

Broadband's role moves up in post-2015 sustainable development

The Broadband Commission for Digital Development, a joint initiative of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UNESCO, has issued a new report looking at several aspects of broadband and its positive effects on people, environment and society. The task force which delivered the report was led by Hans Vestberg, president and CEO of Ericsson.

The report, entitled: "Transformational solutions for 2015 and Beyond: the report of the Broadband Commission Task force on Sustainable Development" analyses national broadband plans for 138 countries and identifies best government practices, urges governments to act now and to include broadband in their national development agenda. It also makes a number of supporting recommendations.

The report is to be recognised by the United Nations secretary general, Ban Ki-Moon. Hans Vestberg says: "As the post-2015 sustainable development agenda process evolved, we felt an urgent need to see action. We see so many opportunities for broadband to transform all aspects of society. Technology evolves faster than policy, and we wanted to make a concerted effort to do everything we could to raise awareness of the potential."

Dr. Hamadoun Touré, secretary general of the ITU, says: "Through this work the Broadband Commission would like to encourage the international community to recognise the need for transformative solutions in the post-2015 development agenda; and this report makes the case. The report presents for the first time new research showing how countries around the world use their national broadband plans as key policy instruments to leverage the full potential of broadband as an enabling infrastructure to accelerate sustainable development; yet there are also many missed opportunities, not least within poverty reduction and food security."

Among the ten recommendations are "make broadband affordable for all," and "deploy national development policies and plans to actively drive cross-sector integration of economic and social outcomes deliverable and scalable through ICT and broadband."

Best practices are highlighted from five countries - Japan, Mexico, the Philippines Rwanda, and Sweden - that have successfully integrated a wide range of development goals into their national broadband plans. The task force credits a spirit of collaborating across all sectors of governments and including the private sector to realise shared aims.

The full report is available at www.broadbandcommission.org.

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