

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

### STATEMENT FROM NORWAY

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

We are gathered here in Tunis to deal with a revolution, comparable only to the Industrial Revolution more than two hundred years ago – and with an impact even more profound.

Driven by information and communication technologies, a global society is now being created. We are gathered here to find the most appropriate response to this new challenge – the challenge of global governance.

In our response to this challenge - *creating a good global society* - we must address the following two fundamental questions:

First, how do we strike the appropriate balance between the freedom of the individual and the interest of society at large? Secondly, how do we strike the appropriate balance between the economic roles of the state and the market?

The way we see it, this two-dimensional balance has been at the heart of our negotiations during the entire WSIS process.

Norway's response is the following: We seek to achieve the maximum freedom, integrity and development prospects for the individual human being, as member of a peaceful and stable society, governed by the rule of law.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Industrial production, in particular manufacturing of goods, has been driving economic growth and development over the past two hundred years. Now, we have come to acknowledge that this *industrial society* is being substituted by what we have labeled the *information society*.

Information, knowledge and ideas are increasingly the main sources of productivity, growth and development.

My government considers this observation and its consequences perhaps the most valuable message to come out of this Summit. As a matter of fact, we consider this the very *raison d'être* of the entire WSIS process.

Recognizing that the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, knowledge and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, is increasingly the key to development, and to pluralistic, prosperous and socially stable societies, we commit ourselves to protect and promote all Human Rights, including the freedom of expression.

We also recognize that truly free and independent media have a crucial role to play in promoting and protecting an open and inclusive society. We therefore call on all governments to take the necessary legal, political and economic measures to guarantee editorially independent media in the Information Society.

Technology alone, without the appropriate democratic policy framework, will do little to promote sustainable development and bridge the digital divide.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Norway would like to see an Information Society based on market economic principles, driven by the private sector. At the same time, we recognize that this must take place within a framework of regulations and other measures necessary to achieve policy objectives.

Central among our objectives are peace, security, prosperity, justice, openness, diversity, fairness and equal opportunities.

This means that we are open to pro-active government involvement when this is deemed necessary to modify undesirable market outcomes. Let me highlight the most important cases in point:

First, all our efforts must be geared at reaching the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

While the MDGs can only be reached in a dynamic environment of economic growth, through good governance and sound macroeconomic policies, unleashing entrepreneurship by the private sector – we do recognize that such an environment will not necessarily reach the marginal and most vulnerable groups of society, nor the poorest among the poor.

Therefore, active government measures are indeed necessary, including public spending in health, education and infrastructure.

The pilot project African University Network, jointly developed by the United Nations University, the ITU, The European Center for Nuclear Research (CERN) and GRID Arendal, and co-sponsored by the Government of Norway, is a case in point.

Second, empowering women, protecting women's rights, and ensuring equal opportunities for women is our highest priority and will require pro-active policy measures.

Third, particular attention must be given to indigenous peoples, whose culture and way of life can be at odds with the fundamental premisses of the market economy. We recognize this and should act accordingly.

Fourth, protection and promotion of cultural diversity is now well established as a fundamental policy objective, most recently in the newly agreed UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity.

Fifth and finally, while privately owned knowledge and information is the norm and the principal mode of supply in a market economy, we also recognize the need to actively encourage and provide for other sources of knowledge and information.

In this context I would particularly highlight the value of public libraries, museums and archives – as well as open source software. Libraries are vital elements in the enabling environment and capacity-building of the information society, supporting education, democracy and human development.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I close, let me address more specifically the issue of Internet Governance and explain Norway's position on this most prominent question at the Summit:

More than anything else, the Internet is the visual – and virtual – expression of our new globalized society. Many will say it is the main driver behind globalization.

The Internet is an immensely powerful tool for individuals everywhere, enhancing their freedom and development, regardless of frontiers.

The Internet has also become an integrated and vital part of every single country's basic infrastructure – and perhaps even more importantly, the umbilical cord of our new, globalized society. The Internet is a global public good.

The crucial importance of the Internet to our civil, political, economic, social and cultural life explains why Norway has been actively involved in the WSIS debate on Internet Governance throughout this process.

The continued security and stability of the Internet is our foremost objective.

Any change to the system of Internet Governance must keep this in mind and promote an enabling environment for competition, driven by the private sector, with a multistakeholder nature, facilitating innovation and development *at the edges*, where decisions are made at the local level.

Precisely for these reasons and because this unique innovation directly affects not only each and every country, but also the interaction and rapidly increasing interdependence of all countries, the challenge of Internet Governance is also a pioneering challenge of global governance.

For my government, this represents a dilemma. On the one hand we fully appreciate the unique role of the United States in the development of the Internet and as the benevolent guardian of the continued security, stability and functioning of the Internet.

At the same time we understand the sense of democratic deficit the current governance regime can cause around the world, a sense of democratic deficit which can undermine the spirit of cooperation necessary to deal with common threats to the Internet, including cybercrime and spam.

We therefore welcome the constructive approach to be adopted by this Summit, and look forward to participate actively in the agreed process on how we can move towards a new model of international cooperation on Internet Governance.

Finally,

Let me express Norway's deep appreciation to the United Nations for giving us this opportunity to collectively address and find solutions to these issues of common concern.

By coming together in the United Nations can we build a peaceful and stable global society, based on the rule of law, where might does not make right, but where right makes might.

In so doing, we shall keep in mind the following fundamental truth:

Democracy at the core requires democracy at the edges!

Thank you.