

**STATEMENT BY
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BEFORE
THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF
THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY
Geneva, 1-5 July 2002**

Mr Chairman,
Mr Secretary General,
Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me, at the outset and on behalf of the Indonesian delegation, to congratulate you, Mr Chairman, on your election to lead the work of this First Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the World Summit on the Information Society and to guide us towards a practical and fruitful outcome. Like other developing countries, Indonesia is aware of the crucial importance of equipping itself with the technology needed to keep abreast of the demands made by an increasingly globalised world and, in this regard, has great expectations of the forthcoming two-tiered WSIS. We are therefore pinning our hopes on this Prepcom and its ability to cover as much important ground as possible ahead of this event.

The Indonesian delegation hopes that the present Meeting will provide comprehensive discussions on the methods of work of the Summit and the theme to be adopted, in a manner which fully reflects the many different views held by the participants. At this juncture, let me also say that my delegation associates itself wholeheartedly with the statement made by the delegation of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Group 77 and China.

Mr Chairman,

The world is currently in the midst of a major knowledge-based revolution propelled by information and communication technology. The extensive innovations which have occurred in Information Technology (IT) or Information and Communication Technology (ICT) over the past twenty years have not only helped in the dynamics of globalisation, they have also created a more knowledgeable society or an “information society” as it is commonly termed. This information society is in constant evolution and the involvement of more and more players around the world is bringing about the corresponding need for a global partnership and empowerment. It is our view therefore that ICT should become a catalyst for development and economic growth, as well as for job creation. Information should also be harnessed to bridge the widening gap between developed and developing countries, which has caused an increasing marginalisation of these countries. This situation is illustrated by the fact that in the seventeen years since the publication in 1985 of a report by the Independent Commission for World-Wide Telecommunication Development submitted to the Secretary-General of the ITU, little has changed in the developing countries, which are still struggling to extend and improve their telecommunication network and services. Thus, whereas in the industrialised world, telecommunication nowadays is taken for granted as a key factor in economic, commercial and social activity, in the vast majority of developing countries it is still regarded as a luxury available only to the few. Our goal is therefore clear, we must strive to reduce, indeed eliminate, the digital divide which separates “the haves” from the “have nots”. In this respect, my delegation is convinced that the forthcoming Summit will provide us with the opportunity to form the global partnership necessary to address this priority.

In the era of intense competitiveness which globalisation has set in motion, it is generally accepted that the future growth of nations will depend on technological development and that, consequently, countries with knowledge will have a distinct advantage in the global arena. Moreover, a digital divide can be found not only between countries but, as a result of socio-economic disparities, between a country's rural and urban areas, between men and women, between the educated and the unschooled and between young and old. Against this backdrop, Indonesia's own geography and size present a huge challenge to the government, which finds that its ability to survive and compete in the globalisation environment is hampered by its limited ICT infrastructures, most notably by a lack of both educational facilities and ICT trained human resources.

In order to tackle this challenge, a Ministry of Communication and Information (MCI) has been created and an ICT High-level Coordinating Team, chaired by President Megawati Soekarnoputri and comprised of members selected from all walks of life, has been formed to coordinate and implement all ICT activities. Presidential Decree No. 6/2001 on the Development and Utilisation of Telecommunications, Media and Information, has also provided an invaluable framework with which to address the issue of ICT. Furthermore, based on the premise that the development of ICT can be used to empower the Indonesian people to achieve national sustainable development, my government has begun setting up a *Balai Informasi Masyarakat*, or Public Information Service, in all rural areas in an effort to educate the public. Thus, a concerted effort is being made to integrate ICT into educational programmes and enhance capacity-building at all levels of society. The Indonesian Government has also called on the private sector to join in the efforts to hasten

the establishment and dissemination of ICT through education and training programmes, as well as through Research and Development (R&D). Likewise, the Government of Indonesia is determined to make the deployment of e-Government in Indonesia a priority and, to this end, has established a National Taskforce for e-Government to prepare Indonesia's Roadmap to e-Government.

Mr Chairman,

To conclude, if the information society is to become more than just a catchphrase or a slogan, we must ensure that this Prepcom addresses the considerable practical problems encountered mainly by the developing countries in their aspirations to development. It behoves us to achieve the global consensus and above all the cooperation which will gradually close the gap between "the information rich and the information poor", while seeking to preserve our cultural identities.

Thank you.