

PrepCom-2
17 February 2005, UNOG, Assembly Hall

Opening remarks
by the President of PrepCom of the Tunis phase of WSIS

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank Minister Montasser Ouaili from Tunisia and Minister Moritz Leuenberger from Switzerland as well as Secretary General of the ITU, Mr Yoshio Utsumi, for their encouraging words and their strong commitment to make this second phase of the World Summit on Information Society a success, as it was in the first phase.

Today, I have the honor and the pleasure of opening the second session of the Preparatory Committee of the Tunis phase of the World Summit on Information Society. I would like to welcome each of you. I know that you all have come to Geneva with the firm intention to participate actively in the preparatory process of the Tunis phase and with the conviction that our work together can contribute to meeting the challenges we face today in the information society.

Let me assure you that this conviction is also one I share. I am convinced that we will succeed based on the fact that we all are working together – representatives of governments, international organizations, civil society and private sector. I am also encouraged by the reports of efforts to form new public-private partnerships to ensure that the benefits of Information and Communications Technologies become available to all.

Let me emphasize that the preparatory process of the WSIS is as important as the Summit itself. I encourage everyone to fully participate in the work, discussions and negotiations of this meeting.

In Hammamet, during the first Prepcom, we agreed on the focus of the Tunis phase of the WSIS and on the structure of the preparatory process.

The second Prepcom should provide solutions on the questions of financial mechanisms and start discussions on the implementation of Geneva decisions as well as on follow-up to the WSIS. We will also examine the preliminary report of the Working Group on Internet Governance.

To prepare the basis of negotiations for this second Prepcom, The Group of Friends of the Chair, assisted by the WSIS Executive Secretariat, drafted a document in two parts, which I will later submit for your consideration and which should lay the grounds for our negotiations.

I hope that on the basis of these consultations, which were held in an open and transparent way with representatives of governments and other stakeholders, will help us to start without delay our negotiation process and to progress effectively in our work.

Based on the report of the Task Force of Financial Mechanisms, on the results of the preparations in the run-up to this Prepcom, as well as on the outcome of the African regional conference, which took place in Accra, Ghana, I am certain that a solution on the financial mechanisms is within our reach. With a good deal of will, we can achieve an effective solution on financial issues, which would consist of an agreement on improvements and innovations in the financing of ICT development. This agreement should be accompanied with a number of multi-stakeholder partnerships that would be sealed in Tunis and would provide an important contribution in regional ICT infrastructure development.

To achieve this, I call again on the participation of all of us, representatives of governments, international organizations, civil society and private sector. Only with our active participation we will make substantial progress in preparation for the Tunis phase.