easily see the status of ICT infrastructure development worldwide.

(2) Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs (Action Line C5)

In line with Paragraph 108 and the Annex to the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, the ITU invited all WSIS stakeholders interested and involved in the implementation process for building confidence and security in the use of ICTs to a consultation meeting to discuss the WSIS multi-stakeholder implementation process for WSIS Action Line C5, “Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs.”

The first meeting was held on May 15 and 16, 2006, at the ITU Headquarters. The purpose of this meeting was in line with Paragraph 110 of the Tunis Agenda, i.e., “the coordination of multi-stakeholder implementation activities would help to avoid duplication of activities. This should include, inter alia, information exchange, creation of knowledge, sharing of best practices, and assistance in developing multi-stakeholder and public-private partnerships.”

In pursuing potential partnership activities for global cyber security, this meeting focused on exploring potential partnerships among governments, the private sector and other stakeholders based on the five main themes identified at the 2005 WSIS Thematic Meeting on Cybersecurity. They are:

1) Information sharing of national approaches, good practices and guidelines
2) Developing watch, warning and incident response capabilities
3) Technical standards and industry solutions
4) Harmonizing national legal approaches and international legal coordination
5) Privacy, data and consumer protection

The second meeting took place on May 14 and 15, 2007, at the ITU Headquarters in Geneva. Based on the first meeting in May 2006, work programs in four focus areas have been initiated: (1) national strategies, (2) legal...
frameworks, (3) watch, warning and incident response and (4) spam and related threats.

The guiding themes for this second meeting include progress by stakeholders in implementation activities in these four focus areas, consideration of future framework discussions to improve international cooperation and coordination in the above domains as well as future work plans.

On May 17, 2007, the ITU launched the Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA), which is a framework for international cooperation in cyber security and international partnership against increasing cyber threats.

For discussions on cyber security, the High Level Experts Group on Cybersecurity (HLEG) was established. The HLEG members include high-level experts from governments, industry, regional/international organizations, research institutes, academic institutions and individual experts from every part of the world appointed by the ITU Secretary General. The HLEG was to submit a report to the ITU Secretary General.

The third meeting was held on May 22 and 23, 2008, at the ITU Headquarters. A total of 125 participants from governments, industry, international organizations, academia and civil society attended the two-day meeting. Participants included representatives of the governments of 39 countries, 22 industry experts and 50 individuals representing international organizations, NGOs and academia.

Six interactive panel sessions on current and emerging threats and solutions were the focus of the first day on May 22. Experts from governments, industry, international organizations, academia and civil society attended the two-day meeting. Participants included representatives of the governments of 39 countries, 22 industry experts and 50 individuals representing international organizations, NGOs and academia.

The theme of Session 1 was “Managing cyber-threats: Can we stay one step ahead of the attacker?” Representatives from Cisco Systems, AT&T, Microsoft and other related organizations and institutions participated in this session as panelists, and discussed whether we are managing to curtail existing threats to our data, information and network security; what new threats we should expect in the short- to medium-term; and what steps software and hardware companies as well as service providers have taken to keep us one step ahead of the attacker.

The theme of Session 2 was “Civilian cyber-defense: Is enough being done to raise security IQs and to protect users?” Panelists of this session included representatives from security companies in Switzerland and Finland and those from international organizations. They discussed where we stand in our efforts to educate the end-user in Internet and information security; when a user is the victim of a cyber-attack, what is his/her degree of responsibility and what options are available for his/her protection; and what are the responsibilities of government and industry in civilian cyber-defense.

The theme of Session 3 was “Cyber-attacks: Are we ready for the battlefield of the 21st Century?” University researchers and representatives from the ITU-T (International Telecommunication Union Telecommunication Standardization Sector) and other related organizations participated in the session as panelists. As millions of people participate actively in virtual communities, the boundaries between the physical and virtual worlds rapidly diminish, and the significance of the virtual world increases. Discussions were held on what should be done to fight against cyber-threats under such circumstances.

Following presentations by stakeholders on initiatives, the agenda for the second day, May 23, included discussions on identifying possible goals and targets, exchanges of views on mechanisms for performance measurement and reporting towards progress in building confidence and security in the use of ICTs.

The theme of Session 4 was “Global Challenges require Global Solutions: Are there any in the pipeline?” Panelists at this session included the Chairman of GCA and university researchers. The Chairman of GCA reported on the discussions held on May 21 at the GCA meeting. Following this, discussions were held on the establishment of guidelines to implement global strategies and cooperation.

The theme of Session 5 was “Overview of Stakeholder Activities: Who is doing what in Cybersecurity?” Presentations were made by representatives from the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Interpol (International Criminal Police Organization), the Council of Europe (CE) and the private sector on their respective activities.

The theme of Session 6 was “Meeting C5 Goals: How far are we towards meeting the goals of C5?” Presentations were made by ITU officials on the progress made so far in implementing WSIS Action Line C5 and future plans. The need to establish relationships between GCA’s five work areas (legal measures, technical and procedural measures, organizational structures, capacity building and international cooperation) and C5 implementation activities was pointed out.

2 CSTD

The Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) was established in New York in April 1993 as a subsidiary body of ECOSOC, as explained at the beginning of Chapter III. CSTD replaced the former Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development and its Advisory Committee that were set up after the Vienna Conference on Science and Technology for Development in 1979.

The purpose behind the establishment of the CSTD was to provide the United Nations General Assembly
and ECOSOC with high-level advice on issues related to science and technology through analysis and policy recommendations. Since July 1993, the UNCTAD Secretariat has been responsible for assisting the Commission. Accordingly, CSTD meetings are generally held in the Palais des Nations (the United Nations Office in Geneva).

Based on Paragraph 105 of the Tunis Agenda that named the CSTD as the organization to conduct the institutional follow-up of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes of WSIS, ECOSOC adopted its resolution at the 43rd plenary meeting on July 28, 2006, that included the review of the roles and responsibilities of the CSTD.

By virtue of this resolution, ECOSOC officially designated the CSTD as the organization to institutionally follow-up WSIS outcomes. Moreover, to strengthen the CSTD organization, ECOSOC decided to enlarge the CSTD by ten members from 33 member countries to 43 member countries to ensure effective and meaningful participation.

Furthermore, the ECOSOC asked the CSTD to adopt a multi-stakeholder approach in the same way as was adopted for the WSIS, while preserving its intergovernmental nature. To this end, the ECOSOC decided that NGOs and civil societies that do not have consultative status with the ECOSOC but that received accreditation to the WSIS may participate, upon approval by the ECOSOC, in the CSTD meetings for the next two years—2007 and 2008.

The tenth session of the CSTD meeting was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from May 21 – 25, 2007. During this meeting, new member countries were elected. To facilitate implementation of WSIS outcomes, it was also decided to study the preparation of work programs with a focus given to a specific theme related to the building of the information society with a view to bridging the digital divide and to themes that are considered available from among those related to science and technology for development.

In addition, the CSTD asked the ECOSOC to adopt a resolution at its plenary meeting that enables information sharing among related organizations through reporting by each UN agency to the CSTD on the status of the implementation of WSIS outcomes.

The eleventh session of the CSTD meeting was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from May 26 – 30, 2008. During this meeting, participants reiterated that science and technology are vital tools in meeting development goals, especially those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. It is thus important that developing countries integrate science, technology and innovation policies into national development policies. The participants underscored the importance for governments to adopt a multi-stakeholder approach in designing such policies.

The participants emphasized the potential role of information and communications technology, in particular the Internet, to contribute to knowledge sharing and dissemination and to accelerate progress towards the achievement of development goals. With the digital divide taking on new dimensions, they also stressed the need to ensure affordable access to information and communications technology including the Internet and digital literacy for poor rural populations.

The participants pointed out that the spread of broadband technologies deserves special policy attention, and that many of the e-applications indicated in Action Line C 7 of the Plan of Action, such as e-government, e-health, e-business, e-education and e-agriculture, depend on fast and affordable access to broadband technologies.

During this meeting, the CSTD recommended to the ECOSOC the adoption of a draft resolution and four draft decisions at its plenary session.

A draft resolution for adoption by the ECOSOC refers to its assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the WSIS. Four draft decisions for adoption by the ECOSOC are:

1) Participation of non-governmental organizations and civil society entities in the work of the CSTD at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions
2) Participation of academic entities in the work of the CSTD
3) Report of the Secretary General on science, technology and innovation to be submitted to the CSTD at its twelfth session
4) Report of the CSTD on its eleventh session and a provisional agenda and documentation for the twelfth session of the CSTD

As such, the CSTD has discussed the implementation of WSIS outcomes at its sessions as one of its two major themes. However, these discussions have primarily focused on related procedures and reports, and so far, there have been few substantive discussions as a moderator/facilitator.

3 IGF

Under the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, the desirability of the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was to be examined in formal consultation with Forum participants within five years of its creation. The offer of the Government of Greece to host the first meeting of the IGF in Athens was welcomed.

As part of the preparatory process for the Athens meeting, two rounds of consultations were held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on February 16 and 17, and May 19, 2006. The participants addressed a wide variety of issues such as the IGF’s scope of work and substantive priorities as well as aspects related to its structure and functioning.

In the May 19 meeting, 46 persons were appointed as members of an Advisory Group, which was to be
chaired by Nitin Desai, the UN Secretary General’s special advisor for the WSIS, to facilitate preparation of the inaugural meeting of the IGF. In addition, the IGF Secretariat headed by Markus Kummer was established at the United Nations Office in Geneva.

(1) Inaugural meeting
The inaugural meeting of the IGF took place in Athens from October 30 to November 2, 2006. Over 1,200 representatives from governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, educational institutions and other related organizations from all over the world participated in this meeting.

The overall theme of the meeting was “Internet Governance for Development” with “capacity building” as a crosscutting priority. The agenda was structured based on the following broad themes:

1) Openness: Freedom of expression, free flow of information, ideas and knowledge
2) Security: Creating trust and confidence through collaboration
3) Diversity: Promoting multilingualism and local content
4) Access: Internet connectivity

At this meeting, while the report for the overall meeting was prepared, agreement documents such as decisions and/or resolutions reflecting the results of discussions and negotiations were not created.

In the “openness” session, much of the discussion was devoted to the balance between freedom of expression and responsible use of this freedom, the balance between protecting copyright and access to knowledge, and the role and responsibility of each government and their limitations. Diverse opinions were expressed during this session. While all panelists emphasized the importance of freedom of expression, some argued that this freedom is not absolute and that the Internet is not above the law. Regulations must be applied to both the on- and off-line world. Other topics of discussion included that access to the Internet and to information constitutes an important theme in developing countries as well as the relationship between national regulation on the freedom of expression and the borderless Internet.

Discussions in the “security” session emphasized the need for Internet security in order to realize the benefits of the Information Society as Internet security is closely related to the development of economic and social activities. Other topics of discussion included the relationship between maintaining the openness of the Internet and ensuring security; protecting users from spam, phishing and viruses while protecting privacy; the importance of authentication and identification to ensure security; the need for reliable authentication organizations; enhancing user awareness against perpetrators of security breaches; the effectiveness of the sharing of information such as best practices and international cooperation; and public regulations and market-based solutions.

Discussions on “diversity” centered on internationalized domain names (IDNs), multilingualism and promoting local content. It was pointed out that as the requirement for multilingualism on the Internet is based on the requirement for ensuring cultural diversity, lack of linguistic diversity might lead to a “linguistic divide.” Discussions also touched on the fact that all of the latest Internet browsers support internationalized domain names, as well as on the technical issue of internationalizing domain names without endangering the stability and security of the Internet. Some participants stressed the need for support for the provision of content in languages for which market forces are not yet strong enough to provide. There was also a discussion of media for people with visual and other disabilities and for those who are illiterate.

During the discussions on the issue of “access,” increasing access was seen as the principal issue facing the Internet community and as being multifaceted and a focal point for public policy responses. It was pointed out that the introduction of competition and the removal of blocks to competition were of fundamental importance. The limitation in a market-based approach was also observed such as inadequate supplies of power, the low level of ICT skills and the shortage of funds.

In summing up the inaugural meeting, Chairman Desai, who also chairs the Advisory Group, commented, “The essential point to realize is that this is a multi-stakeholder forum. It is an open-door forum. It is not a forum with a fixed membership. (Omitted) In that sense, it’s not possible to speak of anything as being a product of this meeting. So it would be misleading to say that there is any such thing as an agreed conclusion or a product of this meeting in the strict sense of the term (omitted).” Following these remarks, reports were made on the activities of each session.

Forum participants reported on workshops, general meetings and other activities. Chairman Desai closed the forum by noting, “This particular session was an experiment. It was an experiment in a multi-stakeholder environment. It was an open-door experiment.”

(2) Second meeting of IGF
In February 2007, a preparatory meeting for the second meeting was held to reflect the results and experience of the first meeting. The multi-stakeholder format was generally seen as one of the key factors of the success of the first meeting, and it was decided to maintain this format as a guiding principle.

In May and September 2007, open consultation meetings took place to hear opinions from all stakeholders on the structure of the second meeting and the themes to be covered. While various opinions were expressed about the themes to be discussed at the second meeting, some developing countries noted that the issue of Internet
resources such as the management of Internet protocol (IP) addresses and the domain name system (DNS) should be added. The governments of developing countries and NGOs emphasized the need for balanced geographic representation to make a multi-stakeholder approach more effective.

The second meeting of IGF was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from November 12 – 15, 2007. The meeting was attended by more than 1,300 participants from 109 countries. A new theme, “critical Internet resources,” was added to the four main themes covered at the Athens meeting, which were “access,” “security,” “diversity” and “openness.” Principal sessions for each of these 5 themes and 84 workshops were held.

1) Critical Internet resources
The “critical Internet resources” session, which was newly added in this second meeting, was designed to discuss issues related to Internet resources such as IP addresses and DNS.

During the meeting, while a wide range of Internet resources that are important for development were discussed, the primary focus was given to the management of IP addresses and DNS. Some participants recommended that the United Nations establish a special multi-stakeholder working group within the IGF framework on critical Internet resources. However, there were also opinions that supported the use of the current framework for discussion. One of the panelists suggested that governments could choose to subsidize the related costs to encourage IPv6 (Internet Protocol Version 6) connectivity among all of the Internet service providers. Another panelist indicated that, while critical Internet resources were not a critical issue for users, security issues as well as issues of access in developing countries were important. There was a general recognition of the importance of building human capacity as a critical resource. One panelist pointed out that the spread of the multi-stakeholder methodology was an important new protocol for resolving issues of critical Internet resources.

2) Access
The “access” session was designed to discuss the policies to increase access to the Internet, in particular, those related to the expansion of access to the Internet and the reduction of costs in developing countries.

Panelists highlighted that the issue of access to the Internet remained the single most important issue, particularly in the developing world. A theme that emerged throughout the session was that while having one billion Internet users as of 2007 was considered a huge success, the focus should shift towards the next billion and the billions after that.

Many speakers stressed the need for open markets, while others emphasized that market forces alone could not solve the issue of accessibility, and governments had the responsibility of designing and implementing policies of universal access. There was an acknowledgment that multi-stakeholder cooperation in which governments, private sector, civil society and related entities are involved was very important with regard to access.

Overall, there was a general agreement that the issues of access remained central to the agenda of the IGF and as the “next billion” come on-line, new challenges and opportunities will emerge.

3) Diversity
The “diversity” session was designed to discuss the promotion of linguistic diversity on the Internet, distribution of local content, diversity related to people with disabilities and the like.

Panelists called for the Internet to be accessible to all. In order to include people with disabilities, use of universal design and assistive technologies were important. Discussions were held from diverse aspects, including cultural diversity, linguistic diversity and the role of DNS.

4) Openness
The “openness” session was designed to discuss the importance of the free flow of information, the freedom of expression, harmonization with the protection of intellectual property rights and the like.

Several speakers pointed out that openness involved several questions of balance. For example, there is a balance between the “two IPs”—the IP for Internet protocol and the IP for intellectual property. There is also a question of balance between the freedom of expression and free flow of information and the freedom to enjoy the fruits of one’s labor. Moreover, there is also the question of balance between privacy and the freedom of expression as the principal issue facing “openness.” It was pointed out that the observance of human rights was not only for governments, but also for businesses and other stakeholders.

It was also pointed out that practical solutions to issues such as child pornography, credit card fraud and terrorism should be built based on the respect of human rights. There was also a discussion on the importance of open standards and free and open source software. It was emphasized that there was no contradiction between free and open source software and intellectual property.

5) Security
The “security” session was designed to discuss the roles of stakeholders to enhance security on the Internet, the protection of children and measures to curb cybercrimes.

Many speakers emphasized the legal dimensions of security. Given the borderless nature of the Internet, they highlighted the need for high levels of cooperation among law enforcement agencies of all member countries. While some called for more legislation, there was also a warning against overregulation. Many speakers...
pointed out that collaborative, multi-stakeholder efforts of cooperation could be sufficient. There was a strong call for harmonizing legislation between countries and also for bringing into force new legal instruments that apply to the online world.

One of the themes that emerged from the discussions was that creating a sustainable environment of trust from all stakeholders was essential in the pursuit of security and to achieve this required everyone’s cooperation.

As symbolized by the “next billion users” in the chairman’s summary on the last day, many speakers stressed that the enhancement of increasing access to the Internet remains a core agenda item of IGF.

It was also pointed out that a fair environment for business competition on a global scale would contribute to an overall improvement in access conditions and that, if necessary, international financing arrangements should be developed to support investment in areas in which it is not commercially feasible. It was also noted that Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) could be valuable resources in developing countries.

While so far, an IGF meeting has been held annually, the general recognition is that IGF meetings will not prepare any official agreed documents because the themes of the discussions continue to expand.

As such, for the implementation and follow-up of WSIS decisions as required under the Tunis Agenda, ITU, UNESCO or UNDP play a leading facilitating role respectively for each of the Action Lines. CSTD and IGF are respectively holding meetings every year in such a way that they maintain cooperation and, at the same time, display their own initiatives.

IV Future Issues and Challenges

In Chapters II and III, the moves and actions taken during the three years after an agreement was reached at the WSIS to overcome the digital divide and to build the global information society were discussed. These chapters introduced a wide range of activities such as cooperation among UN agencies and activities by all stakeholders including member countries and NGOs at the meeting held by UN agencies.

In this chapter, the issues to be addressed and challenges to be met in the future by the international community, international organizations and Japan in particular are considered respectively.

1 Issues Facing the International Community

The international community is made up of individual nations as basic units. However, there is no authoritative organization with the authority of compulsory execution in the international community, while each nation has such power that covers its own country. Accordingly, military power was resorted to as an ultimate means of resolving conflicts between nations in the past. Based on grave reflections on war, however, each nation had started to give priority to discussion and negotiation. International conferences and meetings were held as the places for such discussions to resolve disputes.

Subsequently, a secretariat was established to operate such international conferences and meetings to resolve and mediate disputes between nations. Since then, talks were mostly held at the venues of meetings organized by this secretariat. In particular, in the communications field, an international organization was inaugurated at a relatively early stage as the venue for negotiations for the resolution and coordination of disputes. This is because, as symbolized by the term “sovereignty over communications,” communications networks are deeply involved in national security and national sovereignty. This international organization is the International Telegraph Union, which is the predecessor of the current ITU. It was established in 1865, nine years before the inauguration of the Universal Postal Union in 1874.

Based on the lessons learned from World War I, with respect to political issues as well, a major movement of the international community was towards the importance of talks at an intergovernmental organization. This trend led to the inauguration of the League of Nations in 1919.

For the first time as an international organization, the League of Nations discussed international assistance activities, and announced a report entitled “Development of International Cooperation in Economic and Social Affairs” at its General Assembly in August 1939.

After World War II, the international community began to pay attention to the gap between rich and poor, and started to seriously consider international development aid programs in which rich countries support poor countries.

In 1944, immediately before the end of World War II, all allied nations gathered in Bretton Woods in the United States to discuss a post-war system to stabilize monetary relations, restore devastated Europe and pave the way for a free trade system. These discussions led to the establishment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1945 for the purpose of promoting stability in the exchange rates of currencies, with the US dollar serving as the key currency, as backed by the overwhelmingly predominant US economy.

In 1945, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) was also set up to support the recovery of Europe, which had been devastated during wartime. To maintain the free trade system by replacing protectionism, which is accused of being one of the major causes of the War, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was signed as a multiple-country agreement in 1947. In 1948, GATT was concluded by 23 countries in Geneva when they negotiated trade issues—this was regarded as the inauguration of GATT.
Currently available international development aid programs can be traced back to the Bretton Woods system consisting of IMF, IBRD and GATT, and to the Marshall Plan that was planned and implemented by the United States to recover Europe from the devastation of the War.

Subsequently, colonies in Asia and Africa became independent. These newly independent nations lagged far behind other nations in developing all facets necessary to become independent countries such as justice, administration and national security as well as infrastructure. To support these countries, there was wide recognition that bearing the cost of “assistance” was indispensable.

In 1960, the International Development Association (IDA) was established to promote development assistance for developing countries. Currently, IDA and IBRD constitute the World Bank Group. During that time, the East-West conflict was under heightened tension. The Soviet Union expanded military and economic assistance to its neighboring satellite nations and communist candidate nations. The West was urged to consider strategies for assistance to strengthen its own camp.

Under these circumstances, the balance of payments of the United States had significantly worsened (it had been in deficit since 1958), and requests for “burden sharing” were issued to “allied nations.” In 1960, by agreement among all related countries, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), which was established to help administer the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe, was restructured into the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In 1961, the development aid group within OECD was officially transformed into the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) as the OECD’s forum for discussion.

Around that time, under the initiative of then President John F. Kennedy of the United States, the first United Nations Decade of Development was launched. This concept continued to be implemented four times for 40 years until 2000. Currently, there is widespread recognition that achievement of the results and goals initially anticipated was blocked by difficulties encountered from time to time.

Under such a set of moves, as explained in Chapter II, the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations in September 2000 adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration. This Declaration listed the goals to be achieved by the international community in the 21st century. In Chapter III for Development and Poverty Eradication, the Declaration stated that we are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want. As also explained in Chapter II, in September 2001, international development goals so far established were integrated into an enhanced common framework known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). With the occurrence of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, concerns about development issues began to arise in the international community due to the view that countries suffering from poverty could become hotbeds of terrorism. Subsequently, international conferences where discussions on development issues were central were held one after another.

In March 2002, the International Conference on Financing for Development took place in Monterrey, Mexico, where discussions were held to seek ways of mobilizing resources for financing development around the world, particularly in developing countries, to fulfill the MDGs.

During this conference, the Monterrey Consensus was adopted, which centered on a substantial increase in ODA and debt relief for poor countries. While the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2002 was scheduled to discuss the implementation of the principles adopted at the Earth Summit (the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, as well as newly emerging issues, the major focus of discussions at the meeting in Johannesburg was a call to protect the poor in developing countries.

The Johannesburg Declaration adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development stated, “the deep fault line that divides human society between the rich and the poor and the ever-increasing gap between the developed and developing worlds pose a major threat to global prosperity, security and stability” as one of the challenges we face. This demonstrated recognition that the development issue is deeply involved in the world’s stability and security.

In September 2005, a high-level plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly was held to review the internationally agreed development goals including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. The Outcome Document adopted at this meeting reiterated the determination to ensure timely and full realization of the development goals and objectives that emerged from the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals (Table 3).

There were two focal points for international development assistance that were expressed at international conferences and meetings held under the initiative of the United Nations. One was the “quantity of assistance.” The achievement of the MDGs requires substantial increases in official development assistance. The specific goal toward this end that was set was that each assisting country increases its ratio of ODA to GNI (gross national income) to 0.7 percent by 2015. The second was the “quality of assistance.” To provide assistance in the most effective manner, the recognition was that increased emphasis must be given to coordination, ownership, mutual accountability and management of development results.

Nevertheless, an all-round approach was adopted for selecting the target areas for assistance, and the idea of
prioritizing the areas in accordance with their expected importance in the future and distributing funds based on such priority was not seen.

From a time series perspective, in 2000, the Okinawa Charter on the Global Information Society was adopted at the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit. While the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted at the UN Millennium Summit touched on bridging the digital divide, there was no mention of the digital divide in either the Monterrey Consensus or the Johannesburg Declaration in 2002. While the outcome documents of the Geneva Phase of the WSIS in December 2003 included an agenda for building the global information society, there was no such mention during the OECD Ministerial Council Meetings in 2004 and 2005.

As stated above, in September 2005, a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly was held at the UN Headquarters, where the MDGs and the development issues were discussed, and the outcome document was announced in 2005. In this outcome document, ICT was treated as one of the eight subcategories under the title of Science and Technology for Development, and was not taken up as an independent theme, while consideration was given to education, rural and agricultural development, employment, health issues, etc. as independent themes.

As such, from the viewpoints of major international development assistance organizations such as the United Nations, OECD and the World Bank, the priority given to bridging the digital divide and building the global information society is still low. The development and utilization of ICT is not yet positioned as an independent field.

In the future, each country and these organizations must develop deep recognition of the fact that ICT utilization will have a major effect on global society and can bring about significant benefits to the economic development of developing countries. Developed countries providing assistance should give full consideration to the roles that can be played by ICTs. At the same time, it is important to facilitate the understanding of beneficiaries (developing countries, etc.) of the fact that ICT can drive the development of economic society and largely contribute to solving domestic problems. It is also important to encourage these countries to raise the level of priority of ICT as a field where they request assistance.

### 2 Issues Facing International Organizations

Because of the need for a permanent venue for international conferences, international organizations were generally established as the secretariat to operate such conferences and meetings. Accordingly, the major purpose of their activities is to facilitate smooth operation of
conferences and meetings. The activities of the secretariat are basically structured so as not to affect the sovereignty of any member country. Accordingly, a general concept shared among developed countries is that the scope of the activities of international organizations should be limited, and that contributions to the UN by member countries should be minimal.

On the other hand, developing countries maintain that the scope of the activities of international organizations should be expanded so that these organizations can provide assistance on their own authority to support developing countries.

Developing countries also consider that contributions to these international organizations by developing countries should be kept at the lowest possible level, and that the share of contributions by developed countries with economic power should be increased.

The basic mechanism for decision making at the general assembly of an international organization is a majority vote based on a one-vote-per-nation system regardless of the share of contributions, except for the veto power held by the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and a decision making method in which the number of votes a member country can cast is determined by the amount of investment, as adopted by financial international organizations. Because there are an overwhelmingly large number of developing countries, developing countries generally hold an advantageous position.

Accordingly, developed countries try to limit the activities of international organizations to those that are necessary to achieve the purposes established at the time of their inauguration, while developing countries hope to expand the scope of their activities to facilitate assistance activities for their benefit.

Because of this difference in basic recognition concerning the roles of international organizations, compromise between developed and developing countries is always necessary in making any decision within the international organization. Furthermore, for the international organization to embark on any new activities, the applicable treaty or regulation must be amended. This requires a number of days for deliberations for compromise or amendment procedures to start any new activities based on the fully established underlying foundation. Consequently, it is often difficult for international organizations to quickly launch new activities.

At the same time, because a large number of intergovernmental organizations already exist, overlaps of activities are highly likely to occur with existing organizations in one way or another whenever a new task is considered.

When the creation of the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) was proposed by developing countries during the WSIS meetings, developed countries opposed this idea in the context that there are duplications and overlaps with existing financial mechanisms. However, compromise was reached between developing and developed countries in such a way as that DSF would be created voluntarily by stakeholders outside the framework of the United Nations, and not as a UN agency, to raise funds to reduce the digital divide.

Based on such a compromise, the Global Digital Solidarity Fund was formally established in March 2005 in Geneva and started its activities.

Among international organizations, some make efforts to survive even after the purposes of their creation were achieved such as CSTD, which could find a new mission as stated in Paragraph 105 of the Tunis Agenda of the WSIS.

There are also cases such as that in which the DOT Force created at the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in 2000 was merged with the ICT Task Force to survive as a new organization as a UN agency, which is called the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development (GAID). GAID conducts activities such as panel discussions at the CSTD plenary sessions.

While international organizations specialized in diverse fields are conducting their respective activities, the WSIS, as explained in Chapter III, designated a facilitator/moderator organization for each theme. The facilitator/moderator organization is responsible for holding meetings, implementing and following up on the assigned theme and exchanging information on the theme.

These facilitation and consultation meetings for all themes are held in May every year in Geneva. To date, these meetings have been held three times. While each facilitator/moderator organization assigned to each theme assumes the role of coordinating the schedule and agenda for its own theme, there is no organization that coordinates matters covering all themes. Although the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) was set up as a new inter-agency mechanism with the main objective of coordinating the substantive and policy issues facing the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS, CSTD and IGF are not members of this Group. While each moderator organization of the Group is to hold a meeting in turn, as far as its reports indicate, it appears that the Group is not functioning as a secretariat coordinating all related matters, such as eliminating any overlaps in themes in respective Action Line meetings.

This situation leads to the lack of adequate coordination among WSIS-related organizations, such as the CSTD, which was established to provide coordination for the UN agencies; the IGF, which discusses Internet governance; the GAID, which was set up for the purpose of utilizing ICTs to support developing countries; and the Global Digital Solidarity Fund, which was launched to provide financial support for the use of ICTs in developing countries.

Considering that WSIS follow-up meetings are chiefly held at the ITU buildings, it might be appropriate that
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ITU becomes the responsible organization for the follow-up of WSIS outcomes and provides overall coordination. In light of the thinking of developed countries as explained above and the mechanisms of international organizations, not only ITU member countries but also other international organizations might oppose ITU playing the role of providing overall coordination.

Turning our eyes to the CSTD to which the role of coordination among international organizations was assigned, we find that its functions as the secretariat are not adequately performed, and the participants in its meetings from member countries are the same as those in the past. As such, the CSTD has no experience or accumulated knowledge in ICTs, and is simply accepting reports on the follow-ups of the WSIS outcomes from other international organizations at its meetings. This situation suggests that, currently, the CSTD has not fully displayed its own initiative in acting as a coordinator.

Because of such insufficient coordination, specific themes such as cyber security are discussed in an overlapped manner at various conferences. Simply holding respective discussions at the meeting of the existing international organizations would not produce any integrated or meaningful outcomes.

To address a theme that covers an extensive range of subjects on an integrated basis by avoiding any overlaps, an organization responsible for such coordination is required. However, there are many difficulties in assigning such a role to existing organizations such as the scope of mandated activities and coordination with other organizations.

At the same time, many developed countries would oppose the establishment of a new organization for this purpose.

Under such circumstances, in order to make the best use of the WSIS outcomes in pursuit of building the global information society, each member country must share the problems that international organizations currently have, and must join in a consensus at the level of the heads of state/government about the utilization of international organizations. Upon forming such consensus, member countries should cooperate in providing guidance to respective international organizations to facilitate coordination.

3 Issues Facing Japan

As explained in Chapter II, the bridging of the digital divide was one of the themes discussed at the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in Japan in 2000. One of the official documents issued as a result was the Okinawa Charter on Global Information Society (Okinawa IT Charter). Ahead of the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit, Japan announced a comprehensive cooperation package to address the international digital divide mostly consisting of ODA public funding amounting to a total of $15 billion over a five-year period.

As such, Japan has paid attention to the importance of ICTs at a relatively early stage as compared to other countries, and made a commitment to international cooperation to work to eliminate the digital divide. However, when we look at the actual situation in 2006 after the elapse of five years, we see that it is difficult to find specific results from the international commitments made by Japan.

One of the reasons for this situation that could be considered is that the Japanese government applied the conventional ODA allocation scheme on an as-is basis without establishing a new, special scheme for the elimination of the digital divide, the assistance measures for this purpose might be hidden in the conventional scheme.

The Japanese government’s basic concept for its international commitment of providing a total of $15 billion over five years was not to allocate $15 billion separately for this purpose, but was to accumulate the ICT-related portion of ODA in the general-accounting budget for five years to reach a total of $15 billion.

In the conventional ODA allocation scheme, the percentage of allocation for each field is predetermined to some extent to ensure balanced assistance measures for each field. Accordingly, this scheme makes it difficult to give priority to only the ICT field. Considering the ODA allocation scheme that is specific to the Japanese government, it was difficult for Japan to implement the international commitment unless it established a special scheme for this purpose.

According to the website of Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the primary purpose of Japan’s international cooperation to date was to fulfill its responsibilities commensurate with its national strength and its standing in the international community. The specific goals to achieve this objective were to facilitate peace and stability in the world through promoting development in developing countries and providing humanitarian assistance and to reduce poverty through economic growth.

The concept in which top priority is placed on humanitarian assistance is apt to lead to an all-round, balanced approach because the objective of cooperation is the assistance measures themselves, rather than the effects generated by the assistance measures.

As a result, the actual implementation of strategic international cooperation is deferred, and it becomes difficult for the Japanese government to announce its messages to the international community, thus hindering any increase in Japan’s standing in the international community.

Considering that the taxes people pay constitute the source of funds for international cooperation, “ensuring Japan’s national interest under the trend toward increasing globalization,” which is listed as the second purpose on the MOFA website, should be considered as the primary purpose. In order to provide a persuasive
explanation to taxpayers, the concept of strategic international cooperation in which the effects of assistance are always kept in mind becomes necessary.

Under the difficult financial situation in which Japan finds itself, overall ODA in the general-accounting budget was about ¥700 billion in fiscal 2008. In light of this, it is necessary to discuss what benefits are to accrue to Japan for each assistance case, and to examine how any particular case contributes to Japan’s national interest. Whether ODA in the general-accounting budget is effectively utilized must be determined based on if the relevant assistance case meets the interests of the nation, as well as if the relevant assistance case contributes to the domestic economy of the recipient country. In the United States, Congress deliberates the ODA budget, decides recipient countries and evaluates the results. In Japan, however, the National Diet simply ratifies the contents that are determined by the government. Rather than following such procedures, the National Diet should deliberate and make final decisions on its own responsibility in consideration of the national interest.

A third-party group other than those who are directly involved in the relevant assistance case should examine the achievement of mutual benefits (both to Japan and to the recipient country) based on objective materials, such as whether the provided assistance has actually contributed to the economic growth of the recipient country; and whether the possibilities of Japanese companies participating in the market of the recipient country have expanded. If the National Diet is to deliberate and make decisions from a strategic perspective based on the reports submitted by this group, official explanations as to whether the relevant ODA case meets the strategic purposes and whether it is effective become necessary. This will contribute to an improvement of the current situation in which the government takes the initiative.

As in the cases of ODA provided to some countries, there were instances in which the provided assistance was not appreciated by the recipient country, or in which it is not clear if the assistance actually generated any effects. Japan’s ODA scheme, which simply focuses on the expansion of the amount of ODA, should be reviewed.

Another reason the priority of building the global information society is not raised within the Japanese government stems from the vertically structured administration. Japan’s administration is composed of a unique vertical structure; it is said that there are the same number of “nations” within Japan as the number of ministries/agencies. It has been a long time since such adverse effects were pointed out. The vertical structure can be traced back to the Meiji era. While the Constitution of Japan was enacted after Japan was defeated in World War II, the organizational concept of legislation and administration was still based on that of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan (Meiji Constitution). Accordingly, there was inadequate recognition among the Diet and administrative agencies regarding their respective new roles to be assumed under the new constitution.

As stated above, because Japan’s administrative agencies still maintain the traditional vertical structure that has continued since the Meiji era, coordination among all governmental organizations often becomes insufficient. Although the Diet has been positioned as the highest organ of state power under the new constitution, it still adheres to the tradition under the Meiji Constitution, and does not completely fulfill its role as the highest organ, often simply ratifying matters determined by the administrative organizations of the government. In particular, this vertical structure of administrative organizations not only hinders reaching quick and effective solutions of domestic problems, but also causes various problems in the international community.

Essentially, negotiations in the international community must be based on a national strategy as well as on the country’s predetermined priorities, and a decision must be quickly reached based on such strategy. However, because of the lack of a national strategy, the Japanese government cannot coordinate opinions and views among ministries and is unable to make quick decisions. There have been many cases in which Japan has been at a disadvantage in negotiations because of its inability to make quick decisions as a nation.

However, even under the vertically structured administrative organizations, decisions can be quickly reached even for matters in which multiple ministries are involved if a national strategy is established in advance through coordination among the ministries, which would clarify the priorities the nation gives to relevant matters.

The proper flow would be as follows: each Cabinet establishes its own national strategies; diplomatic and national security strategies are formulated based on such national strategies; and an important issue that arises from time to time such as the ICT strategy is set up based on these strategies.

However, currently, there are neither national strategies nor diplomatic and national security strategies that are established in advance through coordination among the ministries. In addition, there is no organization within the Japanese government that functions to establish such strategies.

In order to deal with this situation, the Advisory Panel to Discuss Strengthening National Security Functions of the Prime Minister’s Office was set up on the initiative of the Abe Cabinet in November 2006. It submitted its report in February 2007. The report pointed out that no organization was available in Japan that worked to establish national strategies. The report also suggested that the functions of the Security Council established in 1986 should be thoroughly reviewed and that the National Security Council should be newly established as an organization that formulates national strategies. The National Security Council was expected
to deliberate the following three new “control tower” functions, in addition to those covered by the former Security Council36.

1) Basic principles on important matters related to diplomacy and national security
2) Important diplomatic and national security policies that are under the jurisdiction of multiple ministries/agencies
3) Basic principles for addressing critical events involving diplomacy and national security

Based on this report, a bill to amend the Law on the Establishment of the Security Council of Japan was submitted to the Diet in April 2007. However, because the Abe Cabinet resigned, deliberations on the matter were incomplete, and the bill was dropped.

Under these circumstances, in Japan, a system for establishing national strategies and diplomatic and national security strategies has still not fully been in place. This situation is caused by not only the lack of thorough discussions by the government about the need for such strategies, but also by the fact that there are only a limited number of people who recognize such a need, which is considered to be the more fundamental reason.

However, if it is assumed that a national strategy were in place in Japan, and the ODA amounting to $15 billion were decided at the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in 2000 based on such national strategy, we could have been able to generate substantive achievements after five years by overcoming the difficulties existing under the current system. Broadly speaking, the current system presents three difficulties.

The first difficulty existing under the current system is the lack of prior consultation with the financial authority. In general, it is extremely difficult to determine the required amount in advance by consulting with the financial authority about details of the activities. This requires a mechanism in which the relevant theme is included as part of a national strategy as a matter of priority; based on this national strategy, coordination is made with the financial authority in advance and the required amount is determined from a political viewpoint.

The second difficulty is the so-called “request principle” to provide ODA. Under the current ODA scheme, ODA is based on the request of the recipient country. Waiting for a request from the recipient country takes a long time before the actual implementation of the ODA project. By doing away with the request principle, quick responses could be made. Furthermore, by considering an ODA case as a support project in which Japan takes the initiative rather than applying the request principle, it will become possible to establish projects that also consider the benefits to Japan in addition to the benefits to the recipient country. If this process becomes possible, Japan can independently conduct surveys on the actual status of the digital divide and the expenses required to develop infrastructure for each country. Japan can also project the benefits that can be brought about by ICT utilization in the recipient country based on the developed infrastructure.

Moreover, infrastructure to be developed should consist of portions developed by self-efforts of the recipient country and portions developed by assistance provided by Japan. By promoting the integration of the development of infrastructure and its post-development utilization, the use of ICTs can be tailored to the actual situation of each specific recipient country. At the same time, requesting the efforts and the bearing of some expenses by the recipient country would give the recipient country a deeper understanding and recognition of the ICTs. It would also become possible to offer communications systems and applications on an integrated basis such as e-government, e-health and e-education based on Japan’s technical standards. If the recipient countries adopt these standard systems, such adoption would contribute to the improvement of Japan’s international standing. Supporting such an overall integrated system would bring about an advantage to Japan because the ODA model would become visible to the relevant recipient country, other developing countries and the international community.

A third difficulty is Japan’s vertically structured administrative functions. In Japan, the use of ICTs is a theme under the jurisdiction of multiple ministries.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications takes charge of the development of infrastructure; the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is responsible for medicine that uses such infrastructure; and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology supervises education. As such, each ministry covers only the portion that is under its jurisdiction. So far, much time and labor have been required for coordination among these organizations. However, if ICT assistance were treated as the priority item in a national strategy, a responsible organization were set up, and this organization were to take charge of providing ICT assistance to developing countries, such an organization could promote integrated development and utilization of infrastructure beyond the borders of ministerial jurisdiction. This would enable effective assistance that could lead to economic growth of the recipient country through integrated infrastructure planning, design and development and ICT utilization.

If Japan could establish a national strategy in such a way, and could eliminate the three difficulties mentioned above, it would be possible to deal with ICT projects flexibly as the key to the elimination of the digital divide in developing countries based on their actual situations. If this were possible, we would have been able to generate achievements in a tangible manner by using the $15 billion ODA, which was the international commitment Japan made at the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit.
In order to build the global information society by overcoming the digital divide, the priority of measures to deal with the digital divide must be raised in the international community. At the same time, developing countries themselves must have an adequate understanding of the need for and importance of such measures as the key to their economic development.

On the part of international organizations, a system must be established that enables quick response to any new undertaking that arises in the future. At the same time, priorities must be increased for new areas that are expected to assume greater importance.

Japan must overcome the adverse effects of its vertically structured administrative functions, and must establish a system in which the administration can formulate timely national strategies including budgetary measures for priority issues. Under such a system, the government must prioritize its policies, and clearly show its intentions by giving high priority to the ICT strategy such as bridging the digital divide and building the global information society.

Under the trend of increasing globalization, Japan can resolve issues such as budgetary measures, the request principle and vertically divided administrative functions by establishing a national strategy. Based on a clear national strategy, Japan can strengthen its international influence, improve its international competitiveness and increase its global presence.

Notes:
2 See Note 1 above.
4 Resolution 73 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis
5 Resolution 1158 of the ITU Council 2000
6 Resolution 1179 of the ITU Council 2001
7 Resolution 1185 of the ITU Council 2001
9 The countries that actually participated were Bolivia, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania. Although China was invited to participate, it did not attend any meetings.
13 http://www.un.org/millennium/
14 http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/
15 http://www.unicastforce.org/about/
16 http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/WSIS-DOC-000411PDF-E.pdf
17 http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/WSIS-DOC-000511PDF-E.pdf
18 ICANN is a non-profit corporation that was created in 1998 pursuant to the laws of the State of California for the purpose of managing and coordinating the Internet’s name and numbering systems all over the world.
22 http://www.wgig.org/docs/WGIGREPORT.pdf
23 The root zone file lists the top-level domains (currently, 259 TLDs) forming Internet domain names, and indicates primary and secondary name server names and IP addresses.
25 http://www.intgovforum.org/meeting.htm
26 ECOSOC Resolution 2006/46
28 http://www.itu.int/org/sgd/cybersecurity/gec
29 http://www.uncatd.org/Template/Page.asp?intItemID=2698&lang=1
32 http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/index.php/athensmeeting
33 http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/index.php/secondmeeting
34 http://www.dsf-fsn.org/
35 UN Press Release, DEV/2572, PI/1701, April 17, 2006

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