

SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS

STATEMENT BY VICE PREMIER HUANG JU THE STATE COUNCIL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Tunis, 17 November 2005

Your Excellency President Ben Ali, Chair of the Summit,
Excellencies,
Your Excellency UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to come to the beautiful country of Tunisia for the Tunis Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society. I wish to express, on behalf of the Chinese Government and in my own name, congratulations on the convocation of the Summit, and gratitude to the Tunisian Government and people for their careful preparations for its successful convening and their thoughtful arrangements for all the participants. I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate all the members of the Bureau on their election. The Chinese government delegation is ready to work together with all participating parties towards a complete success of the Summit.

As known to all, in the present-day world where information technology is advancing by leaps and bounds and economic globalization evolving to greater depth, informatization, as a new major driving force behind the development of social productivity and the progress of human civilization, is generating enormous economic and social transformation worldwide. The modern information networks are gradually expanding beyond national borders, transcending differences in geography, wealth as well as ethnic and cultural traditions, and reaching every corner of the globe. As people in different parts of the world have ever closer economic links and more frequent cultural exchanges, the interests and destiny of the mankind have never been more intertwined in the past millennia than they are today. The wave of informatization is surging. To build the information society has become the inevitable choice and common task of all countries in the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The advent of the information society brings about both development opportunities and new challenges. The international community therefore should adopt practical and effective measures to intensify mutually-beneficial cooperation and give scope to advantages while avoiding disadvantages for common development. On this occasion, I wish to share with you the following thoughts.

First, coordinated development is the basic prerequisite for the building of the information society. Mr. Deng Xiaoping, the chief architect of China's reform and opening-up once said, "Development is what really matters at the end of the day," and "If the issue of development is not addressed, nothing can be discussed." In our view, the information society should be a people-

centered, development-oriented and highly inclusive society in which all peoples and all countries can share its benefit to the full in greater common development. However, we must be aware that amidst the rapid development of the global economy and the ICT, the problem of uneven development remains acute as evidenced by the still distinct, and even widening digital divide between developed and developing countries as well as between different regions within the developing countries. This stands out as a common challenge to all countries, especially the vast number of developing countries. The international community should pay great attention to this problem and make concerted efforts to gradually reverse this situation and build an information society featuring extensive public participation and harmonious regional development.

Second, greater international cooperation is the essential condition for the building of the information society. Building of the information society is the common cause of humanity. All governments, related international organizations and other parties concerned should be encouraged to work together in greater cooperation to promote the development of this common cause. Developing countries should primarily rely on their own efforts to seek and explore development models suited to their own national conditions. At the same time, developed countries are duty-bound to support developing countries, especially the least developed countries, in terms of finance, technology and human resources in their effort to address inadequate infrastructure as soon as possible, keep pace with the world in information society building, develop national economy and eliminate poverty. China is a developing country that always works for world peace, economic growth and the building of a harmonious society. China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world and the world development also needs China. To promote common development, the Chinese Government stands ready to further intensify its exchanges and cooperation with all other countries in the world in the field of information industry and continue to offer our help and support to other developing countries to the best of our capacity.

Third, full respect for differences in social systems and cultural diversity is the basic norm guiding the development of the information society. Given the numerous differences among countries in history, culture and national situation, it is imperative to follow an accommodative spirit, fully understand and respect the right of all countries to choosing their own social systems and development paths, work to dispel misgivings and estrangement and draw upon each other's strength for greater cooperation in the advancement of the information society by expanding common ground while shelving differences. We need to, on the one hand, guarantee freedom of speech and safeguard human rights and dignity, and on the other, let the rule of law prevail and stress social responsibility and obligation, in order to create a harmonious, healthy and orderly environment for the development of the information society.

Fourth, strengthening of network and information security is an important guarantee for building the information society. As the ICT becomes more indispensable to our life and its applications keep moving into new frontiers, the negative impacts that may arise from insecure networks and information have become increasingly evident. We should follow the principles of government guidance, multi-player involvement, democratic decision making, transparency and efficiency in internet governance. We should build an effective mechanism for communication and coordination, enhance cooperation in this field among various countries, international organizations and NGOs, and prevent and crack down on criminal activities like economic fraud, violence, terrorism, and those endangering national security with the use of information technologies and resources, so as to ensure sound development of the information society.

We have taken note with pleasure that gratifying progress has been made since 2001, when the World Summit on the Information Society was launched. The *Declaration of Principles* and the *Plan of Action* adopted at the Geneva phase in December 2003 identified the guiding principles and objectives in building the information society. All these achievements were a result of concerted

efforts of the UN member states and other parties involved in the fast five years. The Chinese Government appreciates the earnest participation of all parties, and in particular, the efforts by the UN to initiate and promote the Summit process. The Chinese side supports the initiative of Senegal President H.E. Mr. Abdoulaye Wade of establishing the *Global Digital Solidity Fund* and stands ready to actively explore with all parties concerned ways to strengthen cooperation in the field of information and telecommunication technology. At this Summit, we will discuss the building of the information society and a host of important issues including development, in order to build consensus and identify our missions and direction in the future. This will greatly encourage nations in the world to step up cooperation and seek common development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Chinese Government, just like other governments in the world, sets great store by building the information society. In light of China's national conditions, it has put forward a strategy for leap-frogging development, according to which industrialization and informatization would reinforce each other. It has vigorously developed the ICT industries, promoted the informatization of the country's economic and social undertakings and achieved notable results. China now has more than 700 million subscribers to fixed-line or cellular phones, which means a penetration rate of over 50%. More than 100 million people can log on to the internet and over 53 million subscribers have broadband access. The development of ICT industries and informatization as a whole have played a positive and important role in boosting economic growth, promoting social progress and improving people's living standards.

At present, countries in the world have an important window of strategic opportunities for informatization. The Chinese Government, following the people-centered, scientific approach to development, has taken developing ICT industries and expediting informatization as an important measure in its efforts to build a socialist harmonious society and attain the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way. It will continue to facilitate the use of information technologies in transforming and upgrading traditional industries, encourage and promote extensive application of information technologies, and further improve services based on information technologies and networks. It will focus on addressing the imbalances in the development of ICT infrastructure across regions and between urban and rural areas, so as to gradually close the gap and push forward the building of the information society in a sound and coordinated manner.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is the goal of building the information society that has linked us all together. We have come here from all over the world to discuss the topic of information society. We need to make pioneering and unremitting efforts to fulfill our shared wish, and we need to unite and cooperate with each other to meet the common challenges. Peaceful development, poverty eradication, common prosperity and mankind's well-being are not only the goals we pursue, but also the purposes we share. China is ready to work together with the rest of the world in a continuous and unyielding effort to accelerate the building of the global information society, materialize the UN MDGs, and usher in a better future for mankind's information society.

Thank you.