

## World Summit on the Information Society

Geneva, Dec. 10 – 12, 2003

### Statement by Thomas Ganswindt, CEO Siemens ICN

Ladies and Gentlemen,

No technology has changed the economic and social development of nations **more quickly and radically** than information and communications technology.

The **so called “digital divide”** is a negative consequence of this rapid technological development and it hits developing nations especially hard.

We are all **committed to the goal of peaceful social and economic development** in the world. The best way of achieving this goal is through better **mutual understanding, tolerance of other cultures and learning from each other**. I and C technologies play a key role in all of these.

As a global player we at Siemens know the challenges associated with the digital divide from our own experience. That is why we are working to overcome this divide with our **technical solutions and our social commitment**.

We are playing an active role in the Information and Communications Technologies Task Force of the United Nations. Siemens also supports many other activities that help bridge the digital divide, such as the UNICEF **“Back to School” initiative in Afghanistan**.

We would like to contribute to this “global summit” with words and also with I and C solutions that are **particularly suited to bridging the digital divide**. One problem in the second and third worlds is **healthcare**. Our contribution to e-health illustrates how a healthcare system’s **efficiency can be increased by**

**improving the care and treatment given to patients while cutting costs at the same time.** One example for this approach is the **collaboration** between the Charité Hospital in Berlin and clinics and doctors in Estonia in the field of cardiology. The sparse population of Estonia does not support the availability of proven expertise in the field of child cardiology. As a result, medical care for children with congenital heart defects used to be a problem there. This was remedied by the **telemedicine bridge between the Charité and Estonia.**

However, **the greatest challenge** in overcoming the digital divide is to rapidly build out **I and C infrastructures.** The current state of the art allows us to skip a step in technical evolution. This is made possible by **converging previously separate networks for voice and data communications in a single network.** To enable this, we have developed high-performance and cost-effective Next Generation Network platforms.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

*When the philosopher **Karl Popper** was once asked why he had such an optimistic outlook on life, despite the imperfections in the world, he replied:*

*“I am an optimist because I have the **ability, the courage and the strength to handle all problems** that might come my way.”*

That was the confident reply of a man who was known for his personal modesty, but who was also convinced of the positive potential for solving problems presented by science and technology.

Let us leverage this potential together and close the gap in the global network of information and communications technology. In doing so, we will be working together to build the foundation of a world that is **more tolerant, more economically stable and more peaceful.**

Thank you.