



**Telecommunication
Development Bureau (BDT)**

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Subject: **Connect a School, Connect a Community Regional Forum
Santo Domingo, 13-15 June 2011**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to invite you to participate in the ITU Americas Region **Connect a School, Connect a Community** Forum, being organized by ITU in the Dominican Republic in close collaboration with the *Instituto Dominicano de las Telecomunicaciones* (INDOTEL).

The event will take place from 13 to 15 June 2011 in Santo Domingo, at the Hotel Barceló Santo Domingo.

The **Connect a School, Connect a Community** initiative was launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and ITU Secretary-General Hamadoun Touré together with 300 youths from some 150 countries participating in the ITU TELECOM World Youth Forum in October 2009. At the launch, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed the need for teamwork and political will in turning the goal of connecting all schools into reality.

The main objective of the event is to share best practices and build political will to connect all schools in the Americas region to broadband Internet by 2015. Connected schools can be leveraged as community ICT Centers for the improved social and economic development of marginalized and disadvantaged groups in the community, especially women, persons with disabilities, youth and indigenous peoples.

Connecting schools provides an opportunity for Communications, Education and other relevant government officials to work hand-in-hand. Connecting schools also requires high-level political will. It is for this reason that ITU Administrations are encouraged to invite their Ministers of Communication, Education, Science and Technology and Gender Equality as well as Heads of National Telecommunication Regulatory Authorities to participate. Representatives from these ministries, as well as from regulatory authorities and Universal Service Fund Administrators also play a vital role in connecting schools. ITU invites all key stakeholders to attend and share their experiences.

This Regional Forum will explore many timely topics, including national policies to connect schools, school low-cost computing device programmes, and developing community ICT centres for women, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, building on the best practices included in the **Connect a School, Connect a Community** toolkit (www.connectaschool.org). A draft detailed agenda is attached (Annex 1).

Please find below additional important information about this event:

Panelist Application

Active participation by ITU Member States and Sector Members as panelists in the Sessions is both welcome and encouraged to ensure the Forum promotes dialogue and the sharing of best practices. Participants wishing to act as a panelist in one of the Sessions identified in the provisional programme are kindly requested to complete the attached Panelist Application form (Annex 2) and return to vera.zanetti@itu.int copy to sis@itu.int, no later than 16 May 2011. All proposals will be analyzed by the Organization Committee and the selected proposals will be confirmed in due time. Please note that the Panel Application form is also available for electronic submission at the following ITU web page: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ams/CMS/index.asp>.

Registration/Documents

Forum registration is exclusively online at <http://www.itu.int/cgi-bin/htsh/edrs/ITU-D/workshop/edrs.registration.form?eventid=4000085>. All information and documents related to the event are available and can be downloaded from <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/sis/index.phtml> and/or <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ams/CMS/index.asp>.

Logistics

- Simultaneous interpretation will be provided throughout the Forum in English and Spanish.
- Pre-registration will start on 15 April 2011 and will be carried out exclusively online through the registration link above. Onsite registration will start as from 12 June 2011, at 17h00.
- Please also note that participants shall cover their own travel and accommodation expenses.
- Due to visa requirements, and in order to ensure that your visa is processed in time for the meeting, I encourage you to follow the instructions available at any of the two Forum websites.

Fellowships requests

- I am pleased to inform that, subject to the availability of funds, ITU will provide **ONE** fellowship per eligible Administration. While the number of participants from any country is not limited, eligible countries will bear the costs of any additional participant.
- Depending on the number of requests from duly authorized candidates who fulfill all requirements, fellowships may be either full or partial. A full fellowship includes one return economy class air ticket by the most direct/economical route from the country of origin to the Dominican Republic, as well as a daily allowance to cover accommodation, meals and incidental expenses. A partial fellowship includes the daily subsistence allowance or the economy class air ticket by the most direct/economical route.
- Please find attached the fellowship form and take into account the deadline established of 16 May 2011 (Annex 4).

I very much hope that you will be able to participate and make a valuable contribution to this Forum.

Yours faithfully,

[Original signed]

Brahima Sanou
Director