



STATEMENT BY
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COMMUNICATIONS
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
AT THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE
INFORMATION SOCIETY
(GENEVA, 11 DECEMBER 2003)

Mr President,

As the information and communications technologies (ICT) have been developing at the global scale with a great momentum, this Summit constitutes a very important opportunity for addressing the problems arising from this swift growth and bridging the digital divide. Turkey attaches great importance to building a global Information Society.

It is not an easy challenge to reach a consensus on a framework for a widespread and equitable access to and use of ICT. However, in this Summit we shall lay down some common denominators to meet this important challenge.

Mr. President,

Undoubtedly, one of the primary objectives of the global Information Society should be to respond to the growing needs of the developing countries to the ICT.

In our world today, while major developed countries are able to use broad band ICT, next generation network, digital broadcasting and 3 G IC technologies, least developed countries which have difficulties in meeting basic needs such as nutrition, shelter, health and education are not able to benefit from even the simplest communication tools like PSTN telephone lines.

This digital divide also magnifies the disparities in the social, political and economic fields. Therefore, the international community must keep this in mind while trying to meet the challenges we face. Otherwise we will have further social unrest, which will feed extremism.

The contribution of the developed countries is essential for the social development projects in the developing countries related to communications infrastructure and services. For this purpose, transfer of information and experience from developed countries, should be encouraged, along with regional networks and cooperation initiatives of the developing countries. These aspects should be promoted and supported also by the relevant international organizations such as the ITU and various other UN agencies at all levels.

Taking into consideration the insufficient level of certain basic technologies in the developing countries, the prevailing intellectual property and patent policies should be revised with a view to ensuring a moderate, feasible and applicable standard. The customs and duties in the trade of ICT products should also be minimised.

To promote cooperation among educational institutions of different countries and to encourage distant educational programmes by widespread use of new technologies in a sustainable manner is essential.

Pilot projects should be developed and put into practice in the developing countries and the best practices in this regard should be identified and disseminated to all countries in order to narrow the digital gap. Public-private partnerships and cooperation among governments on the one hand and the private sector and the civil society on the other, is of fundamental importance in implementing the policies with a view to bridging the digital divide.

Since infrastructural investments require significant financial resources, developing countries should identify research and development programmes utilizing maximum benefit from present technologies. The developed countries should, on their part, provide at least, technical assistance in this field.

Proper legislation should be enacted for the access to and use of ICT by the disabled and the elderly, as well as to ensure an effective ICT security system to protect the youth and the children from illegal and harmful content.

Mr. President,

Freedom of access to information and knowledge is the cornerstone in transforming the world into an Information Society. As a prerequisite for the democratic societies governed by the rule of law, the right to access to information and knowledge should be included among the fundamental rights and freedoms and be defined as such at constitutional level.

In this context, we would like to stress that the sharing and dissemination of the global information and knowledge would also contribute to the development of the desired level of international solidarity and cooperation in combatting the scourge of terrorism which has a global character, as we all witnessed in the light of the recent wave of terrorist attacks in different parts of the world.

Finally Mr. President, on behalf of my Government, my delegation and my own, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to the Swiss Government for hosting this Summit, as well as the ITU Secretariat for the excellent

organizational arrangements and to all delegations, representatives of the private sector and civil society for their valuable contributions in this process.

We look forward to the Second Phase of WSIS in Tunisia in 2005, during which, we hope and expect that the same spirit of cooperation for achieving success in our endeavours to shape the future of the Information Society would prevail.

I thank you Mr. President.