



United Nations Development Programme

REMARKS BY Mr. Shoji Nishimoto, Assistant Administrator and Director, UNDP
PrepCom 1 of the Tunis Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society
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Task Force on Financial Mechanisms

Mr. President,

Mr. Utsumi,

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to offer a few remarks and also to provide a brief report on the work associated with the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms that UNDP has been asked to facilitate in cooperation with other partners at the request of the Secretary General.

During the Geneva Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society there was widespread recognition of the importance of *access to* and *effective use* of information and communication technologies in contributing to economic prosperity and social development of countries, fostering democracy and inclusion, and cultural and media diversity amongst others.

There was also recognition of the roles and contributions of the different stakeholders, as well as partnerships and cooperation between them for securing *financing and mobilization of resources* to achieve the objectives outlined in the Digital Solidarity Agenda as presented at WSIS.

As we are aware, the plan of action advocated for:

- (i) Developing countries to increase their efforts to attract major private national and foreign investments for ICTs through the creation of a transparent, stable and predictable enabling investment environment;
- (ii) Developed countries and international financial organizations to be responsive to the strategies and priorities of ICTs for development, mainstream ICTs in their work programmes, and assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition to prepare and implement their national e-strategies. Based on the priorities of national development plans and implementation of the above commitments, developed countries were also expected to increase their efforts to provide more financial resources to developing countries in harnessing ICTs for development.
- (iii) The private sector was also expected to contribute to the implementation of this Digital Solidarity Agenda;

- (iv) The promotion within development cooperation, technical and financial assistance directed towards national and regional capacity building, of technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, cooperation in R&D programmes and exchange of know-how
- (v) Countries should consider establishing national mechanisms to achieve universal access in both underserved rural and urban areas, in order to bridge the digital divide.

This framework – with its focus on the *combination* of financing modalities with key roles for domestic resource mobilization, international and national private sector investment, development cooperation as well as an exploration of *innovative partnerships and financing models* - underlies the work of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms UNDP has been asked to facilitate in cooperation with a variety of partners in the follow-up to WSIS-Geneva.

The Digital Solidarity Fund that was launched at Geneva at the time of WSIS will be explored within the context of innovative mechanisms and public private partnerships.

I am keenly aware that the issue of financing of ICTD activities is an important issue and that many of you are anxious to hear what is taking place, and how the voices of different

stakeholders can be heard and be fed into the work of the Task Force.

Prior to the formal launching of the Task Force – which we expect will be in place by late July – we have been reaching out to experts and key partners to undertake the process of mapping and information gathering, and identification of areas for further consultation and study. It has been strongly felt that providing a good *diagnostic* of the situation – which was not possible to have in place in time for WSIS Geneva – is key for discussions on these issues to move forward.

Very shortly – also beginning in mid July – a number of consultations will be initiated to secure a variety of stakeholder, regional and organizational inputs for the work of the task force. Virtual consultations are expected to be launched on the WSIS-online platform very soon.

As regards the composition of the task force, it is expected to draw on participants from developing as well as developed countries, and to be oriented to experts who, between them would have the skills on ICT for development, ICTD financing modalities, IT policy issues and be cognizant of the WSIS inter-governmental issues and processes. This will provide

guidance on the report that will be useful for your deliberations in the framework of the WSIS Prepcom process, as well as for decision-makers and stakeholders concerned with ICTD at the national and development cooperation levels.

We expect that a draft report of the Task Force will be completed in November and be finalized by end December. This will provide sufficient time for the WSIS process to take up the report at its up-coming Prepcom in February 2005.

Finally while this Task Force was borne out of a difficult situation and the issues are indeed complicated and challenging, we believe that we have an opportunity before us.

An opportunity to review and assess what is working and what is not, as well as to explore together not only how we can make existing mechanisms work better but also to look at innovative possibilities in the *creative middle* that can help to stimulate and catalyze action by both public, private sector and civil society actors to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, at the sub-national, national, regional and global levels.

I would like to assure you that the concerns of developing countries have been registered at the highest levels of the UN system. The objective of this Task Force is not to come up with a negotiated text – which is the task of the WSIS process. The Task Force will provide you with the inputs that you need for such deliberations, as well as recommendations that we hope will move the process forward and be sustained.

We look forward to working together with colleagues and stakeholders on this.

Thank you Mr. President.