Distinguished delegates, excellences, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

It is my pleasure to be here with you today to look into our activities in ten years after the first World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003.

Lithuania was present in WSIS in 2003 and in 2005 and now we can assess what has changed since then. When we think about ten years – what comes to our minds? Is it a short or a long period? It depends. In Lithuania we have seen many changes through these years.

We managed to move forward significantly since 2004, when we became a member of the European Union. The year of the first WSIS phase, 2003, we started with complete liberalization of our telecommunications market. In the national regulatory authority which I head today, we worked hard to create a regulatory environment that would foster investments in communications networks, growth and connectivity through competition.

The Government put in place the relevant strategies for information society and broadband network development. With the aim to reduce the divide between urban and rural areas, construction of a broadband infrastructure network RAIN in rural areas of Lithuania which were not served was successfully carried out.

Today in Lithuania we are proud of the progress achieved in developing the broadband network. More than one third of users that are connected to the internet are connected by the fibre-optic lines. Over 30 per cent of households with internet connection enjoy speeds of 30 Mb/s or higher. According to „FTTH Council Europe“, Lithuania (with 33,9 per cent) is the top country in Europe and No. 7 worldwide in fibre broadband penetration.

Much still remains to be done. The Lithuanian Digital agenda for 2014-2020, as priority issues, besides ICT infrastructure development, envisages improvement of capacities and motivation of the citizens to use ICT, as well development of electronic contents and its services.

In Lithuania, we pay a lot of attention not only to modern network development, but also to the consumer trust and security in using ICTs. These issues are approached on the highest (political, governmental) level in our country. A national CERT operates from 2008 and the Programme for the Development of Electronic Information Security is in place since 2011.

However, we have always been aware that in the current interconnected world it is only by means of concerted efforts and international cooperation that we can successfully address the challenges and can foster safe and secure environment for using ICTs.. Therefore cooperation among governments, the civil society, businesses, all interested stakeholders on national and international level has been seen as an important factor. This is witnessed by Vilnius Declaration, adopted by the first World Information Technology Forum (WITFOR) organised in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2003 in preparation of WSIS.

To foster an international cooperation process initiated by WSIS, in 2010 Lithuania hosted the Internet Governance Forum in Vilnius. IGF, being an outcome of WSIS process, is important in maintaining a dialogue between the stakeholders and contributing to an inclusive Information Society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Looking back at the ten years post WSIS, we acknowledge with respect the work done by WSIS action lines facilitators, United Nations Agencies.

Today we are meeting new challenges of the interconnected world. As a national regulator, we are faced with the issues of net neutrality. Degradation of services, slowing down is an issue when we speak about an open network. Our main challenge is to find the right balance between the two goals. On the one hand, we need to ensure consumer protection, their freedom of choice. At the same time, it is important and necessary to promote operators’ investments into network development and upgrade.

Despite the challenges, we should seek a world that is not divided, but connected, open and free, based on the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and multistakeholder participation. We are ready to work together in line with our commitments made in WSIS process so that this process can further bring benefits to all our nations.

Thank you for your attention.