

**WORLD SUMMIT ON INFORMATION SOCIETY**  
**Geneva, 10-12 December 2003**

**Speaking Points for the  
Plenary Session of 11 Dec.**

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the Cypriot delegation, I would like to congratulate the United Nations and the hosting Swiss Confederation for their initiative to organise this Summit, and for giving us the opportunity to exchange views on this important subject matter.

It is an unquestionable fact that information and communication technologies, the broadcasting multimedia, and their interaction with human intelligence, brought new dimensions in the entire socio-economic scene. Our era has been characterised as a revolution of equal, if not greater importance, as it was the industrial revolution. The core of today's revolution nevertheless, is information and the knowledge-based infrastructure. Information takes the form of an additional factor in the production process; it introduces new products and services, it brings in new ways of conducting business, thus leading to increased productivity, to efficiencies to higher GDP's and eventually, to a better life for the people of all nations.

New opportunities are created in all aspects of life. The *Information Society is the new, emerging society*, with a global nature, with no physical borders, and with the factor "distance" losing its significance.

However, of utmost importance is that opportunities be offered by the information society to all, if this new factor of production is to benefit all the people and not just a few. It is for this reason that the digital divide between citizens, as well as between nations, must be eliminated. A series of measures should be taken for ensuring that all citizens, especially those with special needs (the vulnerable social groups), have access to modern

communication technologies, in order to improve their quality of life in general, and to equip them with the skills needed to live and work in this new environment.

This World Summit on Information Society could be the first real attempt to bridge the digital divide. The Summit proves to be a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to exchange views, to decide and endorse the principles, on the basis of which the information society should be further developed, ensuring that the whole world community will be given the opportunity to benefit.

The implementation of the Action Plan, which is an ambitious project, indeed requires strong partnerships with public and private entities and with the civil society.

Cyprus recognises the tremendous importance of the information society and supports the agreed Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. We would like to assure the international community that we are committed to fulfilling "our common desire to build a people-centred, inclusive and development oriented Information Society" as stated in the Declaration of Principles. In alignment with our EU partners, we are committed to contribute to the development of an inclusive information society, which respects human rights and freedoms, including inter alia the freedom of expression and democracy in general.

Chairman,

We would like to reaffirm that the development of our national policies will include targets for meeting the challenges of the Information Society and in particular to combat the digital divide.

In closing, I would like to thank once more the UN, the ITU and the Swiss Confederation for organising this Summit.