

**SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER 2005, TUNIS**  
**STATEMENT BY H. E. DR ABDUL MOYEEN KHAN**  
**HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF BANGLADESH**  
**MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INFORMATION**  
**& COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**  
**BANGLADESH**

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**Mr Chairman**  
**Excellencies**  
**Distinguished Delegates**

It's my proud privilege to be here with you, the people of the world, at the Second Phase of the WSIS at Tunis. Let me at the very outset convey my sincerest thanks to the Government and the People of Tunis, the Host of this extra ordinary event for their kind hospitality as well as to the UN and the ITU, the Organizer of the Summit for their impeccable arrangements at this historical city of Tunis.

Coming from a resource starved country like Bangladesh which is also the most densely populated country in the world, it is not easy for me to address this august gathering on a subject that involves the latest technology of the world. Yet, as I will elucidate in a few moments, we have taken up the challenge with our very modest resources in Bangladesh, employing our little precious resources through the national budget allocation where ICT has been prioritized by our Honourable Prime Minister herself who, in fact, highlighted our country's commitment to the Basic Principles and the PoA of WSIS during the Geneva Phase of this Summit.

Let me go back in history a bit. From the dawn of civilization, human endeavour has never been dwarfed by lack of resources or whatever, so long there was no dearth of ideas. This is what we have banked upon in Bangladesh. ICT is a "Quiet Revolution" changing our basic way of life almost everyday, very much in contrast to the "Industrial Revolution" that shaped Europe into the forefront of economic development in the world a few centuries ago. However, there is a critical difference between the two. While the industrial revolution gave rise to an economy that was primarily money based, the ICT revolution is one that is essentially knowledge based. And it is this crucial difference that has pinned hope for developing countries like Bangladesh to be at the forefront of this hi-tech, in spite of our tremendous resource constraints, And that's why I would most humbly like to present our approach in front of you, as to why we in Bangladesh do not at all consider this new technology as one that is creating a "Digital Divide", rather one that has provided us with once in a lifetime opportunity for removing that Divide. Let me try to elucidate why I say so.

The three major challenges of this new technology for the developing world can be summed up as the challenge of the three A's, i.e. Awareness, Access and Affordability. All these are extremely formidable, particularly when being addressed by countries like ours. Yet when we try to confront

these three challenges with the three inherent advantages of this new technology, we arrive at amazing opportunities to which this new technology can lead us to. First, the User Friendliness, second, the Diminishing cost of this Technology and last but not the least, the option to Leap Frog the various earlier stages of this technology to land up in the state of the art forefront in ICT. This is what we have tried to take advantage of in Bangladesh. In this way, we have been able at the moment to export our software to twenty three (23) most advanced countries of the world including the US, Canada, the UK, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Japan and so on. We have been able to achieve this by utilizing the “resources of mind” of our young boys and girls rather than our scarce monetary resources.

We must bear in mind that at the end of the day, this unique technology will not necessarily be judged by its success as a technology itself, rather unlike the traditional hi-techs, will be assessed as to how much this has succeeded in transforming our society into the new millennium acting as the most powerful tool, cross cutting Science, Technology, Governance, Economy, Business and Society as whole. Let’s use the power of this technology to create a society where ICT will not be used to restrict our freedom of thought, deed and belief rather enable them. To be candid, these lofty ideals have been the basic essentials of a civilized society and the aspiration of humankind ever since the dawn of civilization, Let’s employ this technology to create trust and love between people to people, nurture this new technology for promoting peace and prosperity for all people on earth and side by side with security, ensure individual privacy in our approach to ICT, which has been considered to be the basic ingredient for shaping a civilized society in the modern sense of the term. Let us make sure, at this noble juncture of time when I think history is being written in Tunis for the future of this world, that we will not go back in history on one pretext or another. For if we do that, the future generations may not forgive us for our error of judgment in shaping a prospect for our mother earth into the noble concepts of a liberal world.

In conclusion, I would like to draw your kind attention to an old English Adage, that, it is not the machine, but the man behind the machine who will eventually count as to how we utilize this technology for the welfare of the nations and the people on this globe, big or small, rich or poor. What we would need to do is to apply our feelings and emotions, moral judgment and basic ethical values which will determine the destiny of this technology for the humankind. These in fact are the attributes which will indeed make our Information Society a meaningful concept heralding a novel world for our forthcoming generations.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you once again from the core of my heart and the people and the Government of Bangladesh for giving me a patient hearing.