

MESSAGE TO THE BROADBAND COMMISSION

FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT Launch of 2nd *State of Broadband* report New York, 21 September, 2013

I am pleased to send greetings on the launch of this important report on the shape of broadband access around the world.

As many of you know, the Broadband Commission was created in May 2010 to explore how best to harness the power of technology to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Since that time, the Commission has been a central driver of dialogue and actions to make broadband more available and affordable everywhere – particularly to people in the world's poorest nations, where it can help bridge gaps in vital areas like health and education. Broadband development also has the potential to improve environmental sustainability, for example, by enhancing resource management.

As the world becomes increasingly digital, simple connectivity is no longer enough. Affordable broadband must be within reach of people, businesses and governments in all corners of the world. We need to see the same kind of rapid and equitable spread of broadband that the world has experienced with mobile phones.

The *State of Broadband* report is a global survey of broadband access in countries around the world. It measures progress towards five key targets: price, household and individual access, government broadband policy and gender, and access to high-speed technology.

I applaud the Commission for recognizing the vital role that women play in development and advocating for women's rights to this powerful tool for empowerment. I note that the Working Group on Broadband and Gender is also delivering the results of its work today.

The next decade will be the 'decade of broadband'. Around the world, broadband networks are becoming basic national infrastructure – just like transport, energy and water networks.

This is why the work of this Commission is so important. I congratulate all Commissioners on their outstanding efforts and encourage all partners to work together to identify innovative strategies that will help expand the reach of broadband around the globe.