

**Under the High Patronage of His  
Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali  
President of the Republic of Tunisia**

**ICT 4 All Forum- Tunis +4  
Hammamet- Tunisia, 24<sup>th</sup> -25<sup>th</sup>, November 2009**

**In partnership with**



**ICT Innovation as a Tool for Strengthening  
Competitiveness and Growth**

**Opening Statement by**

**Talal Abu-Ghazaleh**

**Chair, UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID)**

**[www.un-gaid.org](http://www.un-gaid.org)**

## **ICT Innovation as a Tool for Strengthening Competitiveness and Growth**

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Your Excellency Prime Minister Mr. Mohamed GHANNOUCHI, permit at the outset to congratulate , through you, the people of Tunisia on the re-election of H.E. President ZINE ELABIDINE BEN ALI such that H.E. may continue the changes mandate for the development of Tunisia.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate you Mr. Prime Minister, on the UN-ECOSOC decision to recognize this ICT4 All Forum as a WSIS platform to promote the ICT environment worldwide. This is a well deserved recognition for a job well done by H.E. Mr. EL HADJ GLEY, Minister of Communication Technologies of Tunisia.

This recognition and this success should take this forum to greater horizons. UNDESA-GAID stands ready to continue its partnership with you towards more success.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates and colleagues, it is an honor to be here with you today at this preeminent global event on the subject of ICTs and development. As Chairman of the United Nation's Global Alliance for ICTs and Development (GAID), I find it extremely motivating and encouraging to meet and learn from so many of the global ICT leaders that we have with us for this event and I feel privileged indeed to be invited once again to this important forum.

Mr. Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Development hinges on production, whether that is products or services. You won't find services or products available, and you can't allocate them in society, if they aren't produced. Furthermore, allowing and encouraging individuals and the private sector to produce goods and services can actually help with the issues of availability and allocation –and this holds true whether to speak of services like education, finance or marketing, or products like food products, consumer goods, or industrial parts and equipments.

That is why promotion of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and motivation is key to all our social and economic goals and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, to create and foster an entrepreneurial culture where innovation is encouraged and supported.

Investments in digital infrastructure continue to lure investors and provide hope to societies financial and economic hardship. But ICTs will only do as much for us as we do with them. We can harness ICTs to cope with many of our global challenges, from climate change , to hunger, to education. But it must remain a priority issue and continuing focus.

Today almost everyone is aware of the economic potential of ICT investment. However the key to success in the broad picture is to remember that when we discuss ICTs we are really talking about the facilitation of human creativity and entrepreneurial innovation. We, as businesses, governments and societies, need to provide the means for individuals to learn, dream, work and create.

And towards that, GAID is overseeing many productive programs. One of which is developing, with the blessing of the UN Secretary General, a matrix of “ICT 4 MDG” providing guidance on ICT as enabler for the MDG achievement, and on barriers to ICT access, such that we may create active plans which may be used by individual countries. This should also produce a map for ICT innovation.

GAID is also providing guidance on the establishment of computer refurbishment centers in Africa and Asia for use by needy schools in execution of the UN Secretary General initialization for 500,000 recycled computers by 2012. This would also provide grounds for skill and innovation.

Mr. P.M, Dear colleagues,

It is expected that video on the internet through broadband is the future. I therefore suggest that, your Excellency Minister El HADJ GLEY may consider taking the lead by making this the theme of a future conference. Currently one third of internet traffic is online videos watch. Broadband is the foundation for the coming coverage of networks towards a single IP-based mode able to provide any kind of service (internet, voice, video .... etc.)

Permit me in closing to read to you GAID’s mission statement

*“UNDESA-GAID shall act as an inclusive, multi-stakeholder global forum, composed of representatives from public, private and civil society sectors as well as international organizations, for policy dialogue and partnership-building to promote the use of ICT for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and to enable and catalyze multi-stakeholder partnerships for action under the GAID umbrella.*

*UNDESA-GAID should address the slow pace of progress towards the achievement of the Millennium development goals (MDGs) in the least developed countries and the added difficulties by the ongoing world economic and financial crisis.*

*UNDESA-GAID, during these challenging times, will focus its key message on how ICTs and innovation can be harnessed to meet key global challenges such as poverty eradication, the financial crisis, climate change, governance and mainstreaming gender within the broader United Nations Development Agenda.”*

GAID and myself are at your disposal in any way we can serve.