

19 November 2001

**Statement of H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo,
President of the 56th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Luncheon in honour of the ICT Task Force
members**

Secretary-General Annan, Distinguished Members of the ICT Task Force, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am very pleased and honored to join the Secretary-General and all of you at this luncheon to mark the official launch of the Information and Communication Task Force.

The ICT Task Force is the first major UN initiative to reach fruition during my tenure as President of the General Assembly, and thus I am immensely proud to be associated with the ICT Task Force. This is all the more so because I come from a country that has embraced the IT revolution, from the boardroom to the individual household, in a remarkably short period of time.

Let me give you a small example how much IT revolution affects our daily lives. In Korea, until quite recently, to see a very popular movie is not an easy job, especially when the movie was a blockbuster like Harry Potter. Young mates spent several hours in front of a ticket office. I myself have romantic memories of waiting hours in a queue with my wife.

These days youngsters do not queue up any more.

Instead they just log on the Internet, locate a virtual ticket office from a website, buy tickets and even print them out on the spot. This may be more efficient, but on the other hand it's also less romantic -- as I am sure my wife would agree.

We are living in an age of unprecedented convenience and prosperity due to the IT revolution. However we are also keenly aware that the vast majority of mankind, through no fault of their own, remains isolated from this technology revolution.

I believe that extending the benefits of the IT revolution to all humanity is the foremost challenge of our age. Our success, or lack thereof, in meeting this challenge will do much to shape the global civilization of the 21st century in its economic, social, and even political dimensions.

I share your vision of a world united, not divided, by information technology. And I congratulate all of you who have had a hand in bringing the ICT Task Force into being, most of all Secretary-General Annan.

Thank you.