

Summary of Discussion and Recommendations
Fourth Meeting of the Strategy Council
Global Alliance for ICT and Development
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
2 September, 2009, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM
Club Industrial - Monterrey, Mexico

I. Introduction

1. The fourth meeting of the Strategy Council of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) was held on 2 September 2009, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at Club Industrial in Monterrey, Mexico. Approximately 200 members of the Strategy Council, Steering Committee, Panel of High-level Advisers and Champions attended the meeting.

2. The meeting consisted of: (I) an opening session, (II) four parallel, interactive Solution Salons on the focus areas of i) The Financial and Economic Crisis and Poverty Eradication; ii) Health and Education; iii) Climate Change; iv) Gender (III) a session on Network Development and Outreach, (IV) a strategy session and question and answer period and (V) closing session.

3. Mr. Sha Zukang, United Nations Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, opened the meeting and made a statement, (For the text please visit <http://www.un-gaid.org/>) and invited Mr Talal Abu-Ghazaleh to chair the session. The chairman made a statement. (For the text please visit <http://www.un-gaid.org/>) Mr. Jaime Parada, Mexico's Director General of the National Council on Science and Technology, welcomed and thanked the Strategy Council members for coming to Monterrey, Mexico for the meeting. Ms. Haiyan Qian, Director of DPADM/DESA, also participated in the Opening Session and outlined the key role of GAID in maintaining its focus on the core themes of bridging the digital divide and using ICTs to reach the MDGs and gave an overview of the Global Knowledge Repository. The Executive Coordinator of GAID, Mr. Sarbuland Khan, welcomed the members of the Strategy Council and thanked the government of Mexico and the State of Nuevo Leon for hosting the event. Mr. Khan expressed his gratitude to his colleagues and members of the GAID community in the academic, public and private sectors for their ongoing support and leadership.

II. Summary of Discussions

4. The meeting's focus was on bringing all of the various GAID communities together, including Strategy Council members, High-level advisors and champions, for an interactive discussion on current actions and future direction of the Global Alliance. A number of recommendations and ideas were proposed by members, advisors and others.

5. It was widely agreed that GAID should continue its efforts to accelerate and mainstream the use of ICT into the UN development agenda especially in using ICT to help achieve progress towards the MDGs and benefit those who need it most, the poor and disadvantaged communities around the world. It was suggested that the Alliance should be at the cutting edge and emerge as a platform for action orientated policy-dialogue and encourage innovation to reduce the cost of technologies for the world's poor. There was broad recognition that GAID has transformed itself in the span of three years into a unique and innovative "Member Support Network" and global forum for policy dialogue and partnership building. Participants agreed that GAIDs further development will rely highly on a frank and open approach, based on shared responsibility and community spirit, and the complementary strengths of the various members where outreach and funding are key elements in ensuring the success of its efforts.

III. Solution Salons : Summaries of Discussions and Recommendations

The Strategy Council broke out into four parallel, interactive "Solution Salons":

A. Financial and Economic Crisis and Poverty Eradication

6. The Solution salon analyzed how ICTs in general and UNDESA-GAID, as a platform for capacity building and partnerships for ICT, can improve the current financial crisis which led to a global recession and negative repercussions for development. According to the participants the main actions that need to be undertaken at local, national and international levels are the following: improve investment in local entrepreneurships, increase transparency, catalyze smaller and local banks, use ICT as a tool to build capacity and facilitate community building, increase levels of public expenditure on ICT infrastructure to more efficiently deliver crucial public services¹, enhance private sector investments in ICT, use ICT to improve agriculture and food production around the world and disseminate knowledge as a powerful enabler in the development community's quest to address the food crisis. As a long term response to the problem of the financial and economic crisis the need to increase the level of ICT training was emphasized. Especially small businesses, entrepreneurs and women can benefit from bringing the technology into the communities and properly training them to use it effectively and efficiently.

7. UNDESA-GAID, in particular, should: help identify innovative ways to advance development by improving the conditions of the developing world through ICT and include economic sustainability in ICTD projects in order to assure a long-term response and involve stakeholders of developing countries.

¹ e.g. Malaysia's main policy strategy in the past year has focused on increased investments in ICT infrastructure by connecting the people and empowering them to become independent of the global financial system.

8. GAID should strengthen its collaboration with UNDP, FAO, WHO and other UN bodies by increasing the collaborative work they are doing already so that the Alliance can be a unique platform to support the development of vibrant private sectors in developing countries.

9. Summary of the key recommendations and action points suggested during the meeting:

- GAID should continue to be a platform for capacity and partnership building between all stakeholders (public & private sector, civil society, governments and international organizations).
- GAID should help strengthen the use of ICT to increase transparency in global finance and in country level governance to help prevent international crises. ICT should aim to advance development by bringing innovative and affordable technologies that can aid education, health, agricultural and business sectors, among others, in developing countries.
- GAID should play a leading role by reinforcing ICT and financial sector policy programs and reforms at country level and encourage the private companies to increase their investments in ICT infrastructure. Poverty reduction strategies should integrate ICT in order to accelerate financial sector development and job creation and enhance real progress in all areas of development moving forward, particularly in the least developed countries.
- GAID should play a strong role by advocating the use of ICT to increase the level of investment, support and governance for social development.
- GAID should take the lead in strengthening collaboration between all bodies of the UN System working on financial and development issues and integrating the use of ICT as a major component of UN System development programs.

B. Health and Education

Health

10. The main focus of the interactive discussion on Health was the need to prioritize health related issues in the GAID agenda (Action Plan). The increased use of health-related services via mobile platforms and other communication devices that can radically improve the healthcare services were also underlined.

11. Summary of the key recommendations and action points suggested during the meeting:

- GAID should promote the exchange of Best Practices using ICT to improve the health system, particularly in developing countries. It is essential to provide tools and criteria, disseminating information through websites, strengthen collaborations with other relevant organizations, governments, civil society and the private sectors. It is therefore crucial to build key partnerships in the area of

e/m Health which enable designing, funding, and advancing e- and mHealth projects in the developing world and ensure a sustainable implementation.

- GAID should then, move from Best Practices to more concrete projects, actively engaging the GAID's community resources and catalyzing actions and identifying champions.

Education

12. The Solution Salon on Education underlined the important need to enhance better access to education by promoting ICT innovations and transform the educational system. In this context ICT is considered the key for providing universal access.

13. Summary of the key recommendations and action points suggested during the meeting:

- GAID should help improve educational content provision and access by: (1) Developing the capacities of teachers and stimulating life-long learning, (2) Global, Open source student driven curriculum, for students to bring in their own content directly and share it with others, (3) Certificated education for knowledge society workforce, and (4) Promoting open educational resources.
- GAID should help create an enabling environment for ICT deployment especially for education in the least developed countries by establishing the following: (1) Regional policy maker's forums to benchmark and compare experiences and promote peer learning within the same region (2) Verify, evaluate and document experiences in different parts of the world and make them available to the educational community and policymakers.
- GAID should encourage the integration of sustainable development in ICT initiatives on Education.

C. Climate Change

14. The Solutions Salon discussion emphasized the fact that not only the private sector, but also civil society, international organizations and governments should identify solutions for climate change that are sustainable and action-oriented.

15. The work of GAID can be linked with the low carbon Prosperity Task Force² of the World Economic Forum. Its aim is to create a set of practical policies and incentives to

² The Forum's Low-Carbon Prosperity Task Force provides leaders at UN Climate talks with plan to accelerate private sector investment and innovation to build a clean, green economy. The key areas identified for action in next 5-10 years are increased energy efficiency, technological development, investment in low-carbon infrastructure and halting deforestation. Eighty business leaders and over 40 environmental and scientific experts outlined a plan for stimulating a "clean revolution" in the private sector within the next few years even as governments continue negotiations on a climate policy framework in the United Nations.

help achieve high-growth and low-carbon economy and technology. The goal of this Task Force is to report their recommendations to the UN Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen. In this context, GAID should evaluate their recommendations from the perspective of the developing countries and emerging markets, and promote those with which they agree.

16. GAID's role is also to address information gaps, highlighting best uses of technology and promoting knowledge exchange to achieve development. In this context, GAID's role can be defined as a knowledge distributor and a knowledge developer.

17. Summary of the key recommendations and action points suggested during the meeting:

- GAID should develop a Digital Data Portal which creates and disseminates a viable best practice data on ICT and climate change. In this context, businesses can upload their research and best practices information, making current successful practices available to all interested parties. Entities can search for others with common characteristics (size, geography, industry, etc.) and find solutions that may work for them as well, thus enabling the constant sharing of information to increase energy efficiency. The Portal will include only well vetted and endorsed relevant, ICT affecting climate change, content.
- GAID should support the creation of a 3-dimensional best practices model: The model will allow businesses, governments, civil society and international organizations to search for working use cases already in practice which are specific to their special needs and individual situation. Under the umbrella of GAID it was proposed that two task forces should be created to accomplish the following:
 - Task Force I will focus on research of existing practices and use cases. It will also review and endorse those it finds most successful and applicable.
 - Task Force II will focus on content creation and identifying gaps in research. GAID will disseminate and promote the results of viable best practice models.

D. Gender

18. The Solution Salon on gender emphasized the need to increase an efficient use of ICT which can help promote gender equity principles and analysis through governance, data analysis, research, education, training and policies. Government investment in IT infrastructures is crucial towards empowering women and allowing them to take a leadership role in their societies.

19. A gender and citizenship framework should be a priority goal in government implementation policies in order to more empowering women in the development of the societies. Concrete actions have to be defined to mainstream gender in youth, education, entrepreneurship, health and governance initiatives.

20. An additional focus was identifying UNDESA-GAID's role to contribute to ICT innovations by promoting women's empowerment and underlining key components for collaborative partnerships to promote gender equality.

21. Summary of the key recommendations and action points suggested during the meeting:

- Local experiences should be used as good examples for incremental progress.
- Gender action should focus on both men and women from childhood to adulthood.
- ICT and gender have to take into account local needs and resources within an overall framework of development.
- ICT should be made available universally for girls and women and promote local knowledge, innovations and gender friendly technology.
- Online action should support access for women to the technological industry, support their career development, influence policy-makers and act as role-models for young girls
- Regional and national centers working on gender and IT should be promoted as well as supported and should include action and research programs through collaborative projects.
- ITF should collect best practices of women and organizations promoting gender equity and ICT and disseminate the results worldwide.

22. Recommendations for the Global Alliance

- GAID should integrate gender as a cross-cutting theme in all lines of action and CoEs.
- GAID together with organizations on ICT and gender should join forces to avoid duplication of work.
- GAID should advocate gender equity through its influential role in policy.

IV. Overall Recommendations and Action Points

23. Key recommendations and action points suggested during the strategy session and conclusion of the meeting are summarized below:

- GAID should continue its work in mainstreaming ICT into the United Nations Development agenda through promoting partnerships, organizing events, and promoting best practices in ICT for Development. Continuing Outreach and increasing funding are key elements in ensuring the success of UNDESA-GAID efforts.
- In some cases, GAID members need to increase their leadership and or re-define their roles in the various GAID constituencies. This re-examination of

the structure of the Alliance will ensure that stakeholders are engaged to focus on action and result orientated partnerships with a special focus on policy issues ranging from poverty eradication, the financial crisis, climate change, health, education and gender.

- The process of communication between the GAID committees should be clarified, allowing members to know whether efforts under the GAID umbrella have been done effectively and efficiently. GAID should assign its members different responsibilities to avoid repeating work. GAID members should take full advantage of every means of modern communication technology, such as Facebook, Skype, MSN Messenger, etc. to exchange ideas as soon as possible instead of waiting until the next conference.
- GAID should continue its work towards working within UNDESA to liaise with the Secretary-General, and through him, to the policy-making bodies of the United Nations, which will serve to strengthen the integration of ICT dimension into concrete policies and programs. Collaboration amongst all of the various UN bodies who are working to integrate ICT into their agendas is critical to sustainable success in doing so.
- GAID should continue promoting, researching and sharing best practice examples. Weekly conference calls with organizations and stakeholders should continue, publishing reports for policies and best practices are key to GAID's outreach efforts. The GAID website should continue to evolve and facilitate this process.
- GAID should increase its work in promoting the use of ICT to help governments improve their efficiency, accountability and transparency. A compendium on E-Governance and ICT best practices has been launched to promote best practices among United Nations member states and to share experiences among governments. The challenge of accessing and communicating the information remains. UNDESA is working on launching a global knowledge repository which will require partnership between all actors involved in ICT and E-Governance. GAID can help facilitate this process.
- GAID networks should make the UN Millennium Development Goals their own goals, GAID can facilitate the process of creating a Matrix of information and knowledge for policy makers on the ways in which ICT can help achieve the MDGs.
- In regards to the Action Plan, GAID members should be assigned specific roles and there should be systematic follow up to ensure that members and groups under the umbrella of GAID are fulfilling their obligations as members pertaining to their assigned tasks and objectives.

- GAID needs more new strategic ideas, good projects and practical action plans to attract financial contributions in that financial stability and sustainability are crucial to support the work of the Global Alliance.