

**Declaration by**  
**Pasquale Pistorio, President and CEO, STMicroelectronics**  
**at the third Plenary Session of the World Summit on the Information Society**  
**Geneva, December 11, 2003**

It's a great honour for me to have the opportunity of presenting my ideas to such a distinguished audience today.

In my position as the President and CEO of STMicroelectronics, one of the world's leading microchip manufacturers, I have been appointed together with other managers as one of the private enterprise representatives in the United Nations ICT Task Force, which is addressing the issue of helping bridge the digital Divide.

During the works of the Task Force, and even before, in preparation of the 2001 G8 meeting, I have made a proposal that I would like to share with you.

The proposal is based on my firm belief that, while building infrastructure and providing Internet access is essential for overcoming the technological gap between the most advanced nations and the developing world, it is equally important that people be able to use the technology, understand its importance and recognize the benefits it has to offer.

I would therefore emphasize education and training, as vital tools for offering access to modern means of communication and information, and, through them, to the immense multiplying effect of modern technology on human endeavour. And in my opinion thousands of private enterprises throughout the world possess the know-how and the resources, and therefore could - and should - invest in teaching those who have not had access to the education necessary to use a PC and access the Web.

I have therefore suggested that medium to large corporations – and by this I mean firms with over 250 employees – should voluntarily donate up to 0.1% of their annual revenues and up to 0.1% of their employees' working hours to this cause.

Those resources should be utilized for educational purposes, mostly directly by the companies who have donated them, in agreement with local authorities, which could provide some logistic support.

Obviously, the amount donated by private enterprises would depend each year on the actual financial performance of the corporations involved, but the contribution of human resources – which in my opinion is the most innovative part of the proposal - while not necessarily cheaper, would surely be less subject to market conditions and business fluctuations. It would also have the invaluable advantage of helping creating the sense of belonging and team spirit among employees of participating enterprises.

My company has already begun working in this direction, and has launched a program of alphabetization courses in information technology in some of the countries where we operate, with Morocco, Malaysia, India and China as the main targets for our initiative, and with the aim of reaching at least one million people in a decade.

It's a small contribution on our side, but I am confident that, if an initiative of this type were to meet with a widespread positive response, it could mobilize human and financial resources sufficient to invert the trend, and strike a significant portion of world underdevelopment at the roots.

Thank you for your attention