

UNDP and Global Internet Policy Initiative join forces in a worldwide effort for an open and democratic Internet

New York, 14 August 2001— A new partnership between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Internet Policy Initiative (GIPI) will support open and democratic access to the Internet in developing countries as a way of fostering development. It will take advantage of UNDP's global reach and its leadership in placing information and communications technology (ICT) on the international development agenda and GIPI's work to promote wider development and accessibility of ICT.

The organizations signed a memorandum of understanding today at UNDP headquarters that calls for cooperation on policy and regulatory reform, design and implementation of national ICT development strategies, capacity development, entrepreneurship support, and awareness and partnership building.

GIPI and UNDP intend to kick off projects this year in Africa, Arab States, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown today said, "Two of the most powerful forces in the world today are the spread of ICT and the global effort to achieve more widespread social and economic development. The partnership between UNDP and GIPI has the potential to play a significant role in increasing digital opportunities for people around the world who need to be able to take advantage of the new technologies to enhance development."

George Sadowsky, Executive Director of GIPI, explained that the agreement lays the foundation for Internet policy to have a greater impact on society. Sadowsky said, "Cooperation between GIPI and UNDP strengthens both entities. GIPI's role as a neutral and expert policy advisor and UNDP's role as a premier multilateral development agency together provide a unique combination of civil society input and direct access to policymakers."

A trusted source of policy advice and capacity building for developing countries and an advocate for a more inclusive global economy, UNDP also provides funds and helps developing countries attract and use aid more effectively. It seeks to address the many causes of poverty and to promote development through support for democratic governance and the adoption of pro-poor policies.

GIPI is a joint project of Internews and the Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT). Internews is a leading and respected voice for open media with offices in 23 countries and a proven track record of working with local stakeholders and governments. CDT is the premier Internet policy organization in the US.

At UNDP's request, GIPI recently convened a special two-day session on ICT issues at the annual meeting of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Eastern Europe and CIS, in Tbilisi, Georgia. GIPI began its collaboration with UNDP in March by co-sponsoring the Kyrgyz Republic's first conference on ICT aimed at developing a national Internet strategy.

For more information about the joint initiative:

GIPI, <http://www.gipiproject.org/>;

Center for Democracy and Technology, <http://www.cdt.org>;

Internews, <http://www.internews.org>;

UNDP, <http://www.undp.org/>.

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