



*Ministro per l'Innovazione e le Tecnologie*

**WORLD SUMMIT ON INFORMATION SOCIETY**

**GENEVA DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2003**

**INTERVENTION OF**

**THE MINISTER FOR INNOVATION AND  
TECHNOLOGIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ITALY,  
LUCIO STANCA,**

**ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

1. INTRODUCTION

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are here today to underline the **great opportunities** that are offered to the world by the development of information and communication technologies.

The European Union and the acceding countries believe these opportunities should be **available to all people in all countries** throughout the world.

The power of information and communication technologies lie in their **capability to remove all barriers and borders**, thus opening up unprecedented opportunities for the free economic and social development of all human beings.

## 2. VALUES

Such un-precedent opportunities carry with them **new and important challenges**. The most important being the identification of an agreed set of values and rules on which to base the future development of the Information Society.

The European Union firmly believes that basic values based on the Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the founding stones of an Information Society for all. **Freedom to access information, freedom of communication and participation, the principles of transparency and of good governance** are the fundamental in the Information Society. Human Rights, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are among the guiding principles of the Information society.

Moreover, access to information and protection of privacy are also central in an inclusive Information Society.

This is why the European Union has insisted throughout all the phases of the preparatory discussions for this Summit on how vital these principles and rights are. **Without their recognition and daily pursuit the concept of an information society for all will not be achieved.**

We express our satisfaction for the way in which these values have been **clearly and un-mistakenly expressed in the Declaration of Principle** we will be adopting at the end of this Summit.

## 3. RULES

Another important challenge is **the identification of a common set of rules**.

These rules should determine how key elements of the information society, as the issue of **intellectual property rights** or the **governance of the Internet** are organised.

An **adequate balance** between different interests and needs must be found on the sensitive issue of intellectual property rights.

On the Internet Governance the European Union has a clear position. Governments must **be involved** when **public policy issues** are at stake, **but it is not the role of governments to manage the Internet or to interfere** in its free development.

#### 4. DUTIES

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, in working for the development of an information society for all we must focus not only on values and rules, but also on our **duties**.

First and foremost the **responsibility to bridge all forms of digital divide**, both **within our countries and at the international level**.

The European Union is **one of the major contributors** in the world for ICT for development projects and is **fully committed to work with developing countries** in order to bridge the international digital divide.

We will vigorously pursue the objectives and actions set forth in the **Digital Solidarity Agenda** contained in the Plan of Action.

**Bridging the digital divide** requires that **developing countries** adopt concrete measures aimed at creating a conducive enabling environment with a free ICT market, thus attracting the necessary internal and foreign investments needed to develop their ICT infrastructure. **Developed countries** on their part need to assist with technology transfer, technical assistance and training.

**Financial support is therefore only one aspect of a wider range of measures that are needed.**

European Union countries are strongly committed to providing the necessary assistance on **specific projects**, based on **agreed objectives** and that see a **central role of the beneficiary country** in their implementation.

I myself am directly responsible for a programme launched by the Government of Italy in the framework of the G8 Digital Opportunity Task Force process, the **eGovernment for Development Initiative**.

In this initiative we have partnered with the United Nations, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank through the Development Gateway Foundation. We are developing and launching in 13 different countries around the world eGovernment applications aimed at improving the efficiency and transparency of their Public Administrations.

**I believe that such concrete programmes are the kind of engagement that is needed from developed countries.**

## 5.THE ROAD TO TUNIS

I will conclude my remarks on behalf of the European Union thanking the Swiss Government for their support and commitment in making possible the organisation and the successful conclusion of this Summit.

We will in the next few months be considering how to move forward to the next phase of this Summit in Tunis in 2005.

We will need first of all to **consider the lessons learned** during the organisation of this first phase of the Summit and guarantee **cost-effectiveness** and **focus on the implementation of the Action Plan**.

Finally, the European Union believes that a successful outcome of the Tunis Summit will be assured **only** if two key players in the information society, **the civil society** and **the private sector**, will be **fully and deeply involved** in the preparatory activities and discussions.

The European Union has actively contributed to the positive outcome of this Summit in Geneva. We are equally committed to make the Tunis Summit a success.

Thank you for your attention!