SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

REMARKS BY MR. SHOJI NISHIMOTO, ASSISTANT

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Excellencies,

Mr. Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union,

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing our sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Tunisia for hosting this Summit.

The two phases of the Summit have played an important role in strengthening our collective commitment and deepening our understanding of what it takes to build a truly people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society. From the experience of countries that have successfully deployed ICT to address development challenges we have learnt that there need not be a tradeoff between ICT and developmental concerns. In fact, ICT is a powerful enabler which can contribute to achieving broad-based and participatory development. We have also learnt that a singular focus on

infrastructure and the ICT sector is not sufficient to harness the opportunities that ICT can provide for addressing poverty reduction and contributing to the economic, social and political empowerment of citizens. These elements constitute the heart of the information society. It is on the basis of this understanding that we at UNDP have sought to integrate ICT into our core areas of poverty reduction and democratic governance.

The Summit has also provided an important learning opportunity to explore key challenges that stand in the way of achieving these objectives. Through the work of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms, the Working Group on Internet Governance and the formal negotiation process, a common understanding on how to move forward to address these challenges has emerged. In this context, multi-stakeholder involvement and the contributions of all sectors is of critical importance.

On behalf of UNDP, I would like to express our appreciation for being given the opportunity to facilitate and support the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms. The report was the product of the collective effort of all the members who so generously contributed to the work of the Task Force. It provided a concrete assessment of the gaps and promising practices and highlighted areas for improvement and innovation with a view to facilitating an evidence based discussion and we hope that you too believe that assisted the WSIS process in addressing this particular issue of importance. We would like to wish the Voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund that was established in the wake of WSIS success in pursuing the important mission that it has outlined.

We look forward to working in partnership to implement the WSIS Plan of Action and the Tunis Commitment. UNDP will contribute to the process with its focus on the development dimensions of the Information Society and through its role as the UN's global development network.   UNDP supports countries in designing and implementing policies and strategies to make development processes and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals more effective and efficient through the use of ICT. The integration of ICT in poverty reduction and other development strategies and their synergy with national e-strategies are critical in this regard.

Strengthening public service delivery, transparency, accountability as well as citizen participation in public policy making is a key priority for UNDP as is support to enhancing democratic governance, advancing pro-poor economic growth, and social development. Central to achieving all of these objectives is capacity development. We will try to do our best to respond to the needs and aspirations of developing countries in these critical areas.

Congratulations on a successful Summit.