

Theme WTISD 2010: Better city, better life with ICTs

At its 2009 session, [ITU Council](#) adopted the theme: “**Better city, better life with ICTs**” to mark World Telecommunication and Information Society Day in 2010.

The WTISD-10 theme is juxtaposed with that of the [Shanghai World Expo 2010](#), which is dedicated to promoting “Better Cities, Better Life” and which will showcase a number of initiatives aimed at achieving greener, safer, healthier, prosperous, inclusive and well-managed cities — where over half the world’s population resides.



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ICTs provide solutions to many of the problems facing cities even as they become magnets for migrating populations as well as contribute to making them more eco-friendly and economically viable. For many city dwellers, it is nearly impossible to imagine life without ICTs. From television to mobile phones and the Internet, ICTs have reshaped the world, helping billions of people to live, work and play. **ICTs present innovative ways of managing our cities** — smart buildings, intelligent traffic management, new efficiencies in energy consumption and waste management, and not least exchanging information and knowledge and communicating on the move in an increasingly converged information society.

*The theme of this year’s WTISD aims to ensure that **ICTs will contribute to a better future** for the growing populations of urban centres.*

While the world’s cities are undoubtedly endowed with many advantages, the disparities between the haves and the have nots among urban populations is often a vivid reminder that **the vast majority is left out of the reach of development.**

It is ironic that even in densely populated urban centres countless millions are deprived of access to the means of communication and information that are taken for granted by others.

Along with this growing digital divide, the lack of safe drinking water, sanitation, food, shelter, health care and education are basic needs that are addressed by the Millennium Development Goals, which calls for the significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

By tapping into the **huge potential of ICTs to improve the lives of people** and by providing affordable and equitable access to information and knowledge to empower everyone to achieve their aspirations, administrations can contribute towards meeting the rising expectations of an ever-growing population in the world's cities. Acting as catalysts for a more productive and better life, ICTs open the door to a myriad solutions that help achieve harmony among the spatial, social and environmental aspects of cities and among their inhabitants.

The [World Summit on the Information Society \(WSIS\)](#), which met in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005, called upon countries to consider establishing national mechanisms to achieve universal access in both underserved rural and urban areas in order to bridge the digital divide. ITU is committed to connecting the world and to ensure that the benefits of ICT reach the remotest parts of the world, including the dark spots that leave millions unconnected in our teeming cities.