



THE FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

## Information & Communication for Development

# UPDATE

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### FDC contributions to the World Summit on the Information Society

#### ICTs for Development: Resources, Needs and Opportunity

Tokyo, Jan 2003: FDC played a key role in initiating and then organising an event to discuss ICT sector opportunities for Pacific island countries, in the context of the WSIS Asia Pacific Regional Conference. Pacific country representatives from Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, New Zealand, Niue, the Northern Marianas, Palau, PNG, Samoa, and Vanuatu attended. A wide range of participants from Pacific regional organisations, bilateral and multilateral development partners, NGOs, and academia also attended. Financial support was received from the Global Knowledge Partnership, the Center for Global Communications, the Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund (Pacific Islands Digital Opportunities initiative), UNESCO, *InfoDev*, and the Asian Development Bank.

#### The Pacific Islands Regional ICT Consultation

Suva, Apr 2003: FDC played a pivotal role in encouraging Pacific colleagues to build on the achievements of the Tokyo meeting. The Consultation was attended by almost 100 representatives of Pacific Island governments, communication and information service providers, media organisations, and NGOs and civil society entities actively involved in a wide range of Information Society issues from 14 countries and territories. The objective was to ensure that the unique contributions and needs of Pacific Island countries and peoples are fully recognised throughout the WSIS process and ultimately reflected in the Declaration and Action Plan to be adopted at the Summit in Geneva in December 2003. The Consultation was organised and sponsored by FDC, the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), ITU, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association, UNDP/OPS and UNESCO.

#### Other Plans for WSIS

FDC is working with Pacific colleagues to prepare a Pacific event or activity for the ICT-4D Platform at WSIS. The organisers of this event/activity will seek assistance from the ICT-4D Platform in terms of allocation of space and display modules. Funding will be sought from a number of sources to ensure the participation of Pacific ICT-4D experts.

### IC-4D Staff

#### **Stuart Mathison**

Program officer responsible for the IC-4D program.

#### **Dr. Paul Greener**

Consulting Associate, focusing on the Multi-Sector Partnerships in ICT4D theme.

### WSIS - The Challenge

*The global information society is evolving at breakneck speed. At the same time, commercial, social and professional opportunities are exploding as new markets open to competition and foreign investment. The modern world is undergoing a fundamental transformation as the industrial society that marked the 20th century rapidly gives way to the information society of the 21st century. This dynamic process promises a fundamental change in all aspects of our lives, including knowledge dissemination, social interaction, economic and business practices, political engagement, media, education, health, leisure and entertainment. We are indeed in the midst of a revolution, perhaps the greatest that humanity has ever experienced.*

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## **Harnessing Development of ICT Through Results-based Multi-Sector Partnerships**

Geneva, Feb 2003: As the result of an FDC initiative, Dr. Michael Warner of ODI and Dr. Paul Greener of FDC hosted a workshop at the WSIS PrepCom II. Around 100 people attended the session. The workshop comprised:

- A presentation on the principles of partnership brokering as they relate to the design of ICT for development projects;
- A plenary discussion around the application of these principles to two case-studies of ICT4D;
- A hands-on exercise using a hypothetical case study, which explored the mapping of core competencies (between NGOs, private operators, and the government regulator) to solve a challenge of rural ICT access.

FDC and ODI's work on Multi-Sector Partnerships in ICT4D has since been officially endorsed by the Executive Director of the WSIS Secretariat. Further activities are being prepared in the lead up to the WSIS in Geneva (Dec, 2003). Dr Greener presented a session on Multi-Sector Partnerships at the Pacific Islands Regional ICT Consultation in Suva in April.

### **Digital Dividends for the Poor: ICT for Poverty Reduction**

Rome, May 2003: Following a presentation by Mr Stuart Mathison of FDC at the annual meeting of the Global Knowledge Partnership network, the European Commission's Directorate General of Development has offered funding to produce a summary of the presentation in pamphlet form, for distribution at the WSIS in Geneva. The pamphlet is to be produced in English, French and Spanish.

### **WSIS International Advisory Panel on the ICT4D Platform**

FDC Executive Director, Ms Beris Gwynne, was invited to join the International Advisory Panel established by the WSIS Secretariat to advise on matters pertaining to the ICT-4D Platform. Her input to date has emphasised the importance of "small island" participation and multi-sector partnerships.

### **WSIS Australian Civil Society consultations**

FDC Executive Director, Beris Gwynne, also participated in the inaugural Australian civil society consultations on WSIS and will attend a symposium being organised by Monash University in Italy in September, 2003

### **FDC and the Global Knowledge Partnership Network (GKP)**

Stuart Mathison serves on the GKP Thematic Working Groups investigating "Funding Models for ICT4D".

### **Oceania Regional Network**

FDC was instrumental in forming the GKP Oceania network of GKP. The current membership comprises FDC, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Rural Development Volunteers Association of Solomon Islands (The "People First Network"); Fiji Government's ITC Services, and Computer Services Ltd (Samoa). A number of other prominent Pacific organisations are considering membership.

This network will be an important context for promoting ICT for Development in the Pacific region.

### **WSIS - The Opportunity**

*The WSIS will provide a unique opportunity for all key stakeholders to assemble at a high-level gathering and to develop a better understanding of this revolution and its impact on the international community. It aims to bring together Heads of State, Executive Heads of United Nations agencies, industry leaders and civil society in a single high-level event.*

### **WSIS - Anticipated Outcome**

*The anticipated outcome of the WSIS is to develop and foster a clear statement of political will and a concrete plan of action for achieving the goals of the Information Society, while fully reflecting all the different interests at stake.*

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## Community-based ICT for Development Projects

### ICT and Health

AusAID has agreed to fund a “pilot project” designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of CD-ROMs as a vehicle for capacity building for health professionals, particularly in non-metropolitan and remote, less developed areas in the Pacific. The pilot will focus on “infection control” in hospitals and clinics and is being produced in collaboration with ITEM *Interactive* (Sydney) and the Fiji Schools of Medicine and Nursing. This CD will be modelled on another ITEM *Interactive* product dealing with Cleft Palate repair. A larger, more comprehensive project will be developed for the consideration of donors (including AusAID) and the World Health Organisation. It is intended that materials produced will be available in different format for different audiences, and uploaded on the Australian Development Gateway.

### ICT and Agriculture

Discussions are in progress with the ATSE Crawford Fund and ACIAR regarding FDC’s proposal of a series of CD-ROM agriculture extension materials designed for remote, rural farmers. As in the ICT and Health project, several pilot CDs are proposed which draw on ACIAR funded or other Australian agricultural research to illustrate the potential of this approach for a larger project. As with the above project, it is intended that materials produced for different audiences will be available through the Australian Development Gateway.

### Samoa Telecentres

In partnership with the Samoan Ministry of Women Affairs and a number of village committees, FDC has prepared a detailed proposal to research the potential social and economic impact of Internet telecentres on remote Pacific Island communities.

### ICT and Microenterprise Development

The APEC Education Foundation is currently considering a proposal from FDC which is designed to mobilise and enhance in-country capacity to provide training and technical assistance for microenterprises and small businesses using ICT-based training and support packages. The project ensures long-term sustainability through the creation of locally-funded and locally directed “Micro-Business Associations”. It focuses on the needs and interests of entrepreneurs in the unregulated economy (particularly women). A related proposal is under consideration in the context of the ASEAN Australia Economic Cooperation Program.

### PNG: (Radio) e-mail network and telecentres

Planning has begun for the implementation of an Internet telecentre and e-mail network (over a HF radio system funded by AusAID) in the Western province of Papua New Guinea. Partner is the PNG Sustainable Development Program Ltd. The University of Papua New Guinea has expressed interest in a collaboration with FDC extending the use of its existing distance education network for “community development” purposes.

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*A technical revolution is transforming society in a profound way. If harnessed and directed properly, ICTs have the potential to improve all aspects of our social, economic and cultural life. ICTs can serve as an engine for development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and as an effective instrument to help us achieve all the goals of the Millennium Declaration. Yet the majority of the world’s population has yet to benefit from the new technology.*

*The WSIS will be a unique opportunity for all key players to develop a shared vision of ways to bridge the digital divide and create a truly global information society. It will be an opportunity to develop specific solutions and tools and adopt a realistic and viable plan of action.*

**Kofi Annan**  
**United Nations**  
**Secretary General**

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