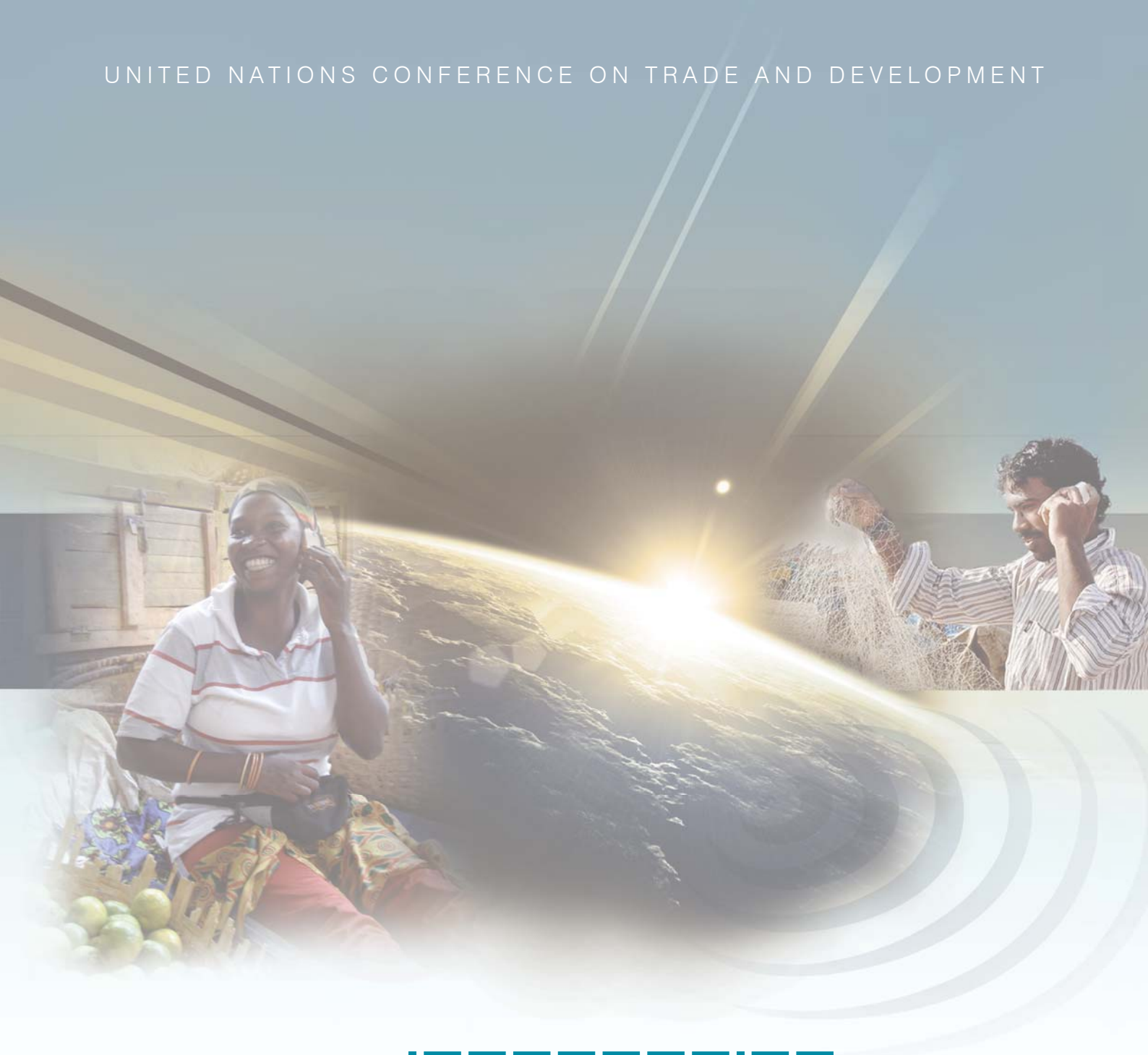


UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT



# INFORMATION ECONOMY REPORT 2010

*ICTs, Enterprises and Poverty Alleviation*



UNITED NATIONS  
New York and Geneva, 2010

## NOTE

Within the UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics, the ICT Analysis Section carries out policy-oriented analytical work on the development implications of information and communication technologies (ICTs). It is responsible for the preparation of the *Information Economy Report*. The ICT Analysis Section promotes international dialogue on issues related to ICTs for development and contributes to building developing countries' capacities to measure the information economy, as well as to design and implement relevant policies and legal frameworks.

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A slash (/) between dates representing years, e.g. 1994/95 indicates a financial year;

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Reference to “dollars” (\$) means United States dollars, unless otherwise indicated;

Annual rates of growth or change, unless otherwise stated, refer to annual compound rates;

Details and percentages in tables do not necessarily add to totals because of rounding.

The material contained in this study may be freely quoted with appropriate acknowledgement.

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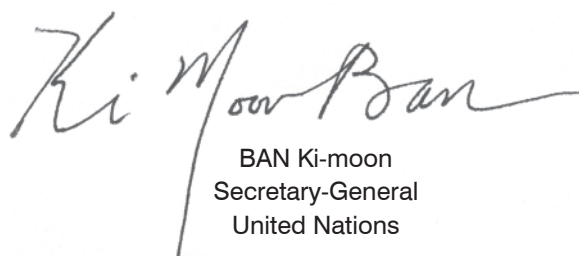
## PREFACE

Fighting poverty lies at the heart of the efforts of the United Nations to promote the economic and social well-being of the world's people. In order to meet the internationally agreed development goals, especially the Millennium Development Goals, every possible avenue must be fully explored. Today there is particular promise in new, technology-based solutions that did not exist a decade ago, when the Goals were first articulated and endorsed. With that in mind, this year's *Information Economy Report* looks at the potential role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in creating new livelihoods and enhancing the productivity of enterprises of direct relevance to the poor.

The contribution of ICTs to poverty reduction lies in their power to enable poor women and men to build "livelihood assets" or more secure employment opportunities. We are witnessing a new dawn in the way new technologies can make a difference, even in the most remote places. The diffusion of some ICTs – especially mobile phones – has improved dramatically, including in regions where many of the world's poor live and work. This translates into new micro-enterprises in different sectors, new services and new ways to market produce and other goods.

As stressed in the Report, however, policies matter in ensuring that improved access to ICTs leads to poverty reduction. The outcome depends on the context and on the environment in which ICTs are introduced and used. Governments have a key role to play in devising policies that respond effectively to the specific needs of the beneficiaries – needs that differ among enterprises, between rural and urban areas, and between countries.

The policy challenge is to take full advantage of the significant improvements in connectivity in ways that bring benefits to the poor. This task is far from complete. I urge Governments and development partners to read the *Information Economy Report 2010* and carefully consider its recommendations.



BAN Ki-moon  
Secretary-General  
United Nations

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