world summit
on the information society
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Turkey

THE CONTRIBUTION OF TURKEY FOR PREPCOM-2

Introduction

In today's global information society that enlarges continuously, Turkey considers the World Summit on the Information Society as an important opportunity per se. It is believed that while preparing the Declaration of Principles and Action Plan it will be more appropriate to emphasize and focus on the priorities of developing and least developed countries to take into account the fact that these countries have more various needs and problems than developed countries in transition to global information society.

To achieve the goal of transforming into an information society thoroughly, the opportunity of access and use of ICTs should be provided to all. Hence, having equal access to ICTs at an affordable and disbursable price by all users and covering the rural and underdeveloped areas in terms of ICT opportunities, have great importance.

In this context, principles and actions to be taken both at national and global level could be as follows.

I- What Turkey and the Developing Countries should expect from International Organizations?

1) It should be the primary aim of the global information society to meet the needs of the developing countries. In this context, a "global fund" should be set up by relatively rich countries in order to finance communication services and equipments that are

related to the social development projects in developing and least developed countries. Management of this fund could be performed by an international organization such as UN or one of its specialized agencies. In this way, the number of ICT users could be increased, the digital gap among communities could be narrowed and widespread use of ICTs all over the world can be ensured.

2) International organizations such as UN and OECD should encourage and direct developing countries in order to set up new regional networks and collaborations with their neighbour countries.

3) While dealing with intellectual property, historical heritage, socio-cultural and intellectual values should not be ignored. In other words, new technologies and innovations which are part of common cultural heritage of mankind should be considered as public property. There is no doubt that, the rights of people, who create and develop products, should be protected. However, this protection should support their motivation and compensate their endured costs but not cause a monopolistic environment. Thus, a balance between public interest vs. individual interest and developed countries vs. developing and least developed countries would be formed.

4) The intellectual property rights should be subject to the regulations of WIPO rather than IMF, WB and WTO.

5) The protection period of products and works of art which are assessed within the scope of intellectual property should be shortened by taking into consideration the rapid technological and economic developments.

6) Due to high costs of copyright and patents, developing and least developed countries are not able to have some specific ICTs. By considering this point, deterrent mechanisms and rules should be set up in order to change the policies of multinational corporations on copyright and patent that are to be applied to the developing and least developed countries.

7) Establishing an international classification standard for obtaining statistical data on ICT products will provide accurate information about trading of these products. While making such a classification it will be appropriate to use Harmonized System that is the basis of the classification of goods in the world trade.

8) Customs duties should be minimized for ICT services and products.

II- **What Turkey and the Developing Countries should expect from the Developed Countries?**

1) In order to share experiences and information among the regulatory bodies and operators of developed countries with developing and least developed countries, joint studies including training programmes should be encouraged and directed.

2) In order to create a general understanding and awareness of Information Society, collaboration among universities should be encouraged and distance-learning programs should be developed and supported.

3) Developed countries should supply their current technologies to the developing and least developed countries at reasonable prices in order to help them to access global information networks.

4) Accessibility to knowledge is one of the prerequisites for developing countries in order to bridge the digital divide. For this purpose, developed countries should use open source-code software.

5) Partnerships, bilateral and multilateral cooperation should be encouraged between developed and developing countries in the fields of information technologies due to the limited financial sources of developing and least developed countries. In particular, joint studies should be carried out on telecommunication technologies. New projects should be encouraged and supported.

6) Widespread use of new technologies in the field of education should be continuously provided through developing cooperation between educational institutions from different countries.

7) In order to bridge the digital gap, some pilot projects should be prepared and implemented in developing and least developed countries. Also, best practices should be made public.

8) While developing ICTs, the cultural and linguistic diversities should be taken into consideration.

9) Substantial economic resources are needed for new infrastructure investments. For that reason, R&D studies in the developing and least developed countries should aim maximum utilization of new technologies over current infrastructure. These studies should be financed from the proposed "global fund".

10) The active participation of developing and least developed countries in the decision making process should be guaranteed.

11) ICT products should be developed as simple and understandable, so that less-educated people can also use them easily. High rates of ICT usage would be possible if this approach is accepted by all developed and developing countries.

III-   What Turkey and the Developing Countries should do?

1. Domestic firms in Turkey and other developing countries that develop and produce information technologies should be supported in order to promote these countries from being sole users to producers. The usage of ICT will be increased in all segments of the society by the technologies developed with local and native content.

2. Freedom of access to information is the basis of transformation to the information society. For that reason, the right to access information should be guaranteed at constitutional level, and accepted as a requirement of human rights, rule of law, democracy, freedom of thought and expression.

3. The establishment of information infrastructure over the technologies that are different from traditional ones and have various social and economic results requires some amendments in the laws and regulations through the contributions of related parties. Innovative approaches should also be adopted not only for the laws and regulations but also for their implementation. For example, the establishment of specialized courts for communication issues should be encouraged.

4. In order to protect youth and the children from unlawful and harmful content, the safety of Internet should be provided and relevant regulations should be made.

5. In the information society the main capital will be the accumulated information. Since the development of the use of the ICTs within the society mostly dependent on the safety and reliability of the communication networks, and in order to reach the aim of

sharing of information without border, appropriate measures should be taken in the process of production, storage, transmission and processing of personal data in line with the privacy principle.

6. In order to provide wider usage and easy access to ICTs, free communication and technology centers should be set up. Existing public institutions such as municipalities, schools and community centers should be utilized as such centers.

7. A special importance and support should be given to the people, who have special needs and who live in inconvenient conditions, in order to enable them to utilize the opportunities of ICT. Government programs should take this issue into account and should provide financial resources for these programs.

8. Governments should cooperate with private sector and NGOs in order to initiate and implement policies aimed at narrowing Digital Divide and preventing increased inequalities.

9. Provision of universal access to ICTs should be accepted as "public service" in every country. Each individual's access to information and basic communication services should be guaranteed and should be provided free of charge or at a reasonable price as well. Youth is the creator and main user of the ICT. Therefore, communication, technology and media companies, public institutions, NGOs and universities should cooperate and use different ways and means (TV, radio, open seminars etc) for encouraging ICT applications to cover all segments of the society.

10. All documents, old and new, have to be transferred to digital media for providing long-term access and preserving cultural, social and technological heritage.

11. Different mechanisms should be developed for education and training of the whole society (students, workers, unemployed, people with disabilities, etc.) for using ICTs actively.

12. An awareness of the cost for the lack of information society technologies should be created and emphasized.

13. Access to information has a vital importance in ensuring the equal participation of people of disabilities and old people to social life in information age. So, while providing some opportunities to women and youth, it is vital to take into account the

needs of people of disabilities and old people and make the necessary legal regulations to give them the opportunity of equal access to communication services.

14. Research and development centers should be established to design the technologies in a manner that people of disabilities can easily benefit from them at national and global level.

15. For achieving the goal of transformation to information society, public awareness has to be developed, targets have to be determined and identified clearly, and administrators who have the power to realize these goals have to be made more conscious about information society.

16. Different incentive programmes have to be implemented for developing domestic ICT production. Also, research and development activities have to be supported politically and economically. In order to facilitate ICT trade, customs and duties over the ICT equipments and services has to be reduced.

17. The necessary legal regulations about e-signature, data protection, consumer security, user privacy and information network security have to be done promptly to develop e-commerce.