

HUNGARY

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address the World Summit on the Information Society on behalf of the Hungarian Government.

The presence of so many leaders from around the world is a most positive message in itself. This commitment, the principles we lay down here and the actions we decide to take will undoubtedly move us towards achieving the Millennium Declaration Goals, towards a global Information Society ensuring prosperity and sustainable development.

Creating and sharing knowledge is a driving force in shaping our future. We need to make sure that new technologies serve the harmonious development of all the nations without leaving anyone behind. The digital divide is a threat to all of us, not only for people living in the less developed parts of the globe. Bridging it must be a priority in every aspect.

This issue goes far beyond industry and producing goods. Information Society is a new and higher form of social organisation, where highly-developed ICT networks, access to information and effective communication bring about harmonious development in every sense.

All stakeholders — public, private sector and civil society — must be involved in shaping the Information Society. Governments have a very significant coordinating role and responsibility. They have to encourage technology transfer and investment in the creation of national and regional ICT production facilities, research and development and small and medium-sized enterprises, which is of extreme importance in the emerging and developing countries. Public-private partnership should be endorsed as an effective solution to many of the tasks ahead of us.

The use of applications as e-government, e-learning, e-health and e-business boosted by government actions provides a favourable environment for the private sector to invest in the development of new services and enables people to be involved in defining their own needs.

Technological change requires life-long learning. It is very important that public policy should deal with inequalities in access to quality education and training, particularly in the case of vulnerable groups and remote areas.

By joining the European Union in May 2004 Hungary is given a unique opportunity to speed up this development inside the country and have much better possibilities to promote the Information Society on the international level.

Year 2003 could be described as an “IT offensive” in Hungary. As a result of regulatory and practical measures and an intensive media campaign we have experienced a serious turnover in this field.

Hungary has started a number of programmes and the Government adopted the Hungarian Strategy on Information Society incorporating many of the targets set in the WSIS Plan of Action. A new Act on Electronic Communication has been recently adopted by the Parliament.

We have held series of events dedicated to János von Neumann, the well-known Hungarian scientist born 100 years ago, who created the first modern computer in the middle of the last century.

This all has helped to raise awareness and to form a positive attitude of Hungarian people towards the Internet, ICTs and the Information Society. Internet usage started to grow dynamically. Broadband access is spreading rapidly in Hungary, its share has overcome the European average.

All these activities are carried out along the guidelines and policies of the European Union.

Meanwhile, by delivering the European Union’s Action Plan called *eEurope 2005* we hope to have a better basis to act on global scale. Hungary would like to stress its commitment by hosting the eEurope Ministerial Conference at the end of February 2004 in Hungary. At this conference ministers of the member states, acceding and candidate countries will assess the execution of the eEurope and eEurope+ 2005 Action Plans.

All we intend to do should be put into a global context. National, regional and global strategies and actions have to be harmonised and must be complementary to each other. Effective coordination leaving space to market mechanisms and civil initiatives is needed. International organisations like ITU can have an essential role in this respect.

The goals are common for all and their realisation should lead to diminishing the existing technological gap between North and South, East and West while cultural diversity should be respected and preserved by means of ICTs. Hungary is ready to play its role in this process.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to reassure you once again of Hungary’s commitment to the objectives of the United Nations Organisation and this Summit and our willingness to participate actively in forming an Information Society for all. I believe that the Geneva and the Tunis Summits create a most favourable climate for this endeavour.

Thank you very much for your attention.