

WSIS+10 HIGH LEVEL EVENT

POLICY STATEMENT FROM CANADA

Dr. Bruce Gracie – High Level Expert

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:

I'd like to express my sincere appreciation in being invited here to contribute to the dialogue in assessing the WSIS outcomes, and offer a perspective on how Canada is facing the challenges of adapting to the transformational digital age. As Dr. Touré noted in his remarks during the recent celebration of the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, digital development is a transformative tool to fast-track sustainable development. Canada agrees that that, in order to realize its full potential, it is essential to roll-out high-speed broadband networks, making it affordable as well as universally accessible.

I'm pleased to say that Canada's own response to the need to ensure that all of its citizens can share the benefits of broadband access has been the announcement in April of this year of the Digital Economy Strategy, which has been designed as an open and flexible plan that provides Canadians with the tools they need to fully embrace the opportunities of a digital future.

Known as Digital Canada 150, its main features include the following:

- Providing access to over 98% of all Canadians to high-speed Internet at 5 megabits per second – a rate that enables e-commerce, high-resolution video, employment opportunities and distance education – providing rural and remote communities with faster, more reliable online services;
- Enhancing broadband service for up to an additional 280,000 Canadian households;
- Developing enabling wireless policies to connect Canadians with competitive prices, more choice in services and world-leading technologies in all regions of the country;
- Strengthening the protection of Canadians with regard to online privacy;
- Amending Canada's intellectual property laws, including the Patent Act, Trademarks Act and Industrial Design Act to harmonize with key international treaties;
- Committing to reducing roaming costs on networks within Canada, preventing wireless providers from charging other companies more than they charge their own customers for mobile voice, data and text services.

Under Digital Canada 150, the Government of Canada will be a leader in using digital technologies to interact with Canadians, making it simpler and quicker to access services and information online. "Open data" – the ready access to government data in easily usable formats – will expand public dialogue, stimulate citizen engagement and foster greater cooperation among governments, businesses, academia and individuals.

Underlying Canada's efforts to provide high quality broadband access to all of its citizens are certain fundamental principles, among which are the need to preserve an open and secure Internet, and the need to preserve the right to freedom of expression online as a catalyst to facilitate innovation, as well as to stimulate economic and social development.

Digital Canada 150 is designed to set out a vision of what Canada can achieve by the time we celebrate our 150th anniversary in 2017, and beyond. Similarly, ITU's 150th anniversary next year provides the entire ITU membership with similar opportunities, and we look forward to working with all stakeholders in translating an ITU vision shaped in part through WSIS outcomes into concrete actions and programmes. The recent adoption of revised Resolution 130 by the World Telecommunication Development Conference concerning the role of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector in implementing the outcomes of the WSIS, offers a glimpse as to how such actions can be shaped, with an emphasis on strengthening partnerships and collaboration with national, regional and international entities, the promotion of capacity building to help the world's citizens adapt to the digital age, and, as this WSIS+10 High Level Event has clearly highlighted, the sharing of best practices and lessons learned which can ensure that ITU remains in the forefront in addressing the many challenges which lie ahead. Canada looks forward to working with all of you as together we can build the information society of the future.

Thank you.

For further information on Digital Canada 150, please refer to:

<http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/028.nsf/eng/home>