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United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

# INFORMATION ECONOMY REPORT 2006

## The Development Perspective



United Nations



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## The development perspective

Prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat



UNITED NATIONS

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## Foreword

At last year's concluding phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, the international community set itself an ambitious but achievable agenda. The Summit made a commitment to ensuring that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are employed to support a truly global, open and inclusive information society that benefits people everywhere.

Much work lies ahead to better understand the dimensions of the digital divide and its effects on development. However, the basic diagnosis is well established. People in developing countries need easier and cheaper access to ICTs. They need enhanced ICT skills to better employ these technologies in their homes, schools and jobs. And they need the freedom to create, share and exchange information and knowledge of all kinds.

UNCTAD's *Information Economy Report 2006: The Development Perspective* analyses the specific requirements of ICT and e-business strategy-setting in a developing-country context. It also considers the design and assessment of pro-poor e-strategies as well as the usefulness of national ICT policy reviews. Finally, it evaluates the development implications of crucial technology and business trends such as web services and service-oriented architectures – trends that first emerged in the developed world but that, in an increasingly networked economy, need to be considered by developing countries.

This Report was prepared as Governments, non-governmental organizations and the UN system continue to implement the World Summit's outcome. It is designed to help policymakers in developing countries make informed choices in the field of ICT and e-business. I am therefore pleased to recommend it to the growing ICT-for-Development community and, more generally, to anyone interested in promoting sustainable development for all.



Kofi A. Annan  
Secretary-General of the United Nations

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# Contents

<i>Foreword</i> .....	<i>iii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of boxes</i> .....	<i>viii</i>
<i>List of charts</i> .....	<i>ix</i>
<i>List of tables</i> .....	<i>xii</i>
<i>List of abbreviations</i> .....	<i>xiv</i>
<i>Explanatory notes</i> .....	<i>xviii</i>
<i>Overview</i> .....	<i>xix</i>
<b>1. ICT Indicators for Development: Trends and Impact</b> .....	<b>1</b>
A. Introduction .....	1
B. ICT access and use by individuals, households and enterprises .....	2
C. The ICT sector .....	23
D. Trade in ICT-enabled services .....	26
E. Measuring ICT impact .....	45
F. Conclusions and recommendations .....	50
Annex I: Statistical annex .....	53
Annex II: The Orbicom conceptual framework .....	112
Annex III: Breakdown of the computer and related service sector .....	114
Annex IV: Mode 1 and Mode 3 market access commitments for computer and related services (WTO, GATS) .....	115
References .....	124
Notes .....	128
<b>2. Reviewing National ICT Policies for the Information Economy</b> .....	<b>133</b>
A. Assessing the role of ICTs in development .....	133
B. ICT policy review model framework .....	136
C. Concluding remarks and recommendations .....	152
Annex I: Core ICT indicators .....	154
Annex II: National ICT plans in developing and transition countries and territories, 2006 .....	157
References and bibliography .....	165
Notes .....	167

3. Pro-poor ICT policies and practices .....	169
A. Introduction .....	169
B. The concept of pro-poor ICTs .....	170
C. Current thinking and realities regarding pro-poor ICTs .....	173
D. Institutional barriers .....	182
E. Framework to understand, question and propose pro-poor ICT policies and interventions .....	184
F. Making ICTs work for the poor: Institutional development recommendations .....	190
Annex I: Gender issues in ICT policy .....	192
References .....	196
Notes .....	201
4. ICTs in the oil sector: implications for developing economies .....	205
A. Introduction .....	205
B. International petroleum market: The state of play .....	206
C. ICTs and their impact on the oil supply chain .....	209
D. ICT contribution to increased efficiency in oil trading .....	217
E. The development perspective .....	220
F. Conclusions and policy recommendations .....	223
References and bibliography .....	226
Notes .....	228
5. ICTs, enterprises and jobs: What policies? .....	231
A. Introduction .....	231
B. How do ICTs interact with the world of work? .....	232

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