ZAMBIA

ZAMBIAN CONTRIBUTION AND COMMENTS TO THE SECOND PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY, 17TH – 28TH FEBRUARY 2003 IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Foreword

The Zambian Government wishes to congratulate and support the United Nations and its agency the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in its effort to bring about the World Summit on the Information Society to discuss modalities of providing means to the world populace access to tools of bridging the Digital Divide between the rich and the poor as well as ushering the developing and least developed countries into an information age.

In this regard, the Zambian Government recognizes the importance of the world summit discussing this important subject. Zambia like any other developing and least developed countries is lagging behind in the provision of information and communication services due to insufficient financial and human resources. Africa needs all forms of support from developed countries in its quest to bridge the digital divide between Africa and the rest of the world, and speed up entry into the information.

Zambia hopes that the Summit will be able to find the lasting solution to the problem that has eluded the developing and least developed countries for so many decades now.

Principles guiding the preparations for the Summit

As discussed and agreed at the First Preparatory Committee (PrepCom 1) meeting, Zambia fully endorses the broad principles that would guide the preparatory work of the Summit. In particular, Zambia wishes to urge the Preparatory Committee and the Summit to emphasize on the following:
Aim at extending the benefits of the information society to all and should be development-oriented, overcoming the digital divide.

The importance of utilization of ICTs for the benefits of the disadvantaged communities.

ICTs are a tool for achieving economic and social goals such as those stated in the UN Millennium Declaration, and not an end in themselves.

Consideration in a balanced manner, infrastructure and content development.

**Proposed Themes**

With reference to the African Regional Conference held in Mali and the First Preparatory Committee Meeting held in Geneva, Zambia abides by the resolutions of these two events and supports the proposed themes. However, Zambia wishes to comment as follows:

- **Infrastructure: financing, deployment and sustainability:**

  Zambia has a Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) and three Mobile telephone networks. PSTN is a very old infrastructure which is mostly analogue and as a result cannot meet the demand of modern technologies. It is expected that the Summit will give priority attention in assisting our poorer countries in the development of Information and Communication Infrastructure, Policy development, regulatory and capacity building.

- **Foreign Direct Investment:**

  The Government of the republic of Zambia in its quest to providing its population with access to information and communication services, in 1994, passed an Act of parliament, which among other things provided for the liberalization of the telecommunication industry to facilitate injection of both local and foreign investment. Since then, we have had investment in cellular mobile and Internet services. This investment is inadequate considering that the services do not cover the entire country, especially the marginalized rural areas, the summit should come up with solutions on how to attract foreign direct investors in Zambia and other developing countries.

  It is hoped that the World Summit will stimulate interest to the international financiers to appreciate that investment in developing and least developed countries are viable and bankable.

- **Other areas of concern**
Considering that Information and Communication Technologies has become the mainstay of social and economic development of any given country, it is cardinal that Education, human resources development and training is accessed by the majority of our poor communities. Access to information and communication technologies needs to be harnessed and developed to be part of strategic plans for sustainable economic growth to benefit all.

For ICT to have an impact in the lives of the poor majority, there is need to ensure that when developing policies and regulatory framework that identify theirs needs are taken into account

**NEPAD**

We request this summit to fully support the African Information Society Initiative (AISI), the recommendations of the African Development Forum (ADF '99) and the ICT component of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In this regard, the ICT programme of NEPAD should federate all the ICT initiatives of the continent and mobilize resources for funding of the major African projects.