



With breaking stories and
newswire products from

UN NEWS CENTRE



Senior UN, private sector officials define vision for globally connected society



12 July 2010 – Meeting at a United Nations forum, leaders from the private sector, civil society and the creative world have underscored the critical role played by broadband networks in spurring global development.

In a private gathering yesterday in Geneva, the **Broadband Commission for Digital Development** conferred on how to deploy the networks worldwide to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**), the eight anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline.

Chaired by Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Carlos Slim Helú, Mexican businessman and one the world's wealthiest people, the body will deliver its conclusions to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 19 September at an official side event of the high-level gathering on the MDGs in New York.

Serving as the joint vice chairs of the 30-member Commission are Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunications Union (**ITU**), and Irina Bokova, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**).

"The global deployment of broadband networks will be as powerful a transformational force for the 21st century as the progressive installation of electricity networks was in the first decades of the 20th century," Mr. Touré said.

“Just as connection to the power grid is now seen as a basic element of social and economic empowerment, so ubiquitous connectivity to broadband networks will be vital to the ongoing development of every nation worldwide,” he added.

For her part, Ms. Bokova said that the latest information and communication technologies (ICTs) have created new opportunities to create, preserve, disseminate and use information.

“We aim to go further, towards the construction of inclusive knowledge societies in which people can transform information into knowledge and understanding that empowers them to improve their livelihoods and contribute to their social and economic development,” she said in a message to yesterday’s meeting.

Other [members](#) of the Commission include Richard Branson, Founder and Chairman of the Virgin Group; Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute and Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General; and Muhammad Yunus, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Managing Director of Grameen Bank.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue
Broadband internet can spur anti-poverty efforts, UN agency says