

SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS

STATEMENT FROM THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Plenary Session, 18th of November 2005

Dr. Andreas Moleskis, Permanent Secretary, Planning Bureau of the Republic of Cyprus

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the Cypriot delegation, I would like to congratulate the United Nations and the hosting Tunisian Government for their initiative to organise the second phase of the World Summit on Information Society.

It is an unquestionable fact that information and communication technologies, the broadcasting multimedia, and their interaction with human intelligence, brought new dimensions in the entire socio-economic scene. Our era has been characterised as a revolution, the core of which is information and the knowledge-based infrastructure. Information takes the form of an additional factor in the production process, as it introduces new products and services and brings in new ways of conducting business. Hence, it leads to increased productivity, efficiencies, higher GDP growth and eventually to a better quality of life for people of all nations.

The *Information Society* is the new, emerging society, with a global nature, with no physical borders, and with the factor “distance” losing its significance.

However, it is of utmost importance that opportunities should be offered to all, if this new factor of production is to benefit all the people, and not just the few. It is for this reason that the digital divide between citizens, as well as between nations, must be eliminated. A series of measures should be taken for ensuring that all citizens, especially those with special needs, have access to modern

information and communication technologies. This will equip them with the skills required to live and work in this new environment, and will improve their quality of life in general.

The World Summit on Information Society could be the first real attempt to bridge the digital divide worldwide. The two phases of the Summit proved to be a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to exchange views, to decide and endorse the principles, on the basis of which the information society should be further developed. In this way, it is ensured that the whole world community will be given the opportunity to benefit. However, this was just the first step of our effort towards an inclusive information society. The implementation of the Geneva and Tunis decisions constitutes a great challenge and indeed requires strong partnerships between public and private entities and with the civil society.

Cyprus recognises the tremendous importance of the information society and appreciates its significant contribution on strengthening the economic, social and cultural development. We reaffirm the commitments made in Geneva and would like to assure the international community that we are committed to fulfilling our common desire “to build a people-centred, inclusive and development oriented Information Society”, as clearly stated in the Tunis Commitment. In alignment with our EU partners, we are committed to contribute to the development of an inclusive information society, which respects human rights and freedoms, including inter alia the freedom of expression and democracy in general.

We would like to reaffirm that the development of our national policies will include targets for meeting the challenges of the Information Society, bridging the digital divide, and preventing the abuse of information resources and technologies for criminal purposes.

Mr Chairman,

Cyprus will be promoting and supporting national and international policies for equitable and affordable access to ICT infrastructure and services, and policies that create a favourable climate for increased confidence and security in the use of ICTs.

In closing, I would like to thank once more the UN, the ITU and the Tunisian Government for organising this Summit.

