



Distinguished guests, ladies, gentlemen,

Vodafone delivers services that help to bridge the digital divide. We have the experience of turning ambitious plans into reality and therefore we really appreciate the opportunity to address this international summit on its very important goals .

Vodafone supports the Draft Action Plan's statement on the importance of private sector commitment to ICT and its role in sustainable development. We have experienced in many countries and continents that communications empowers people and their countries – both economically and socially.

Empowering people and achieving the information society ideals requires creating the necessary long-term commercial viability conditions. Mobile is a tremendous success story in the ability of the commercial sector to bring communication services to people in the developed and developing world. Mobile telephony penetration and commercial innovations, such as pre-paid mobile, popularised affordable access and have increased significantly working opportunities in the developing world and productivity and social contact everywhere. Pre-paid now accounts for around 90% of the mobile market in many African countries, and enables communication and trade in all continents.

On a global scale, there are now more mobile subscribers in the world than there are fixed lines.

Governments must facilitate sustainable Mobile Telecommunication and ICT development through attractive, transparent and sustainable investment environments. Long-term investors – like Vodafone and many others – require these to be confident in quickly delivering all services to the people, everywhere.

We have to stress that it is *operators* who *deliver* telecommunications services to customers, not regulations or policies. Regulations, on the other hand, can positively or adversely affect the outcome of the marketplace. Good regulatory structures together with investment driven operators provide the best conditions to attract and sustain investments in electronic communications.

Good regulation creates also a *constructive dialogue and a spirit of partnership between government and the private sector* that is needed to develop common and implementable visions. These visions have to recognise the efficiency of commercial incentives to quickly deliver results *rather* than rely on the imposition of costly obligations, burdensome authorizations and taxes.

Vodafone believes in people and technology and wants to be a contributor to reduce the digital divide. Closing the digital divide, and the deriving benefits of an information society, depends on the credibility of the investment climate governments create. If governments provide the right environments, we can and we will deliver results.

Thank you.