

SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS

STATEMENT BY H.E. BINALI YILDIRIM, MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express on behalf of my government, my distinct pleasure in sharing our views in connection with this Summit and the progress achieved so far.

We have all been contributing to a long and tiring process which is of critical importance for our common future. Bearing in mind that the World Summit on the Information Society has been conducted in two phases including many preparatory sessions in an attempt to seek common denominators, the concept of information society has indeed been taken-up with determination by the international community.

As the driving force behind the Information Society, ICTs are without doubt the most important instruments of the sustainable economic and social development processes within the development efforts of the new millenium. In essence, we have been discussing about the active participation of every individual in the economic and social aspects of their respective societies using their real potential, whereby seizing the opportunities presented by ICTs. However, all opportunities bring about new challenges as well. The universal character of the Internet, as an example, necessitates international collaboration against new challenges and threats.

Make no mistake; effective international cooperation would lead to the creation of a common vision for a better future. In this connection, the digital divide, internet governance, information security and cyber crimes require our greater scrutiny.

Mr. President,

Opportunities for economic and social development offered by the Information Society would be instrumental also in attaining the Millenium Development Goals.

It would be unrealistic to expect societies to achieve great strides in economic and social development without progressively using ICTs to bring about their true potential to provide a better future.

In the global village of today, humanity needs more mutual understanding and cooperation, paving the way to increased solidarity. In the near future, ICTs will play an important role in bridging different conceptions, thus contributing to international efforts such as the "Alliance of Civilizations Project" led by Turkey and Spain.

The generation of, access to, and sharing of information appear to be among the most crucial factors before us for the creation of an information society which indeed is a transformation process with deep impacts on our societies. Prominent issues such as technological infrastructure, education and human resources, business environment and entrepreneurship, and social transformation require our determined action.

Particularly in recent years Turkey, cognizant of this holistic approach, has increased her efforts to manage the process of transforming the Turkish society into an information society in a more coordinated manner. In this connection, a myriad of programs have been developed; namely, e-government services in education, health, taxation, social security, justice system and in similar fields, broadband access to schools and infrastructure services to SME's. Universal service regulations are being utilized to overcome the digital divide and projects are being developed to achieve social inclusion of those with low income, giving special emphasis on rural areas.

Mr. President,

My government considers that the implementation and follow-up of the Tunis Agenda as well as the commitments made by the international community during the two phases of the WSIS process constitute the most crucial aspects of our common future.

Mr. President, Esteemed delegates,

I would like to express our gratitude to the Tunisian Government for their great hospitality as well as for their tireless efforts to make this Summit a success.

Last, but not the least, our sincere appreciation also go to the ITU as well as to all the stakeholders.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to reiterate our pleasure in welcoming you to Turkey for the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in November 2006 in Antalya, Turkey.

I thank you very much.