

SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS

INTEL CORPORATION

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Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to join the previous speakers in thanking the Tunisian government for this visionary initiative to dedicate a summit on Information Society

There have been unprecedented changes in the world's economic structure in the past decade. With Russia, Eastern Europe, Middle East, North Africa, Latin America, India, China & Southeast Asia joining world's free economic system competition has changed forever. Geographic areas, countries, states, cities, people are now competing at all levels. And increasingly the competition is based on valued added skills associated with educational accomplishment.

There has been equally unprecedented change in the impact of technology on economic competitiveness. The PC & the internet have emerged as powerful forces impacting every aspect of our daily lives. Very simply, the internet has become the medium of choice for information access, communication, decision making, commerce, education, & much more.

Perhaps the most profound impact is on information access, education, & the ability to make knowledge based decisions. In the past, education & knowledge-based decision making were primarily the domain of the developed economies. And as the standard of living generally closely tracks educational level, the highest standard of living went to the developed economies. In a sense, geographic location at birth was destiny.

But, as the PC & the internet have leveled the playing field the competitive rules have changed. One has only to look at young children in the poor districts of Sao Paulo, Cairo, or Bangalore when given access to & instruction in PC/Internet to realize that every child on the face of the earth now has the potential to succeed.

National government are increasingly recognizing this trend & providing access to PCs & the internet in the elementary education years. The parallel effort to train teachers how to use technology in the classroom to increase educational effectiveness is also underway.

None of these actions is solely in the domain of the developed economies. Poor economies can address this issue as they focus on access to technology rather than ownership of technology. Schools, community centers, kiosks, internet cafes, can all offer PC & internet access even to the lowest economic levels.

Today we are just starting to see the impact of these global changes around the world. Today, medical diagnostics, hardware design, patent attorneys, financial accounting, software coding &

much more can be done remotely. The internet - with its resultant low cost communication & data processing capability - has indeed flattened the world. Geographic location is no longer destiny. Rather, education coupled with computer & communication skills is destiny.

Because of this the world of the future, I believe, holds great promise for nearly all its citizens. Every child with access to computing & communications infrastructure has the potential for success. The challenge facing governments around the world is relatively straightforward. Provide your young citizens the opportunity to succeed. Provide them with quality teachers & access to technology.

Please don't be misled by the myth that increased access to technology gives increased results. If that were true, the young citizens of my country, the United States, would have the highest aptitude for mathematics and science in the world because they have the highest density of PCs in their classrooms of any young children around the world. In fact, the reality could not be farther from this prediction. In international test after test the young children from my country rank at the lowest levels in mathematics and science aptitude.

What does succeed is access to the technology AND quality teaching. This is something that every government should strive to provide to their young citizens. As we like to say at Intel, computers are not magic, teachers are magic. Around the world, we should all be focusing as much attention on quality teaching as we do on technology access.

I hope these observations can provide the basis for further discussion as this summit proceeds.

Thank you