

## **United States Position on Phase II of the World Summit on the Information Society**

During the Geneva Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the global community came together to recognize that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are a key element of economic growth, social development and political progress. By agreeing to the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, the United States reaffirmed its commitment to the importance of the use of ICTs to promote peace and security and to enhance democracy, respect for human rights, open and transparent government and the rule of law. Throughout the WSIS process the United States has emphasized the fundamental building blocks of an Information Society – infrastructure development, human capacity building, and network security. We are pleased that through the adoption of the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, the international community recognized these elements as critical to achieving our common vision.

In order to more fully realize the many Information and Communications Technology (ICT) goals contained in the WSIS Plan of Action, we must begin, as ITU Secretary-General Utsumi has suggested, by taking stock. We need to ask: what has worked in the past and what hasn't? Which efforts currently underway show the most promise in helping narrow the digital divide? And what ideas not yet implemented may show promise? Addressing these questions during WSIS Phase II will allow us to focus more clearly on how to further most effectively the development of a vibrant and inclusive information society. Negotiation of a new document, on the other hand, will only be worthwhile if such a document elucidates clearly and concretely which measures must be addressed at the national level and which could be addressed at the international level that would bring the benefits of ICTs to the widest possible population in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. Toward this end, useful work could be done in setting priorities within the Plan of Action.

In order to expand access to and use of ICTs, the United States proposes that WSIS Phase II focus on identifying practical contributions that are and can be made at the national and international levels to facilitate infrastructure development, capacity building, and the creation of a secure ICT environment. Indeed, the Plan of Action calls for efforts on the part of all stakeholders in these important areas. These efforts include action to support an enabling and competitive environment for ICTs, domestic policies to ensure that ICTs are fully integrated in education and training, and cooperation to protect both data and network integrity. A wide variety of international activities currently underway, including by governments, international organizations and the private sector, aim to assist in these efforts.

The United States believes that the Tunis phase provides a unique opportunity for the global community to reaffirm ongoing activities and encourage efforts that contribute to already established WSIS objectives. We are committed to working in close partnership with all stakeholders to “take stock” of existing programs and to implement the common

vision of the future set out in the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. The United States looks forward to a productive Phase II and to the Tunis Summit in 2005.