# A commitment
## to future generations

*A compendium of extracts from statements by Heads of State and Government at the World Summit on the Information Society, Tunis, November 2005*

**Volume 2**

ITU
International Telecommunication Union

*Committed to connecting the world*

# ITU vision statement

## 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.

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 **disadvantaged** and **people with disabilities**. To realize all this, we know that it is not enough to be only communication specialists; we also have to be specialized in communicating.

ITU International Telecommunication Union

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*A compendium of extracts from statements by **Heads of State and Government** at the World Summit on the Information Society, Tunis, 16-18 November 2005*

*Prepared from the Summit's General Debate,
Plenary Sessions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7.*

world summit
on the information society
Geneva 2003 - Tunis 2005

International
Telecommunication
Union

## Note from the Publisher

This publication provides extracts from statements by Heads of State and Government at the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that took place in Tunis, Tunisia, on 16–18 November 2005. 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

Some countries have changed their names since the time of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, but the old names are given here to reflect the situation in 2005. Some Heads of State and Government are no longer in office or have passed away, but their views have been kept in this publication to reflect the situation in 2005.

### Disclaimer

# *Foreword*

**Dr Hamadoun I. Touré**

*Secretary-General*
*International Telecommunication Union*

》 I am honoured to introduce this compendium presenting the views of Heads of State and Government at the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in Tunis on 16–18 November 2005. It contains extracts from their statements at the event, and follows a first volume relating to the Geneva phase of WSIS in 2003.

As the culmination of the Tunis Summit, world leaders issued the *Tunis Commitment* and the *Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.* In the *Tunis Commitment,* these leaders reiterate their "unequivocal support" for the *Declaration of Principles* and *Plan of Action* issued at the summit's first phase in Geneva. They reaffirm their commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The aim is for people everywhere to be able to share and utilize information and knowledge in order to achieve their full potential and attain internationally agreed development objectives, including the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

The *Tunis Agenda for the Information Society* states firmly that "it is now time to move from principles to action." World leaders set an agenda not only for ways to close the digital divide, but also for the work of ITU as a leading agency in this effort. It also gave ITU many other tasks that we have grasped with dedication and determination, following their endorsement by our Plenipotentiary Conference in Antalya, Turkey, in 2006.

ITU, alongside the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), plays a leading role in implementing the WSIS Geneva Plan of Action, which has eleven main areas of focus, or "action lines". ITU is leading the multi-stakeholder efforts in the areas of "information and communication infrastructure" and "building confidence and security in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT)": the two action lines for which our Union has sole responsibility.

A decade ago, there were just 182 million people using the Internet globally – and almost all lived in the developed world. By early 2009, there were over 1.5 billion Internet users worldwide, and more than 400 million of them had access to broadband. This represents tremendous progress in our commitment to connect the world. But unfortunately, the rapid spread of the Internet has brought with it equally rapid growth in cyberthreats. Malware is becoming an increasing problem, while spam clogs up the networks. Targeted attacks on businesses and government networks present serious threats. Ordinary users too are at risk of identity theft, while children are encountering paedophile predators online.

To help combat these problems, I launched in May 2007 the ITU *Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA)* as a framework for international cooperation to enhance confidence and security in the information society. The GCA is intended to create a platform where governments, law enforcement authorities, the private sector, international organizations and civil society can work together to defeat cybercrime. The GCA has elicited enthusiastic support from both private sector and government partners around the world. On 20 March 2009, I was delighted to inaugurate, with Malaysia's Prime Minister Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawii, the new facilities which will host the Global Cybersecurity Agenda. These are located at the global headquarters of the International Multilateral Partnership Against Cyber Threats (IMPACT), in Cyberjaya, near Kuala Lumpur.

I am also very pleased that Dr Óscar Arias Sánchez, President of the Republic of Costa Rica and 1987 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, are both Patrons of the ITU *Global Cybersecurity Agenda*.

The Internet is a growing common resource – vastly increasing the opportunities but also the dangers online, especially for children. That is why the theme of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2009 (17 May) was chosen to be "Protecting children in cyberspace". In selecting this theme at its meeting in November 2008, the ITU Council drew attention to the great importance of an issue that affects a fast-growing number of children and teenagers worldwide. And during the High-Level Segment of the Council meeting, ITU launched its *Child Online Protection* (COP) Initiative, which brings together international partners with the aim of creating a safe online experience for children everywhere.

Ensuring the online world is a safe and secure place to visit will be essential to promoting worldwide adoption of this powerful resource. Working together, we can – and must – create a safe cyberspace in which people can trade, learn and be entertained.

A great deal has happened since the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society. Technical advances continue at an almost incredible pace, but new challenges have arisen too. Foremost of these is climate change. ICT has an enormous role to play in helping to monitor and mitigate the changing climate, as well as in warning of, and responding to, the natural disasters that may occur as one of its results. ITU is working hard on the issue of climate change, while continuing to maintain its focus on the priorities of cybersecurity and other issues. By tackling them, in partnership with our membership, we will, I believe, be able to give an important boost to progress towards achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

# Visions

## for a **better world**

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

**Volume 1**

*is available at:*
*www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/opb/pol/S-POL-WSIS.VIS_BW-2008-PDF-E.pdf*

**ITU**
International
Telecommunication
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*Committed to connecting 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 second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society,
Tunis, November 2005*
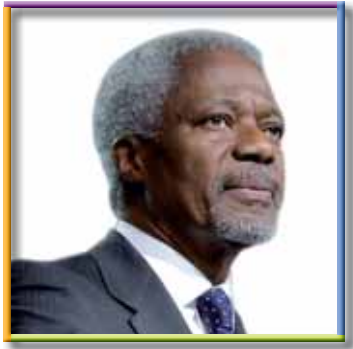
# Statement by

*Kofi A. Annan*

*Secretary-General\* of the United Nations*

The first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, 2003) articulated a vision of an open and inclusive information society. Our task here in Tunis is to move from diagnosis to deeds.

This Summit must be a summit of solutions. It must lead to information and communication technologies being used in new ways, which will bring new benefits to all social classes. Most of all, it must generate new momentum towards developing the economies and societies of poor countries, and transforming the lives of poor people.

What do we mean by an "information society"? We mean one in which human capacity is expanded, built up, nourished and liberated, by giving people access to the tools and technologies they need, with the education and training to use them effectively. The hurdle here is more political than financial. The costs of connectivity, computers and mobile telephones can be brought down. These assets – these bridges to a better life – can be made universally affordable and accessible. We must summon the will to do it.

The information society also depends on networks. The Internet is the result of, and indeed functions as, a unique and grand collaboration. If its benefits are to spread around the world, we must promote the same cooperative spirit among governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations.

And of course, the information society's very lifeblood is freedom. It is freedom that enables citizens everywhere to benefit from knowledge, journalists to do their essential work, and citizens to hold government accountable. Without openness, without the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers, the information revolution will stall, and the information society we hope to build will be stillborn.

The time has come to move beyond broad discussions of the digital divide. By now, we know what the problems are. We must now get down to the specifics of implementation, and set out ways to foster and expand digital opportunities.

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

Those opportunities are immense. Already, in Africa and other developing regions, the rapid spread of mobile telephones and wireless telecommunication has spurred entrepreneurship and helped small businesses take root, particularly those run and owned by women. Doctors in remote areas have gained access to medical information on tropical diseases. Students have been able to tap into worldwide databases of books and research. Early warning of natural disasters has improved, and relief workers have been able to provide quicker, better coordinated relief.

The UN system is ready to help Member States and all stakeholders to implement whatever decisions are taken at this Summit, including on Internet governance. But let me be absolutely clear: the United Nations does not want to "take over", police or otherwise control the Internet. The United Nations consists of you, its Member States. It can want only what you agree on. And as I understand it, what we are all striving for is to protect and strengthen the Internet, and to ensure that its benefits are available to all.

The United States deserves our thanks for having developed the Internet and making it available to the world. It has exercised its oversight responsibilities fairly and honourably. I believe all of you agree that day-to-day management of the Internet must be left to technical institutions, not least to shield it from the heat of day-to-day politics. But I think you also all acknowledge the need for more international participation in discussions of Internet governance issues. The question is how to achieve this. So let those discussions continue.

UN agencies and departments continue to work hard to build capacity, and to use information technologies to boost our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These efforts are bearing fruit. But for far too many people, the gains remain out of reach. There is a tremendous yearning, not for technology *per se,* but for what technology can make possible. I urge you to respond to that thirst, and to take the tangible steps that will enable this Summit to be remembered as an event which advanced the causes of development, of dignity and of peace.

# Statement by

*Yoshio Utsumi*

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

We started on the long journey to Tunis in 1998, when the government of Tunisia proposed to hold a World Summit on the Information Society. We have accomplished much during this journey. We have shared the vision of an information society that is people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented; an information society where information and communication technologies (ICT) are vital tools to promote sustainable development and to improve the quality of life. An information society where anyone, anywhere has an opportunity to participate and no one is excluded from the benefits it offers.

Here in Tunis, we will be closing one chapter, but we will be opening a new and much bigger chapter on the implementation of that vision. In this endeavour, however, we should really recognize the true value of ICT as a central theme in national development policies.

The Geneva Plan of Action provides us with a road map of where we should go and how to get there. Two critical elements are the development of basic infrastructure and the provision of training and education. The challenge we are now facing is how to implement these two elements. I believe what is required is a new pact between "haves" and "have-nots". When discussing the Summit documents, we have too often assumed that promoting ICT for development means just another type of traditional assistance. But that's not true. In the information society, we become richer by sharing what we have, not by hoarding it. The new pact will not obey the normal rules of negotiation of give and take. It will be based on mutual self-interest.

In the old world of *finite* natural resources, one country's exploitation of those resources meant there were less available for others. But in the new world of *infinite* information resources, one country's creation of wealth based on information can be shared by all. It is a win-win game. The goal of creating a global information society is a task for all stakeholders, not just governments. This Summit has been a learning process in which we have been trying to understand the role of the private sector and civil society in the traditional international order.

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

The challenges to the conventional sovereign State are never greater than in the realm of cyberspace. The traditional principles of "national sovereignty" that have been applied to telecommunications – namely that each State regulates its telecommunications in the way it sees fit– are not working for the Internet, which started in one country and has penetrated everywhere before States could step in. Now that the Internet has become a basic element of infrastructure for any nation, it is very natural that nations try to claim their sovereignty over the Internet as they do over the traditional telecommunication infrastructure. However, the value of the Internet lies in the value of information created and consumed by users, rather than in the infrastructure itself. So, Internet governance requires a multi-stakeholder approach in which providers and users of information alike agree, at an international level, to cooperate on such issues as security, privacy protection and efficient operation.

That is why we have suffered such agonies in our discussion of Internet governance – the existing models do not work well. We need to embrace a new model for "communication sovereignty". What matters is to guarantee everyone access to information or the means to communicate with others, rather than to control the means of communication.

Communication is a basic human need and the foundation of all social organization. We must fight to defend the "right to communicate" rather than the "right to govern". In order to guarantee the right to communicate, we must first solve issues of connectivity. And when it comes to technical issues, an international technical institution such as ITU is best placed to ensure this.

As the Secretary-General of the World Summit on the Information Society, I feel truly honoured to have been given the opportunity to serve the international community at this key moment in history. As the wheel of change continues to turn, we must work together to create a more just and equitable information society. ▮

**Note from the Publisher**

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\*    The host countries for the 2005 phase (Tunisia) and the 2003 phase (Switzerland) of the World Summit on the Information Society are listed here first. All other countries are listed in official United Nations alphabetical order.

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[1]    Nepal has now changed its name to Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

[2]    Serbia and Montenegro are now two seperate countries.

# Heads of State and Government and their commitment to future generations



world summit
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2005

*His Excellency*
*Zine El Abidine Ben Ali*

*President of Tunisia*

# *Tunisia*

Our country, which in 1998 called for this Summit to be held under the auspices of the United Nations, is indeed proud to host its proceedings. For Tunisia has always been the land of dialogue, entente, tolerance and moderation, offering all cultures and civilizations opportunities for meeting and communication. Our meeting represents a Summit for the "global village" whose networks have been established through information and communication technologies (ICT).

Tunisia is firmly convinced of the importance of building the information society in order to guarantee a better future for all humanity. We are also deeply aware of the need to strengthen relations of cooperation among the international community, as well as to reduce disparities among peoples, in order to narrow the digital divide and remedy its negative effects as soon as possible.

While reaffirming the fact that the digital divide is essentially a development disparity before being a technological gap, we call on the international community to join efforts in order to allow all peoples, particularly in least developed countries, to gain access to technological progress and to benefit from the scientific and digital revolution witnessed in the world today.

We also look forward to the adoption of practical decisions and programmes that will help solve issues posed by the information society, such as protecting identity and cultural diversity. The last few years have witnessed the emergence of certain types of use that shake confidence in the contents of networks and call into question the credibility of information, its sources, and its conformity with agreed ethical standards. Some of the uses of ICT arouse racism, discrimination and hatred, and advocate extremism and terrorism, or contribute to the propagation

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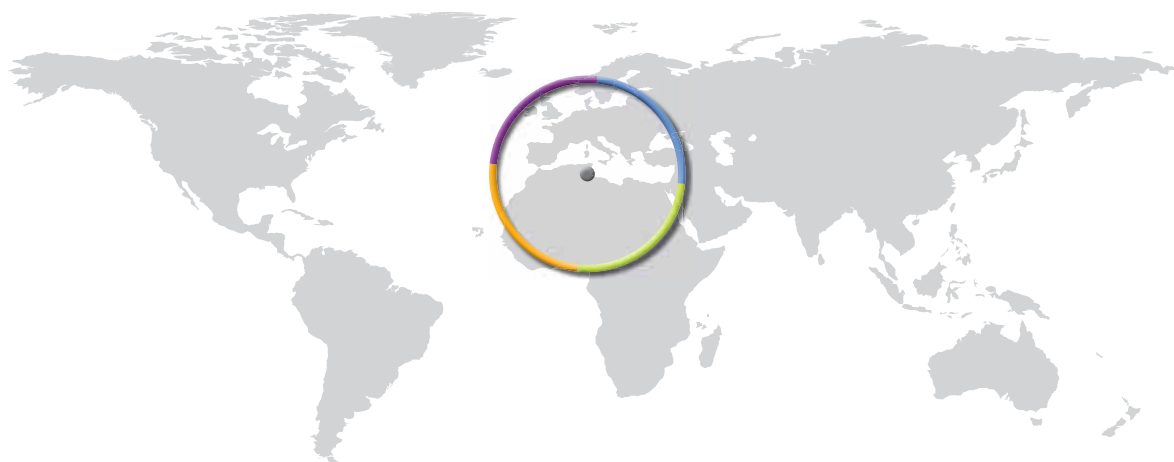
of organized crime. Others disseminate allegations and falsehoods, and transgress the individual right of access to information, through unsolicited messages, or through the illegal commercial use of databases.

The information society offers individuals considerable means for self expression, independent access to information, and for contributing to the community. But individuals must be committed to responsible use of ICT, and abide by ethical values that preserve others' rights and integrity.

The effects of the digital divide extend to cultural dimensions of humanity. Communication among cultures now depends on their ability to be present in virtual space. Statistics show that the presence of the various languages and cultures on the Internet does not currently reflect the reality of human diversity. It follows that preserving cultures amounts to a collective moral responsibility that the international community as a whole should assume.

In Tunisia, we have chosen a development approach based on the principle of complementarity between the political, economic and cultural dimensions. We have concentrated our efforts on building a modern society, through a project of reform based on enlarging the scope of individual and public freedoms, promoting relevant legislation, reinforcing

democratic practice, protecting human rights, guaranteeing political pluralism, encouraging private initiative, and consolidating the competitive capacity of our economy.

Establishing an information society constitutes an essential part of our approach, as it is a fundamental factor in accelerating growth. We have established a strategy for the dissemination of digital culture, so that it covers all segments of society. This involves widespread teaching of computer science, and providing incentives and facilities to promote access to the Internet. We have also established a special policy to encourage investment in ICT.

We hope the Tunis Summit will constitute a propitious opportunity to find solutions to the challenges of ICT. The Internet is one of the most important pending issues that need a consensus in order to serve the interests of all humanity, as part of the serious dialogue that we hope will be pursued after this Summit. As regards the reduction of the ever-widening digital divide, there is a need, more than ever before, for the establishment of a clear approach outlining the contours of an equitable knowledge society, offering all peoples the opportunity to have access to communication technologies.

*His Excellency*
*Samuel Schmid*

*President of the Swiss*
*Confederation*

# Switzerland

In 2003, it was my country, Switzerland, which had the pleasure and the privilege of hosting the first phase of the World Summit on the Information (WSIS) in Geneva. At the time, we were still not certain that those four letters, WSIS, would really succeed in launching a dialogue at the global level. Today, even the most sceptical recognize that this Summit provides the ideal platform for worldwide dialogue on information and communication technologies (ICT), the importance of which is no longer in doubt.

In Geneva, we adopted the legal and political basis for the project by agreeing a Declaration of Principles and a Plan of Action. Here in Tunis, it is a matter of entering the implementation phase. In other words, we should determine who will do what in order to ensure that ICT are applied with a view to making the world a fairer and safer place.

The twenty-first century is the century of information. The Internet, the short-message service (SMS) via mobile phones, and other technologies making it possible for people to be reached anywhere and at any time, have completely revolutionized professional and private life. The technologies in question have multiple possibilities of establishing a better world: for example, in combating poverty, in ensuring better access to medical care, in strengthening the economy and stimulating trade, in promoting democracy and guaranteeing cultural diversity, and even in furthering understanding among peoples. Seen from this angle, the results of WSIS, notably those which will be achieved here in Tunis, are also of capital importance with a view to achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

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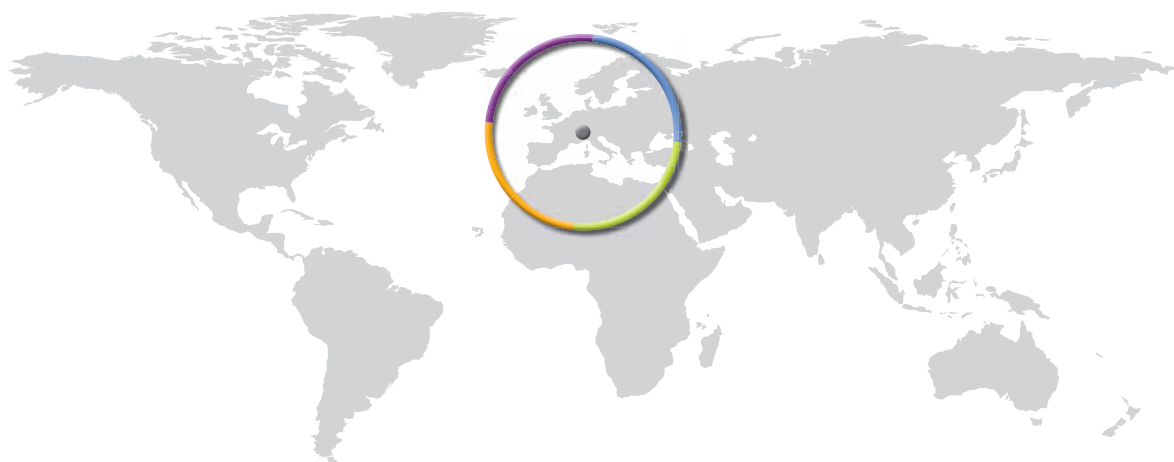
However, we must not forget that, if they are used unwisely, these technologies may result in the exact opposite of what we expect from them. They may be harmful to society, by increasing the divide between rich and poor. They may lead to States keeping watch on their citizens without respecting their private lives or their democratic rights. Finally, they may lead to excesses, by bringing within everyone's reach pages of a racist nature, or featuring child pornography.

It is up to us to carve out the political and legal framework which will prevent abuses and which will enable ICT, with the immense opportunities they represent, to be instruments in the service of a better world.

In my capacity as President of one of the oldest democracies in the world, I want this Summit not only to concentrate on the technologies, but also to take up the questions of content and access to it. A very large proportion of the inhabitants of our planet do not have access to means of communication, due to insufficient infrastructure or financial resources. Today, these hundreds of millions of individuals are still excluded from the information society. This is why one of the major goals of this Summit will be to further the financing of infrastructure and telecommunication services in the poorest regions of the planet.

We must therefore take measures to enable the inhabitants of the developing countries to use these technologies with a view to improving their living conditions: this involves also educating the people concerned and creating concrete content which is appropriate to their needs. Until this has been put in place, ICT will remain a tool of the rich, and the divide between rich and poor will continue to grow.

Of the many individuals who still do not have access to information resources, for many this is due to political reasons. It is not acceptable – and I say this without beating about the bush – for the United Nations Organization to continue to include among its members those States which imprison citizens for the sole reason that they have criticized their government or their authorities on the Internet or in the press. Any knowledge-based society must respect the independence of its media, as it respects human rights. I therefore expect that freedom of expression and freedom of information will constitute central themes over the course of this Summit.

I want this second phase of WSIS to be a success and would like it to produce some very concrete results which will enable the inhabitants of our planet to have access to information and thereby solve a large number of their problems.

*His Excellency*
*Abdelaziz Bouteflika*

*President of the Democratic*
*Republic of Algeria*

# Algeria

The continuing quest of humankind for happiness, in a world that is increasingly globalized, lends great importance to the discussions for which we are here: not only people and nations, entire civilizations that have made their contribution to the rich tapestry of human culture are today facing the challenges that the information society is raising in their daily lives.

In Geneva, we recognized that there is a need to create an enabling environment based on well-defined policies to facilitate universal, equitable and affordable access to the information society. Here in Tunis, we have to take our consensus further, as it is unquestionable that the information society in its current manifestation reinforces the existing economic, social and cultural divides, both domestically and internationally.

The developing countries were the first to taste the harsh reality of the exclusively market-oriented policies that have historically characterized the management of the Internet, and, in that context, have suffered from the exorbitant costs tied to the construction and acquisition of information infrastructure. Inevitably, therefore, the case of the developing countries has become the litmus test for a situation that, while new, bears a striking resemblance to the "business as usual" that has, alas, dominated international economic and financial relations, despite those countries' repeated protests ever since their independence.

It is, therefore, important to create a new vision, one which recognizes the link between underdevelopment and its direct result: the digital divide. Next, strategic directions need to be identified that will be useful in putting in place an information society that will benefit all people equally. For all of these reasons, we call for international cooperation that is built on
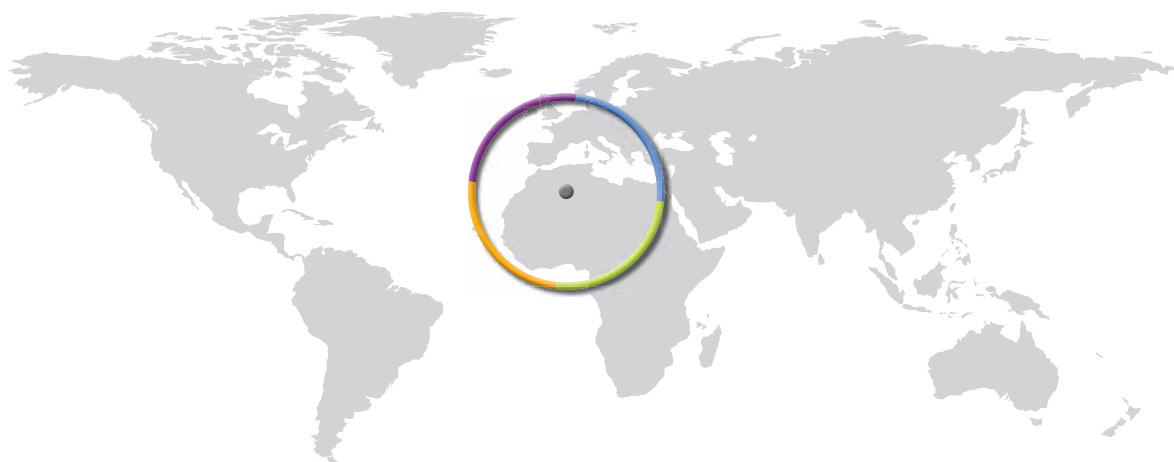
solidarity, in order to better meet the challenges of globalization and of the digital world.

Africa must build its material and human capacities in order to seize the fabulous opportunities created by new information and communication technologies (ICT). We are devoting a colossal effort to catch up. This can be seen in the projects established by the e-Africa Commission within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). An example of this is the "e-School" project which will make it possible to connect a number of schools in Africa to the Internet via satellite links.

In the run-up to this Summit, Algeria, like other countries has reflected on important questions, including Internet governance, financing mechanisms, and the mechanism for implementing the Geneva Plan of Action. For its part, Algeria proposes a transparent, inclusive and democratic organization for Internet governance. Given that the entire international community is dependent on the Internet, all stakeholders must play their respective roles in a new process, based on an international charter that should be set up and adhered to by all players.

Regarding financing mechanisms, the NEPAD peers, including Algeria, and other countries and donor organizations responded to the call from the international community by bringing their financial contribution to the Global Digital Solidarity Fund. My hope is, of course, to see the developing countries join this major cooperation project.

It is generally conceded that inequalities within a country represent another digital divide. In Algeria, we are tackling this through important initiatives, aimed at citizens and private enterprise, to stimulate and develop the use of ICT. They include "Operation OUSRATIC", under which it is intended to equip six million households with a computer and high-speed Internet access by 2010. Essentially, our policy is to make ICT part of the national strategy for development.

The challenge, for all of us, is to recognize that the information society is not a rigid concept, and to prepare for a future that will be much more complex, as new technologies shrink our world into a global village. The finely woven web of the information society is being spun at high speed. All the peoples of the Earth must be involved in its construction and its benefits. This Summit will go down in history if it succeeds in addressing this challenge.

*His Excellency
Fernando da Piedade
Dias dos Santos*

*Prime Minister of the
Republic of Angola*

# *Angola*

Angola has only recently emerged from a long-lasting war that devastated its infrastructure and left a great number of displaced persons and refugees. Accordingly, our country faces a gigantic challenge in the process of reconstruction, which will demand total commitment from our people. At the same time, the democratic process is continuing as we prepare to hold general elections.

Given what is at stake, we are rallying to the challenge of information and communication technologies (ICT), marshalling all the services and resources available to put Angola back on its feet and work for its development in all domains.

The government is finalizing a package of policies and measures to promote macroeconomic stability and reduce poverty. Essentially, they come down to reducing inflation, stabilizing interest rates and exchange rates, and promoting free enterprise, in order to stimulate entrepreneurial activity, create new jobs and increase the income of ordinary citizens.

The emergence of the information society will demand that we all adopt new ways of understanding the world around us. It will also demand new paradigms for government. This in turn will imply new models for the relationship between government and citizens, and effective new ways for citizens to participate in the country's social, cultural, educational, economic and political life.

Our country and our government are engaged in the search for solutions, and in pursuing the solid construction of the knowledge society. We know what is at stake, and we are aware of the risks. We know that we will only be able to move to an information society through a lengthy construction process and
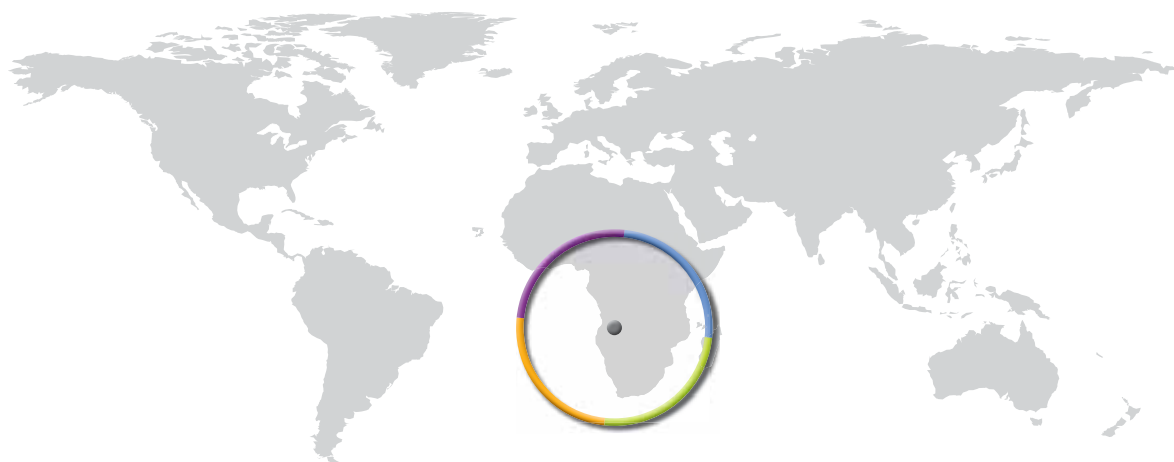
with the participation of the public and private sectors.

We are pleased to announce that in 2004, Angola's digital access index was twice as high as the figure that was calculated by ITU two years ago, based on information that our country had for 2001, the year in which we achieved peace.

The new situation is essentially the result of the growth in per capita income and the significant progress made in infrastructure, education and Internet access. This is backed by statistics showing, for example, that the illiteracy rate in 2004 was around 33 per cent, and overall teledensity reached 5.52 per cent.

Nonetheless, we remain among the group of countries that still have a long way to go to reach the summit of the digital revolution, but we are determined to persevere on the path of change.

We are also conscious that the information revolution represents a great opportunity for the harmonious development of the entire planet, and that there is a correlation between the consolidation of an equitable information society and the pursuit of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. We are on the side of those who promote the use of synergies, at the domestic and the international

level alike, between the public and private sectors and civil society; with ideas and actions that contribute to a shared vision and understanding of the information society.

We are supportive of all initiatives that promote universal access to information and knowledge, and we welcome the creation of the Global Digital Solidarity Fund.

Regarding the outstanding questions on which consensus has eluded us so far, in particular the issue of Internet governance, we are on the side of those who think that it should be done in a multilateral, transparent and democratic manner. Recognizing, at the same time, the complexity of the matter, we are in favour of a process of gradual transition, guided by the Geneva principles relating to the roles of government and of all stakeholders.

We believe that a formal, functional follow-up mechanism must be set up for the outcomes of this Summit, oriented towards consensus-based action lines. The mechanism should be within the United Nations system and the coordination role should be endowed with sufficient weight to guarantee the principle of universal access to communications in all countries of the world.

*His Excellency*
*Andranik Margaryan*

*Prime Minister*

# *Armenia*

We commend this initiative of the United Nations and we express our support for the formation of the information society.

Armenia has been, and remains, a pioneer in the creation and dissemination of information and communication technologies (ICT).This year, under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the international community joined hands with Armenians worldwide to celebrate the 1600th anniversary of the invention of the Armenian alphabet. In the mid-20th century, Armenia was among the very few countries to embark on the new stage of ICT development, and in 1960 the first Armenian computer was made. Recent years have seen rapid growth in the ICT industry, which has been declared an economic priority by the Armenian Government. As a result, ICT output reached 1.7 per cent of GDP in 2004.

Owing to public-private partnerships, Armenia has enjoyed a considerable increase in investment in the ICT sector. New courses have been introduced into schools and universities, and regional training centres have been established, including laboratories for radio-frequency identification (or RFID). To support the development of the sector, an ICT council attached to the Prime Minister's office, was established in 2001. The council includes representatives of all stakeholders, including ministries, private companies and scientific and non-governmental organizations. With World Bank support, the Armenian Government has been implementing a business incubation project in the ICT sector. The project has been a major spur
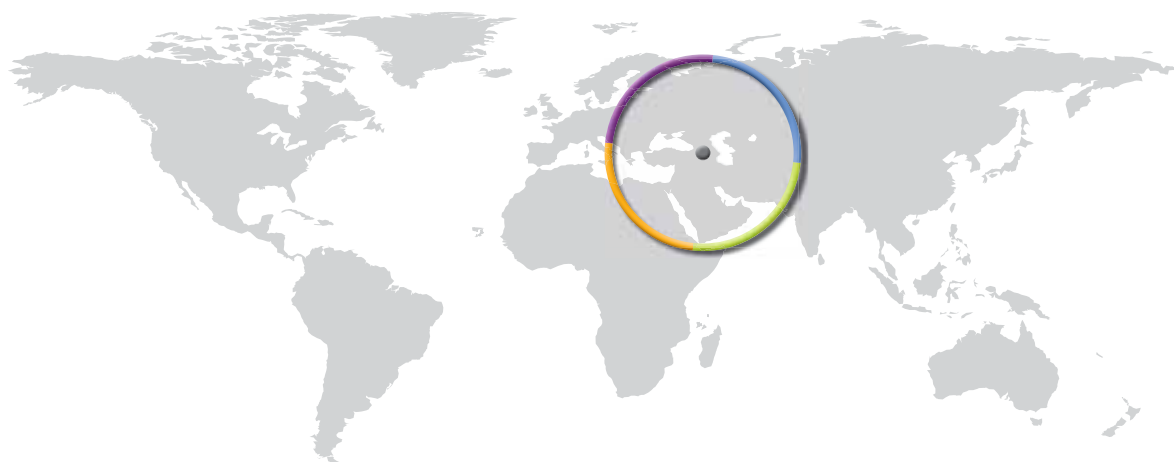
to the growth of small- and medium-sized enterprises and the formation of venture capital. The effective collaboration between Armenia and the Armenian diaspora is also worth a special mention as a success story in this area.

Armenia does not simply view ICT as a branch of industry; rather, it is perceived as an effective tool that can drive the growth of other sectors domestically. ICT can enhance the effectiveness and transparency of government, improve access to public services, and boost a country's competitiveness and economic productivity. Recognizing the importance of building a knowledge economy and developing systems of governance, education, culture and health, the Armenian Government intends to elaborate a national strategy for creating an information society. We will implement the strategy as a means of eradicating poverty, in line with our policy as well as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

We believe the continued implementation of decisions taken in Geneva during the first phase of the Summit, and further discussion of the issues raised here in Tunis will require the United Nations to continue coordinating the formation of the information society. Among the issues discussed in Tunis, we attach particular importance to balanced governance of the Internet, bridging the digital divide, creating a multilingual environment and promoting cultural diversity, and dealing appropriately with education, science and technological innovation. We are confident that these issues can be resolved by combining the efforts of all stakeholders.

The Government of the Republic of Armenia reiterates its commitment to taking an active part in the future process aimed at furthering these objectives. We will cooperate and, to the best of our ability, exert our efforts towards achieving universal development and prosperity.

*His Excellency*
*Ivo Miro Jovic*

*Chairperson of the*
*Presidency*

# Bosnia and Herzegovina

This second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society proves how important the development of the information society is for the entire world, especially for economic growth and globalization.

Establishing the information society is a process that started long ago, when the first printing press was invented, and is developing in a way that seemed unimaginable, introducing the information and communication technologies (ICT) into all aspects of our lives. Thus, ICT are becoming the infrastructure for economic and social development and for the new world order.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country in transition from war, a place where the lack of information and insufficient access to knowledge dominate. However, this situation and the presence of outdated technologies are offering Bosnia and Herzegovina a unique opportunity to introduce and apply the most modern and high-quality technologies instead of our outdated ones. We are ready and eager to move forward, whilst our own experts and the international community are providing support.

This is a remarkable opportunity for countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina to use the recommendations and solutions from the most developed information societies, or countries and regions. By doing so, we have become the first country within our region to establish an independent public agency and to separate the regulatory part of the telecommunication sector from the State. The result of this measure is a liberalized market with modern and highly digitized networks, as well as service providers that cover even the most distant rural areas.

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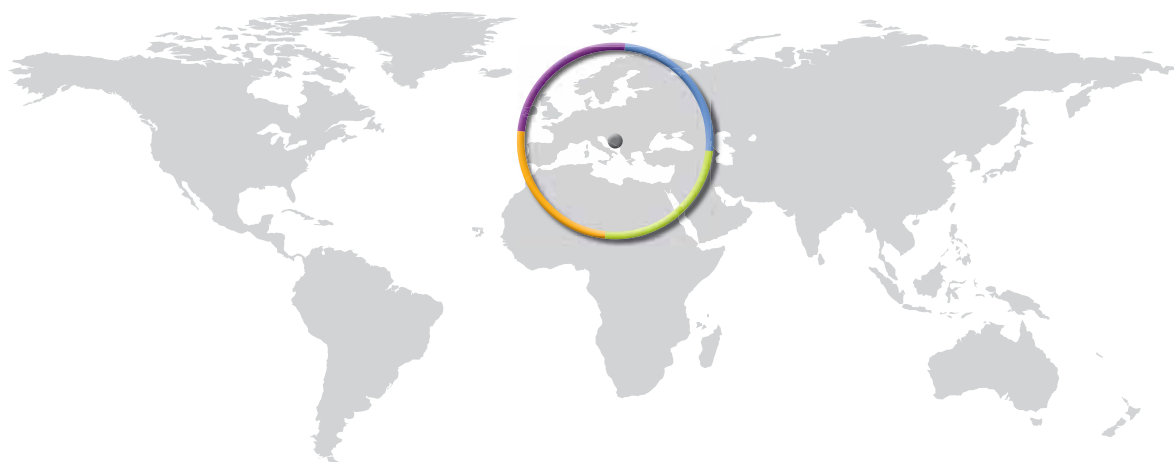
Our most important task in the near future will be the efficient handling of the privatization of the State-owned telecommunication companies.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has adopted a policy and action plan for development of the information society. These underline five areas of development: ICT infrastructure, ICT industry, e-government, e-education and e-legislation. An agency is being established to implement our plans.

Even with the results already accomplished, Bosnia and Herzegovina is still facing a serious and complex task of implementing the national strategy and action plan. This Summit is an opportunity for us to see where we stand in comparison to other countries, and to get an insight into the most recent findings in order to – as soon as possible – become partners with those countries that have already achieved great progress in developing the information society.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is facing the additional need to reduce a digital divide between the rural, less-developed areas of the country and developed ones. We are trying to speed up progress by creating encompassing infrastructure. We have just initiated one of the most ambitious projects: creation of an "ICT highway" that will enable all our citizens to share the benefits that the information society provides.

The information society is alone in the huge benefits that it offers to humanity. At the same time, there are numerous risks, especially possible misuse of ICT. Therefore, establishing the information society requires a proper regulatory framework, not one that takes an arbitrary and monopolistic approach, since the free flow of information should not be restricted.

At the same time, freedom has to include a certain code of conduct in order to prevent anarchy. In this context, it is necessary to establish clear regulatory mechanisms that would reduce misuse to the minimum and prevent the activities of terrorists or criminals. All of us here must pay special attention to the protection of information systems and networks from every type of unauthorized access or sabotage.

It is of great importance that the management of Internet, the basic foundation of the information society, is delegated to a regulatory body ruled by international laws, in a way that would provide for it to be used by everyone in an open and just way. 🟥
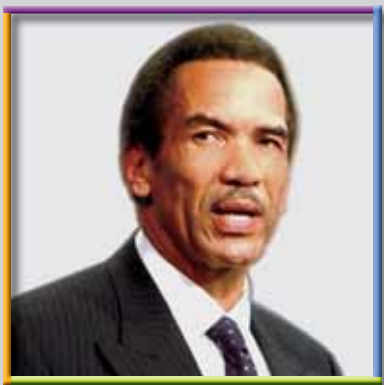
*His Excellency*
*Seretse Khama Ian Khama*

*Vice-President*
*of the Republic of Botswana*

# Botswana

Following the Geneva Plan of Action issued at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, Botswana embarked on the development of a national policy on information and communication technologies (ICT), which seeks to embrace all the Geneva principles within our national context. As we move towards implementation of this strategy, there are two key challenges that are emerging: capacity constraints because of a shortage of expertise, and a scarcity of financial resources to provide ICT infrastructure for all our people. Our experience suggests that these are the two most important issues that the world needs to address in order for the information society to become a global reality.

In an effort to improve the availability of appropriate skills, Botswana is establishing a new university, specializing in science and technology, to enable our youth to participate fully and benefit from emerging knowledge.

Major investments have also been made in modernizing our national telecommunication infrastructure, and plans are being developed to further improve access in the rural parts of the country. The high costs and complex regulatory requirements for such infrastructure, however, require much closer regional cooperation, coupled with a new policy and regulatory framework focusing on affordable and open access to communication facilities.

It is our fervent hope that the proposed regional infrastructure projects, such as the East and West African submarine cable systems and associated backhaul links, will be developed along these principles. We urge our development partners to
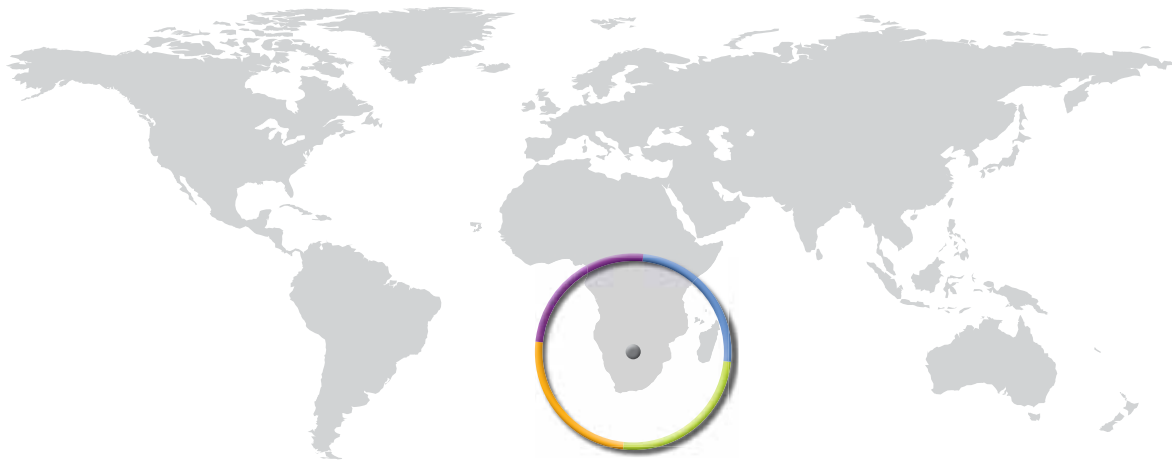
support those initiatives, based on open access. Failure to embrace this principle is likely to create further monopoly operators on the continent, who give precedence to the profit motive at the expense of broader development objectives.

At the global level, it is important to emphasize that the security and stability of the Internet are paramount, and that developing nations should ensure that they build the institutional and technical capacity to contribute to defining public policy on the use of this technology. Major areas where the developing world should be increasingly involved are Internet security and cybercrime, including personal privacy and general morality in cyberspace. Only through this level of participation can we develop a safe and secure information society.

As regards WSIS implementation structures, our wish is that we should not be constrained by existing structures, and instead nations should devise innovative ways of taking the WSIS plan forward.

In this vein, Botswana, in conjunction with the International Federation for Information Processing, this year hosted the biennial World Information Technology Forum, which aims to translate some of the WSIS Action Lines into concrete projects. This conference produced an action programme called the Gaborone Declaration, which was adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its 33rd General Conference, and represents one of the vehicles through which the WSIS process can be kept alive after this Tunis Summit.

Let me close by again thanking the Tunisian Government for proposing the World Summit on the Information Society. We hope that those given the onerous task of implementing the decisions and aims of the Summit will take inspiration from the spirit of determination and hope prevailing here in Tunis.

*His Excellency
François Bozize
Yangouvonda*

*President of the Central
African Republic*

# Central African Republic

The special session devoted recently by the United Nations to evaluating the progress made on the Millennium Development Goals has brought out the enormous gap between the promises made by governments at the Millennium Summit held in New York in 2000 and actual realization of those promises five years later. This gap is even wider in the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector, even though that sector is fundamental to all development efforts.

I am therefore pleased to see the international community engage in overall reflection on the future of the information society, which represents such high stakes for the African countries and in particular for the Central African Republic, which is struggling to create its own niche in a world of science and technology that is going through such profound change today.

Nevertheless, the return to constitutional legality, to which the international community contributed considerably, now makes it possible to concentrate on the task of national reconstruction, a fundamental vector of which must be an information society focused on people's improved well-being and on harnessing the potential of ICT for development. Such is the philosophy of the Central African Republic, as it was my privilege to explain during the special session on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals — namely, that people must remain the fundamental focus of all action taken by our societies. This is why we in the Central African Republic maintain that new information and communication technologies should contribute to strengthening existing mechanisms aimed at satisfying the demands of health, education, agriculture and the rational use of natural resources.

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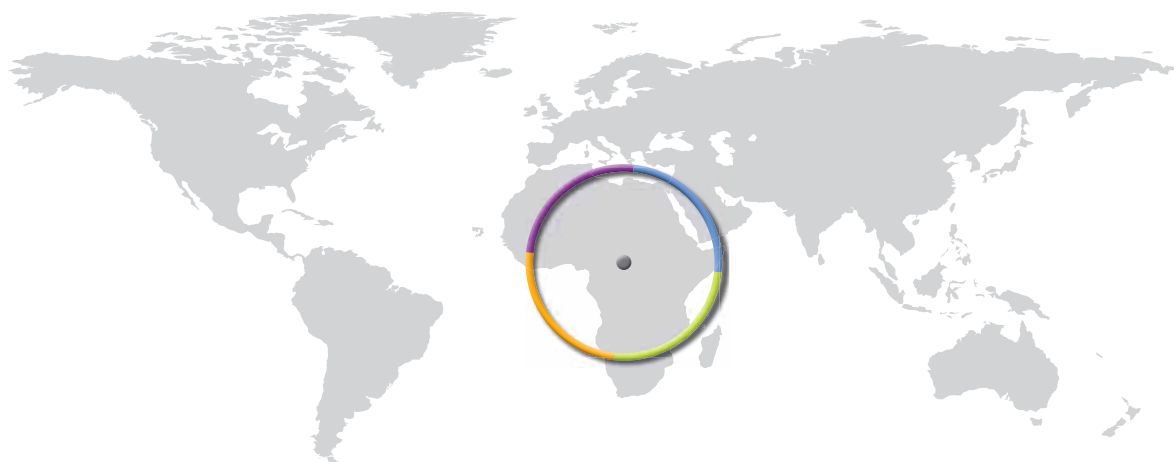
The Geneva phase of the Summit requested the United Nations Secretary-General to set up a working group on Internet Governance and a task force to study existing and new financing mechanisms, including the Global Digital Solidarity Fund. We fully support the recommendations made by the two working groups established by the Secretary-General in these two areas.

The recommendations are fully in line with the reforms to be introduced to promote the creation of a new legal and institutional environment that will reassure investors, encourage researchers and facilitate access to these numerous opportunities by our population – particularly the least privileged – in both rural and urban areas. It is under this condition that tele-education, the virtual university such as at the University of Bangui, videoconferencing, telemedicine, digital television, open source technology, voice over the Internet protocol (IP) and its multiple applications, and the renewable sources of energy that go with them, will constitute a real opportunity for advent of the information society we hope for with all our hearts, for Africa in general, and for my country, the Central African Republic, in particular. ■

*His Excellency
Huang Ju*

*Deputy Prime Minister
of the People's Republic
of China*

# China

Modern information networks are gradually expanding beyond national borders, transcending differences in geography and wealth, as well as ethnic and cultural traditions. As people in different parts of the world have ever closer economic links and more frequent cultural exchanges, the interests and destiny of humankind have never been more intertwined than today. To build the information society has become the common task of all countries in the world.

Coordinated development is the basic prerequisite for this task. The chief architect of China's reform and opening-up, Deng Xiaoping, once said "development is what really matters at the end of the day". The information society should be a people-centered, development-oriented and highly inclusive society in which all peoples and countries can share its benefits to the full. However, the problem of uneven development remains acute, as evidenced by the digital divide between and within countries. The international community should pay great attention to this problem and make concerted efforts to gradually reverse the situation.

Building the information society is a common cause of humanity. All governments, relevant international organizations and other parties, should work together to promote the development of this common cause. Developing countries should primarily rely on their own efforts to explore development models suited to their own national conditions. At the same time, developed countries are duty-bound to support them, especially the least developed countries, in terms of finance, technology and human resources. China is a developing country that always works for world peace, economic growth and the building of a harmonious society. The Chinese Government stands ready to further intensify its cooperation with all other countries in the
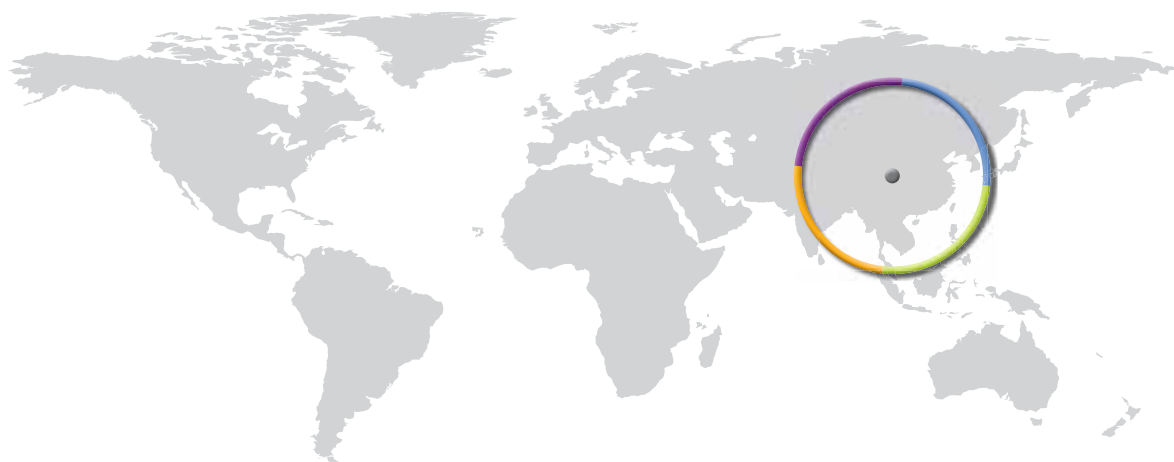
field of information and communication technologies (ICT) and will continue to offer help and support to other developing countries.

Full respect for cultural diversity is the basic norm guiding the development of the information society. It is imperative to understand and respect the right of all countries to choose their own social systems and development paths, work to dispel misgivings and estrangement and draw upon each other's strengths. On the one hand, we need to guarantee freedom of speech and safeguard human rights and dignity, and on the other, let the rule of law and social responsibility prevail, in order to create a harmonious, healthy and orderly environment for the development of the information society.

Strengthening of network and information security is another important factor. As ICT become indispensable to our lives, the negative impacts of insecure networks have become increasingly evident. We should follow the principles of government guidance, multi-player involvement, democratic decision-making, transparency and efficiency in Internet governance. We should build an effective mechanism for communication and coordination, enhance cooperation in this field among countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, and crack down on criminal activities. China supports the initiative

of President of Senegal Abdoulaye Wade in establishing the Global Digital Solidarity Fund and stands ready to actively explore with all parties concerned ways to strengthen cooperation in the field of ICT.

The Chinese Government, just like others, sets great store by building the information society. It has put forward a strategy for leapfrogging development, in which industrialization and informatization reinforce each other. This has played a positive and important role in boosting economic growth, promoting social progress and improving people's living standards.

We have come to Tunis from all over the world to discuss the information society. We need to make pioneering and unremitting efforts to reach our shared goal, and we need to unite to meet the common challenges. Peaceful development, poverty eradication, common prosperity and well-being are not only the goals we pursue, but also the purposes we share. China is ready to work together with the rest of the world in a continuous and unyielding effort to accelerate the building of the global information society, achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and usher in a better future for humanity.

*His Excellency*
*Assoumani Azali*

*President of the Union*
*of the Comoros*

# Comoros

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have transformed the world in a few short years. They have revolutionized human interaction, and the organization of our socio-economic life. They are leading to profound changes in all societies, unprecedented throughout history because they offer a real chance to make up the development lag that has accumulated in recent years.

Information and communication technologies are a formidable tool, a powerful catalyst for development, a chance for developing countries to leapfrog over poverty, ignorance and illiteracy. Accordingly, this Summit needs to succeed in its mission by drawing up the principal guidelines for the actions that countries and governments need to take to prevent a further deepening of the inequalities and the marginalization of the poor countries by the international or domestic digital divide.

The ICT revolution will thus have to build on existing accomplishments which we need to consolidate, and encourage new, bold, determined initiatives. We must be perfectly clear: it is not a matter of promoting any particular ambitions, or to set up as a model the cultural accomplishments of any one country versus those of another — let alone those of any particular group versus those of other groups within a given country.

The Union of the Comoros has made the development of ICT a national priority. Our country intends to do what is necessary to disseminate the use of ICT at all levels throughout the vital sectors of education, health, justice, public administration and the private sector. This is because we are convinced that the information society has to bring the State a little closer to the citizen, improve transparency in the administration of the public good, and promote the circulation of information. This is why a
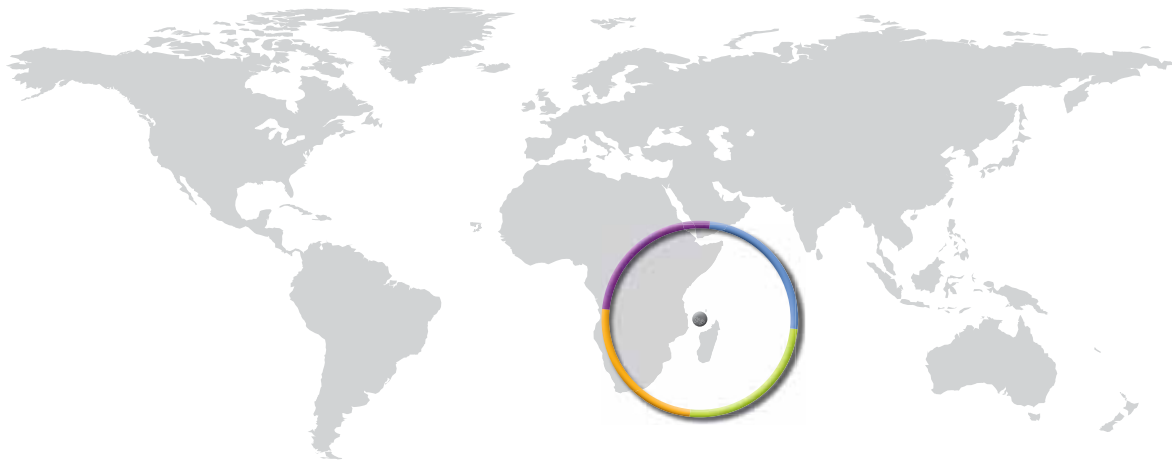
robust infrastructure of high-speed networks is needed, so as to provide the required level of connectivity for the needs of the country.

Since the Geneva phase of the Summit, my country has increased the outgoing Internet traffic bandwidth by a factor of eight. Information technology equipment and documents have been granted full customs exemption. The rates charged for Internet access have been reduced by 50 per cent. Ambitious projects for access to ICT will be pursued throughout the country, and a system of collective access, especially in public establishments, has been put in place so as to encourage broad adoption. The university network, *Agence universitaire de la francophonie,* helped in setting up an information access centre at the Comoros research and documentation centre.

The information society needs solid legal and institutional foundations. An environment must be created taking into account the rights and obligations of all. This is because protection is needed from cybercrime and other crimes and misdemeanours involving the abuse of information and communication networks. This will require partnership between the countries of the North and the South, and between the public and private sectors, in order to turn to advantage this formidable leap forward in terms of know-how and knowledge. In this way, through international solidarity in

information technology as in so many other areas, the world will be able to find again its humanism, and affirm itself in stability, peace and security. But that is not enough: the information society must also be firmly anchored in day-to-day reality. This is why my government, in its programme of cultural development, has made ICT a keystone in its strategy document for the struggle against poverty.

Five years ago, my country embarked on the path of reconciliation, in mutual concert and dialogue. It was greatly aided and supported by the entire international community, under the aegis of the African Union and the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.* Together with our partners, we are tackling the socio-economic development of our country: the basis for the lasting stability that is needed to preserve peace, democracy, the rule of law, and the good governance that we have had for more than five years now.

Long live international solidarity, a world at peace, security and development!

*His Excellency
Denis Sassou-Nguesso*

*President of the Republic
of the Congo*

# Republic of the Congo

At the Geneva Summit in 2003, there was a broad, positive consensus that the information society, as one of the cornerstones of the new world order that humankind is striving to construct, must be founded on the opportunity it offers individuals, communities and people to "create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge… in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life in full respect of human rights".

The Republic of the Congo is well aware of the stakes involved in meeting the challenge of everyone's right to information, and thus supports, without reservation, the initiative and course of action to be followed in order to ensure that all peoples and inhabitants of the world enjoy the benefits of new information and communication technologies.

My Government has therefore launched an ambitious programme to promote and develop new information and communication technologies within the framework of a national cyber strategy. The efforts deployed by my country in this sector are based on the principle that technological evolution only makes sense if harnessed to the objectives of the socio-economic, scientific, technical and cultural development of current and future generations. To put it simply: if they help to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

But as we are all aware, the technological changes in our world have unfortunately led to the emergence of other forms of inequality and other kinds of frustration. The digital divide, whose roots are to be found in the social divide, provides a sad illustration of this. If the digital divide exists between one
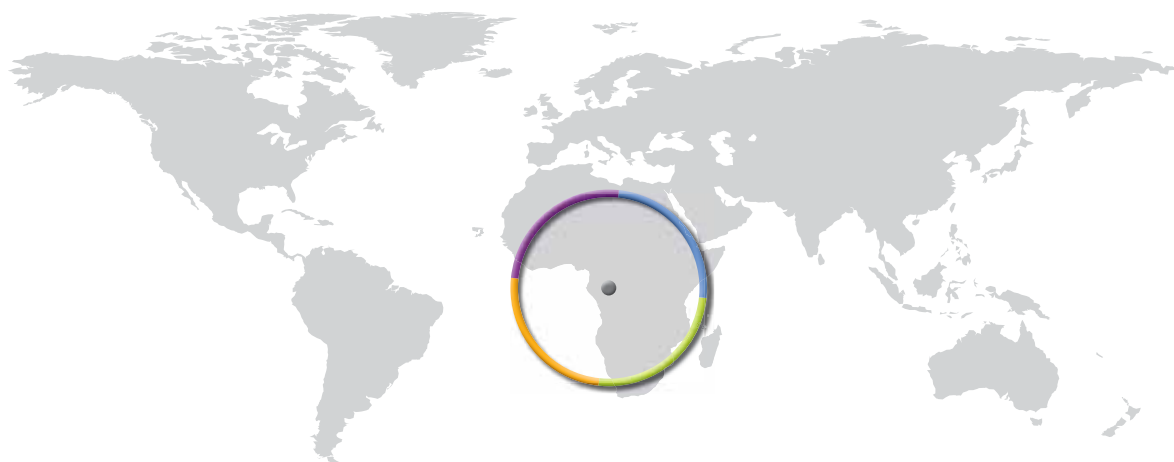
continent and another and between one country and another, this can only mean that traditional development funding mechanisms have become ineffective in meeting the new requirements of the information society.

The Congo therefore welcomes the creation of the Global Digital Solidarity Fund as an innovative means of narrowing the digital divide and in the fight against exclusion. Within this framework, the Congo hopes that the geographical distribution of projects funded by the Global Digital Solidarity Fund will comply with the criteria of equity, social justice and solidarity, so that no one is left stranded on the side of the global information and communication highway.

This gathering in Tunis is quite rightly called upon to address several issues of recognized importance. These include:

■ the international community's approval, through the United Nations, of the control and management of the technological pillars on which the information society stands;

■ the increasingly rational use of the Internet. The international community must ensure this;

■ unrestricted and more open access to Internet governance based on the Geneva principles;

■ reconciliation of freedom of expression with the principle of the inviolable sovereignty of States;

■ implementation and follow-up of the results of the Summit by the specialized agencies of the United Nations, and in particular the International Telecommunication Union as the prime mover of this Summit.

The duty of the international community, and of us all, is to set the information society on steadfast and sustainable foundations in a spirit of responsibility and solidarity, so that all peoples of the world may benefit from it in equity, justice and freedom.

Long live international solidarity! May our work be crowned with success!

*His Excellency*
*Stjepan Mesic*

*President of Croatia*

# *Croatia*

The unimaginable development and progress of engineering and technology, primarily in the field of communications, has ushered in a new period in the history of humankind. We have undergone a historic transformation. Our lives and lifestyles have changed irreversibly.

What was recently science fiction has become reality. An inconceivable volume of information has become available to an incredible number of people. The Internet is providing access to a world of information on anything we can imagine, including things we did not even know.

The information society has opened up access to information on everything. However, what it does not provide is an evaluation of the reliability and authenticity of that flood of information. Also, while we have access to information on everything, do we consider whether information on us is available to others as well – and what they might do with it? Recently, I read in a Croatian newspaper the results of a poll in which readers were asked whether they were afraid that the Internet might be used for disclosing their private data. Almost 40 per cent replied that they were afraid of that possibility.

Our Summit is concerned with the potential of something which can rightfully be called a global blessing. At the same time, however, we should not ignore the fact that the information society also has the potential to turn the blessing into a nightmare. I am not being a pessimist. I am simply a realist, and I think we should keep an eye on something that is absolutely possible.

The fight for information is becoming a mortal combat; a struggle which decides who will survive and who will succumb, who will get a lucrative contract and who will go bankrupt, who will organize an act of terrorism and who will foil it, who will "sell" his policy to the public and who will be profiled as being dangerous and unacceptable in the eyes of the same public.

I am talking about total availability of totally uncontrolled information and about its possible manipulation. I am also talking about the temptation which any government will find it difficult to resist over the long term – the temptation to use the benefits of the information society to enforce full control over its citizens. I have no doubt that such control will be enforced, and it is already being enforced with a completely legitimate goal – to reduce the danger from global terrorism. This is the beginning – but where will it end?

You may think I am opposing the free flow of information and private initiative. Nothing could be more mistaken. I have always upheld the citizen's right to timely access to true and complete information on any matter of interest. I have always claimed that personal, private initiative is the driving force of development in any field. But I am definitively against turning freedom or private initiative into a fetish.

Yes, everybody is entitled to express his or her thoughts publicly. But everybody is also entitled to discover the truth about any matter of interest. Because of this, nobody should have the right to use the Internet for wrong or fabricated data. I have particularly in mind false interpretations of historic events, because, in the information era, such misinterpretations have turned into a means for spreading political propaganda of the worst kind, racism and chauvinism.

Every State has the duty to defend itself and its citizens from the dangers of global terrorism. However, no State has the right to use its defence as a pretext for jeopardizing fundamental rights and freedoms in a democratic society.

I invite you to consider the possible reconciliation of freedom of information on the one hand and, on the other, the need to introduce some kind of supervision of the information which current technology and communications are bringing into our homes.

*His Excellency*
*Obiang Nguema*
*Mbasogo*

*President of the Republic*
*of Equatorial Guinea*

# *Equatorial Guinea*

This Summit must take measures to face the global challenges of the new millennium by adopting a concrete plan of action, and by harnessing the enormous potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) to bridge the digital divide that separates developed and developing countries. Our development objectives can never be achieved so long as this divide exists. The globalization of economic policies requires all countries to have access to information technology. Those countries lacking ICT will find themselves excluded from global development.

It is Equatorial Guinea's understanding that the objective of this Summit is to achieve a broad and consensual commitment by all political leaders of the world to pursue not only technological progress, but also its *raison d'être* in today's modern society. My delegation would like such a commitment to encompass all factors that can help rid the world of the digital divide by 2015. In pursuit of this commitment to build an information society that satisfies the development objectives of all countries, my government did not hesitate to co-finance the Global Digital Solidarity Fund created by a committee of Heads of State, in collaboration with the City of Geneva, to combat existing inequalities.

There has to be an end to the developing countries' lack of access to technology. It is our understanding that without access to new technologies, there can be no effective access to information and modern communications, and thus no possibility of development for the populations concerned. Developed countries have been able to achieve their present situation after many years of study and considerable investment.
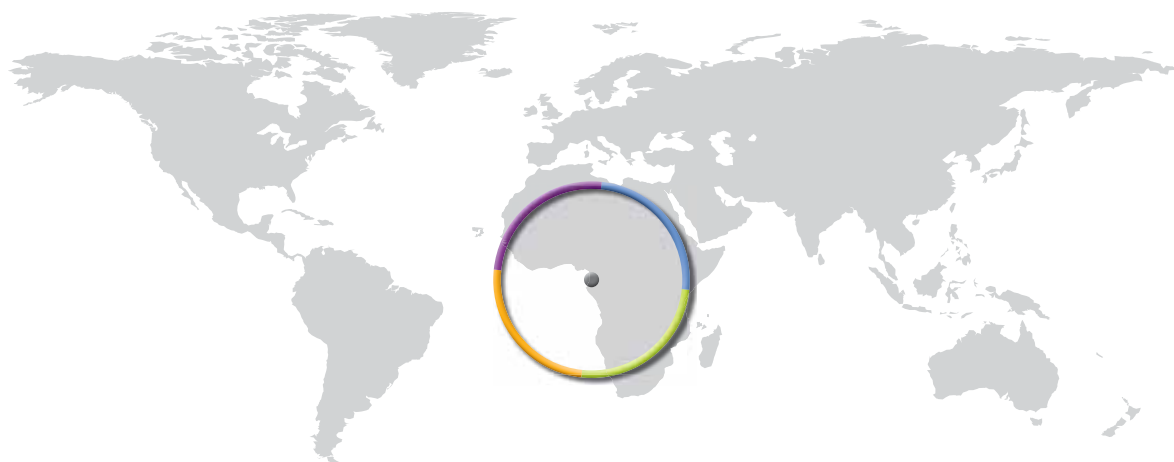
We should not allow the less developed countries to embark on a new industrial and technological revolution using know-how that is not current. The primary objective should be to bridge the digital divide by combining efforts, with everyone cooperating on the basis of solidarity. From now on, let us sensitize those that already have these state-of-the-art technologies, with a view to realizing this fundamental, all-important goal.

The success of this Summit depends on the consensus we reach on the major topics discussed at its preparatory meetings, and on the commitment that stakeholders undertake, with a bottom-up implementation plan, coordinated by international organizations in their areas of expertise. For Equatorial Guinea, building the information society represents an opportunity to benefit from the advantages new technologies have to offer individuals and populations as a whole, with neither discrimination nor exclusion with regard to access to knowledge and data sources.

We are convinced that competition is important in stepping up the pace of development to which economic players can contribute actively with the support of government. Accordingly, Equatorial Guinea has established a policy to support private investment in the telecommunication sector, with the recent approval of the General Telecommunications Act. In addition, we are now focusing our efforts on deploying and bringing into use communication centres in all cities and major towns, providing access to national and international telephone communications, and on creating computer centres for children in schools. Our programme for the telecommunication sector involves connecting our primary, secondary and higher education institutions to the Internet in stages, and establishing computer and Internet clubs in public cultural centres.

This Summit should constitute an important point of departure to analyse further the courses of action available, with a view to strengthening international and regional cooperation aimed at eliminating inequalities between countries and peoples with regard to the acquisition of knowledge and control of advanced digital technology.

Equatorial Guinea hopes that the efforts we make today will find their reward in the successful deployment of an information society that contributes to the progress of humankind.

*His Excellency
Jean-François
Ntoutoume-Emane*

*Prime Minister
of the Gabonese Republic*

# Gabon

This second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society is a major milestone in the task of building a just society of shared knowledge and learning that will allow us to achieve the Development Goals defined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. It should allow us to evaluate the progress made in implementing the Plan of Action that we adopted in Geneva in 2003, and to reach agreement on the principles – so often asserted and reasserted – for achieving our objectives.

Having developed a national strategy, it is the ambition of the Gabonese Government to make our country a major digital hub. This political initiative should allow Gabon, along with other Member States of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa, to play a driving role in the development of information and communication technologies in our subregion.

Gabon has implemented various projects in the administrative sectors, in particular the e-administration of education and health. This Summit provides us with the opportunity to appeal for digital solidarity with the objective of narrowing the digital divide between rich countries and those countries that are less well off. Indeed, this calls for the establishment of funding mechanisms that are reliable and accessible to all. The establishment of the Global Digital Solidarity Fund represents a significant step forward, but it must receive support if it is to become a reality as soon as possible.
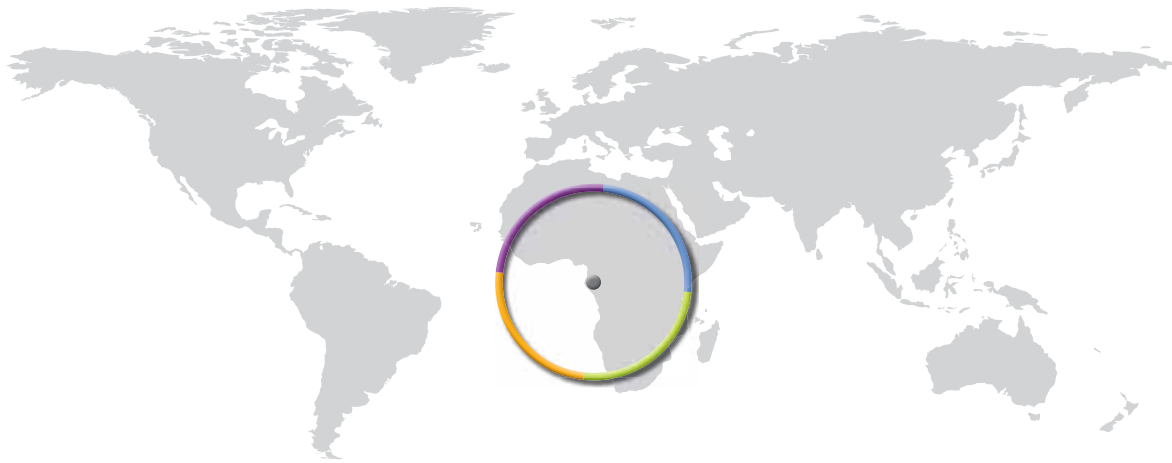
Moreover, in our opinion, the pace at which the Internet is evolving as an effective medium calls for the establishment of an appropriate framework within which the roles of the various partners in governments are clearly defined. Cooperation between the public and private sectors must be allowed to establish itself gradually, so as to evolve into a real partnership in the management of the Internet.

On behalf of President Omar Bongo, I should like to state the firm conviction that the conclusions we reach at the end of our work will constitute the common expression of our determination to pursue our commitments to the establishment of a world of dialogue, justice, peace and shared knowledge and learning.

*His Excellency*
*Alhaji Aliu Mahama*

*Vice-President of the*
*Republic of Ghana*

# Ghana

Just about when the United Nations was formed, Winston Churchill, in a lecture at Westminster College in the United States, said: "I have now stated the two great dangers which menace the homes of the people: war and tyranny. I have not yet spoken of poverty and privation, which are in many cases the prevailing anxiety. But if the dangers of war and tyranny are removed, there is no doubt that science and cooperation can bring, in the next few years… an expansion of material well-being beyond anything that has yet occurred in human experience."

Sixty years later, that observation is almost prophetic. Material well-being has increased due to tremendous advances in scientific knowledge, yet vast areas of the world remain afflicted with grinding poverty.

Now poverty is turning out to be the greatest threat to durable peace and security in the world. Wherever there is underdevelopment, deprivation and exclusion, conflict dominates. We also find disease, ignorance and hatred, which sometimes find expression in despicable acts of terrorism, threatening our collective security and well-being.

We are committed to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals as the way to roll back the scourge of poverty. I believe the United Nations, by virtue of this Summit, has a tool for advancing the true realization of a universal information society. The light of knowledge that the Internet brings can dispel the mists of hopelessness, overcome the prejudice of ignorance and banish the frustration of poverty, thereby ensuring the peace and security which the world so needs.

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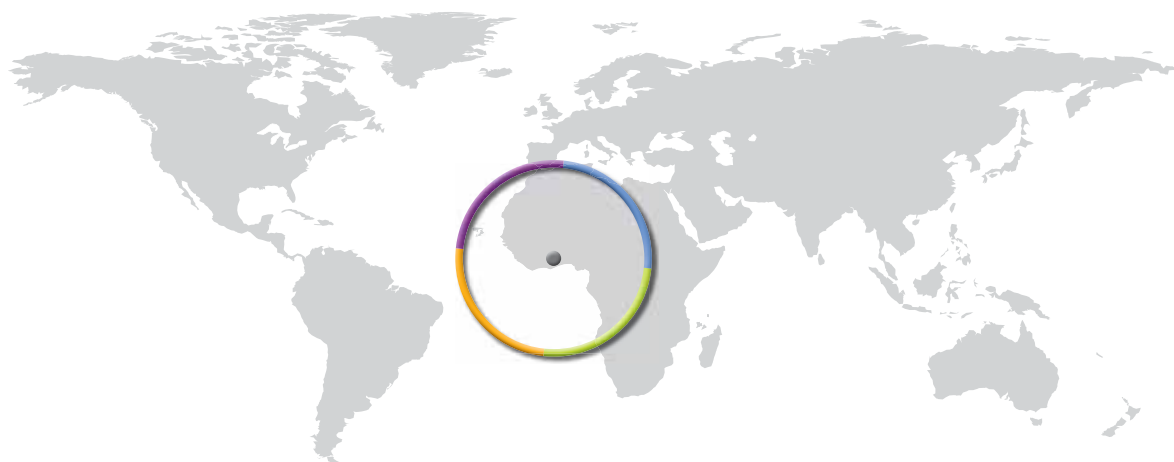
Ghana, on its part, has recognized that, in the new information society, it will need to implement comprehensive socio-economic development strategies led by information and communication technologies (ICT). Ghana's *ICT for Accelerated Development* policy has therefore defined 14 priority areas as an integral part of the national poverty reduction strategy. Emphasis is placed on human resource development to drive the process of technological innovation led by the private sector.

Success depends on adequate infrastructure. I wish to emphasis that the current high cost of building basic ICT infrastructure in Africa poses a major threat to the development of the information society. It is in this light that we welcome the establishment of the Global Digital Solidarity Fund, coupled with existing financing mechanisms to support the Geneva Plan of Action, as well as commitments made at Tunis to provide regional connectivity that will substantially reduce costs and promote integration. Most importantly, it will also prevent the marginalization of Africa and other developing economies.

An essential key to the way forward is consensus on the governance of the Internet. I am aware of a healthy diversity of opinion.

However, the great majority of people who eagerly anticipate access may appreciate that, while democratic governance of the Internet is very important, achieving agreements ought not impede delivery of cost-effective access. Ghana, which now holds the chairmanship of the Africa Ministerial Committee, will do all in its power to facilitate understanding that enables fair and equitable management of a common resource.

This Summit provides a wonderful opportunity for the world community to create the road map that will bridge the digital divide and thereby accelerate progress towards a truly universal information society. Our firm commitment will definitely enhance the environment for global peace and security founded on equitable development.

*His Excellency*
*Silvan Shalom*

*Deputy Prime Minister and*
*Minister of Foreign Affairs*
*of the State of Israel*

# *Israel*

It is an honour and a pleasure to address this important Summit on the information society here in Tunisia. For me, it is a special occasion. I was born in this country, from which I emigrated to Israel as a young child.

Today, Israel is a prospering country, a world leader in high-tech. In 57 years of independence, we have certainly come a long way. Israel is a major centre for research and development in the fields of computer programming and engineering, in nanotechnology, in aerospace, in optics, in medicine, in telecommunications and in a myriad other fields.

But Israel is not an island, nor do we wish to live in isolation. Israeli inventions and technological developments can benefit not only our own economy and our society, but also our region and the international community.

Today, for the first time in many years, there is a real possibility for deep and radical change in the whole outlook and prospects for the Middle East. Since taking office almost three years ago, I have managed my mission to extend Israel's ties with Arab and Muslim countries.

The Middle East, and indeed the global community, face common challenges that, until recently, were local in their geography or limited in their scope. Global fundamentalist terror organizations, environmental issues, desertification, global warming, water scarcity, nuclear proliferation by rogue States and AIDS are only a few of the global challenges facing us in the 21st century.

In the coming years, no nation will be spared these dangers. No nation will be able to stand aside and ignore these
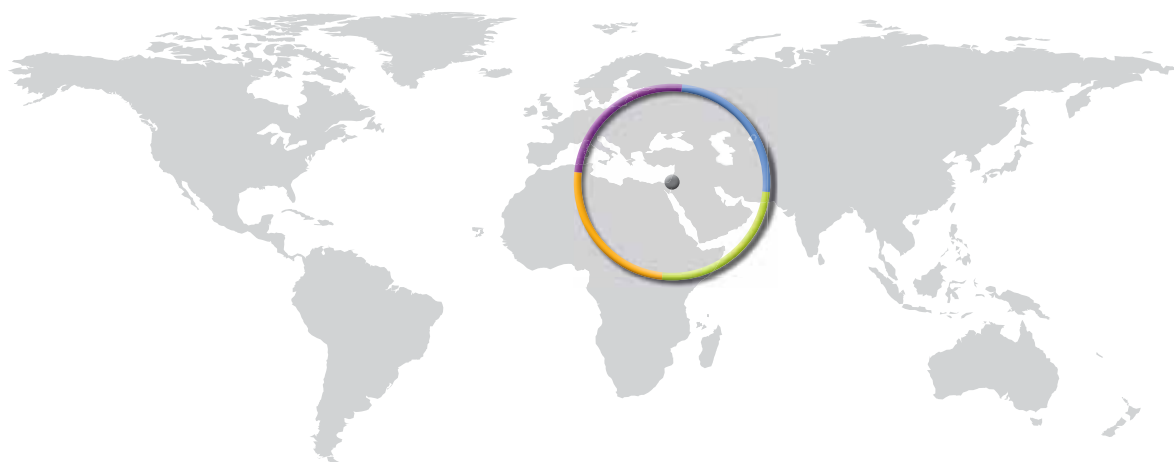
threats, and no nation will be able to face them single-handedly.

One of the main dangers facing us all is that of global terrorism. The Internet raises major challenges for addressing the phenomenon of terrorism and the supportive environment that allows it to spread. Israel is firmly of the view that counter-terrorism principles acknowledged by the international community are fully applicable in the context of the Internet as well.

Fighting terrorism on the Net will require close international cooperation, and this is precisely why the matter is put on the doorstep of the WSIS process. We must all agree to encourage the development of a network for cooperation and information sharing. We must build a code of conduct that will allow nations of the world to oversee and effectively deal with aspects of terrorism found in the web.

The moment is ripe for leaders the world over to unite in a concerted effort to advance a common agenda. Much can be achieved if we pool our resources and determination together.

Israel wants to share its knowledge and put its research and development achievements at the disposal of the international community. In conjunction with this Summit, Israeli experts are presenting three seminars on e-learning,

e-government and e-medicine. Private firms and businesses are working hand in hand with the Israeli Government in order to find the best ways of sharing their experience and know-how with other countries and societies.

Let us talk, let us share and let us cooperate. Separately, we cannot address all the challenges and threats facing our people. Together we not only stand a chance, we can actually improve the standard of living of all nations.

Collaboration in research, development, communications and medicine can, and should, serve as the basis for future understanding between all peace-loving peoples in the world. The foundations of political dialogue and agreement are to be found where men and women of the academic and research world come together. Where there are shared economic and social interests, there will be less political conflict.

A Tunisian proverb says, in English, that "time goes by as fast as the sand slips through your fingers". We have an opportunity to make a change, but timing is crucial. Let us rise to the challenge together.

*Her Excellency*
*Dr Vaira Vike-Freiberga*

*President of Latvia*

# *Latvia*

I am very pleased that this unique Summit has gathered such a large number of prominent representatives from national governments, international institutions, the private sector, the research community and civil society. I sincerely hope that it will succeed in its goals of advancing the worldwide use of ICT-based services, by enabling citizens to take full advantage of their potential for sharing knowledge, thus helping to bridge the digital divide and stimulating social cohesion.

If we truly wish to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, then the decisions taken in both phases of this Summit will have to be translated into concrete actions and policy decisions. The stakes are high at this phase in Tunis, particularly on such questions as Internet governance and the financial mechanisms for promoting a worldwide digitally enabled society.

We are agreed that access to modern technologies should be made available in all parts of the world. But we must also work to ensure that people everywhere can benefit from the freedom to seek and receive information and to freely express their opinion. The Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for Action are important documents, as they reaffirm our common commitment to an inclusive and development-oriented society across the globe.

The information society that we have begun to create is already serving as a purveyor of such important democratic values as the protection of fundamental human rights. Therefore, the

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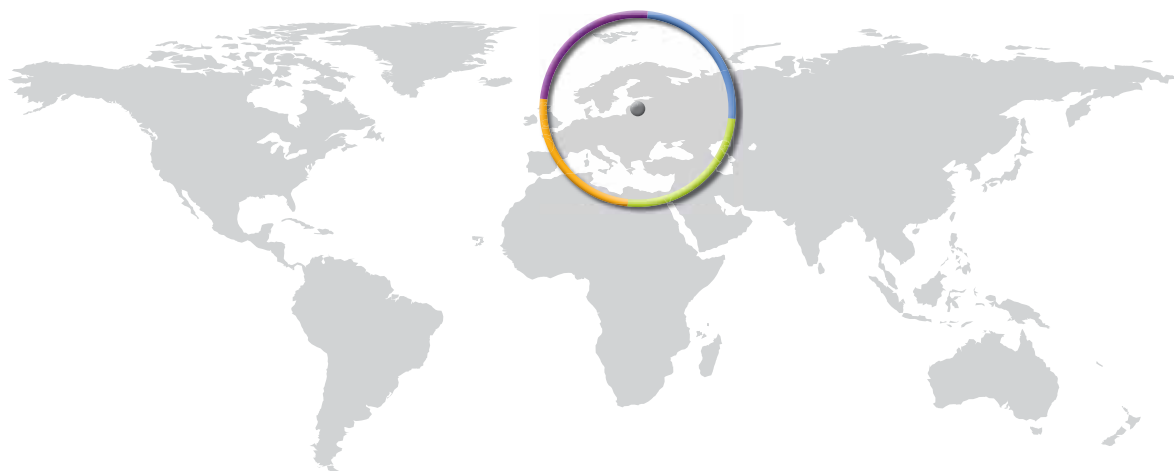
regulation of this sphere of activity could have large-scale ramifications in our societies. That is why a strong sense of social responsibility for accessibility to information services must prevail in the interactions between national governments, ICT providers, non-governmental organizations and individuals.

This sense of social responsibility must serve, above all, to reach another common goal: a world with less inequality. Our industrial society has marked economic progress over the last two centuries. Now, our post-industrial society is evolving into an information and knowledge society. E-inclusion, e-learning, e-health and e-government are just some of the ways to provide its benefits to all populations, particularly in developing countries. These are important endeavours that can help us to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Latvia is actively contributing to the reduction of the digital divide and the resulting social exclusion that exists, not only between the developed and the developing world, but also within each society. Since regaining its independence 14 years ago, my country has taken a number of important steps. Among other measures, it is working on improving communications infrastructure in rural areas, implementing easily accessible e-government services, and providing education and e-skills to use them effectively. It has also built up a valuable team of IT specialists, whose qualifications have in no small measure helped Latvia to achieve one of the fastest economic growth rates in the world. We recognize that information is a valuable commodity and that knowledge is becoming a vitally significant resource for our economic development.

This World Summit on the Information Society has been unprecedented in the United Nations system, with the involvement of various stakeholders from the public and private sectors, as well as civil society. Perhaps this Summit can serve as an example for a new model of multilateral cooperation in the global world of the 21st century. Our countries face a wide array of daunting development challenges, but I am certain that by working responsibly together, we can eventually succeed in developing an inclusive knowledge society across the globe, an indispensable pillar in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals for the benefit of more and more people everywhere.

*His Excellency*
*Emile Lahoud*

*President of Lebanon*

# Lebanon

Our meeting today is the second chapter in a process of reflection that began in Geneva in 2003 on the information society. In the intervening period, the use of electronic and computer technologies has grown exponentially, confronting us with the challenge of developing strategies that require constant review.

We note, first, that such growth is not risk-free, as we face daily the difficulty of reconciling the plethora of modern means of communication with the respect that has to be shown for each individual's right to confidentiality. Genetics certainly open up new horizons for medicine that were inconceivable even yesterday. But the potential for manipulation exposes humankind to dangers that are, unfortunately, all-too imaginable. And the monopolization of electronic media by the richest and most powerful threatens to impose a single cultural model on our entire planet, to the detriment of diversity, which is the mainstay of our civilizations.

Our priority should, therefore, be to establish an institutional model which both promotes the development of modern information techniques and prevents hijacking in ways that are incompatible with the values and humanist ideals that are the cornerstones of our societies. Just such a model inspired the recent Convention on Cultural Diversity, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which Lebanon strongly supported and which I have pleasure in recognizing here.

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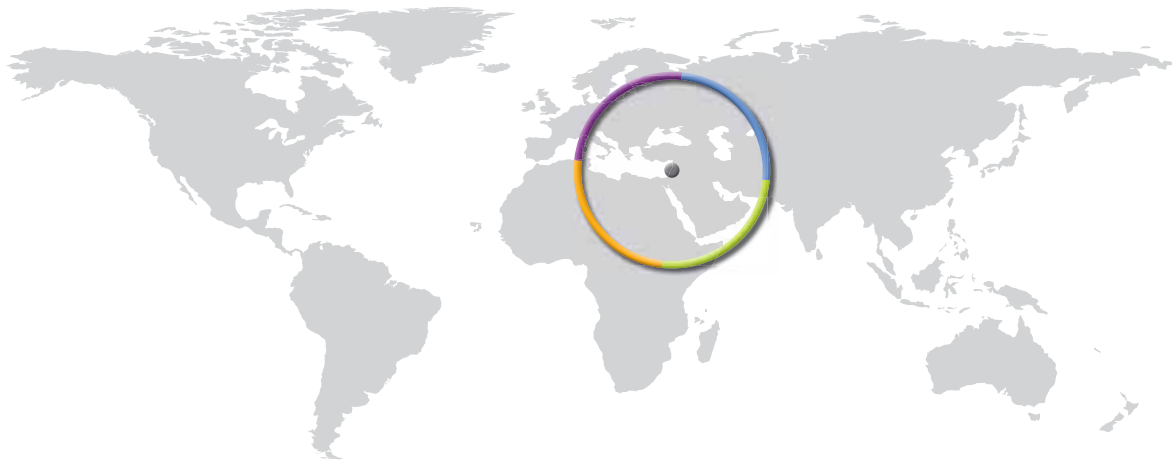
While proclaiming their attachment to a more realistic conception of the digital age our world is entering, our societies must take advantage of the new technologies in order to assert their individual characteristics and demonstrate their creativity even more. This is essential in the field of culture. It is also essential for the economy, through the relocation of production, which was formerly the preserve of industrialized countries.

For people who have hitherto been under-privileged, computers now open up the possibility of new prosperity. They transform State management; they have become – and must increasingly be with each passing day – the driving force behind good governance, without which our Asian, African and Middle East countries cannot hope to embrace modernity.

*His Excellency*
*Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili*

*Prime Minister of the*
*Kingdom of Lesotho*

# Lesotho

Lesotho has taken full cognizance of the pivotal role information and communication technologies (ICT) can play in the socio-economic uplifting of its people.

If ICT are deployed fully, they can assist countries like ours to expeditiously move away from being least developed, underdeveloped or, for that matter, developing, into fully developed countries. The United Nations Millennium Development Goals set the tone for the complete removal of obstacles, both real and imagined, that have consistently dogged Africa.

Political independence has been a reality for African countries for 50 years, on average. A large part of this period was characterized by failed policies carried out by unrepresentative and repressive regimes which, strangely, enjoyed a large measure of economic and financial support from both government and financial institutions in the developed world. Accountability during that period was nil, and Africa's gains that should have come with independence were seriously minimized.

Today, the overwhelming majority of African countries represented here are governed by democratically elected governments, and yet, strangely, support from both the developed countries and their financial institutions is diminishing. A glimmer of hope was felt by decisions taken at the Gleneagles meeting of the G8 world leaders in July 2005. However, too little has come out of that.
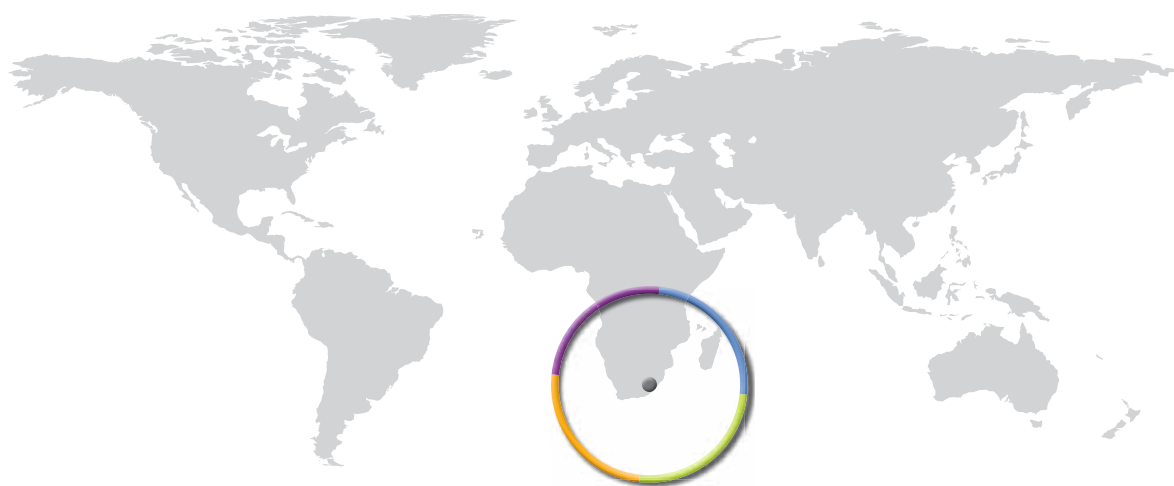
In developing countries, ICT is about development, especially human development. ICT must first and foremost be tools for education, for good governance, good health, fair trade, and thus economic prosperity.

Southern Africa is currently confronting the problem of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, and its twin sisters of malaria and tuberculosis. This situation cannot be adequately addressed by African or developing countries alone. Unless and until we – together with the developed world – can begin to access and use ICT to arrest and overcome this pandemic, all our efforts in other sectors will come to nought.

The need for infrastructure in order to completely remove the divide between the rural and urban populations within a country, on the one hand, and between developing countries and the rest of the world on the other, requires urgent attention and support.

Management issues involving legislation, liberalization, mobilization of funds, relations between government and the private sector, and the need to observe and respect market forces, are issues that we remain conscious of, and that we are addressing earnestly.

Lesotho acknowledges the efforts that have been put into the development of the Internet from its early days as a private network used for research and other non-commercial purposes, to its present stage as a world commodity with such a global impact on our daily lives. It is my delegation's opinion, therefore, that the governance of this strategic and global resource should be representative of the world's communities.

Countries, through their elected governments, together with other stakeholders, should thus assume their rightful role as active players in governance matters of the Internet. We recognize the unique role of the United Nations as the custodian of world peace and security, and its overriding role in the future of the Internet, with special reference to ITU.

*His Excellency*
*Ousmane Issoufi Maïga*

*Prime Minister and Head of*
*Government of the Republic*
*of Mali*

# *Mali*

Since the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, Mali has maintained its steadfast commitment to making new information and communication technologies (ICT) a fulcrum for its economic, social and cultural development.

With the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Development Programme, the Government of Mali has drawn up a national policy and a national strategic plan for ICT. The text of the national policy defines the main courses of action to be pursued to ensure the harmonious development of ICT in our country, while the strategic plan lists the actual actions to be undertaken by the players involved: government, local communities, private sector and civil society.

Even before these texts were adopted, we were taking active measures to promote ICT in Mali, such as setting up an Information and Communication Technology Agency, which is fully operational today.

As part of creating a favourable environment, the government abolished the value-added tax charged on all computer equipment entering Mali. In the field of education, the University of Bamako has had its own virtual network for some time now. Our faculties, institutes and specialized higher education institutions have facilities where students, teachers and researchers can work online and make use of the resources of the Internet.

Mali has also equipped and connected to the Internet more than 25 secondary schools, with support for four of them provided by the Swiss operator, Swisscom, and the International Telecommunication Union. We are currently embarking on the
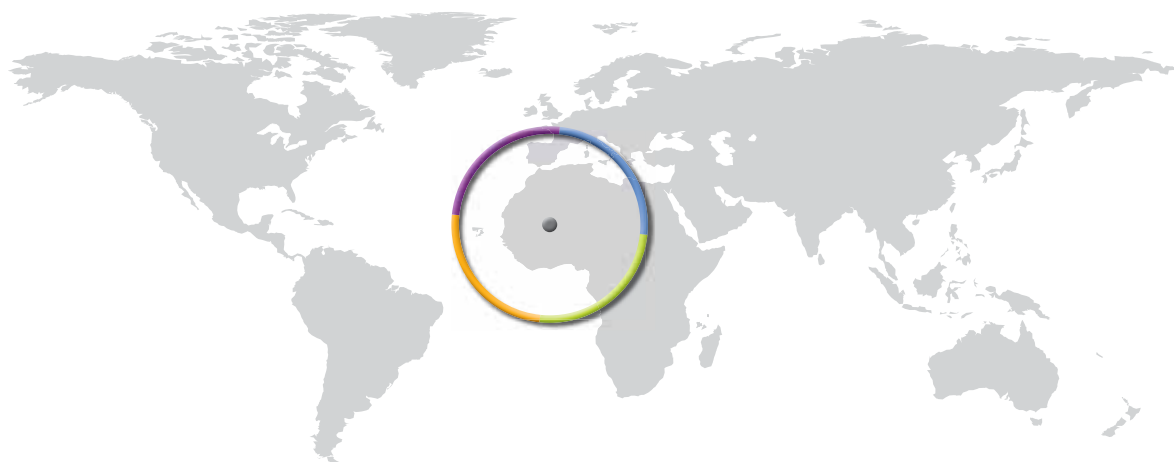
introduction of ICT in primary schools, and we hope to make swift progress in this area with assistance from our partners.

In the field of e-government and good governance, the Information and Communication Technology Agency is gradually connecting up our ministerial departments on an Administration Intranet. It has launched a vast programme to train State employees in office automation systems, networking and productive use of the Internet. Subsequent training will include the creation and maintenance of databases and webpages. The objective is to accelerate modernization of government, to bring it closer to citizens, and to make it more transparent.

Telemedicine is well established in Mali. Five major national hospitals, the University of Bamako, and a hospital in Dogon some 700 km from the capital, are in a network with the University of Geneva and health institutions in Senegal, Morocco, Chad and France.

A major focus of our national policy on ICT is outreach and the inclusion of all Malians in the future information society. The Information and Communication Technology Agency is committed to connecting Mali's rural communities. Local authorities, associations of rural women, local small- and medium-sized enterprises and young people thus have access to telephone, fax and Internet services at community facilities.

Today, there can be no denying that Africa is ready to shoulder its share of responsibility and contribute its share of innovation and imagination in order to bring ICT properly to bear on the continent's development objectives. In this undertaking, Africa will need the support and contributions of other continents. Together, we must create this surge of digital solidarity. The Global Digital Solidarity Fund, initiated by His Excellency Mr Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, must be fed with regular contributions if it is to meet the considerable demands of those who find themselves excluded from the global market.

We are in favour of the democratic, transparent and multilateral management of the resources generated by the Internet, with more active participation by governments and by all other players in their fields. We are also in favour of the establishment of a procedure to follow up the decisions taken in Geneva and Tunis, organized around the Secretary-General of the United Nations and embracing all players involved in the World Summit on the Information Society.

Mali, for its part, will spare no effort in embracing our entire continent and all its inhabitants in the information society that we are all constructing together.

*His Excellency*
*Ely Ould Mohamed Vall*

*President of the Military*
*Council for Justice and*
*Democracy*

# Mauritania

It was not simply by chance that Tunisia was chosen to host the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society. The country's President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali realized very early on the potential of new information and communication technologies (ICT), and has put them to full advantage for the well-being of his people. The country's successes in this area provide ample proof that new technologies can really contribute to effective and harmonious economic development.

New technologies are revolutionizing our working and living conditions. They offer enormous possibilities with regard to education and health, trade, and other areas essential to the economic and social development of our countries. Nevertheless, the promise of a world of sharing and progress is still far from becoming a reality for most of the world's inhabitants, who have been left to one side in this revolution in knowledge.

The Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted in December 2003 in Geneva show clearly the course that has to be followed to bridge this divide and build a balanced, diverse and solidarity-based world information society.

This second phase of the Summit offers us the opportunity to evaluate the progress made and take appropriate action to reach consensus on the outstanding issues. Already, the Geneva Declaration defines a shared vision that should lead us to an information society that is inclusive and accessible to all. Such a society requires new forms of solidarity, partnerships and cooperation between States, international organizations, the private sector and civil society. This implies a collective effort requiring firm commitment on the part of all stakeholders and the will to promote digital solidarity and guarantee harmonious, just
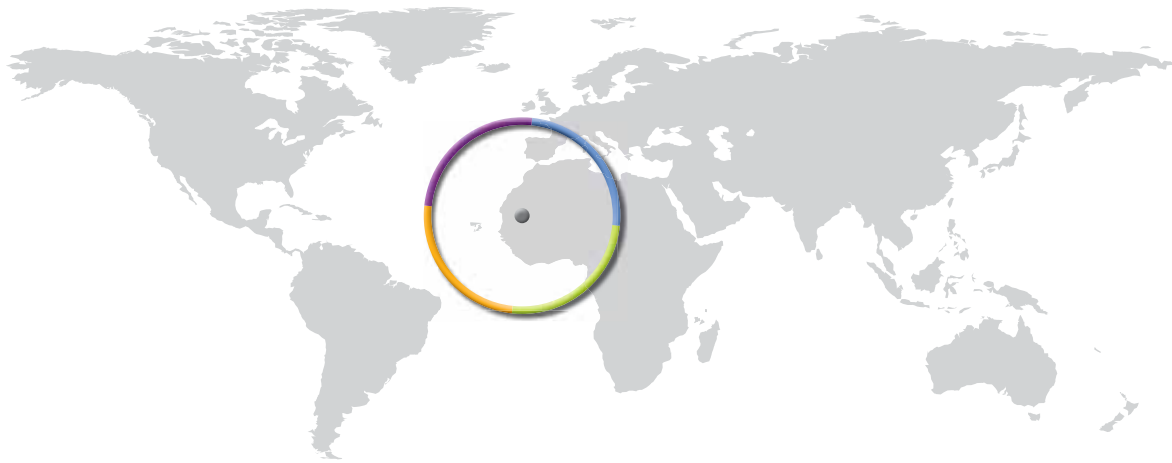
and equitable development. Within this frame-
work, Mauritania welcomes the establishment
of the Global Digital Solidarity Fund.

Mauritania has resolutely embarked upon pur-
suit of both the mastery and appropriation of
new technologies, not only as a powerful cata-
lyst for development, but also as a key element
of democracy, transparency and good govern-
ance. This commitment has already produced
several initiatives. These include the reform of
the telecommunication sector, which has led
to its liberalization and the establishment of an
independent regulatory authority; the promo-
tion of universal access to basic services and
the creation of an agency for implementation
purposes; the creation of a ministerial depart-
ment responsible for new information and
communication technologies, and the formu-
lation and implementation of a national strate-
gy for the development of these technologies.

My country places great hope in the results of
this second phase of the Summit, at which, to-
gether, we must identify the necessary means
to implement the Plan of Action adopted in
2003 in Geneva. We have no doubt that the
commitment and sense of responsibility of
all stakeholders in this process will be strong
enough to ensure that the hopes placed in this
Summit are fulfilled.

*His Excellency
Driss Jettou*

*Prime Minister
of the Kingdom of Morocco*

# Morocco

This Summit, which brings us together in Tunis with all the members of the world community, is an important opportunity to take stock of how far the Geneva Plan of Action has been implemented, what commitments have been made within the Plan's framework, and what steps have been taken thus far to reduce the digital divide between poor countries and rich ones.

The Summit also provides an opportunity to develop an integrated and well-defined strategy that would enjoy economic and financial support from the international community and the world financial institutions, a strategy based on synergy between the rich States and the poor ones, a strategy that would enable the transition from the phase of elaborating perceptions to the phase of real implementation.

The Geneva phase of the Summit has placed the States of the world before great challenges. It has made clear that meeting these challenges is the responsibility of all the concerned parties.

In line with the directions given by the first phase, the public authorities in the Kingdom of Morocco, in full coordination with the private sector and civil society, have adopted a strategy to accelerate our country's integration into the information society. This strategy is based on two major pillars:
- Working on bridging the digital divide through facilitating the introduction of information and communication technologies (ICT), and broadening the sphere of users from individuals and enterprises to public administrations.
- Developing a national information and communication industry and related services.
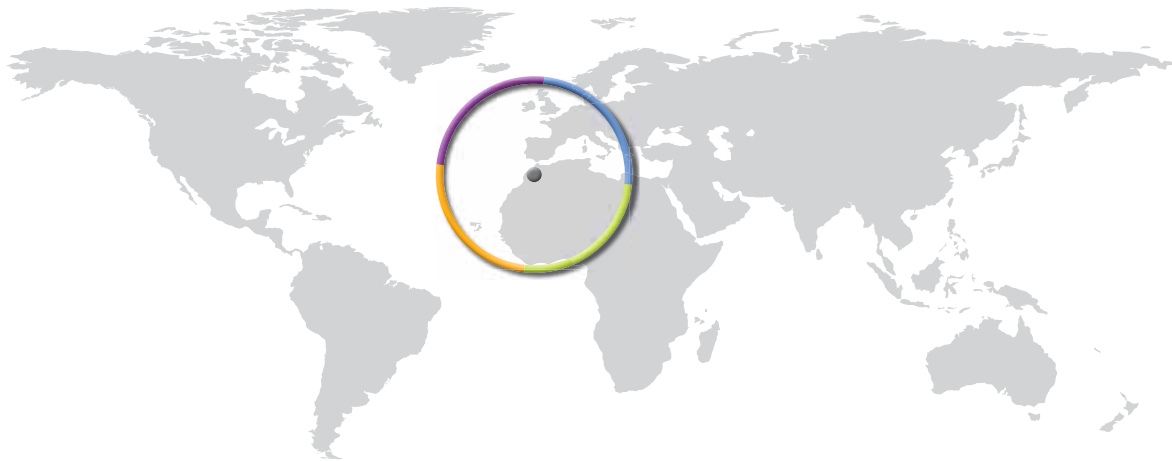
The Moroccan public authorities have adopted the liberalization of the ICT sector, the mobilization of its own necessary capacities, and good governance methods.

Morocco was one of the first countries to adopt a deliberate policy to liberalize information and communication services. We have been keen to provide the ICT sector with the necessary financial means through enhanced public allocations and the creation of the Universal Service Fund, as well as through the Hassan II Fund for Socio-Economic Development.

Recognizing the importance of the role of the Global Digital Solidarity Fund in bridging the digital divide, in particular between African countries and other countries of the world, Morocco has been keen to be among the States that constituted this Fund and contributed to it.

This policy has yielded important results, with the number of subscribers in the mobile telephone network exceeding 10 million, representing more than one-third of Morocco's population, and about 4 million Internet users, thanks to the introduction of the asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL) system.

Taking into account the potential of the education sector to increase the number of users, an ambitious programme has been adopted to mainstream the use of computers. The programme aims to connect 8600 educational institutions to the Internet. Now, more than 6 million students use the programme to which USD 100 million has been allocated from the public development budget.

Morocco has also made progress in implementing the "electronic administration" programme, which provides several online services. Now we are focusing our attention on the creation of technology parks to attract the equipment and hardware industry nationally and internationally.

We believe that the establishment of a global information and knowledge society is subject to prerequisites, the first of which is to allow countries that are most in need to get the necessary financial aid. This is fundamental, if we are to implement successfully the Geneva Plan of Action and the initiatives which this second phase of the Summit will adopt.

We hope that the Summit will constitute the foundation of a new partnership based on fruitful cooperation and the exchange of expertise with the aim of building a global information and knowledge society under the umbrella of the United Nations and its mechanisms – a society in which peace, stability, coexistence and cultural interaction can prevail.

*Her Excellency*
*Luisa Dias Diogo*

*Prime Minister of the*
*Republic of Mozambique*

# *Mozambique*

The reason for convening the World Summit on the Information Society is the recognition by world leaders, particularly the Heads of State and Government, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the heads of UN agencies, and business and community leaders, that the benefits of the digital revolution must be extended to all peoples of the planet, irrespective of race, religion, place of birth, political orientation or sex. We are convinced that this course of action will significantly contribute to reducing today's enormous gap between the "haves" and "have-nots". We do believe the time has come for the digital divide at national and international levels to be buried forever. Recent results from the field have clearly demonstrated that this is within our reach. All that is needed is political will, strong leadership and commitment to our common cause.

Bearing in mind the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action we adopted in Geneva in 2003, we come to Tunis with a lot of expectations. We shall leave Tunis with the certainty that an information society for all will not be just another slogan or catchphrase, but a tangible reality in the near future – and not only for the developed nations, but also and especially for the developing ones. That is why we see the Tunis Summit as a summit of solutions.

In the developed world, Internet access, mobile telephony, e-mail and so on have become household items. In other parts of the world, however, they remain an elusive and distant dream. Our task is to make the dream come true, for example, by providing multipurpose and multimedia community centres, Internet kiosks, telecentres and e-enabled schools. In our recent past, decision-makers were often confronted with
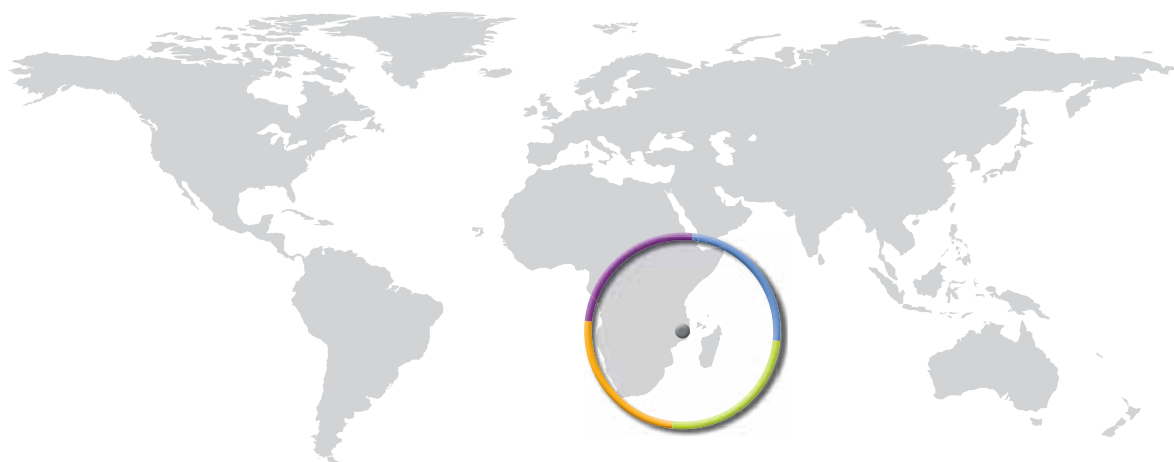
the false dichotomy of having to choose between information technology and other development imperatives. We have now gone beyond that dichotomy, and we recognize that information and communication technologies (ICT) must be an integral part and enabler of our development agenda.

Here in Tunis, we will delve into some of the key issues of how to translate the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action into concrete interventions that will transform our countries, our economies and our lives. We share the WSIS vision of an inclusive information society, where everyone can create, access, use and share information and knowledge, thus enabling individuals and communities to achieve their full potential as human beings. In this way, ICT can and will play a significant role as a catalyst for development, reducing poverty and fast-tracking the attainment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. In Mozambique we have drawn up a national ICT policy and implementation strategy, under which ICT initiatives are now flourishing.

As a woman, I am especially convinced of the role women can play in disseminating science, information technologies and knowledge. In fact, women have always been the guardians of wisdom and humanity, which makes them

natural but usually secret rulers. The time has come for them to rule openly, but together with, and not against, men.

Obstacles that our developing countries face include human capacity, infrastructure, digital content and software applications, regulation, and financial resources. The African continent and the NEPAD framework have set common goals and targets that we believe will be achieved. But we in Mozambique, we the peoples of Africa and the developing world, strongly believe that little progress will be made if we do not adequately address issues of Internet governance and financing mechanisms for the information society that are on the table at this Summit. It is a matter of justice and legitimacy that all peoples have a say on the way in which the Internet – as a global asset – is to be governed. As for financing mechanisms, the establishment of the Global Digital Solidarity Fund is already a reality. All governments, multinationals and businesses should contribute to this fund if we want the information society to succeed.

*Her Excellency
Libertina Amathila*

*Deputy Prime Minister of the
Republic of Namibia*

# Namibia

The advent of the information age has heralded an opportunity for humanity to make use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to increase productivity and accelerate national development.

In particular, developing countries should embrace the opportunities afforded by the ICT revolution to overcome key developmental challenges, as set forth in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

The use of ICT ensures increased access to basic services and generates economic growth, while creating employment opportunities to improve the general welfare of the people and ultimately eradicate poverty.

In Namibia, the use of ICT in education, training and human resource development is being pursued vigorously at all levels of the education sector. For instance, SchoolNet Namibia currently provides free hardware, training and Internet access to more than 300 schools. A national computer refurbishment centre has been established through the partnership between Microsoft and our government, to reduce the cost of acquiring computers for education and training purposes. This initiative will enable more schools to acquire computers so that students can be trained in computer literacy at an early age.

Young people and women in our country are the ones most affected by high levels of unemployment and poverty. We are, therefore, harnessing ICT to enable them to acquire new knowledge and create business opportunities in line with Namibia's "Vision 2030", that is, our road map for national development.

While much still needs to be done, the following legislative and policy initiatives have been prioritized and include an Electronic Communications and Transactions Bill, which has been circulated for public comment. In addition, a national ICT policy is in place, including e-government for public services in Namibia, and the policy for ICT in education.

There is also multi-stakeholder participation in ICT development, and the government recognizes the ICT Alliance of Namibia as the appropriate body to undertake research, development and consultations. Furthermore, Namibia has introduced a flat-rate, continuous Internet connection for all schools, using a fully digital fibre-optic network that connects all major towns through a 6000-km network.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the Namibian Government is strongly committed to working with all national and international stakeholders to fully utilize the benefits of ICT, in order to empower our citizens and allow them to fully participate in national development.

*His Majesty*
*Gyanendra bir Bikram*
*Shah Dev*

*King of Nepal\**

# Nepal*

While the digital revolution offers real development opportunities for the economies of the world, the digital divide between developed nations and the rest of the world sadly continues to grow. We believe that there should be a mechanism to facilitate meaningful participation in Internet governance to accomplish the vision of the Declaration of Principles of the World Summit on the Information Society. An international Internet governance system should be developed to harmonize technical and policy issues to the advantage of the global community. We also wish to add that sustained efforts should be made to ensure participation of developing countries to make the system truly meaningful and effective.

Nepal is committed to the Geneva Declaration of Principles. We believe that the Internet, which has become omnipresent in our lives, can be truly beneficial to humankind if a multi-stakeholder participation, which is inclusive and transparent, can be developed.

We need to focus on how the global information revolution could be made a development enabler in the real sense, by contributing significantly to reducing poverty and promoting all-round development in the world. This would provide us with a great opportunity to accelerate the process of bridging the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" in terms of access to information technology. The international community needs to give special attention to the needs of the developing, land-locked and mountainous countries which face problems of promoting the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) due to high infrastructure costs.

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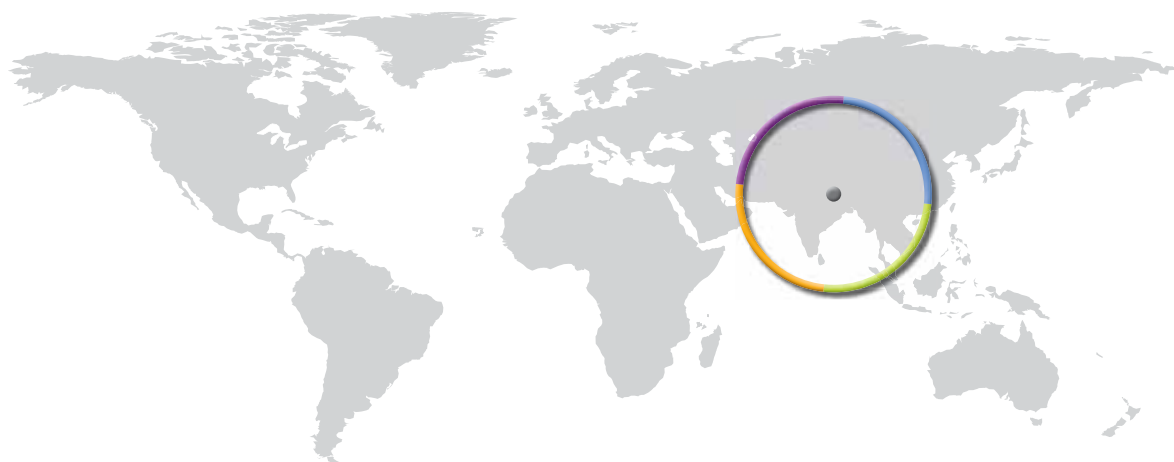
My country is committed to the common vision of the information society and its key principles based on shared knowledge. Since the initiation of the WSIS process, Nepal has played a significant role in the development and promotion of its ICT sector, recording impressive achievements in all the eleven WSIS action lines, despite constraints and limited resources. The State's efforts have been further augmented with the establishment of an autonomous High Level Commission for Information Technology, to enhance internal and external private investment and to stimulate new economic sectors, such as e-commerce. It is a matter of satisfaction that this has resulted in an ever-growing, mutually beneficial partnership between the government and the private sector in the field of information technology.

We believe that the time has now come for all of us gathered here today to make a common commitment to implement the Declaration adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society, with all honesty and sincerity to the benefit of all humankind.

*His Excellency
Laurens-Jan Brinkhorst*

*Deputy Prime Minister of the
Kingdom of the Netherlands*

# Netherlands

These days we are discussing information and communication technologies (ICT) and the freedom to use them. ICT is a fundamental element in our societies. The impact on economic, social and democratic processes is enormous.

In our times ICT is the catalyst for development. In order to fully exploit the development potential of ICT, the Netherlands considers an enabling environment to be of critical importance. ICT should be an integral part of all national policies and practices in order to be fully effective. This varies from education to health, from libraries to information literacy, and from agriculture to human rights. ICT gives us unprecedented possibilities to close the development gap and to create social innovation.

However, we have to face the fact that ICT can also pose threats to human rights. For example, although the large-scale use of personal data has improved the efficiency of governments and the private sector, the misuse of ICT could create serious issues for privacy.

Censorship could hamper the freedom of information and expression. We as governments have the obligation to prevent State and private censorship by means of effective legal and practical measures, including international peer pressure. Without a plurality of opinion and expression, there is no truly democratic information society.

In its relatively short history, the Internet has become critical for the economic, social and democratic development of our societies. A failure of the Internet could result in chaos. We have to make sure that we have done everything to protect the proper functioning and management of the Internet. Security and stability are key. All stakeholders have engaged in reducing spam.
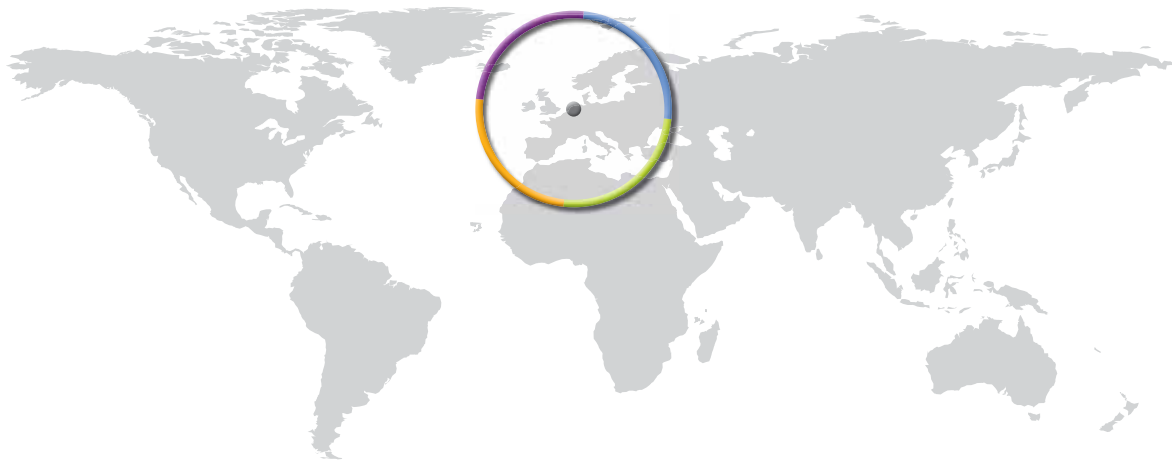
We must continue and increase our efforts. We have to fight cybercrime.

I very much welcome the creation of a new Forum on Internet Governance. The historic role of the United States as the ultimate authority over some of the core resources of the Internet should be reviewed in the light of the enormous growth of the Internet and its use all over the world. We must try to find a way which leads to a more shared responsibility among all stakeholders. And we need to arrive at a situation which is future-proof.

The follow-up and implementation of this Summit are of crucial importance. At the international level, the United Nations system has an important responsibility to assist governments to stay fully engaged, but I should emphasize that implementation is primarily a national responsibility. Full participation of civil society and the private sector is of vital importance for the agreed follow-up framework.

Implementation should be integrated and coordinated, as part of our efforts to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. I therefore call upon the United Nations Secretary-General to actively pursue system-wide inter-agency coordination and cooperation.

To conclude: the biggest achievement of this Summit is that it has raised awareness amongst all stakeholders that we face a number of challenging questions related to the information society. Many of these questions demand a coherent and concerted international approach.

Closing the digital divide, enhancing cooperation in Internet governance, and creating an open and enabling environment are our shared goals.

We need to move from principles to action. We need to do this, not just for our future, but for the future of our children, and their children too.

# Nigeria

At the Geneva Phase of the Summit, we set for ourselves, in the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, a common desire, commitment and goals to create an all-inclusive information society, where people can achieve their full potential to promote development. We agreed to work towards a win-win situation, where information and communication technologies (ICT) will become available to all, in order to boost socio-economic development.

Achieving this objective requires the dismantling of obstacles to the empowerment of poor communities and nations; reducing prohibitive prices of technology and products; expanding access to training, and ensuring that opportunities are available to all. Our coming together at this Summit demonstrates our commitment to surmounting the daunting challenges of the digital divide. It is our hope that the outcome of this Summit will be fully implemented in order to address the challenges of accessibility to ICT and truly turn the digital divide into digital opportunities.

We in Africa will take advantage of this opportunity to transform our communities. At the international, regional and national levels, we must, however, establish follow-up mechanisms for continuous assessment, monitoring and evaluation of progress to ensure comprehensive implementation, by all parties, of obligations arising from our decisions.

Africa remains fully committed to the Global Digital Solidarity Fund, which is a voluntary commitment of stakeholders that is complementary to existing funding mechanisms. The Fund will soon begin to finance the implementation of projects in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean countries in accordance with its guidelines. I note with pleasure that the High-Level Segment
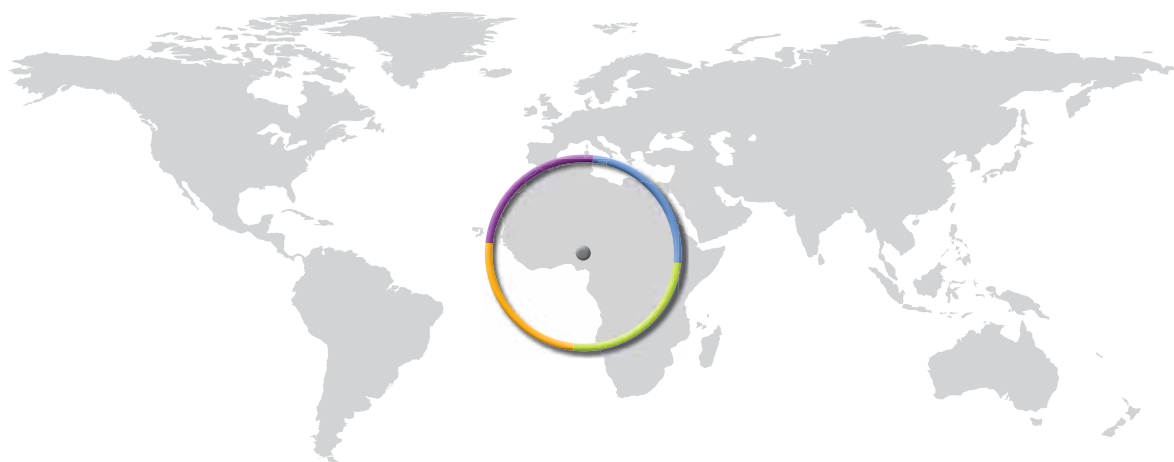
of the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly welcomed the Global Digital Solidarity Fund.

This Summit must strive to usher in hope for communities that are most disadvantaged in the evolving information society. Both the developed and developing countries must fulfil their part of the bargain to make the world safer and more secure. One way of doing this is to assist the developing countries with funding, technical expertise and investments in addition to debt relief. On their part, developing countries also must create the required conducive environment for foreign investment, and imbibe the culture of democracy, good governance, transparency and the rule of law. ICT are central to the realization of these noble goals.

We must make special efforts to build the capacity of the majority of world citizens in the evolving information society. Education is the cornerstone for capacity building. In recognition of this, the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiated an e-school programme with the aim of providing computers to about 600 000 secondary schools across the continent. And the SAT-3 international submarine cable is now carrying high volumes of traffic.

In Nigeria, among other initiatives, we have put in place a National ICT Policy and National Telecommunication Act that liberalizes the ICT sector. This will create the necessary enabling environment for public-private partnerships for ICT development. Also we have launched a satellite for remote sensing and disaster monitoring which has generated a huge volume of data now being used in project planning, especially in agriculture, in both Nigeria and other African countries.

Nigeria has seen an exponential increase in the number of Internet providers and users, a lowering of the cost of software and hardware, massive expansion in the number of telephone lines, and heavy investment in rural telephony. We are fully committed to bridging the digital divide between rural and urban communities. And we acknowledge the value and support of the WSIS process.

We must continue to work hard to build, strengthen, deepen and widen this process. Our peoples are eager for useful and valuable information and as we know, they cannot only generate new ideas but they can also absorb and replicate as necessary, existing technologies. Let us think together, plan together, work together and share opportunities in the interest of our peoples and humanity.

# Qatar

This Summit is a landmark in the march of the international community to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. By stressing the value of the information society and the means of achieving its objectives, we will work jointly to consolidate the role of information and knowledge as a principal tributary for the progress and prosperity of civilization. Our hopes in channelling the potential of knowledge and technology to serve our communities are embedded in the three major objectives of the UN Charter: development, security and human rights.

We confirm the State of Qatar's commitment to the joint world effort to build the information society. We emphasize here today our commitment to fulfil our obligations to play a leading role in this, by drawing comprehensive and long-term national strategies.

His Highness Shaikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Amir of the State of Qatar, has put forward a progressive vision for the country, on the basis of political reform and fair and sustainable economic and social development so that citizens enjoy equal opportunities for achieving high standards of living on a modern economic base.

We are fully convinced that information and communication technologies (ICT) will contribute to realizing this vision. That is why, in 2004, we set up the Supreme Council for Communications and Information Technology, which is chaired by His Highness Shaikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani. The Council is assigned to organize the ICT sector in Qatar and draw up
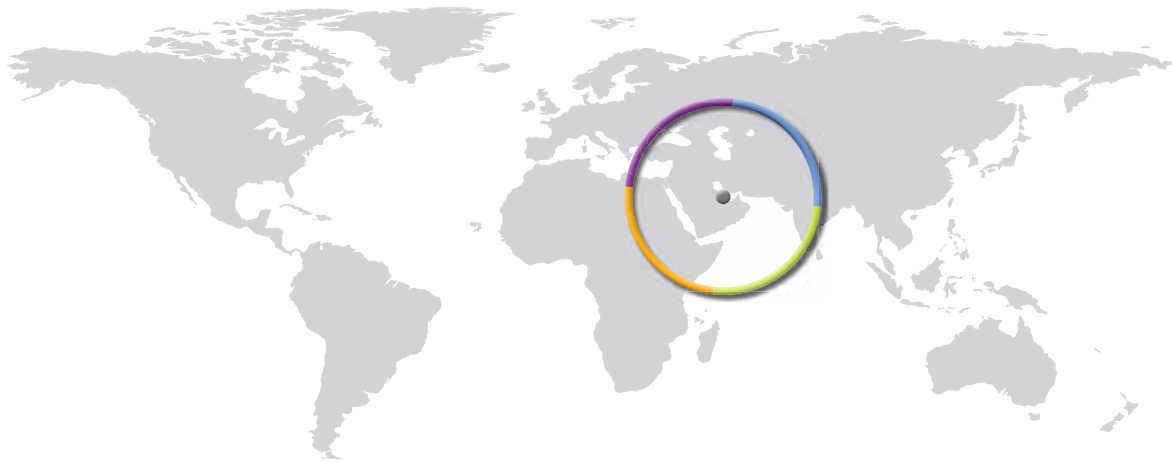
strategies, so as to provide the opportunity for the different categories of society to use ICT to improve their quality of life and raise the community to become progressive and to have a knowledge-oriented economy.

Implementation of the WSIS Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action, and what we expect of the Tunis Declaration, are on the priority list of the Supreme Council for Communications and Information Technology. In particular, we are focused on the role of governments, the necessity of providing ICT infrastructure and human capacity, confidence building and security in the use of technology, and the role of regional and international co-operation in implementing the Plan of Action.

Alongside the flourishing of creativity that the State of Qatar is witnessing, and the launching of *Education City* with its pioneering work worldwide, we have decided to launch "Q-CERT" as a regional centre concerned with all aspects of protecting cybersecurity. The objective is to provide the Middle East region with the necessary measures and applications in the sphere of electronic security, and to have Qatar actively contribute to international efforts to make the information channels more secure for all.

Qatar has always been, and remains, at the heart of tackling international community challenges. In 2004, it had the honour to chair the meeting of the Group of 77 and China, and to host the 2nd South Summit. It has also hosted a number of conferences and forums concerned with freedom of religion, human rights and dialogue.

Moreover, the State of Qatar will host in March 2006 the ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-06), where the necessary plans and programmes will be drawn up to give a push to the march of the information society over the next four years. We look forward to WTDC-06 being complementary to the outcome and recommendations of this Summit.
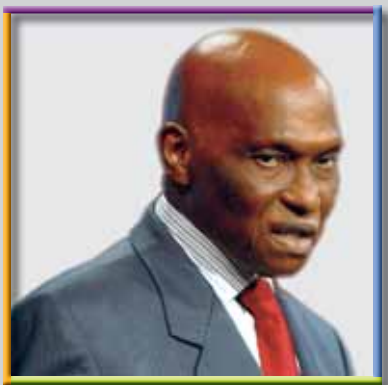
*His Excellency*
*Abdoulaye Wade*

*President of the Republic*
*of Senegal*

# Senegal

I should like to make my own contribution to this last stage of the World Summit on the Information Society, on two items that I think still pose problems. The first is the funding of the information society, and the second is Internet governance.

Concerning funding of the information society, I shall address the concerns of the countries of the south that have been left right out on a limb by the evolution of information and communication technologies (ICT). Through me, Africa has proposed the Global Digital Solidarity Fund as the answer. The idea of the Fund is supported by most of the international community today, and the problem now lies in its funding.

The Fund's primary objective was to provide countries of the south with digital equipment, and specifically with computers and the capacity to access the Internet, in order to allow those countries to tap into the knowledge and programmes they require for education and training. It was therefore a matter of identifying, in both north and south, voluntary contributions from States, municipalities, local authorities, companies and citizens to purchase equipment for the south.

This concept could generate large sums of money, but this will be used to purchase equipment from the north, thereby boosting industry in the north. In other words this operation represents a "win-win" situation. Accordingly, this would appear to be the appropriate forum for us to recognize the Geneva Principle, according to which all public procurement contracts set aside one per cent of the value of the contract to be paid into the Global Digital Solidarity Fund.

In Senegal we have introduced computers, not only at university and in colleges, but also as a toy in nursery schools. We
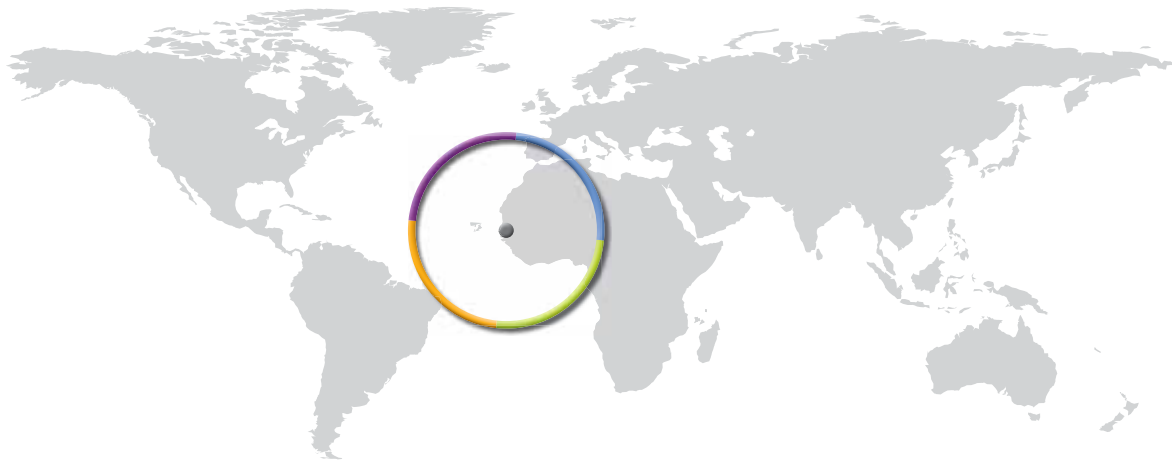
have introduced simple computers in schools, but only to a limited extent, as these measures require considerable resources.

We have started to create Internet and training programmes aimed at primary-school and college teachers, through individual or collective training. These programmes will be extended to civil servants, and Senegalese working in the private sector will benefit from facilities for further training, especially in management of the knowledge of foreign markets. We have set up a digital imagery network at Dakar's main hospital so that all practitioners from different fields of expertise can connect up with one another, and so that the hospital itself can log on as part of a world network.

I come now to Internet governance. In my opinion, the Internet must be managed on the basis of a clearly identified, single entity recognized by the international community, as is the case today. I do not believe in a democratized Internet scattered across the globe, as we could fall into anarchy and total disorder, nullifying all the rationalization efforts made to date; moreover, the actual architecture of the Internet argues in favour of the single-entity approach.

I also consider it necessary to distinguish between the technical management of the Internet and management of its content.

Problems of censorship are indeed implied in some discussions. If anything that constitutes an attack on human dignity is to be censored, censorship may become ideological. This issue must be discussed thoroughly, and would rightly be included in the proposal for a world charter on the Internet, as an international treaty signed by States and governing the Internet.

Participation in Internet governance should also imply various commitments. The extensively discussed issue of the distribution of IP addresses raises two fundamental problems: the amounts available, and the rules of distribution. The problem of the availability of addresses becomes somewhat negligible with IPv6; the international community must nevertheless accelerate the adoption of this technology and invite the major IPv4 countries to migrate in order to avoid creating inequalities.

With regard to IPv6, in a few years from now everything will have an IP address — my watch, my car, a book even. The system is thus destined to stir up enormous commercial interests within the framework of governance undergoing reform. This is why, as we undertake the final phase in the process of mastering the information society, I would like to suggest that the question of commercial interests be discussed in the forum of the World Trade Organization.

*His Excellency*
*Zoran Sami*

*President of the Assembly\**

# Serbia and Montenegro*

History teaches us that the foundation stone of each civilization is knowledge. During the times when humanity forgot the knowledge of their predecessors, civilization regressed, and those were times of distress and suffering. On the other hand, when people return to their natural curiosity and desire for knowledge, these are times of progress of civilization. Let us remember, for example, Ancient Greece, the Renaissance, and the development of high technology in the second half of the twentieth century.

When it comes to the information society today, at the beginning of the third millennium, we are actually trying to provide everyone with the right to access knowledge. This is necessary, since only in that way can we secure the possibility for civilization to give another chance to humankind.

Serbia and Montenegro, being a democratic State that abides by the rule of law, maintains a continued commitment to observe all international norms and documents: starting from the fundamental ones, such as respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every State and observance of human rights and liberties, to respect for the rule of law in international and state affairs. Therefore, we are quite ready to accept all the obligations of building the information society and to make, as we have done so far, our contribution to the development of human thought and knowledge.

*\* Serbia and Montenegro are now two separate countries.*

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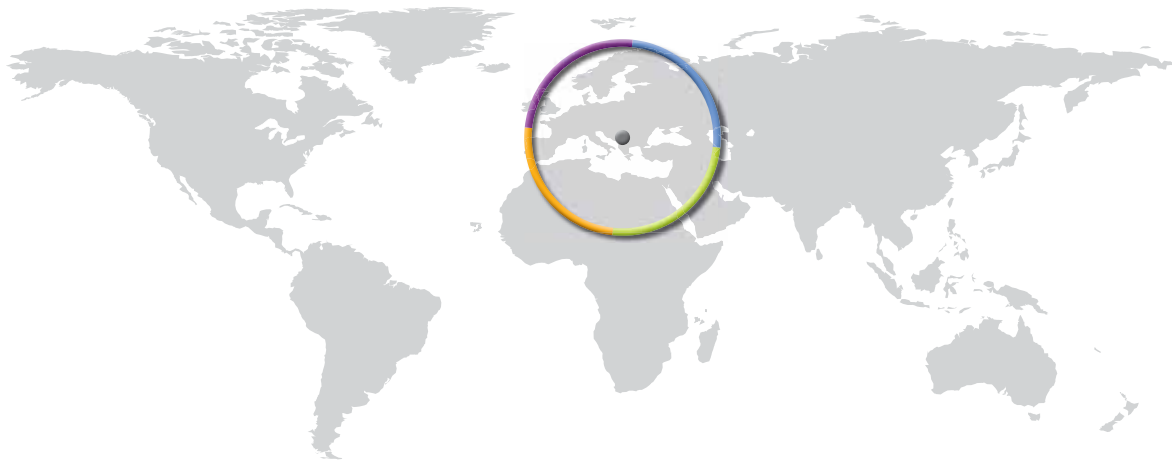
I would like to underline that in this field, we must be guided by the principle of equal access for everybody. Accepting a policy of double standards in any matter – as history teaches – is a dangerous undertaking with, as a rule, a bad conclusion.

Finally, dear friends, allow me to express my deep conviction that if we are reasonable and wise and have vision, we will succeed in building a happier world, worthy of the 21st century.
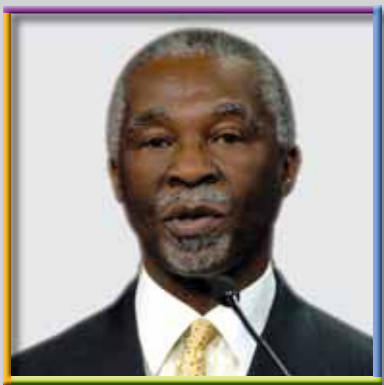
*His Excellency*
*Thabo Mbeki*

*President of the Republic*
*of South Africa*

# South Africa

The world community of nations has recognized the fact that one of the central and urgent challenges facing humanity is the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment.

We hope that the fact that this second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society takes place in Africa will further underline the need for us all to do everything possible to promote the use of modem information and communication technologies (ICT) to help extricate the poor of Africa and the world from their condition of underdevelopment, marginalization and social exclusion.

We believe that it is imperative that the decisions we take should fully reflect the desire we expressed in the Declaration of Principles adopted in Geneva in 2003, "to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society... enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life..."

These decisions must, again as we agreed in Geneva, enable all stakeholders to work together, among other things "to improve access to information and communication infrastructure and technologies... build capacity, increase confidence and security in the use of ICT, develop and widen ICT applications, foster and respect cultural diversity... and encourage international and regional cooperation."

In this regard, we welcome and fully support the agreed position that Internet governance is an essential part of a "people-centred, inclusive, development-oriented and non-discriminatory
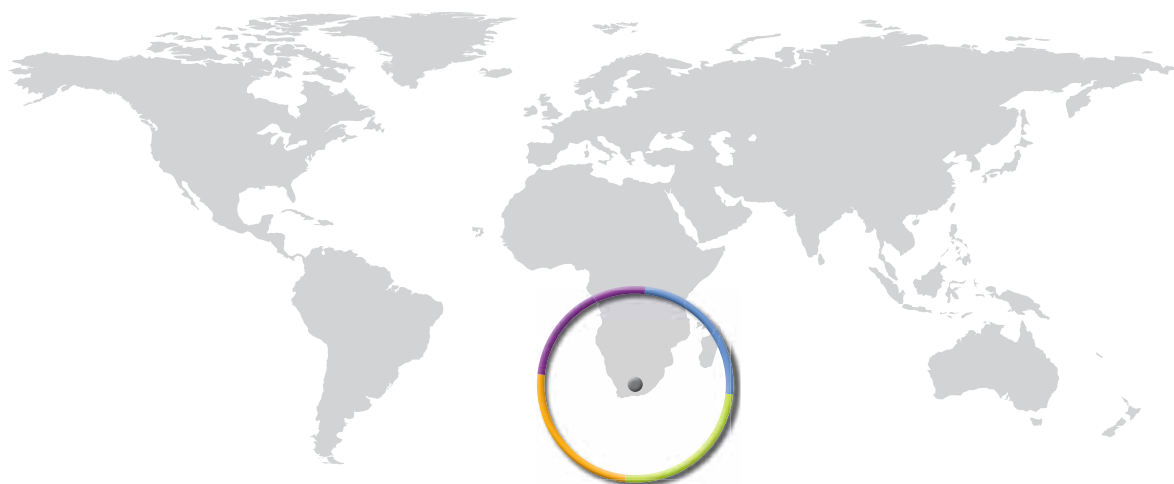
information society", and that "we commit ourselves to the stability and security of the Internet as a global facility and to ensuring the requisite legitimacy of its governance, based on the full participation of all stakeholders".

Indeed, the creation of an inclusive and development-oriented information society is in the best interests of the majority of humanity because most of the peoples of the world, especially from the developing countries, are confronted by the challenge of exclusion in the context of the global economy, in whose development modern ICT play a vital role.

Accordingly, one of the fundamental challenges facing all of us is to build multilateral and multi-stakeholder institutions and systems rooted within the United Nations system, to ensure inclusive and equitable access to ICT within the context of an Internet governance system that is legitimate, transparent and accountable.

We therefore agreed fully that this World Summit should mandate the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convene the Internet Governance Forum to enable multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic and transparent dialogue to take place covering all relevant areas.

We also believe that we should move with the necessary speed to implement the agreement to utilize various technologies and licensing models (including those developed under both proprietary schemes and open source and free modalities) to expedite access to ICT and the elimination of the digital divide by fostering collaborative development, interoperable platforms and free and open source software.

Our country and continent are determined to do everything possible to achieve their renewal and development, defeating the twin scourges of poverty and underdevelopment. In this regard, we have fully recognized the critical importance of modern ICT as a powerful ally that we have to mobilize. This is reflected both in our national initiatives and in the priority programmes of NEPAD, the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

We are, therefore, determined to do everything we can to implement the outcomes of this World Summit on the Information Society. I appeal to all stakeholders similarly to commit themselves to taking action to translate into reality the shared vision of an inclusive development-oriented information society.

*His Excellency
Omer Hassan Ahmed
Elbashir*

*President of the Republic
of Sudan*

# Sudan

 This Summit is convened as we witness great changes in the world. These changes have opened up horizons and made access to information and knowledge easier; they have made time and distance shorter; they have raised hopes of improving the quality of life, exchange of information and ideas, and the laying of foundations for peace and justice in all regions of the world. However, this progress has not been accessible to millions of people and the benefits of these changes have not been equally shared between the developing and developed countries.

The data we have at our disposal indicate that the digital divide is is growing wider between rich and poor countries. The existence of monopolies of knowledge and technology, as well as unfair competition, less developmental aid to develop technologies and services for poor country populations, constitute a real problem.

We must first achieve a society that values every individual, and every culture. Without that wisdom, poor societies will become poorer. And they will not adopt objectives that are noble in essence and are the very reason for existence. Having access to information is meaningless if it is not in the context of a society's culture, and if does not meet people's moral and material needs. If we truly set up a society based on this wisdom, we will give everyone the chance to fulfil the noble objectives that we have set ourselves, rather than hankering after the illusion of a single, globalized model.


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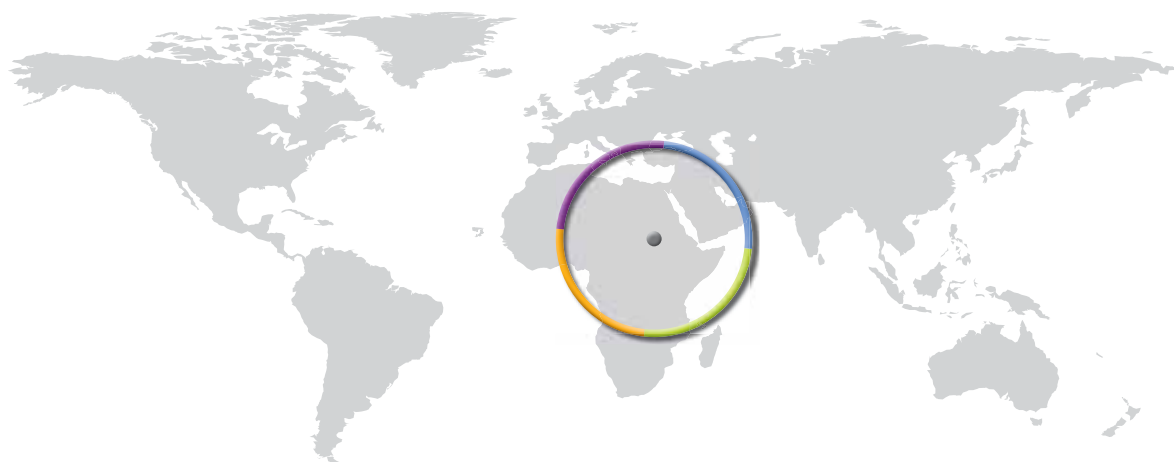
Since the Geneva Summit in 2003, Sudan has been working hard to implement the Plan of Action. For example, we have pursued legislative and institutional measures to build an information society by adopting appropriate legislation regarding information and communication, and by reforming institutions. Our infrastructure has grown, and over 70 per cent of the population now has access to communication services. Economic liberalization has enabled new companies that deal with information and communication technology to come into the country. Also, the government is improving access to official data and information through a number of websites.

The efforts of the private and public sectors have also been directed at combating illiteracy in technology and have thus built up human capacity in Sudan. With the support of the international community, we have been able to achieve our ambition in terms of development, and, following political transformations, we have generated an environment that is conducive to investment.

The narrowing of the digital divide, and the reduction of all kinds of inequalities, calls for us meeting here in Tunis to be very brave. We must base our actions on what the past has given us, and take into account the requirements of the future, so that we can build that future, and not conform to models that are hastily imposed upon us. We need to be wise, in particular, in managing the Internet. We must offer fair access to knowledge.

If we do not ensure this is the case, we will not work towards the development of humanity. We will be going against diversity. Therefore, we must adopt brave decisions that affect our future, and we must apply those decisions progressively so that we can manage in a fair manner the resources of the Internet.

We must fulfil our historic responsibilities to ensure the outcome of the Summit is implemented, and we must bridge the gaps by finding the means to establish a society based on wisdom.

*His Excellency*
*Absalom Themba Dlamini*

*Prime Minister of the*
*Kingdom of Swaziland*

# Swaziland

Heads of State and Government met in Geneva in 2003 to forge a common vision of building an information society, which will put people first and foster participation and development in our respective countries.

The Kingdom of Swaziland, like many other developing countries, acted upon the conclusions of the first phase of the Summit.

We created an inclusive and multidisciplinary team whose mandate was to draft a national information and communication technology (ICT) policy. The drafting process drew together a wide range of stakeholders including government, the private sector, civil society and academia.

I would particularly like to acknowledge here the input and advice we received from external agencies, such as the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and other agencies, which played a pivotal role by providing technical and financial assistance in the policy formulation process.

In drafting the policy, the Kingdom of Swaziland has taken into account the importance of capacity building at all levels of society. Since Geneva, we have witnessed a number of capacity building initiatives which have taken place through the assistance of our partners. However, a large gap in capacity still remains between developing countries, such as Swaziland, and developed economies that have spearheaded the information technology revolution. We, therefore, call for a closer cooperation between the developing and developed countries to bridge the digital divide.

The Kingdom of Swaziland has intensified the promotion of ICT programmes and through the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) we have introduced ICT centres in some villages with a view to bridging the digital divide between the urban and rural population.

The government has also embarked on the provision of ICT development in schools. Currently, most of our schools offer computer lessons, and already have access to Internet services, of course with the assistance of co-operating partners and friends of Swaziland. In addition, all government ministries and departments now have access to computer and internet services.

The Kingdom of Swaziland encourages and supports the participation of private Internet service providers, and there are currently seven major Internet service providers. We also have a media policy in place, which enhances information flow and platforms throughout the Kingdom.

Information technology infrastructure, access and literacy are all important to development and we recognize that if we are to succeed, our policies and action plans must be closely aligned with our wider social and economic development strategies.

Inclusiveness and access are important in this regard, while at the same time affordability and equitability are critical considering the low income levels and poverty in the rural areas. All these efforts must also take into account people with disabilities.

In conclusion, may I once again emphasize that the Kingdom of Swaziland is committed to promoting the development of information and communication technologies in the country. And we believe that it is the only way we can compete in the global economy and markets. There is no doubt that ICT creates opportunities for all, irrespective of status in society.

# Tajikistan

*His Excellency*
*Emomali Rahmonov*

*President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

During the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in 2003, an historic step was taken in determining the parameters of human society in the new conditions of the 21st century. The Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted there laid a solid foundation for a genuinely global campaign of cooperation in the creation of an information society for the good of all humankind. I hope that this second phase of the Summit will mark an important stage in the move towards the creation of a global information society, based on genuine partnerships between all the countries of the world.

Within the framework of the implementation of the Geneva texts, Tajikistan is taking active steps to strengthen and broaden the legislative basis and, in particular, the technological foundations on which the development of information and communication systems relies.

We have adopted a strategy entitled "Information and communication technologies for the development of the Republic of Tajikistan". It includes special State programmes for developing information and communication technologies (ICT) and disseminating them to all areas of community life. Of particular importance is a programme for the application and development of ICT in the official language, and the modernization and digitization of existing telecommunication systems. In this regard, the country has joined the trans-Asia-Europe fibre-optic line, covering more than 20 countries in Asia and Europe.

Today, thanks to these measures, Tajikistan's ICT industry has turned into the most dynamic and important segment in our country's private-sector economy. The State strategy takes into account the real needs and interests of diverse social and age
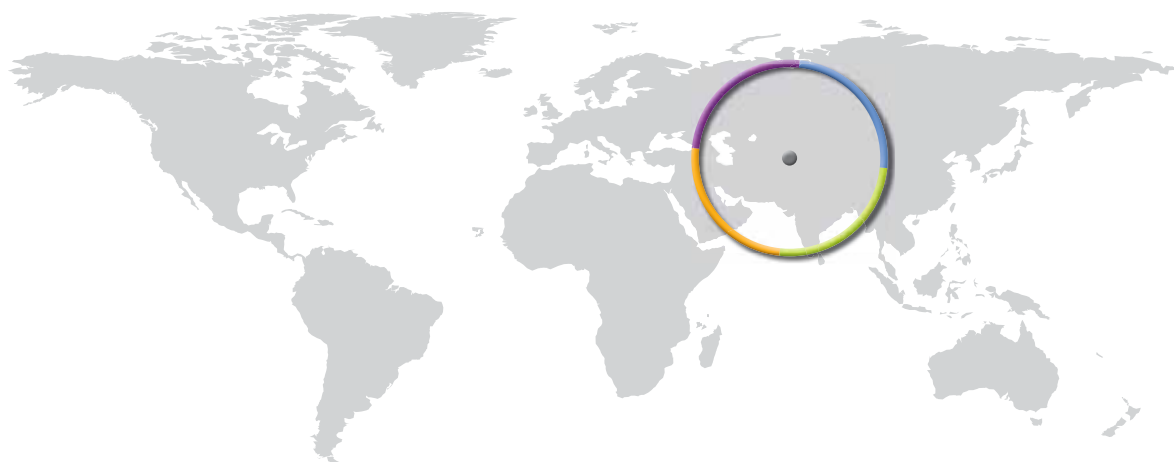
groups. In parallel to the computerization of schools and universities, we are introducing new educational and teaching methods, providing students with access to the Internet and other ICT resources, and providing specialized training.

But a number of challenges still face our country, concerning the lack of sufficient financial, technical and human resources. For this reason, we continue to rely on support from international organizations and developed countries for the full implementation of our strategy. With support from the United Nations, Tajikistan has already carried out an evaluation of its requirements for achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which show that we will require some USD 13 billion over the next ten years.

One of the central goals of the information society concerns people's cultural, intellectual and spiritual development. At the same time, because ICT can also fall into the hands of destructive forces, it is necessary to intensify work on ensuring information and network security and reliability.

In the first instance, this concerns the Internet, which has become an open resource on a worldwide scale. We wish to express our support of the work done by the United Nations Working Group on Internet Governance, set

up in accordance with the Plan of Action of the Geneva phase of WSIS. It is our profound conviction that the priority goal should be to arrive at a consensus definition of the Internet. The decision-making process for Internet governance should be transparent. And all countries should have equal rights in protecting their cultural and linguistic diversity. In addition, vital importance should be attached to the ethical and the humanitarian dimensions in operating global information and communication systems. In our view, a special code of conduct is required to govern these systems and their use.

If these and other objectives are to be achieved, broad-based international cooperation at the regional and subregional levels will be needed. We consider that the Digital Solidarity Agenda, in the Geneva Plan of Action, meets this need, with its goal of mobilizing resources to enable everyone to be a part of the emerging information society.

Tajikistan endorses the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda, and their provisions to bring about new possibilities for the construction of a genuinely global information society that will meet the hopes and aspirations of every human being on Earth.

*His Royal Highness Prince
Ulukalala Lavaka Ata*

*Prime Minister of the
Kingdom of Tonga*

# Tonga

I attach special importance to this Summit being convened here in Tunisia, which was the initial proponent of the World Summit on the Information Society at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis, in 1998.

The Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action we adopted in Geneva two years ago laid a solid foundation for building a truly global, inclusive and development-oriented information society, in support of the promotion of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

As we are all aware, successful implementation of the WSIS principles and Plan of Action will require unremitting multi-stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnership. It will also need a well-coordinated system of follow-ups, and an efficient time-frame on regional, national and international levels. Appropriate measures should also be put in place, as benchmarking mechanisms to provide a clear indication of the progress being made during the implementation stage.

At this point we acknowledge the launching of the partnership on measuring information and communication technologies (ICT) for development, and its efforts to develop a common set of vital ICT indicators on WSIS-related activities and their relationship to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Such indicators will assist policy-makers in their evaluation processes. They will also serve as a valuable tool for follow-up beyond WSIS, as will the "Golden Book" initiatives launched at this Tunis phase.

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ICT has enormous power to change economic structures and greatly contribute to economic prosperity and a better quality of life, through providing greater choice and supporting social, economic and cultural activities. ICT is an equally important tool to assist in meeting the global challenges facing us today in terms of terrorism, security, climate change and trade. Meeting these challenges requires global integration, which calls for multilateral action.

Tonga has adopted this set of principles, driven by an understanding that expanded connectivity will stimulate domestic growth and will provide the scope for greater participation by our people in the global information economy. We have been guided by our prime objective which is: "To improve sector 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 policy has also resulted in liberalization of our market and the introduction of competition. Within five years of implementing these policy decisions, tariffs for almost all services dropped significantly by more than 200 per cent. Teledensity has tripled.

Indeed, information and communication technologies have offered a historic and an unprecedented opportunity to bridge the digital divide. And their potential can be put at the service of humanity to make our world a better place.
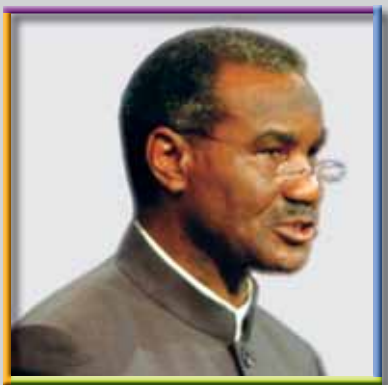
*His Excellency
Lupando Mwape*

*Vice-President of the
Republic of Zambia*

# *Zambia*

What makes this Summit unique are its terms of reference, which include bridging the digital divide, and the fact that it is being held here in Africa. We Africans are extremely proud of this recognition.

As one of the world's least developed countries, Zambia is one of the victims of the digital divide and thus a potential beneficiary of the success of the World Summit on the Information Society. In Zambia, and in other developing countries, our challenge is to find a way to embrace information and communication technologies (ICT) as a tool of sustainable development. As governments, we need to consider how best ICT can be applied to fight poverty, disease, illiteracy, and other problems.

Ending poverty and its related ills is no simple task. In addition to resources and tools, it requires a serious desire, commitment and action by all of us as citizens of the world.

On our part, we have put in place an ICT policy, which will provide guidance on the way forward in the development of an information society in Zambia. However, the full implementation of the policy will require capital financing, which we can hardly afford. What is true for Zambia is also true for most African countries. We need an injection of funds to enable us to reduce the digital divide. Zambia, for example, with a population of 11 million, only has 1 million mobile phone subscribers, 90 000 fixed line subscribers, and only 17 000 Internet subscribers. These statistics are pathetic, and a testimony of how we are lagging behind.

world summit
on the information society
Geneva 2003 - Tunis 2005
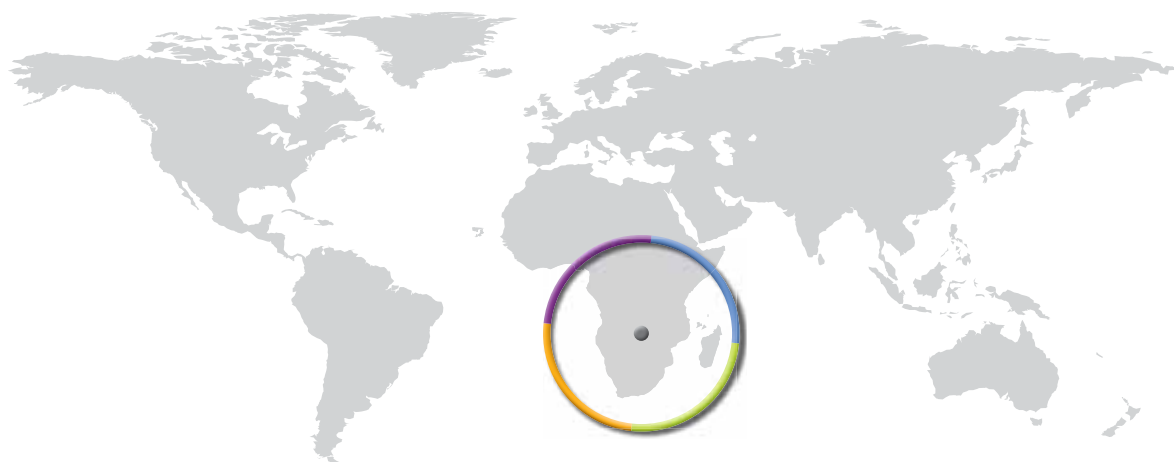
Zambia welcomes the Plan of Action and the Declaration of Principles approved by the Geneva phase of the World Summit in 2003. The world of ICT is producing an historic transformation in the way we live, learn and communicate. This digital revolution has turned the world into a global village. Unfortunately, the developing world continues to remain behind.

The Geneva phase of WSIS opened the way forward, but this is a long journey. We trust that the Tunis phase has addressed the remaining issues on Internet governance, and financial mechanisms. It is pleasing to note that there is recognition of governments' role in the governance of the Internet and responsibilities in the international multilateral public policy issues. We understand from deliberations that the management of the country code, top-level domain names, which was of great concern, will be carried out within individual countries.

With regard to the question of financial mechanisms, we wish to extend our thanks to the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, for having created a task force on financial mechanisms which guides the WSIS process forward.

Zambia also welcomes the Digital Solidarity Agenda as provided for in the Geneva Plan of Action. We believe that funds should be provided specifically for the development of the information society in underprivileged countries.

The cost of personal computers and Internet access prices, which are determined by the developed world, are a barrier to the entry of developing countries into the global village. When cost relative to per capita income is considered, developed countries should come to the aid of Zambia and other needy countries to enable us to bridge the digital divide. Our common destiny is at stake.

We recognize that the negotiations which started in Geneva and elsewhere, and which were concluded here in Tunis, have not been very easy, and we applaud the spirit of give and take which has been shown by all well-meaning countries.

In conclusion, I trust that this Summit, which is the last of its kind at least for now, will conclude with a positive plan of action and mechanisms for its full implementation.

# Zimbabwe

We meet on the occasion of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), in order to make another imprint on the journey that began in 1998 with Tunisia's proposal for a global meeting that would promote greater understanding of what is now known as the information society. It is fitting that this second phase should take place in Africa, where the idea of this Summit was born.

The Declaration of Principles agreed at the first phase of WSIS, held in Geneva in 2003, rightly observed that, where favourable conditions exist, information and communication technologies (ICT) can be a useful tool in generating economic growth and employment creation, thereby improving the quality of life of all our people. It is thus our collective challenge to help create the required conditions.

Regrettably, the huge potential for economic growth and poverty reduction in many developing countries, including Zimbabwe, is stymied by lack of adequate information and communication technologies, thus marginalizing these countries instead of integrating them into the world economy. The Summit provides an ideal opportunity for the global family of nations to seriously address this need. We attach special importance to the establishment of the Global Digital Solidarity Fund, and trust that it will play a positive role in expanding access by developing countries to ICT.

At the close of the Geneva phase of WSIS, we approved a Plan of Action to guide us in fully harnessing the development potential of information and communication technologies. Zimbabwe has embarked upon a number of national activities aimed at enhancing our capacity to benefit from ICT. Universities and other tertiary institutions are now largely connected through
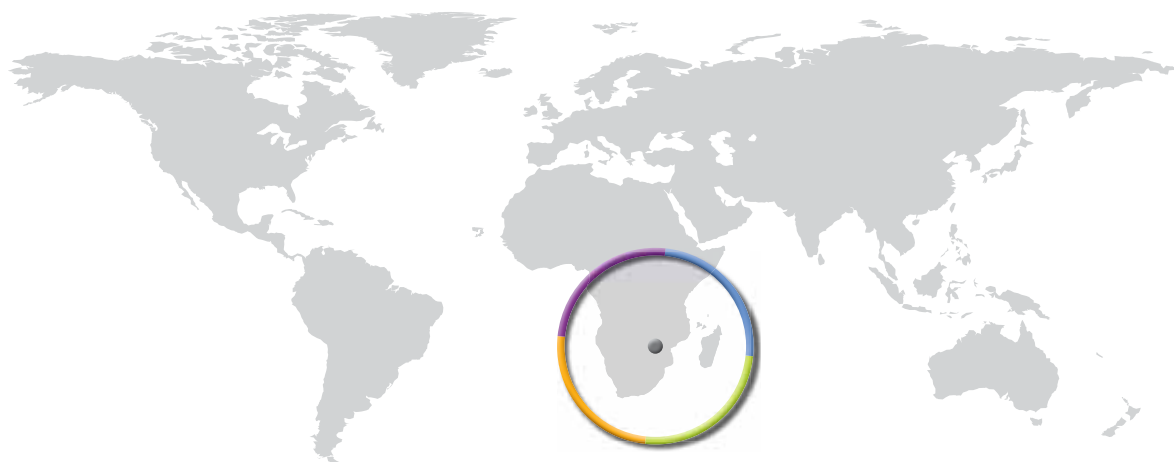
the national education management informa-
tion system, which also provides access to
the Internet. With support from the corporate
world, we have initiated a programme that has
seen about 500 secondary schools computer-
ized across our country. We are now working
with ITU to provide training. Zimbabwe also
has a well-established rural electrification pro-
gramme, which is opening new horizons for
the use of ICT in rural areas.

However, Zimbabwe is concerned that ICT
continue to be used negatively to undermine
national sovereignty, and social and cultural
values. Also, we should always guard against
such crimes as child pornography, computer
hacking, electronic fraud and cyberterrorism.
Needless to say, these shortcomings erode the
confidence that should be growing in the in-
formation society.

We also challenge the issue of Internet gov-
ernance, where one or two countries continue
to insist on being world policemen in the man-
agement and administration of the Internet.
The Summit should empower all our countries
in their development endeavours, and engen-
der confidence in Internet users everywhere,
by allowing for a more transparent and multi-
lateral approach to Internet governance.

The absence of clear funding mechanisms
for the development of ICT in the third world
threatens the very information society we are
discussing. Since the utility of any communi-
cations network is its reach, without clearly
defined financing mechanisms to bridge the
digital divide, the information society will not
have a meaningful impact in many parts of the
developing world. The West's resistance to the
development of a specific financing mecha-
nism for the Plan of Action may spell doom to
all the positive things emerging from this WSIS
process. It is also surprising that developed
countries continue to frustrate measures, such
as technology transfer and preferential trade
terms, that would further advance our informa-
tion society.

After praising the virtues of information and
communication technologies, it seems to us
that the next step naturally is to ensure that
such technologies become widely available. It
is imperative that greater efforts are made to
bridge the digital divide. A supportive United
Nations system and a well-designed and fi-
nanced plan of action, as well as appropriate
policies developed through WSIS, would sig-
nificantly move us in the direction of bridging
the divide.

*His Excellency*
*Mahmoud Abbas*

*President of the Palestinian*
*National Authority*

# The Palestinian National Authority

The Palestinian National Authority has been paying special attention to the sector of information and communication technologies (ICT) because of its vital role as an indispensable tool for comprehensive socio-economic development. Such development is no longer merely a local course of action, but has become a process that includes significant regional and international links with production centres. Such development would include radical changes in the way of life in our society and will not be achieved without focusing on ICT that should be mainstreamed in the planning process for the future.

Accordingly, the Palestinian National Authority has given great attention to human resource development, while focusing on the rehabilitation and development of infrastructure and establishing well-defined legal and regulatory frameworks, as well as creating an enabling and competitive environment that will allow for a real and effective partnership between the public and private sectors. This was embodied in the recent procedures and decisions adopted by the Palestinian Authority to open markets, apply the electronic Palestinian initiative and proceed with the implementation of a number of projects in the framework of the national information technology strategy. These projects include:

- establishing a regulatory authority for ICT;
- implementing e-government;
- launching an electronic education initiative, including reforming all educational and training curricula;
- connecting Palestinian universities, institutes and academic institutions, through the Euromed project;
- providing a computer for every household;
- establishing the first technology park in Palestine.
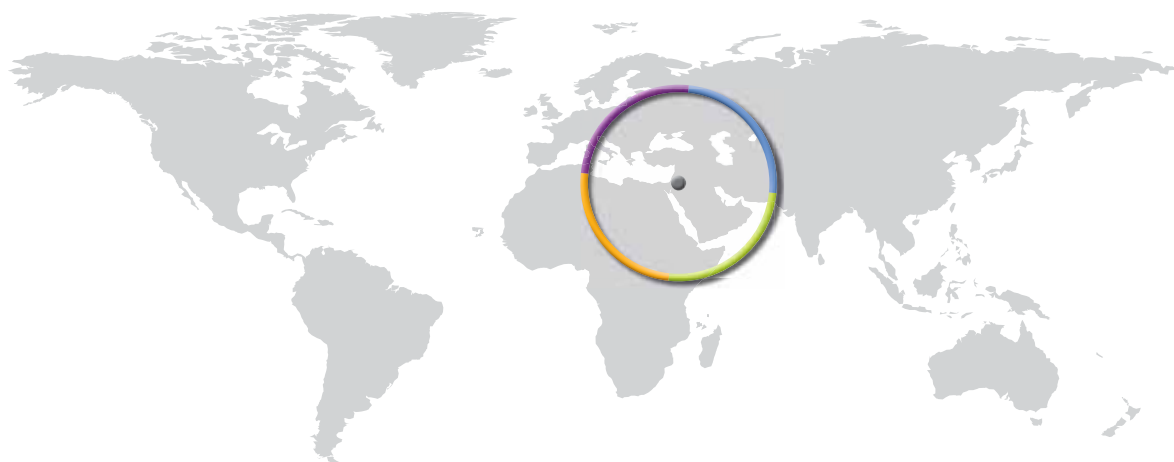
In order to realize development and establish a knowledge platform, we must have comprehensive and equitable peace which would ensure the security and stability of all peoples of the region, while recognizing their right to live within safe and recognized borders. This necessitates going back to the negotiation table without any delay, and opening all the files of the peace process.

The recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people is the fundamental guarantee to establish stable and sustainable peace. This is the only option the peoples of the region have in order to reach a safe future and close the doors of war. Only then will the peoples and States of the region start building a common cooperation platform and establish the information and knowledge infrastructure for peace. And only then will they be able to extirpate the roots of terrorism in the region and avoid having more innocent victims.

The first phase of the Summit held in Geneva in 2003, devoted special attention, in the framework of Article 16 of the Declaration of Principles, to the special needs of countries and regions under occupation. Our Palestinian people have been suffering as they are deprived of the means that would enable them to catch up with technological development due to the continuation of the Israeli occupation. This occupation has been dominating both the territories and the air. It has been dominating Palestine's frequency spectrum, placing impediments and obstacles in the way of development of this sector and depriving our people of their right of direct access to communication and information services.

Therefore, from here in Tunis, we are requesting the international community to oblige the Israeli occupying authorities to respect the relevant international conventions and resolutions, in particular the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as Nos. 6 and 7 of the ITU Constitution on the right "to promote the extension of the benefits of the new telecommunication technologies to all the world's inhabitants and to promote the use of telecommunication services with the objective of facilitating peaceful relations".

We are also requesting the international community to oblige the Israeli occupying authorities to enable our people to enjoy the right of direct access and to operate Palestine's international gateway in all its forms, including wired, wireless and space telecommunications. This would enable our people to practise its legitimate right to use and harness the great benefits of ICT in order to realize sustainable development, integrate with the world economy, reduce the digital divide, create employment opportunities and eradicate poverty.

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