

Your Excellencies, Distinguished and Honoured Ladies and Gentlemen

Today we meet as a family.

A family created by the passion, drive and dream of Nicholas Negroponte and his team to give “One Lap Top per child” to children in need.

A family is not something you choose. Instead it is a given.

We are a family obsessed.

Driven by a passion.

Our very obsession unites us into what we are.

We are driven by a purpose.

A purpose that transcends our own self interests; our pet hobbies and our own vanities.

Our purpose is simple.

Our purpose is to give every single child in the developing world and the developed world, the power to escape poverty, the power to escape ignorance, the power to escape years of neglect, deprivation and non fulfilment.

By doing so we give them a life chance, an opportunity, a window to realise their life potential and join the whole of the global community whatever their own circumstances.

Our purpose is to make them leap from a medieval to a 21st century existence.

We are not delivering a computer.

We are delivering a time machine.

**A time machine that is so enormously transformational
that everything after that
is changed.**

Changed for ever.

Imagine this.

**A hut in an African village. An old man and an old woman
cooking their dinner by firewood . At a small table a young
boy about 11 years of age is tapping into a computer
looking at the key board in the half light of a flickering
kerosene lamp.**

He has escaped his hut.

**His mind is elsewhere, connected to the global internet
community. He is doing his homework together with 7
other kids in similar huts 1 km away.**

**The huts are connected to the children. The children are
the nodes and the village community is brought together
by their laptops.**

**The children are learning, interacting, sharing, emailing
and surfing. They are developing marketable technology
skills, which can lead to jobs and opportunities for the
youth of today and the work force of tomorrow.**

The challenge now is to bring the old man and the old woman into that community of information, knowledge and empowerment that the children in that village possess.

The laptop unites the child with the world, then binds the village into a community and later connects that community into the global village.

This is a process.

Delivering the lap top is merely the first step.

**A small pebble
that starts
an avalanche of change.**

**A change so vast, so complete, so comprehensive
that every person in that remote village
will change and
become
a part of our global space,
the same space as that
we now occupy
in this room.**

It impacts on everybody and everything. Not only the child.

That is why I have called for our programme to be designated by the UN as a Millennium Development Goal. Or MDG 9.

Whatever one's motivation for combating extreme poverty—human rights, religious values, security, fiscal prudence, ideology—the solutions are the same.

The Millennium Declaration was adopted in September 2000 by 189 nations-and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit

A political framework was established.

For the first time in human history

a compact was made

between the poorer countries who pledged to improve policies, governance and accountability to their own citizens;

while wealthy countries pledged to provide the resources

The aim was to cut world poverty by half by 2015, saving tens of millions of lives and empowering a billion people into joining the global economy.

All that was needed was action and money - a paltry 60 billion USD per year more from a global economy of \$32 trillion USD per year.

Action given that we spend 1.0 trillion USD on arms, and 600 billion USD on agricultural subsidies.

Well its 2008 now and you may quite rightly ask are we on track after the half way point ?

The simple answer is no.

United Nations Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon recently said.

"The MDGs are still achievable if we act now. This will require inclusive sound governance, increased public investment, economic growth, enhanced productive capacity, and the creation of decent work."

Progress so far:

Goal 1: Was to Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger

Global poverty rates are falling in Asia. But millions more people have sunk deeper into poverty in sub-Saharan Africa.

Low agricultural output and has led to millions of more people being chronically hungry in sub-Saharan Africa and in Southern Asia, where half the children under age 5 are malnourished. Quick wins are the provision of massive replenishment of soil nutrients and high yielding seeds for smallholder farmers on nutrient-depleted lands, through free or subsidized distribution of chemical fertilizers and agro forestry no later than the end of 2008.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

There are some 600 million school children enrolled in schools in 155 developing countries. Of these 66 countries have achieved, or are on track to achieve, universal primary education by 2015. The other 89, in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Oceania however, are unlikely to reach this goal over the next decade. Over 105 million children worldwide have not enrolled in schools.

Five developing regions are approaching universal enrolment. But in sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia and Oceania fewer than two thirds of children are enrolled in primary school. Increased enrolment must ensure that all children receive a high-quality education.

Quick Wins can be achieved by ending school fees and fees for uniforms for primary schools; the expansion of

school meal programmes to cover all children in hunger hotspots using locally produced foods, to provide annual deworming and hand cleansing gels to kill bacteria that produce diarrhoea and so improve health and educational outcomes.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality & empower women

The gender gap is closing — albeit slowly — in primary school enrolment in the developing world.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

Death rates in children under age 5 are dropping. But not fast enough. Eleven million children a year — 30,000 a day — die from preventable causes. Most of these lives could be saved through low cost solutions

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

More than half a million women die each year during pregnancy or childbirth. Some progress has been made in reducing maternal deaths in developing regions, but not in the countries where giving birth is most risky.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria & other diseases

AIDS is the leading cause of premature death in sub-Saharan Africa. Prevention efforts must be intensified. Malaria and tuberculosis together kill nearly as many people each year as AIDS. Ninety per cent of malaria deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa, where prevention and treatment efforts are being scaled up. Tuberculosis is also on the rise.

Quick Wins are to provide mass distribution of bed-nets and effective anti-malarial medicines for all children in regions of malaria transmission by the end of 2008.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.

Insufficient progress has been made to reverse the loss of the world's forests and environmental resources. Access to safe drinking water has increased, but half the developing world still lack toilets and basic sanitation. Nearly 1 billion people live in urban slums outpacing the availability of productive jobs.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

To achieve the Millennium Development Goals, increased aid and debt relief must be accompanied by further opening of trade, accelerated transfer of technology and improved employment opportunities for the growing ranks of young people in the developing world.

So how can OLPC now augment the Millennium Development Goals by revisiting the MDG Programmes and accelerating their progress?

What is needed in these programmes which OLPC can uniquely provide?

The answers are simple and self evident.

The MDGs are failing because it is still “them and us”.

There is no common ownership.

We give and they take.

There is no interaction, no partnership, no dialogue, no common stakeholder-ship, between the individual beneficiary and the global donors.

Not at an individual level, not at a village or community level, neither at a regional level nor even possibly at a national level.

OLPC creates a new dimension a whole new world of interactivity. It creates a life long partnership of shared information and access to knowledge, between the child, who will be a teenager or adult by 2015, and between his or her village and the global community.

Why should such a interactive knowledge partnership accelerate and promote the MDGs ?

OLPC by connecting the internet to the child and the child to the village community introduces a technological component to development. While creating a better future for children it is also doing something for the parents of today.

The children can and will become the purveyors of information to their parents and to the wider village community.

Points of community contact and information will be networked together via the laptops for: education, health, business, and social empowerment.

Local clinics will be connected between far-flung villages, correct information on AIDS prevention will be distributed, preventive treatment programmes for malaria without expensive out-reach workers will mushroom.

Farmers will know the true worth of what they are growing by accessing world prices and prevent being cheated. They will learn to manage agriculture using more sustainable techniques. Deforestation will slow down, water conservation will improve.

The stored books in the computer will not only increase children's knowledge but expand adult's knowledge and ability to interact with the world markets.

Each of the earlier MDGs from MDG 1-to MDG 8 will be enhanced and accelerated by the newly created MDG 9.

Creating a new MDG is not enough.

The new programme has to be speedily and effectively delivered to meet our 2015 target of providing at least 100 million laptops; without having to approach bilaterally 155 countries and their attending bureaucracies.

Can this be done in time?

The answer to this is also quite evident.

The HIV Aids crisis led to the creation in 2003 of an huge global fund of some 8 billion USD. So far US\$3.7bn has been spent in 132 countries. The Global Fund has provided 1.1 million people with antiretroviral treatment for HIV, 2.8 million people with treatment for TB, 30 million insecticide-treated bed nets have been distributed to protect against malaria and many millions more people have received counselling, care, support and training, saving 1.8 million lives to date.

We have now also created under the UN aegis a Global Water Fund to provide clean drinking water and basic sanitation to millions of people.

Under the GAVI immunisation Alliance we have created a unique, multi-dimensional partnership of public and private sector resources with a single focus which is to improve child health in the poorest countries by extending immunisation coverage.

I now propose that we set up a multi-lateral Global Fund for Digital Education, GFDE - a part of the UN Millennium Goals programme as MDG 9 in partnership with the UNDP and UNESCO.

This would be a public and private sector partnership to raise large enough funds to deliver 100 million OLPC laptops in the next 7 years using the United Nations multilateral institutions for their delivery.

This would require raising some 2.6 billion USD per year from Governments and as Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes from the private sector.

It is a challenge and it is worth doing.

Starting now.

Thank you