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Broadband internet can spur anti-poverty efforts, UN agency says



10 May 2010 – Information and communication technologies, such as high-speed internet, can help drive social and economic development and accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)), the head of the United Nations telecommunications agency said today.

"The truly transformational power of broadband networks can help us get the MDGs back on track," Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunications Union ([ITU](#)), told the opening of the World Summit on Information Society ([WSIS](#)) Forum.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had said that the progress on the MDGs, the set of universally accepted anti-poverty measures to be reached by 2015, has been too slow.

"Broadband is particularly important because it delivers benefits right across every sector of society. That's why broadband needs to reach all people, in all nations," Mr. Touré added.

The WSIS Forum – organized by ITU, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), the UN Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)) and the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)) – brings together representatives of UN agencies, governments, civil society and the technology industry.

This year's gathering, which will conclude on Friday, focuses on future broadband applications, social networking, cyber security and disaster management. In

addition, topics are expected to touch on rural development, multilingualism, environmental sustainability, education, healthcare and innovation.

In a related development, ITU and UNESCO announced today the creation of a top-level global Broadband Commission for Digital Development focused on accelerating the rollout of broadband and accelerating progress towards the MDGs.

The new Commission is comprised of 30 technology leaders, and representatives of UN agencies and civil society. It is co-chaired by Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, and Carlos Slim Helu, Mexican businessman and one of richest men in the world, with Mr. Touré and Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General, serving as vice-chairs.

Mr. Ban will receive the Commission's findings at the MDG Summit which will be held in September in New York, coinciding with the opening of the high-level debate of the General Assembly.

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