Human Development Report 2001: Making New Technologies Work for Human Development

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The Human Development Report 2001, commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is the latest annual installment in a series devoted to shifting the development debate away from a sole concern with economic growth toward a balanced concern for equity, sustainability, and empowerment. Now published in 13 languages, the Report features a wide variety of national development indicators for 162 countries including demographic trends, education levels, gender disparities, and macroeconomic indicators. The Report's Human Development Index now serves as a successful complement to GNP as a measure of overall development.

This year's Report tackles the theme of how to make new technologies--such as information and communications technologies and biotech--work for human development. While the potential rewards are tremendous, access to these technologies is still deeply divided. Some 2 billion people do not even have access to the most basic medicines such as penicillin, and four-fifths of all Internet users are found in the world's richest countries. The Report examines some of today's controversial policy issues: the risks and benefits of genetically-modified "frankenfoods," "brain drain" of highly-educated workers from developing countries, patents and other intellectual property issues and much more. And it provides recommendations for national technology policy, international initiatives and fairer global rules that will make the network age an age of opportunity for all.

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