Press Release

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'CARING COMMUNITIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY – IMAGINING THE POSSIBLE'

SUBJECT OF HEADQUARTERS CONFERENCE 10 FEBRUARY

NEW YORK, 7 February (UN-HABITAT) -- An international conference, "Age of Connectivity - - Caring Communities for the 21st Century: Imagining the Possible", will be held on Friday, 10 February at United Nations Headquarters from 10 a.m. till 6 p.m. in Conference Room 1.

It is part of a series of interlinked conferences, addressing the "Age of Longevity", organized by the International Council for Caring Communities (ICCC) in coordination with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), United Nations Programme on Ageing, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Public Information, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The conference is organized in support of the United Nations Commission for Social Development and the World Summit for the Information Society. The conference will also highlight the winners of the 2005 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Student Design Competition. The Competition provided a unique opportunity to stimulate new thinking and to showcase globally meaningful solutions that enhance the quality of life for all ages.

The conference will address, among other issues, "Connecting the Generations: ICT as a tool"; how to utilize opportunities to expand work, education, health care and other personal growth/sharing experiences via new pathways and opportunities, opening up along the information and communication technology digital highway. It will also consider how to integrate telecentres, the Millennium Development Goals into urban planning, to enhance physical and social connectivity, and help integrate neglected older persons, youth and orphans, into the society at large.

The questions the conference seeks to answer include:

-- How can partnerships be developed which incorporate older person's experiences and augment their capacities?

-- How can ICT boost economic development in an ageing world?

-- How can ICT tools enhance lifelong learning and employment?

-- What role can e-health play in improving the quality of life for people of all ages?

The conference will be co-chaired by Dean Fadi Deek, School of Science and Liberal Arts, and Michael Gurstein, Chair, Community Informatics Research Network and Research Director LOGIN Africa, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa.

Opening remarks will be delivered by Anna Tibaijuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN-HABITAT, and Sarbuland Khan, Director, Office of Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Keynote speakers are Jose Luis Guterres, Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations and Erasmo Lara, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations.

Additional presenters are Professor Frederick Fenech, Director, International Institute on Ageing, United Nations, Malta; Parmod Gaur, President and CEO, Viterion TeleHealthcare LLC, United States; Motoo Kusakabe, Senior Counsellor to the President, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, United Kingdom; Dean Craig Lehmann, School of Health Technology, Stony Brook University, SUNY, United States; and Peter Mathias, President, Bridge Research and Development, Ltd, United Kingdom.

The programme also includes: Amir Dossal, Executive Director, United Nations Foundation for International Partnerships (UNFIP); Sonia Elliott, Liaison Officer, UNAIDS New York Office; Alexandre Sidorenko, Focal Point on Ageing, United Nations Programme on Ageing; Sergei Kambalov, Chief, United Nations Economic and Social Council and Inter-organization Cooperation Branch, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Vyatcheslav Cherkasov, Partnership and Outreach Programme Coordinator, DESA; and Denis Gilhooly, Principle Advisor, ICT and Development, United Nations.

The ICT Student Design Competition for 2005 will also be showcased and insights presented; the conference will feature awarding of prizes to the winners -- Aditya Chand, Carnegie Mellon University, United States; Jae Heon Choi, Somtob Devahastin, Panitte Tuangsuwan and Terrence Li, Mahidol University International College, Thailand; and Jose Carlos Silva Martinez. Pontificia Universidad Catolica Del Peru -- and an exhibition of the winning projects. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation sponsorship in cooperation with United Nations partners, Inter-American Development Bank and New Jersey Institute of Technology stimulated this first competition addressing "Connecting the Generations", focusing on inclusion of older persons.

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