

SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS

STATEMENT BY H. E. MRS. DANA BEROVA, MINISTER OF INFORMATICS, HEAD OF THE DELEGATION THE CZECH REPUBLIC 17 NOVEMBER 2005

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

- It is a great honour for me, on behalf of the Government of the Czech Republic, to have the opportunity to address this Plenary Session of the Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society.
- To recall the Geneva Summit, as the Swiss President said in Geneva in 2003 following the adoption of the WSIS Declaration of Principles, the WSIS Process is a *Constitution for the Information Age*. The Geneva Summit gave a green light to the journey into the future, but we all know that this will be a long journey. The reality is that today's information society is permanently characterised by unrealistic expectations, imbalances, inequalities, as well as the digital divide, so a lot of digital solidarity is needed. We need to admit that the WSIS process is much more complex and challenging than we originally had expected.
- The two-phase format of the Summit now held in Tunis allows for opening the gateway into Africa and other parts of the developing world with an increased focus on the use of ICTs to achieve specific goals to reduce poverty, combat diseases, achieve adequate ICT literacy and generally empower people and communities in their access to information.
- In Geneva 2003, the Czech Republic declared its full commitment with the WSIS objectives including a joint vision on the information and knowledge society and informed participants about the Czech Government *National Computer Literacy Programme* which focuses on the ICT literacy deployment, especially to the out- of school population. The HoD of the Czech Republic promised in Geneva in 2003 that the above mentioned ideas could be extended to developing countries to help them in their efforts to bridge the digital divide.
- It is my pleasure today to inform the Plenary Session of the Tunis phase of the Summit that in the course of this year, the Czech Republic already organized a series of *Basic PC and Internet Course* Projects in Kenya, Africa in collaboration with ITU. If you are interested, I would like to offer you more detailed information at our National Exhibition Stand. My country is prepared to continue with assisting developing countries to bridge the digital divide through those small steps, as a contribution to the goals of the Geneva Plan of Action. Similarly, we are ready to support other international programmes and initiatives helping Africa, like for example the EU Strategy for Africa, including cooperation with the specialised UN agencies. Some projects are now ready for final approval and are expected to start next year.

Mr. President

- The Czech Republic would like to reaffirm that democracy, sustainable development, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as good governance at all levels are all necessary to achieve our goals. The Czech Republic's delegation in Tunis is ready to support the adoption of the Tunis Commitment as well as the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. It is our hope that this Summit in Tunis will be — as it has often been said — a *Summit of Solutions*, where Governments, Civil Society and industry leaders would find common responses to the ambitious targets set to be achieved by 2015. Without the widespread and innovative use of ICTs, the WSIS and Millennium Development Goals objectives may prove impossible to attain. While information and communication technologies alone cannot solve the world's problems, still they are crucial tools in facing these global challenges.
- To conclude, let me express my appreciation to the Tunisian government and people for their warm hospitality to host this summit, and to the president of Preparatory Committee for his leadership allowing us to reach consensus on the final documents.

Thank you for your attention.