APPENDIX 5:

ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT (ICT4D)

APP. 5.1 THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS)

The **MDG**s, agreed at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, aim to reduce world poverty and improve lives by 2015. The UK Department for International Development (**DFID**) has made the **MDG**s the focus of its work. ICT is seen as a means of achieving many **MDG** goals. One target specifically relates to ICT aiming "*to make the benefits of ICT available to all*".

There has been progress in this area, although critics argue that the target does not specify which ICT should be made available, to whom, and by when. Others argue the **MDGs** should place more emphasis on economic growth: they suggest the MDG-inspired prioritization of ICT applications for micro- and small-scale firms ignores medium- and large-scale firms that are key drivers of wealth creation and competitiveness.

APP. 5.2 WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS)

WSIS, a two phase United Nations (UN) summit, aimed at overcoming the digital divide and creating an all inclusive Information Society. During the second phase, November 2005, management of Internet infrastructure particularly top level internet domain names (like .com or.org), was a key area of debate.

While WSIS did not result in any major changes to arrangements in this area, one outcome was the creation of the UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF). The IGF will provide a platform for discussing cross-cutting issues such as internet security, although it will have no decision-making powers. While WSIS brought together many actors in the ICT4D field, some critics suggest that it lacked representation from the ICT industry (particularly from developing countries). They also point to a lack of independent research and 'big ideas' beyond the $100 laptop.

APP. 5.3   NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD)

NEPAD is an African-initiated strategic framework for the continent's revival. It identifies ICT development as a priority action area. It focuses on two key areas: the rapid development of ICT infrastructure and dissemination of ICT skills across the African population, by implementing an e-schools program across primary and secondary schools.

NEPAD has been widely praised for having placed ICT on the development agenda although some critics suggest it lacks the resources and infrastructure to fulfill its goals.

APP. 5.4   COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (CFA)

The CFA is a UK government initiative set up in 2004 to stimulate development in Africa. The CFA report from 2005 recognizes the importance of ICT in many areas, including higher education, economic growth, governance, culture, trade and finance. It urges donors to increase funding to support a free media (including new ICT such as internet broadcasting). Critics say that although the commission proposes substantial increases in funding to carry out its recommendations, it is not clear how these funding increases will be delivered.

APP. 5.5   EXAMPLES OF ICT4D PROJECTS

• **Health:** Kenya Blown telemedicine project aims to provide an online network for all hospitals and health districts in Mali. Physicians are the sole users of the pilot site, but other healthcare workers are invited to consult and contribute content. Medical tele-teaching has also been initiated.

Examples of consultations include one between an expert in Geneva and a patient in the Bamako, Mali; and a leprosy consultation between an expert in Bamako and patient in Geneva.

• **Economic empowerment:** The Grameen Bank NGO,3 a village-based organization in Bangladesh, offers women low-cost loans to set up mobile phone exchanges in villages where there are few landlines.

The women charge for the use of their Village Pay Phones, and earn close to three times the annual average income. Their earnings allow them to

send their children to school and enhance their status in the community. However the scheme is threatened by the increasing availability of cheaper phones for potential purchasers.

• **Human rights:** The Kubatana Trust in Zimbabwe aims to strengthen the use of e-mail and internet strategies in local NGOs and civil society organizations.

Kubatana makes human rights and civic education information accessible to the general public from a centralized, electronic source, and has become an important means for disseminating information about the political situation locally and internationally.

• **Commerce:** In Senegal, Manobi (a French private telecommunications company) uses Wireless Application Protocol (WAP)-enabled mobile phones to obtain up-to-date market prices for Senegalese fruit and vegetable farmers. The prices are updated in real time via a central database by data collectors at various markets, and offer transparency of prices inside the market that many producers lack.