



PRESS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

UN offices join hands to promote information technology in vulnerable countries

United Nations, 17 May 2007: The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) has signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) to promote the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for development in the most vulnerable countries.

The agreement was signed during the observance of the World Information Society Day today at the United Nations. The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury signed on behalf of UN-OHRLLS while the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Jose A. Ocampo, signed on behalf of UNDESA.

Under the agreement, UNDESA, through the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development (GAID), will provide advice to the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States on building and sharing knowledge and development solutions.

UNDESA will also work with UN-OHRLLS to build partnerships with high profile individuals and organizations to promote ICT in the most vulnerable countries.

UN-OHRLLS will provide UNDESA with advice on intended ICT activities for the most vulnerable countries.

Speaking at the same event, the Chairman of the Group of Least Developed Countries and Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations, Mr. Jean-Marie Ehouzou, called upon the international community to assist LDCs to take advantage of the opportunities offered by ICT.

“The opportunities provided by ICT must be available to all humanity, not just the privileged few,” he said. He added that LDCs needed to undertake massive investments in education and infrastructure to benefit from ICT.

The event was chaired by the Permanent Representative of Iceland and Vice President of the Economic and Social Council, Mr. Hjálmar W. Hannesson. The Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, delivered a video message.

ENDS