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## Transcript

**Event:** “mHealth for Development”

**Speaker:** Simon Rosenberg

**Subject:** The Power of Mobile Technology

**Date:** June 24, 2009

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**Simon Rosenberg:** Thank you all for coming. I'm Simon Rosenberg from NDN. We're one of the sponsors of this event, and proudly so, tonight. And my job here is just to set the table for some of the other wonderful speakers we're going to have. And I want to begin by just thanking all the partners of this effort, and congratulate them on what has been a wonderful day. From CTIA and the Vodafone-UN Foundation Technology Partnership, to my incredibly good friend and inspiration Carolyn Brandon, who's got more energy than just about anybody I've ever met, who's here tonight-- there she is. Thank you all.

For those of you who don't know about NDN, we're a think tank here in Washington. I think the reason Carolyn asked me to speak tonight was something that Alec Ross, who's here, he and I wrote a paper two years ago, calling for universal laptops for all kids here in America. Uruguay is doing it, Libya is doing it, we don't have a fundamental commitment in the US to providing our workers and our kids the kind of tools they're going to need to succeed in the 21st century economy. It's something we feel very passionate about, and I just want to read to you, if I can, what Alec and I wrote, and hopefully it'll be relevant to tonight. So, we wrote that:

A single global communications network, composed of Internet, mobile, SMS, cable and satellite technology, is rapidly tying the world's people together as never before. The core premise of this paper is that the emergence of this network is one of the seminal events of the early 21st century. Increasingly, the world's commerce, finance, communications, media and information are flowing through this network. Half of the world's 6 billion people are now connected to this network, many through powerful and inexpensive mobile phones. Each year more of the world's people become connected to the network, its bandwidth increases, and its use becomes more integrated into all that we do. Connectivity to this network, and the ability to master it once on, has become an essential part of life in the 21st century, and a key to opportunity, success and fulfillment for the people of the world.

We believe it should be a core priority of the United States to ensure that all the world's people have access to this global network and have the tools to use it for their own life success. There is no way any longer to imagine free societies without the freedom of commerce, expression, and community, which this global network can bring. Bringing this network to all, keeping it free and open and helping people master its use must be one of the highest priorities of those in power in the coming years.

And it's something that's been guiding us in our work at NDN, and I think what brought us together tonight. And I just want to congratulate, again, the remarkable report that we all are celebrating tonight. What an inspiration I think it is to all of us here, and hopefully to the policymakers who are being exposed to it. And I'm proud to say that Adam Smith, who was the keynoter at the event this morning, is one of the most influential thinkers on global development policy in Congress, and I know that he read the whole report-- I actually know that for a fact. So we've got one, so far, that we've been able to influence.

Let me make one other point, and then I'll introduce our other guests. I think this really is an exciting time to be alive. Despite all the challenges that we have, and the global recession that we're in, we know that at some point in the next ten years that all the people in the world are going to be connected through these things that we used to call phones.

And if we know that the last great moment of democratization of information that took place, which was the printing press, helped bring in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment in Europe, what is it going to mean for all of us, and the societies that we live in, that a farmer making two dollars a day in India has the same access to information as my kids sitting in Washington with a 24-inch iMac. This is, I think, going to be seen in the future as a tipping point in human history. And I am just excited that I am going to be able to witness this and be a part of this in the coming years. And I think it's going to be something that increasingly, the impact of this-- on governing, on politics, on health, on the economy, on freedom as we've seen in Iran in the last ten days-- that this is fundamentally going to alter our lives in ways that I think we've only just begun to think about. And what an exciting opportunity for us in the coming years, to work together to bring the promise of this mobile age to be. So thank you, again, for letting me address all of you tonight.