

Zuckerberg, Gates make bid for universal Internet access

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Nepalese girls surfing the internet in the village of Nagi, some 200 kms west of Kathmandu using home-made computers assembled in wooden boxes

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and Microsoft billionaire Bill Gates on Saturday threw their weight and resources behind the goal of bringing Internet access to everyone in the world by 2020.

The pledge is part of a United Nations effort to eradicate [extreme poverty](#) by 2030, a goal set on Friday during a special summit at the global body.

The Internet became commonplace in developed countries in the 1990s, but UN officials estimate that half the world does not have reliable access—especially women and girls, whose education is vital to development.

"When people have access to the tools and knowledge of the Internet, they have access to opportunities that make life better for all of us," said a declaration signed by Zuckerberg and Bill and Melinda Gates, who have devoted their wealth to philanthropy.

"The Internet belongs to everyone. It should be

accessible by everyone," the declaration said.

Zuckerberg, writing on Facebook, said that for every 10 people connected to the Internet, one is lifted out of poverty.

"If we connect the more than four billion people not yet online, we have a historic opportunity to lift the entire world in the coming decades," he wrote.

Other signatories included Jimmy Wales, co-founder of free online encyclopedia Wikipedia, and U2 frontman Bono on behalf of his One anti-poverty campaign.

Jamie Drummond, global executive director of One, called on every country to come up with an "urgent plan" to meet the Internet access goals.



Philanthropist's Bill Gates has teamed up with Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg to bring internet to everyone in the world by 2020

The campaigners did not announce funding on their own, but the United Nations has said that meeting the new global goals will cost between \$3.5 and \$5 trillion per year.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on Saturday launched its own roadmap, which put a top priority on improving the health and education for girls.

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Releasing the report, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that more than \$25 billion has been committed so far to meeting the goals, led by \$3.3 billion from the United States and large pledges from Canada, Germany and Sweden.

Melinda Gates, speaking to reporters in advance of the launch, said that the health and education of girls was critical to anti-poverty efforts and that the issue had not been sufficiently emphasized in the UN's previous Millennium Development Goals.



Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg writes that for every 10 people connected to the Internet, one is lifted out of poverty

"When we look at investing our own money or asking governments to invest their money... we have to make sure that those investments make a difference," she said.

For a girl, "for every year she is educated, she increases her income by 20 percent when she goes out to get a job," Gates said.

Gates said that family planning was also "hugely important" to fighting poverty by ensuring that parents can adequately provide for children.

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