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Chair: Mr. Cardi .... (Italy)
later: Ms. Stepowska (Vice-Chair) .... (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 16: Information and communications technologies for development (A/69/65-E/2014/12 and A/69/217)

1.   **Ms. Wu** Dong (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels (A/69/65-E/2014/12), said that the report included input from 26 United Nations and other international organizations and stakeholders from civil society and the technical, academic and business sectors. The report noted that global access to information and communications technologies (ICT) had continued to increase. More than 2.7 billion users worldwide had accessed the Internet in 2013 and the number of mobile cellular subscriptions had surpassed 6.8 billion. Mobile broadband subscriptions were growing at approximately 30 per cent per year. However, sizeable gaps in ICT development remained between and within regions, widening the digital divide. In Latin America, for example, more advanced countries had witnessed 15 times more ICT development than the countries lagging the furthest behind. The nature of the digital divide was also changing and was increasingly reflected in how ICTs were used to promote development outcomes rather than in terms of ICT access. Furthermore, not everyone was able to benefit from the emergence of new applications. An increasing number of countries had recognized the importance of ICT and were adopting or formulating ICT policies to spur development. Those policies aimed, inter alia, to raise awareness of and improve people's ability to use ICT, enhance underserved populations' access to ICT services and ensure that those services were affordable.

2.   The report covered a broad range of activities planned or undertaken by United Nations entities and other stakeholders in 2013 in connection with the implementation of World Summit outcomes. It also noted the establishment by the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation on public policy issues relating to the Internet, which had met four times between May 2013 and May 2014 and had reported on its work to the seventeenth session of the Commission.

3.   A number of United Nations entities and other stakeholders had already begun preparations in connection with the 10-year review of the World Summit outcomes , to be held in 2015. The conclusions of that review process should allow stakeholders to draw up strategies for addressing ICT-related challenges in the years ahead and serve as useful input to deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda. In that connection, the WSIS+10 High Level Event, held in Geneva in June 2014 under the auspices of UNCTAD, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), had endorsed two outcome documents, namely the WSIS+I0 Statement on the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes and the WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015. Furthermore, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development had invited a broad range of stakeholders to share their views on implementation of World Summit outcomes over the previous decade and would be submitting the results of that review to the General Assembly.

4.   The rapid pace of change in ICT technology, markets and services had greatly influenced the implementation of World Summit outcomes. The 10-year review needed to consider the dynamic nature of the ICT landscape and its implications for building a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society for the benefit of all, as envisaged in the Geneva Declaration of Principles.

5.   **Mr. De Guimarães-Pinto** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), introducing the report of the Director-General of UNESCO on communication for development programmes in the United Nations system, transmitted in a note by the Secretary-General (A/69/217), said that the convergence of traditional and new information and communications technologies provided vast opportunities for people to interact and to construct a social agenda. The report, which included input from five United Nations agencies, underlined the fundamental role of freedom of expression, of information and of the press in promoting sustainable development, and emphasized that a free, independent and pluralistic media was vital in efforts to foster development.

6.   The High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda had recommended that ensuring

good governance and effective institutions should feature prominently on that agenda, and had highlighted the importance of openness, transparency, access to information, and freedom of speech and the media. The United Nations Group on the Information Society had, moreover, proposed that the agenda should fully recognize ICTs as technologies that could promote rights-based development, and wider exercise of freedom of expression and press freedom, which were, in turn, critical in efforts to combat corruption, ensure gender-sensitivity, deepen accountability and promote socially inclusive development. In 2013, UNESCO had adopted a resolution in which it had described freedom of expression; universal access to knowledge and its preservation, and free, pluralistic and independent media, both offline and online, as indispensable elements for flourishing democracies and promoting citizen participation. Indeed, the international media and human rights experts had urged the United Nations to include access to information, free expression and independent media under the umbrella of good governance. UNESCO therefore commended the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals for proposing a stand-alone target on ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms under goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies. Furthermore, the Bali Roadmap for Media and Development, adopted by the Global Media Forum in August 2014, had echoed the call for free expression and independent media to be part of the post-2015 development agenda and urged Governments to respect freedom of expression, including press freedom and the right to seek and receive information, as fundamental rights, and , in September 2014, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had held a round table focusing on mainstreaming communication for development into policies and programmes with a view to supporting social inclusion, food and nutrition security, strengthening rural livelihoods and promoting family farming.

7.   UNESCO would continue to promote and defend the right of communities to own and operate community radio, which complemented public and private broadcasting and whose unique, local and participative contribution to social development deserved deeper examination, recognition and support. Enabling a favourable legal and regulatory environment for community radio was a pro-poor measure to advance sustainable development and enhance equitable opportunities that offered wide-ranging social, economic and cultural benefits.

8.   Multilateral assistance for media development should be enhanced, including through the UNESCO-sponsored Intergovernmental Programme for the Development of Communication, which had recently provided over $2.2 million to 123 national and 20 regional projects, benefiting 77 countries. Those projects sought to address gaps identified by the UNESCO media development indicators, and integrate media development into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. UNESCO would continue to foster United Nations inter-agency collaboration with a view to enhancing media freedom, freedom of expression, and the use of ICTs to promote development, inter alia through the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and the Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy.

9.   **Mr. Llorentty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that ICTs were a critical enabler of socioeconomic development and were vital to developing countries' full participation in the global economy. They held tremendous potential to bolster efforts to eradicate poverty and promote inclusive growth, and should be a critical component of innovative development solutions in the post-2015 development agenda. For developing countries to benefit fully from those technologies, a greater emphasis should be placed on reducing their cost, including the cost of broadband connections, and on capacity-building to increase ICT use. Telecommunication infrastructure in developing countries must also be upgraded.

10.   The Group was concerned at the persistence of a significant digital divide between developed and developing countries, particularly with regard to broadband access and affordability, and the negative impact of the ongoing financial and economic crisis on developing countries' capacities to mobilize resources for ICT investment and diffusion.

11.   In an increasingly interdependent world, all Governments should have an equal role and responsibility for international Internet governance and for ensuring the stability, security and continuity of the Internet. Moreover, to strengthen Internet governance in a transparent and accountable manner, the functions

currently undertaken by the Internet Assigned Number Authority should be reassigned, and efforts made to accelerate the internationalization of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, so that it became a truly international and global organization with an independent status and clear accountability mechanisms.

12. The 10-year review of the World Summit should mark the beginning of a new chapter for ICT development in developing countries that built on the lessons learned over the previous decade. The Group reiterated its call for the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to provide adequate and comprehensive resources to support the review process, which must consider submissions from a wide range of stakeholders, including Member and observer States, and in which the General Assembly must retain its key role.

13. The Group of 77 and China reiterated its commitment to intensifying international efforts to safeguard cyberspace and promote its exclusive use for peaceful purposes and as a vehicle to foster economic and social development and international cooperation. In that regard, the Group emphasized that any such international cooperation must be based on human rights principles, including, in particular, the right to privacy.

14. **Mr. Charles** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the Community welcomed implementation of World Summit action areas at the regional and international levels, and of the recommendations of the Working Group on Improvement of the Internet Governance Forum. It agreed with the observations made in the report of the Secretary-General (A/69/65-E/2014/12) that although ICT supply and demand was growing, challenges remained in relation to ICT access, affordability and quality in many parts of the developing world. Further work was needed to identify and overcome barriers to the development, dissemination and use of ICT with a view to overcoming the digital divide between developed and developing countries. CARICOM also agreed with the report's recommendation that the 10-year review of WSIS outcomes must inform the post-2015 development agenda on the complex connections between ICTs and sustainable development.

15. CARICOM Governments were endeavouring to make the Caribbean subregion a single ICT space, but additional efforts were needed to achieve that objective, particularly with a view to further liberalizing the telecommunications sector. To help transform the subregion into a knowledge-based society, CARICOM was formulating an ICT development programme and a Regional Digital Development Strategy. Notwithstanding those efforts, major challenges persisted in mobilizing resources for investment in new technologies, particularly in the area of small and micro-enterprise development, and in addressing cybercrime: additional assistance from the Community's bilateral partners and the United Nations, including through the transfer of appropriate technologies, would prove essential if the region was to be able to address the challenges it faced.

16. As a region of small island and low-lying developing States that were vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, CARICOM saw the environment sector as a key area in which the further development and dissemination of ICT could contribute to its resilience-building efforts. It welcomed the work of ITU on energy, smart grids and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, and the joint work of ITU, UNESCO and the World Meteorological Organization on climate monitoring and disaster warning systems.

17. CARICOM emphasized the importance of strengthening statistical systems to support the implementation of the sustainable development goals, and commended the Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on their work to develop indicators to support ICT measurement in the region.

18. **Mr. Mendoza-García** (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that ICT was an essential tool with which to achieve internationally-agreed development goals, promote social inclusion and achieve economic growth. It could be used to improve the coverage and quality of education, health care and other services and foster respect for gender equality, diversity and fundamental rights. ICT had an immense impact on virtually all aspects of people's lives and its rapid development was creating new opportunities to accelerate development and improve the lives of millions around the globe.

19. CELAC countries reaffirmed their commitment to building a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society based on human rights, including the right to privacy, and on the principles of peace, solidarity, democracy and freedom. They were also committed to involving civil society, the private sector and the scientific and technical communities in an open, participatory, multilateral and multisectoral dialogue, in accordance with the principles established at the World Summit on the Information Society, to promote sustainable development and improve people's lives.

20. CELAC countries were committed to meeting the goals set forth in the Plan of Action for the Information and Knowledge Society in Latin America and the Caribbean and were determined to strengthen regional cooperation to that end. However, environmental challenges and the ongoing economic and financial crisis continued to undermine CELAC countries' ability to mobilize resources for ICT investment and diffusion. Furthermore, the digital divide, particularly the disparities in broadband access and affordability between developed and developing countries, remained a matter of concern. That divide must be narrowed so that people in all countries could use and benefit from ICTs.

21. It was critical that the World Summit review process addressed ways to promote and protect all fundamental human rights, including the right to privacy, an essential prerequisite for human dignity, whose protection was crucial in safeguarding individuals against the abuse of power. Any interference or restriction on the right to privacy should be adequately regulated by law, subject to effective oversight and to appropriate redress, including through judicial review or other means, to ensure that measures were not imposed arbitrarily. In that regard, CELAC was deeply concerned about the negative impact that State surveillance and interception of communications, including extraterritorially, could have on the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and underscored that measures to combat terrorism must always be conducted in strict observance of international law, including human rights law, international humanitarian law and the international law of refugees. Only those measures adopted in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other relevant international norms promoting civil coexistence among States could be successful and garner broad support from the international community. Actions taken outside the international legal framework were unjustifiable, illegal and unacceptable. All States must therefore comply fully with General Assembly resolution 68/178 on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism.

22. ICTs, including the use of social media, could promote understanding between peoples and nations. At the same time, however, the illegal use of ICTs had a negative impact on nations and citizens. CELAC was deeply concerned in that regard that the objectives of the ZunZuneo online social networking and microblogging service had constituted an illicit use of ICT, and strongly denounced any misuse of ICT that was detrimental to any CELAC country. ICT use must not contravene international law.

23. CELAC countries were committed to intensifying international efforts to safeguard cyberspace and promote its exclusive use for the achievement of peaceful purposes and as a vehicle to contribute to both economic and social development. International cooperation, in full respect for human rights, was the only viable way to foster the positive effects of ICTs, promote their peaceful and legitimate use, and guarantee that both scientific and technological progress was directed towards preserving peace and promoting the welfare and development of societies.

24. *Ms. Stepowska (Poland), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

25. **Mr. Beviglia Zampetti** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia,, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the evolution of information and communication technologies and the Internet as drivers of innovation and economic growth, as well as their role in guaranteeing people's right to freedom of expression and access to information, continued to present new opportunities as the international community sought to build an inclusive information society, achieve the internationally agreed development goals, and agree on a transformative post-2015 development agenda.

26. He noted that the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society recognized the growing role of ICTs "not only as a medium of communication, but also as a development enabler, and as a tool for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals". The modalities for the review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit since 2005 having been established earlier in the year, the European Union and its member States now wished for an inclusive and transparent multi-stakeholder process that would take into account the Commission on Science and Technology for Development review mandated by the Economic and Social Council; the outcomes of the World Summit review event entitled "Towards Knowledge Societies, for peace and sustainable development", hosted by UNESCO in February 2013; the outcomes of the World Summit review facilitated by the International Telecommunication Union in June; and the road map established by the international community at the NETmundial conference in April 2014.

27. The Internet Governance Forum, which brought together representatives of the private sector, civil society, Governments, international organizations, parliamentarians, the technical community and academic experts to exchange views and best practices on the development of the Internet, had benefited from the recommendations of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. The mandate of the Forum should be extended beyond 2015 and stable and predictable funding for its secretariat should be ensured. Access to the Internet was an innovative driver of economic growth, and a platform for freedom of expression, information and development. The forthcoming review and the international focus on the issue of ICTs for development were a key part of the United Nations development agenda and the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

28. **Mr. Ismail** (Brunei Darussalam), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ICTs were a key driver of economic and social transformation; they were an important tool for achieving the MDGs and must be a key element in the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. ASEAN welcomed the adoption of resolution 68/302 on modalities for the overall review

by the General Assembly of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. Those outcomes would strengthen cooperation among stakeholders, particularly between development actors in the ICT sector and least developed, landlocked developing and middle-income countries. It also welcomed the progress achieved since the Geneva and Tunis phases.

29. ASEAN remained concerned at the widening gap across the ICT infrastructure landscape. According to the ITU, only 32 per cent of the population of developing countries would enjoy access to the internet by the end of 2014, compared with 78 per cent in developed countries. Developed and developing countries, in collaboration with the private sector, must work together to mobilize the funds necessary to bridge digital divides and reduce inequality within and among countries, particularly in view of the importance of ICT in enhancing the provision of education and health care, strengthening financial sectors and safeguarding the environment. Steps must also be taken to enhance the integrity and reliability of telecommunications networks, strengthen the security and resilience of ICT infrastructure, and promote capacity-building and technology transfer.

30. ICT was a valuable tool for enhancing regional connectivity and economic integration among ASEAN members. However, given their different levels of economic development, significant challenges remained with regard to overcoming the digital divide between States and regions. In that regard, the ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2015 aimed to increase ICT adoption, particularly in rural areas, and empower its citizens so that they could benefit on an equitable basis from the rollout of national broadband networks, improvements to universal service obligations and educational and other partnerships. The ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity would also contribute to overcoming digital challenges.

31. ASEAN once again wished to emphasize that, in accordance with paragraph 1 (b) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 65/276, the European Union should, as a non-State entity, take the floor after the regional groups; moreover, it should speak after individual States unless it was itself represented by a State.

32. **Mr. Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that ensuring cybersecurity and combating criminal

activity could only be achieved with enhanced international cooperation. Digital opportunity for social inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable groups, meanwhile, must be advanced through an agreed multilateral framework of goals and targets with financial support.

33. Internet governance could no longer be dealt with under a non-governmental institution such as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers. The divergence between those who saw Internet governance through the lens of State sovereignty and those who independently responded to its challenges without the concurrence of the international community needed to be closed. A United Nations framework for a broad dialogue on that topic could be established.

34. With regard to the review of the World Summit on the Information Society, the recommendations of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation should recognize that public policies must uphold the security, transparency and accountability of the Internet and the promotion and protection of all human rights, including the right to privacy.

35. Revelations concerning a global electronic surveillance network had shown that human rights and civil liberties continued to be violated. Actions to combat terrorism taken outside the international legal framework were unjustifiable and unacceptable. Although ICTs were central to the post-2015 development agenda, the unwarranted interception of data belonging to citizens, Governments and corporations must not be condoned. The enabling role of ICTs for development must not occur at the expense of respect for sovereignty and equality of nations. Those issues should be debated with a view to establishing a civilian multilateral framework for the use and governance of the Internet and to protect data privacy in cyberspace.

36. **Ms. Ben-Dor** (Israel) said that ICT offered limitless possibilities but far too many people lacked access and the world's unconnected people found themselves having to leapfrog in their ICT capacity. ICTs were more relevant than ever to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development goals.

37. Mobile technology was providing innovative responses to emerging crises. In the face of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, for example, mobile applications were helping workers to streamline research and receive updates in the field and they were helping to disseminate information about Ebola in local languages. The Israeli application "About Ebola", for example, had been downloaded over 5,000 times in West Africa.

38. Knowledge dissemination was critical to development and Israel was committed to bridging the digital divide. With its dynamic cyber-environment achieved through entrepreneurship and research and development, Israel was home to 200 ICT start-ups and its share of the global market was far greater than its share of the global economy.

39. At the multilateral level, digital media offered unprecedented opportunities to promote the well-being of humanity. Israel would hold a conference on that topic in 2015 within the framework of the UNESCO Information for All Programme in order to encourage the development of a people-centred information society. However, the global challenges that arose from the malicious use of ICTs and the cyberdomain required joint efforts by the international community within relevant frameworks and organizations. For its part, Israel was increasing its efforts to deal with a range of cyber threats. Israel supported the 2012/2013 recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, in which it actively participated.

40. The potential of ICT for development must be fully weighed in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and links must be made with the World Summit review process to ensure coherence.

41. Finally, the expansion of key Internet domain name functions and the increased rate of mobile communication services had demonstrated the success of the multi-stakeholder model. That model should be enhanced in order to maintain the security and openness of the Internet, to benefit consumers and to achieve the full implementation of the World Summit goals.

42. **Mr. Morozov** (Russian Federation) said that his country had a wealth of experience in overcoming the digital divide between its different regions which it was willing to share at regional and international levels. Since the importance of the Internet to development would only grow in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, it was in the interest of

all States to address jointly issues relating to the reliability and security of the Internet and its associated critical infrastructure. However, certain States were using their dominance to achieve their own economic, military and political goals through digital attacks on the information resources of other States. As a result of external threats to the World Wide Web, States were turning in on themselves and, in so doing, were fragmenting the global Internet. Such a reduction in international cooperation would not be ignored by international terrorists and criminal structures.

43. The Russian Federation had taken a number of steps to improve information security, including, among others, the introduction of a system to detect, prevent and stop computer attacks on Russian information resources and the creation of protected networks and systems for State defence and security needs. It had worked with a variety of international partners to improve international information security, and, alongside Brazil, India, China and South Africa (its BRICS partners), condemned the mass collection of data and electronic surveillance of individuals as a violation of State sovereignty and human rights. Further international cooperation on information security was clearly needed, particularly within the framework of the United Nations and its specialized bodies and agencies.

44. **Ms. Robl** (United States of America) said that ICTs had been one of the most effective and promising tools to help people and communities realize the objectives set out in the Millennium Development Goals. It was, therefore, critical to adequately recognize and promote the contribution of those technologies to many shared sustainable development goals and to continue to support the open and inclusive multi-stakeholder approach that maximized the potential of ICTs to help improve the quality of life of people across the world.

45. Governments, the private sector, the technical community and civil society must all contribute to ensure that everyone had access to ICTs and information online, that costs for such technologies continued to decrease, that investments in networks and technologies were redoubled and that all efforts promoted innovation, growth and universal values of freedom of speech and expression. Those goals would not be met by erecting new barriers, fragmenting the global Internet or restricting the free flow of information.

46. The 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society would be crucial to enhancing the contribution of Summit outcomes to development for years to come. The review should reaffirm a shared commitment to the Tunis Agenda and include comprehensive and objective analyses of Summit outcomes and practical measures to realize the goals outlined in 2015. It should not be an attempt to renegotiate those outcomes. Her delegation supported the important work of ITU and UNESCO in the review process and the coordination efforts of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

47. The Internet Governance Forum continued to be the premier and most dynamic venue for discussions regarding the Internet. The multi-stakeholder nature of the Forum underpinned its unique ability to engage in open and candid conversations about difficult issues and provided timely direction on best practices without the need for negotiated outcome documents. The United States had financially supported the Forum for those reasons and encouraged other stakeholders to do the same. It also supported the expeditious renewal of the Forum's mandate in order to plan future sessions and to attract potential donors to the Forum's Trust Fund.

47. **Mr. Kohona** (Sri Lanka) said that ICT must be central to the strategies of developing countries as they sought to eradicate poverty and realize sustainable development goals. Although Millennium Development Goal 8 had been intended to make the benefits of new technologies widely available, the limited commitment of development partners and the paucity of full private sector engagement in that regard remained a disappointment. More effective collaboration between the two sides was needed to achieve that Goal and Governments must implement long-term strategies to facilitate partnerships and to develop new technologies.

48. In Sri Lanka, IT literacy had grown steadily from 3 per cent in 2005 to nearly 50 per cent in 2014 as a result of a people-centred national policy. It was the aim of the Government to increase ICT literacy to 75 per cent by 2016 and, in so doing, attract rural youth to ICT-based "green" jobs.

49. Sri Lanka sought to become the major ICT and knowledge hub in its region and ICT would be key to transforming Sri Lanka into a global hub for the shipping, aviation, commercial and energy sectors. In 2013, the Sri Lankan ICT sector had generated

US$ 720 million in revenue and its employees had grown in number from 33,700 in 2007 to 75,100. It aimed to increase revenue to US$ 5 billion and comprise 200,000 employees by 2022.

50. Public-private partnerships had flourished with the introduction of more than 790 telecentres that served to disseminate ICT knowledge and deliver e-government services in local languages. An e-library programme had been named the best rural IT access programme in the world by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and, thanks to the number of new e-government services, Sri Lanka had made the greatest progress by a Member State in the United Nations e-Government Development Index, rising from 115th position in 2012 to 74th in 2014. Furthermore, competitive private broadband providers were helping to reduce the digital divide in the country and mobile phone penetration was over 110 per cent.

51. **Ms. Ibrahimova** (Azerbaijan) said that many Eurasian countries experienced difficulties because they were landlocked or were located away from the broadband highways of the West or the Asia-Pacific region. Other challenges included inadequate infrastructure and its associated higher connection costs.

52. With the adoption of two General Assembly resolutions, the United Nations had supported an Azerbaijani initiative to develop the Trans-Eurasian Information Superhighway. The Superhighway was a development tool that facilitated access to the Internet, telecommunication systems and e-information resources for 20 countries in the region, thus creating the East-West transport corridor. The General Assembly had also adopted resolutions on the establishment of the Eurasian Connectivity Alliance, which would help numerous stakeholders provide strategic assistance and support for ICT-related projects in a vivid example of cross-border cooperation between public and private institutions.

53. **Mr. Benamadi** (Algeria) said that ICTs were a vector of growth and development and had a positive impact on employment and social protection, relations between enterprises and consumers, and citizen participation in public and private life. However, the use and control of ICTs were unevenly distributed among countries and regions - and many developing countries, especially in Africa, felt marginalized. Although the cost of broadband technology had fallen,

it remained unaffordable for most developing countries and their peoples.

54. Technology was key to solving social and economic development problems and should be included in developing countries' development strategies. Developing countries that had successfully implemented technical modernization had reaped the rewards in the form of growth and development. The international community should gradually eliminate inequalities of access to ICTs and maximize the resulting benefits, namely, reduced poverty, ignorance and environmental problems, and enhanced health care and disease control. It should also facilitate technology transfers and access to ICTs so that developing countries could draw up their own sustainable development strategies by removing obstacles preventing access to ICTs and addressing property and standardization problems.

55. The management of the Internet, a publicly available ICT service, raised important issues with regard to international security and the use of satellite imaging for illegal, criminal or terrorist purposes. International cooperation was necessary to address cybersecurity problems since all countries were equally affected; a culture of responsibility must be encouraged. Given the growing numbers of Internet users, genuinely exclusive Internet governance should replace the current monopolistic system imposed by a very limited number of countries.

56. **Mr. Zdorov** (Belarus) said that, in his country, ICTs had brought improvements to telemedicine and education, expanded broadband Internet access and strengthened international information security. Belarus had become a major regional and international supplier of ICT services and occupied a leading position in the ICT Development Index.

57. In addition to bridging the digital divide, steps must be taken to prevent harmful effects of the Internet, particularly on children and young people. A more active fight must be waged against Internet terrorist activity, cybercrime and other negative online phenomena.

58. The United Nations and its Member States should redouble their efforts to improve ICTs and their development applications to introduce and support e-government. Advisory and technical support for Member States, including middle-income countries, must continue with a view to enabling them to improve

the competiveness of their economies. More broadly, ICTs should be considered as part of the wider issue of affording access to a variety of technologies in order to guarantee sustainable development.

59. **Mr. Mukerji** (India) said that while developing countries could make use of ICTs to enhance their governance reach and capacities and maximize limited resources to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth, a digital divide between developed and developing countries persisted. That was evident not only in mobile and Internet penetration rates but also in the gender gap in Internet access in developing countries. ICT could significantly empower women as force-multipliers in society by helping them to transform a variety of sectors, including education, health care and energy.

60. His Government had recently launched "Digital India", a programme designed to transform the country into a digitally empowered society and a knowledge economy using ICT as an engine across nine growth areas. The programme envisaged high-speed Internet as a core utility in all village assemblies and would promote universal digital literacy and cradle-to-grave digital identity along with the provision of all government services in real time from online and mobile platforms.

61. In the spirit of the Tunis Agenda, the Internet should not be managed as private property. Its governance and architecture should reflect its global and democratic nature. In conclusion, he said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 68/302 on modalities for the overall review by the General Assembly of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and looked forward to the review process.

62. **Mr. Shava** (Zimbabwe) said that ICT development and acquisition by developing countries must be a priority in the post-2015 development agenda. It was deeply disconcerting that the digital divide between developed and developing countries remained wide, particularly in terms of availability, affordability, quality of access and broadband connectivity. The United Nations and development agencies had a critical role to play in building the capacities of Governments and the private sector in developing countries to the point where information technology industries could produce affordable IT

products and services. Financial and technical support was also needed to help developing countries build, expand and maintain their ICT infrastructure.

63. ICTs would be deemed positive if they led to tangible positive outcomes such as poverty reduction, inclusive and sustained growth, job creation and social cohesion. People in the developing world must economically benefit from the use of ICT tools through human capital development, higher productivity and commensurate incomes.

64. In Zimbabwe, between 2011 and 2013, Internet subscribers rose from 2 million to 5.2 million, while the teledensity rate for both mobile and fixed-line telephones increased from 75 per cent to 91 per cent. His Government was working on fibre-optic cable projects to link all major cities and towns but the development of the Internet and broadband services was hindered by financial constraints and Zimbabwe's situation as a landlocked country. Meeting the July 2015 deadline set by ITU for transition to digital broadcasting was a key priority for his Government. Zimbabwe would welcome support to that end since it was unlikely that that goal would be achieved.

65. Regional and international cooperation was needed so that developing countries had full access to ICT in order to facilitate their active participation and integration into the global economy and to harness the full benefits of globalization. However, the potential use of ICT for purposes that were inconsistent with maintaining international stability and security or that could adversely affect the territorial integrity of States must be prevented.

66. **Mr. Momita** (Japan) said that Japan's commitment to international economic cooperation was evident from the statement delivered by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during the general debate of the plenary Assembly. The most important aspect of the fight against poverty was the cultivation of a sense of ownership and the encouragement of self-help efforts. With women's empowerment, the attainment of development goals would be that much more within reach.

67. An important phase in the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda was about to begin. Japan had participated actively in the review processes that would serve as inputs to the Secretary-General's comprehensive and ambitious synthesis report on which. intergovernmental negotiations could build.

Financing for development was separate from but closely related to the post-2015 development agenda; coordination between the two processes would help to minimize duplication of efforts, without prejudice to the outcomes of either.

68.   The outcome of the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in March 2015 in Sendai, Japan, would be a significant contribution to the post-2015 development agenda. Even though negotiations on that agenda were not complete, it was time to think about how it should be implemented in future. The Second Committee might need to introduce some reforms, for example by streamlining its agenda and resolutions that were duplicative with the post-2015 development agenda.

69.   **Ms. Suthimanus** (Thailand) said that Thailand attached great importance to the role of ICTs as a key driver and enabler of sustainable development. In spite of the efforts of Governments to develop national ICT policies, particularly in developing countries which had the fastest growth in Internet usage, sizeable gaps in ICT development remained. The Secretary-General's report therefore suggested that all stakeholders had important roles to play.

70.   Her Government had been implementing the "Smart Thailand" policy, which comprised Smart Network, Smart Government and Smart Business and was intended to increase public sector efficiency, boost private sector competitiveness, and improve people's quality of life by using ICTs in all aspects of development. The report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals addressed the issue of technology in the targets under proposed goal 17 on the means of implementation. The United Nations and international agencies had begun preparing for the 10-year review of the World Summit to be undertaken by the General Assembly in 2015, alongside the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. That review should address the interlinkages between ICTs and development to ensure rights-based development, job creation, entrepreneurial opportunities, high-quality education, women's empowerment and other benefits.

71.   Thailand had highlighted the role of ICTs in development in two areas where it could share experiences and expertise with others. The first of those areas was food security. Thailand had led and coordinated the ASEAN Food Security Information

System to strengthen food security in the region through the analysis and dissemination of food security-related information. The second area was disaster risk management. Thailand utilized ICT networks for disaster monitoring and warning systems as well as post-disaster management to ensure community resilience to tsunamis and other natural disasters. Thailand had initiated the Multi-Donor Trust Fund of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which supported early warning systems. Thailand had organized, in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union, the "Connect Asia-Pacific Summit 2013" in Bangkok, part of the ITU "Connect the World" series, as well as ITU Telecom World 2013. It had also organized the "Smart Thailand 2020" exhibition under the concept "ICT Shift the Future of Thailand" a strategy that would improve quality of life, education, business and industry, energy and environment, entrepreneurship and creative industries in Thailand.

72.   ICTs would be a key means of implementation in the post-2015 development agenda. Her delegation hoped that Member States would make every effort to bridge the digital divide between developing and developed countries as well as between and within regions. Thailand was a candidate for re-election to the ITU Council. It had been an active member of the Council since 1973 and supported the work of ITU, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), UNESCO, UNCTAD, ESCAP and other United Nations agencies in building ICT capacity to promote sustainable development and universal access to knowledge.

73.   **Mr. Achargui** (Morocco) said that spectacular advances had been made in the area of ICTs since the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society. The market for certain products, such as mobile telephones, was saturated in developed countries but had spread and diversified worldwide. ICTs were now omnipresent in homes, workplaces and schools. They had also opened up rural, remote and mountainous areas in developing countries but remained costly and were often used only for telephone calls. Appropriate strategies were needed to promote connectivity and optimize ICT use, including in efforts to reduce illiteracy and digital illiteracy. However, hopes that ICT use would become universal and democratic had been frustrated by inequitable access to new

technologies and the digital divide between developed and developing countries.

74. ICTs could boost socioeconomic development by improving education systems, health care, administrative services, productivity, e-commerce and job creation. They could also strengthen the right of access to information, freedom of expression and human rights. However, developing countries faced difficulties such as insufficient human and material resources and the weakness or absence of institutions capable of making the most of ICTs.

75. ICTs could play a pivotal role in the transition to the information and knowledge society if appropriate policies were in place to manage the digital revolution. In 2005, King Mohammed VI of Morocco had launched the *e-Maroc 2010* strategy which had led to an increase in the use of the Internet and telephones, especially mobile telephones. The strategy had focused on reforming the telecommunications sector and starting up e-education, e-government and e-commerce. In 2009, emboldened by the success of that initiative, Morocco had launched the *Maroc Numeric 2013* strategy to give citizens broadband Internet access; launch an e-government programme to make the administration more accessible to users; promote the computerization of small and medium-sized enterprises; and develop the information technology industry. The Moroccan ICT industry had since attained a turnover of around $4 billion in 2013.

76. **Ms. Ali** (Bahrain) said that Bahrain had made significant progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including target 8.F on making available the benefits of new technologies, including ICTs. To that end, Bahrain had established the National ICT e-Governance Committee and the e-Government Authority, which ensured that public services were provided efficiently to citizens, residents, businessmen and visitors. Furthermore, the public could now access services provided by ministries and other government agencies by visiting a one-stop shop government website. That website could be accessed 24 hours a day and had significantly reduced the number of people visiting government offices in person.

77. Bahrain had been awarded two United Nations Public Service Awards in 2014: its National Contact Centre had been ranked first in the Western Asia region in the *Promoting Whole of Government Approaches in*

the Information Age category and the National Health Information System had been ranked second in the region in the *Improving the Delivery of Public Services* category. According to the 2014 United Nations e-government survey, Bahrain's e-Government Development Index was the highest among Arab and Middle Eastern countries and the 18th highest globally. For the third consecutive year, Bahrain had been ranked one of the eight top countries in terms of online service delivery. Although it was proud of those achievements, the e-Government Authority was working to further enhance the provision of e-services and would continue to work with the United Nations to that end.

78. **Mr. Xie** Xiaowu (China) said that progress in ICT had brought tremendous economic and social benefits worldwide but the digital divide between developed and developing countries was ever-widening and was seriously hampering development in certain areas. The international community should bear in mind the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, enhance the roles of ICTs in the post-2015 development agenda and increase technical assistance to developing countries so that all of humanity could benefit from the advancement of ICTs. United Nations entities such as ITU, UNESCO and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) should continue their significant contribution to the area of ICTs for development while also maximizing their expertise and coordination.

79. Internet use in China had grown exponentially over the past 20 years. There were currently over 600 million Internet users in China and nearly 3 billion websites, while 500 million people in China accessed the Internet using mobile phones. E-commerce sales in the first half of the year had reached 5.66 trillion RMB. Four of the world's top 10 Internet companies were Chinese. The Chinese Internet industry had been growing at an annual rate of 30 per cent and that was due to a strategy that prioritized development and adherence to openness, cooperation and mutually beneficial partnerships. China had also developed an effective approach to freedom and order, development and security, international public order and respect for the national laws of other countries.

80. **Mr. Gone** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that his Government had put in place a strategy to make Côte d'Ivoire an emerging economy by 2020, in part through a digital revolution that involved extending digital

coverage even to isolated areas and connecting to the pan-African online services network to access computer applications in the areas of education, health care, commerce and agriculture; Côte d'Ivoire had also reopened its ICT graduate school to provide the country with high-quality human resources and set up an e-government system to improve the quality of public services.

81. His Government had also put in place a new regulatory environment for the ICT market with a view to protecting consumer rights, including laws on e-commerce, personal data protection, cybersecurity, addressing in cyberspace and the identification of cybercafés. New government bodies had also been established to monitor compliance with those laws. The development of the ICT sector, and rapid growth in mobile telephony in particular, had made life more convenient for the people and expanded the national economy, with a turnover exceeding $1.6 billion in 2013 and a share of GDP of around 5 per cent. The number of subscribers had grown from 400,000 in 1998 to over 19.5 million in 2013. Communication quality had improved and services had diversified, while costs had fallen sharply and data rates had increased following the granting of third-generation licences and the construction of a broadband transmission infrastructure.

82. ICTs could potentially make a huge contribution to poverty eradication, but the digital divide between developed and developing countries remained wide. To achieve sustainable development for all, developing countries required assistance to provide affordable ICT access to their people. ICTs should be considered a key component of innovative development solutions in the post-2015 development agenda and Côte d'Ivoire therefore welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 68/302, entitled "Modalities for the overall review by the General Assembly of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society".

83. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the global development landscape was changing and ICTs could be a catalyst for development in every country as they could boost innovation and enhance productivity. Full implementation of the outcomes of both the Geneva and the Tunis phases of the World Summit on the Information Society would address the issue of the digital divide between and within countries, and the provisions on Internet governance

were of particular importance. All Governments needed to have equal responsibilities for ICT-related issues.

84. The General Assembly should consider the outcomes of the World Summit in order to build synergies between the post-2015 development agenda and its 10-year review and follow-up; for that reason, his delegation had supported the adoption of resolution 68/302 sponsored by the Group of 77 and China. As the primary body for conducting that review, the General Assembly should not rely solely on the Commission on Science and Technology for Development but also on submissions from Member and observer States. His delegation also supported the call by the United Nations Group on the Information Society for the World Summit review output to be an input into the process of defining the post-2015 development agenda.

85. The Islamic Republic of Iran had sought to narrow its internal digital divide by means of programmes intended to provide easy access to computer resources. Since the beginning of the country's fifth development plan in 2011, the ICT Ministry had set up the infrastructure required to provide electronic services such as e-learning, e-banking and e-commerce, as well as health services, while drawing on domestic resources and preserving Iranian-Islamic traditions and culture. The ICT budget of the Islamic Republic of Iran stood at $1.36 billion, representing 1.65 per cent of the total budget.

86. **Mr. Lorenzo** (Dominican Republic) said that advances in broadband technology had transformed the way the international community could achieve the sustainable development goals. Governments, the private sector and civil society could henceforth make use of tools that would facilitate human development in unprecedented ways and at unprecedented speeds in critical areas such as employment, education, public health and transport. New ICT developments such as smart mobility, social networks, cloud computing and big data analysis were driving forward the digital revolution. Growing interconnectedness between people, information and ideas was impacting the global economy and causing a paradigm shift from a supply-driven market to a demand-driven one owing to Internet users' insatiable demand for the latest information.

87. There were now over 6.8 billion mobile telephone subscribers worldwide and in the Dominican Republic, there had been around 10 million subscribers in 2013. However, many remote and rural areas in developing countries lacked mobile telephone coverage and many citizens could not afford mobile telephones. His Government saw that as an opportunity to democratize access to cutting-edge technologies and had accordingly set up training programmes on basic technological skills designed, inter alia, to empower vulnerable groups, in particular persons with disabilities. The Government had also set up specialized digital rooms in the one-stop service centre for persons with disabilities for the purpose of introducing differently abled children to ICTs and thereby providing them with education, health and psychological support services. Furthermore, the Government had forged strategic alliances with various economic and technological sectors in order to boost the technical skills required to increase productivity and competitiveness, and broaden the range of job opportunities available to Dominicans.

88. Digital health care, defined as a combination of electronic health care and mobile health care, was revolutionizing the quality and accessibility of public services worldwide. Innovations such as electronic health records, human-machine interfaces, molecular and cellular imaging and videoconferencing were making a difference in hospitals and clinics everywhere. Similarly, digital education was transforming teaching and learning, and e-learning was democratizing higher education by expanding remote teaching.

89. ICTs should be approached not in isolation but as a component of a much larger vision of how to harness technology as a development tool. The ICT development approach should therefore be placed in the context of renewable energy, efforts to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, the creation of environmentally friendly and socially inclusive employment, food security and sustainable agriculture, water, oceans, trade, financing for development, international cooperation and especially South-South cooperation, since increasing trade and foreign direct investment between developing countries had transformed the global economy.

90. The International Telecommunication Union had played an important role in facilitating the achievement of the MDGs by means of a focus on connecting the world, and ensuring that ICTs would be a key component of the sustainable development goals. His Government was also committed to the expansion of wireless technologies, in the hope that broadband services would contribute to growth in the Dominican Republic while benefiting the global economy within the framework of South-South cooperation.

91. **Mr. Chinyonga** (Zambia), speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that more than half of landlocked developing countries were also least developed countries, and more than 20 percent of the nearly 450 million inhabitants of landlocked developing countries lived on less than $1.25 per person per day. Hunger and malnutrition were a constant challenge for most of those countries, which also faced geographical constraints since they were dependent on trade and transport systems in neighbouring and coastal countries. Owing to the poor state of infrastructure, those geographical liabilities generated high transaction and information costs and impeded trade and financial integration with the rest of the world. Being on the fringes of the global economy, landlocked developing countries lagged behind in overall development. In addition, because of their remoteness, they were less frequent beneficiaries of financial flows, in particular foreign direct investment. However, landlocked developing countries should not view their landlocked status with resignation since a significant proportion of their disadvantage could be offset through improvements to their own infrastructure as well as that of their transit countries. Most importantly, landlocked developing countries should structurally transform their economies, and promote industrialization and value addition. ICTs were one of the options for adapting to the geographical hurdle.

92. In the run-up to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, it was time to assess what had been achieved under the Almaty Programme of Action. Challenges with regard to transit policies and infrastructure needed to be tackled at the bilateral and regional levels, with the support of development partners and the international community. Landlocked developing countries should therefore be given priority. A holistic and result-oriented 10- year programme of action with innovative support measures would assist landlocked developing countries and strengthen their collaboration with transit countries and development partners. In that context,

ICTs were enablers of economic development and investment, with positive effects on employment and social welfare.

93. Speaking in his national capacity, he said that his Government had continued to promote growth in the ICT sector. Customs duty on telecommunications equipment had been waived and that had resulted in the installation of mobile communication towers in around 169 rural chiefdoms. That number was expected to double in 2015. Mobile telephones were being used to transmit medical information and images to referral hospitals for analysis. His Government also supported the call for technical assistance and capacity-building for the prevention, prosecution and punishment of the use of ICTs for criminal purposes. The high cost of service provision, limited broadband infrastructure, poor utilization of ICTs in public service delivery, and limited commercial use of ICTs by the private sector were other challenges that would have to be addressed. The expansion of ICT infrastructure especially in rural areas was therefore one of the focus areas in Zambia's medium-term plan. His Government was mainstreaming ICTs in agriculture, health and education in order to promote innovation and accelerate development.

94. **Mr. Fowlie** (International Telecommunication Union (ITU)) said that ICTs were an essential feature of modern life and drove innovation and economic growth. Affordable technology and a reliable ICT infrastructure were prerequisites for social equity and economic productivity. The potential of ICTs for development had been missed in the MDGs but they deserved a prominent role in the future sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda. Nonetheless, only four of the 17 proposed sustainable development goals reflected the role of ICTs. A systematic approach to integrating ICTs as a means of implementation was still lacking. Broadband should be explicitly included among the means of implementation of most, if not all, of the proposed goals.

95. At least 10 of the other goals might benefit from the enabling potential of broadband. ICTs were essential for reducing poverty, hunger and food insecurity; for combating climate change; for industrialization; for equality among nations; for preserving cultural diversity; for creating sustainable consumption and production patterns; and for upholding the rule of law. The international community should therefore acknowledge the unique role of ICTs and broadband as a means of implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and should reflect that role in the final outcome.

96. **Ms. Kovacs** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that she was pleased to share the outcomes of the thirteenth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, which had contributed to the FAO-led discussions on the International Year of Family Farming, with a focus on supporting programmes dealing with food security, resilient livelihoods and family farming. Strong inter-agency collaboration was needed to address such issues as awareness-raising on the benefits of communication for development; capacity-building efforts at the country programme level; the use of a collective communication for development strategy in policy advocacy; and networking of the communication for development sector within and beyond the United Nations system. Communication for development could play an important role in the post-2015 development agenda as well as in dealing with emergencies such as the current Ebola outbreak. The United Nations Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development was the only mechanism enabling exchanges between United Nations agencies and partners outside the United Nations system. As participating agencies were interested in exploring new forms of communication and advocacy, the Round Table had agreed to establish a United Nations Communication for Development Technical Working Group. An interim secretariat led by FAO, UNESCO and UNICEF would facilitate the establishment of the Working Group, provide communication tools such as a website and a formal network of specialists, and encourage agency participation. The Round Table had called for mainstreaming of communication for development to facilitate multilateral planning and the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.