

# **Egypt**

Address of H.E. Mr.

**Mohamed Hosny Mubarak**

President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

At

**The World Summit on the Information Society**

Geneva, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003

**Mr. President**  
**Excellencies Heads of State and Government**  
**Distinguished Secretary-General of the United Nations**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen**

*I would like to start by expressing our appreciation to the United Nations, the International Telecommunication Union, and to the Swiss and Tunisian governments for their efforts that lead to convening this important Summit in both its phases, in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005. This Summit emphasizes the pivotal role which the United Nations should play, with all its organs and specialized agencies, in maintaining peace and security as well as promoting sustainable development.*

*It is evident that convening our Summit today reflects the increasing will of the international community to formulate a clearer and more stable collective vision to make maximum use of the information and communication revolution, and to redirect such revolution towards materializing the objectives of all societies .. industrial and developing .. rich and poor .. large and small, as reflected in the developmental goals approved by the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000 and solidified in the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.*

*Those Summits emphasized the importance of harnessing ICT for the achievement of the developmental goals which our peoples aspire to achieve in their endeavors for better standards of life. This in itself embodies the solid pillars of our formidable efforts to bridge the digital divide towards building the modern information society.*

*However, the effects of ICT revolution should not be limited exclusively to achieving economic and developmental gains. It should be extended to strengthening political, social and cultural links among nations .. to bringing about world peace based on justice, equality, and respect of international legitimacy .. to supporting national efforts towards more freedom, democracy, and respect of human rights. All this should be achieved within a framework that respects national identity and maintains the diversification of particularities, religions, and cultures as key components for cooperation and integration among civilizations.*

*To deepen the concept of universality in information society, all peoples should have a chance to effectively take part in developing, manufacturing, and utilizing ICT which should become an effective instrument in exercising the right to development in its broader sense, in a manner that entrenches the principles of equality, justice, and active community participation.*

*This requires support, particularly to developing countries, through promoting their scientific and research capabilities, and in transferring needed technology and know-how.*

**Mr. President;**

*Egypt has always played a major role in building regional support to the international efforts to establish the modern information society. We took the lead in proposing a common Arab strategy which reflects our vision of the Arab Information Society, and which was endorsed by the Arab Summit in Amman in 2001. Egypt has taken similar steps on the African level, which contributed to directing the work of the E-Africa Commission, established within the context of NEPAD and under the auspices of the African Union, towards achieving the same objective.*

*These efforts were crowned with our full-fledged involvement in regional efforts within the preparatory process for this Summit through hosting the high-level Pan-Arab Regional Conference on WSIS last June, to which our African brothers were also invited.*

*The Pan-Arab Conference has signaled an unprecedented interest in laying down the solid foundation for the contemporary information society, and in making the maximum use of the ICT revolution to bridge the digital divide. The main document adopted at that conference reflected our aspiration that this WSIS will give a strong push to our national and regional efforts in several areas, the most important of which are:*

**First:** *Deploying the necessary infrastructure, along with creating the mechanisms required to increase the penetration of communication and internet services, using newly-developed business models to reach everyone, everywhere, and at affordable cost.*

**Second:** *Developing our human resources through exploiting the high capabilities of ICT in education and training.*

**Third:** *Promoting the creation of electronic content and applications to serve economic and social development while encouraging innovation, and maximizing the role of the private sector in this regard.*

**Fourth:** *Encouraging governments to adopt necessary policies and legislations that enable the growth and flourishing of the information society, and foster partnerships among national and multinational businesses.*

**Fifth:** *Introducing innovative financing mechanisms that respond to developing countries' needs to bridge the digital divide including the adoption of debt reemployment policies in funding developmental projects.*

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**I**n our persistent quest for entrenching the fundamentals of the contemporary Egyptian society, we launched an array of national initiatives to transform the Egyptian society into a knowledge-based society. Our leading initiatives include the use of ICT in upgrading education standards, improving health services, speeding our efforts towards E-government, and facilitating E-business transactions. Our efforts have been accelerated by the establishment of an evolving ICT industry as a catalyst in both the Arab and African regions.

**F**or this purpose, Egypt has established the "smart village": a state-of-the-art high-tech business park that invites investors to benefit from an excellent support environment and special incentives in order to address a strong emerging local and regional market. Furthermore, Egypt has established a successful partnership among the government, the private sector, and the civil society in implementing a number of pioneer initiatives aiming at providing free internet, availing a computer for every home at affordable prices, and establishing IT clubs nationwide. Our main objective behind all that remains to expand the base of popular benefit from ICT in all sectors.

**A**ll the above-mentioned objectives would not have come true without our vanguard efforts in the development of human resources, and in reinforcing awareness of the importance of ICT in modern societies. Egypt has now reached a standard that would qualify it to become a center of excellence in this field.

**H**ence, I call for the establishment of an equitable partnership between developing and developed nations, to utilize available resources and share success stories. I am convinced that the financial support through the newly-ushered mechanisms will ensure finding innovative ways to bridge the digital divide and construct the global information society that we look for.

**I**t is also a source of pleasure to address to all of you an open invitation to attend AFRICA TELECOM exhibition and forum, to be held in Cairo in May 2004, in collaboration between the Government of Egypt and the International Telecommunication Union, and to have a first-hand look at our successful models in ICT, which Egypt, our African continent, and our Arab region are proud of. You will acquaint yourselves with the Egyptian Information Society Initiative and its various pivots, providing worthwhile lessons that we put at the disposal of other developing countries.

**T**here is no doubt that assembling again in Egypt in May next year will be an additional positive step in the journey that we started here in Geneva, and I am confident that we will add in Cairo another contribution that would help in ensuring success to the upcoming phase of the WSIS in Tunis, towards achieving our common goals for the good of humanity.

Thank you.