



PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY MIR ZAFARULLAH KHAN JAMALI
PRIME MINISTER OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF
PAKISTAN

AT THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION
SOCIETY (WSIS)

Geneva,

**Prime Minister's statement at the WSIS
Geneva, 10 December 2003**

Mr. President,

It is indeed a matter of immense pleasure for me to address this gathering of world leaders, business executives, civil society leaders and prominent intellectuals at a Summit that addresses the most important aspect of contemporary life.

The past decade has witnessed a miraculous revolution centered on information and communication technologies. Breathtaking advances in ICTs have driven changes in all spheres of human life.

This Summit marks recognition of the fact that we are all citizens of an Information Society, which necessitates the creation of a new social contract geared to universalizing the endowments of this unique era. In the future, the ability to access and use these tools effectively would determine the prosperity and well-being of all nations.

Mr. President,

But we have a long way to go. The enormity of the digital opportunity is marred by a vast digital divide. To bridge this divide is the challenge of our time. It must not be allowed to grow further.

The digital divide is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that separates people within and between countries. The speed of global technological and economic transformation demands concerted global action.

We should create an information society which embraces everyone. Poorer regions of our planet are threatened with structural irrelevance associated with their technological obsolescence. The Summit must therefore aim to:

- a. Create an information society which is inclusive and provides equal opportunity to everyone, everywhere;
- b. Develop tools and mechanisms that would open the doors of technology to the poorer segments of mankind;
- c. Encompass a commitment to assist the developing countries in developing their ICT infrastructure;
- d. Protect universal norms particularly our moral and spiritual values to which we all aspire;

- e. Ensure the security of our information systems free from the threat of infiltration;
- f. Allow all peoples to imbibe the knowledge which the ICT revolution promises; and finally
- g. Harness the digital revolution to lift the dispossessed from the throes of deprivation.

The Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action before the Summit are pregnant with promise. The presence of so many world leaders should provide the political impetus to translate hope into action. We must work together to evolve a Digital Development Agenda. The knowledge intensive nature of the Information Society calls for a global accord and partnership so that the fruits of technology are evenly distributed. This critical opportunity in the march of civilization must be seized by all of us - governments, business leaders and the civil society - to rectify the historical wrongs that had caused the development gap amongst nations.

In Pakistan, my Government is engaged in harnessing digital technology for the economic advancement of our people. We have earmarked a significant part of our limited resources to build the necessary infrastructure, promote computer literacy and widen ICT applications in health, education and public sector management. In this demanding enterprise we need support of the international community.

I would like to add that in Pakistan as we speedily move towards deregulation and privatization, we offer tremendous investment opportunities not only for fixed and mobile telephone operations but also for software companies and IT enabling back-office service companies, to service Pakistan's own expanding ICT needs and potential and through this potential for the global community.

Mr. President,

Let us join in paying a special tribute to the pioneers of the digital revolution which has opened this remarkable vista before us. These men and women, some of whom are present here, must be considered as the true revolutionaries of the 21st century. Let us leave this beautiful city of Geneva with a strong commitment to launch a new global compact to promote our common quest for a better world.

I thank you, Mr. President.