

7 July 2005

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To Ministers of Foreign Affairs of States

**Subject: Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS),
Tunis, 16-18 November 2005**

Madam/Sir,

It is my pleasure to invite your country to be represented at the highest level at the Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which will take place from 16 to 18 November 2005 in Tunis. I join Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in reiterating the strategic importance in Tunis of carrying forward the process of building a truly global, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, as underlined in his invitation letter of 25 April 2005 to your Head of State/Government.

The Geneva phase of WSIS culminated in 2003 with a landmark gathering that established the foundations of the Information Society by enunciating a shared vision to meet the global challenges of the new millennium along with a concrete Plan of Action. World leaders clearly expressed the need to harness the tremendous potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to help bridge the digital divide and advance the broad development agenda outlined in the Millennium Declaration.

Let me take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to your government for its strong commitment and active participation throughout the preparatory process of the Summit. During the Tunis phase, Preparatory Committee meetings were held in Hammamet (Tunisia), 24 to 26 June 2004, and in Geneva, 17 to 25 February 2005, while WSIS regional conferences took place in Damascus (Syria), Accra (Ghana), Tehran (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). I am pleased to report that the preparatory meetings have been successful, providing valuable inputs in the elaboration of the documents of the Tunis Summit.

The Tunis phase of WSIS will focus on the highly political issues of Internet governance and financing to bridge the digital divide as well as on defining the implementation and follow-up process to pave the way ahead. The challenge is to provide access to communication and information to all humanity, not just the privileged few, by making the most efficient use of existing resources while avoiding wasteful duplication of efforts. Building a people-centred Information Society that will help accelerate the pace of development requires political commitment and support at the highest level from world leaders. I therefore attach great importance to the participation of your Head of State or Government at this path-breaking World Summit on the Information Society.

Registration for the Tunis Phase of WSIS will be by electronic means and the username and password, provided to the focal point of your Government for participation in PrepComs, will also be valid for Tunis. Registration will begin on **1 September 2005** and additional information will be made available at <http://www.itu.int/wsis/tunis/index.html> in due course.

As in the Geneva phase of WSIS, the list of speakers of States for the General Debate will be established by a drawing of lots. An information session on this process will take place during PrepCom-3 this September. You will receive later and by separate mail an invitation for your Government to the Special Meeting for the drawing of lots, which will take place in early October 2005 in Geneva. For more information on the organization of work of the Tunis Summit, please refer to the Draft Format document at: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs2/pc2/off4.doc> .

I look forward to welcoming you and your Head of State/Government at the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis.

Accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(signed)

Yoshio UTSUMI

Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Secretary-General of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

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