

**World Summit on the Information Society**  
**PrepCom1, Hammamet, 24-26 June 2004**  
**Intervention by Mr. Mongi Hamdi on behalf of**  
**The UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development**

Distinguished Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) and UNCTAD, which provides substantive support to the Commission, let me begin by assuring you of the full support of the Commission to the preparatory process of the World Summit on the Information Society. As the focal point in science and technology within the United Nations, the CSTD has a broad mandate to generate greater understanding of the role of science and technology in development.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that the current North-South gap in the generation and application of ICTs constitutes a “technological divide” that must be bridged if developing countries are to participate effectively in a global inclusive knowledge society. Thus, bridging the digital divide must be at the heart of the agenda of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society.

For this, the focus of the second phase of the Summit should center on the development dimensions of ICTs, such as access and connectivity. It should also focus on the role of ICTs in helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through applications of ICTs, in such areas as health and education.

At its seventh session, held in Geneva this past May, the CSTD addressed the role of technology, including ICTs, in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Commission stressed that achieving the MDGs will only be possible by fully harnessing the potential of ICTs and ensuring access for all. The Commission stressed that most developing countries are unlikely to meet the millennium development goals without a clear political commitment to promote development-oriented ICT applications and to make access to ICTs top priorities in their development agenda. The Commission also stressed that for developing countries to be full partners in a global inclusive information society, they need access and development of ICTs, which require technology transfer, financial and technical assistance.

Mr. Chairman,

Let's not forget that science provides the foundation of all technological development that are underlying the knowledge and information societies. Therefore a vision of the scientific community should be articulated at the World Summit on the Information Society. In this regards, the CSTD, in cooperation with the Trieste System of scientific institutions, UNESCO, the UN ICT Task Force and CERN, is exploring the possibility of convening a high-level forum in March 2005 in Trieste, Italy as one of the events related to the preparatory process for the Summit. The event would bring together high-level policy makers, representatives of international and regional organizations and civil society, as well as prominent experts in the area of science and technology. The outcome of this event would be a Statement to be delivered to the WSIS to raise awareness about the importance of science and technology, especially ICTs, in development and to highlight international and national policies that should be pursued to ensure that science and technology contribute effectively to economic and social development. The Forum would be chaired by a head of state and would be attended by Nobel laureates and Ministers responsible for research, science and technology.

Thank you for your attention.