

**Summary of the**  
***International Workshop on Promoting Access and Capacity Building for Scientific***  
***Information Resources and ICT Infrastructure in Developing Countries***  
**of the InterAcademy Panel Initiative on**  
**Access to Scientific Information in Developing Countries**  
**Held on**  
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Mr. President of the Republic, distinguished members of the Academy and the government, ladies and gentlemen. It is truly an honor and pleasure to be here to discuss some of the results of the recent workshop on initiatives for access to scientific and technical information. A report summarizing the workshop and outlining the actions that need to be taken will be published soon, but I would like to take this opportunity to review some of the highlights with you today.

Mr. President of the Republic, from your important and positive leading role in the recent World Summit on the Information Society, you are especially cognizant of the essential functions of the information communication infrastructure in economic and social development, and in building the Information Society and the Knowledge Economy. You also know well the key role of the scientific and technical community in the development of global digital networks and their myriad applications, as well as the importance of effective and low-cost connectivity and information access for research and development. And you have properly recognized the opportunities and the potential of such connectivity and access to the more rapid development of Senegal in particular, and of all developing countries more generally.

Digital networks and the related technological infrastructure have become essential, but the conditions for implementing them in the developing world are always difficult. These

technologies, while holding great promise of applications for research, education, and broader socio-economic development must nonetheless be accompanied by appropriate organizational, management, cultural, and legal changes to yield maximum efficiency and utilization. Indeed, the exploitation of all revolutionary technologies is always subject to evolutionary human capacities.

Over the past two days, a group of leaders from the scientific and technical and informatics communities from Senegal, Africa, and other regions of the world have met to discuss the Information Society and to identify some ways to make progress. I am pleased to report that these discussions have been very positive and productive.

We examined in some detail the many challenges and opportunities in promoting access and use of scientific information and ICT infrastructure for research and education in Senegal and in other developing countries. Although the challenges are enormous, they can all be overcome with a concerted focus and joint action. In particular, there are many examples of proven and successful approaches that can usefully be adopted to solve the recognized problems.

For instance, different developed and developing countries have established a variety of novel and effective mechanisms to reduce barriers and promote the production, access and use of digital scientific information. Models such as open-source software, federated data networks, open access journals, and collaborative Web sites are especially useful for the advancement of public research and education.

Similarly, well-functioning national and regional research and education networks have been implemented on some other continents in recent years. Those strategies and management principles are now effectively tested and thoroughly understood, and can be adopted relatively quickly and broadly in Senegal and Africa. Many of these elements already exist or can be readily acquired, given sufficient financial and political support.

The participants in the workshop developed a set of recommendations and identified numerous projects for collaboration in these major areas that will be followed up in the months and years to come. In particular, the many distinguished members of the Academy of Sciences and Technology of Senegal provide an outstanding core group of experts to help lead these efforts in your country and in the West African region. I am sure that they will be eager to work with your Ministries to make progress on these important problems.

Mr. President of the Republic, we believe that the scientific and technical community in Senegal together with those in the other countries represented in our meetings are ready to overcome the challenges and to seize the many opportunities that exist. By working together with the other key stakeholders in the public and private sector, the research and education goals can be achieved in an efficient and sustainable manner for the benefit of all society.

Thank you.