



PRESS RELEASE

UN USING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO SHARPEN UNDERSTANDING OF GLOBAL CRISES

Briefing highlights United Nations innovation initiative to use real-time data and new technologies for agile global development

4 Nov 2011 - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will be the keynote speaker at a General Assembly briefing about Global Pulse, an innovation initiative in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General focused on harnessing real-time data and new technologies for more agile global development.

The event on 8 November 2011, which is part of the initiative's regular engagement with Member States, will be a high-level briefing to update representatives on Global Pulse's progress to date and its roadmap for the coming year.

Global Pulse aims to serve leaders around the world. It functions as an innovation lab, bringing together expertise from inside and outside the United Nations to learn how the latest advances in data science and technology can yield new insights for decision-makers and improve resilience to the impacts of today's fast-moving socioeconomic crises. The new tools and techniques will complement existing systems already used by the UN for monitoring crises and tracking global development.

The briefing will include updates on research projects exploring the potential of real-time analytics, and on Global Pulse's plans to establish regional "Pulse Labs"—the first two of which are being set up in Uganda and Indonesia.

Global Pulse Director Robert Kirkpatrick says Member State involvement is critical to the success of the initiative. "Much of the innovation required to power Global Pulse is coming from the Global South," says Kirkpatrick. "We need our Member State partners to help us seize this new opportunity."

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has placed great emphasis on the United Nations' ability to harness technology in ways that can help Member States, particularly those in the developing world, to protect vulnerable populations from external shocks.

"We are honoured that Global Pulse is contributing to the Secretary-General's vision for innovation," says Kirkpatrick, pointing out that the initiative was founded in the aftermath of the 2008-09 financial crisis. "Understanding the impact of a crisis while it is still unfolding has tremendous implications for how we at the United Nations work to keep development progress on track and to protect the incredible development gains we've already made."

Kirkpatrick adds: "In the 21st century, the use of real-time information from new digital sources is crucial to the design of effective programme and policy responses. It will become an essential part of our work in the years ahead."

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About Global Pulse

Global Pulse functions as an innovation lab, designed to bring together expertise from inside and outside the United Nations to learn how the latest advances in data science and technology can complement our existing systems and better understand emerging vulnerabilities. The implementation strategy includes working with Member States to establish a network of “Pulse Labs” to explore the potential of new sources of data and scale successful approaches. Indonesia and Uganda are setting up the first two labs in Jakarta and Kampala.

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