

SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS
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Distinguished Secretary-General,
Your excellencies Presidents and Prime Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

With your indulgence, I would like to use the short time allocated for my speech to brief you on the accomplishments and problems in the formation of information society in Azerbaijan within the last two years. Reforms of the ICT sector were effected, pursuant to the National Strategy for ICT Development adopted in close cooperation with the UNDP. The new Telecommunications Policy Plan was drafted and adopted by the government, in cooperation with the World Bank. The amount of national legislation adopted in this field includes the Laws on Telecommunications, Post, Electronic Signature and Documents, E-commerce and so on. The National Program on ICT development for 2005 to 2008 was adopted.

Major new technologies applied in the country include broadband communication, 3G services, digital TV, wireless internet, NGN etc. The installation of the new postal network infrastructure, capable of providing financial, banking and information services, was accomplished and has played an important role in poverty reduction and bridging the digital divide in the country. The installation of the 10 Gbit high-speed digital network covering the whole territory of Azerbaijan has begun, with a view to providing access to communication services in rural areas, a positive solution to "the last mile" problem. Azerbaijan is located at the intersection of the East-West and North-South communication of the Trans-Eurasian Fiber-optic Cable, and was the first in the region to get the European backbone connection.

The Government of Azerbaijan is paying particular attention to the further increase of the ICT outreach and its support in the reinforcement of democratic values through various e-government projects. Dozens of WEB-sites offered by various governmental offices have been placed at the disposal of individuals and the business community. The National Law on E-government is currently being drafted. We are proud to say that Azerbaijan was among the leading states formulating the principles of the ICT role in human rights advocacy.

It should also be mentioned that as a sponsor and active member of the Summit's PrepCom, Azerbaijan succeeded in hosting two international exhibitions, three ITU workshops and a conference, and a number of international for a conducted within the framework of the International Post Union, World Bank and the UNDP

Distinguished Summit participants,

We believe that irrelevances in international relations and ongoing conflicts present the major obstacles for ICT's role as the basis for international cooperation. The occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territory by Armenia and the displacement of about a million Azeri nationals from occupied areas has a negative impact on the situation in the region, and severely hampers the implementation of a number of regional projects including those in the field of ICT. I also believe in the great role of ICT for the settlement of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan together with other hostilities throughout the world, by disseminating unbiased information and delivering the truth to nations.

Therefore, we view the global development of ICT as a major tool for poverty reduction, the management of epidemics and natural calamities, the suppression of terrorism, the support of friendly relations between nations and human rights advocacy.

Thank you for your attention.