

## Editorial

The digital revolution, which deeply affects many aspects of our development, is occurring within a political, social, economic and cultural context shaken by recent globalisation trends. Governments in industrialised countries must cope with the emergence of new stakeholders and thus are forced into real politics. Public institutions are unable to mainstream technological change and therefore the private sector's room to manoeuvre is increased. International organisations are expected to assist governments by providing a general framework for development. Yet, their intergovernmental nature deprives them of the means necessary to regulate the international system.

Private businesses, confronted with the challenges of the global economy and intense competition, strive above all to ensure their own development. This struggle to survive leads them to reject any new constraints likely to affect their growth.

Unless we accept a new set of social and political responsibilities, we will be unable to escape this climate of uncertainty. This is the paradox of the liberalisation so desired by economic stakeholders; the resulting situation now requires them to develop significantly new approaches to management. As part of such new approaches, we call on businesses to adopt the «one percent digital solidarity principle»: the only means by which to reduce the digital divide, whose social, economic, political and cultural consequences remain of major concern.

We would like to congratulate all those who decide to support the Global Digital Solidarity Fund. We hope that they may serve as an example to others.

**Alain Clerc**  
Executive Secretary

## «Businesses must commit to the community»

The UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, the Malian «interplanetary navigator», Cheick Modibo Diarra, calls for technological development in Africa

### What do Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) represent for Africa?

They are indispensable tools, the best solution to many problems. Currently, for example, a lack of document archiving tools means a whole nation's history is lost. We keep few records – even birth certificates are not archived. Information technology will enable us to conserve our heritage and to improve the way we use information.

It is in the realm of education that ICTs is most promising. In Africa, the majority of the population is under 25. This youth must be able to acquire an added value, which only education can provide. Thanks to ICTs, we will be able to offer

very effective training. Thanks to teleconferencing, a good teacher will be able to share his knowledge with 5000 individuals, with no additional expense. This is a marvellous tool to enlighten the young and democratise access to information.

Finally, small businesses will be able to develop thanks to ICTs.

### «The ICTs sector needs to evolve towards a greater sense of citizenship»

#### How to increase ICTs dissemination in Africa?

We must be able to access the same technology as that available in the developed countries and we should not be satisfied with marginal solutions, which do not offer comparable services. One must not use poverty as an excuse to become even poorer. An additional effort must be made to reduce the cost of memory and processors, so that Africa may benefit



Cheick Modibo Diarra is committed to educating the African youth. He founded the World Francophone Digital University (UNFM) and the Pathfinder Foundation for Education and Development



«Since its creation, the CERN has always cooperated with the world physicists' community. We also wish to play this same role in the field of communications networks for developing countries.»

Dr. Robert Aymar, CERN Director General



Cheick Modibo Diarra presents the UNFM to students

from the same processing power as the rest of the planet. As for the cost of broadband, it is currently still prohibitive.

Also, financing must be directly allocated to projects in the field. I fear that the West's expression of good will has not evolved and efforts are still targeting governments, while populations do not feel involved. This is distressing. We must identify local needs and provide resources to communities and to the young, who have the capacity to understand and use ICTs.

### What is the role of ICTs businesses?

The ICTs sector needs to evolve towards a greater sense of citizenship. This will happen, ultimately. In Africa, one of the world's last large markets, people will understand that it is worthwhile dealing with those companies who invest in training the populations with whom they do business. The more people are educated, the more they will participate in globalisation. The old vision of a business without a face, without a country or a soul, is over now. People want friendly, community-based companies.

### What is the ideal relation between businesses and the community?

Businesses who benefit from new markets should allocate a certain percentage to aid with local problems in countries where those profits were made. In return, the community can play an important role in the success or failure of a business: it has leverage and must use it to favour community-based companies, rather than those interested only in immediate profit. In this sense, civil society must take its own destiny in hand.

## WiSeKey and DSF cooperation agreement

### A market leader in digital security underlines the role of the economy in bridging the digital divide

« We sincerely support the Global Digital Solidarity Fund: as an international market player, we take social responsibility to heart.» It is in these terms that Carlos Moreira, Chairman of WiSeKey, welcomed the cooperation agreement signed with the DSF. Specialised in digital identification technology, the Swiss company has adopted the «one percent digital solidarity contribution», which enables the DSF to support projects in countries lacking Internet access.

**«All populations must be able to access the same development opportunities»**

WiSeKey also commits to cooperate with the DSF in the field of digital identification. «In some developing countries, no secure identification system exists at the national level. Thanks to identification technology, combined with fingerprint biometric recognition, we can offer each citizen their own ID. This has interesting applications in many areas. In the case of an immunisation campaign, for instance, doctors will be able to easily follow the medical evolution of a patient», explains Alejandro Linch.

WiSeKey is convinced that companies must become involved in fighting the digital divide: «All populations must be able to access the same development opportunities and digital identification technology is an indispensable tool to this end», comments Alejandro Linch, WiSeKey Director in charge of the DSF project. «To cooperate means to offer technology to disadvantaged countries, thus promoting their development process. In this manner, we participate in the opening of new markets, which represents a long-term investment. One must give in order to receive.»

Carlos Moreira views WiSeKey's support to the DSF as the private sector assuming its social responsibility. «In the years to come, the digital divide will become a digital identity divide. Our mission is to ensure that such a divide does not worsen the situation of already disadvantaged world regions. We support the Global Digital Solidarity Fund and the one percent digital solidarity principle, as this is one of the most important actions undertaken to reduce the digital divide in the developing world.»

For more information WiSeKey : [www.wisekey.com](http://www.wisekey.com)



Mr. Carlos Moreira, President of WiSeKey and Mr. Fernando da Piedade dos Santos, Prime Minister of Angola, visiting the Swiss stand at the WSIS in Tunis

## CERN adopts the «one percent digital solidarity» principle

The European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) adopted, at the end of 2005, the «one percent digital solidarity» principle. This innovative financing mechanism developed by the DSF proposes that public authorities and private businesses, when purchasing ITC-related equipment or services, require the winning vendor to contribute 1% of the transaction to the Fund. The CERN's commitment to the DSF represents an additional step towards a more cooperative information society. Indeed, CERN has already greatly contributed to building the information society: by giving the world the World-Wide Web.

When collaborating with more than 6'500 scientists worldwide, the issues of interconnection, access to documentation, or scientific training becomes crucial. «We are the world's institute the best connected to Internet», explains Dr. Hans Falk Hoffmann, Head of a LHC\* research group, which gathers 2000 researchers from 32 countries. «We have the knowledge of working within networks, which we can transmit. Science must be at the heart of development policies; it is intrinsically global, as scientific innovation benefits humanity as a whole.»

For this researcher, scientific and technology education is one key solution to developmental issues: «we must work with Universities, because research is a catalyst to development. Thanks to digital networks, researchers from all countries can contribute to CERN's experiments and share their knowledge. Universities are essential actors in the effort to reduce the digital divide. Science is at the forefront of advancement of development processes in disadvantaged countries.»

<http://public.web.cern.ch/Public/Welcome.html>

\* LHC : Large Hadron Collider

## Sun Microsystems is favourable to the DSF

According to the Director of Sun Microsystems (Suisse) SA for French speaking Switzerland, Mr. Daniel Schudel, businesses must participate in the effort to bridge the digital divide. Interview

### Does the digital divide have an impact on the world economy?

The digital divide will have serious consequences on Western countries' economies. Keeping our eyes closed is no longer possible: we must find solutions and take action. If we are unable to anticipate, we will run into problems. The Global Digital Solidarity Fund is a positive initiative, as it can bring real solutions.

### «Sun Microsystems welcomes (...) the idea of a 1% contribution»

### What is the role of the private sector in fighting the digital divide?

Private sector stakeholders, and in particular «information and technology» businesses, must assume their responsibilities. From the onset, businesses must be ready to share their innovations with the less fortunate and allot part of their budget to the effort to bridge the digital divide. The United Nations considers Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to be an essential development tool, which must be made available to the developing world.

Today, problems have become global, so we must adopt a global approach. Since 1982, Sun Microsystems has been convinced that the computer is the network. We have always followed this strategy, and, today, we are proud to present our global mission, which we call the «Participation Age». Concretely, we want to offer our technology, our services and our solutions to those countries which lack the resources to invest. By sharing its innovations, Sun Microsystems participates directly in the reduction of the digital divide.

### Do you support the DSF?

Sun Microsystems welcomes the Global Digital Solidarity Fund initiative and its

idea of a 1% contribution on information technology-related contracts. The DSF objectives are in line with our own mission: that of creating new technologies to be put at the service of a participatory society. In fact, we have developed a project, similar to that of the DSF, which supports poor regions and enables isolated communities to be connected by satellite and benefit from distance education programmes.

Sun Microsystems is ready to support the DSF, however, it is important that the Fund develops a coherent and transparent policy with regard to the funds which are invested in developing countries. The DSF must also make sure that its partners are well informed about the projects carried out to fight against the digital divide. ■

[www.sun.ch](http://www.sun.ch)



Mr. Daniel Schudel is convinced that we must share resources



# ICT and Sustainable Development

## Valencienne will be hosting the ICT21 Forum. For its Mayor, Mr. Dominique Riquet, a global vision of the challenges of the Information Society is necessary

« Information Technologies' contribution to Sustainable Development » is the innovative theme which the International Economic Forum ICT21 will address in Valencienne on the 28 and 29 March 2006. « From many perspectives, ICTs promote sustainable development », explains the organiser, Mr. Gilles Berhault, President of the Association ACIDD\*. « For example, in the fight against climate change, we absolutely must limit travel in order to reduce CO2 emissions. Thanks to ITC applications, such as video-conference or tele-work, it is possible to improve the situation. Also, at the scientific level, technology enables the simulation of ecological catastrophes, making it possible to observe climatic evolution and thus anticipate mitigation. Not to mention the use of the net, which facilitates the exchange of experiences in the field of environment management. »

Recalling ICT's positive role in reaching the UN Millennium Development Goals, by creating access to markets, education or culture, the Valencienne Mayor, Mr. Dominique Riquet, wants a Conference that underlines the ICT challenges: « it is a wonderful technology, but it requires that we assume our responsibilities. We must take into account the social and environmental impact of the Information Society. Bringing technology to the developing world must be accompanied by solutions to the very problems generated by ICTs. Such are the themes and objectives of ICT21: to communicate and exchange information and skills in order to create new partnerships which bring together actors from all sectors. »

Indeed, there are many risks involved. First, from an ecological point of view, ICTs consume great quantities of energy (only 2% of a computer can be recycled), they use polluting heavy metals



The Mayor of Valencienne, M. Dominique Riquet, wants to bring together information technologies and sustainable development

and rare materials. Also, on the social level, the massive influx of a consumer culture into other societies can create disruptions.

**«it is a wonderful technology, but it requires that we assume our responsibilities»**

« ICTs are a great tool for democracy, they can accelerate development. But they can also be used to control information. Technology without accompanying regu-

lating measures can produce negative effects », warns Gilles Berhault, who promotes a global vision of ICTs, in accordance with the principles of Agenda 21. ■

ICT21 Forum, Valencienne, 28 and 29 March 2006

[www.tic21.com](http://www.tic21.com)

*\*Association communication et information pour le développement durable*

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Relations between the DSF and the DSA

On January 5, 2006, in Lyon, a first cooperative document was signed between the DSF and the World Digital Solidarity Agency (DSA). The creation of the Agency is an initiative of the Grand Lyon. Mr. Gérard Collomb, Senator – Mayor of Lyon and President of Grand Lyon, is the Agency's spokesperson. The relationship between the DSF and the DSA is complementary. To decide which projects best answer the Fund's criteria and to maximise their benefits, the DSF will request technical advice and services from the DSA. The latter will include :

- > supporting the DSF intervention policy operational formulation
- > examining project proposals quality and feasibility
- > providing advice to project initiators/stakeholders
- > moderating scientific and technical partners' networks
- > mobilising experts from the South and the North in support of DSF projects
- > federating stakeholders, creating synergies
- > disseminating the digital solidarity message in order to increase contributions to the DSF

### International Agenda

The DSF will participate to the Marrakech International Forum on ICT strategies and investments (IFISI), from 1st to 3rd March 2006. <http://www.virtualis-net.com/ifisi/index.html>

The DSF will also participate in the Intelsat Congress GTM2006 to be held in Washington DC from 8 to 11 May 2006. <http://www.intelsat.com/gtm2006>



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