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Chair: Mr. Carrillo Gómez (Vice-Chair) (Paraguay)

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In the absence of Mr. Logar (Slovenia), Mr. Carrillo Gómez (Paraguay), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 17: Information and communications technologies for development (A/70/63-E/2015/10, A/70/360 and A/C.2/70.2)

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 (WSIS) at the regional and international levels (A/70/63-E/2015/10), said that 2015 was a crucial year for the WSIS process, marking the culmination of the 10-year review of progress made in implementing the WSIS outcomes. The report included input from 27 United Nations and other international organizations and stakeholders, and covered a broad range of activities that had been planned or undertaken by United Nations entities and other stakeholders in 2014.

2. It was noted in the report that the WSIS target that half the world's population should have access to information and communications technologies (ICTs) should be achieved by the end of 2016. Over 90 per cent of the world's population was covered by mobile networks and the number of mobile subscriptions was almost equal to the world's population. Nevertheless, the digital divide between developed and developing countries continued to have an impact on how different people and countries benefited from the information society. For example, 81 per cent of households in developed countries had Internet access, compared with only 34 per cent in developing countries and 11 per cent in African countries. A similar divide existed with regard to mobile broadband connections, which were available to 87 per cent of the population in developed countries and only 39 per cent in developing countries.

3. The rapid pace of change in ICTs had given rise to new services and new opportunities, including more flexible mobile devices, the shifting of data and applications to the cloud and cloud-based services, more extensive use of big data analysis and open data, and the emerging Internet of things, which would greatly expand the data available to enhance development opportunities. Those developments also posed substantial challenges to policy and regulation,

however, especially in terms of pressure on the radio spectrum, and raised concerns about data protection, privacy and data sovereignty.

4. The report on the 10-year review of implementation of WSIS outcomes had been prepared by the secretariat of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) at its eighteenth session in May 2015. Based on online and face-to-face consultations, previous reviews and relevant literature, the report drew attention to the considerable progress made, especially in increasing access to ICTs and reducing the digital divide with regard to basic services. Challenges remained, however, especially concerning the affordability of access to broadband services, the specific needs of least developed countries, the persistent gender divide in ICT use, and the need to ensure full inclusiveness for economically and socially marginalized groups.

5. The outcome documents of WSIS continued to provide a solid foundation for shaping the information society and proved that the vision adopted at the World Summit was still valid. Rapid change and innovation since then had brought new opportunities and challenges, however, and the international community should reflect on priorities and adjust, where appropriate, the implementation of WSIS outcomes without revising decisions that had been taken at the Summit.

6. It was important to focus on the post-2015 development needs of developing countries. Priority should be given to international cooperation between developed and developing countries, especially least developed countries and landlocked developing countries. As there was a significant cost to investing in ICTs, financing mechanisms were crucial. Developing countries had asked for recommendations on ways to enhance financing to implement WSIS outcomes and ensure robust financial and technical assistance.

7. **Ms. Mafole** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that ICTs had had a tremendous impact on the economies, education, health care, culture and politics of developing countries, and would only gain in influence as capabilities were expanded. While there had been encouraging growth in the adoption and use of ICTs in both developed and developing countries, the prevailing digital divides between and within countries still gave cause for

concern. Although fixed and mobile broadband connections remained much more widely available and affordable in developed than developing countries, rural areas continued to have little broadband access in most countries, which could make it impossible to harness the potential of ICTs as useful tools and enablers for development. It was disconcerting that new divides appeared to be growing with regard to access to broadband networks and the services they enabled; the gender gap in ICT access and use also needed to be addressed. At the global level, it was important for all countries, and especially developing countries, to participate as equal partners in the discussions and decisions regarding ICTs for development.

8. ICTs had been recognized as essential development enablers in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The potential impact of ICTs on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was significant; it was therefore essential to invest in capacity-building and education. The contribution of ICTs to development in areas such as health, education, agricultural development, early warning systems, responses to the impact of climate change, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian action had been considerable and continued to grow. It was necessary to build the capacity of developing countries if the full potential of ICTs was to be leveraged and harnessed in the implementation of sustainable development.

9. **Ms. Ibrahim** (Brunei Darussalam), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ICTs were a key driver for all aspects of nation-building, including development and economic and social growth; they were therefore an essential instrument to connect ASEAN countries with mainstream global development. ICTs had played a crucial role in the progress made on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and would continue to be important in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. ASEAN welcomed the inclusion of target 9.c under Goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals. There was an urgent need to bridge the digital divide between developed and developing countries by harnessing the full potential of ICTs, which had become an intrinsic part of everyday life.

10. ASEAN remained concerned about the digital divide and about the socioeconomic gap between

developed and developing countries that had yet to be addressed. The WSIS+10 review process should therefore address the challenges that had hampered the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, with a view to building a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society.

11. ASEAN continued to prioritize efforts to bridge the digital gap and ensure that all communities and businesses could benefit from ICTs. Both developing and developed countries, in close partnership with relevant stakeholders, should pay particular attention to the ICT challenges facing developing countries, including those in Africa, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and middle-income countries, in terms of both socioeconomic development and technology capacity.

12. The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) would be established at the end of 2015. ASEAN reaffirmed its commitment to regional economic integration, welcoming the use of ICT to narrow the development gap within and between Member States. As a robust ICT infrastructure would foster an innovative, inclusive and integrated community, ASEAN continued to develop and promote ICTs in the region, including through the implementation of the ICT-related initiatives in the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity. ASEAN had upgraded mobile, satellite and Internet lines throughout the region to enhance communication networks and was thus on track to complete the ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2015. It would continue to build upon the positive progress made through that Plan to plot its post-2015 vision and further enhance innovative use of ICTs for sustainable economic development.

13. ASEAN appreciated the ongoing efforts of United Nations bodies, especially the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to bridge the digital divide and promote the use of ICTs to fuel productivity, improve e-learning and strengthen development in developing countries. The United Nations and its agencies played a vital role in promoting and expanding ICT development. ASEAN reaffirmed its commitment to building a truly global information society for the benefit of all.

14. **Mr. Charles** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that CARICOM welcomed the progress made with

regard to the implementation of the WSIS action areas at the regional and international levels, but noted that further work was needed to identify and overcome barriers to the development, dissemination and use of ICTs with a view to overcoming the digital divide between and within countries. Moreover, a significant amount of work remained to be done in order to address growing challenges in the field of cybersecurity and emerging challenges in the limited use of cloud networking as the result of unreliable or unavailable broadband access in developing countries, as well as the continued gender divide in access to ICTs.

15. CARICOM looked forward to closer integration of WSIS action lines with the 2030 Agenda at all levels: it agreed that more attention must be paid to measuring and assessing the development impact of ICTs at the national and international levels in order to help States to design policy tools to effectively leverage ICTs in support of development. Significant work had been done by the Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean and by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to develop indicators and support ICT measurements in the region.

16. The Sustainable Development Goals laid the basis for close interlinkages between ICT development and the attainment of goals on education, gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and fostering innovation. The timing of the review should therefore allow for improving policy and measurement tools, which would strengthen the ability of Governments and individuals to realize the full potential of ICTs for the achievement of the Goals.

17. The CARICOM Governments were endeavouring to make the Caribbean subregion a single ICT space, but additional efforts were needed to achieve that objective, particularly with regard to further liberalization of the telecommunications sector, where many challenges persisted. To help transform the region into a knowledge-based society, a regional vision for a Caribbean Information Society had been elaborated, and 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 infrastructure for broadband connectivity. There was also a need for the establishment of regional legal

frameworks and enforcement, as well as for greater research, public awareness and capacity-building. Additional assistance from the Community's bilateral and multilateral partners, and from non-governmental organizations and the United Nations, including through technical expertise for capacity-building, would be required in order to assist efforts already underway. A multi-stakeholder approach was necessary at all levels in order to ensure that policy decisions reflected the needs and realities of a rapidly evolving sector.

18. 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 including smart climate monitoring. It welcomed the work of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on energy, smart grids and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, and the joint work of ITU, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Meteorological Organization on climate monitoring and disaster warning systems and called for closer linkages between environmental issues and WSIS action areas.

19. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that, as highlighted in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action and in the 2005 Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, the least developed countries needed coordinated assistance in their efforts to establish telecommunication infrastructure; service providers should be encouraged to provide commercial Internet service in least developed countries at reduced cost, considering the constraints faced by those countries. The Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 had set the target of providing access to the Internet for everyone in least developed countries by 2020. However, only 5 per cent of households in the least developed countries currently had Internet access and with very few exceptions, most of the poorest countries had very little broadband access in rural areas. With the rapid advent of new technologies, there was a strong probability that the digital divide would continue to grow and that the least developed countries would lag even further behind.

20. Although the least developed countries had been striving to fulfil their part of the commitments made in the Istanbul Programme of Action relating to ICTs, and had adopted modern and relevant ICT policies commensurate with their national realities, international cooperation was still crucial for ensuring necessary infrastructure set-up and the transfer of appropriate technology. The least developed countries called on the international community, international organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders to provide meaningful assistance to them in building and strengthening ICT infrastructure. The concerns and constraints of least developed countries had not been adequately reflected in the WSIS documents or various other United Nations reports. As the least developed countries constituted almost 25 per cent of the membership of the United Nations, it was important for them to be included in the process for the implementation of the concept of the information society; the Group of Least Developed Countries requested that the Secretary-General address that concern in future reports. While the least developed countries were ready to engage on the issue of ICTs for development, the international community, including development partners, must fulfil their commitment of helping least developed countries to eradicate poverty, strengthen productive capacity, and build durable physical and ICT infrastructure.

21. **Mr. Sareer** (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that although ICTs and Internet connectivity had seen an unprecedented rise since 2003, access and deployment were uneven, and the digital divide between developed and developing countries continued to grow. Lack of access to affordable and reliable technologies remained a key challenge for developing countries, especially small island developing States. While ICTs had long been recognized as key enablers of socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability, it was necessary to ensure that the vulnerable could take advantage of ICT progress and fulfil their developmental aspirations. For small island developing States, harnessing technological innovation and ensuring universal access had huge implications.

22. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda was closely linked with increased access to ICTs; innovation must be harnessed to ensure that outcomes were leveraged for sustainable development. ICTs played a role in many social sectors, including

education, jobs creation, youth employment and economic sustainability. However, high transaction costs made it very difficult for small island developing States to invest in technology infrastructure. To that end, his delegation recalled the commitment made in paragraph 111 of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway to support the efforts of small island developing States to gain access to modern and environmentally sound technologies and to increase connectivity and the use of ICTs through improved infrastructure, training and national legislation, as well as public and private sector involvement.

23. ICTs had a huge role to play in the eradication of poverty by building livelihood assets, both tangible and intangible, and securing long-term employment opportunities in rural areas, including through the creation of microenterprises. As connectivity bridged gaps and provided access to public services to large populations across diverse sectors, it was necessary to keep implementing communication technologies in the fight against poverty.

24. ICTs were also crucial for climate change and disaster risk management. As small island developing States faced many financial and non-financial costs due to natural disasters, it was imperative to minimize risks and to leverage innovation by developing ICT networks, early warning systems, remote sensing, computer-based mapping systems and wireless technologies. In that regard, the mobilization of public finance was critical for providing coordinated assistance to groups of countries in special situations, including small island developing States.

25. The digital divide remained a complex — and growing — challenge for developing countries, as access to information did not inherently result in knowledge, if the data received could not be interpreted. The divide would only be bridged when content and technology were geared towards local needs and priorities while enhancing the capabilities of end users to use data productively. AOSIS supported the establishment of national and regional ICT platforms and information dissemination hubs to facilitate the exchange of experiences and capacities and enhance knowledge sharing. Regional access to information on best practices, policy mechanisms and programmes for disaster risk reduction was crucial for small island developing States to effectively respond to natural disasters and environmental hazards.

26. Due to their limited capacity, small island developing States had always struggled to find a seat at the table to discuss ICTs. However, participation in that discussion must be transparent and equitable, with all concerned parties being adequately heard. The issue of ICTs could not be examined in a vacuum: concrete ways to collectively mainstream ICTs in efforts towards sustainable development must be found.

27. **Ms. Chanda** (Zambia), speaking on behalf of the 32 landlocked developing countries, said that if they were fully harnessed, ICTs could help address the economic, social and environmental challenges faced by landlocked developing countries. The broad application of ICTs to reduce paperwork during customs clearance and border crossing and the use of e-payments and e-tracking of shipments could significantly accelerate the flow of goods and services across national borders, lower the trading costs faced by landlocked developing countries and promote further international trade. Increased use of ICT-enhanced single windows and the Automated System for Customs Data had greatly improved customs clearance and procedures.

28. Although ICTs could seem like a silver bullet for the development problems of landlocked developing countries, helping increase competitiveness and productivity through more efficient production, enhance disaster response, and improve the delivery of health care, education and other social services, while also promoting jobs creation and micro-entrepreneurship, those potential benefits could not be realized at current ICT levels in those countries. While the percentage of people in landlocked developing countries using the Internet had increased from 2.2 per cent in 2003 to 20.6 per cent in 2013, that rate was still much lower than the average of the developing world and of the world as a whole. The constraint to the full use of ICTs in landlocked developing countries was the higher cost of those technologies; broadband costs, as a share of gross national income (GNI), were much higher in landlocked developing countries than in coastal countries located close to submarine communications cables.

29. Priority 2 of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade, infrastructure development and maintenance, outlined specific objectives to be accomplished by landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and

development partners. The 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda also accorded great importance to ICTs, and must be implemented. The landlocked developing countries called on development partners, South-South partners, development banks and the private sector to support investments in their ICT sectors and help close the digital divide; and called on the United Nations system and other international organizations to provide more and better targeted technical assistance to support accelerated ICT development in landlocked developing countries. As data on ICTs was crucial for monitoring progress, her delegation called upon ITU to include the landlocked developing countries as a subcategory in its statistical calculations.

30. **Mr. Parenti** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, Iceland, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that ICTs and the Internet were drivers of innovation and economic growth, and facilitated people's right to freedom of expression and access to information, thus presenting new opportunities for building an inclusive information society and implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

31. The European Union and its member States attached great importance to the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance and to the fundamental aim of WSIS of using technology to improve people's lives and bridge the digital divide. As recognized in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, ICTs were development enablers. Greater global adoption of ICTs was revolutionizing health care, education, government and commerce. The high-level meeting of the General Assembly in December 2015 would be an important opportunity to align the WSIS agenda with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

32. The European Union and its member States continued to support the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), as well as the work underway to improve IGF and implement the recommendations of the working group on improvements to the Internet Governance Forum, including the recommendations concerning the sustainability of its funding and ensuring that its outcomes were more visible and could be taken forward by other relevant forums.

33. **Mr. Shalev-Schlosser** (Israel) said that the previous decade had seen remarkable evolution and diffusion in ICTs, which had penetrated nearly every corner of the globe and every facet of daily life, revolutionizing interactions, travel and business. Unlike traditional finite resources that ran the risk of being depleted, the knowledge fuelling ICTs was democratic and potentially limitless. Knowledge was no longer geographically limited but could be shared instantly with people on the other side of the globe.

34. Although over 3 billion people had some form of access to the Internet in 2015, far too many people remained without connectivity: lack of access to the Internet and ICTs meant increased isolation and ever greater poverty. Addressing the digital divide by developing, using and applying ICTs was of the utmost importance in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure that no one was left behind.

35. The progress witnessed over the past decade had been the result of cooperation between Governments and the private sector and of an environment conducive to ICT investment, allowing for the proliferation of new technologies and the rapid expansion of public access. In order to connect those left behind, Governments, private enterprise, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international institutions must all work together.

36. Israel knew first-hand how important ICTs were to development. As a country without an abundance of natural resources, in the course of its 67 years Israel had been transformed thanks to hard work, entrepreneurial determination and directed investment, and had a well-earned reputation for technological innovation that had helped the developing world. In the 1960s, Israel had developed a revolutionary system of drip irrigation that had fundamentally altered world agriculture by significantly reducing the amount of water needed to raise crops. It was currently providing monitoring software to water utilities around the world, providing real-time detection and control over networks which would save farmers time, money and water. As smallholder farmers produced 70 per cent of the world's food supply, that innovation would have a domino effect around the globe. The next step in the ICT revolution was the Internet of things, in which Israel was ready to play a central role.

37. **Ms. Voronovich** (Belarus) said that the United Nations should continue to play a prominent role in helping States to develop ICTs and use them to enhance efficiency and transparency. Her Government welcomed the provision of advisory and technical assistance to Member States in developing e-governance and facilitating the exchange of technological innovations while promoting increased competitiveness, all of which was important for all States, including middle-income countries.

38. There was a continued need to bridge the digital divide both between developed and developing countries, and between different social and demographic groups within countries. Efforts should be directed at promoting standardization between countries and ensuring the compatibility of new technologies and equal access to ICT innovations; such had been the focus of the 79th meeting of the International Electrotechnical Commission, held in October 2015 in Minsk.

39. As Belarus had invested in infrastructure development and increased Internet access, the country was now 38th in the ITU ICT Development Index and had completed a full transition to digitalization ahead of schedule. Her country was also one of the sponsors of the recently adopted Connect 2020 Agenda for Global Telecommunications/ICT Development of ITU. Her Government believed that the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) should be involved in the process of implementing WSIS outcomes to ensure that developing countries gained access to innovative developments.

40. The reliability and accessibility of Internet infrastructure was an increasingly relevant issue, including in the context of ensuring sustainable development. It was important to strengthen international cooperation, with a key role played by the United Nations and ITU in the transition to Internet Protocol Version 6, broadband access, and the fair use of the geostationary orbit. In view of the increasing penetration of ICTs in all spheres of life and of the economy, the issue of ensuring security in cyberspace and minimizing risks was extremely important; there was a need for an international agreement on ICT security and also the development of an international structure in which all States could participate in formulating global policy on an equal footing. In view of the increasing penetration of the Internet and the growing dependence on its reliability, predictability

and accessibility, Internet governance must be conducted by the international community on a non-discriminatory basis with the equal participation of all States, and must be understandable, transparent and predictable.

41. **Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka) said that ICTs were a catalyst for economic and social development, with critical spin-offs for employment generation and wealth creation; access to the Internet for everyone could therefore enable great societal and economic gains and pave the way to sustainable development. The rapid growth in the adoption and use of ICTs across the globe had accelerated development and shortened global distances. Despite such positive indicators, however, the continuing digital divide and the gap in broadband access between developed and developing countries did not augur well for sustainable development. Mobilizing resources for investment in ICT diffusion therefore remained one of the main challenges for developing countries. Although the global community had been successful in rapidly deploying broadband access to more than 2 billion people over the previous decade, continued investment would be crucial to reach billions more.

42. As ICTs were a cross-cutting element in all the Sustainable Development Goals, the WSIS action lines must build synergies with the 2030 Agenda to bridge the digital divide between developed and developing States. While international cooperation was required, carefully crafted national policies and strategies should also contribute to narrowing the divide.

43. Sri Lanka's IT literacy had grown steadily from 3 per cent in 2005 to almost 50 per cent in 2014, thanks to the implementation of a people-centred national policy. His country's national broadband policy was also narrowing the digital divide by providing citizens with free wireless Internet connections. Sri Lanka was now ranked 65th by World Economic Forum in its Networked Readiness Index 2015, leading South Asia and ranking in the top 10 economies in terms of affordability. As a multi-ethnic, multicultural society, Sri Lanka had also taken the lead in introducing multilingual Internet initiatives in keeping with the policy of encouraging multilingualism and creating technical conditions to facilitate the use of local languages on the Internet. It had also implemented a legal framework for e-governance and e-commerce, and had adopted the requisite legislation for electronic commercial

transactions based on model laws developed by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). In support of initiatives to build cyberspace security, Sri Lanka had become a State party to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime; the Convention had entered into force in Sri Lanka in September 2015. His country's e-Government policy and associated projects had driven growth in e-services, thus benefiting a large portion of the population. Consequently, Sri Lanka had advanced from 115th to 74th place in the 2014 United Nations E-Government Development Index.

44. **Mr. Castro Cordoba** (Costa Rica) said that the information society was a huge asset for human development, with access to and use of ICTs growing every day across the world. ICT innovations had greatly changed how Governments provided services, companies engaged with consumers and citizens participated in public and private life. Nonetheless, the digital divide continued to pose a significant obstacle to the implementation of the WSIS outcomes. Furthermore, policies must always take into account the need to empower women and reduce the gender gap, especially in least developed countries and most middle-income countries.

45. With regard to the outcomes of the World Summit, it was necessary to keep strengthening the multi-stakeholder approach and increase international cooperation, recognizing the central role of the private sector and of civil society, as well as the capacity-building needs of developing countries, in particular middle-income countries, in order to be integrated into global value chains. In that regard, synergies with the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism) were important.

46. His delegation was pleased that a section on human rights had been included in the zero draft, as an important cross-cutting theme. It believed that all human rights recognized offline should be recognized online as well. The laws and policies developed to put into effect that principle were of great importance, and synergies should be created between the WSIS follow-up process and the 2030 Agenda, as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. All human rights must be adequately reflected in the lines of action that were defined and in future international instruments. That coordination would contribute to the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

and the building of more peaceful and inclusive societies.

47. His delegation hoped that progress would be made in the consideration of means of implementation in order to expand access, build capacity to generate new content, and ensure open and safe access to the Internet. It was necessary to establish a conducive environment by promoting innovation, investment in sustainable infrastructure, and the development of public-private partnerships.

48. **Mr. Mokaya** (Kenya) stressed the importance of ICTs in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. ICTs played a significant role in socioeconomic development, enabling access to global markets, enhancing wealth creation and generating high quality employment, which eventually led to poverty reduction. Unfortunately, most developing countries had not achieved sufficient development of ICTs.

49. Kenya's national ICT policy, adopted in 2006, had been guided by the need for infrastructure and human resource development, stakeholder participation and an appropriate regulatory framework. A master plan developed under his Government's Vision 2030 programme aimed to create a legal and regulatory environment that was conducive to stimulating the growth of ICT-related businesses and had enhanced employment creation and socioeconomic growth. In 2009, his Government had completed the roll-out of the East African Marine System, which had shifted Internet resilience in almost the whole country from satellite to more efficient and reliable cable.

50. Kenya's mobile payments system, M-PESA, had been an extraordinary success, and had changed the banking system in the entire region and beyond. More broadly, collaboration of the mobile phone industry with the banking sector had resulted in new mobile banking products, revolutionizing banking in the region in a transformative and inclusive way. The contribution of the Internet to Kenya's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2014 had been more than double that of the rest of the continent. Over 50 per cent of Kenyans now had access to the Internet, primarily through mobile phones. His Government was creating a technology city as part of the Vision 2030 flagship programmes, with a view to creating an environment conducive to investment and jobs creation. His country would continue to develop its ICT sector in recognition of its crucial role in spurring sustainable development.

51. **Mr. Abebe** (Ethiopia) said that although ICTs had contributed to poverty reduction and the implementation of the MDGs, the existing digital and broadband divides between and within countries, particularly in Africa, could lead to missed economic opportunities. It was therefore imperative to take more concrete measures, including public and private investment, to further harness the full potential of ICTs to achieve the 2030 Agenda. As agreed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, both financial and capacity-building assistance must be enhanced, especially for least developed countries.

52. Ethiopia reaffirmed its conviction that a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society would contribute to poverty eradication and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals. His country had taken concrete steps to make ICTs a priority in its development planning, improve ICT infrastructure and harness ICT potential in agriculture, education and health. It had also implemented a national e-Government strategy to improve government services, with greater involvement of citizens and the private sector, and had also inaugurated Ethiopia's first Ethio-ICT Village to attract ICT sector investment. As a result, encouraging results had been achieved in expanding ICT infrastructure, mobile subscriptions, and Internet service and connectivity. Despite such progress, much remained to be done to harness ICT potential for inclusive economic growth; improving the access, quality and affordability of ICTs therefore remained a priority in the country's second Growth and Transformation Plan (2015-2020).

53. To address the challenges of the digital and broadband divides, cybersecurity issues, and the lack of national capacity as well as local content, the international community should ensure universal, inclusive and non-discriminatory access to information and knowledge related to ICTs. It was also important to support national efforts in developing countries, especially least developed countries, to strengthen local capacities and build knowledge economies. The information society must respect national and ethnic diversity. The global partnership should be further strengthened to harness the development potential of ICTs, and promote the development and use of ICT infrastructure and capacity-building.

54. **Ms. Butts** (United States of America) said that the WSIS+10 preparatory process had facilitated

discussion of the progress made in the implementation of WSIS outcomes, as well as the remaining challenges, including bridging the digital divide and harnessing ICTs for development. At the upcoming high-level meeting on WSIS+10 in December 2015, the international community should discuss the potential of ICTs to enable development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, reaffirm the WSIS principles and vision established a decade earlier, and recommit to creating a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society. Her delegation believed it was important to focus energies on WSIS+10 and not engage in discussions within the Second Committee that would duplicate or undermine the ability to achieve a significant consensus outcome at the high-level meeting.

55. The WSIS ten-year review should examine in detail the achievements of the previous decade, celebrate the multi-stakeholder efforts that had led to the development of the information society thus far and recognize that continued efforts by all stakeholders within the existing framework must aim to make the information society more tangible and accessible for all people, including the billions who still lacked access to ICTs.

56. ICTs were some of the most powerful tools for economic and social development: they transformed markets, created new industries, drove efficiency gains, improved health care services, broadened educational opportunities, empowered citizens and connected the world in ways that would have been unimaginable a decade prior. The economic benefits were widespread. Worldwide, the digital economy was growing 10 per cent a year, faster than the global economy as a whole. In developing countries, it was growing between 15 and 25 per cent a year, while in developed economies, the digital economy contributed between 5 and 9 per cent to total GDP. More than 3 billion people and 16 billion devices were connected to the Internet. Every 10 per cent increase in broadband connectivity resulted in an additional 1.5 per cent in economic growth.

57. As the unprecedented growth of the digital economy over the previous decade was due in no small part to inclusive, sustainable and flexible policies, it was important to extend that winning formula and find ways to distribute its benefits more broadly, while remaining true to the principles of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information

society adopted at the World Summit. As the international community was still discovering how ICTs could be used to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, it should focus on providing an appropriate framework within which all stakeholders could come together to discuss, collaborate, measure and review such efforts. A people-centred focus was essential and underscored the complementary and mutually reinforcing relationships between ICTs, human rights and economic development, ultimately supporting the broader targets of the 2030 Agenda.

58. **Ms. Prizreni** (Albania) said that Internet use in her country had reached 60 per cent in 2014; the target of reaching European Union levels was likely to be achieved by the end of 2015. In 2014, Albania had received high scores in the biennial United Nations e-Government Survey; it was ranked between 0.50 and 0.75 according to the United Nations e-Government Development Index.

59. Her Government strongly believed that access to broadband Internet and hence to reliable and up-to-date data in all spheres of activity was a major driver for the development and strengthening of a transparent society, while also helping combat corruption and mismanagement in public administration. Its three main goals with regard to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals were to provide more e-services for citizens and the business sector and improve public services; to include digital technologies in the education system; and to extend and consolidate the digital infrastructure country-wide so ICTs were accessible to all. It was making sustained efforts to meet the requirements of the tenth chapter of the *acquis communautaire* by improving national ICT capacities to boost economic development, with a view to accessing the European Digital Single Market. The high-level meeting should provide an opportunity to align the WSIS agenda with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in order to boost economic and social growth and make societies more competitive, inclusive, innovative and free.

60. **Mr. González Franco** (Paraguay) said that in order to achieve sustainable economic, social and environmental development for all and eradicate poverty, the needs of all populations, especially the most vulnerable, must be taken into consideration. His delegation advocated equal, universal access to ICTs, which had great potential for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. ICTs were also

crucial for narrowing the gap between developed and developing countries, between transit countries and landlocked developing countries, and between urban and rural areas.

61. On account of its largely young and bilingual population, Paraguay was committed to protecting and promoting cultural diversity and a culture of peace. Discussions on ICTs must take into account their relevance for safeguarding and promoting multilingualism, civic engagement, cultural diversity and education for peace. The framework emerging from those discussions must protect children and adolescents, safeguard private information and ensure accessibility for differently-abled persons. His delegation stressed the importance of the commitments made in the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries related to ICT infrastructure, especially the reduction of high trade costs, trade facilitation, increased competitiveness and productivity, the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in international trade, market expansion, the integration of regional and global markets and value chains, the development of the service sector, the promotion of public-private partnerships, and improved governance, responsibility and transparency in landlocked developing countries.

62. **Mr. Pinyowit** (Thailand) said that in order to tackle the digital divide, the potential of ICTs as critical enablers of sustainable development must be harnessed and capacity must be built for their productive use in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The international community must create a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society. Thailand had launched distance learning programmes via satellite to overcome teacher shortages in remote rural areas and ensure access to quality education for all children. Thanks to continuous broadcasting of educational programming for all 12 grades, plus vocational training, university courses and international programmes, over the course of almost 20 years, the number of secondary school graduates in Thailand had increased by more 600 per cent. When people were at the centre of development, it was possible to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

63. Science, technology and innovation policies must be integrated thoroughly into national development plans and strategies. His Government had prioritized

the digital economy, as enhancing ICT capabilities across all sectors would increase economic competitiveness and prepare the country for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Community and lead it out of the middle-income trap. Thailand's digital economy policy was in line with its national economic and social development plan for 2012-2016 and the national digital economy master plan (2016-2020) to be launched in June 2016. Substantial work was underway to transform Thailand into a digital community: outdated regulations would be amended and new laws enacted to keep the nation abreast of the fast-moving digital world.

64. Narrowing the digital divide between and within countries would require multi-stakeholder participation and the strengthening of ICT cooperation at all levels. The fourteenth ASEAN Telecommunications and IT Ministers Meeting, held in Bangkok in January 2014, had adopted the theme "Transforming ASEAN: Moving Towards Smart Communities", which reiterated the ASEAN countries' commitment to realizing the benefits of regional integration through the use of ICTs. ASEAN and its partners, namely China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the European Union and ITU, continued to strengthen cooperation in various areas, including cybersecurity, human capacity development, disaster response and new emerging technologies. Greater private sector participation was also welcomed to develop quality ICT infrastructure and a skills-based workforce to improve competitiveness.

65. Developing countries, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States needed assistance to build capacity and acquire necessary resources. Science, innovation and technology transfer remained crucial for developing countries to enable them to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. His delegation welcomed the launch of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and efforts to enhance synergy and efficiency in science, technology and innovation within the United Nations system, especially for capacity-building initiatives.

66. As the host country for the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and a council member for 2015-2018, Thailand would continue to take an active role in the ICT sector. The upcoming high-level meeting should provide a set of concrete recommendations on how to bridge the remaining

digital divides and align the WSIS action lines with the Sustainable Development Goals.

67. **Mr. Rodrigues dos Santos** (Brazil) said that the digital divide remained a serious challenge and had become even more pervasive. While unprecedented innovation had spurred progress and prosperity in some societies, it was necessary to ensure that those trends worked to reduce, rather than increase, inequalities. Although ICTs had great transformative potential, the digital divide was creating increasingly serious obstacles to social inclusion, poverty eradication and inequality reduction. Bridging the digital divide must become an integral part of the implementation strategy for the Sustainable Development Goals.

68. Since 1995, a multi-stakeholder body, the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee, had addressed Internet governance issues. Based on national experience, his delegation shared the view that Internet governance required the full participation of the private sector and civil society alongside the Government. It considered that, at the international level, there was no inherent contradiction between multilateral negotiations and multi-stakeholder involvement, with different stakeholders possessing different roles and responsibilities.

69. Brazil would host the tenth meeting of the Internet Governance Forum in November 2015. His Government believed that the Forum played a unique and fundamental role in Internet governance and that its mandate should be extended beyond 2015. There was also a need to move forward in the implementation of the enhanced cooperation concept; the WSIS+10 review process should develop effective provisions to strengthen the Forum and promote cooperation.

70. Referring to General Assembly resolution 68/167 on the right to privacy in the digital age, he said that in the absence of the right to privacy, there could be no true freedom of speech or of opinion, and thus no actual democracy. The principle of net neutrality was critical to ensure universal, affordable, unrestricted and equal access to the Internet. A safe cyberspace, free of criminal activity, could be established only through enhanced international cooperation that also engaged other stakeholders.

71. **Ms. Soemarno** (Indonesia) said that a healthy ICT sector had a strong impact on a nation's economy, delivering access to a wide range of social services and applications. Over the past decade, the worldwide

spread of mobile telephony and communication systems, Internet networks and broadband infrastructure had had a significant impact on international production and trade patterns. However, developing countries were lagging behind in many areas; they needed to create legal, institutional and policy frameworks, develop the necessary skills in Government, business and civil society, and expand their infrastructure to foster productive and inclusive use of ICTs in both urban and rural areas.

72. The 2030 Agenda had recognized the power of ICTs for sustainable development, and WSIS should contribute positively to the achievement of that Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The focus should remain on building an information society that was people-centred, inclusive, transparent, equal and beneficial for all. Despite the progress made towards an inclusive information society in the previous decade, 60 per cent of the world's population still lacked Internet access. At the same time, a new digital divide was emerging between and within countries, especially in terms of the quality of ICT infrastructure, broadband access and digital content. The high price of broadband Internet access in low-income countries was particularly concerning. International cooperation was of paramount importance to urgently and effectively address the challenges still ahead.

73. While reasonable progress had been made in implementing the WSIS outcomes, much remained to be done to extend the potential benefits of the information society to everyone, to address new challenges, and to incorporate ICT innovations and the services that they enabled. International cooperation must prioritize ICTs through an enhanced flow of official development assistance (ODA) commitments by developed countries, as well as through new public-private partnerships. Given the important role of ICTs for development, there was an urgent need to carry forward ICT successes in developing countries, especially least developed countries and landlocked developing countries.

74. **Mr. Liu Jun** (China) said that while the rapid development of ICTs had done much to promote economic and social development, a digital divide had clearly emerged. In order to ensure that ICTs were harnessed for sustainable development, in line with the international consensus reflected in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, measures should be adopted to provide strong support to the ICT

capacity-building of developing countries, especially human resources and institutional capacity-building through training, experience sharing, knowledge transfer and technical assistance. Both South-South and North-South cooperation should be strengthened to bridge the digital divide and ensure that all countries could harness the latest ICTs to promote sustainable development.

75. China was implementing an innovation-driven strategy and placed great importance on ICT infrastructure. By the end of 2014, its total number of telephone users had reached 1.5 billion, 1.2 billion of whom were mobile users. Internet users had likewise reached 649 million, 557 million of whom were accessing the Internet through mobile devices. China had launched a major broadband programme in 2013, and the number of broadband users now exceeded 200 million. ICTs were increasingly being used in all economic sectors and helping to promote coordinated social and economic development. China was willing to share its ICT experience for economic development and actively cooperate with all parties. It supported the intergovernmental process for reviewing the WSIS outcomes and the promotion of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda.

76. **Mr. Morozov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation agreed with most of the findings in the report of the Secretary-General, including the importance of bridging the digital divide and expanding broadband networks and services, e-commerce, cloud computing and the Internet of things, and also the need to ensure trust in ICT and maintain cybersecurity. The upcoming WSIS+10 review process, in the context of the 2030 Agenda, was an opportunity to establish a new development paradigm for the information society as it transitioned into a knowledge society. His delegation believed that there was no justification for equating the development of society only with the development of technology and ignoring the development of the individual; for replacing the acquisition of knowledge by training in computer and smart phone techniques; or for focusing on bridging the digital divide and capacity-building while neglecting the quality and security of information in the global network.

77. His delegation recognized the direct link between the key goals of the WSIS process and the

implementation of the 2030 Agenda in building a people-oriented knowledge society, open to all, through the development of the information society and the growth of international scientific and technical cooperation. It believed that State policy on the development of ICTs fell within the sovereign purview of individual States. Since States were the guarantors of the rights and freedoms of their citizens and played a key role in the development of the economics, stability and security of ICT infrastructure, they should take the necessary steps to counter illegal actions in the global information network. The role of Governments in the development of ICT infrastructure should be substantially strengthened.

78. It was crucially important for all States to play an equal role in international Internet governance and to share equal responsibility for managing the use of the Internet and ensuring its reliability, security and stability. At the international level and within the United Nations system, transparent and democratic multilateral mechanisms for Internet governance must be established to ensure a fair allocation of resources, facilitate access for all, and ensure the safe and stable functioning of the Internet and protect critical ICT infrastructure from hostile acts or risks. To that end, it was first necessary to develop a common understanding of Internet security issues and engage in further cooperation at the national and international levels.

79. His delegation stressed the vital need to develop international legal frameworks for Internet governance. As the fundamental institution of international law and inter-State cooperation, the United Nations must play a greater role in managing global ICT infrastructure. His delegation called on the General Assembly to set up a preparatory committee to elaborate an international convention on Internet governance, a new and universal model that would ensure an equal division of responsibility among all States and, if necessary, other subjects of international law.

80. Rules of procedure must be developed for the work of the Internet Governance Forum to ensure that all States and other interested parties could participate equally, including a transparent decision-making mechanism, agreed upon by the General Assembly, on key questions of international cooperation in the management of the Internet. As had been stated in General Assembly resolution 68/167, illegal or arbitrary surveillance and/or interception of

communications, as well as the illegal or arbitrary collection of personal data, violated the right to privacy and to freedom of expression and might contradict the tenets of a democratic society. State authorities, Internet service providers and other participants in the ICT market must refrain from using invasive interception technologies such as drill-down of data packets, or otherwise interfering with data traffic.

81. In considering specific issues of ICT development, it was important to bear in mind the leadership role of ITU as the specialized United Nations body on ICT matters. Given the growing sociopolitical importance of the information society, including with regard to Internet governance and development of ICTs, a new summit meeting should be held in 2020 to consider, at the highest political level, the new challenges, threats and prospects for developing the global information society in close alignment with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

82. **Mr. Shehu** (Nigeria) said that his delegation welcomed the positive trends that had emerged in connectivity and affordability, given that ICTs held tremendous potential for poverty eradication and the socioeconomic advancement of developing countries, especially in rural areas, and for bridging the technological divide between developed and developing countries. It was particularly pleased that African countries had continued to make progress in access to ICTs and their use as development tools. The continent had witnessed increased investment in international and national broadband infrastructure, improved connectivity, and increased bandwidth and services, including e-governance and development applications. Ownership of mobile telephones and Internet accessibility had grown rapidly, with some countries positioning themselves to export ICT goods and services.

83. Nevertheless, broadband deployment in Africa had not kept pace with other regions. The widening gap in digital and broadband access between developing and developed countries, as well as the potentially adverse impact of difficult economic circumstances on ICT investment and diffusion, gave cause for concern. Unless concerted efforts were directed towards redressing the digital divide, many Africans would miss out on economic opportunities that depended on high-quality communications, such as data collection

and analysis, which were central to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

84. For developing countries to derive maximum benefit from ICTs, greater emphasis should be placed on reducing the cost of such technologies, including the cost of broadband connectivity, and on capacity-building for greater access and application in the developing countries. ICT infrastructure in developing countries also needed to be upgraded and expanded to maximize dividends. His Government had developed ICT infrastructure to create jobs, enhance business productivity and growth and stimulate wealth creation, and was providing incentives to the local ICT industry to support other critical sectors of the economy. One of the country's key economic achievements was the rapid growth of its mobile telephone sector, which now boasted close to 190 million mobile subscriptions, more than one per person. Nigeria's ICT sector had been responsible for a 17 per cent growth in the economy in the third quarter of 2014.

85. His delegation hoped that the WSIS+10 review process would address the gaps and challenges in ICT development at both the regional and international levels. ICTs were critical enablers of economic development and investment, with consequential benefits for employment and social welfare. Many innovations had profoundly influenced how Governments delivered services, how businesses related to consumers, and how citizens participated in public and private life. His delegation stressed the need for improved capacity-building and more systematic data gathering and analysis to promote greater developmental outcomes.

86. **Ms. Simonyan** (Armenia) said that ICTs played an increasingly important role in sustainable development, shaping new models to exchange information, knowledge and innovations. The use of broadband and mobile services for immediate communication had disrupted traditional social and economic structures. In Armenia, the ICT sector had shown the most progress in the transition from the MDGs to the Sustainable Development Goals: ICTs now accounted for over 5 per cent of her country's GDP and e-Government services were a reality.

87. The fundamental aim of WSIS had been to use technology to improve people's lives and bridge the digital divide; the issue of the divide must now be viewed within the context of tackling inequalities at all

levels. As drivers for sustainable development, ICTs must also reflect the long-term sustainability considerations of inclusive development. It was crucial to enhance possibilities for inclusive, participatory systems to develop ICTs and consequently implement the goals and targets of sustainable development. Consistent monitoring and review of policies should provide tangible benchmarks for assessing progress.

88. Institutions that promoted inclusive policies, especially in the ICT sector, were equipped to sustain participatory and equal societies, while exclusionary and discriminatory policies undermined the sustainability of economic and social development. ICTs should continue to play a role in promoting human rights and freedoms as a requisite for sustainable development. The WSIS+10 review process was an important opportunity to identify links with the 2030 Agenda and consider the long-term sustainability impact of inclusive, people-centred ICT policies.

89. **Mr. Fowlie** (International Telecommunication Unit (ITU)) said that the 2030 Agenda had confirmed the importance of global connectivity and ICTs to advance human progress, including in the areas of education and gender equality and as basic infrastructure. However, ICTs were best viewed as an essential means of implementation to be applied as a cross-cutting enabler for each of the Sustainable Development Goals.

90. For centuries, millions of Africans had lived outside the financial system, as banks were either non-existent or untrustworthy. As mobile technology began to spread rapidly throughout the continent, however, the M-PESA mobile money system was introduced in 2007: it was an African technology, developed by Africans to solve African problems, and had brought millions of people into the financial system. Despite many such examples of technology and innovation for the people and by the people, digital gaps remained with regard to access, affordability and gender. It had been estimated that bringing 600 million additional women and girls online could boost GDP by up to US\$ 18 billion. Connecting everyone in developing countries to the same level as in developed economies could create 140 million jobs and lift 160 million people out of poverty. The success of any sustainable development strategy would be measured by how effectively it integrated a digital means of implementation and accountability, which was possible

only when policy and practice were integrated in a multi-stakeholder approach.

91. ICTs could play a key role in solving specific targets of the 2030 Agenda. For example, in relation to the target of universal birth registration, every day, up to 35 per cent of the children born worldwide were not registered, even in countries with good connectivity. Registering invisible children was the only way to secure their most fundamental human right, to be recognized as a person, in accordance with article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By registering children at birth, it was possible to ensure that their lives at least began with a safe and secure digital footprint.

92. ICT progress would be achieved through the smart integration of new technologies for all of the targets included in the Sustainable Development Goals, including big data, software-defined networks and mobile and cloud computing. The international community should strive to harness the advantages offered in fields such as robotics, nanotechnologies and the Internet of things. The challenge for the United Nations system would be to integrate such research and knowledge into an annual assessment, not only of the Sustainable Development Goals but also of the WSIS+10 outcomes. The upcoming WSIS+10 high-level meeting was an unprecedented opportunity to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and the WSIS agenda, thus unleashing the power of ICTs as a means of achieving sustainable development for all.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.