Statement by

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before the

World Summit on the Information Society

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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Excellencies,

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen;

We are all aware of the historical sufferings of human beings caused by "distances" and "separations" which have been reflected in different languages and in various fields of knowledge. In the light of the massive change we are experiencing in the field of communications, can we now be hopeful and optimistic about the "reduction of distances"?

The entry to the information society is a new opportunity for the entire world population. The "information age" is the "age of dialogue" and the "networked society" is the organizer of the "networked order". We must seek a solution and work out a formula so that "exchange of information" in the information society leads to "dialogue" and shortened distances. At the outset of this millennium, I raised the need for "dialogue among civilizations", in the age of cyberspace, too, we should continue to encourage and promote "dialogue among civilizations."

The information society must take cultural diversity as the foundation for the common existence of human society and must be able to rely on it. We must work towards securing the participation of all cultural, social and linguistic groups in the creation of a knowledge-based society.

The establishment and consolidation of knowledge-based societies requires commitment to ethical values, human rights and principles of democracy and instruments of "good governance". Politicians and experts should be able to delegate power to the people through the electronic process.

We are concerned about inequalities in the development of infrastructures and global access to and use of information and communication technology. We should focus on the objective of turning the digital gaps into digital opportunities through the promotion and consolidation of digital ties.

In this perspective, we shall strive and endeavour towards the fulfilment of rights such as the "right to development", the "right to communication" and the "right to information." We urgently appeal the international community to help create new capacities in the developing countries and assist them with their empowerment.

It is expected that the summit will succeed in clearly explaining the common concepts and stances cited in the draft declaration of principles and on this same basis I expect:

1 – We all contemplate changing the unfair and alarming situation of the present world, which considers the flow of information as a tool for the exertion of force and the imposition of unilateralism. We should see to it that an information society be established not as an extension of the present status quo, but on a new foundation.

2 – To reach consensus on the principles of new life for human beings, which is a necessity for living in the information society, new and more ethical, humane and fair conventions should be formulated.

3 – To ensure the indiscriminate access of individuals, institutions and countries to information, international policies and monitoring instruments should be envisaged so that no government will have the right to impose unilateral decisions, depriving other nations from their rights including correct access to information.

4 – Global management of internet should find a democratic and comprehensive mechanism to enable all players, including the developing countries, to play an effective role in this arena.

5 – In a bid to establish and strengthen knowledge-based societies, a fair balance needs to be created and promoted between the rights of the creators, owners and users of the works covered by intellectual property rights and public interest.

6 – The trend of democratization and free and fair access of people to the sources of power, wealth and prestige both at national and international levels should be facilitated and strengthened.

Now we should all ponder the notion of the formation of a balanced international atmosphere, the foundation of which is interaction, communication, ethics, dialogue and equal access by all to information and knowledge as the prerequisite for the promotion of knowledge and the expansion of communications infrastructures.

In order to ease and reduce the sufferings and historical distances, we should place the empowerment of human beings at the forefront of our efforts. We know that a knowledgeable man is a capable individual and a knowledgeable society an empowered society. So let's make the "information society" a "knowledgeable and sagacious" one. As the great philosopher and renowned poet of Iran, Mowlana states:

Since awareness is the requirement of the soul

Whoever is more knowledgeable has a strong soul

Thank you.