



22 December 2010

Dear friends and colleagues,

2010 was again a very eventful year for all of us who are working in this exciting and challenging new field we call crisis information management, or peace and humanitarian operations in the information age. During many of the natural and man-made crisis all over the world in 2010, it was demonstrated again in a most visible and credible fashion, how Information and Communication Technologies have once and for all changed the way, how the international community manages crisis and can positively support the humanitarian and peace workers and victims alike.

Like so many others, the ICT4Peace Foundation, has been for instance actively involved in assisting crisis information management activities in Haiti, Chile, Pakistan Kyrgystan, Gulf of Mexico. Through the deployment of the ICT4Peace Crisis Information Management Wikis (www.wiki.ict4peace.org), the Foundation was able to support the actors on the ground, and the Foundation was hailed by the UN for that effort.

Of course these new tools and processes also pose new challenges to the international community, which need to be addressed. The Foundation therefore launched early on a reflection process and released a report in March 2010 - ***Haiti and beyond: Getting it right in Crisis information management*** (<http://ict4peace.org/publications/haiti-and-beyond-getting-it-right-in-crisis-information-management-4>) – the first critique of a number of others - on the deployment of ICTs to help aid and relief efforts in Haiti after the devastating earthquake in January 2010. As noted in this succinct report, much more can and must be done to strengthen disaster preparedness and crisis information management. There are no longer excuses for ill-preparedness or haphazard aid response. We already know much of what needs to be done and going forward requires requisite funding coupled with political will of the international community.

It was therefore gratifying to see that the UN Secretary General in its report to this years UN General Assembly on the implementation of the ICT Strategy of the UN underscores again the need for a better and more robust crisis information management strategy and implementation, the development of which the ICT4Peace Foundation was privileged to support since 2008 with the stocktaking report on the UN Crisis Information Management Capabilities, including the use of Web 2.0 and social networking tools.

As a follow-up to this report, in 2009 the UN CITO and other key UN agencies such as DPKO, DPA, OCHA, WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR convened the UN Crisis Information Management Advisory Group (CiMAG), to develop the UN Crisis Information Management Strategy (CiMS). (<http://ict4peace.org/updates/report-of-the-un-secretary-general-underscores-crisis-information-management-strategy>).

This positive development is mainly thanks to the relentless efforts of the UN Chief Information Technology Officer, Dr. Soon-hong Choi, who simultaneously published a very readable report on the UN ICT Strategy with a reference to Crisis Information Management and the ICT4Peace Foundation. (<http://ict4peace.org/updates/united-nations-core-ict-strategy-incorporates-crisis-information-management>).

In the fall 2010 the Foundation along with the UN CITO, Dr. Soon-hong Choi participated at the 2010 Crisismappers Meeting in Boston. The UN thus embraced for the first time at the highest level an increasingly important community of actors in crisis information management. The ICT4Peace Foundation subsequently was the first organisation to publish a report on the pressing question of how to support cross-fertilization between the UN IASC Core Operational Data Sets (COD) and Information generated by Crisismappers during a given crisis (<http://ict4peace.org/updates/connecting-crisismapping-to-the-united-nations>).

The ICT4Peace Foundation is also pleased to report on its second third year of successful cooperation with Ushahidi (www.ushahidi.org). In view of the increasing need to qualify and verify crowdsourced information, the ICT4Peace Foundation helped the development of the Matrix plugin for the Ushahidi platform. Used in the Ushahidi instance set up to monitor the Tanzanian national elections on 31st October 2010, this plugin essentially requires pre-trained reporters in the field tagging reports with the following for reports they enter into the system: 1.) Source Reliability and 2.) Information Probability. When the reports are filtered into the back-end, administrators via the analysis plugin would then see the attached matrix on tagged reports, which helps with making analyses', finding related reports and/or possibly creating new reports to shield the actors involved in some of these reports. (<http://ict4peace.org/publications/the-matrix-plugin-for-ushahidi-platform>).

The ICT4Peace Foundation was invited in October 2010 to participate at the early warning for protection conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, organised by Oxfam Australia and supported by Australian Government's AusAID, to explore how private, public and civil society institutions can harness early warning information and communication technologies (ICTs) and mechanisms to contribute to the prevention of mass atrocity crimes. On behalf of the United Nations Francis Deng, Special Advisor of the Secretary General for the Prevention of Genocide and Dr. Edward Luck Special Advisor of the Secretary General for the Responsibility to Protect and leading experts participated. In preparation of this Conference the ICT4Peace Foundation published a report called ***ICTs for the prevention of mass atrocity crimes*** (<http://ict4peace.org/updates/icts-for-the-prevention-of-mass-atrocity-crimes>). The report explores what is being done to support the prevention of mass atrocity crimes

as well as reconciliation, healing and justice with a particular emphasis on the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) ?

The ICT4Peace Foundation, in the fulfilment of its mandate, also continued to work with the Cairo Regional Center for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCPA), the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra and L'Ecole de Maintien de la Paix (EMP) based in Bamako, Mali to develop Crisis Information Management courses training courses for peacekeepers, governments, I.O., NGOs in multi-stakeholder and multi-dimensional missions in the region. ICT4Peace, in close cooperation with UN OCHA also carried out a Crisis Information Management (CiM) Training course for humanitarian operations managers as part of the Executive Master Programme for Humanitarian Logistics and Management of the University of Lugano. This course included the testing of a first of its kind CiM simulation exercise using ICTs based on the events in Haiti and the ICT4Peace Wiki on Haiti. For many participants, this was their first experience of leveraging tools and services on the web to inform policies and responses regarding a sudden onset disaster.

The ***ICT4Peace Inventorisation Wiki***, which started in 2006 continued to be updated in 2010 (<http://wiki.ict4peace.org>). A number of new examples, anchored to the report ***The Role of ICT in Preventing, Responding to and Recovering from Conflict*** (http://old.ict4peace.org/articles/ict4peace_ebook1.pdf) are included in the Foundation's ICT4Peace wiki (<http://inventory.ict4peace.org>), which is updated regularly with new initiatives and examples from across the world.

On behalf of the ICT4Peace Foundation, I wish you and your families a successful and fulfilling year ahead.

Daniel Stauffacher
Chairman
ICT4Peace Foundation
Geneva, Switzerland

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ICT4Peace took root with pioneering research on the role of ICTs in preventing, responding to and recovering from conflict in 2003 and lead to the adoption of Paragraph 36 by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis in 2005 which recognises *"...the potential of ICTs to promote peace and to prevent conflict which, inter alia, negatively affects achieving development goals. ICTs can be used for identifying conflict situations through early-warning systems preventing conflicts, promoting their peaceful resolution, supporting humanitarian action, including protection of civilians in armed conflicts, facilitating peacekeeping missions, and assisting post conflict peace-building and reconstruction"*.

The **ICT4Peace Foundation** (www.ict4peace.org) works to promote the practical realisation of Paragraph 36 and looks at the role of ICT in crisis management, covering aspects of early warning and conflict prevention, peace mediation, peacekeeping, peace-building as well as natural disaster management and humanitarian operations.

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