

ALGERIA

We have gathered together in this splendid city, in this wonderful country of welcome and refuge, greatly cherished in the minds and hearts of the Algerian people, to embark on the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society.

Allow me to convey the greetings of His Excellency Mr Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, who is the initiator of the ICT development in Algeria. He has been unable to free himself from his weighty obligations despite his wish to be with us. T

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my country, despite the difficulties inherent in an economy in transition, despite the problems caused by natural disasters, we are continuing to make improvements in all fields, in particular that of education.

We therefore decided on an intensive input of ICTs into all levels of training, whether it be equipping 22.000 educational establishments with microcomputers or installing information networks inside and between universities and centres of vocational training.

As regards human development, this has received funding amounting to 6 per cent of GDP, particularly benefiting the Algerian university system, which is preparing facilities for more than one million students.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our approach has always been to focus our attention on ordinary people. The aim of all our activities is to create wealth in order to improve their living conditions and enhance their well-being.

How should this aim be incorporated into the concept of the information society if not by providing the right of access to information networks and the right to communicate?

It should be emphasized that the development effort extended over the entire telecommunication infrastructure, with 15 000 kilometres of fibre optic cables laid throughout the country since 2001 in order to provide high-speed multimedia communications.

Accordingly, since 1 November this year, ADSL broadband access has been operational in Algeria, providing the benefits of high-speed services.

This welcome progress is the result of combined efforts from the public and private sectors. This type of access, the cost of which has fallen significantly, will benefit business users and academics, as well as people surfing the Internet in several thousands of cybercafés throughout the country.

All these efforts have resulted in the doubling of teledensity in two years.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Development and innovation are also playing their part in this economic revival process: the creation of a cyber-park in the new town of Sidi-Abdallah, west of Algiers is one of the concrete projects for that.

The cyber-park, covering about one hundred hectares, will leverage the development of ICTs through the Technobridge incubator and will be a true showcase for the new technologies.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The integration and participation of all in the building of the information society depends on mutual understanding and respect between cultures and languages in particular, since we believe that plurality and diversity remain one of the riches of human heritage and should therefore be at the heart of the building of the information society.

Since the free movement of information is an essential prerequisite in this process, it is clear that the media must play an active role in promoting various freedoms, in particular the freedom of expression, and strengthening democratic practice.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Internet has become an indispensable tool of communication for both government and business, researchers and the general public. This is why the Internet environment and Internet security is of the greatest interest to us, as it is to all other States.

While recognizing that some of the concerns over management of this

global network are of a technical nature, the fact remains that other types of concern are being raised.

These are a matter for governments, which must establish mechanisms to enable a multilateral response. We are deeply involved in both the use and the development of the Internet.

We have staunchly supported efforts to promote the use and manufacture of generic medicines by developing countries, for reasons of survival. Similarly, while respecting the protection of intellectual and industrial property, we support access to open software, as a solution to the constantly increasing cost of software and as a means of preventing access being blocked to the sources of know-how and knowledge.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the field of regional cooperation, together with our African counterparts, we are establishing mechanisms and funding for various projects under the NEPAD initiative, which has placed major emphasis on ICTs.

Our ambition is to transform Africa into a developed continent which will provide its children with proper conditions for their development and well-being, in particular as a result of its connectivity with all the countries of the world, and which will no longer be synonymous with economic and social underdevelopment, with famine and war. The African continent will then be able to extend a warm welcome to all investors, providing them with the conditions they need to get fully established.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A draft plan of action, containing objectives and guidelines, has been put before us so that we can work together to devise the shape and the content of the global information society of the future, which will incorporate all the citizens of the globe.

These objectives will translate into large-scale projects requiring funding on a scale which reflects the ambitions of the international community.

Since these are objectives geared to achieving the same purpose, namely the construction of the information society, the international community must quickly consider the possibility of setting up an international fund intended exclusively for funding operations within the framework of our global vision and our Summit's plan of action.

The international community is expecting a great deal from this Summit.
So we must take decisions that do justice to the hopes invested in it.

Thank you.