

UNESCO-Conference: Forging an Agenda for Knowledge-Driven Media
Development

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The potential of ICT for the post 2015 development agenda

The spoken word shall prevail!

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

first of all, I would like to express my gratitude towards the UNESCO's director general, Ms. Irina Bokova: Thank you very much for making this event possible. I am happy to have a joint conference with UNESCO, the German commission for UNESCO, the German Ambassador here in at UNESCO, Deutsche Welle and SAP.

Also, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me convey the best wishes from our chancellor Angela Merkel.

I congratulate Ms. Bokova on her very convincing nomination. I wish her all the best for her reelection on the twelfth of November and her next term.

The German Federal Government, too, is currently restructuring – and in some parts maybe even reinventing itself – for the next legislative period.

There are important points on the agenda. Let me mention three:

Germany will take over the G8 presidency in 2015.

In October 2017, we will be celebrating the anniversary of the Protestant Reformation – 500 years after Martin Luther posted his 95 theses in Wittenberg.

In 2015, – the world community will have to critically analyze whether the Millennium Development Goals have been achieved. At the same time, we have to agree on the new “post-2015 development agenda”. In which manner can sustainability or questions of governance be included? And how concrete *should* such a global program be? How complex *can* it be to have a *global* impact at UN level?

In my opinion, **interaction between new media and education plays a crucial role in this discussion**. We can only end extreme poverty with improved education. And for this we need a driver and in my opinion, we have a future driver in the **information and communication technologies (ICT)**.

Let me explain you what I mean.

Technical innovation influenced the course of history more than money and even more than political ideas. For example, I mentioned Martin Luther before. Consider the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the fifteenth century: Without this technical innovation Martin Luther’s translation of the bible would not have spread that quickly and far reaching.

What does that mean for today? The last decades have shown the growing influence of knowledge-driven media on most parts of our lives. **How will ICT change today’s world?**

ICTs provide the infrastructure for a knowledge-based world economy. They are also a key technology for sustainable development.

Using ICT, things do not only get faster. **We can now achieve and do things that were impossible before.** We can see this especially well in the interaction of **media and education.**

A couple of years ago, the expression of “media consumption” meant listening to the radio and watching TV. And on the other hand, education meant sitting in a classroom.

Today, this has been replaced **by people communicating in real-time through social media.** An unimaginable amount of data is floating in the virtual space. Which changes will cloud computing generate? ICT has a fundamental influence on education, the acquisition of knowledge, on how knowledge is used and on how it is spread. **ICT thus influences the concepts of education *itself*.**

You all know Mobile Money, like M-Pesa in Kenya, which revolutionized Africa. Let us now have a look at what else becomes possible with ICT:

- **In education**, free access to information and knowledge will increase more and more. Thus the possibilities of a youngster in Africa will more and more equal the possibilities of a Harvard professor. Will we still need better and better paid teachers? Or will we just need educational apps that are well-functioning, self-explanatory and self-organizing?
- **In the health sector**, patients in areas without special medical treatment centers could be cured by doctors on the other side of the world.

- **New business models will arise and new jobs will be created.** The poor, too, do have needs that they spend money on. Our development cooperation answers questions that seem important to *us*, and it uses methods that we know. But perhaps those, who are extremely poor, have got completely different questions and need to find their own specific answers. Here, ICT could open up new opportunities.
- Also, ICT will further **change social structures**. What will 100 million young people, aged 8 to 18, do if one percent of them own an iPad? A young girl could earn her own money by programming an App. She could then buy the latest tablet computer. Or, and this is an interesting case, she could buy her father a tractor.

Other questions coming in my mind are:

- Which African leader will allow for this kind of development if it means that he or she loses power but, at the same time, allows his or her country to advance?
- What does such a development mean for African languages and local religions? And for the traditional social structures that I have mentioned before?
- Another field where ICT have an important influence is highly sensible and complex systems and security issues including military systems like drones. These systems could be destroyed or misused by unknown hackers who can't be hold responsible. I am giving you this last example to show that **ICT have not only a huge beneficial potential but they also bear some risk.**

Ladies and gentlemen, excellencies,

I have named a whole range of possibilities for the use of new information and communication technologies. All these technologies could unfold an own dynamic in developing countries, and especially on the African continent.

The post-2015 agenda has to include ICT, especially if we want it to be sustainable and effective.

I am sure that UNESCO will actively support and foster this process. In my eyes, the UNESCO is strongly underrated compared to other UN organizations. This event also wants to call attention to the networks and to the knowledge that UNESCO offers. It wants to encourage people to build on these capacities and to use them even better in the post-2015 process.

Germany is one of the few donors that have been active for many years in the field of ICT. One example is the program “ICT in development cooperation”, which started already in 1999. This project was about using ICT solutions in administration, about promoting innovations, technology and telemedicine. In addition, Germany co-financed the East African submarine cable. Today, the German Federal government wants to continue its support for this process.

Many of you know *Deutsche Welle*, the German worldwide broadcaster. *Deutsche Welle* has been very active in training journalists in the last couple of years, and they have been very successful. This illustrates that it is not only the use of new media that matters to us. We also want to convey our understanding of journalism and freedom. The new Director-General of *Deutsche Welle*, Peter Limbourg, is also present today – Mr. Limbourg, thank you very much for joining us.

SAP is one of the biggest software companies and it is from Germany. SAP is always among the first when it comes to developing new platforms and innovative solutions.

The private sector is crucial if we want to achieve economic growth and make a difference. Mr. van Heck, thank you very much for contributing to this event.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us – **all together** – tackle the task of using new media and the possibilities they offer us to make the world a little bit better. Because this is precisely what the post-2015 agenda is about.

Thank you for your attention.