

## WSIS Closing Plenary

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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

As we enter the final stage of this first phase of the WSIS, it seems strange that an event that has taken five years to prepare can be over so quickly! But, as Winston Churchill said, "This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning".

This first phase of the WSIS has been an *agenda-shaping event*. We have plotted a course that will take us to Tunis, in 2005, and to the building of a global Information Society, by 2015 at the latest.

We have agreed a common set of policy principles; something that seemed in doubt as recently as Tuesday of this week. Furthermore, we have agreed to a set of actions that will be the first test of the multi-stakeholder partnerships we have established.

The WSIS is a process, not a product.

When we began to prepare this event, we expected that some five to seven thousand people might participate. Never, in our wildest dreams, did we imagine that more than 20'000 people would be here. That is a tribute to the importance of what we have agreed here today.

In the preparatory phase of the Summit, ITU was given the mandate to play the leading managerial role. My role now, at the closing of this event, is to thank all those who have contributed.

First and foremost, I would like to thank our hosts, the Swiss Confederation and the Canton of Geneva, for their excellent hospitality and their generous contribution to make this event a reality. Although there are as many as 5'000 support staff helping to organize this event, it would not be unkind if I pick out Secretary of State, Mr. Mark Furrer and Ambassador Daniel Stauffacher, and the rest of their team, for special thanks.

Secondly, I would like to thank those many countries and organisations that have donated staff and resources, as well as financial contributions, over the past three years, especially those that took the risk in making the first contributions, before it was certain that the event would take place. I would particularly like to thank the following for their financial contributions to the Trust Fund: ITU, Japan, Switzerland, Canada, the Canton of Geneva,

the European Commission, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Spain, NTT DoCoMo, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Burkina Faso, WMO, UPU, Rwanda, Slovenia, Malta, the UNFCU, the ATU and the promised contribution from Gabon.

In addition, the governments of Switzerland, Japan, Canada, Korea, Spain and Romania, as well as KDDI, have generously provided staff members, while the Canton of Geneva has financed the Civil Society secretariat. Furthermore, I would like to thank those UN agencies which have contributed staff, including ITU, UNESCO, UNITAR and UNDP, as well as KDDI. I would like to thank also ITU, UNESCO, ILO and UNOG for hosting PrepCom meetings.

Third, I would like to thank all who contributed to the PrepCom process. Since July 2002, we have spent countless hours negotiating texts. Through some 38 long days and nights of negotiation, the tireless optimism of our President, Adama Samassekou, has kept us going. But I would also like to thank especially Ambassador Numminen of Finland and Lyndall Shope-Mafole of South Africa who moved the process along at key moments, as well as Marc Furrer who pulled it all together at the end.

Fourth, and in addition to the PrepCom process, the organization of regional meetings played an important role in the early stages of developing the documents, and sharing the policy vision. I would like to thank those countries and cities that hosted the regional and sub-regional meetings.

But the PrepCom process and regional meetings would have been empty were it not for the thousands of delegates—from governments, the private sector and civil society—who have filled out the declaration and plan of action with purpose and hope. Behind the 22 pages of text we have approved today are more than 7'000 pages of contributions and comments submitted at various stages of the PrepCom process.

Labouring under this mountain of paper has been the Executive Secretariat of the WSIS, under the able direction of the Executive Director, Pierre Gagné. The Executive Secretariat began as a diverse collection of individuals, but it has finished this first phase as a team. We have all learned to rely upon each other, because without teamwork, nothing is possible. I would like to thank Charles Geiger, Alain Clerc, Louise Lassonde among other members of the Executive Secretariat.

As well as the Executive Secretariat, the membership and staff of ITU have played a crucial role, in hosting the PrepCom meetings, in hosting the Executive Secretariat, in providing staff and resources, and in providing an initial loan. Thank you Special Ambassador Guy-Olivier Segond. I would like to pay a personal tribute to Arthur Levin, who has been my right-hand man throughout the process as well as to Arnaud Guillot, the ITU Legal Officer for his contributions and advice. I would especially like to thank the Content team, led by Tim Kelly.

During the WSIS itself, more than 300 ITU staff members have been engaged in different tasks, alongside our Swiss hosts. I would particularly like to thank the registration team, the media staff, security staff, protocol officers, logistics experts, the teams of translators and interpreters, and others who have worked behind the scenes to make this event run smoothly. In addition, I would like to thank the other ITU elected officials for their support at all stages of the process.

Finally, my thanks are due to you, the Heads of State, Ministers, Senior Officials, business people, civil society representatives and other delegates who have made this event so memorable.

Congratulations to all concerned!

As I said in my opening speech, when designing the structure of this Summit, I felt it was important to innovate, and the biggest innovation is still to come. This is the first World Summit to be held in two phases, with the Tunis phase to be held from 16-18 November 2005.

As we look ahead, the wisdom of that decision is now becoming clear. We have unfinished business from the declaration and action plan, but we also have a clear timetable in which to complete it. For our part, ITU is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities in the implementation of this action plan and to continuing to play the major role in the Tunis phase.

Let us work and move forward together towards Tunis.