

## **SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS**

### **STATEMENT BY H.E Mr. IGNACIO GONZÁLEZ PLANAS, MINISTER OF INFORMATICS AND COMMUNICATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA, IN THE SECOND PHASE OF THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY**

TUNIS, 16 NOVEMBER 2005  
(Non official translation)

Mr. Chairman,

The new information and communication technologies, far from becoming a means to move towards a fair world, and a more harmonic and equitable development, have contributed to deepen inequality and injustice, and have become an additional obstacle for the progress of the poor countries.

The promising technological scenario which is being predicted is framed by the existing unfair international economic order and the neoliberal nature of the current globalization process, turning extraordinary achievements of men's intellect into privileges which are enjoyed by just a few countries.

A few examples confirm these realities:

- In the United States and Canada there are 74 computers and 60 fixed phone lines per 100 inhabitants. In Africa there are 1.76 computers and 3.09 fixed lines per the same amount of people.
- Only 15 percent of the 6 000 million inhabitants of the planet have Internet access. Out of them, 51.9 percent belongs to the United States, Canada and Europe, and only 2.5 percent to Africa.

More than half of the world population does not have telephone access, which was invented more than a century ago. 40 percent of the telephone lines are found in just 23 developed countries, where less than 15 percent of the world population lives.

More than 50 percent of the clients of the cell phone services and the internet servers are found in developed countries.

Without the actual democratization of the access to technological development, all the predictions regarding a new global economy, based on informatics and communications, and the transit towards the so called "Information Society", will continue to be impossible for the vast majority of humanity.

Cuba, a blockaded country without huge financial resources, is currently showing a way towards the wide use of the new technologies by its population. The priority given to the social and collective use of the information and communication technologies has made it possible that:

- All children and teenagers in the country, since kindergarten, are taught computer science

in their schools and have access to two national television channels which are exclusively devoted to Education.

- Universities have expanded to all municipalities in the country, with the use of computer science and audio visual aids as essential tools in learning.

- The Computer Sciences Youth Clubs movement, network of community facilities in which access to computer sciences teaching is provided free of charge, has doubled the number of clubs since the Geneva Summit; now with 600 centers which have trained more than 770 000 Cubans in 18 years.

- Through the Cuban method to teach how to read and write "*Yo, Si puedo*", based on the use of television and video, one and a half million Venezuelans have been dragged out of ignorance and that nation has become the second territory free of illiteracy in the Americas. Other 10 countries are successfully implementing this revolutionary teaching formula at different stages.

- Cuban doctors rendering their services in more than 60 countries in the world are using informatics as an essential element to obtain scientific degrees and, at the same time, develop their work as university professors in the training of new medical students in their same practices, located in the humblest and most isolated areas in those nations.

Cuba shares the view of the vast majority of the countries represented here: Internet shall not continue being administered by the United States. It is necessary to organize a new multilateral and democratic institutionality, which would administer the network of networks, and, at the same time, regulate and promote international cooperation, transfer financial and technological resources, and exchange with equal possibilities for all nations regarding the new information and communication technologies. The Final Statement and the Action Plan of this Summit should make this concept clear.

Furthermore, Cuba considers that the manipulation and interference by the rich countries that are trying to impose a single way of thinking and the patterns of the opulent north on the developing south, should be stopped. It is necessary to reveal the truth and the cultural riches of another world which is not on the media, of the thousands of millions who do not have internet access, who do not know the telephone, or who can not even see television images or listen to the radio.

An end must be put to the unilateral and arbitrary measures that violate international law and the Charter of the United Nations against countries like Cuba, which withstands the most colossal and brutal blockade in history, condemned just a few days ago at the UN General Assembly by 182 countries, blockade that curtails without any reason at all, our access to new technologies.

Likewise, the systematic aggression of our radio-electronic spectrum by the US government, as a clear, rude and constant violation of the norms and proceedings of the International Telecommunication Union, must be stopped. Truth should be known, in the face of the attempts to silence the unfair imprisonment of five Cuban young men who were fighting against terrorist groups which, from the US territory and with total impunity, are attacking our country.

Mr. Chairman,

Moving towards the so called "Information Society" requires, first of all, a world free of hunger, ignorance, unhealthiness, discrimination and exclusion. The hungry, sick, illiterate and excluded will never be able to understand the use of new technologies. We want to have a world in which the

benefits of science and technology can be real tools to achieve progress for all the inhabitants of the planet.

In our country, we shall continue our work following a strategy based on the principles on which the development of our economy and society is based. For Cuba, favoring the social and collective use of the new technologies means to increase their use in education, public health, science, culture, economy, government and the services rendered to the population, with rational and practical solutions. This experience, although it is still modest and incipient, is at your disposal.

The political will of the Cuban Revolution and the clear vision of comrade Fidel Castro, tireless promoter of the use of new technologies, have played a key role so that a small, poor and blockaded country can work towards the achievement of ambitious goals, within the framework of a Battle of Ideas, which grants all priority to the full development of the human being.

We Cubans who are revolutionary and optimistic, dream of, work and fight for a new world economic order, justice and equality for all, so that new technologies can contribute to promote the values of human beings, the training of the new generations and the development of a fair society of solidarity, which may enable our peoples to move towards that better world we dream of.

Thank your very much.