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ICT4Peace: An International Process for Crisis Management

ICT4Peace aims to enhance the performance of the international community in crisis management through the application of information Communications Technology (ICT) – technologies that can facilitate effective and sustained communication between peoples, communities and stakeholders involved in crisis management, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding. Crisis management is defined, for the purposes of this process, as civilian and/or military intervention in a crisis that may be a violent or non-violent with the intention of preventing a further escalation of the crisis and facilitating its resolution. This definition covers peace mediation, peace-keeping and peace-building activities of the international community. In bridging the fragmentation between various organisations and activities during different crisis phases, ICT4Peace aims to facilitate a holistic, cohesive and collaborative mechanisms directly in line with Paragraph 36 of the WSIS Tunis Commitment:

> *"36. We value 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."*

ICT4Peace aims to raise the awareness of and mainstream the Tunis Commitment in all stages of planning and executing crisis management and peace operations. Victims of man-made and natural disasters as well as violent and protracted ethno-political conflict are often severely disadvantaged on account of existing ICT mechanisms that fail to adequately facilitate knowledge and information transfers, augment collaboration and complement multi-stakeholder initiatives. Under the Chairmanship of President Martti Ahtisaari, a group of experts from the UN, international civil society, business and academia met in March 2007 to identify key challenges of and solutions to existing ICT mechanisms on conflict management.

1. **Enhance the performance of the international community in crisis management through ICT**
   - From 2007 – 2008, key partners in ICT4Peace will work with the United Nations, bilateral and multilateral donors, international NGOs, civil society organizations, academia and Universities as well as global business to establish ICT4Peace as integral to their approach to and understanding of crisis management.
   - ICT4Peace aims to enhance the competency and professionalism of the international community in crisis management through improved interagency interoperability supported by practical collaborative frameworks and ICT tools.
   - ICT4Peace will establish broad principles derived from operational best practices, integrate them into UN processes and make ICT part of UN evaluation exercises. To this end the support will be sought through the intergovernamental process by adoption of an appropriate resolution of the General Assembly.

Roadmap:
- Meeting at the United Nations, New York on 15th November 2007 to launch the ICT4Peace initiative and introduce it to a international range of stakeholders
- Ratification of advocacy document that explains ICT4Peace and its importance in conflict mitigation. Translation of this document to French, Arabic and Spanish and subsequent dissemination amongst a wide spectrum of stakeholders
- Comprehensive report on the current state of interoperability and ICTs in conflict mitigation by end 2007, including opportunities and challenges for ICT4Peace
- Confirmed buy in to ICT4Peace process from key UN and key international and local partners by mid-2008 in the form of letters of support and commitment to key principles

- First template for ICT, media and communications in conflict management written and distributed for discussion by end-2007
- Comprehensive inventorisation of current and planned ICT4Peace initiatives by mid-2008, including brief description, contact details and website
- Final commitment conference by 2008

Guiding questions for ICT4Peace:
- Do ICT have a special role in promoting peace and if so, how do you see the future of ICTs in conflict and crisis management, what will the priorities and challenges be in coming years?
- Can ICT be used in other ways, by other actors, to diffuse a situation leading to conflict, help end a conflict, or allow the stabilization of a post conflict situation?
- How can we enable a greater degree of cohesion, transparency and accountability to processes of conflict transformation? Can ICT augment existing stakeholder interventions, enable marginalized actors to participate more fully in peacebuilding processes, empower grassroots communities, and bring cohesion to full-field peacebuilding activities?
- Establishing computers and Internet connections is insufficient if the technology is not used effectively, if people are discouraged from using it or if local economies and patterns of access cannot sustain long-term application. How do we make sure that a strong political will supports these transformations?
- One important application of technology is enabling communication and connection between people beyond their immediate environment. Modern communication technologies such as live satellite broadcasting, the Internet or video cameras have the potential to create empathy and understanding on a global scale. Depending on how technology is deployed, can enable or disable public expression and elaboration of contending interests and give voice to the differences of identity, experience, values and histories that inform conflicts. Does this open up new possibilities for an international public sphere of understanding and solidarity?
- How do we integrate ICT in enhancing the competency and professionalism of the international community in crisis management?
- How do we improve inter-agency interoperability and collaboration within the international community (UN system, EU/EC efforts, etc.) to harnessing ICT for peace-keeping, conflict prevention and crisis management?
- How do we promote information-sharing in places of conflict and/or crises?

Partners:

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