

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

### **STATEMENT BY H. E. MS. MAUD DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The technologies which drive the Information Society are not fundamentally good or bad – they are what we make of them. They can help us learn, create and heal, but they can also hurt and destroy our dignity and our freedom. The Internet can be a powerful vehicle of democracy in countries where, regrettably, censorship remains a rule enforced, if necessary by street thugs.

You, the leaders of the world are gathered today to pledge making digital technologies a positive force for the future. On behalf of the Council of Europe, the pan-European human rights and democracy Organisation representing 46 states and 800 million people, I invite you to go beyond the words and establish policies and instruments for an Information Society based on Human Rights, democracy, rule of law, social cohesion, cultural diversity and trust between individuals and between peoples.

Two years ago, the First Phase of this World Summit in Geneva made an important step in recalling the primacy of Human Rights in the Information Society. But Human Rights and freedoms are much more than declaratory statements. In Europe, the state is accountable for its actions and omissions which breach its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. This instrument, enforceable in 46 states, remains fully valid in the information age.

Europe offers a cutting edge instrument to combat crime committed on, though or against computer systems – the Council of Europe Cybercrime Convention. The Convention is open to all countries in the world - in fact, many regional meetings preceding this Summit encouraged states join the Convention and adopt laws which follow its standards. I call upon you to confirm this appeal in the Tunis Commitment. The Cybercrime convention is a unique international binding instrument for the security of the Information Society. It is a resource which becomes more valuable the wider it is shared. Let's not lose precious time - we all need to act under a single treaty to combat borderless cybercrime!

The Information Society is clearly in need of a global governance mechanism. The Council of Europe, with its unchallenged Human Rights expertise, political consultation structures, and solid relationship with civil society, must be party to discussions undertaken at every step of the way concerning Internet Governance and Human Rights.

But amidst important discussions regarding structures, processes and mechanisms, let us not forget that the Information Society is ultimately driven by people. People are the backbone of the Information Society: by empowering and educating them – not only in e-literacy but also in democracy literacy and human rights literacy – we will be making the most crucial investment we can make to the world we live in to be passed on to future generations.