

**Bahrain World Economic Summit  
Opening Statement by  
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([www.un-gaid.org](http://www.un-gaid.org))  
Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain  
22nd of November, 2010**

Excellencies, Distinguished Friends and Colleagues,

I would like to thank you all for coming from far and wide to join us today in this historic endeavor.

Ten years ago, at the dawn of the new millennium, world leaders made a compact at the United Nations to strive for a better future. The Millennium Development Goals were agreed upon as the guiding framework for achieving a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous world.

Over the past decade, the United Nations has led the international community in an exemplary manner in making the MDGs as the centrepiece of international cooperation. We have made significant progress in achieving many of the goals in some regions as highlighted by the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Keeping the Promise". Yet, the results so far have been far from satisfactory. Many regions and a large portion of the human family have been left behind. New challenges such as the current financial and food crises and numerous natural disasters have caused serious setbacks.

In this challenging environment, we need to look for new opportunities for positive change and more rapid progress towards the MDGs in the next five years. I do recognize that the global challenges confronting the United Nations and the international community are great, but we must turn these into an even greater opportunity for a change for the better.

I am convinced that if there is one enabler which can accelerate achievement of the MDGs it is ICT. And if there is one force needed to ensure that achievement it is the leadership of the United Nations Secretary-General.

It is in this conviction that I proposed to the Secretary-General last February, the initiative, adopted by the Board of UN-GAID at its Monterrey annual meeting in August 2009, to create a new web-based MDG eMatrix. The Secretary-General, with his sagacity and vision, immediately saw the value of this initiative as a change-maker for his MDG Agenda. He graciously agreed to become the Honorary Chairman of UN-GAID and gave us the go ahead to build the eMatrix under his patronage.

As most of you know, I have worked ceaselessly with the UN-GAID community and through worldwide consultations to develop the Matrix to become a unique and innovative instrument: The MDG eNabler, a powerful free use engine for enabling governments of developing countries to take charge of their own development by using ICT for access to vital information on best practice, finding ICT solutions and applications for their health, educational and development needs and planning and implementing their programmes and projects in a cost effective and efficient manner.

As co-chair of the UN ICT taskforce, I recall that the High-level Panel the taskforce organized in 2000 recommended that the United Nations, at the Millennium Assembly in September 2000, should proclaim the right of universal access to information and communication services, such as the Internet, as an important new component of the UN principles and conventions on human rights and development. The Alliance, as the successor of the UN ICT Task Force created on the recommendation contained in that report of the Panel, followed up on that recommendation and presented to the United Nations Secretary General in August 2010 a draft Declaration on the Right to Information for All in the Information Society. The achievement of that goal would facilitate the universal use of the eNabler. Hence we whole-heartedly support the objectives of the Broadband Commission.

We fully realize that despite the great progress we made over the past few months and all the inputs that have been received from around the world, this is still work in progress. That is why we are here today. We need your insights, your guidance, your inputs and your sustained support and participation to make this ambitious virtual engine an ICT solutions resource for countries and people who need it most. Macedonia is already successfully using it. And under the patronage of the Secretary General of the league of Arab States plans are already under way to make it available in Arabic for the 22 Arab countries. And under the leadership of Cheick Diarra, we plan to make it available to the 52 African countries in collaboration with the African Union out of a support center hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain.

A Preparatory meeting for the presentation of the MDG eCenter in the context of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly was held on 1-2 September 2010, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The meeting was attended by some 140 participants representing 44 countries as well as UN agencies, business, civil society and academia. It was a truly multi-stakeholder event with 30% participation from governments, 20% from business, 16% from civil society, 14% from UN agencies and 10% from international organizations.

The purpose of the meeting was to further refine and develop, through an interactive discussion and exchange of ideas and suggestions among high-level representatives of all relevant stakeholders, the design, features and title of the 'eCenter' in preparation for a presentation of a further developed version to Member States in the context of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on 21 September. The organizational and governance structure of managing and maintaining the content for the project was also a major topic of discussion throughout the meeting.

There was broad recognition of the positive and dynamic impact that the new initiative could have on accelerating progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The expert participants engaged in an interactive and lively discussion on all aspects of the initiative. The concepts and objectives of the project received overwhelming support and a positive response

from all participants. While there was not a single objection to the project, many important suggestions and proposals were made to help refine, enhance and develop it. This morning, I am seeking your valued support for the sake of the developing world.

I count on you to lend us your support to come up with the most viable and effective solutions that can move us forward. I urge, in particular, our colleagues from the United Nations agencies who have vast knowledge and experience in the key MDG areas to help lead the way and set the pace to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

I myself come from the developing world and hence am extremely eager to deliver this eNabler to help developing countries help themselves. And although my current term expires in December 2010, I want to ensure that my successor will have a living being by December capable of continuous growth.

In conclusion, we are announcing the birth of a development enabler, a unique innovative approach to advance MDG achievement, a web-based dynamic enabler composed of a matrix as its core, a portal of portals as its resource and a strategic planner for specific country planning and virtual tool kits for implementation, training and monitoring performance.

As the Deputy Minister of Economy and Planning of Liberia said during the PrepCom meeting, "this innovative initiative is long overdue. Its timing and execution is very crucial to become mainstream, successful and impactful."

The time is short and our task is great. But we must seize the moment and succeed because we cannot afford to fail.