

SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS

STATEMENT FROM LITHUANIA

Tunis, 17 November 2005

Dear Mr. President, Secretary-General, Your Royal Highnesses and Excellencies,

Dear colleagues heads of the delegations,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me join the previous speakers in extending our delegation's warmest congratulations on your appointment to preside over this meeting. We are confident that under your skillful leadership the World Summit on Information Society in Tunis will reach fruitful results. Our congratulations go also to other office bearers. Our special gratitude is addressed to the Government and people of Tunisia for their hospitality and friendly welcome.

Lithuania recognizes the importance of development and quick and wide adoption of information and communication technologies which open new prospects for the world community and create well-grounded preconditions for sustainable peace, economic welfare for all and preservation of cultural diversity. We fully comprehend the importance of reaching the Millennium Development Goals in cooperation with the private sector to make available the benefits of new technologies, especially ICTs at its fullest extent.

Today we speak about an emerging new society, based on knowledge and competences. Such a society, modern knowledge society –equipped with ICTs- can easily adapt to the dynamically changing environment. That can be achieved only if we continue to focus on the fundamental freedoms of opinion and expression and to guarantee the right of access to information for all.

It is through joint efforts, that we can and must develop the modern knowledge society which relies on a vast complex of effectively operating organizations, which on their turn are based on information infrastructure and human capacities.

Lithuania has been consistently demonstrating to the international community its commitment and strives to achieve this task. The newly adopted Information Society Development Strategy of Lithuania clearly sets forth the following four priorities in performing the goal:

- competence development and promotion of social inclusion;
- modernization of public administration through ICT;
- development of knowledge economy; and
- promotion of Lithuania's culture and language.

Being fully committed to develop the Information Society we see other important tasks in performing this goal:

- to ensure universal access to studies and subsequent qualification acquisition;
- to build-up experience of ICTs application;
- to develop competence of population, through equal access to information sources, making best use of ICT.

To this end, public-private partnership is encouraged by the Government. An exclusive example of such a partnership -“Window to the future”-, which is under implementation already for four years, demonstrates how public private partnership can bridge the digital divide through mobilization of joint financial, human and technological resources and offer equal opportunities for everybody. This initiative resulted in a wide-covering network of publicly available internet access points, providing people with free access to the Internet. This and other similar public-private initiatives have had significant impact on the growth of internet penetration which in the last 18 months has grown four times and now is close to the level of the average of the European Union.

In our opinion, one of the most important priorities in bridging the digital divide is further developing the network of information access points, putting to practice new comprehensive and effective national information society development strategies as well as promoting the development of electronic e-content to uphold the diversity of culture and heritage.

Application of the achievements of ICTs in public administration opens new prospects for wider participation in decision making, transparency, constructive and smooth functioning of public institutions and civil society. By implementing e-government package, our government aims at to create a favourable legal and institutional environment for investment and innovation.

We recognize the Internet as one of the most influential medium. The sustainable stability and strength is of crucial importance. A new model of enhanced co-operation taking into account all stakeholders, we are convinced, will contribute to this by properly addressed public policy issues. Lithuania is extremely content that the participants of the Summit recognize unanimously information insecurity, growing number of unsolicited commercial e-mail messages and cyber crime, the price of internet services as urgent problems. These problems must be addressed internationally and in multi-stakeholder approach.

Today we face the emerging of global information society, approach the threshold of a qualitatively new world.

Information and knowledge society is a challenge to be effectively addressed by pooling our intellectual efforts and showing strong political will as well as employing the invaluable tool of constructive multi-stakeholder partnership to fully utilize the potential of ICTs.

The government of Lithuania on its turn commits to promote and implement the results achieved in Geneva and Tunis on the way of implementation of the Lisbon strategy for wealth and prosperity of people.