

# Visions

## for a better world



*A compendium  
of extracts from  
statements of  
**Heads of  
State and  
Government**  
at the World  
Summit on  
the Information  
Society, Geneva,  
December 2003*

Volume 1



Committed to connecting the world

# ITU vision statement

PhotoDisc

## ITU: Committed to connecting the world

**By connecting the world and fulfilling everyone's fundamental right to communicate, we strive to make the world a better and safer place.**

Among technological developments, national and international policies, and the many diverse interests of commercial businesses, there needs to be an organization that safeguards everyone's fundamental right to communicate.

The ITU is that organization. With 191 Member States and over 700 Sector Members and Associates, ITU puts great emphasis on its accountability and transparency. Communication is not only the subject of our efforts, it is, increasingly, the means by which we achieve our goals. Working with partners and members from around the world, what we do affects everyone on the planet – our work is truly global. And we believe that communicating openly and honestly is the only way to get the job done.

It is our task to ensure that people around the world can communicate with each other in an efficient, safe, easy and affordable manner. It is our responsibility to be proactive about what the world might need in the future, not just what it needs right now. We will do our utmost to get everyone to work together – government and industry alike – to come up with solutions that work: for sharing knowledge, developing tools, and building and safeguarding networks.

There are serious challenges facing us. The growing role for information and communication technologies (ICT) holds great promise, but it can be abused. Breakthroughs in communications bring not only benefits, but also new dangers. Global cooperative agreements have never been more necessary, yet at the same time, the sheer speed of development makes this all the more difficult. This means we must not only work hard, we must work smart: creating effective partnerships, making efficient teamwork central, and finding ways to do more with less. When doing things better proves not enough, we'll show the courage to do things differently.

In the coming years, ITU must take the lead in many areas: ensuring **security in cyberspace**, the efficient use of **radio-frequency spectrum** and satellite orbits, promoting appropriate strategies and policies, encouraging infrastructure development to **bridge the digital divide**, and the use of ICT to mitigate **climate change**. We are the first and last stop for establishing **workable standards** to provide global telecommunications for everyone, including the **disabled** and **disadvantaged**. To realize all this, we know that it is not enough to be only communication specialists; we also have to be specialized in communicating.

# Visions for a better world

*A compendium of extracts from statements of **Heads of State and Government** at the World Summit on the Information Society, Geneva, 10-12 December 2003*

*Prepared from the Summit's General Debate,  
Plenary Sessions 1, 2, 3 and 4.*



**world summit  
on the information society**  
Geneva 2003 - Tunis 2005



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## **Note from the Publisher**

This publication provides extracts from statements by Heads of State and Government at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 10-12 December 2003. It is intended as a historical resource and as a vehicle to carry the messages of world leaders to a wider public.

The extracts are taken from texts submitted to the WSIS Executive Secretariat or from audio recordings made at the event. For reasons of space and equal treatment, all extracts have been kept to two pages for each leader. The full texts of the statements and archived audio recordings are available on the official website of WSIS at [www.itu.int/wsis](http://www.itu.int/wsis)

Some countries have changed their names since the time of the first phase of WSIS, but the old names are given here to reflect the situation in 2003. Some Heads of State and Government are no longer in office, but their titles have been kept in this publication to reflect the situation in 2003.

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# Foreword

Dr Hamadoun I. Touré

Secretary-General  
International Telecommunication Union

» I am honoured to introduce this first volume of a compendium presenting the views of Heads of State and Government at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). It contains extracts from their statements at the event, held in Geneva in December 2003.

Today, information and communication technologies (ICT) have become a vital source of social development and economic growth. At ITU, we are committed to helping the evolution of the telecommunication and information networks that are necessary to connect the world. We are committed to bringing about a future in which everyone, everywhere, can participate in the global information society. That is why we took the leading role in organizing WSIS, with the second phase held in Tunis in November 2005.

At the Summit's first phase, world leaders issued a *Declaration of Principles* for building the information society, along with a Plan of Action. They agreed targets that include connecting, by 2015, all villages around the world, and bringing ICT to all universities, schools, research centres, public libraries and other facilities, as well as clinics and hospitals. Local and central government departments should also be connected and accessible online. World leaders recognized the role of ICT in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which range from halving extreme poverty to putting all children into primary school, and from improving health care to ensuring environmental sustainability – all by 2015.





We have made tremendous progress in connecting the world since 2003. According to the ITU WSIS Stocktaking 2008 Report, released in May, more than 3800 activities are being undertaken by governments, businesses, civil society, international organizations and other stakeholders to provide more people with access to ICT. However, as the 2015 target date draws ever closer, much remains to be done.

At ITU, our immediate strategy has been to concentrate on a regional approach, starting with Africa and moving on to other regions. It was my great pleasure to join leaders of government, business and international and regional organizations at the *Connect Africa* Summit, in Kigali, Rwanda, in October 2007. The event was held under the patronage of President of Rwanda Paul Kagame, to whom I extend my deepest gratitude. Significant steps were taken at the summit, including a commitment to develop broadband infrastructure to interconnect all African capitals and major cities, and improve links with the rest of the world, by 2012. In addition, it was announced that investments worth some USD 55 billion are foreseen for boosting ICT infrastructure in Africa over the next few years, largely from the private sector. This is very encouraging news.

Summits for other world regions will follow. ITU plans to use them to add momentum to the mobilization of human, financial and technical resources that are required to bridge major gaps in ICT infrastructure. Developing countries need modern, reliable broadband infrastructure in order to create jobs for economic growth. The end result will be a strengthening of their competitive position in the global economy.

ITU is not only the world's oldest global agency concerned with ICT, the Union also provides the premier platform where governments and the private sector can find ways to make progress for the benefit of all. Civil society groups also provide their valuable input, and I hope that a growing number will become associated with our mission. World leaders have recognized its importance, and I commend this compendium as a key historical resource to help remind us of their vision as we seek to connect the world. ■



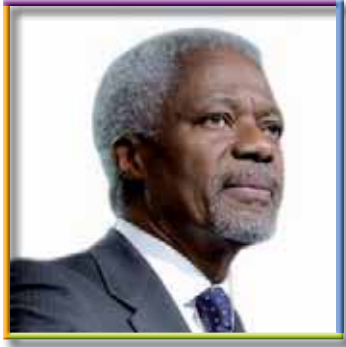


# world summit on the information society

Geneva 2003 - Tunis 2005



*Heads of State and Government with the Secretary-General  
of the United Nations, Kofi A. Annan, and the Secretary-General  
of the International Telecommunication Union, Yoshio Utsumi,  
at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society,  
Geneva, December 2003*



## *Address by*

*Kofi A. Annan*

*Secretary-General\* of the United Nations*



We are going through a historic transformation in the way we live, learn, work, communicate and do business. We must not do so passively, but as makers of our own destiny. Technology has produced the information age. Now it is up to all of us to build an information society.

This Summit is unique. Where most global conferences focus on global threats, this one will consider how best to use a new global asset. We are all familiar with the extraordinary power of information and communication technologies.

From trade to telemedicine, from education to environmental protection, we have in our hands, on our desktops and in the skies above, the ability to improve standards of living for millions upon millions of people.

We have tools that can propel us towards the Millennium Development Goals; instruments with which to advance the cause of freedom and democracy; vehicles with which to propagate knowledge and mutual understanding.

We have all of this potential. The challenge before this Summit is what to do with it. The so-called digital divide is actually several gaps in one. There is a technological divide – great gaps in infrastructure. There is a content divide. A lot of web-based information is simply not relevant to the real needs of people. And nearly 70 per cent of the world's websites are in English, at times crowding out local voices and views.

There is a gender divide, with women and girls enjoying less access to information technology than men and boys. This can be true of rich and poor countries alike: some developing countries are among those offering the most digital opportunities for women, while some developed countries have done considerably less well.

There is a commercial divide. E-commerce is linking some countries and companies ever more closely together. But others run the risk of further marginalization. Some experts describe the digital divide as one of the biggest non-tariff barriers to world trade.

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\* Mr Annan was Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1997 to 2006.





And there are obvious social, economic and other disparities and obstacles that affect a country's ability to take advantage of digital opportunities.


We cannot assume that such gaps will disappear on their own, over time, as the diffusion of technology naturally spreads its wealth. An open, inclusive information society that benefits all people will not emerge without sustained commitment and investment. We look to you, the leaders assembled here, to produce those acts of political will.

We also look to the business community, which I am glad to say is represented here in impressive numbers. The future of the information technology industry lies not so much in the developed world, where markets are saturated, as in reaching the billions of people in the developing world who remain untouched by the information revolution. E-health, e-education and other applications can offer the new dynamic of growth for which the industry has been looking.

We look to civil society groups, in particular, for their rich knowledge of hopes and concerns at the local level, among communities that are eager to join in the global exchange of ideas and information, but may also feel their identities are threatened by a pre-packaged global culture.

And we look to media organizations, which are both creators of content and essential watchdogs. Indeed, the right to freedom of opinion and expression is fundamental to development, democracy and peace, and must remain a touchstone for our work ahead.

Information and communication technologies are not a panacea or magic formula. But they can improve the lives of everyone on this planet. Yet even as we talk about the power of technology, let us remember who is in charge. While technology shapes the future, it is people who shape technology, and decide what it can and should be used for.

So let us embrace these new technologies. But let us recognize that we are embarked on an endeavour that transcends technology. Building an open, empowering information society is a social, economic and ultimately political challenge. 



## Address by

*Yoshio Utsumi*

*Secretary-General\* of the International Telecommunication Union and Secretary-General of the World Summit on the Information Society*



Since it was established in 1865, ITU's mandate has been constantly evolving – from the facilitation of cross-border telecommunications to today's very important mandate of spearheading policies and technologies that extend the benefits of communication to all citizens, around the globe.

When I took over as Secretary-General of ITU in 1999, I had one ambition: to oversee the expansion of telecommunication services in every corner of the world. It gives me great satisfaction to tell you today that we have had unprecedented growth, as never before. In 1999, there were around 1.5 billion telephone lines worldwide. But in just the last four years we have added 1 billion more. This is a remarkable achievement, especially as more than 75 per cent were installed in the developing world.

ITU is making untiring efforts to bring the benefits of information and communication technologies (ICT) to every part of the global community. And we are proud to be the lead agency organizing the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), on behalf of the United Nations system. As ITU Secretary-General, I have followed every step of the Summit process. It has been a long and hard journey. To make WSIS meaningful and substantive, I decided it would have to be a Summit with a difference: a Summit that is inclusive, reflects the changes in the modern world and the pervasive and fundamental nature of the transformation brought about by the information society.

Hence, the Summit has many innovations. It is being held in two-phases, it includes participation by the private sector and civil society in the whole process, and it benefits from a multi-disciplinary executive secretariat. All are quite new for UN summits. And in preparation for WSIS, regional meetings took place in many parts of the world for delegates to debate the issues, while our sister international organizations have also been very active. I thank all stakeholders for their excellent inputs and contributions. And I would be failing in my duty if I did not thank both WSIS host countries for their excellent and generous support.


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\* Mr Utsumi was Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union from 1999 to 2006.



A great deal is at stake in this Summit. For the first time, the leaders of the world will address the challenge of the transformation to the information society. This will be every bit as profound as the movement from agrarian to industrial societies. In the past, such changes have led to winners and losers. Some countries have prospered, while others have fallen behind. It could happen once again and, if we do not take any action now, existing gaps may be widened. We must not make the same mistakes. By taking the right decisions, we must shape the direction of the information society and create a more just, prosperous and peaceful world.

The cornerstone of any project today – be it to eradicate poverty or stop the spread of disease – is reliable and effective communications. Connectivity has the power to bind the global community into a cohesive fraternity, which shares the common ideals of peace and tolerance, growth and development. A concerted global effort must be made to ensure that there is no gap between the rich and the poor when it comes to the flow of, and access to, information.

There comes a time when preaching must give way to practice. I call upon political leaders to exert their will; upon captains of industry to show their business acumen, and upon civil society organizations to provide the zeal that will forge a unity of purpose to achieve the vision of universal access. In the annals of history let us be remembered for ushering in a truly global information society. Let us bestow on the next generation the gift of ICT for everyone in the global community. 

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# Heads of State and Government and their visions for a better world



2003



*His Excellency  
Pascal Couchepin*

*President of the  
Confederation of  
Switzerland*

## Switzerland



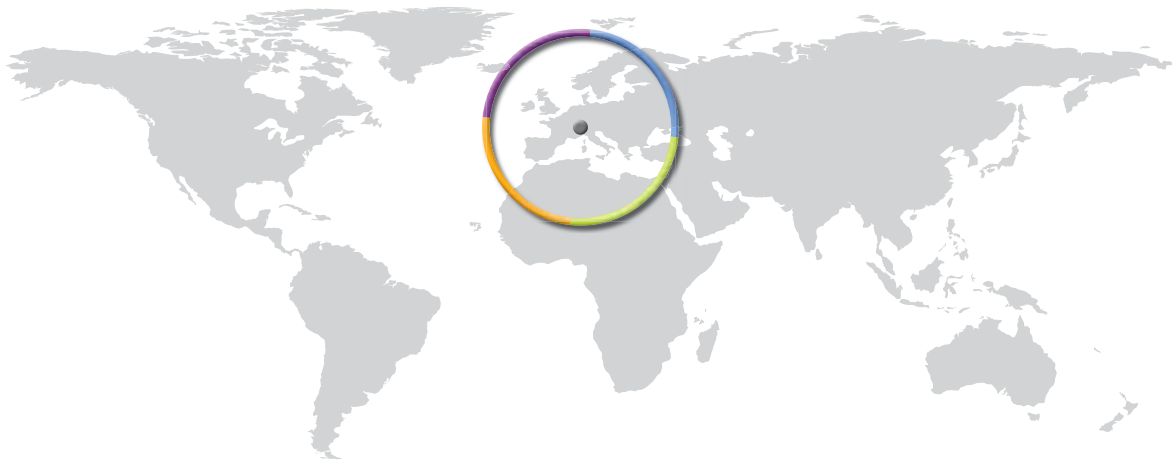
Switzerland is proud to be hosting this Summit, which, for the first time at the international level, will be addressing the challenges posed by the information society.

The right to freedom of opinion and expression, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is one of the main preconditions for the advent of the information society. Information technologies represent an opportunity for promoting human rights.

The development of new technologies has revolutionized the way in which we access information. This revolution, a part of daily life in the western world, has to be extended to the rest of the planet. Indeed, over half of the world's human beings are without access to the telephone, while Internet usage remains an even more restricted preserve.

The impact of technological progress is not homogeneous, with some participating in the movement and others choosing to remain on the sidelines, while another part of the population is simply without access. One of the objectives of the Millennium Declaration is to reduce the digital divide. The objective of this Summit is to find concrete means of reducing this divide between those who are inside and those who are left out, between rich and poor.

Today, it is to governments and civil society that I am speaking. We must encourage, in a way that is both sustainable and equitable, the information revolution. We must shoulder our responsibilities. We must not miss the opportunity we now have in Geneva. The digital divide does not belong in the new millennium we are seeking to build.



The international community must join together to ensure that information is a public good. Free and unrestricted access to information lies at the very heart of development. I am convinced that information fuels both the market and, more broadly, democracy. Transparent information helps to build trust in the democratic institutions.

Switzerland is committed on various fronts to ensuring that the Summit gives rise to a shared vision of the information society. Our negotiators have worked hard to ensure that the Summit adopts a declaration and a plan of action that will serve to reduce the digital divide between rich and poor countries.

The results of the negotiations to date are encouraging. Of course, not all proposals have been adopted, compromises have to be made, and some questions will remain open at the end of the exercise. Geneva marks the beginning of a process. The discussions will continue until 2005 in Tunis.

For the first time within the framework of a summit, the United Nations has opened up the dialogue to non-governmental organizations and the private sector. It is not just the economic and technical aspects of information that are important: it is also time to make a political commitment. That is what we are doing today.

We believe in this new political dialogue. In the Millennium Declaration, we expressed our desire "to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people". With this goal in mind, we have adopted a series of specific objectives with timeframes for their achievement. However, it is not enough merely to state one's objectives: they must now be given tangible form. If the rich countries fail to keep their promises they will ultimately drive the poor countries to despair.

In concert with the United Nations, ITU, Tunisia and civil society representatives, Switzerland has sought to broaden and deepen the discussion of ideas. Soon we shall be adopting a policy declaration and plan of action. Together they will express our wish to create an information society that is as open as possible. 🇪🇺



*His Excellency  
Zine El Abidine Ben Ali*

*President of the Republic  
of Tunisia*

## Tunisia



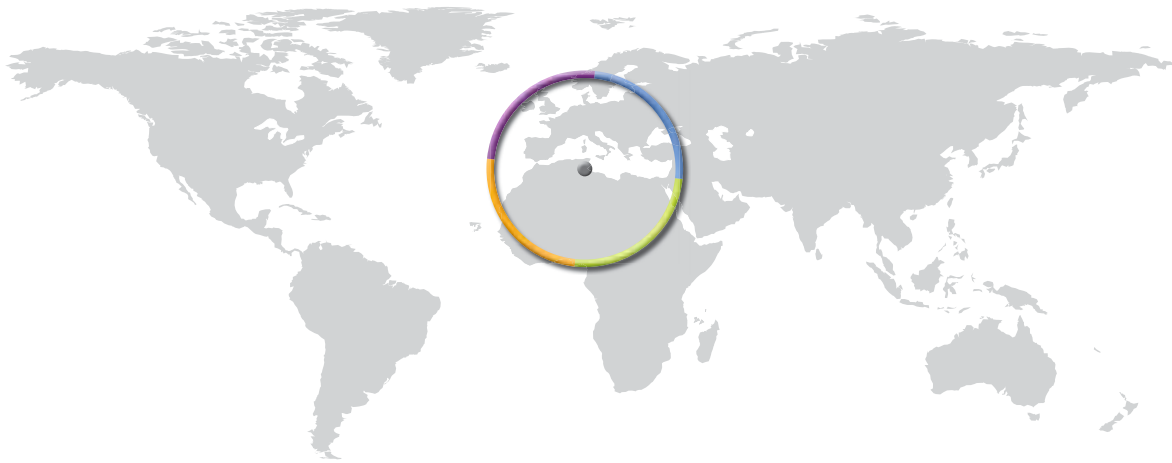
The holding of this Summit, and the international community's interest in its central theme, confirm the fact that the establishment of the information society has become a strategic imperative for the progress of humanity.

Tunisia's initiative at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in 1998 in Minneapolis, United States, calling for the organization of a World Summit on the Information Society under the auspices of the United Nations, was premised upon its belief that this sector is vital for the achievement of a balanced and just human development, and for the achievement of humanity's aspirations for freedom, justice and dignity.

The preparatory meetings for this first phase of the Summit have brought to the fore the major concerns and poles of interest in this vital sector for building humanity's future. The contributions of all parties, however different and diverse, are important, for they reveal new challenges and stakes. They also demonstrate the growing awareness that the information society will radically change the face of the world; that disparity is taking new forms unprecedented in the history of humanity; and that the treatment of the current issues must be based on an appropriate approach and on universal principles.

The newness of this theme (the information society), coupled with the rapid pace of the introduction of new technologies and their application in economic, social, cultural, educational, environmental and other fields, renders any consensus as to the principles and action methods difficult, but still possible in the light of our common universal values enunciated in various international charters and agreements.





For Tunisia, the establishment of the information society constitutes a basic national choice which we have endeavoured to consecrate as part of a comprehensive approach through continuous structural reform and consolidation of our country's infrastructure for information and communication technologies (ICT).

We are keen on promoting human resources, by establishing a coherent strategy to spread the teaching of computer science throughout the various levels of education, and by creating institutes for technological studies. We have also intensified the training of ICT specialists, in order to develop their capacity in new technologies and make optimum use of them in the service of development.

We have also focused our efforts on disseminating the digital culture on the widest scale, such as through regular media programmes, establishing computer centres for children all over the country, connecting basic, secondary and higher education institutions to the Internet, setting up computer and Internet clubs in public cultural centres, and providing average-income families with facilities and incentives for the purchase of "family computers".

Convinced as we are of the importance of competitiveness in stimulating the pace of development, in addition to the State's efforts, we have relied on the effective contribution

of the private sector in mastering information and communication technologies. For that purpose, we have established a policy to enhance internal and external private investment and to stimulate new economic sectors, such as e-commerce.

The information society to which we aspire is one that offers all countries equal opportunities to benefit from the advantages of technology, and that encompasses all countries and allows everyone, without discrimination, to have access to networks and to sources of knowledge and information. Realizing this vision requires consolidation of the bonds of solidarity and mutual assistance among all the world's peoples, so as to narrow the digital divide and curb its dangers.

This first phase of our Summit is an important starting point for looking closely into the ways and means of stimulating international and regional cooperation in order to reduce inequalities between countries and peoples in the acquisition of knowledge and in the mastery of modern digital technologies.

And in 2005, we hope the Tunis Summit will constitute an historic landmark ensuring for all our countries the conditions of progress and development, particularly in the fields of ICT, within a context of peace, security and stability. 🇵🇸



*His Excellency  
Marc Forné*

*Head of Government of  
the Principality of Andorra*

## Andorra

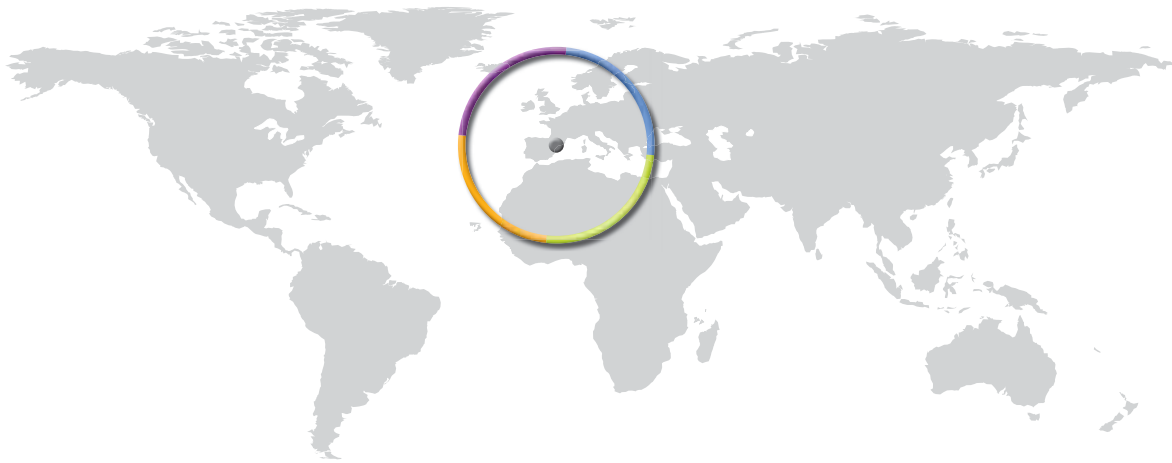


It is an obvious fact that new technologies have had a great influence in shaping our present-day world, which is more and more interdependent and globalized. The technological revolution, like all new things, has both positive and negative aspects. It is up to the rulers of the world to enhance the positive ones and eliminate or minimize the negative ones, always bearing in mind that the greatest beneficiary of the new technologies must be humankind.

The new information and communication technologies (ICT) must be used to unite and not to separate, to make a more just and peaceful world, and not to widen or create gaps and differences between countries.

I believe that we must promote affordable access to new technologies. The quality of the information content, the preservation of intimacy, and the avoidance of cultural and linguistic colonization are the rights of all world citizens. It is also necessary to lay down moral guidelines based on human rights, so as to avoid content that is degrading, discriminatory or vexatious.

Andorra has made available to its population the benefits brought by scientific advances in the world of communications. We acted in the first place in the sphere of education, launching a school computerization programme in 1985. Today, all Andorran schools have computers as a tool to support the teaching of other subjects. And all schools are connected to the Internet. Moreover, the University of Andorra has reached agreements with other universities to provide teaching via the Internet.



In 1995 we made available universal access to e-mail and direct access to the Internet, with no need for an administrative contract. Other countries have shown interest in this model developed in Andorra. But we also wished the benefit of ICT to reach the whole population, especially those having daily direct contact with the government. In 1999, we implemented the “Tràmits” project, by which any citizen can carry out any administrative formalities in his or her locality, taking advantage of ICT. The government of Andorra set up a Department for the Information Society which has taken the lead in a whole series of projects conceived to bring citizens closer to the new technologies.

In the international field, and despite our modest territorial dimensions, in 1998 Andorra promoted and carried out computerization of the archives of the group of western states in the United Nations. And I now have the honour of presenting the United Nations Mobile project, which Andorra has developed to complement United Nations information in mobile or electronic diary formats available over the Internet.

All these programmes already begun and continuing in Andorra are envisaged in various points of the Declaration of Principles pro-

posed for this Summit. I wish to stress that my country will, consequently, back the projected Declaration.

I have sketched out the situation of Andorra and the role which the administration has played in making available to the population the advantages given us by the new technological tools. But the work does not stop there. We must have solidarity with developing countries and do everything possible to enable them to benefit from these advances. In practical terms, it is essential to combat the digital divide which is opening up more and more between rich and poor countries, and between social classes with differing purchasing power.

Lastly, for us as citizens of the world, the important basic challenge for the future – once we have achieved the aim of everyone being able to obtain information speedily – is to make sure that information is trustworthy, to understand how to use the information we have, while preserving the cultural identity of every country.

I hope that this first step we are taking here in the city of Geneva will serve as a signpost for the road which must lead us to the Tunis Summit in 2005. 🇲🇩



*His Excellency  
Robert Kocharyan*

*President of the Republic  
of Armenia*

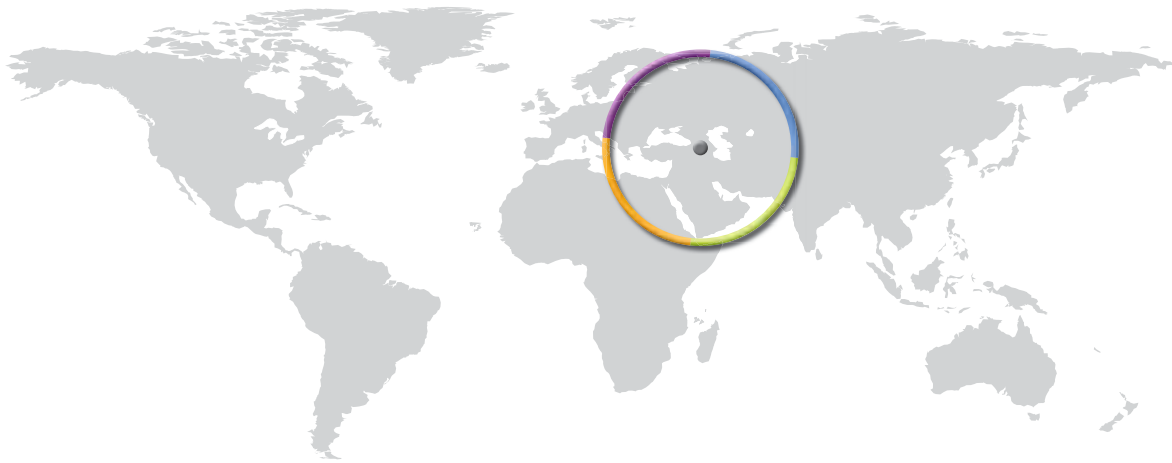
# Armenia



Armenia was once considered the “Silicon Valley” of the Soviet Union. The first computer was created and assembled in Armenia in 1960. Today, with the growth of our private sector, we have declared our objective of seeing Armenia become a provider of intellectual services. This Summit is important to us, since we look forward to establishing common rules in the field to which we give priority in advancing our economy. Today, the software and IT services comprise 1.7 per cent of Armenia’s gross domestic product (GDP). That places Armenia among high-growth countries in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT).

We have prioritized ICT as one of the prospective fields for cooperation with the European Union. Our “E-Caucasus” initiative is already in progress with the support of European counterparts. In addition, the regional European Academy has been established in Yerevan.

An ICT Council, under the Prime Minister and comprised of various ministries, private companies, academia and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has already drawn up a master plan for developing the sector. Currently, work is under way to develop this plan into a comprehensive strategy. Among our first actions have been the implementation of an e-visa programme, and we continue to develop e-consular services. These initiatives are especially useful for a nation with many migrant workers, and a large diaspora. Ahead of the initiatives of this Summit, we have initiated diaspora networks for our citizens living abroad. The “Silicon Armenia” portal allows for their active involvement in advancing ICT in Armenia.



There is another reason we are here: New technologies help us change old assumptions. They force service users and providers, in the public and private sectors, to simplify procedures. In this way, we get closer to a society of equals.

We are here not as technicians who expand and broaden the capabilities of technologies, but as leaders who wish to use the potential of ICT to strengthen democratic societies, and promote transparent and accountable government. Providing good education, good health services and good governance is every State's responsibility. It is evident that e-education, e-health and e-governance can be employed as efficient tools in that domain.

Armenia's ambitious plan is to assure connectivity for all our schools in three years. Rapid development often leaves behind parts of society, and the ICT revolution is no exception. While some speed up their Internet access and upgrade their computers, many are left without an ordinary telephone line. That digital divide deepens economic and social gaps. We are here to jointly ensure connectivity and computerization for all.

That responsibility is not a government's alone. NGOs, academia, media, and donor organizations too must use applications based on the new technologies as a tool for development. It will help to diminish the digital divide between, and within, nations.

Last but not least, in regions like ours, where political relations among neighbours are less than ideal, we look to information technology to build a virtual community of nations. Professionals and students must be able to communicate and cooperate. This will force governments to follow and truly appreciate the potential of the information society: cooperation and development across borders without physical obstacles. 🌍



*His Excellency  
Ilham Aliyev*

*President of the Republic  
of Azerbaijan*

## Azerbaijan



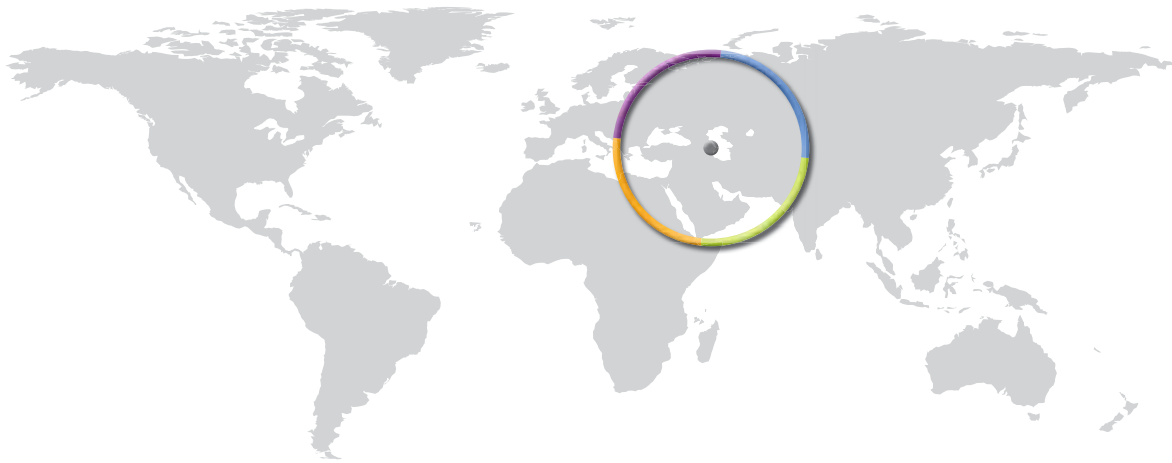
During the last decade, information and communication technologies (ICT) have become an integral part of our daily life. It is difficult even to imagine today's world without the Internet, without e-mail, and many other features of the global cyberspace. Today, we are talking about a new type of society – the information society – and a new style of governance: e-governance.

The decisions of this Summit, to a large extent, refer to the younger generation, since they are expected to create the new realities of the information society. In this respect, the Summit documents will be of great importance to Azerbaijan, with 70 per cent of its population under the age of 35. The young people of Azerbaijan are actively involved in a number of ICT projects implemented jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Building the information society is fully in line with the Government of Azerbaijan's principles and, therefore, we reconfirm our commitment to this idea. We are currently developing a State Programme called "E-Azerbaijan", which includes a number of projects ranging from e-governance to e-economy.

The economic and political stability that has existed in Azerbaijan for more than 10 years is one of the major reasons for its rapid development. The policy of economic and political reform, aimed at integration into the international community, has resulted in rapid economic growth and further democratization of our society. Annual gross domestic product (GDP)





growth has been around 10 per cent for the last six years. The private sector's share in GDP is more than 70 per cent. Azerbaijan, for many years, has held one of the leading places among former republics of the Soviet Union and countries of Central Europe in the amount of foreign investment per capita.

Today, the world's biggest energy projects are being implemented in Azerbaijan. During the next three years, almost USD 10 billion will be invested in oil and gas development in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea and in the construction of oil and gas pipelines. A good investment climate, full transparency and political stability in Azerbaijan are key factors of this investment boom.

The geopolitical situation of Azerbaijan makes our country a crossroads in regional transport projects. Azerbaijan's role in East-West and North-South transport corridors is important. The flow of transport and energy resources is always accompanied by information flows.

We believe that our country is capable of acting as a system integrator in regional ICT development, and in ICT for development in particular. Azerbaijan not only participates, but

also plays a crucial role in all regional projects. And its participation in regional cooperation will continue.

Serious attention is paid in Azerbaijan to the creation and development of an information and knowledge market, and of information technology infrastructure and services. Azerbaijan has the scientific potential and technological achievements needed to create a knowledge-based society.

The State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan, which was created to protect and properly manage oil revenues, help to diversify the economy and accumulate assets for future generations, is a completely transparent, internationally audited structure. This fund will help us to achieve our main objective: to transfer our black gold – our oil resources – into human gold, for the true welfare of every citizen of our country. 🇦🇿



*Her Excellency  
Begum Khaleda Zia*

*Prime Minister of  
the People's Republic  
of Bangladesh*

# Bangladesh



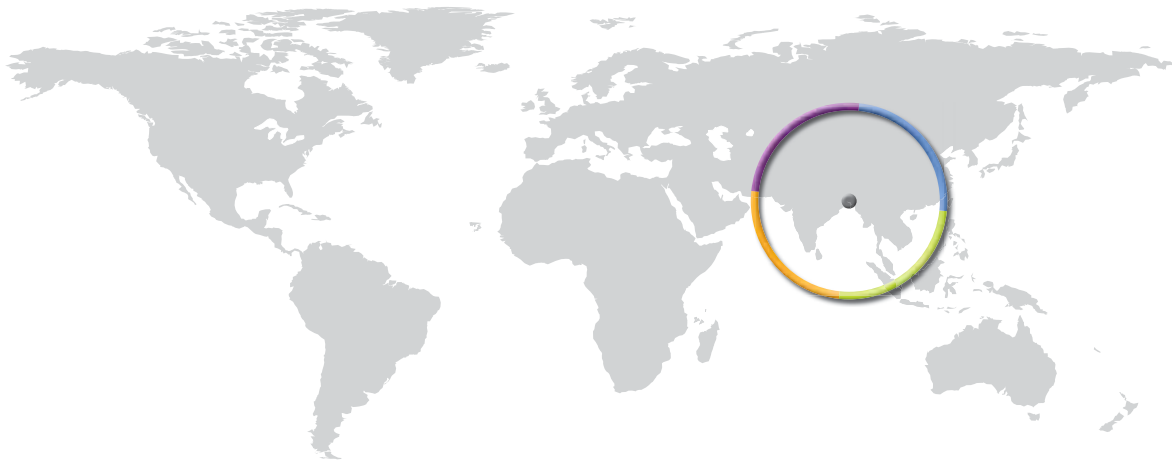
I am delighted to be part of this occasion as we gather here in Geneva, to lay the foundations of the information society. This is truly a noble cause.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have generated profound changes in human society. These are quite different from the social transformations caused by earlier scientific advances. The invention of the telegraph in the early 19th century started the modern information technology. In the 21st century we are witnessing a dramatic new wave of ICT, leading to massive socio-economic changes.

Information technology has significant advantages over past industrial technologies. Its impact goes beyond the developed world and extends to developing countries as well. It has opened up vast new opportunities for them, unlike past technology.

Information technology demands very modest investment. It does not degrade the environment. Information technology requires only one ingredient to become productive, namely human intellect. The technology becomes cheaper as it develops. Also, while its cost declines progressively, its uses multiply at a faster rate. These fundamental differences have created conditions for us to leapfrog underdevelopment.

Bangladesh has placed poverty alleviation on the top of its development agenda. It is here that ICT has a critical role to play. Developing countries – and especially the least developed among them – should seize the opportunity and adopt ICT as a priority tool to fight hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, and discrimination against women, children, the aged and the disabled.



The need to invest in ICT infrastructure and human resources is paramount.

I am happy that Bangladesh's national policy on ICT conforms closely to the outcomes in the documents we intend to endorse in Geneva. Our aim is to build an ICT-driven nation comprising a knowledge-based society. We hope to establish a country-wide ICT infrastructure that will ensure access to information by all our citizens. This will both empower people and enhance democratic values. It will also facilitate sustainable economic development, governance, e-commerce, banking, public utility services and a variety of online services.

The challenges faced by poorer countries in building an information society are formidable. The complexity of the issues is compounded by a lack of resources and ICT infrastructure. This is recognized in the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action produced by this Summit. I am happy that the world community has shown flexibility and remarkable will in adopting them.

We live in an asymmetric world marked by wealth and poverty. The digital divide has widened the development gap. However, I believe that we have now devised a technology that can overcome these differences and lead to a global society with minimum poverty and

maximum equity. We must resolutely commit ourselves to building the information society and implementing our Plan of Action.

In this regard, the need for both regional and international cooperation is vital. This is necessary to overcome financial obstacles that impede access to ICT. There is also a need for greater support and cooperation programmes from international financial institutions. Impetus from this World Summit is, therefore, crucial.

I strongly recommend that we create a Digital Solidarity Fund which would:

- Channel technical and financial assistance towards national capacity building.
- Facilitate transfer and use of technology from developed countries.
- Assist the sharing of knowledge and skills.
- Develop compatible regulations and standards that respect national characteristics and concerns, including spectrum management.

ICT offers a unique opportunity to attain the socio-economic targets set by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It provides a chance for poorer countries to narrow the gap with the developed world. We need to demonstrate our united resolve to take up this challenge. 🇳🇵



*His Excellency  
Alyaksandr Lukashenka*

*President of the Republic  
of Belarus*

## *Belarus*



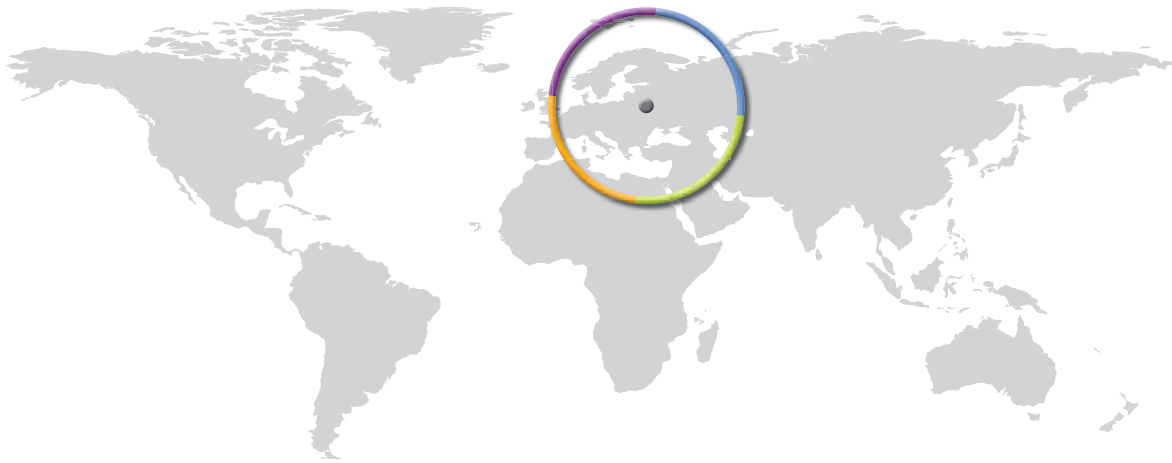
The Republic of Belarus greatly appreciates the initiative to convene this Summit as an important and timely step with a view to building the information society. Belarus was one of the most economically and technologically developed republics of the former USSR. In all its achievements in space exploration and defence programmes, the contribution of Belarusian specialists was considerable.

We have not lost our high potential. We have concentrated it on national priorities. Our path in the world in new technologies has been defined by a comprehensive national programme called "Electronic Belarus". Our scientists have participated in developing a super-computer as one of the 500 most powerful computer systems created by companies in 14 countries of the world.

We have also developed a national space system for remote sensing, along with developing land infrastructure for receiving real-time information from space. We are planning to launch our own spacecraft in the near future.

These advanced technologies, well-trained specialists and our network infrastructure enable us to participate in international programmes. As an active partner, but not as a passive consumer of someone else's product, we are prepared to offer our services to help resolve complicated tasks, radiation safety monitoring and environmental protection.

Our country has traditionally enjoyed a high level of education and human development. Today, more than one quarter of our national budget is allocated to science and education. Higher and secondary educational establishments in Belarus



are increasing the number of high-quality specialists. These establishments are prepared to admit more overseas students. Specialists in information technology from Belarus are welcome in many developed countries around the world.

On the one hand, this is good. However, at the same time, it leads to specific difficulties, such as a brain-drain. This issue is relevant not only for my country. Therefore, I think it would be useful to reflect this in our Summit documents.

Unfortunately, the price of software is disproportionately high relative to the incomes of people in most countries in the world. We think it is crucial to join the efforts of our countries to create affordable and high-quality software. One of the possibilities for resolving this issue could be a special fund under the auspices of the United Nations to compensate software producers for the cost of their products when they supply them at reduced prices to developing countries.

It is no secret that some software could disturb vitally important industries in any country. We believe that governments and large software companies should agree on the transparency of the systems they create, which would guarantee their safe use by other countries.

The international community must also join efforts to create the mechanisms to protect information systems from terrorist attacks. A clear example of fruitful international cooperation was resolving the acute threat of the “year 2000”, or Y2K, problem. From this experience, we see that all countries in the world are able to cooperate with each other when the issue is a noble goal.

We politicians must realize that people have great expectations to achieve a higher quality of life. With the broad use of information technologies we must make it possible for these expectations to be achieved. I am confident that this world Summit will serve this purpose. 🌈



*His Excellency  
Festus Gontebanye Mogae*

*President of the Republic  
of Botswana*

## *Botswana*

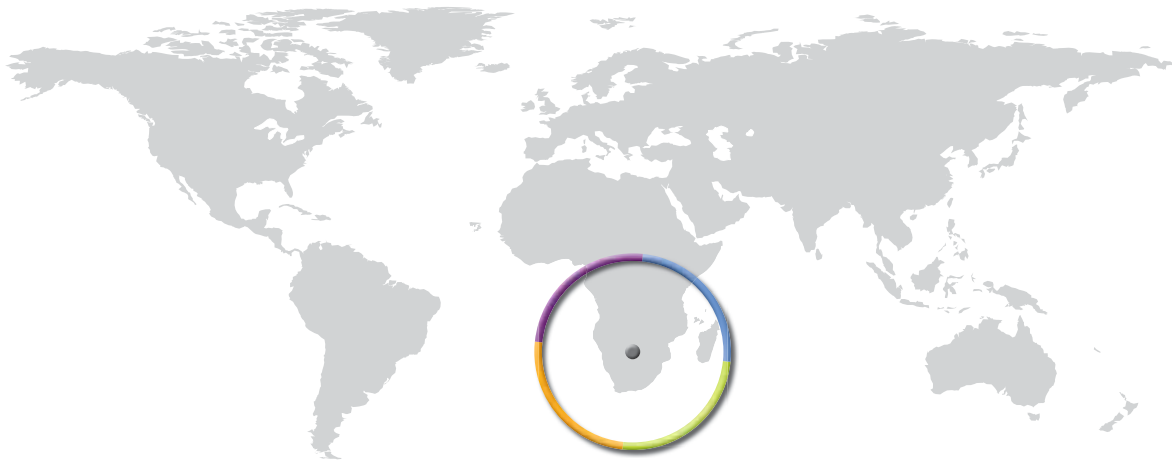


The fact that our world has been transformed by the application of rapidly evolving information and communication technologies (ICT) has become a challenge to us all. We are living in a global information age in which advanced communications have become a key factor in the social and economic progress of nations. The new technologies carry with them the immense potential of creating a more equitable global order. They can unlock the untapped capacities that lie within every society, but more especially those of poorer less developed nations. But clearly, for this promise to be delivered, we must first overcome the digital divide that threatens to even magnify existing disparities in the future.

If the 21st century is to differ from what has come before, we must all work together to find new and creative ways of ensuring that the spread of ICT promotes win-win partnerships on a global scale. In this respect, while we acknowledge the crucial role that must be played by the more developed countries in bridging the digital divide, it is also incumbent upon developed nations to open themselves up to the opportunities of becoming part of the information society.

This calls for countries such as my own to reassess their development priorities and prepare themselves for a meaningful role in the knowledge economy. In moving forward, it is clear that donor assistance will, in itself, neither be sufficient nor sustainable as a means of helping developing nations meet future challenges, such as those set forth in the Millennium Declaration. Botswana places great emphasis on attracting direct foreign investment as a more enduring method of generating employment and wealth for our people.





Faced with finite natural resources, Botswana has little option but to explore the great potential of ICT-driven development. We recognize that investors from the developed world will expect to find facilities no less advanced than those to which they are accustomed in their own countries. This requires state-of-the-art information and communication infrastructure, accompanied by a highly literate and technologically innovative workforce. For us, therefore, investing in a world-class ICT infrastructure is not a luxury but a development imperative. We also recognize that transparent regulation, good governance and removal of trade barriers are all important requirements for attracting domestic and foreign private investments.

Unfortunately, having expended much energy towards the achievement of these goals, we in Africa have yet to experience the anticipated gains in foreign direct investment. It is therefore my hope, and I am sure that of all developing countries, that the commitments made at this Summit will lead to a redoubling of efforts towards an agenda that strives to build true partnerships between the rich and the poor. I believe that this is the true essence of the information society.

The main concern is that, without investment inflows in human capital development and in science and technological research, developing countries shall continue to be mere consumers of ICT goods and services from developed countries, thus missing out on the creation of wealth through trade in ICT. International cooperation in capacity development is therefore critical in ensuring a balanced development of the information society.

The other focus of our efforts should be on uplifting the standard of living of our peoples, and harnessing the creative and innovative potential of our societies. Many developing countries face an uphill task in opening economic opportunities in rural areas, and they have major problems with the provision of education, health care and other public services. All these challenges can benefit from the innovative infusion of ICT. In this respect, I am pleased that the Declaration of Principles before us recognizes the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals as a key underlying objective of the information society. Botswana commits itself fully to the ideals and aspirations set forth in the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action. 🌍



*His Excellency  
Pedro Pires*

*President of the Republic  
of Cape Verde*

## Cape Verde



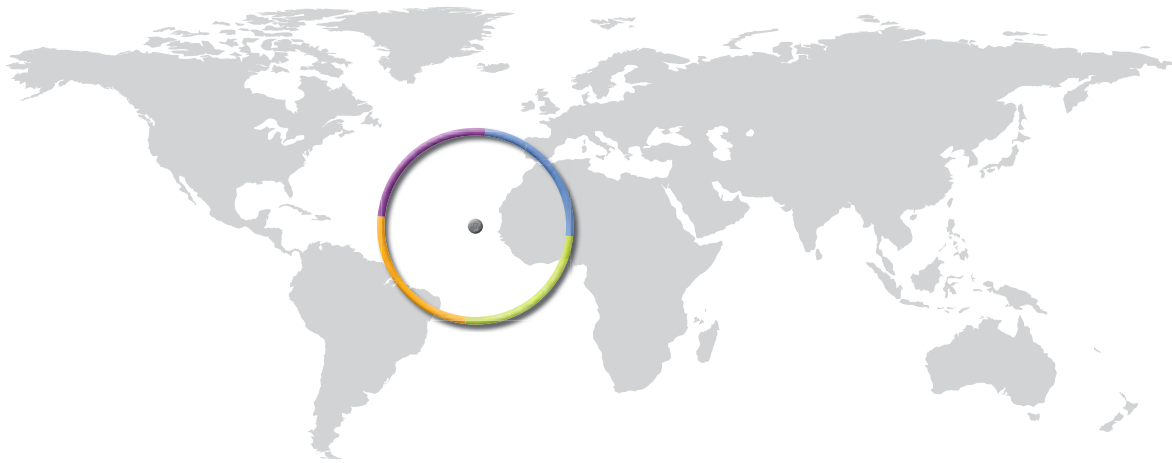
Technology has always been a powerful tool for development and progress. It is generally recognized that economic development provides opportunities for technological innovation and its dissemination. However, the converse is also often true when investments in technology, education and training act as the incentive for development, giving people new skills and better tools for their work.

Technology should be viewed as a tool for economic growth and human development. Achieving this objective requires that technology transfer be promoted and encouraged in a determined manner, so as to benefit developing countries and allow them to create a durable technological base.

The reality today is that there is a growing gap around the world not only in terms of the distribution of riches, but also in terms of the opportunities to use the new technologies and capitalize on them. The growing disparity, particularly for digital technology, is a source of concern and should be dealt with rapidly. This will require the free dissemination and sharing of knowledge worldwide.

I am happy that the international community, through the United Nations, has committed itself to setting up the mechanisms needed to put into effect the profound changes that the new information and communication technologies (ICT) promise to put at the service of human development.

Cape Verde endorses the text of the Declaration of Principles that we have before us. We support the noble objective of harnessing ICT to promote and achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, with a particular emphasis on the eradication of poverty and famine, universal education,



gender equality, the elimination of endemic disease, the struggle against HIV/AIDS, and the long-term protection of the environment.

Capitalizing on the enormous potential of ICT for increasing productivity and improving quality of life will be a serious challenge, especially for the people living in developing countries or in countries with economies in transition – they are at risk of being excluded from the benefits of the new advances in human knowledge.


We are aware of the inequalities in the way the benefits of the technology revolution are disseminated, among countries and within national societies. To overcome them, great efforts will need to be made, and the necessary political will have to be marshalled. We consider that digital solidarity needs to be elevated to the rank of a fundamental principle and recognized as such at this Summit. Against this background, we draw attention to the particular conditions of small-island developing States such as Cape Verde.

We share the idea that an inclusive information society will only be possible if each and every one of the players works together to improve access to the information and communication infrastructure, build human capacity, increase confidence and security in the use of ICT, and, most importantly, create at all levels an envi-

ronment that will be conducive to developing and expanding ICT applications.

If developing countries, such as Cape Verde, are to become full members of the information society and embrace the knowledge-based economy, their capacities in such areas as education, technology know-how and information must be built up; these are the criteria for development and competitiveness today. To this end, the countries of Africa hope that the international community will provide the support necessary to implement NEPAD, a programme that proposes an innovative framework for African development within which the information society and ICT have a central position.

Regarding the risks associated with ICT, adequate measures will be required along with strict legislation, so as to pre-empt and combat the misuse of those technologies for criminal ends or other purposes at odds with international law.

To summarize, then, the vision currently being constructed of the information and knowledge society is based on accepted, shared principles, including: universal access to information; human capacity building through education and training; and the creation of an environment conducive to the development of information and communication technologies. 



*His Excellency  
Azali Assoumani*

*President of the Union  
of the Comoros*

## Comoros



I am happy to participate on behalf of the people of the Comoros in our reflections on how the world is unfolding, and on the need to share responsibilities, in order to achieve human development.

The world is being transformed by dramatic developments that require a new vision and a new understanding; they need to be mastered, in order to be put at the service of humankind.

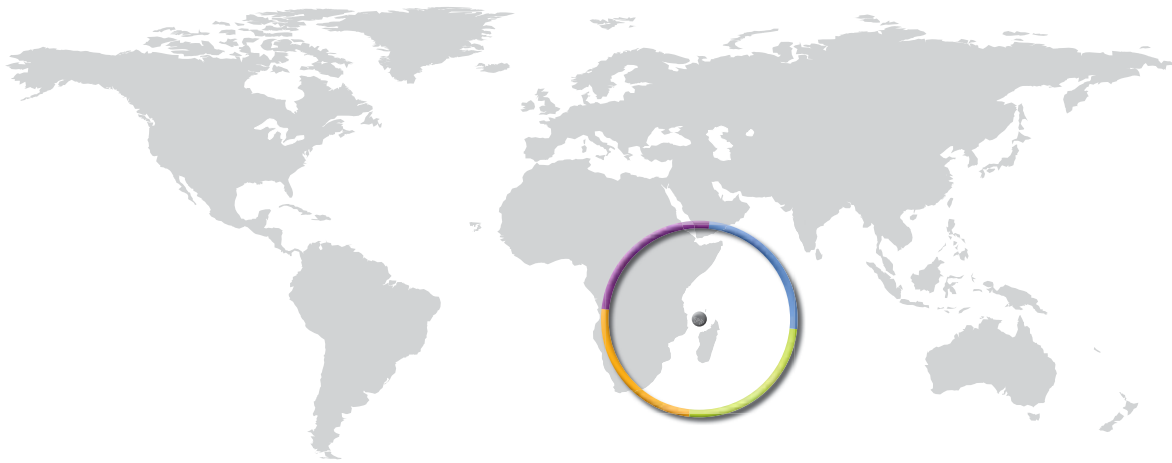
Today the world needs a society of a new kind, one which rejects marginalization and exclusion, one which recognizes the dignity and responsibility of all, one which increasingly bases itself on complementarity and solidarity, to ensure the survival of the nations and the security of all peoples.

Nothing should be neglected in strengthening peace in the world. We are all equal in the face of fear, anxiety and worry.

Today, more than ever, the world is one, indivisible; and life confirms each day how closely the destinies of humans, of all peoples in all countries around the world, are linked. Every person on this Earth has the right to enjoy the bounties of nature and share in the rich benefits of science.

The new information and communication technologies (ICT) are opening up new horizons. They are a formidable tool and a catalyst for development. They develop civic spirit and bridge the gap between governments and the people who are governed.

But ICT can also be turned into a tool for oppression, and they can be used to aggravate inequality and deepen social fractures. For this reason, we must invoke the conscience of human-



kind not to shirk the challenge of this unique opportunity, lest it become the preserve of a narrow social class.

It is necessary to involve all countries and nations in more intense cooperation to prevent cybercrime and prevent information and communication networks from being used as vehicles for hate, and as weapons in the hands of criminals. And in preserving democracy and the freedom to express oneself and communicate, it is also necessary to reinforce professional ethics among ICT professionals.

The information society has to be rooted in the reality of everyday life. To this end, knowledge has to be disseminated across the barriers of age, and alliances forged wherever possible, especially with young people, who tend to take a greater interest in these things, and with women, who continue, regrettably, to suffer from the results of widespread inequality.

My government has committed itself to a robust policy aimed at integrating ICT into all areas of life, especially academic and vocational education at all levels. Ambitious projects have been launched across the land to make access to ICT more democratic.

While our country's resources are modest, we believe in the benefits of new information and communication technologies. This is why we

have decided to make ICT equipment and systems exempt from customs duties. Also, Internet communication fees have been cut by 50 per cent. A system will be set up to provide community access to ICT, particularly in public establishments, so as to promote widespread acceptance. However, this pro-active policy needs to be backed up by real, genuine cooperation. My country calls on the international community for solidarity and commitment in this domain.

ICT should be put at the service of a dialogue of cultures, for strengthening the unique identity and traditions of each people.

It would be a mistake to view the introduction of new information and communication technologies as a purely technical matter. Their effects and implications need to be understood and channelled to serve the needs of all of humanity.

I trust that all peoples around the world will be able to take advantage of the new technologies and the energy of the United Nations to build a fair society based on solidarity and responsibility, a society that will be of benefit to all. 🇺🇳



*His Excellency  
Stjepan Mesic*

*President of the Republic  
of Croatia*

## Croatia



It is with particular pleasure that I welcome the initiative by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the International Telecommunication Union to organize a World Summit on the Information Society.

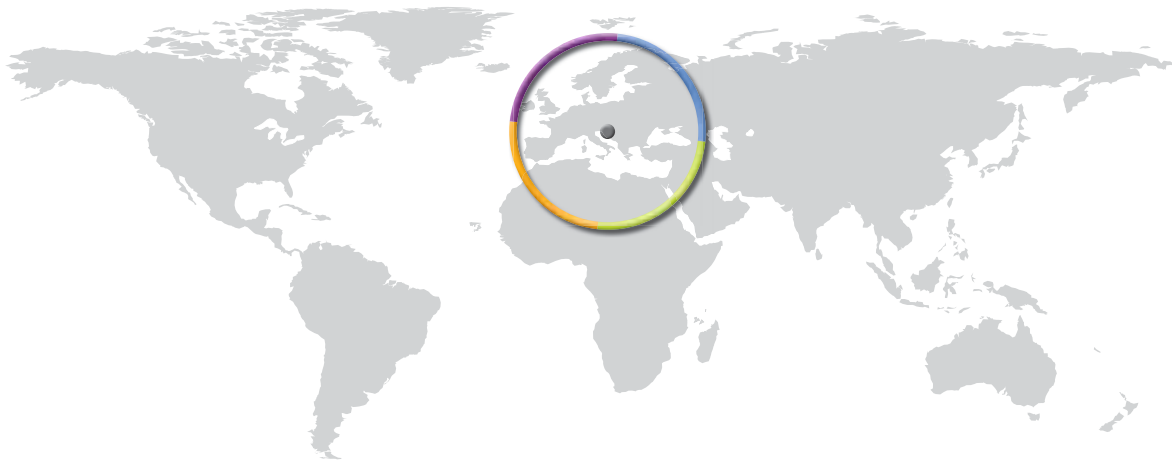
I am proud to point out that the development of wireless technology, the technology underpinning the information society, originated from the invention of radio transmissions, attributed to the great scientist Nikola Tesla, whose home country was Croatia. The vision of comprehensive global connectivity, which he had at the beginning of the 20th century, is now taking shape.

Croatia recognizes the importance and timeliness of this Summit and, drawing on its own experience, wishes to make a contribution to the shaping of the information society. Our experience demonstrates how essential the exchange of information is for development, both at the level of local communities and at the level of State governance.

Allow me to focus your attention on the economic benefits of embracing the information society, which offers great possibilities for less developed countries. Only by investing in information resources can developing countries catch up with the developed world. This is a wonderful opportunity to narrow the gap between the developing and the developed countries.

At the international level, it is essential for less developed countries to mobilize the necessary means to become integrated into the information society. A redistribution of global resour-





es is, therefore, needed to avoid the danger of limiting the spread of the information society only to the developed world.

However, at a time when technology is developing faster than the underlying social infrastructure, and when its penetration is unstoppable, governments must ensure that it spreads in an even and standardized fashion.

We are aware that the global information society helps to promote human rights and liberties. However, it also carries an inherent threat to the fulfilment of those rights and liberties. With computerization, individual privacy has come under more threat than ever before. That is why States and the international community must play a role, not only in fostering the development of the information society, but also in incorporating clear mechanisms for the protection of human rights and liberties, as well as the protection of privacy and intellectual property. Striking a balance between the protection of the right to privacy and intellectual property on the one hand, and the accessibility and free flow of information on the other, is essential.

Furthermore, States and the international community must devise and harmonize legal regulations providing for the protection of the in-

dividual against any abuse of information, and prevent the spread of unacceptable content, including racism and hate language.

Governments and the international community should also make sure that the public sector is not left behind in the development of the information society. In this regard, Croatia has put forward three projects of particular interest for smaller countries. These are:

- speech recognition and synthesis for languages of small countries;
- access to the benefits of the information society to citizens with special needs;
- a blueprint for an information society development strategy for smaller countries.

The core issue and, I believe, the goal we wish to reach in the shortest time possible, is making the information society accessible to all, everywhere and under the same terms, turning it from a global into a universal phenomenon.

Finally, allow me to re-iterate the readiness of the Republic of Croatia to endorse the conclusions adopted at this Summit and to actively pursue their implementation, drawing on all its resources and potential. 🇺🇦



*His Excellency  
Ricardo Alarcón de  
Quesada*

*President of the National  
Assembly of People's Power  
of the Republic of Cuba*

## Cuba

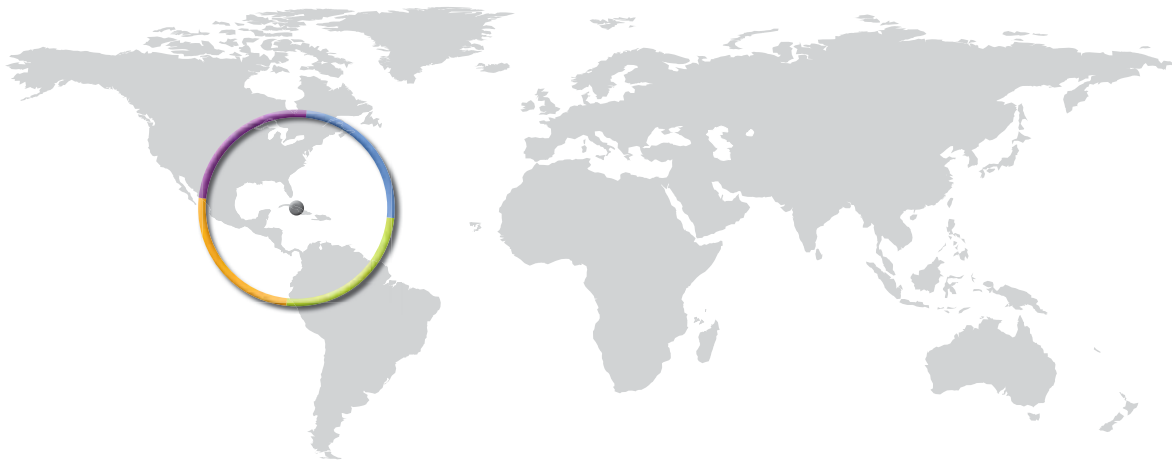


These are not times for illusions nor for echoing rhetoric meaningless to the peoples of the world. To seriously speak of "the information society", the conquest of a world free of hunger, ignorance, illness, discrimination and exclusion is a prerequisite. For this phrase to be more than a deceitful slogan, it has to be placed in the context of true humanity and solidarity.

What does "the information society" mean for the 75 per cent of the population of the developing world? What is the use of new information and communication technologies for the 2.2 billion people living in extreme poverty, for the 843 million people living in hunger and for the 2.4 billion lacking health services? What would the 854 million adults who do not know how to read or write, and the 115 million children without access to education, do with a computer? How would it be used by the 2 billion people lacking electricity?

The number of those who are not yet acquainted with the telephone is higher today than the total of the world population when commercial telephone services were established. Those who barely survive today in the most abject poverty are more numerous than those who inhabited the Earth the day the United Nations was born.

In 2001, the countries with the highest income were home to 73 per cent of Internet users and 95.5 per cent of the computers connected to it. In addition, the digital divide creates new contrasts within countries, including the richest ones. By 2002, it was estimated that only 2.4 per cent of humankind had Internet access, while between 50 and 60 per cent struggled against poverty.



Let this Summit not be one more in the long list of meetings convened for the debate of vital issues, but without concrete results. Let it result, in essence, in the firm commitment to carry out effective action.

The Internet should not remain in the hands of the main owners of transnational capital; it is imperative to create a democratic, intergovernmental institution which regulates it and promotes international cooperation and the transfer of financial resources and technology. Let the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action of this Summit serve as a means for halting manipulation of the media, for upholding truth, for accepting cultural diversity and for ceasing to impose the patterns prevailing in the countries of the North upon those of the South.

A new world order of information and communications is a need that cannot be postponed. Furthermore, it requires the achievement of an international revolution in the field of education. It is possible to eradicate illiteracy and to extend primary school education throughout the world. The total expense for achieving this would amount to less than the 0.004 per cent of the gross domestic product of industrialized member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in a single year.

Cuba, despite its economic blockade, provides its modest contribution to a number of countries and reiterates its readiness to participate in the international effort that should be undertaken by all.

Two and a half centuries ago, the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau denounced "a handful of powerful and rich in the summit of greatness and fortune, while the multitude crept in darkness and misery". Not much has changed in the world since then, in a world submitted to a regime "that only serves to maintain the poor in their misery and the rich in their usurpation".

Let us do something concrete here in Geneva in order to advance towards the dream of justice and equality inspiring hundreds of millions today, in the certainty that a better world is possible. 🇺🇳



*His Excellency  
Petr Mares*

*Deputy Prime Minister  
of the Czech Republic*

## *Czech Republic*

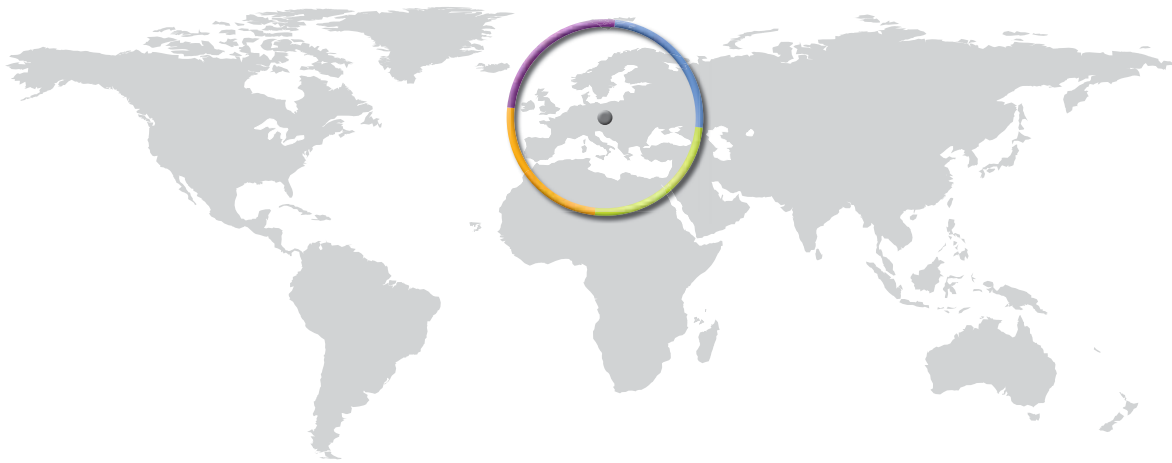


For the first time in the history of the United Nations, the global community is able to formulate and conduct a coordinated appraisal of the issues which are driving the dynamic, worldwide development of information and communication technologies (ICT) and to find consensual solutions.

The Czech Republic fully shares the objectives of this Summit, including the Declaration of Principles highlighting a shared vision of the information and knowledge society. On 1 January 2003, the Czech Republic set up a Ministry of Informatics, the role of which corresponds to the plans contained in the draft Declaration and Plan of Action of this Summit.

The Czech Republic supports the idea of wide use of new technologies, not only in the development of economic and social potential and education, but also in the development of public administration services. In order to enhance and promote computer literacy among citizens as a precondition of their effective use of ICT in everyday life, the Government runs a National Computer Literacy Programme. This focuses on the expansion and consolidation of computer literacy among all generations.


The Czech Republic intends not only to pursue the above-mentioned principles in its own territory, but, as it is fully committed to the goals of the Digital Solidarity Agenda, it is also prepared to supply expert assistance in this field to developing countries in order to help them bridge the digital divide. As a first step, the Czech Republic has recently sent a financial contribution of CZK 1 million, with the recommendation that it be used to promote the current ITU programme "Internet Training Centre Initiatives" in Africa.



We should realize that our perception of the term "information society" differs significantly whether we are in Europe, Africa or in another continent. There are relatively few common issues because, for example, in Europe there is an up-and-running, developed infrastructure for ICT, while Africa often still has to come to grips with basic issues. Nevertheless, the development of the global information and knowledge society is a trend the whole world will pursue, irrespective of the current technological conditions in individual areas or regions.

The differences in perception of some key issues made the preparatory process of this Summit extremely difficult and many changes in the positions of stakeholders have been required. Many important areas remain for further development, such as financing, Internet governance and intellectual property rights, which will necessitate deeper discussion and hard work.

I would like to recommend that a suitable platform should be established for the participation of private capital in developing ICT infrastructure throughout the world in the context of funding the Plan of Action. We should also strive to establish mechanisms for coordinating with existing programmes of a similar bent, which are set up and financed by international organizations other than ITU.

The Czech delegation is ready to support the adoption of the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action because we are aware of the possibilities and roles of all stakeholders, which should have a positive impact on the education and training of the public and which can foster awareness and knowledge in relation to the requirements of further development in the world. 



*His Excellency  
Kim Yong Dae*

*Vice-President of the  
Presidium of the Supreme  
People's Assembly of  
the Democratic People's  
Republic of Korea*

## *Democratic People's Republic of Korea*



This Summit marks an important occasion for making international political commitments and guidelines for building an information society that is conducive to promoting the well-being of all humankind. Today, the rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICT) has an immense impact on all aspects of social life and, in particular, plays a decisive role in accelerating the process of sustainable development.

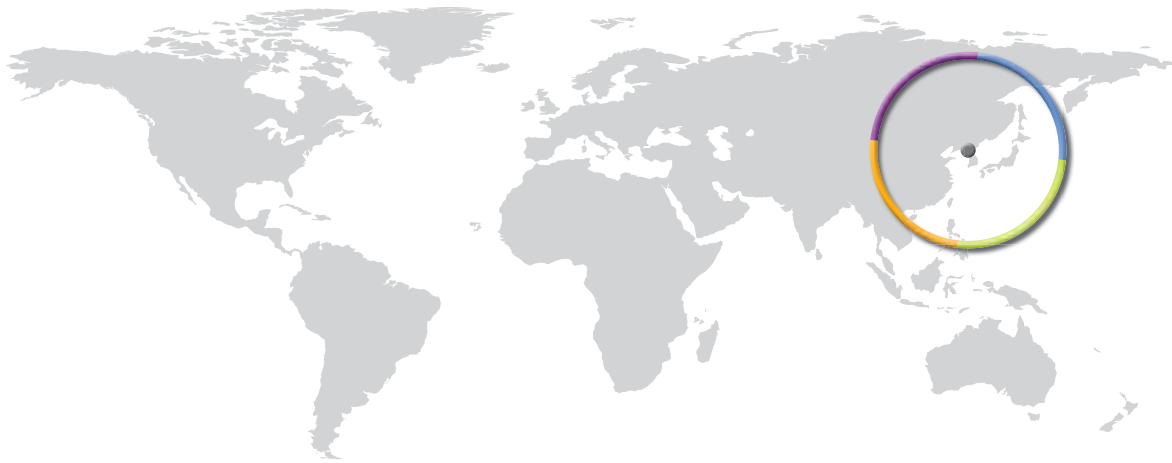
To our regret, however, the overwhelming majority of the world population are not benefiting from the development of ICT, and the digital divide between the developed and developing countries is further widening the already existing disparities between the rich and poor. In particular, imbalance in the network of information and communication and false information of all kinds in cyberspace are destroying the diversity of language and culture, the common heritage of humankind, and bringing about conflict among civilizations and cultures.

Due to these negative impacts, we are now facing grave challenges in our efforts to achieve the intellectual development of humankind and harmony among peoples of the world.

Our delegation considers that the knowledge-based, information society for all should be the one in which all the people enjoy the benefit of ICT and participate actively in all fields of social life independently and creatively by enhancing their intellectual capacity. With this in mind, my delegation wishes to make the following points.

Firstly, we hold the view that what is important in building the information society is for the government of each country to attach priority to the development of ICT, and implement a





strategy for developing the information industry in such a way as to make everyone its beneficiary.

Today, the development of science and technology constitutes a fundamental element that decides the rise and fall of a country and nation. This reality demands the government of each country to play its due role with full responsibility for the building of the information society.

Secondly, efforts should be directed at expanding and developing international cooperation for the sake of the information society that all of us desire to build, by eliminating the imbalance of ICT worldwide and realizing their even development. This will benefit not only developing countries, but also the developed ones. The United Nations and other international organizations should initiate and expand projects aimed at activating international cooperation and exchanges in the field of ICT, such as training of experts, transfer of technologies, and so forth.

Thirdly, it is equally important to ensure that ICT promote understanding and trust among nations, and contribute to establishing sound international relations. In this regard, the sovereignty of each country should be respected and the diversity of language and culture protected and encouraged in cyberspace. Any at-

tempt to incite hatred, violence and war should be brought to an end.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea consistently maintains a policy of attaching importance to science and technology, regarding them as the foundation of national power and the driving force for national prosperity. Pursuant to the idea of the great leader General Kim Jong Il, our Government is directing State investment and efforts towards the information industry, in order to accelerate the building of a powerful and prosperous country by relying on ICT and providing the people with a more civilized and affluent lifestyle.

With a view to developing software, the core of information technologies, steps are also being taken to enable as many people as possible to possess ICT, while continuously expanding and strengthening the institutions and organs specializing in software development and training computer experts.

The Government will continue to strive for the development of the information industry of our country as required by the information age, thus actively contributing to international efforts for the building of the information society. 🌈



*His Excellency  
Mohamed Hosny  
Mubarak*

*President of the Arab  
Republic of Egypt*

## *Egypt*

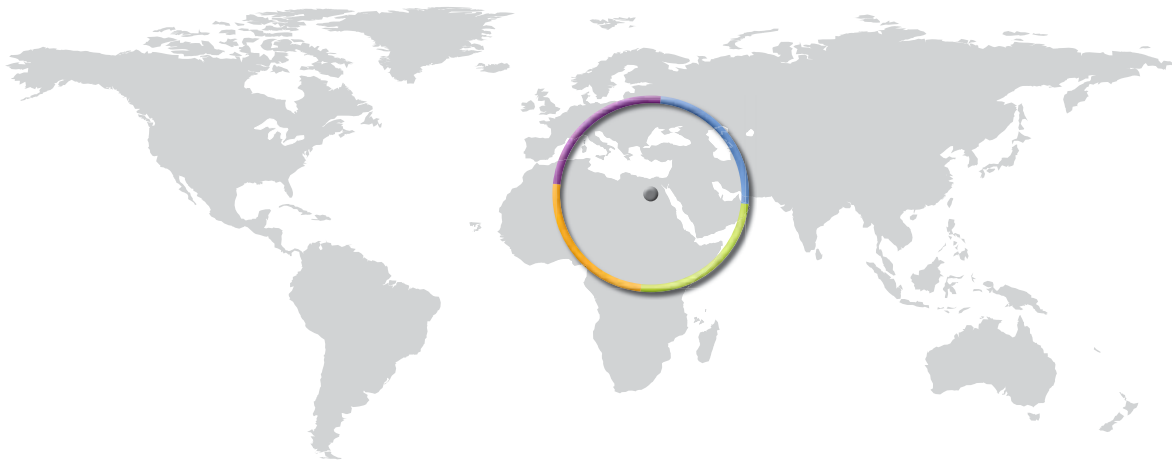


It is evident that convening this Summit reflects the increasing will of the international community to formulate a collective vision to make maximum use of the information and communication revolution, to achieve the objectives of all societies – industrial and developing, rich and poor, large and small.

The effects of the revolution in information and communication technologies (ICT) should not be limited exclusively to achieving economic and developmental gains. They should be extended to strengthening political, social and cultural links among nations; bringing about world peace based on justice, equality, and respect of international legitimacy; and supporting national efforts towards more freedom, democracy and respect of human rights. All of this should be achieved within a framework that respects national identity and maintains the diversity of cultures as key components for cooperation among civilizations.

To deepen the concept of universality in the information society, all peoples should have a chance to effectively take part in developing, manufacturing, and utilizing ICT, in a manner that entrenches the principles of equality, justice, and active community participation. This requires support, particularly for developing countries, through promoting their scientific and research capabilities, and in transferring necessary technology and know-how.

Egypt has always played a major role in building regional support for efforts to establish the information society. We took the lead in proposing a common Arab strategy, which was endorsed by the Arab Summit in Amman in 2001. Egypt has taken similar steps on the African level, which contributed to the work



of the E-Africa Commission, established within the context of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) and under the auspices of the African Union.

These efforts were crowned with our involvement in the preparatory process for this Summit through hosting the Pan-Arab Regional Conference on WSIS in June 2003. The conference signalled an unprecedented interest in laying down a solid foundation for the contemporary information society, and in making the maximum use of the ICT revolution to bridge the digital divide. It reflected our aspiration that WSIS will give a strong push to our national and regional efforts in several areas, the most important of which are:

- Deploying the necessary infrastructure, and 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.
- Developing our human resources through exploiting the high capabilities of ICT in education and training.
- 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.
- Encouraging governments to adopt policies and legislation that enable the infor-

mation society to flourish, and foster partnerships among national and multinational businesses.

- Introducing innovative financing mechanisms that respond to developing countries' needs to bridge the digital divide.

We have launched national initiatives to transform the Egyptian society into a knowledge-based society. These include the use of ICT in upgrading educational 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.

For this purpose, Egypt has established the "smart village": a state-of-the-art high-tech business park that invites investors to address a strong emerging local and regional market. Furthermore, Egypt has established a successful partnership among the government, the private sector, and civil society in implementing pioneer initiatives aimed at providing free Internet access, a computer for every home, and establishing ICT clubs nationwide.

I call for the establishment of an equitable partnership between developing and developed nations, to utilize available resources and share success stories. 🌍



*His Excellency  
Arnold Rüütel*

*President of the Republic  
of Estonia*

## *Estonia*



Information society development is the call of the day. It is also a global, national and individual challenge.

In order to ensure economic growth, competitiveness and – most importantly – an increase in the quality of life of our people, it is essential for governments to keep information society development constantly high on the agenda.

I am pleased that Estonia, although one of the smallest countries in Europe, has clearly defined this goal as a priority. Consistency in policy and practice has ensured a strong move towards the information society in Estonia. In a relatively short time, we have reached the forefront of advanced usage of information and communication technologies (ICT).

How was such development possible for a country with limited resources? The answer is simple: creating an enabling environment, opening markets, including all stakeholders, and prioritizing ICT in education have been the steps producing results. Perhaps the most important factor for ICT development has been the liberalization of the telecommunications market.

Developing of the enabling environment and fruitful cooperation with the third and private sectors have put in place ICT infrastructure that provides access to information society services, including for the people in Estonia who are not so affluent.

The use of ICT has rendered the public sector more efficient. This has created possibilities for using more public funds for handling other important issues in society. In rebuilding our




public sector, we have strongly relied on the Internet. Today, most of the information in the public and private sectors is exchanged through the Internet. In addition, ICT solutions have enabled us to increase democracy by increasing citizen participation in decision-making processes.

However, it is necessary to follow democratic principles and to ensure freedom of speech and a free press. It is clear that generally recognized principles of human dignity and protection of minors apply also to the new media.

In the summer of 2002, the Government of the Republic of Estonia, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Information Programme of the Open Society Institute (OSI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to set up an eGovernance Academy in Estonia. The main purpose of the academy is to increase coordination of ICT among the public-sector leaders, specialists and third-sector representatives of the former Soviet Union republics, Central and Eastern Europe, and Asian countries.

The training project combines the practical knowledge and experience of the Estonian public sector, the know-how of European

Union experts, and the experience of the target countries, who participate in the training. So far, the eGovernance Academy has successfully carried out training for senior officials responsible for ICT from Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Albania, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan and many other countries. It is envisaged that training will be provided for a total of 400 people within three years.

We expect the training programmes and knowledge sharing to be a significant contribution to the global process of information society development. Estonia's experience confirms that ICT development and cohesive implementation is cost saving and effective for society. And this approach is what we are willing to share with everybody, in order to make a contribution to building the information society. 



*Her Excellency  
Tarja Halonen*

*President of the Republic  
of Finland*

## *Finland*



At the start of the new millennium, we, the representatives of our nations, reaffirmed our commitment to build a more peaceful, a more prosperous and a more just world. We accepted that we share a common responsibility to maintain human values, equality and the principles of justice worldwide. In this task, information and communication technologies (ICT) can serve as our partner, speeding up the achievement of these goals.

ICT is a powerful tool, but it is just a tool. At the heart of it all is a human being, not the technology. At this Summit, we are all committed to building an information society that puts people first and that fosters participation and development.

The information technology revolution is profoundly changing people's lives: both at work and at leisure. We are now in the process of creating a global information society. This will open up new opportunities for improving the quality of life and for promoting sustainable development. Everyone should have access to these opportunities.

Every country bears the primary responsibility for its own development. And every country will create its information society from its own unique starting point. History and culture, just like the other requirements for development, vary from country to country. However, the values and principles on which we build the information society are common to all of us in the United Nations. Human rights and freedom of opinion are the basis of an information society where people have the right to access, change and distribute information without restriction.



Within the information society, the significance of the information itself is central. Every human being must have access to information and it is the job of governments to guarantee this access. Information is the very basis of democracy.

At present, the majority of people in the world are not benefiting from the new technology. There is a digital divide which separates the rich and the poor countries. But there is also a division between old and young and between the educated and those without the benefit of education. It is the task of all of us to bridge this digital divide.

The message of this Summit is clear. The world needs a common sense of commitment to removing inequality. This is an absolute precondition of the creation of a global information society. It can, and should, promote the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.


Finland has achieved comparatively good results in the development of the information society. Nations cannot offer ready-made models for others to follow. We can, however, pool our experience, and collaborate. On the basis of Finland's success, I would like to emphasize that the development of the information society is linked to general economic and social development. The task of government is to

create a favourable environment where initiative and creativity can flourish. And all players need to be active: the public sector, business, civil society and individuals.

Also, the significance of education is even more evident in the information society. Everyone must receive a good basic education, as well as the knowledge and skills that the information society demands. Research and development are also required.

Finland is ready to share with other countries its own experiences in the development of the information society. We are also ready to reinforce our contribution to development cooperation.

Finland is actively constructing new partnerships with the private sector, with civil society and with international organizations to promote advancement in the development of information societies. An example of this is the Millennium Technology Prize. This will be awarded biannually as an international acknowledgement of outstanding technological achievements aimed at promoting the sustainable development of society and the quality of life.

Building the global information society requires cooperation extending to all countries and to all the sectors of society. 





*His Excellency  
Jean-Pierre Raffarin*

*Prime Minister of France*

## France



The information society holds immense promise. It is changing and opening up our world. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have enabled a very great number to access what was previously only available to a select few.

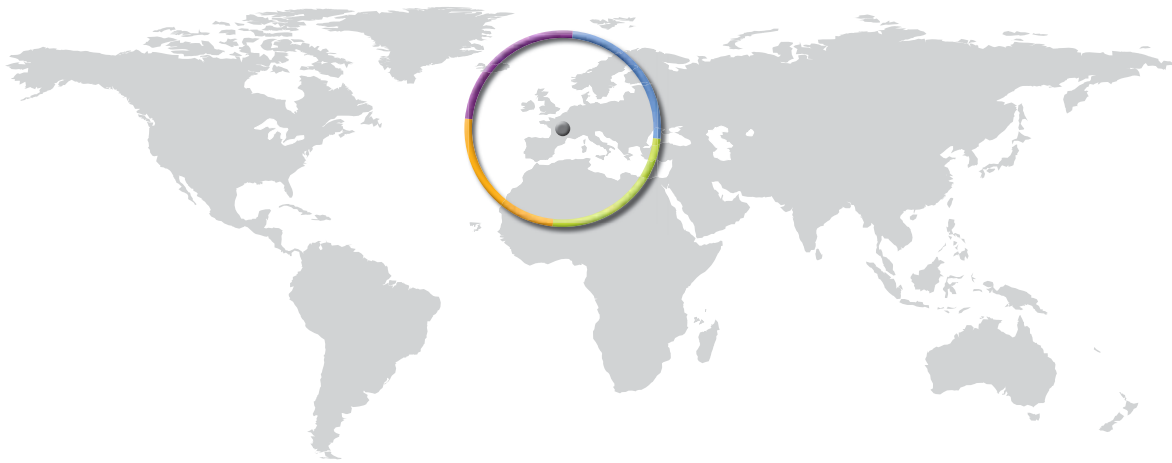
We are experiencing an expansion of the world, such as during the age of the Great Discoveries. But this is no longer a time of solitary discoverers. It is a time of committed participants in a universal enterprise.

The information society has inspired dreams around the globe. Not all of the expectations placed on it have been fulfilled. It is nevertheless evident that information and communication technologies are radically changing the day-to-day lives of our citizens, businesses and societies.

The information society is already a reality, opening up new opportunities, but – like any technological revolution – raising new concerns. Therefore, this is no longer the time to dream; this is the time to build.

This is the purpose we must give to this Summit in Geneva, which for the first time, under the aegis of the United Nations, has assembled States with a common concern to provide a framework for the emerging information society.

It represents the first step in an essential international dialogue. It must also be the first step in a common undertaking. In every field – politics, economics, society and culture – information and communication technologies are a fantastic way of sharing our heritage, our knowledge and our skills, to meet the challenges of the new century.



If the information society is to live up to its promises, in terms of dissemination of knowledge and the economy, we must ensure that its benefits are accessible to all.

The information society that France and its European partners advocate is a society open to all, founded on the principles of freedom, equality and non-discrimination. ICT must be used to uphold rights and freedoms. They must serve democracy, by guaranteeing freedom of expression and privacy, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These new technologies should also facilitate new relationships between citizens and government and greater participation by all in civic life.

ICT must also be used to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and to encourage the sharing and dissemination of knowledge. This is why we must help the least favoured communities and countries to obtain these technologies. We must not assume that the digital divide and the marginalization of part of our populations, our continents and our planet are inevitable. We must redouble our efforts to bridge the digital divide, within our own societies and through international cooperation.

Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, including the possibility for everyone to express themselves in their own language, must be

one of the founding principles of the information society.

Between now and Tunis, we must also reflect on ways to improve Internet governance. France would like this concept of governance to be understood in the broadest sense, so that, beyond legitimate technical concerns, all the problems posed by the development of the information society can be identified and addressed. We will also have to agree on ways to guarantee network security and provide fair and transparent management of domain names and allocation of addresses.

Rules for the digital economy must strike a balance between freedom of commerce and protection of personal data, privacy and consumer rights. Similarly, there must be international rules to safeguard intellectual property rights, which are the foundation of innovation, technological progress and creativity.

We must also create a space of trust for our children. France is committed to the development of international cooperation on the protection of children and combating illicit content, particularly child pornography.

To respond to these challenges, concerted action is required – from governments, of course, but also from international organizations, civil society and the private sector. 🌈



*His Excellency  
El Hadj Omar Bongo*

*President of the Gabonese  
Republic*

## Gabon



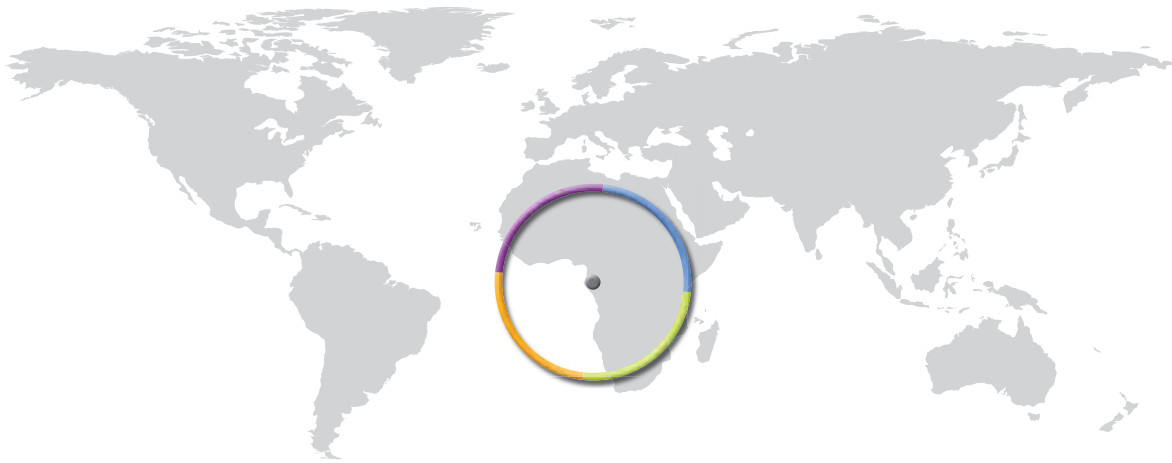
Like many of my fellow Heads of State, I am pleased to participate in the work of the World Summit on the Information Society, which I regard as an historic event.

The World Summit on the Information Society is an exceptional opportunity for laying the foundations of a more just and inclusive society that is beneficial to everyone.

Indeed, new information and communication technologies (ICT) are important tools for progress. They open up numerous possibilities, particularly with regard to diversified and sustainable development. They have now become such an integral part of our everyday life that they have transformed our customs and mentalities. This is why I have made access to information a priority for my country, on the same footing as drinking water, health, education and housing.

All members of society, and especially women and young people, must be associated with the implementation of this priority goal.

This Summit also provides me with the opportunity to reaffirm Gabon's attachment to the values of democracy as a key factor of freedom and peace. For us, no information society can be created without men and women who are free, well-trained communication professionals in a position to exercise their profession responsibly and without fear.



For those same reasons, my country reaffirms its commitment to in no way impede the free exercise of the profession of journalist. For their part, journalists must comply with the universally accepted rules of ethics and common practices of civility. In the same spirit, and in that of respect for individual freedom of expression, the Internet must not be a tool, either for individuals or for States, that is used for destabilization purposes. Moreover, within the framework of the United Nations, regulations must be established to protect the private lives of individuals.

The ever-widening social divide between North and South requires us to go further than mere intentions. Our Summit must undertake to narrow the digital divide through multi-faceted partnerships.

I therefore solemnly call for digital solidarity. Within this context, the most developed countries must make their knowledge and capacities available to those countries least well off, in order to allow the latter to have access to new technologies. This they must do with all the more conviction and commitment because

the New Partnership of Africa's Development (NEPAD) has identified new information and communication technologies as a leading priority.

I reiterate the hope that international solidarity may manifest itself and take action on this major challenge facing our modern world.

The information society, which I regard as a society of dialogue, should allow us to build a world of peace, in order to ensure that the development expected by the people of the world can take place. 🌍



*Her Excellency  
Isatou Njie-Saidy*

*Vice-President of the  
Republic of the Gambia*

## Gambia

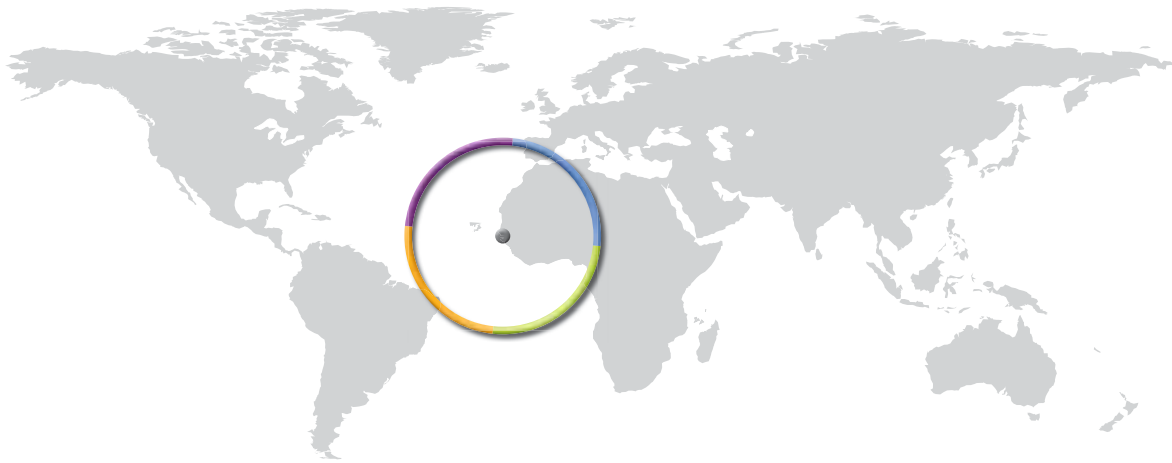


This Summit is unique. Unique in the sense that it reaffirms our global solidarity once again, and commitment, particularly to the importance of information and communication technologies (ICT) as engines of growth and also of global socio-economic development.

The African continent is quite aware of the huge potential that ICT hold for the attainment of socio-economic development objectives and meaningful transformation for all. It was in 1996, for example, that the Joint Conference of African Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Economic Development and Planning identified the use of emerging ICT in central government and local administration as one of its priority areas for entry into the information era.

The commitment to use ICT as an entry point into the information society gave rise to the African Information Society Initiative (AISI). This commitment is consistent not only with the national development blueprint of the Gambia, which we call "Vision 2020" and which seeks to develop and use electronic information for development, but is also consistent with the spirit embodied in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

In this respect, and within the framework of AISI, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), following a preliminary assessment of the state of ICT in the Gambia, designed an e-government strategy for our country as a pilot project focused primarily on various departments of State. Initially, these included the Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, the Office of the President, and the Department of State for Education and Health, as well as local government. The pilot project is expected to facilitate the shar-



ing of financial and economic management data between these priority government sectors. It is also envisaged that, following the successful implementation of this pilot project, it will surely be expanded and replicated in other African countries, as well as in other institutions and services within the Gambia. UNECA's Committee on Development Information, meeting in Addis Ababa in May 2003, designated the Gambia as an AISI model for e-government for the African continent.

E-government in Africa will aim to transform the relationship between government and the public that it serves; between government and the private sector, and, indeed, between government departments themselves, in terms of how transactions are carried out in a more efficient manner for the benefit of all. E-government in Africa will provide other advantages, including high-quality and efficient public service delivery. It is also expected to further increase transparency, accountability and good governance.

At this Summit, once we have endorsed the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action to bridge the digital divide, I humbly enjoin all concerned, particularly our Heads of State and Government, to do everything possible to pave the way to the successful building of an all-inclusive information and knowledge-based society: a society where no individual is

left behind in utilizing the potential benefits offered by ICT. These noble objectives and ideals, as well as goals, can be achieved if the richer countries that are far ahead of the rest of the world in ICT make a humane commitment to share their resources and technological know-how with the poorer and less advantaged countries of the world. In this regard, the urgent implementation particularly of the Digital Solidarity Agenda and its related fund for developing countries would surely help less endowed countries in their efforts to bridge the digital divide and become equal and active participants in the development of this evolving information society.

Ignorance is, today, humanity's worst enemy as it is responsible, for example, for all the conflicts and the problems that afflict the entire human race. ICT are, without doubt, one of the remedies to this deadly human scourge and malaise.

I cannot conclude without expressing some caution, as others have done. While we embrace the benefits of ICT in combating poverty and social exclusion in particular, we must remain alert at all times to their potential criminal abuse as well. 🇨🇲



*His Excellency  
John A. Kufuor*

*President of the Republic  
of Ghana*

## Ghana



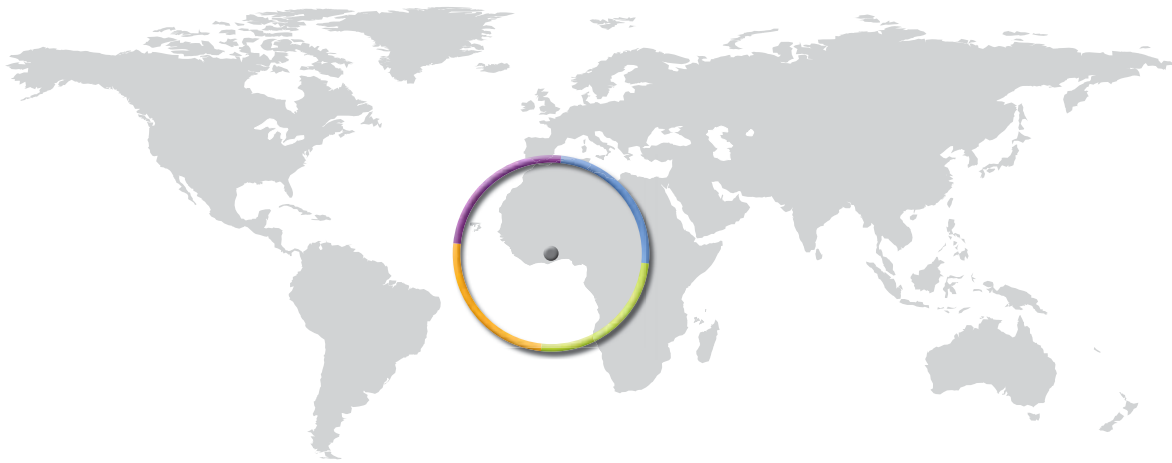
We have gathered here today to try to foster unity among the people of the world through the deployment and utilization of information and communications technologies (ICT) for development. This is to help the disadvantaged nations to try to leapfrog the digital divide in global development.

The process leading to this Summit, especially the preparatory meetings, seems to have sufficiently succeeded in debating the main issues in the Declaration of Principles. Evidently, there is general acceptance that ICT is propelling the already advanced to even greater heights, whilst most of the developing world is being dismally left out.

It has also come out that all participants accept the need to ensure equitable accessibility and benefits to all countries, businesses and individuals. The principle here is that, in the global village, this technology will be indispensable infrastructure for social, economic, security and other aspects of proper development.

This is why Ghana endorses the call for the establishment of the global digital solidarity fund to assist developing nations to harness the full potential of ICT for their accelerated development. The principle underlying such a fund should be collective subscriptions from nations, each according to its ability. An administrative set-up will be needed to regulate the proper functioning of the system. I am of the view that this will be an indispensable social service for the efficient and sustainable evolution of the global village. I therefore support the call for a committee to work on the feasibility of the fund and its regulation.





Meanwhile, permit me to say a few words about Ghana's ICT development. The National Communications Authority of Ghana has revised the regulatory regime to take account of global trends. The legal regulatory system or framework is to make investors comfortable and efficient. The authority is guided by the principles of openness, fairness and competitiveness, in order to enhance market liberalization and a universal access policy aimed at encouraging investors in ICT into Ghana.

One noteworthy area is the work being done on the protection of intellectual property. The establishment of opportunities for the facilitation of education and training, as well as providing universal access for disadvantaged groups, is catered for under a national policy to extend broadband to every town in the country with a senior secondary school and/or teacher training college.

Another area of success is the establishment of an international centre of excellence for the training of trainers in ICT for the sub-region comprising the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This has been achieved and launched with the support and help of India.

Ghana is creating a technology park that we hope will go some way to serve our corner of the world. We are demonstrating our commitment to the promotion of investment in the country's ICT sector.

In conclusion, let me reiterate my call for a concerted effort to build a global ICT infrastructure and for countries to subscribe to a digital solidarity fund. 🇳🇮



*His Excellency  
Mohammad Khatami*

*President of the Islamic  
Republic of Iran*

## *Islamic Republic of Iran*



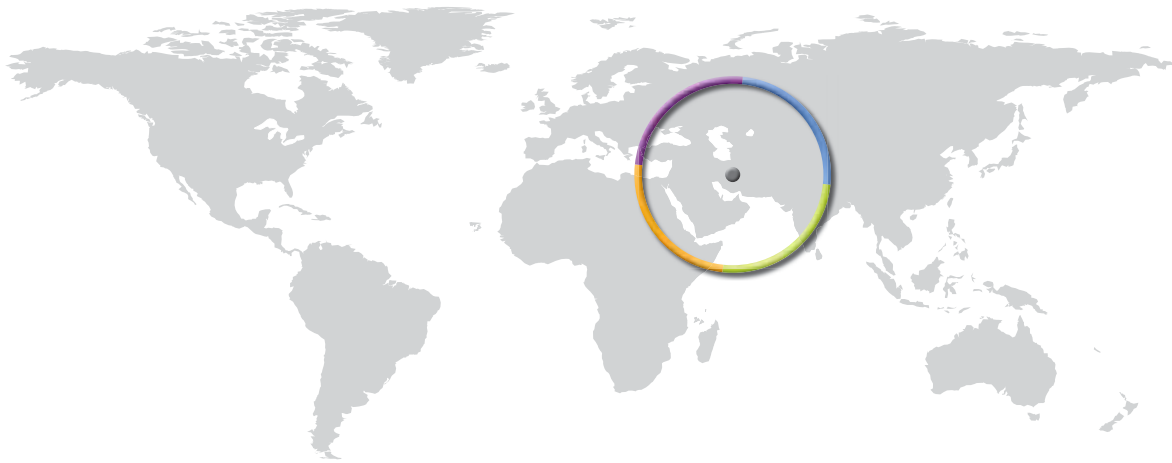
We are all aware of the historical sufferings of human beings caused by distance and separation, which have been reflected in different languages and in various fields of knowledge. In the light of the massive change we are experiencing in the field of communications, can we now be hopeful and optimistic about the reduction of distances?

The entry into the information society is a new opportunity for the entire world population. The information age is the age of dialogue and the networked society is the organizer of the networked order. We must seek a solution and work out a formula so that exchange of information in the information society leads to dialogue and shortened distances. At the outset of this millennium, I raised the need for "dialogue among civilizations", in the age of cyberspace, too, we should continue to encourage and promote this dialogue.

The information society must take cultural diversity as the foundation for the common existence of human society and must be able to rely on it. We must work towards securing the participation of all cultural, social and linguistic groups in the creation of a knowledge-based society.

We are concerned about inequalities in the development of infrastructure and global access to, and use of, information and communication technologies (ICT). We should focus on the objective of turning the digital divide into digital opportunities through the promotion and consolidation of digital ties.

From this perspective, we shall strive and endeavour to fulfil such rights as the "right to development", the "right to communication" and the "right to information." We urgently appeal



to the international community to help create new capacities in the developing countries and assist them with their empowerment.

It is expected that the Summit will succeed in clearly explaining the common concepts cited in the draft declaration of principles and on this same basis I expect that we shall:

- Contemplate changing the unfair situation of the present world, which considers the flow of information as a tool for the exertion of force and the imposition of unilateralism. We should see to it that an information society is established not as an extension of the present status quo, but on a new foundation.
- Reach consensus on the principles of the new and more ethical, humane and fair conventions that are a necessity for living in the information society.
- Ensure the indiscriminate access of individuals, institutions and countries to information, international policies and monitoring instruments, so that no government will have the right to impose unilateral decisions, depriving other nations of their rights.
- Find a democratic and comprehensive mechanism to enable all players, including the developing countries, to play an effective role in global management of the Internet.

- Create a fair balance between the public interest and the rights of the creators, owners and users of the works covered by intellectual property rights.
- Facilitate and strengthen the trend of democratization and the free and fair access of people to the sources of power.

In order to ease suffering and reduce historical distances, we should place the empowerment of human beings at the forefront of our efforts. We know that a knowledgeable man is a capable individual, and a knowledgeable society is an empowered society. So let us make the information society a knowledgeable and sagacious one. As the great philosopher, and renowned Iranian poet, Mowlana Jalaluddin Rumi states:

*"Since awareness is a requirement  
of the soul*

*Whoever is more knowledgeable  
has a stronger soul".*





*His Excellency  
Bertie Ahern*

*Prime Minister of Ireland*

## Ireland

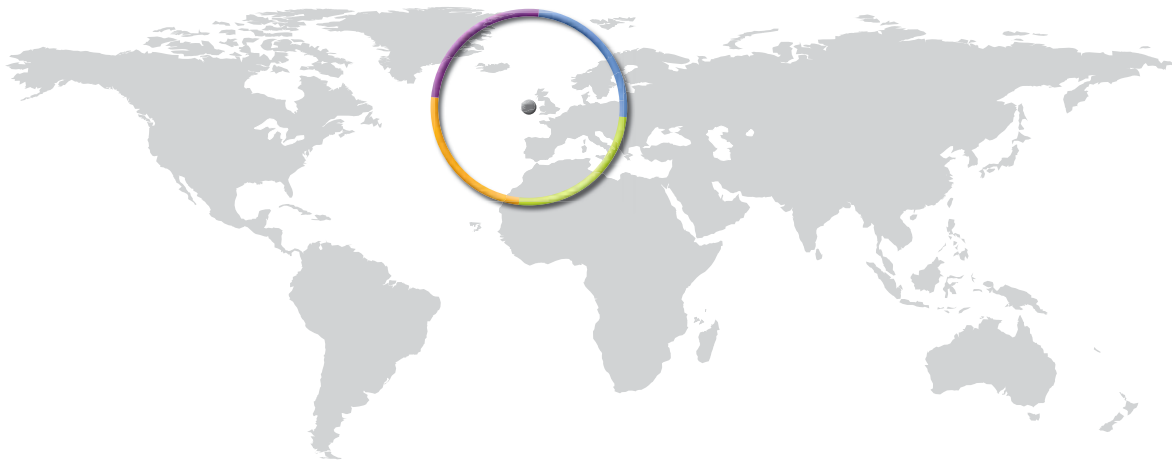


"Information society" is a phrase that is not used in the daily lives of people around the world. But the power of technology to change people's lives is understood and accepted by everyone wherever they live.

Technology is a tool and an enabler of change. However, it cannot, and should not, dictate how our societies are shaped and developed. What is most important in any society is its citizens. That is who we as governments serve, and the ultimate goal of technology is to serve the citizen.

Today, our societies are divided in new ways – into those who have the ability and the means to access and use technology to achieve their full potential and those who don't. The information society presents each country with the same opportunities and challenges for economic and social development. But the difference between countries lies in their ability to grasp these opportunities and to confront these challenges. From Iceland to Idaho and from Mali to Moscow, citizens, governments, and businesses are dealing with the emergence of a knowledge-based information society. It is, therefore, timely to have a global discussion on the growth of this relatively new phenomenon. We need to look at how the information society can benefit the global community – and how the global community can shape its future development.

I firmly believe that we can only fully realize the power of information and communication technologies (ICT) in close cooperation with the private sector. While governments can provide the supporting framework, the private sector has driven the development of ICT and their application. In areas such as distance education, e-health, wireless access and low-cost con-



nectivity solutions, progress depends on partnership with private-sector companies, including a renewed focus on research into ICT for development.

In Ireland, we want to tap into the huge pool of ICT expertise in Irish industry in a new partnership to support poverty reduction. We will encourage and facilitate Irish ICT volunteers to use their skills in support of capacity-building programmes in our partner countries. We will consult industry and tertiary institutions about new areas of research into ICT and development. We will work to develop new partnerships between Irish ICT companies and enterprises in developing countries.

Ireland's development cooperation programme works with the poorest people in the poorest countries of the world. Ireland will work with its partner governments in support of their national ICT strategies. We want to see ICT used to achieve the goal of universal primary education by 2015. And we think ICT can make a vital contribution to the implementation of HIV/AIDS treatment regimes in countries where millions face death because they have no access to life-saving drugs.

Development Cooperation Ireland, the government's official development assistance programme, will use ICT as a new and pow-

erful tool in its programmes. We will increase spending on ICT in response to the needs of our partner countries. We will advocate greater use of ICT in national poverty reduction strategies. We will promote regulatory systems which encourage the open flow of information and widespread access to the Internet and other communications media.

While ICT hold out great promise for the future, and should help us in our common effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, we have to be realistic and pragmatic about their application. The digital divide in access to ICT is a symptom of a wider development divide. Unless we tackle the root causes of global inequality and injustice, we will not bridge the digital divide. Fundamentally, as we agreed at Monterrey, we need better governance, sound economic management, more Overseas Development Aid, more debt relief, a fair world trade order and a relentless focus on the fight against HIV/AIDS.

As a global society, we must ensure that all our citizens enjoy the benefits and the opportunities that an inclusive people-centred information society offers. If we do not ensure this, we will be remiss in our responsibility and duty as governments. 🇪🇺



*His Excellency  
Moody Awori*

*Vice-President of the  
Republic of Kenya*

## Kenya

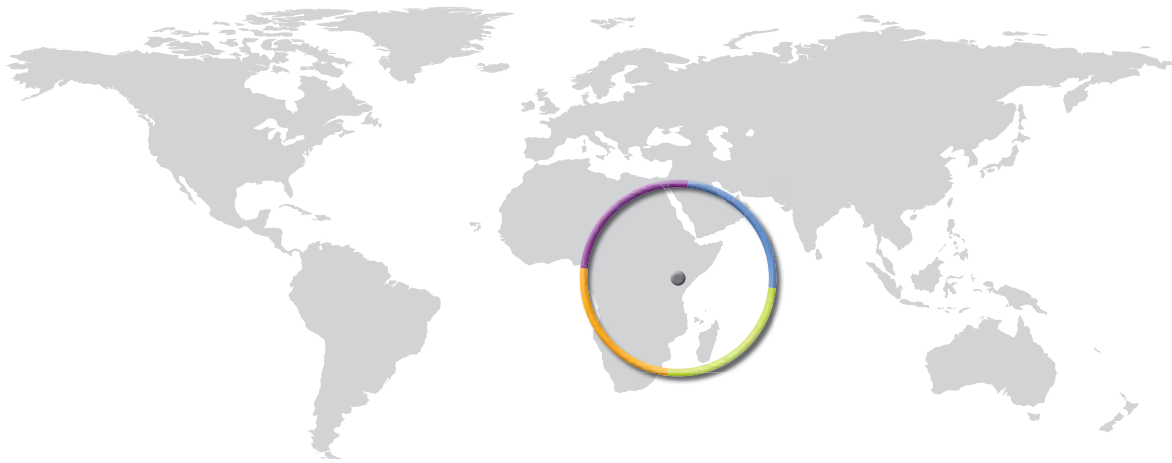


It gives me great pleasure to address this gathering on this auspicious occasion devoted to building an information society for the benefit of humanity.

This meeting is important and timely for the development of a common understanding of the fundamental and irreversible transformation of the world into a global village. It also symbolizes our commitment to turn the digital divide into a digital opportunity. We shall all need to tap the dynamism of emerging technological advances to the full, in order to revitalize and enhance the development pace of the growing economies.

It is true that the majority of the world population has yet to access the benefits of information and communication technologies (ICT). Most developing countries are still lagging behind in the implementation of ICT. This is one area that we all need to take cognizance of, and mobilize resources to develop. This Summit has been challenged to come up with a Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action that should demonstrate undivided commitment to changing this situation. Solutions to the ever-widening gap, especially those that relate to the less developed countries, must be sought. This will avert the risk of unbalanced information society and pave the way for participation by all.

Development of ICT can be used to fight ills that have plagued our society, such as poverty, ignorance, hunger and disease, as articulated in the Millennium Declaration. Our aspirations at this Summit form a great vision towards the development of an information society that is people-centred, creative and accessible to all members of our nations. In this respect, we must



address the various challenges and constraints that hinder the development of the sector. Above all, we must focus on the large, excluded segment of society. This includes those living in rural and remote areas that are unserved and under-served.

This Summit provides both an opportunity to address the ICT issue in a comprehensive manner, and a challenge of our commitment to reverse the prevailing situation. In doing so, I am reminded of the words of the great Mahatma Gandhi, who said: "The difference between what you do and what we are capable of doing will suffice to solve most of the world's problems." Those words remain valid today. It is, therefore, a challenge for us to formulate policies that incorporate the ICT component. To this end, it is expected that we enhance transparency and performance within the public sector.

My Government is committed to improving the level of access to ICT for all Kenyans. Already, we are in the process of developing a national ICT policy. I note with appreciation the indispensable role played by the development partners, private sector and civil society in the development of ICT. In this respect, I wish to call upon them to uphold the positive spirit of partnership.

In conclusion, I wish to re-emphasize that ICT is a tool for economic development and progress. The WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action provide the road map to address the digital divide and transform it into a digital opportunity. I am convinced that the community of nations gathered here today will provide responsible leadership and the required political direction to turn this road map into our common reality. 🇰🇪





*His Excellency  
Askar Akaev*

*President of the Kyrgyz  
Republic*

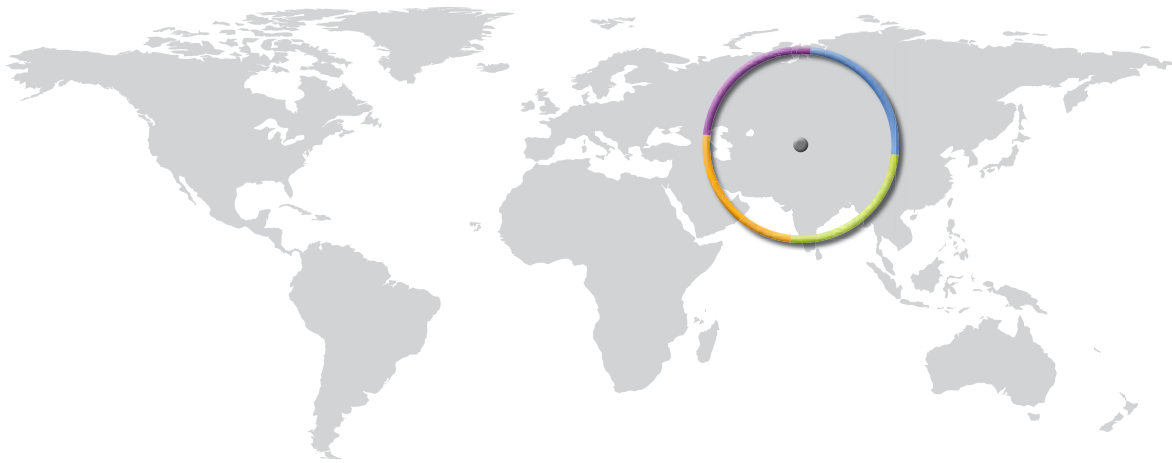
## Kyrgyzstan



Our world is at present undergoing a tremendous digital revolution and the driving force is information and communication technologies (ICT). They can provide everybody with access to global communication and also to a treasure chest of international wealth.

Kyrgyzstan has to carefully study the experience of other developing countries regarding ICT. And in every example there is something to be learned. But, at the same time, I am convinced that we cannot blindly repeat even the very best example. Rather, we have to look for our own way and we have to take into account our own circumstances. The reduction of the digital divide is not the final goal for Kyrgyzstan: we need to make a qualitative jump and land on the other side of the digital gap.

To do this, we are trying to design our own Kyrgyz model in using ICT for development. First of all, we want to have a very high level of education. According to an assessment of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Kyrgyzstan is the leader amongst the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as regards education reform and literacy levels. We were among the initiators of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) programme and the "virtual silk road". As a result, we have today in central Asia an excellent educational network, and there has also been a dramatic increase in Internet usage.



The experience of Finland has shown that universities, in particular regional ones, are innovative centres for growth. We have created a network of universities and we are trying to set up a special State programme for preparing engineers in hi-tech fields. With the support of the Government of Japan we are opening an ICT centre. Technical assistance is also going to be provided by Indian companies.

As regards the development of telecommunications, rural areas of Kyrgyzstan are still far behind urban ones. In order to overcome this digital gap, we have set ourselves the task of increasing as much as possible all centres of public access to ICT. Also, private business is now making a significant contribution.

We are trying to raise awareness of ICT and arouse interest in it amongst people living in remote areas, so that they will in turn promote development. We also have great hopes for the development of a mobile economy. The initiators of this would be private mobile telephony companies, which have already achieved vast success.

The strategic position of Kyrgyzstan in central Asia is very important and we have a very ambitious, but an achievable, goal of transforming our country into a regional ICT hub, with connections to the main arteries of communication from China and Singapore.

I have two proposals to include into the concluding document of this Summit, regarding support to help overcome the digital divide. First of all, developing countries need assistance from the world community in the development of terrestrial telecommunication networks to access the major hubs. This will enable us to get cheap tariffs for accessing information systems of primary countries. Then, all developing countries should also be helped to support universal access to overcome the digital divide between urban and rural areas. 🇷🇺



*Her Excellency  
Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga*

*President of the Republic  
of Latvia*

## Latvia



I express Latvia's full support of a comprehensive Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action for the building of a worldwide information society. It is my country's firm conviction that the foundations of any successful information society must lie in such universal human rights as freedom of thought and expression, the free exchange of information, democracy and tolerance, equality and non-discrimination, and the rule of law and in good governance.

Within authoritarian and closed societies, information is closely guarded as a precious commodity and divulged only to the privileged few. If previously power was based on the ownership of land and later on the acquisition of capital, then nowadays power is becoming increasingly based on access to information. This is why information societies must also be open societies, where information is widely distributed and available to all.

The creation of an information society will involve the costly process of making information and communication technologies (ICT) more accessible to the people of our countries. It will involve the establishment of more public access points to computers and the Internet, along with the continued development of such e-services as e-government, e-health, and e-commerce. This is where such international organizations as the United Nations can work in partnership with national governments, and where the private sector can complement government development assistance efforts.



Since only a computer literate population will be able to make full use of the services provided in an information society, it is imperative to reduce the so-called digital divide that exists at many levels. It exists between the developing and developed countries, but also within countries, within regions, and even within families. By bridging the digital divide, we can empower those who have been left behind and allow for their fuller participation in all spheres of life. Thus, along with increased public access to ICT, education and life-long learning should be among each country's national priorities.

Another widening gap is arising from the fact that more powerful, but also more expensive, technologies are being created all the time. As a result, people with the resources to obtain these can gain distinctive advantages over those who do not. At the same time, we should not pursue the development of an information society without a full understanding of the risks and dangers involved. Technology is a tool and not a panacea. An information society is merely a stepping stone towards a knowledge society in which information is properly managed and channelled into positive social transformation and into the continued development of a country's economy.

Finally, I cannot fail to mention the importance of using the information society to maintain our planet's rich linguistic and cultural diversity, which is one of the world's principal treasures. The tools provided by an information society should promote dialogue and increase cooperation among our world's cultures and nations, which in turn are essential factors for global, sustainable development.

If we succeed in harnessing the immense potential offered by ICT and if we make these technologies accessible to as many people as possible, then we will be in a much better position to achieve the over-arching goals that have been enshrined in the Millennium Declaration, notably the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the containment of disease, the protection of the environment and the attainment of a more peaceful, just and prosperous world. I am convinced that the unprecedented action of involving business and civil society leaders in this Summit's activities will prove beneficial to all and that it will bring us significantly closer to reaching all these development goals. 🌈



*His Excellency  
Emile Lahoud*

*President of the Republic  
of Lebanon*

## Lebanon



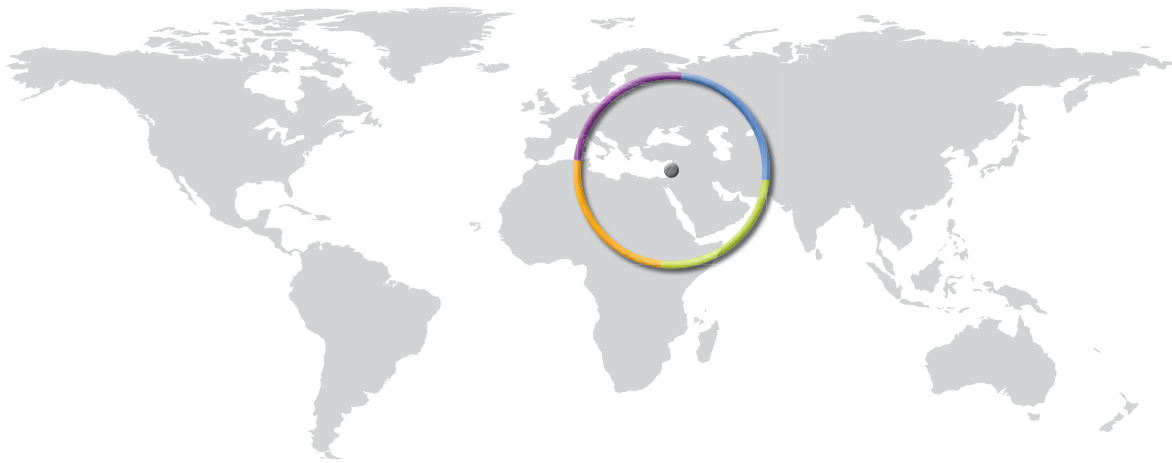
The advent of the information society to which we devote this Summit is, for our planet, a crucial moment. In order to assess its implications, it is important to put it in its proper historical perspective.

It is the third stage of a long evolution inaugurated some 10 millennia ago on the plains of the Middle East. There, the agricultural revolution, in converting hunter-gatherers into farmers, founded our civilization. The rural economy it established led to the imperial and feudal order that governed most of the world until the industrial revolution.

In mastering new energies, the industrial revolution of the 18th century transformed work through machines. No longer synonymous with physical labour, work ceased being a curse and for the first time, humanity knew abundance. It consequently discovered freedom. Over the ruins of dead empires, the industrial nations learned democracy, which was consolidated when the injustices inherent in the excesses of liberalism were rectified with the advent of social democracy.

Founded on a more equitable distribution of prosperity within the industrial nations, this order remained the sole prerogative of these nations. The rest of the world was, unfortunately, excluded. Without going as far as saying that the wealth of some is the result of the poverty of others and that the development of the so-called North is historically the outcome of the exploitation of the South, let us acknowledge that the latter was long deprived of the benefits of the industrial revolution.

The new information technology, which allows the dematerialization and the delocalization of economic activity, ensures



today a better future for underprivileged peoples. However, a deep gap still separates the world of the rich from the world in which more than one billion human beings live on one dollar a day, drink undrinkable water, and have no access to modern means of communication.

Digital production and communication techniques are neutral in themselves. They can liberate regions from underdevelopment. But they also have the ability to exponentially increase the advance of the most powerful, and aggravate the despair of the most deprived.

Left only to the laws of the market, globalization can only yield more inequalities and deepen economic and social imbalances with each passing day. On the cultural level, it can be synonymous with standardization to the benefit of a dominant pattern, and flatten other cultures whose diversity nevertheless enriches the world.

The Nation State rectified, in times past, the abuses of unbridled liberalism through economic and social reformism, thus reconciling private initiative and a democratic direction of society. This synthesis was possible under the aegis of the State as it took place in a historical context where the economic and political spaces coincided.

The age of the Nation State is, to a large extent, gone. If, within a national framework, the laws of the market were controlled and humanized, it is because there was a political authority with the power to do it. In today's world where information techniques have projected us, this authority is still uncertain and no power, no matter how great, would be able to unilaterally replace it.

The Lebanese population is characterized by a high level of education and multilingualism, linked to our geographical location as well as to the structure of our economy, where services and trade are predominant. Thus, it is naturally predisposed to information-related activities. A large number of our enterprises are devoted to them. Some even act in partnership with prominent international groups. These enterprises animate large sectors – banking, insurance, trade, tourism, transportation, communications – which are traditionally characterized in Lebanon by dynamism and efficiency.

Convinced of the necessity of bringing the public sector into line with the private one, the Lebanese State has launched administrative reform with computerization as its cornerstone. This is a necessary condition for good governance and modernity. 🇱🇧



*His Majesty King Letsie  
III of the Kingdom of  
Lesotho*

## Lesotho



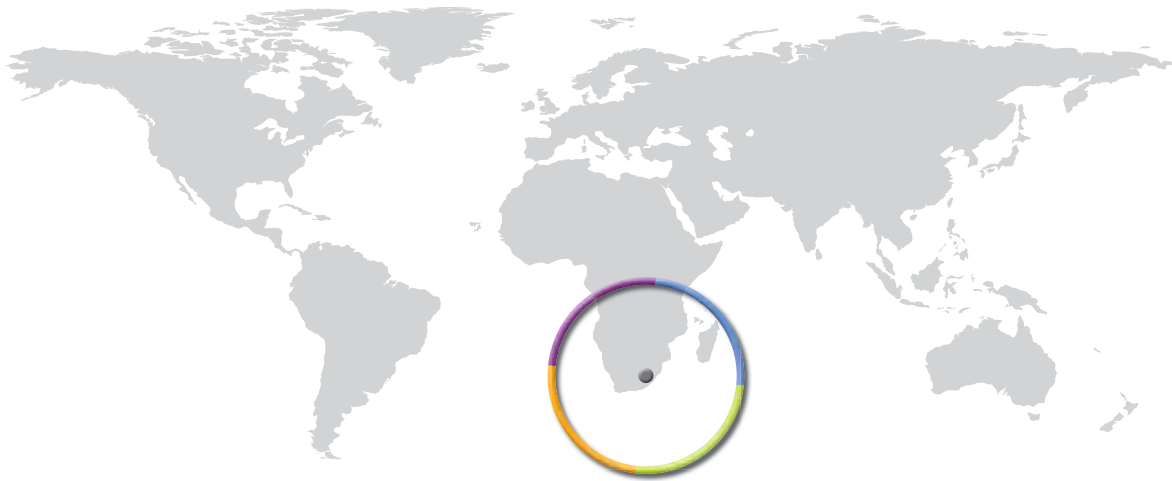
There is a growing consensus globally that information and communication technologies (ICT) can contribute significantly to economic growth and development. It is in this context that the Kingdom of Lesotho wishes to reaffirm its commitment to an information society. It fully aligns itself with the goal of a development-oriented information society, geared towards the eradication of poverty and hunger, and the achievement of a balanced and comprehensive social and economic development for all.

Lesotho, like most developing countries of the world, is still at the infancy stage of ICT. The widening digital divide between the North and the South remains a matter of grave concern to us. It is my government's humble submission that the quest for an information society should be pursued as a global initiative if humankind as whole is to reap its full benefits.

In the case of Lesotho, with its unique mountainous landscape coupled with a small population and an equally small economic base, connectivity poses unenviable challenges. Driving a universal access strategy in this environment calls for the parallel development of support infrastructure, such as electricity, to reach rural areas in order to register a noticeable improvement in the connectivity problem that plagues Lesotho and the developing world as a whole.

Low ICT skills, and awareness in general, among our communities hinder progress in the proliferation of the ICT sector. Capacity building, through transfer of skills and overall human resource development, would greatly assist in addressing these challenges.





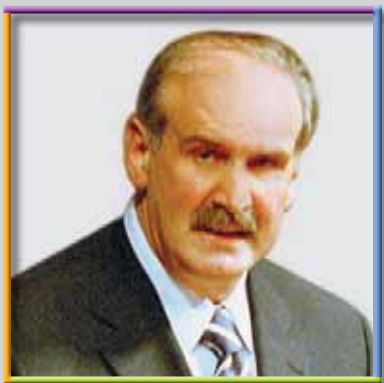
Developing countries urgently need to develop the capacity to adapt computer software to their domestic conditions. Use of a foreign language in applications does not promote the use of computers among our communities with low, or no, proficiency in a particular foreign language. Regrettably, this comprises the majority of our populations. Use of open source and free software that permit modification and adaptations to domestic conditions remains a readily available solution. These should be promoted, while research and development programmes are being accelerated to offer a lasting and efficient solution.

We are aware of the potential of ICT in the betterment of the daily lives of our communities. These technologies permit nations to compete equally in the global marketplace without the impediment of distances between their respective locations. My country is very eager to seize these opportunities.

The challenges that we face to accelerate our efforts to become aligned with the rest of global society in an information society look daunting without external assistance. However, we take comfort in knowing that we have partners to join hands with in this difficult task. The Kingdom of Lesotho strongly urges

and appeals to the Heads of delegations here present to adopt the digital solidarity agenda to facilitate the mobilization of resources for the inclusion of all in the emerging information society.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Kingdom of Lesotho wishes to assure this august conference of its commitment and maximum support in the promotion of the information society worldwide. 🇱🇸



*His Excellency  
Otmar Hasler*

*Head of Government of the  
Principality of Liechtenstein*

## *Liechtenstein*

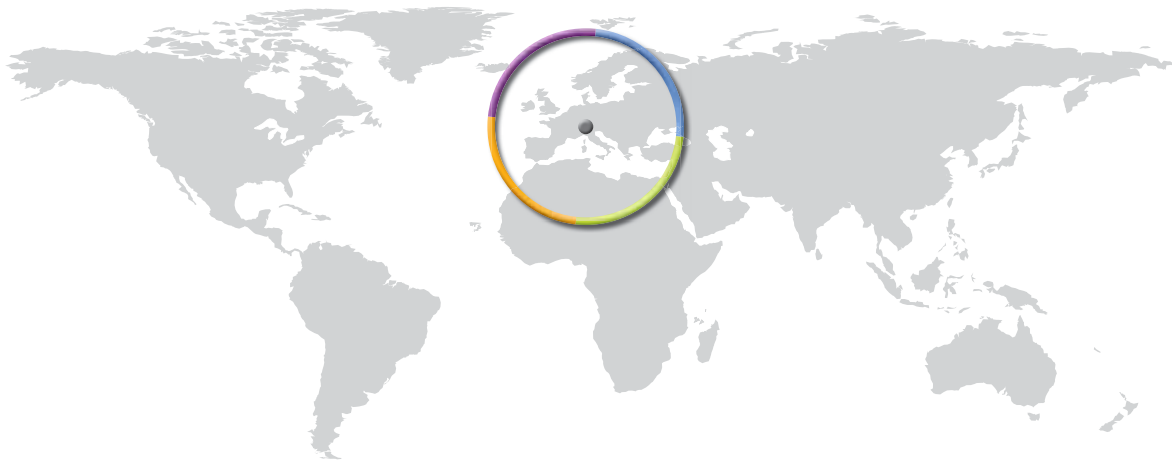


The highly developed industry of Liechtenstein is wide open to the world and could not exist without the widespread use of modern information and communication technologies (ICT). Children in our country learn to use the Internet at an early age and get in touch with children from all over the globe. However, they cannot contact those children who do not have access to the Internet, and thus they cannot learn from their experiences.

In a small country like Liechtenstein, we are particularly aware of the need to strengthen cultural diversity. Therefore, we think it is of great importance that ICT – including traditional media, as well as new technologies – should also be used for the protection and promotion of cultural diversity and local heritage.

Reaching rural, isolated or nomadic communities through the use of ICT should render it possible for them to make their voice heard and to hear other voices. The right to freedom of opinion and expression through any media, and regardless of frontiers, must be given a central place in our endeavours. Of course, this freedom must be subject to the protection of privacy and the prevention of criminal conduct, as well as of acts based on racism or xenophobia.

In order to strike the delicate balance between these apparently conflicting objectives, we should more often provide ICT users with adequate education. In Liechtenstein, the need to help children and young people deal with content available via modern, electronic communication tools that may affect their personal development, has been recognized and taken into account. Such education can go a long way towards ensuring the responsible use of ICT.




My Government has developed a comprehensive national e-government strategy to achieve a more efficient allocation of resources at all levels of government and to get people more closely involved in public life. Empowerment of disadvantaged groups in society by enabling them to participate in democratic processes, as well as increasing transparency in public administration, should be an aim in promoting ICT at the international level.

In this respect, it is important to put people at the centre of our efforts. Adopting a demand-driven approach is certainly more effective than devising highly complex strategies far away from people's needs and concerns.

Liechtenstein's development cooperation policy puts its focus on projects that enable people to participate in their conception, implementation and follow-up. The development of rural areas, as well as education and empowerment of women and girls, are also priorities, and obviously lend themselves to the support of projects based on the use of traditional and modern ICT.

If we want to reach the goal of an inclusive information society, we have to ensure that all stakeholders are closely involved. Besides governments, civil society and the media, we also need the commitment and effective par-

ticipation of the private sector. This Summit is to give a new impetus to all kinds of public-private partnerships. Cooperation between the private sector and governments will benefit from a business environment which is stable and well-coordinated. In this respect, we are of the opinion that ITU has to play a role in the direction of global harmonization. Closer relations between ITU and the private sector could lead to a win-win situation.

The Plan of Action we are going to adopt is very ambitious. It is an important part of our shared vision of how to overcome the digital divide and build a truly inclusive information society. We are called upon to do our best for the full implementation of the Plan of Action in order to make it an effective instrument for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. I can assure you of the full commitment of Liechtenstein to this end. 



*His Excellency  
Amadou Toumani Touré*

*President of the Republic  
of Mali*

## Mali



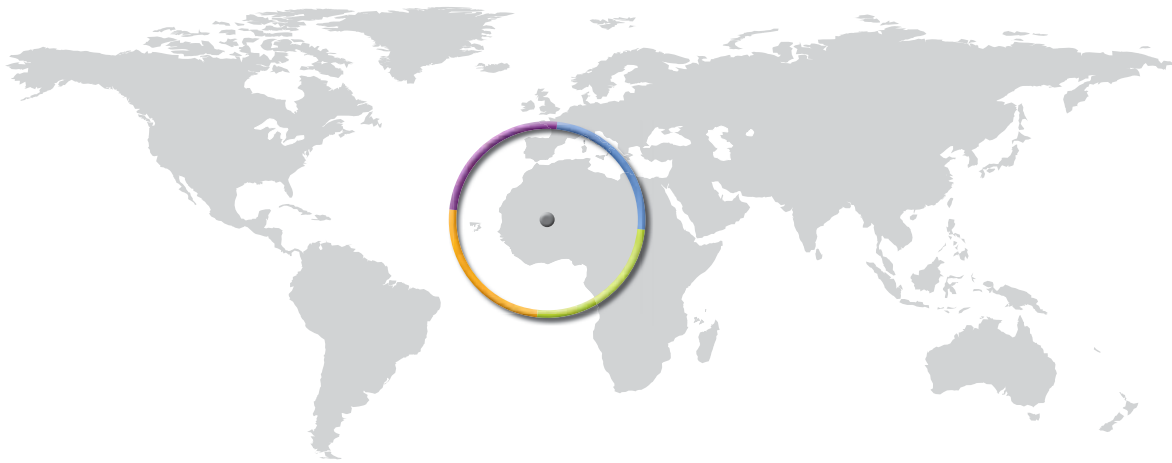
My country, Mali, began its journey towards the digital age fairly early on. In 1996, my predecessor, President Alpha Oumar Konaré, here in Geneva, and along with then President of the Republic and Canton of Geneva Guy-Olivier Segond, launched the "Anaïs Network", which proved to be a catalyst for the use of Internet in numerous African countries.

Mali's commitment, at the highest level of the State, led to our country hosting the Bamako 2000 Conference on the theme: "Internet: Bridges to development". That international meeting, which was attended by all major players in the development of information and communication technologies (ICT), was a decisive stage in mapping out this Summit in Geneva.

Moreover, at a continental level, Mali was chosen to host the regional conference and chair the African Group. My Government has spared no effort to enable the Bamako 2000 Bureau to participate in all African meetings during the preparatory phase of this Summit. Thus we have drawn together, organized and harmonized our continent's positions.

It would be remiss not to thank all delegations here present for having chosen our compatriot Adama Samassekou as Chairman of the Summit's Preparatory Committee. Through him, Mali and the entire African continent are honoured.

Africa is convinced that new information and communication technologies can offer a powerful tool for development in the fields of education, health, commerce, agriculture and industry, to name but a few. Africa is here present in order to make its contribution to building this global edifice. We are here present, with our creative genius, and with the enormous potential our young people have to offer.



We are also here present with our difficulties, our hopes, and the solutions we have proposed during the preparatory phase of the Summit. Africa, more than any other continent, needs infrastructure, suitable content, human resources, computers and telecommunication equipment – and at a fair price. We have contributed to building humankind's intellectual heritage, and we rightly call for free access to that heritage, in its modern, digitized form.

We find ourselves at the dawn of an unprecedented revolution in the entire history of humankind. In order to participate in it fully, we require a new organizational, implementation and funding mechanism. Thus, we fully endorse the proposal by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal to establish a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund, free of the burdens of bureaucracy and red tape, to finance the concrete actions of the Plan of Action.

In the information society that we shall build, Africa intends to preserve its soul, its identity and its values. We are well aware that the digital divide makes a division not only between North and South, but also within our own States. It creates differences between town and country, and excludes the least well-off. We must close these internal gaps.

For this reason, Mali would like to pay tribute to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its promotion of multipurpose community telecentres. We also salute the initiative made to introduce the Internet in schools, launched in our country by ITU and Swisscom. This has allowed the secondary school at Timbuktu to receive state-of-the-art equipment, and is intended to embrace other schools. This kind of partnership is essential if we are to eliminate our own digital inequalities.

I wish every success to the Geneva Summit, and look forward to the Tunis Summit in 2005. 🇲🇱



*His Excellency  
Sanjbegz Tumor-Ochir*

*Speaker of the Parliament  
of Mongolia*

# Mongolia

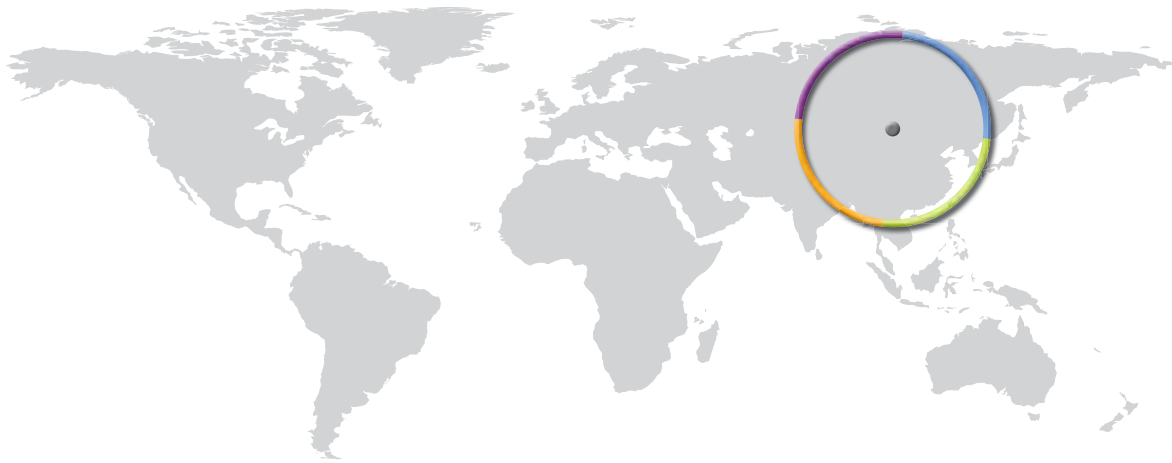


In many countries, information and communication technologies (ICT) are increasingly becoming means of fundamental importance to provide government and business services to citizens. Hence, Mongolia believes that the main purpose of the World Summit on Information Society lies not only in giving added impetus to governments' efforts, but also in drawing the attention of the international community to the widening digital divide among regions and countries, and in supporting developing countries, particularly their civil society and private sector, in using ICT as an engine of growth and development.

The major outcome of the Summit must facilitate the creation of a new collective agreement that encompasses all stakeholders and directs their comparative advantages towards the achievement of the goals set at the United Nations Millennium Summit and in Johannesburg and Monterrey.

In order to successfully create the information society, the special needs of the poor, particularly those living in remote areas of the world, and of minorities and nomadic people should be taken into account. We strongly support the position that ICT are a powerful tool that can be used to further development efforts, especially the goals to reduce extreme poverty, provide basic education, improve health care, decrease gender inequality and increase global partnership and cooperation.

The enormous potential that ICT create presents the most productive means of development for landlocked developing countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and countries with economies in transition. However, affordable and widely available access to ICT infrastructure and services remains a challenge facing developing countries in



building the information society. Therefore, the issues of capital and human capacity building, as well as sources of financing for the provision of assistance, need to be addressed in a very constructive manner.

Mongolia has been establishing the fundamentals of the information society for quite some time. The national development strategy envisages ICT as a priority goal and a leading factor for the social and economic progress of the country. Within this framework, measures are taken to improve the legal environment, increase the usage of ICT in all sectors of society, and enhance human resources and institutional and professional capacity.


Laws on communication and postal services were adopted in 2001 and 2003. A package of information technology laws will soon be put to parliament. The Communications Regulatory Commission and the Universal Service Fund for Rural ICT Projects were established to help liberalize the ICT sector and ensure fair competition and local investment.

The National ICT Committee, headed by the Prime Minister, leads the national ICT development process with the active participation of both the private sector and civil society. Mongolia adopted in 2002 its "Medium Term Strategy for the Development of ICT". The central communication network has been convert-

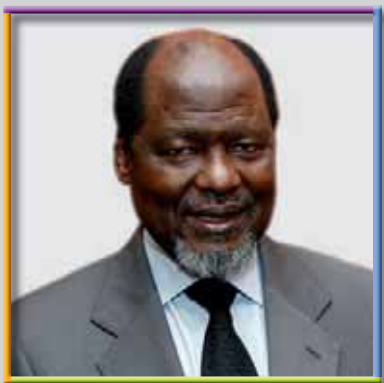
ed to digital technology through foreign investment and Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding. Important projects for an ICT Park and a Training Centre were implemented successfully.

Mongolia, with a large, sparsely populated territory, is encountering many difficulties in developing ICT. Providing the public, particularly youth and children, with computer knowledge, giving them skills to use ICT productively in their daily lives, is a paramount task.

Our short-term objective is to expand broadband penetration, based on the current communication infrastructure, and, subsequently, to reduce the digital gap between rural and urban areas. We also seek to enhance the legal and technological environment and capacity building in order to fully introduce electronic delivery of public services.

The Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action that we are going to adopt at this Summit highlight ICT literacy as a key principle for building a global, inclusive information society. Therefore, Mongolia proposes that the United Nations General Assembly declare 2005-2014 as the UN Decade for Universal ICT Literacy. Mongolia is ready to consult and cooperate with the United Nations, UNESCO and other institutions and member countries to materialize this initiative. 





*His Excellency  
Joaquim Alberto  
Chissano*

*President of the Republic  
of Mozambique*

## Mozambique

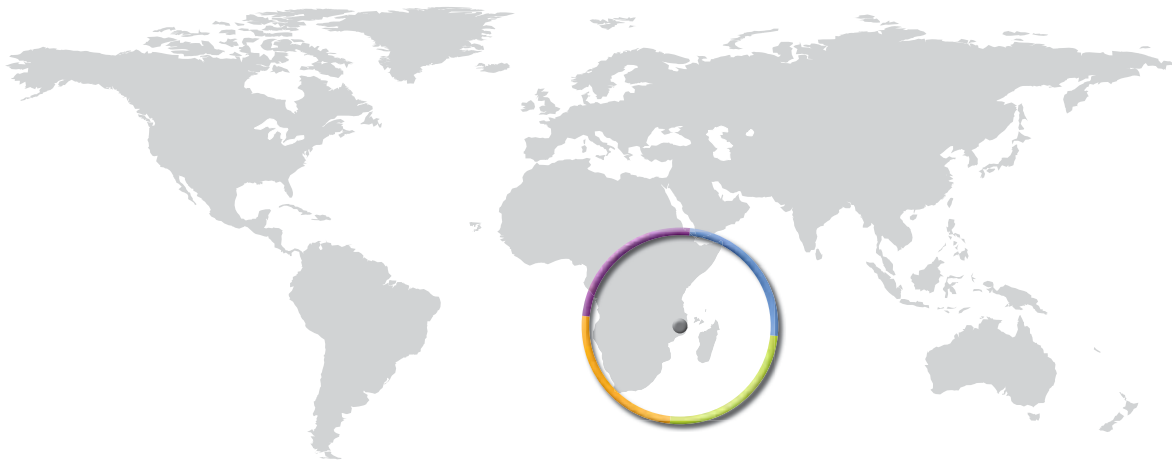


We are gathered at this Summit to craft a common vision for the information society, and to seek for ways and means to narrow the digital divide, an important step to reduce poverty through the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

I strongly believe, based on the experience of Mozambique, that information and communication technologies (ICT) are indispensable tools for economic, social and political development. In my country, as well as in most developing countries, the information society cannot be established without basic ICT infrastructure and skilled human resources. Therefore, developed and developing nations must come together to make the information society a reality for all. Information and communication technologies are the vehicle that will let information flow freely, allowing ideas and knowledge to be shared as a basic human right.

In Mozambique, we are committed to building an information society. My government has established a high-level task force on ICT, composed of government, business and civil society leaders. The ICT Policy and its implementation strategy are the road map to the creation of the information society in Mozambique.

The global economy requires countries to develop abilities to use ICT efficiently as a way to improve their competitiveness. Even though we are a poor country, we have gone beyond the dilemma of having to choose between ICT and other development imperatives. Today, ICT are the enablers and engines of spurring development in all sectors.



The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is the vehicle for meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, seeks to use ICT to accelerate economic growth and development. Through NEPAD we are fostering intra-regional trade for attaining the goals of an African common market.

ICT play an important role in data collection and processing, which are key for the review of the political, economic and corporate governance at the national, regional and continental levels in the context of the African Peer Review Mechanism. This mechanism constitutes a process whereby peers ensure that the policies and practices of the participating States conform to agreed standards, and achieve mutually agreed objectives in socio-economic development contained in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance.

The World Summit on the Information Society offers a new window of opportunity to the world, especially to the African peoples to accelerate human development. Africa's vision of the new information society is one that leads to a knowledge society, where the issues of language, education, literacy, dialogue of cultures and human development take centre stage. To make this vision a reality, strong leadership is

needed, as well as a public-private partnership that brings together all stakeholders, namely government, civil society, businesses, and the international community. The adoption of the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action before us will provide a guide and a monitoring tool to judge our success in building an information society.

Africa calls upon all development partners to come forward and lend their unequivocal support in building an information society that is inclusive. We call upon all our bilateral and multilateral partners, governments and development agencies, private companies, non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders to join hands with us, in Mozambique and in the African continent, and open a new chapter in North-South and South-South cooperation.

The success of the information society will be judged by the degree of improvement and progress of ICT as an important tool for the sustainable development of humankind.

I call on the Summit to take this unique opportunity to adopt the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action that will open the way to the future development of a true knowledge society. 🌍



*His Excellency  
José Rizo Castellón*

*Vice-President of Nicaragua*

## Nicaragua

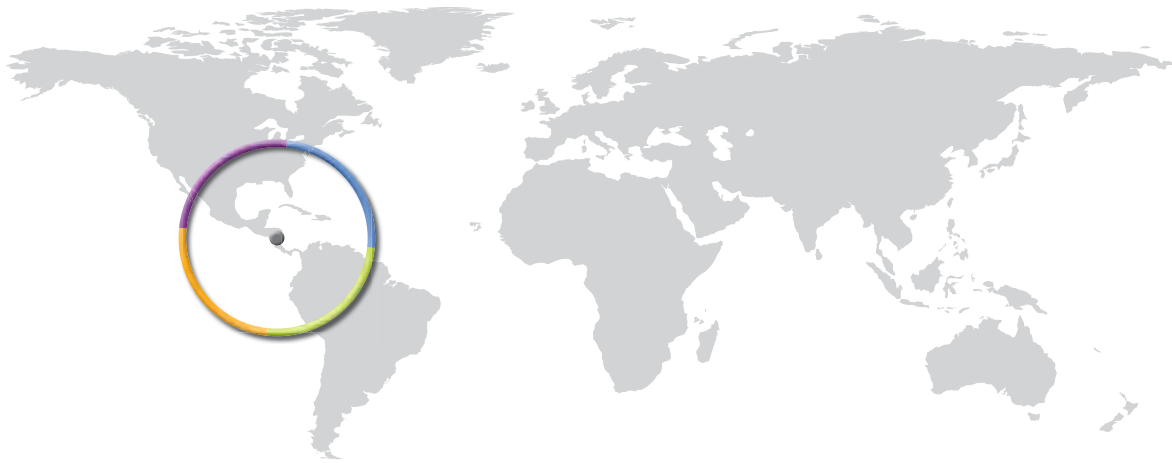


The development dimension, so often referred to in the declarations we have formulated as members of the United Nations, is an intrinsic element in the many aspects of a country's economic improvement, such as meeting basic needs of nutrition, health, housing and education, without which there is no underpinning for development in other domains. Human beings have evolved through curiosity. That same curiosity continues to be the force that drives today's technological revolution. However, the needs are no longer the same – nor, unfortunately, are the environments.

Nicaragua's 130 000 km<sup>2</sup> are home to a little over six million inhabitants, just over 40 per cent of whom survive on less than USD 30 a month. In this situation, and looking at things objectively, it is very unlikely that any of these citizens will be seeking to improve his or her quality of life through new technologies while struggling with the day-to-day basic necessities that have to do with mere survival.

Like many other countries, Nicaragua is paying off an extremely high foreign debt, leaving us unable to release resources for making improvements where they are needed, or to have access to new and better technologies that could bring development opportunities to my fellow citizens. The Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action should incorporate tasks which take fully into consideration the various problems of heavily-indebted poor countries undergoing hardship.

In speaking of hardship, I am referring not only to material well-being, but also to the hardship that individuals can experience



when their right to freedom of expression and their access to education and knowledge development are constrained. How can there be progress born out of curiosity where there are still privations that limit this innate capacity on the part of the human being?

In my country, even though we are still facing major challenges, we have gradually succeeded in putting together a sound democracy, an unshakeable desire for peace and the unbribled freedom to be who we are. But this is not yet the case in all parts of the world, and we must therefore take every opportunity to protect men, women and children from acts and practices which continue to undermine their basic rights and freedoms.

The world is going through a difficult period: the threat of terrorism and associated criminal acts is a daily reality, against which we must take a determined stance if this scourge is to be eradicated. We must draw on the benefits of information technologies in order to better wage this struggle, while remaining constantly aware of the need to protect the individual's private sphere. We must not forget that almost half of the world's population is made up of children and young people. We must commit ourselves to ensuring that children and young

people cannot have access to xenophobic or pornographic material or any other type of content that incites hatred, distorts the realities of life, undermines their self-esteem or entices them down one-way streets such as those leading to drugs, prostitution and terrorism.

Nicaragua is of the view that intellectual property rights and technical cooperation for development are fully compatible. The software packages that are commercially available already have a public that will continue to use them on account of the assurances that come with a brand name. Freeware and open-source software are tools that can help to develop the information society in poor countries, where many users are unable to afford software licences. Laws which regulate intellectual property are a source of stability and enable potential investors to proceed in the knowledge that their rights will be duly protected.

Nations of the world, opportunities for defining the future are few and far between, and our present responsibility is such that it will still be some years before we are able to fully appreciate the foundations that we are laying now. We are already in the future, and it is necessary to have a vision of the future in order to proceed. 🌈



*His Excellency  
Olusegun Obasanjo*

*President of the Federal  
Republic of Nigeria*

# Nigeria

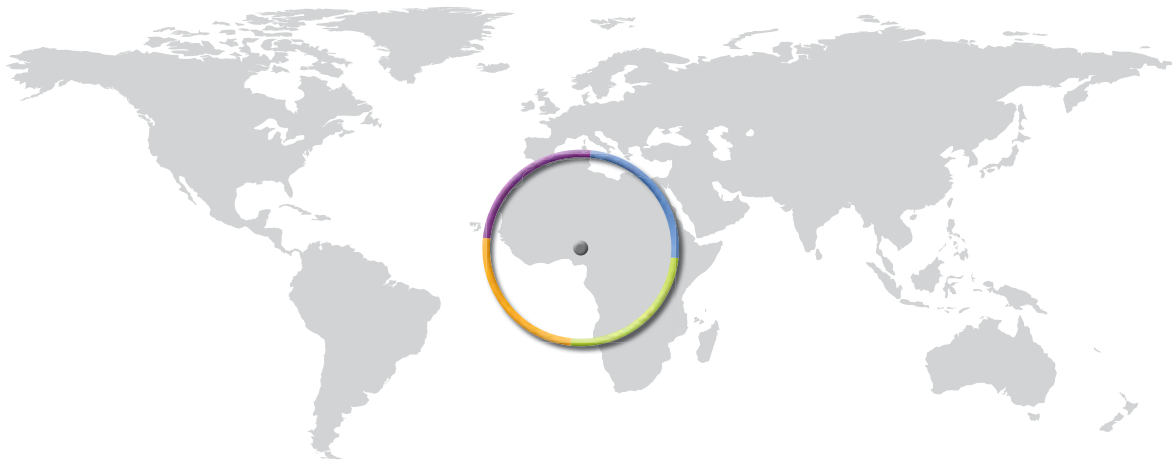


I want to seize this opportunity to remind us that the major goal of the information society is to seek to achieve the bridging of the digital divide between the developed and developing countries, and among the urban and rural areas, so that no individual or community is left behind in the revolution in information and communication technologies (ICT).

The challenges to development are numerous for countries of the South. We are still struggling to provide the basic necessities of life which we lack: for example, food, shelter, safe drinking water and health care services. Furthermore, social infrastructure, such as schools, roads, hospitals, and electricity, are either in a state of disrepair or non-existent. While faced with these challenges, we are also confronted by the digital revolution. How should we share our meagre resources between the basic necessities of life and provision of ICT infrastructure?

In spite of the difficulties, Nigeria has made efforts to address the problems. We have adopted a national ICT Policy, which aims at creating the necessary enabling environment with the emphasis on public-private partnerships for ICT development.

In addition, Nigeria has enacted a National Telecommunications Act to give direction to the industry and create investor confidence in the economy. An independent regulatory body has been established. This has led to the introduction of a variety of new services, increased foreign and domestic investment, and the intensification of competition. Within the past four years, fixed telephone lines have increased from about 300 000 to about 720 000, while mobile telephones increased from less than 50 000 to about 2 500 000. Direct foreign and domestic investment in the sector amounts to about USD 4 billion.



This record of achievement over a short period is unprecedented in Africa.


Another achievement is the recent launching of Nigeria's first satellite, NIGERIA SAT-I. This will undoubtedly assist the country in breaking new ground in data gathering for use in areas such as disaster and environmental management, agriculture and urban planning. My government has also given approval for the design, building and launching of a communications satellite. This will serve as strategic backbone infrastructure for ICT development in the country.

Africa, having suffered centuries of the slave trade and colonialism, and now afflicted with numerous conflicts and diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, is in the most disadvantaged position in the digital revolution. The continent's huge indebtedness complicates efforts at economic development. This situation is further worsened by the unjust world economic order. The provision of ICT infrastructure is fundamental to development. Unfortunately, many people in Africa, particularly school children, unlike their counterparts in the developed world, do not have access to such basic tools as computers, the telephone and the Internet. Youth, as the future workforce and leaders, must not be left behind. However, if policies and relationships do not change for

the better, they risk being excluded from the emerging information society, unless universal access is created and the governance and management of global information networks, particularly the Internet, becomes a global public facility.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a new initiative of African leaders for the economic transformation of the continent, has accorded ICT the necessary priority. To complement this initiative, the assistance and cooperation of our development partners is urgently needed, especially in the areas of capacity building, infrastructure development, transfer of technology and funding.

I call on the developed and industrialized countries of the North to support the initiative on the Digital Solidarity Fund as a practical measure for redressing the digital imbalance.

The world has the resources; what is lacking is the political will. I therefore implore world leaders and other stakeholders to put the human race on the path of sustainable development through the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action. The disadvantaged countries on their part must create the necessary enabling environment, especially in the areas of transparency and good governance. 



*His Excellency  
Zafarullah Khan Jamali*

*Prime Minister of the Islamic  
Republic of Pakistan*

## *Pakistan*



The past decade has witnessed a miraculous revolution centred on information and communication technologies (ICT). Breathtaking advances in ICT have driven changes in all spheres of human life.

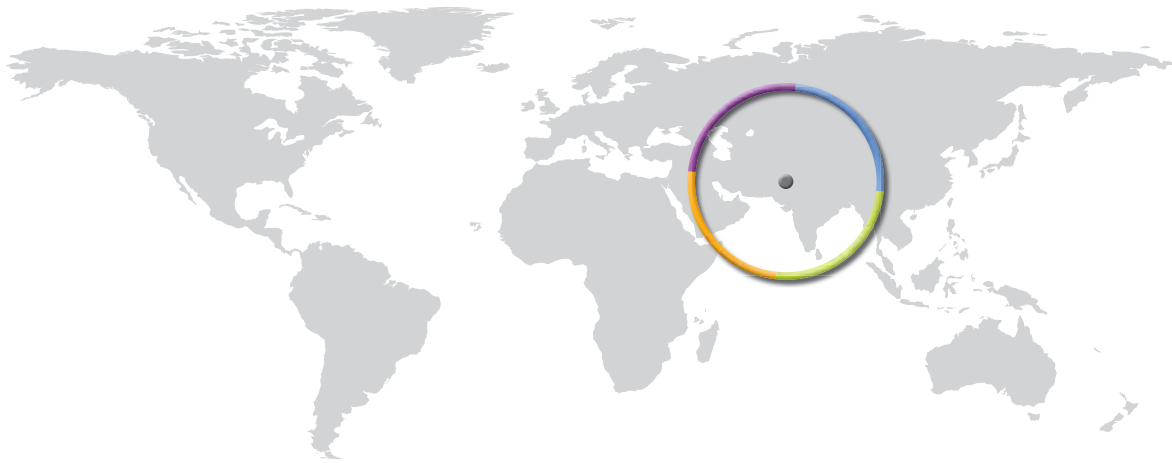
This Summit marks recognition of the fact that we are all citizens of an information society, which necessitates the creation of a new social contract geared to making universal the endowments of this unique era. In the future, the ability to access and use these tools effectively will determine the prosperity and well-being of all nations.

But we have a long way to go. The enormity of the digital opportunity is marred by a vast digital divide. To bridge this divide is the challenge of our time. It must not be allowed to grow further. The digital divide is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that separates people within and between countries. The speed of global technological and economic transformation demands concerted global action.

We should create an information society which embraces everyone. Poorer regions of our planet are threatened with structural irrelevance associated with their technological obsolescence. The Summit must therefore aim to:

- Create an information society which is inclusive and provides equal opportunities for everyone, everywhere.
- Develop tools and mechanisms that will open the doors of technology to the poorer segments of humankind.
- Encompass a commitment to assist the developing countries in developing their ICT infrastructure.
- Protect universal norms, particularly our moral and spiritual values to which we all aspire.





- Ensure the security of our information systems free from the threat of infiltration.
- Allow all peoples to imbibe the knowledge which the ICT revolution promises.
- Harness the digital revolution to lift the dispossessed from the throes of deprivation.

The Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action before the Summit are pregnant with promise. The presence of so many world leaders should provide the political impetus to translate hope into action. We must work together to evolve a digital development agenda. The knowledge-intensive nature of the information society calls for a global accord and partnership so that the fruits of technology are evenly distributed. This critical opportunity in the march of civilization must be seized by all of us – governments, business leaders and civil society – to rectify the historical wrongs that have caused the development gap amongst nations.

In Pakistan, my Government is engaged in harnessing digital technology for the economic advancement of our people. We have earmarked a significant part of our limited resources to building the necessary infrastructure, promoting computer literacy and widening ICT applications in health, education and public sector management. In this demanding enterprise, we need the support of the international community.

I would like to add that in Pakistan, as we speedily move towards deregulation and privatization, we offer tremendous investment opportunities. These are not only for fixed and mobile telephone operations, but also for software companies and back-office service companies, to service Pakistan's own expanding ICT needs and potential and, through this potential, the global community.

Let us join in paying a special tribute to the pioneers of the digital revolution which has opened this remarkable vista before us. These men and women, some of whom are present here, must be considered as the true revolutionaries of the 21st century. Let us leave this beautiful city of Geneva with a strong commitment to launch a new global compact to promote our common quest for a better world. 🌈



*His Excellency  
Kayser Bazán*

*Vice-President of the  
Republic of Panama*

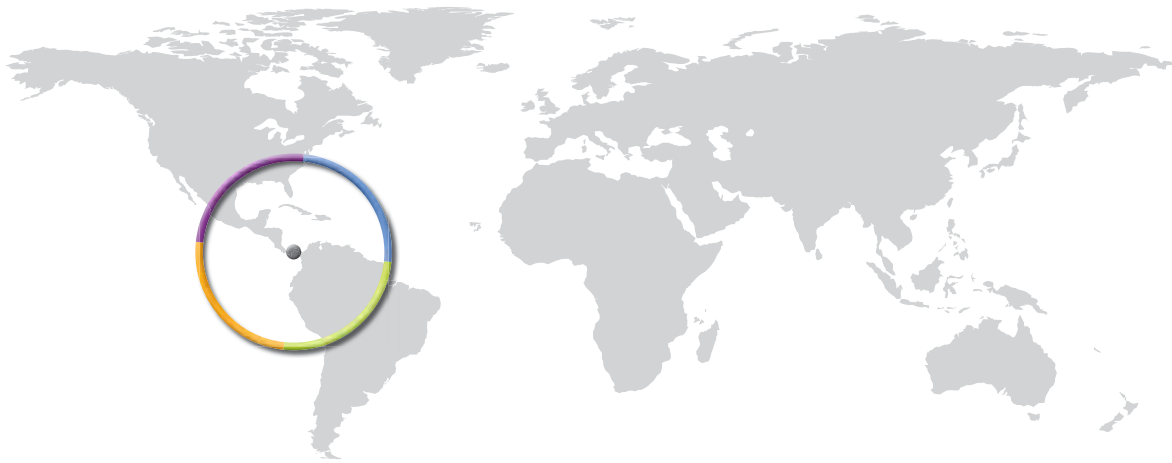
## *Panama*



This Summit will serve to bring our nations even closer together and enable them to learn more about the best practices pertaining to the information society at the global level. It will also help us to achieve consensus on important issues and give us guidance along the road towards the information and knowledge society.

For Panama, this presents a dichotomy. In certain sectors of our economy we find high levels of development in information and communication technologies (ICT) and their applications, which have placed us in a prominent position within the information society. These sectors include: the telecommunication industry, with a main backbone serving six international networks providing global access; the international banking and reinsurance sectors serving Latin America and the Caribbean; the Panama Canal, whose daily operations include the use of tracking satellites; the Smithsonian Institute, an internationally known and respected centre for marine biology which maintains an online library accessible to the global scientific community; the Institute of high technology for the development of biotechnology, bio-prospection and aquaculture, which ranks fourth among such laboratories in Latin America; ports handling the greatest number of containers in Latin America and the Caribbean; and the Colón Free Trade Zone, the largest free zone in the Americas and the second largest in the world. These segments, whose operations are generally located in the vicinity of the Panama Canal, make up a high percentage of the country's gross domestic product.

In the remainder of our country, the level of ICT applications becomes much lower the farther one moves away from the Canal. Connectivity is inadequate and, more seriously, there is



a relatively low level of awareness regarding the benefits to be derived from the Internet. This situation is reflected in a domestic digital divide of large proportions.

Where the country's public sector is concerned, some eight years ago a number of government institutions initiated projects involving the use of ICT to increase the efficiency of public services, improve management information systems and reduce operating costs. Although these initiatives were working in the right direction, at that time the national government lacked coordinated and clearly defined digital policies. In other words, we did not have a digital programme.

Aware of this digital divide, Panama's President Mireya Moscoso set up, in June 2002, the "e-Panama Commission" as the entity responsible for coordinating the development of the "e-Panama Programme", which constitutes our digital action plan. Its main goal is to foster the use of ICT as an instrument for mobilizing government operations, providing better public services and achieving higher rates of economic and social growth.

Today, Panama has begun to develop its digital programme through the "e-Panama Commission". In addition, we are participating actively in international forums, seminars, con-

ferences and summits, such as the one taking place now, in order to learn lessons from other successful programmes.

We have succeeded in establishing numerous strategic cooperation alliances with international agencies and friendly governments. Indeed, only a few days ago [at the beginning of December 2003] we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Canada.

The relevant international bodies have ranked our level of digital progress as "intermediate" on the global scale. With our e-Panama programme, we intend to make rapid progress over the next two years and achieve a far higher position than the one we occupy now.

We are confident that this Summit will meet its objective of generating a higher level of awareness and commitment on the part of our governments so as to bring about broader participation in the information society and narrow the global digital divide.

In Tunis, we will be assessing the outcomes of the Plan of Action that we will be formally approving here on 12 December 2003. 🇵🇦



*His Excellency  
Ion Iliescu*

*President of Romania*

## Romania



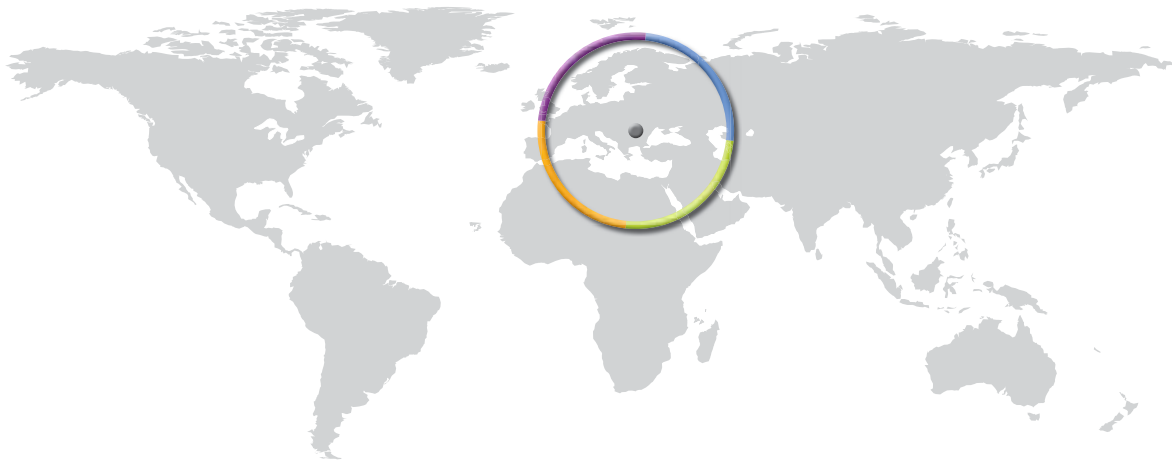
Confronted with problems regarding the transition from a centralized, State-run economy to a free-market economy, such as weak institutional capacity and red tape, Romania has, over the last two years, introduced instruments of electronic governance in central and local administrations, including electronic tenders for public procurement. The outcome is promising from the standpoint of costs, efficiency and transparency.

Romania has designed and implemented a strategy of promoting a knowledge-based society, and places great emphasis on education. By 2004, the Romanian schools will be equipped with about 500 000 computers. We are also strongly developing the software industry, which we consider a genuine engine of sustainable economic growth.

Our expertise in the field makes us believe that it is necessary to define an agenda of digital solidarity, which should be sustained by mechanisms that stimulate and motivate public and private actors to use the nation's resources of creativity effectively. The optimal allocation of resources remains a real challenge for the sustainable development of the Romanian society.

Information technologies by themselves do not solve problems and are not a panacea. They can only intensify positive phenomena and processes, if used rationally, within open political and economic systems that seek for the optimum in terms of social costs. In other words, the information society is genuinely democratic.

There is a very direct link between development and democracy. The structures of the information society allow for the development of some new forms of social solidarity, community



life and direct democracy. We have the opportunity to create a democratic society at the global level, by making universal the rights and freedoms of citizens and setting up a worldwide, proactive civil society aimed at reducing economic and social gaps.

In this process, Europe, in full swing of reunification and creation of a European identity, is called to play a key role. It can do so by reducing the economic gap inside the continent, thanks to the European social model that mixes the prerequisites of economic development with the needs of effective social protection.

The social dimension is a determining element of the information society. It entails some of today's state-of-the-art public education services and a broad base for the recruitment of political, economic and cultural elites, as well as systems of social solidarity. In this context, Romania is constantly improving the offer of services available online for an increasing number of users.

I consider that WSIS represents a great opportunity for clarifying and facilitating consensus on the key issues of the knowledge-based society, founded on public-private partnerships. By holding the second phase of this Summit in Tunisia, a clear signal has been conveyed regarding the special heed paid by the international community to the reinsertion of Africa

into scientific and technological dynamics at the global level. Globalization through promoting an information society for all does not mean diminishing the diversity and the vigour of local cultures; on the contrary.

ICT represent, of course, a reliable engine for economic development. But they cannot solve, by themselves, the complex social problems we face and, in particular, the big gap between rich and poor. That is why ICT have to be people-centred, governed by an adequate regulatory framework and by functional institutional mechanisms, and able to address the need to match economic efficiency with social justice and equality. We should involve in this process the main stakeholders namely, the government, the private sector and civil society.

The age in which we live is not only one of access to information, but also one of a permanent search for balance between the imperatives of the economy and the needs of society. This can be reached only by our joint efforts, guided by key goals such as affordability, universal access, transparency, sustainability and connectivity.

Romania is ready for this challenge. 🇷🇴



*His Excellency  
Paul Kagame*

*President of the Republic  
of Rwanda*

## Rwanda



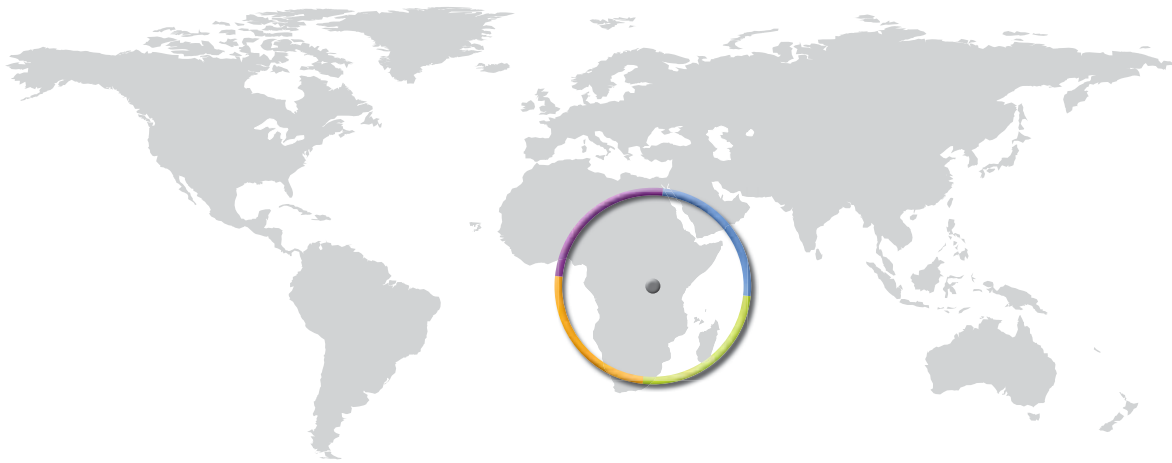
Today, we all recognize that information and communication technologies (ICT) are not a matter of choice; they are a necessity. It has become abundantly clear to us in Africa that ICT are an indispensable tool in the achievement of our development outcomes, as well as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

We have to leapfrog if we are to be part of the global information family, and in the understanding that human society advances according to the level of its accumulated knowledge base. We do not have the luxury of waiting until the necessary conditions are in place. Information and communication technologies are an enabler, and we are determined to take advantage of the many benefits that accrue from their applications, and the new opportunities they create for nations and communities.

The issue for us is not whether it is worthwhile for us to make use of ICT, but rather whether ICT can be used appropriately to meet the needs of our people and achieve our development objectives. Our choice should not be between antiretroviral drugs and ICT, or between penicillin and Pentium microchips.

The challenge for us, in the developing world, is how best to apply ICT to provide more leverage in our fight against poverty, disease, illiteracy, lack of information and a skilled workforce.

We in Rwanda have had our fair share of these problems, some of them inherited from the 1994 genocide. But we believe that we have in place an ambitious ICT programme that will effectively deal with these problems. Information and communication technologies have been integrated into our development strategy, as a catalyst for economic growth and social transformation.



We now use ICT as an instrument to enhance unity and reconciliation, to strengthen the participatory justice system we call "Gacaca", and as an instrument of empowering women. We also use these technologies as a basis for the consolidation of our decentralization programme and democratic governance.

Rwanda is a founding member of the Development Gateway project, intended to use ICT for development. We plan to provide broadband connectivity to all secondary schools within three years, using fibre-optic and wireless technology. These will also serve as telecentres for the benefit of rural communities in the catchment areas, with the ultimate aim of providing universal access.

Given that we are a landlocked country, modern ICT hold great potential for us. We therefore plan to transform Rwanda into a technological hub within the Great Lakes Region, providing low-cost and accessible means of communication within the region and beyond.

Of course, elaborating policies and plans is one thing; mobilizing resources to implement them is another. That is why we would like to appeal to our development partners to join us in ensuring that we realize these objectives. And I would like to express our gratitude to a number of international initiatives which have contributed to the growth and development

of ICT for global development, most notably, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in Rwanda's case.

I would like to conclude my remarks by reiterating our conviction that ICT are a development tool that will narrow the gap between rich and poor, and that ICT in Africa and the rest of the developing world will be major contributors to the improvement of human welfare.

In Rwanda we are convinced that ICT will enable us to transform our current challenges and adversity into opportunities for this and future generations. 🇷🇼





*His Excellency  
Abdoulaye Wade*

*President of the Republic  
of Senegal*

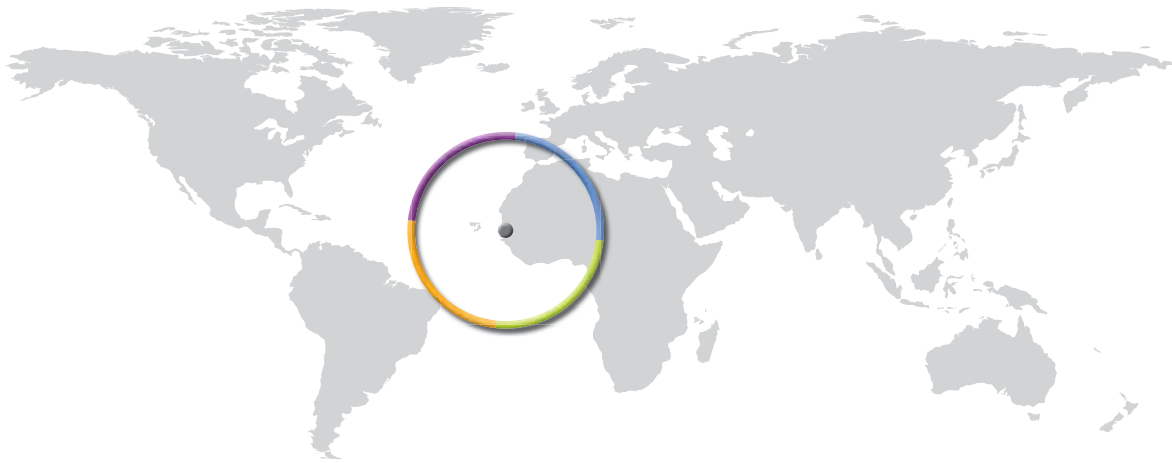
## Senegal



NEPAD, or the New Partnership for Africa's Development, is the result of a fusion between Senegal's Omega Plan, the economic part of which had the objective of closing the gap between our countries and the developed world, and the Millennium African Plan, or MAP, drawn up by President Mbeki of South Africa, President Obasanjo of Nigeria, and President Bouteflika of Algeria, later joined by President Mubarak of Egypt. The two plans were merged into a single one and adopted by the Lusaka summit in 2001 to become the vision of Africa and its strategy for reaching world level by mobilizing domestic and external resources, in partnership with the developed world.

NEPAD is based on three fundamental elements: good governance, in the public and private sector alike; a massive appeal to the private sector rather than the State economy, and regions before nations. Within those three elements, NEPAD has chosen eight "super" priorities, namely: infrastructure, education, health, agriculture, the environment, new information and communication technologies (ICT), energy, and access to the markets of developed countries.

In the area of ICT, development in Africa is uneven. Countries such as Tunisia, South Africa and Senegal have sound infrastructure established in their capital cities. Dakar and Johannesburg are the two African nodes for the optical-fibre connection that gives Senegal a 310 Mbit/s bandwidth. However, the disparity between cities and the countryside remains. In Senegal, our universities have connections to the major world universities and many rural primary schools have computer pools that let students surf the web. The *Case des tout-petits* (the Children's



House), a project supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), provides educational toys and an introduction to the computer for children aged two to four. But it shouldn't be about individual countries forging ahead, so much as ensuring that the whole continent progressively moves forward together, with vertical and horizontal connectivity alike.

The question we face is this: what needs to be done so that Africa, and more generally the developing countries, can take their rightful place in the information society?

As you know, I am a proponent of the market economy, and an advocate of economic liberalism for Africa. But it has to be recognized that the market is not a cure-all. There are occasions when the heart has to speak. In this connection, I should say that I have long deplored the aid/loan relationship that, ever since the post-colonial wave of independence, has been at the heart of international development policy. This policy has led to an impasse on the aid side, where aid levels have never reached even one half of the 0.70 per cent quota recommended in the 1970s; and on the loan side, it has resulted in a mountain of debt, with no solution in sight.

This is why we have focused on partnership, based on mutual advantage in the short, medium and long term. Only such a partnership can make the African continent into a true partner and not merely a chronic aid recipient.

What Africa asks for today, is that the human race should remember the major injustices that were perpetrated, and come up with mechanisms to allow our continent to regain its momentum and rejoin the world economy. Currently, Africa attracts less than 1 per cent of investment, and its contribution to international trade amounts to less than 1.4 per cent. We welcome competition and we welcome globalization, but on equal terms. It is not fair to demand of us that we respect the freedom of trade while at the same time our products are excluded from the markets in the developed world, and, indeed, from our own markets. Our position is "free trade, but fair trade!"

To turn to digital technology specifically, I am happy to observe that there is total agreement on the principle of digital solidarity, and that the Summit has decided to conduct the studies needed to set up the fund. Please permit me to express my warm thanks to all those who, right from the outset, supported the African proposal for a Digital Solidarity Fund. 🇳🇮



*His Excellency  
Dragoljub Micunovic*

*President of the Assembly  
of the State Union of Serbia  
and Montenegro\**

*\* The State Union effectively came to an end after Montenegro's formal declaration of independence on 3 June 2006, and Serbia's on 5 June 2006.*

## *Serbia and Montenegro\**

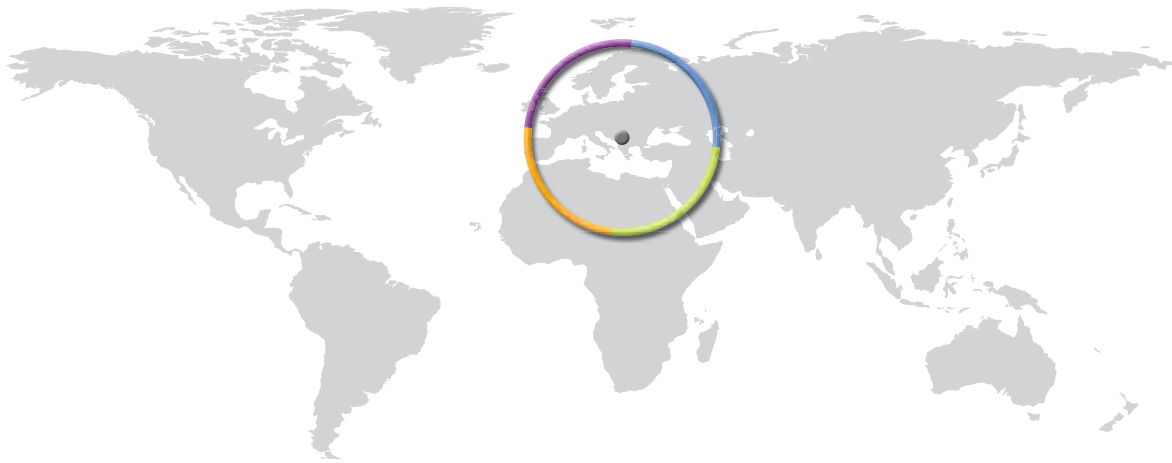


The implementation of the information society will affect many relationships in society, as well as its economic and political systems. The time between scientific and technological discoveries and their wide application is getting shorter and shorter. And the impact of technological innovations on social changes is becoming increasingly apparent. At the same time, the rapid development of technology makes social development trends less and less predictable.

The accelerated development of information technology systems has opened up numerous opportunities for further social development. Civil society and the democratic parliamentary system are a globally accepted or imposed social and political order – their acceptance is a pre-condition of survival in the international community. This begs the question of how the latest development of information technology systems affects civil society and democracy.

On the one hand, as demonstrated by the Internet, information technology gives access to numerous individuals, to a variety of ideas and to political groups. This phenomenon democratizes the global public opinion and favours democratization as a global process. In addition, the exchange of information and insights narrows the gap in the level of information between the developed and developing countries, and reduces isolation.

On the other hand, state-of-the-art information technology systems make it possible for the most developed countries to be dominant and for the English language to become supreme with all the consequences it has for the cultures of other linguistic groups. It is necessary to identify ways to maintain the cultural identity and languages of others.



The new information technology systems may also infringe human rights through encroachment on the privacy of individuals and their personal data. The ambitions of State administrations to control all personal data in order to prevent money laundering, for example, or fight the drug mafia and terrorism, may become excuses for the dangerous transformation of democratic systems into police States where the fundamental value of a citizen would be lost before the omniscient government or global society.

We in Serbia and Montenegro understand well that implementation of the information society poses a global challenge for the new millennium. The potential of the digital economy has been recognized in Serbia and Montenegro and, I am convinced, throughout South-East Europe, as an opportunity for a timely integration into European and global economic processes. For that reason, national development programmes for the information society are important to all countries in the region, and need to be synchronized. In that regard, under a regional initiative called the "Agenda for the Development of Information Society" a Statement of Intent was signed in Ljubljana in June 2002 to the effect that the countries of the region would implement their information societies in cooperation with the European Union.

Serbia and Montenegro is a State in social and economic transition. Following the democratic changes in 2000, our country has been clearly committed to moving towards European structures. I have to point out that in the ten-year period preceding the democratic changes when our country was internationally isolated and under sanctions that, for highly incomprehensible reasons, included sanctions in the field of scientific and cultural development and cooperation, Serbia and Montenegro regressed to a considerable extent in introducing new technologies and implementing its information society. It is up to us now to work at an accelerated pace to make up for lost time.

A great deal has already been done since 2000. Dismantling of monopolies on the market of telecommunication services is quite certainly a prerequisite that will be achieved in the period ahead. Our intention is to continue to invest in the education of professionals in this field, for which our country has been traditionally known worldwide.

Our common path towards implementing the information society calls for new and faster forms of communication and cooperation. I sincerely hope that this Summit will contribute greatly to achieving such aspirations. 🇷🇸



*His Excellency  
Boris Trajkovski*

*President of the Former  
Yugoslav Republic of  
Macedonia*

## *The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*



We are all here at this Summit to declare a vision of the future, to declare a dream for a better society for our children, aided by the use of information and communication technologies (ICT).

We are here not only to set a destination, but also to lay down a path. We are here to better develop each of our societies, along with our global society. To develop on a global scale not only an information society, but also a good society.

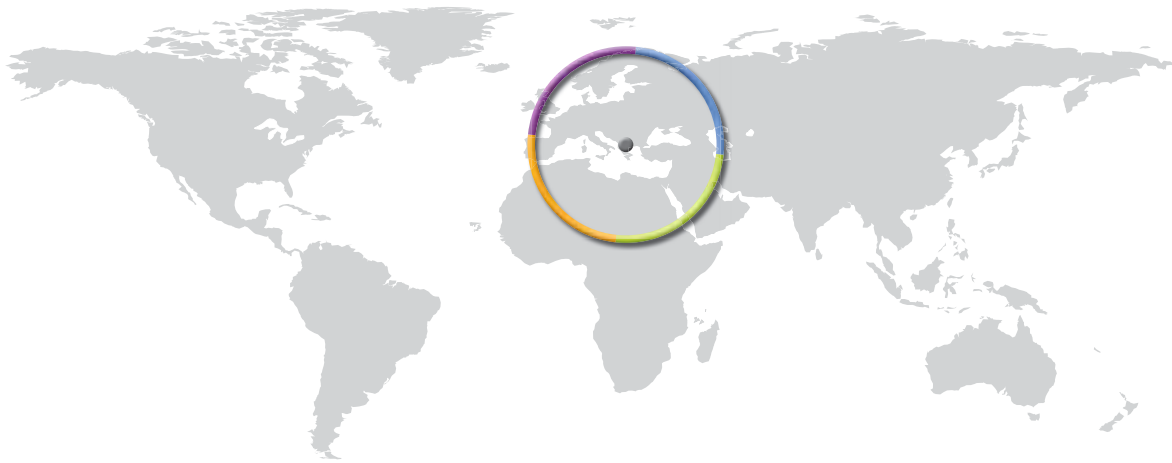
Communication is the glue that holds together any community, and anything that can enhance the quality of communication should be embraced. Governments can communicate better with their citizens; businesses with the government and their clients; and citizens with government and the world.

Information and communication technologies can assist that process. Nevertheless, we must all be aware that though technologies represent a driving force, they are but an instrument.

It is useless to speak of the use of ICT if basic educational needs are not met; groundless to speak of e-democracy if democracy is ungrounded; inadequate to speak of e-participation if participation is not allowed.

A vision must be aimed at specific targets, grounded in a strategy and continuously tested by properly set benchmarks. The strategy itself cannot be the product of a solitary mind. We are entering the age of the networked citizen, the age when many minds contribute towards the construction of any given item.

This was the reason I invited members from almost all areas of society – from the business community, the educational sector,



governmental institutions, banks, and civil society – to participate in a committee that helped prepare Macedonia's strategy for the creation of an information society. The "E-Macedonia for All Committee" paved the way, in a very short period, to several very important laws. A strategic document, "e-Declaration 2002", was prepared with recommendations for accelerated growth of the information society and creation of a digital economy as priorities for Macedonia. This Declaration was adopted by consensus in Parliament.

The information society is dependent on well-established ICT infrastructure. An excellent telecommunication infrastructure is currently in place in Macedonia. We believe that this will serve us well as we move closer towards the information society.

ICT can play an indispensable role in creating a global knowledge-based economy, accelerating growth, raising competitiveness, promoting sustainable development, facilitating the integration of all countries into the global economy, and, finally, eradicating poverty. We are living with the strains of massive changes in our economies, which are no longer based on agriculture and industry. The race to be the locus of the world's knowledge revolution is now on.

Such technologies offer a huge opportunity in helping marginalized regions to connect to the world economy by overcoming many of the disadvantages of distance. Macedonia, for instance, is a landlocked country. We do not see this as a disadvantage, but rather as an opportunity. Along with its central position in the region, Macedonia has a comparative advantage in the production of ICT-based service exports.

Recently, the Government of Macedonia signed a strategic partnership agreement with the software company, Microsoft. We invite worldwide ICT leaders to come to Macedonia and invest in ICT projects, solutions and services.

What are our next steps for rapid growth of an information society? We will prioritize several initiatives, including computerization of all primary and secondary schools, raising the percentage of ICT graduates, and increased use of wireless technologies to bypass weaknesses in the wireline infrastructure.

We are at this Summit because we have a dream. We are here to declare that we are working to realize that dream. Thus, we have agreed the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. The aim is the information society, the knowledge economy, the networked citizen. But these are only points of reference. The ultimate aim is a better world. 🇲🇵



*His Royal Highness Prince  
Ulukalala Lavaka Ata*

*Prime Minister of the  
Kingdom of Tonga*

## Tonga



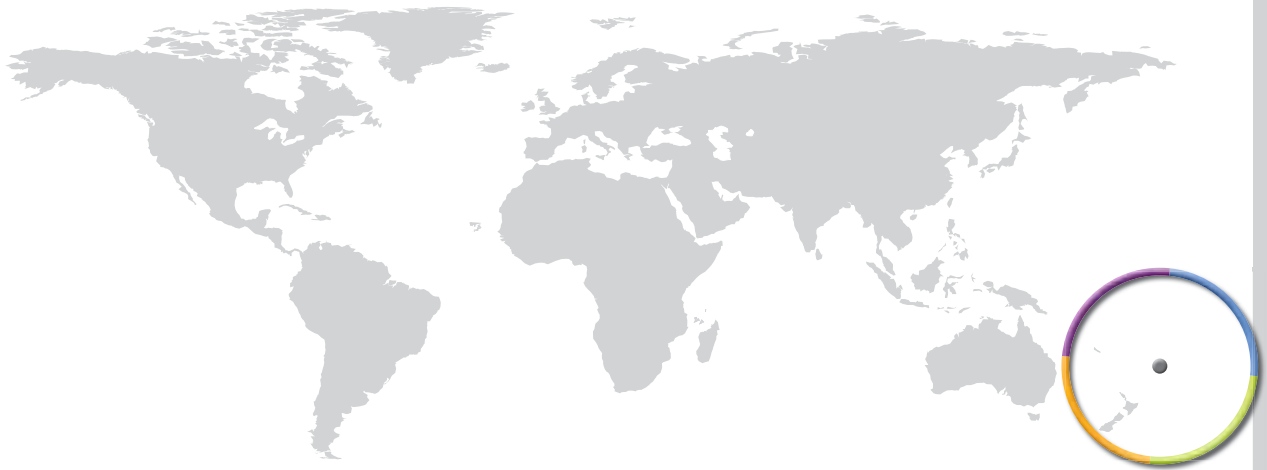
We have gathered in Geneva to carefully assess the global challenge facing us in this new millennium under the theme of the information society that has been created by the explosion of information and communication technologies (ICT) during the past two decades. The information society is a system of shared knowledge and information, and we should enhance its potential to support promotion of the goals of the Millennium Declaration and to achieve sustainable development as constituted in the Johannesburg Declaration.

Our collective effort here at this Summit is aimed at working together in partnership and solidarity to develop a common vision and better understanding of the information society and the adoption of a declaration and plan of action for implementation by governments, international institutions, and all sectors of civil society.

ICT has enormous power to change economic structures and greatly contribute to economic prosperity and a better quality of life. Additionally, it can enrich people's lives through providing greater choice and supporting social, welfare and cultural activities.

Development of such a vision for ICT services and applications must be driven not only by local market parameters, but also by the recognition that the global nature of the information economy transcends national borders and interests. Similarly, any related policy framework should be designed to deliver a





step-function improvement in the provision of services and applications that will guide its development. It should be centred on the need to give every citizen access to information and communication technologies so that all individuals can share the benefits that these technologies bring.

Tonga has adopted the same set of principles, driven by an understanding that expanded connectivity will stimulate domestic growth and will provide the scope for greater Tongan participation in the global information economy. We are guided by a prime objective which is to improve the sector's performance to ensure domestic and global connectivity throughout the Kingdom of Tonga. This includes improving quality of life, geographic coverage, service affordability and access to new service applications.

This has resulted in the recent liberalization of the market and the introduction of competition. Within a year of implementing these policy decisions, tariffs for almost all services dropped by more than 200 per cent. Teledensity, the number of mobile subscribers and Internet users, have all doubled.

A "Universal Access System" is currently being designed to ensure that any citizen who requires communications access, can obtain it. This also includes emergency communications from uninhabited islands.

Indeed, information and communication technologies have offered an historic and an unprecedented opportunity, not only to bridge the digital divide, but also to place their potential at the service of humanity to make our world a better place. 🌍



*His Excellency  
Apollo Nsibambi*

*Prime Minister of the  
Republic of Uganda*

## Uganda



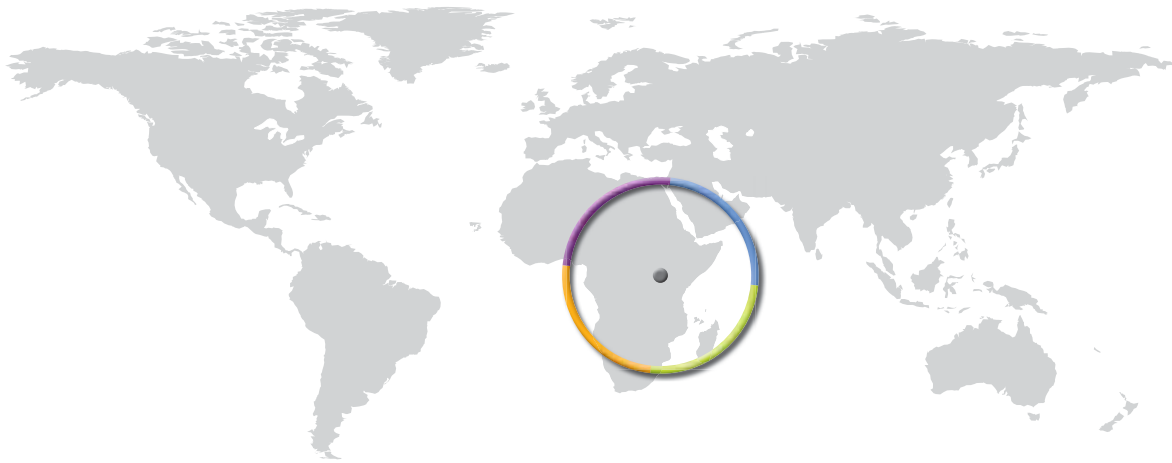
We appreciate and applaud the partnership between governments, the private sector and civil society that has made it possible to hold this Summit as we move towards the information and knowledge society.

Africa missed the industrial revolution, and it is therefore determined not to lose out on the information age by ensuring that we harness the opportunities offered by information and communication technologies (ICT).

In the specific instance of my country, Uganda, our communication and information infrastructure was accessible to only a privileged few. However, specific policy reform initiatives put in place by my government in the mid-1990s have resulted in the following achievements:

- The basic infrastructure for communications now covers most of the country.
- An increased number of service providers are creating a competitive environment, improved quality of service and lower prices.
- Internet access points have been established in many districts.
- The telephone customer base has increased tenfold in the last five years.
- There has been a remarkable reduction in geographical isolation and exclusion of many rural communities.

In addition, we have put in place a people-centred agenda, the National ICT policy Framework, designed to foster sustainable development in various areas, including education, health, trade and good governance.



Nonetheless, the above remain modest achievements, considering that a large number of people still remain underserved. As my country continues to address the issues of sustainable development set out in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, we strongly share the view that ICT are crucial to the process of sustainable development.

Concerning issues at hand in the East African sub-region, we have embarked on a harmonization of ICT policy under the general umbrella of East African cooperation. At the regional level, Uganda has participated actively in Africa's efforts in promoting development, through initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

We would like to reaffirm our commitment to the common vision of the information society as identified in the draft Declaration of Principles now before the Summit. Furthermore, I wish to underscore the vital importance of the following key principles: the role of government and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICT for development; access to information and knowledge; capacity building, and the creation and maintenance of an enabling environment for ICT development.

As regards the proposed Plan of Action, Uganda fully supports the global objectives, goals and targets it contains. As a country, we shall endeavour to mobilize the necessary resources, including partnership support, to attain these goals. We also believe that it is important for our development partners to actively support developing countries in the mobilization of the resources required to achieve the goals set out in the Plan of Action. In addition, adequate laws and regulations should be put in place by countries to ensure that ICT are not used to promote terrorism.

In conclusion, we are convinced that the decisions of this Summit will be critical in determining the future of humankind. 🌍



*His Excellency  
Abdulla Aripov*

*Deputy Prime Minister of the  
Republic of Uzbekistan*

## *Uzbekistan*

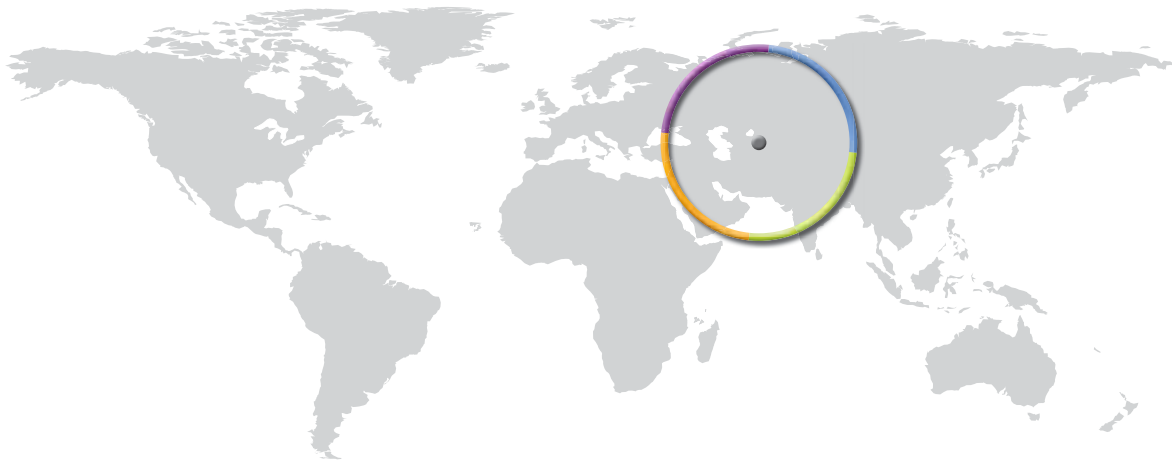


For the last decade, information and communication technologies (ICT) have become one of the most important factors affecting social evolution and people's lifestyles. New technological breakthroughs caused by the onrush of ICT have had a profound influence that has affected the overall development of society. This Summit is a vivid confirmation that the world community is entering a new development stage – the building of the information society.

Today in Uzbekistan, as in other countries, informatization is one of the primary directions of policy, based on an increasing awareness of the benefits of ICT development and deployment. ICT development has become a major component of Uzbekistan's economy. Our long-term strategy is also oriented towards building an information society.

The basic aspects of the national strategy and action plan in the area of ICT were defined in a speech by the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov in Parliament in May 2001, as well as in the Decree "On further development of computerization and introduction of information and communication technologies". Top-priority tasks of ICT development and deployment are the following:

- development of an information resources and services market, and a gradual transition to electronic forms of information exchange;
- wide introduction of information technologies into branches of the real economy, creation of conditions for wide access by the population to modern computer and information systems;



- introduction of progressive teaching systems into the education process, based upon acquisition of, and active utilization of, modern computer and information technologies;
- accelerated development of technical infrastructure of ICT throughout the country, taking into account convergence of information and communication networks and services;
- providing high-speed access to national and international information networks, including rural areas.

The Coordination Council for Development of Computerization and ICT is in charge of managing this strategy.

Uzbekistan supports the creation of an information society that observes and protects national sovereignty, and the religious, cultural, social, and linguistic interests of all countries and peoples, without any discrimination.

Uzbekistan aspires to, and is ready to participate in, the building of an information society oriented to the interests of the people, and where each person, regardless of country of residence, has the right to search, receive, and disseminate information.

We agree that in order to carry out these tasks, all interested parties must work to widen access to ICT as well as information and knowledge. They must also work to strengthen confidence and security in using ICT, to create an enabling environment, to develop ICT applications and expand the areas where they can be used, and encourage cultural diversity. In this connection, as one of the countries with an economy in transition, we would like to call for a further broadening of international cooperation by means of coordination of donor activities, as well as the development of specialized aid programmes to countries in transition.

Uzbekistan fully supports the Declaration of Principles put before this Summit. 🇺🇵



*His Excellency  
Robert Gabriel Mugabe*

*President of the Republic  
of Zimbabwe*

## Zimbabwe



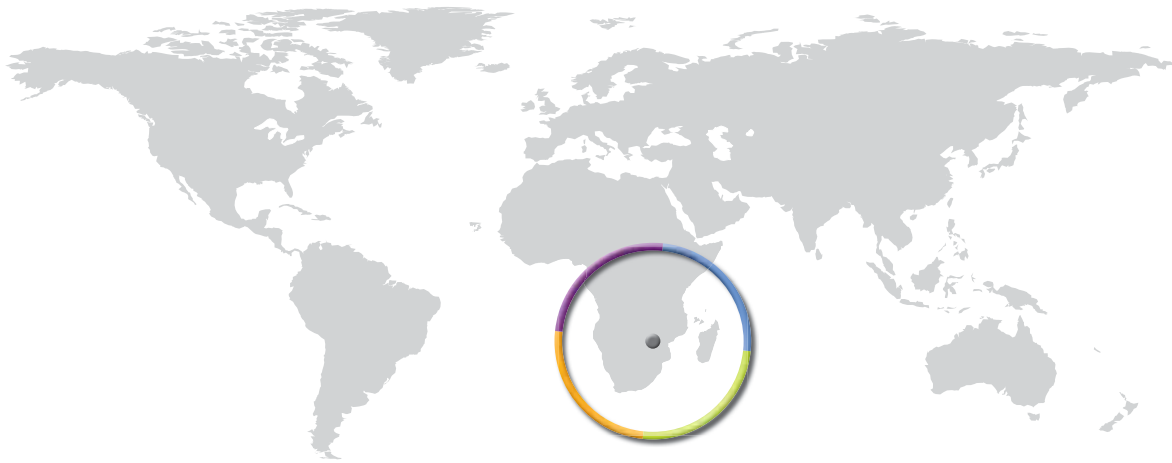
This Summit is a culmination of a series of efforts that seek to bring into sharp focus an integral dynamic in human development, namely information, as well as the infrastructural means of its delivery, or what we have come to collectively term information and communication technologies (ICT).

The new millennium boasts dramatic technological improvements which have given rise to an information revolution. Time, space and distance have collapsed to create what for some is "a brave, new world". It is a world of enormous technological leaps, a world where means have improved well beyond measure.

Yet in this new age, we continue to face basic paradoxes. The duality of development and underdevelopment remain implacably in place. The rich, digital North remains on the one side of the development divide; the poor, disempowered, underdeveloped South remains on the other side.

Hence, in spite of the present global milieu of technological sophistication, we remain a modern world divided by old dichotomies and old asymmetries that make genuine calls for digital solidarity sound hollow. It is a sad, sad story of improved technological means for unimproved human ends.

Long after we have talked about the need for information and communication technologies as tools with which to contrive the information society, we discover that receivers and computers are powered by electricity which is unavailable in a typical Third World village. Long after we have talked about connectivity, we discover that most platforms for electronic communication need basic telecommunication infrastructure which does not exist in a typical African village.




What is worse, we will discover, much to our dismay, that the poor villager we wish to turn into a fitting citizen for our information society, is, in many instances, unable to read and write. Where we are lucky to find the villager literate and numerate, we soon discover that he or she is not looking for a computer terminal, but for a morsel of food; an antibiotic to save a dying child; a piece of land on which to eke out an existence; in short, looking for a humane society that guarantees food, health, shelter and education.

For us, e-commerce implies growing economies trading fairly in barrier-free markets. E-education implies economies run for the people, not for the sake of enriching one or two multinational corporations. E-health implies affordable drugs for affordable health delivery systems that can only be guaranteed by policies that are genuinely national. Yes, e-government implies a sovereign national government that manages "Top-Level Domains" within its borders and whose preoccupation are its people first and foremost.

The key to, and foundation of, an information society lies in the resolution of the dilemma of development. The way to an information society is through even, fair and just development. There is no shortcut.

Today, we seek an information society in a world shaped and divisively structured by global hierarchies of power – undiminished, hegemonic power made most arbitrary by the politics of uni-polarity that have led to circumstances of a disempowered United Nations system. We seek equal access to information, itself duplicitously presented as a basic human right, when in fact it was commercialized and commoditized by a few rich countries a long time ago.

The quest for an information society should not be at the expense of our efforts towards building sovereign national societies. Our national society does not exist to serve ICT or information. Both must be instruments that serve our society as it seeks fullness through balanced development and self-determination. Both must express themselves within the parameters of our inviolate sovereignty represented by our democratic national will, which expresses itself through our national laws, our national policies and our national institutions. On this we are firm and unbending.

We should seek to use ICT as tools that can be adopted and adapted to the construction of sovereign national societies, with clear national identities, themselves the real and only durable building blocks to a vibrant, diverse, just and sustainable global information society. 



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