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Message from UN Secretary-General

WTISD 2012: Message from UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon

I welcome the focus on women and girls as the theme of this year's World Telecommunication and Information Society Day.

Information and communications technologies are already benefiting women and girls in numerous ways. E-commerce is expanding opportunities for entrepreneurship. Mobile telephones are enabling midwives to make childbirth safer. Electronic social networks are allowing women around the world to mobilize as never before for democracy, dignity and human rights.

At the same time, we know that information and communications technology has the potential to cause harm. Cyberbullying, Internet-driven human trafficking and other abuses are often targeted at women and girls. We must do everything possible to stop these crimes and promote greater online security for all people.

More broadly, we should work to optimize the power of information and communications technology to support sustainable development. gathering, disseminating and analyzing information, we can accelerate action to protect natural resources, combat climate change and help vulnerable people, including women and girls.

This is especially important in the context of the "Rio+20" United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held next month in Brazil. In the final run-up to the Conference, and then especially afterwards as we implement the decisions taken there, information and communications technology can make possible new approaches and solutions for a sustainable future.

On this World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, I call again for wide-ranging efforts to close both the digital divide and the gender gap. All people must be able to make the best use of information and communications technology to help create the future we want.

Ban Ki-Moon
UN Secretary-General

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