

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Science, Information Society and the Millennium Goals



11th December 2003

Room C

PALEXPO, Geneva

14:00-16:30

Brief description of the event

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have the capacity to increase accessibility to scientific knowledge internationally. As enabling technologies, they are central to scientific research. They help scientists perform basic and applied research, build partnerships and scientific international consortia, collect data, conduct experiments, manage laboratories, and communicate their findings to their peers and the public.

The digital world in which we live is not only a product of science but a fundamental force for shaping the scientific research agenda and determining how scientific knowledge will unfold, be utilized and above all, be shared, in the future. However, despite this potential, the knowledge divide will widen if inequalities are not addressed properly. Increasing inequalities in access to ICTs reduce opportunities for individuals and institutions to use scientific knowledge that could help foster innovation, facilitate efficient decision making, and support education and training. For example, present systems for the publication and dissemination of scientific information do not provide adequate access to knowledge originating in many developing countries. While scientific data and information from one country may or may not be specifically relevant to another country's needs, all countries must be able to develop and communicate their own knowledge.

This Event is set up to highlight the important role of Science in the Information Society. It will address how sustainable development is dependent on open and equitable access to scientific knowledge and the role that ICTS play in this context. A major focus will be put on bridging the Digital Divide. By building on the ICSU/CODATA/UNESCO workshop organized on 12 March on Science in the Information Society and the event on the role of science in the information society to be organized by CERN in cooperation with UNESCO, ICSU, TWAS and ICTP, this event will highlight themes such as: **universal access to scientific knowledge, improving education and training and some policy issues in scientific information.**

Programme

14:00 - Opening statement: Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General

14:10 – High-level Round Table: Agenda for Action

The Ministerial roundtable will invite Ministries dealing with Science matters from both Northern and Southern countries to address how they might implement an agenda for action to ensure universal and equitable access to scientific knowledge in the Information Society.

Chair: Prof. Dr. W. Erdelen, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences

Moderator: Mr. A. Mironov, Secretary general Romanian National Commission to UNESCO

- H. Ex. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania
- Mrs. Lidia Brito, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology Mozambique
- Dr. Atta-Ur-Rahman, Minister of Higher Education, Pakistan
- Mr Rao, President of TWAS
- Jane Lubchenco, President of ICSU
- Mr Shuichi IWATA, President CODATA, University of Tokyo

16:15 – Closing remarks: Mr Luciano Maiani, Director-General, CERN

In cooperation with:

