



# General Assembly

Seventieth session

**77<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting  
 Tuesday, 15 December 2015, 3 p.m.  
 New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Lykketoft . . . . . (Denmark)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. González Franco (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.* Governance Forum has been extended for another 10 years.

*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

## High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society

### Agenda item 17 (continued)

#### Information and communications technologies for development

##### Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/63)

##### Draft resolution (A/70/L.33)

**Ms. Novelli** (United States of America): I would like to start by acknowledging the leadership of the President of the General Assembly and of the Permanent Representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Latvia, who served as co-facilitators of this important review. I thank them for devoting so much time to making this high-level meeting a success. We congratulate the negotiators on reaching a consensus that builds on the first meeting of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held 10 years ago, and establishes a strong foundation for the next 10 years, based on multi-stakeholder collaboration. Importantly, today's draft resolution (A/70/L.33) recognizes that multi-stakeholder collaboration should foster economic development as well as an information society that respects human dignity. In that regard, we are particularly pleased that the mandate for the Internet

At the first WSIS meetings, in Geneva in 2003 and Tunis in 2005, the information revolution was still just beginning. Only 12 per cent of the world's population was online, and they were concentrated mainly in North America and Europe and on personal computers. The widespread use of smart phones was still years away. For people living in the developing world, Internet access, if available, was prohibitively expensive. What a difference a decade makes. Today, digital technologies are the foundation of economic growth and social development. More than 3 billion people, about 40 per cent of the world's population, have Internet access, and the number of Internet users in developing countries has almost doubled in the past five years.

Those are significant achievements that have improved millions of people's lives. That growth was encouraged in part by the framework for multi-stakeholder cooperation laid out at the original World Summit, 10 years ago. That gathering encouraged bottom-up investment and innovation rather than top-down Government control. That multi-stakeholder model encouraged and facilitated the dynamism and innovation of the technology industry that we see today. There are at least three clear reasons why that is the case. First, intergovernmental institutions often lack the capacity and expertise to make decisions quickly, a characteristic that is incompatible with Internet speed. Secondly, multi-stakeholder processes include the crucial views of all essential stakeholders

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in international Internet policy, not just those of Governments. Lastly, greater Government control could allow repressive regimes to advance policies geared towards censorship or content control on the web, and that is anathema to what the Internet should be about.

We are pleased with today's clear reaffirmation of the WSIS process, and we look forward to doing our part to help achieve the WSIS vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society. To that end, the United States Department of State, working with all stakeholders, recently launched an initiative, Global Connect, which aims to bring an additional 1.5 billion people online by 2020. Through it, we will work with every stakeholder group that touches development, including national Governments, development agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to mainstream the view that Internet connectivity is as fundamental to economic development as roads, ports, electricity and other traditional infrastructure.

Global Connect aims to achieve that expansion in global connectivity by working on three tracks. The first will encourage countries to integrate Internet connectivity as a key part of their national development strategies and to adopt policies that can unlock digital growth. The second will encourage international development institutions, such as multilateral development banks and development agencies, to prioritize digital access. Finally, the third will champion innovative, industry-driven solutions aimed at extending connectivity. We are thrilled that, since our launch in September, Governments, businesses and organizations from around the world have expressed strong support for Global Connect and its principles for international connectivity. Part of that international support reflects the understanding that digital technologies can be a force for alleviating poverty and creating opportunity only if people have access to them.

To that end, the State Department will welcome key stakeholders, along with ministers from the developed and developing worlds, to a Global Connect conference in Washington, D.C., on the margins of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund annual meetings in April. With the help of the United Nations, we can build greater momentum towards fulfilling the core aims of WSIS and extending the benefits of connectivity to underserved communities across the world.

**Ms. Fjaestad** (Sweden): The message I will take home from this meeting is that the Internet remains a force for good, for development, for human rights and for the empowerment of people everywhere. Sweden has been deeply engaged throughout these discussions. One overarching goal of our feminist foreign policy is ensuring the participation of women and girls as actors for sustainable development. Civil society is a crucial partner in that process, as it has been in the negotiations leading up to this meeting.

We are pleased that we have now made progress on an issue that must be solved — ensuring equal access to technology and information for women and girls. As long ago as 1995, at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, we agreed on a platform of action that set out to “increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making” in the face of new media and new technology. It is time to deliver on those promises. Obviously, fulfilling the potential for empowerment of information and communications technologies (ICT) requires such basics as access, skills and data. I know that we are doing much important work in that area though our international development cooperation, but at the same time, we still know too little. Sweden is contributing to statistics being developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in order to further our understanding of the gender divide.

We see women leaving the Internet, concerned about their safety and integrity. The same patriarchal power structures that limit the lives of women offline are also present online in every society, all over the world. Women are targets of hate speech and cyberviolence, and that is both a security and a human rights issue. We must focus on empowering women, and we must approach the topic with a power analysis.

We must close the digital divide. UN-Women, Member States and all other stakeholders will work to enhance the use of ICT with the aim of empowering women, something that is also clearly stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Human rights are the foundation of the information society. We must therefore reject the false dichotomy of pitting human rights against security. Rather, they are prerequisites for each other. We must develop our policies in a way that respects and promotes human rights and the rule of law. Sweden would like to see an inclusive global dialogue on these issues. Next year, the Stockholm Internet Forum for Global Development will

convene hundreds of representatives from around the world, and we look forward to continuing to the global conversation on technology, gender and sustainable development there.

**Mr. Metzger** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Swiss Confederation, I would first like to thank the co-facilitators and their team for the tremendous job they have done over the past six months, as too have the United Nations agencies and all the representatives of civil society, the academic community, the private sector and Governments. They have succeeded in submitting a draft text that we can fully support (A/70/L.33). We should understand that the efforts and contributions of each of us are needed if we are to find concrete ways to promote the emergence of an information society open to all. That is how we will succeed in harnessing the tremendous potential of information and communications technologies (ICT).

It is human beings who are at the centre of the information society. Everyone — men, women, children, young people and disabled persons alike — should have access to information and communications technologies and be able to make good use of them. Equality of opportunity, an absence of barriers and discrimination and judicious utilization of information and communications technologies are essential conditions for achieving that goal.

This meeting of the General Assembly marks the end of the 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+10), whereby we must decide on measures to be taken in future to achieve the goals we have established in accordance with the WSIS outcomes. The review shows that we have already made great progress since the era of the Geneva and Tunis meetings, particularly in the dialogue among stakeholders. The role of information and communications technologies and of digitization in economic, social and cultural development is increasingly important and will continue to grow.

At the same time, we can see that there are still many challenges that we must tackle in a more focused way. New challenges are constantly appearing and evolving. The international community should continue to make reducing the digital divide a top priority. We should commit to working together more consistently in future. Of course, we must continue to promote access to information and communications technologies, particularly where high-speed Internet

and new broadband services are concerned, in terms of usage costs, local content, multilingualism and applications. We should not, however, lose sight of the importance of strengthening capacity at every social and economic level. If the possibilities that information and communications technologies offer are to be fully exploited, it is vital to ensure people's uncensored access to information, their freedom of expression and the protection of their right to privacy. That is how we can ensure the people's ability to freely form opinions, their informed participation in democratic debate and their full involvement in political life.

Those challenges particularly affect women and girls, who are often not in a position to take full advantage of information and communications technologies and are thus deprived of many possibilities for development in their professional, social, political and economic lives. That is a major worry. Women's independence and gender equality are central to human rights and Swiss values. They are fundamental to our democratic institutions. As a way to access our new public and political space, information and communications technologies can help to empower women and eliminate gender inequalities globally. The importance of promoting and protecting women's equality and independence is a challenge that was identified as long ago as 2003, in the first expression of the WSIS vision. It is even more important today, considering that none of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) can be truly achieved if women and girls are not integrated into them and if their specific needs and assets are not taken into account. In order to help our society evolve, eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development, which is the bringer of economic growth, the potential of half the population of the planet — that is, of women and girls — must be able to fully flourish.

Bridging the digital divide between the sexes is one of the best ways to promote universal sustainable development. In order to eliminate the gender gap in information and communications technologies, we must tackle their various dimensions — accessibility, cost, skills and use. Switzerland believes that providing greater access to new types of training, non-traditional occupations and the capacity to create innovative enterprises is a vital stage in the work to be done.

When it comes to promoting information and communications technologies and dealing with the challenges that lie ahead, particularly with regard

to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals to the benefit of all, the agencies of the United Nations will continue to play a leading role. However, if we wish to make our vision a reality, the WSIS+10 and its next stages must proceed in an inclusive way that is open to all stakeholders. The continued role of the Internet Governance Forum will be key. The values and principles of cooperation and multi-stakeholder engagement that have characterized the WSIS process since its inception, as well as the continued implementation of its conclusions, will require the commitment of all the parties concerned, whether they are international organizations, the private sector, civil society, the technical and academic community, United Nations agencies or Governments.

Switzerland is also committed to developing new capacities to enable all interested parties to hold discussions and make decisions on an equal footing, in the context of their respective roles. That is why we have launched the Geneva Internet Platform. Since Geneva is one of the main hosts of the major forums where policies related to digital issues are discussed and put into practice, the Platform offers an open space for debate and is particularly interested in supporting small States and developing countries. We hope it will go on to make a significant contribution, and we encourage all interested parties in every area to participate actively and make the best use of it. Debates and multi-stakeholder decision processes on public policy issues can help us find the solutions that are best adapted to developing an information society consistent with the WSIS vision expressed in Geneva in 2003 and Tunis in 2005.

**Mr. Deepak** (India): I would like to take this opportunity to thank our co-facilitators for their unparalleled commitment to making the 10-year review of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+10) a success. I would also like to thank all stakeholders for enabling us to arrive at the WSIS+10 outcome document (A/70/L.33), which not only represents the aspirations of users but also appears to reflect the requirements of those who will have access to information and communications technologies (ICT) in future.

We have made substantial progress on Internet governance since 2005. As the outcome document recognizes, it is imperative that the priorities and concerns of the stakeholders from developing regions be substantively represented in all global Internet

governance processes. We therefore reiterate our commitment to a multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance and encourage its embrace of all geographies and societies. We should all agree and acknowledge that since a large proportion of the next billion Internet users will come from developing nations, policies that promote access to the Internet should be formulated with the full involvement of all stakeholders from the developing world. The review acknowledges the importance of bridging both digital divides — between countries and between genders — if we are to make ICT a powerful tool of development. We look forward to contributions by stakeholders in terms of both knowledge and financial and technological resources, including by operationalizing a digital solidarity fund, aimed at realizing the WSIS objectives. We also support the renewal of the term of the Internet Governance Forum.

We believe that there are close linkages between the WSIS process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). India is fully committed to realizing the 2030 Agenda through active deployment of ICT infrastructure and services. We believe that technology can change the world and transform people's lives. It informs, empowers and helps realize our Prime Minister Narendra Modi's concept of *sabka saath, sabka vikas* — that is, "development for all".

Today, India has become a major player in the global information technology market, and our business model includes the provision of online services using the Internet. The start-up sector in India has also witnessed incredible innovation and attracted large investments that have made it the third-largest start-up ecosystem in the world. Four new technology start-ups are appearing every day, and because of their speed, agility and low costs are quickly becoming preferred models for global research and development in ICT.

For India, the decade that has elapsed since the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2005 has seen a revolution in mobile connectivity. We have leapfrogged many stages of development in access technology, and that has led to a huge increase in demand for digital services. In 2000, we had fewer than 30 million telephone users in a population of about a billion. By the end of 2015, we will have passed 1 billion connections in a population of 1.25 billion. In the next few years, with low entry barriers, we expect a similar explosion of data connectivity and broadband use. It took India 20 years to reach its first 100 million



Internet users. Adding the next 100 million took three years, while for the third it was less than 18 months. Furthermore, of the next billion new global Internet users, we believe about 400 million will be from India.

During this period, we have also witnessed immense growth in ICT infrastructure. But what is even more remarkable is the huge digital opportunity that lies before us, from health and education to agriculture and disaster management, and from human resource development to financial inclusion. While we are seeing progress, almost 900 million people in India still do not have access to the Internet. That leads to an asymmetry of information and knowledge, which in turn leads to an asymmetry of opportunity. It is therefore important to bridge the digital divide.

To that end, India has launched Digital India, an ambitious programme that is being implemented in mission mode in order to bridge the stark differences between digital haves and have-nots. As the world's largest democracy, we seek to empower citizens by giving them both a voice and a choice. Citizens' direct participation in formulating public policy through social media platforms such as Mygov is making that happen. We remain committed to sharing our development experience in the use of ICT with other developing-country members of the United Nations family. In that context, India has implemented the ambitious Pan-African e-Network project, designed to use a satellite and fibre-optic network to connect 53 States members of the African Union to one another and to India, providing e-education, telemedicine and other applications. More recently, on 12 July, we inaugurated the first telemedicine project between India and Central Asia.

As we go digital, we face challenges related to cybersecurity. Many of them are not well understood, much less addressed. The multi-stakeholder approach acknowledges that there are various stakeholder groups that have different roles to play in global internet governance, with levels of responsibility that vary from role to role. In the context of security and allied public policy concerns, we believe that Governments, which bear ultimate responsibility for providing essential services and ensuring public safety, have a key role to play and are central to discussions of Internet security. We should also aim to create a global convention to address issues of cybersecurity and cybercrime.

As India and the world deal with the changes in Internet governance, it is important to keep in mind that this is not a zero-sum game. Rather, it can be a win-win for all. The Internet is not a scarce resource, but a powerful, enabling platform that can be used for the benefit of all. In this context, we look forward to the implementation of the recommendations of the review on enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda, taking into consideration the work that has been done so far.

In conclusion, we believe that ICT has changed the lives of those who have access to it for the better. Further, it has great promise to do the same for those who, by not being connected, remain deprived of its benefits today. To this end, we reaffirm our commitment to working with all stakeholders — to strive, to seek and to find the benefits of ICT for the entire global community and the developing world.

**Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh): I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the 48 least developed countries (LDCs). The Group of LDCs associates itself with the statement made by the Chair of the Group of 77 and China (see A/70/PV.76).

We would like to congratulate all delegations on the efforts made to ensure adoption of a draft outcome document that has been agreed by consensus (A/70/L.33). After long and intense negotiations, we have been able to produce a draft document that is acceptable to all of us. We would remind ourselves that this in itself is a victory for multilateralism.

The Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) drew attention to the fact that least developed countries need special attention in their efforts to establish telecommunication infrastructure. In the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society of 2005, the need for coordinated assistance for LDCs in the area of infrastructure for information and communications technologies (ICT) was reiterated. It was highlighted that relevant parties — namely, service providers — should be encouraged to provide commercial Internet service in LDCs at an affordable rates, considering the constraints faced by these countries.

The Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs, adopted by the States Members of the United Nations in 2011, set the specific target of significantly increasing access to telecommunications services and to strive

to provide everyone in the least developed countries affordable access to the Internet by 2020. This has been reinforced in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and, as target 9.c of the 2030 Agenda, it has become one of the early harvests to be achieved. The overall credibility and attainability of the Sustainable Development Goals will largely depend on our ability to meet the 2020 deadline.

With respect to the goals and targets set by the international community and the Governments of the least developed countries, the hard reality is that only 5 per cent of households in the least developed countries have Internet access. In terms of broadband Internet access, with very few exceptions most of the LDCs have very little or basically insignificant broadband access in rural areas. There is a strong probability that the digital divide, with rapid advent of newer technologies, will continue to grow, and the least developed countries will be left even further behind.

The least developed countries made their utmost efforts to fulfil their share of their commitments in the ICT area. Most of the LDCs have modern and relevant ICT policies commensurate with their national realities, yet progress is slow. International cooperation is of utmost importance for ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is set up in LDCs and that appropriate technology is transferred to these countries for providing easy Internet access to peoples in all walks of life.

On this point, the least developed countries call upon the international community, international organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders to give attention and meaningful assistance to the efforts of the LDCs in building and strengthening ICT infrastructure in their countries. The concerns and constraints of least developed countries are yet to be adequately reflected in the different WSIS outcome documents. Even when there are specific commitments by partners, they have not been realized. In the Geneva Plan of Action, a specific call to developed countries was reiterated in which they were asked to fulfil the commitment of providing 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national income to LDCs as official development assistance. Without the support of the development partners, least developed countries will not be able to merge successfully into the information and communications technologies highway.

There is vast opportunity for building ICT-based societies in the least developed countries as a result of the resource of their knowledge-hungry youth population. Appropriate policy intervention, supported by technical assistance, can unlock the potential of these young entrepreneurs and workforce. Internet-based freelancers contributing in the area of creative applications can help the LDCs leapfrog in their development efforts. We deeply appreciate the support of the international community in this regard, and urge it to enhance its assistance.

In this context, I would like to touch briefly upon this subject in my national capacity. Bangladesh believes that access to information by people in all walks of life is a fundamental requirement for national development. The Government of Bangladesh give high importance to ICT as a key enabler and tool for its development plan. At present, all areas of Bangladesh, including at the most grass-roots level of local government, are connected through the Internet. E-governance has been launched at all levels, and people now do not need to go to district headquarters to fill out different Government forms, submit applications, buy or sell properties, and so on. Some 600 mobile apps have already been created in Bangladesh in this area. We are now working on expanding our optical fibre network to reach every corner of Bangladesh, along with video-conferencing centres at the local levels, e-learning systems, Wi-Fi hotspots and the desktop cloud.

Giving priority to information systems has directly benefited the economy as well. At present, Bangladesh earns some \$300 million from the export of ICT services, and more than 200,000 people, including freelancers, are employed in this sector. It is expected that the outsourcing of ICT services alone will generate around \$1 billion for Bangladesh within the next five years. This progress in the ICT sector is commensurate with the Vision 2021 of a digital Bangladesh, as set forth by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. This will pave the way for our graduation from LDC status within next six years. We are closely working with all our partners, including other least developed countries, by sharing best practices and by transferring technologies under mutually agreed terms that benefit us all.

Finally, the international community, including development partners and other stakeholders, need to fulfil their commitment to helping LDCs build durable physical and ICT infrastructure for ensuring sustainable development. The World Summit for the Information

Society is the platform for fulfilling that commitment in a tangible manner. Information and communications technology will play a catalytic role in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and, with the appropriate support of Member States and other stakeholders, including the private sector, the least developed countries are confident that they will eventually be able to achieve their own goals of graduation from LDC status.

**Ms. Kalamwina (Zambia):** I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the 32 States members of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

At the outset, I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the informative report of the Secretary-General (A/70/63) on the progress made and the challenges faced so far in the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The Secretary-General's report highlights positive developments in the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) in developed and developing countries, while acknowledging the need to further expand their roll-out. Once fully harnessed, ICT will be a critical ingredient of national, regional and international development. We are certain that ICT can greatly help address the economic, social and environmental challenges faced by LLDCs.

The broad application of ICT in reducing paperwork during customs clearance and border crossing, the use of e-payments and the e-tracking of shipments in transit can significantly accelerate the flow of goods and services across national borders, lower the trading costs faced by LLDCs and promote further international trade. The increased use of the ICT-enhanced single-window system and the Automated System of Customs Data have greatly improved customs clearance and procedures.

ICT can also play a major role in the broader development of LLDCs, including increased competitiveness and productivity through more efficient production of goods and services, disaster preparedness, early-warning systems, rescue, mitigation, relief and response; improvements in the delivery of health care, education and other social services; and creation of employment opportunities and enhanced micro-entrepreneurship.

Although ICT appears to be a silver bullet for the development problems of LLDCs, the aforesaid potential benefits cannot be realized at the existing levels of ICT in LLDCs. There is a very wide digital divide between

the LLDCs and other groups of countries. For example, although the average percentage of individuals in LLDCs using the Internet improved from 2.2 per cent in 2003 to 20.6 per cent in 2013, the figure lags far behind the average for the developing world, which stood at 32.4 per cent in 2014, and the world average of 40.6 per cent. The main hindrance to the full utilization of ICTs in LLDCs is the higher costs of acquiring these technologies.

Broadband costs, as a share of gross national income, are much higher in landlocked developing countries than in coastal countries that are located close to submarine communications cables. It is for this reason that one of the priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action is specifically focused on ICT infrastructure development in LLDCs. The Vienna Programme of Action has outlined specific objectives that are to be accomplished by LLDCs, developing transit countries and development partners in connection with ICT infrastructure development.

The Vienna Programme of Action further requests that LLDCs and transit developing countries work together to modernize transit and transport facilities and customs and other border facilities by fully utilizing the capabilities of ICT. We call upon development partners to support landlocked developing countries in promoting their national broadband policy and developing the necessary broadband infrastructure to provide capacity-building to LLDCs so that they can use modern and affordable communications technology. Development partners should continue to support the efforts of landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries to facilitate access to information and communications technologies and the transfer of relevant skills, knowledge and technology on mutually agreed terms, for the development, maintenance and sustainability of infrastructure.

As a Group, we appreciate the immense benefit that ICT contributes to disaster mitigation, early -warning systems, humanitarian responses, agricultural development and the provision of education and health services. Accordingly, concerted efforts are required to build capacity among LLDCs so that their development challenges may be reduced.

The LLDC group is cognizant of the importance that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) places on ICT. As highlighted in Goal 17, the 2030 Agenda places emphasis on enhancing

North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and on expanded knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level and through a global technology facilitation mechanism.

The Group further promotes the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed. It also supports fully operationalizing the technology bank and the science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanisms for least developed countries by 2017 and enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology. In this regard, the LLDCs take further note of the importance that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda places on ICT and the international community's agreement to work to promote the development and use of ICT infrastructure and capacity-building, particularly in developing countries.

We call on the international community to implement what is on paper. We call on our development partners, our South-South partners, development banks and the private sector to support investments in our ICT sectors and help us close the digital divide.

**Mr. Shcherbakov** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

At the outset, I would like to express our deepest appreciation to the facilitators, the United Arab Emirates and Latvia, for the tremendous efforts and energy they invested in negotiating the draft outcome document (A/70/L.33).

For CELAC, information and communications technologies (ICT) are useful tools for promoting human development, social inclusion and economic growth, and are essential enablers for meeting the internationally agreed development goals, particularly for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. For this reason, our region has agreed to continue strengthening regional cooperation in digital matters with regional projects and the promotion of innovation-oriented activities, human resources training and the dissemination and transfer of

new technologies and good management practices, as well as to promote the use of ICT to generate solutions in all areas of life, particularly access to justice, health, education and agriculture, and to create effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

However, we strongly believe in the need to strengthen the follow-up process of Tunis and Geneva and work with determination to put in place the people-centered, development-oriented vision of the World Summit on the Information Society and to meet the agreed goals. The creation, development and diffusion of new innovations and technologies and associated know-how, including the transfer of technology under concessional and preferential terms, are powerful drivers of economic growth and sustainable development. Nevertheless, we note with concern the persistent digital divide and the uneven innovative capacity, connectivity and access to technology, including information and communications technology, within and between countries. We also highlight the need to address the diverse and specific development challenges of middle income countries in this field.

CELAC considers that the Internet should be an open global public good and that its management should include both multilateral processes involving multiple stakeholders. It should be transparent, democratic and with the full involvement of Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations and all other relevant stakeholders. We should seek together to facilitate access for all, especially for all developing countries, in order to support the objective contained in the Sustainable Development Goals aimed at reaching a democratic society, sustainable development, and taking into account multilingualism.

Therefore, CELAC defends, protects and ensures net neutrality as a principle of Internet governance where Internet traffic flows without distinction or priority of its content, origin, destination, terminal service and application. In addition, we need to strengthen the progress in promoting greater participation and engagement in Internet governance discussions at the regional and national levels, among Governments, the private sector and civil society in order to achieve a multilateral, democratic and inclusive Internet governance that involves multiple stakeholders, and where all States' interests are represented, regardless of their stage of development.



CELAC reiterates its strong condemnation of espionage and indiscriminate massive and global monitoring actions among countries by State and non-State actors, and emphasizes the need for strict adherence to the rules and principles of international law, in particular respect for State sovereignty and human rights, including the right to privacy, which cannot be subject to discrimination on basis of nationality.

We need to promote actions and strategies to strengthen cybersecurity and prevent cybercrime and, in particular, create mechanisms to build more confidence and security in the use of ICT. The use of ICT for fighting organized crime and terrorism must always be conducted in strict observance of international law, including human rights law, international humanitarian law and the international refugee law. Only those measures adopted in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other relevant international norms can be successful and garner broad support from the international community. Actions that go against this international legal framework are unjustifiable, illegal and unacceptable.

We also note the relevance of human rights in the Information Society and, in this regard, we reaffirm our commitment, set out in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, to the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development as enshrined in the Vienna Declaration. We also reaffirm that democracy, sustainable development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and good governance at all levels are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. We further resolve to strengthen respect for the rule of law in international and national affairs.

CELAC member States are also deeply concerned about the vulnerability of children in such situations as trafficking, smuggling, sale for purposes of sexual exploitation, grooming, abuse, sale of organs, sexual tourism, child pornography and the use of children in pornography and cybercrime, as well as the harassment and abuse that women and girls suffer online. It is important to tackle these circumstances in an efficient and coordinated manner.

We express our shared desire to build an information society that allow us all to create, access,

utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities, peoples and Member States to achieve their full potential in promoting sustainable development and a better quality of life, based on the purposes and principles of the Charter and full respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in its entirety.

Finally, we stress that international cooperation is the only viable option to foster the positive effects of ICT, prevent their potential negative effects, promote their peaceful and legitimate use and guarantee that both scientific and technological progress is directed towards preserving peace and promoting the welfare and development of our societies.

**Ms. Haynes** (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) at this High-level Meeting on the review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). CARICOM aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/70/PV.76), and the representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. CARICOM also aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Maldives on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

CARICOM joins others in welcoming the convening of this high-level review and wishes to express appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Latvia and the United Arab Emirates for co-facilitating the negotiations on the draft outcome document (A/70/L.33) and for their excellent work in fostering consensus through many long and arduous hours of negotiations.

For CARICOM, the World Summit on the Information Society and its outcome documents and follow-up processes are critically important in facilitating global and regional cooperation towards the creation of a facilitative international and regional environment for the widespread promotion and development of information and communications technologies (ICT) in developing countries.

CARICOM underscores that ICT and the Internet will continue to be essential tools in facilitating the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (resolution 70/1), as well as a key means for leveraging the inventiveness, collaboration

and partnerships required to make it a reality. In this regard, CARICOM notes that the Sustainable Development Goals already lay the basis for close interlinkages to be made between ICT development and the attainment of goals on education, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and fostering innovation. CARICOM therefore looks forward to transferring the lessons learned from the utilization of ICT for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals to the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and urges all stakeholders to recognize the critical enabling role of ICT in fulfilling the 2030 sustainable Development Agenda, including as it relates to the key issues of data and statistics.

CARICOM underscores that the regional experience with the challenge of expanding the use and dissemination of information and communication technologies and in deploying them in support of development efforts highlights the necessity of a multi-stakeholder approach to these matters. It would be critical for such an approach to be maintained at all levels in order to ensure that policy decisions reflect the needs and realities of a quickly evolving sector.

CARICOM has established an ICT-for-development programme, along with a regional digital development strategy, and is in the process of developing additional policy tools designed to make ICT work for development. Notwithstanding these efforts, mobilizing resources for investment in new technologies, particularly in the area of infrastructure for broadband connectivity, remains a challenge. In this vein, CARICOM endorses the recognition in the review document of the critical role that can be played by official development assistance and other forms of concessional financial flows, in contributing to ICT-for-development outcomes, and calls on the international community to enhance its support to CARICOM in the development of the ICT sector through the provision of additional resources, strengthened partnerships, increased technology transfer and capacity-building that is tailored to meet the particular needs of our small societies. The role of the United Nations development system and its funds, programmes and agencies in streamlining the issue of ICT into its development programming would also be critical for the success of these efforts.

Given that the increasing use of technology is accompanied by real and potential threats, there is a need to develop the requisite capacity to mitigate the

impact of cybercrime while building confidence in the use of the Internet. Additionally, owing to the fact that traditional geographic boundaries do not exist in cyberspace, cybersecurity and cybercrime have to be addressed collaboratively at the national, regional and international levels. Consequently, CARICOM welcomes the treatment of cybersecurity in the draft outcome document and stresses that approaches to cybersecurity must respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As a region of small island and low-lying developing States vulnerable to the effects of climate change and natural disasters, CARICOM underscores that an additional key sector for the further development and dissemination of ICT is the environment. CARICOM welcomes the recognition in the draft outcome document of the catalytic role of ICT in deploying renewable energy, energy efficiency and smart and resilient city concepts. In the light of the recently agreed Paris climate change agreement, which should set the world on the path to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future, CARICOM looks forward to the expansion in the use of ICT in the protection of the environment in keeping with the need to match the implementation of the WSIS action lines closely with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

CARICOM supports the need for periodic reviews for assessing progress, including at the regional level, in the implementation of the WSIS action lines. CARICOM regrets that agreement could not be reached to hold a review meeting in 2020. In our view, a 2020 review would have placed us in a good position to assess our progress in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, taking into account technological advancements and the rapidly evolving ICT landscape. Nevertheless, we reaffirm our commitment to the 2025 review and look forward to its outcomes feeding into the review processes of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

CARICOM is of the view that every effort should be made to keep the implementation and review of the WSIS outcomes people-centred. CARICOM therefore reaffirms its support for the acknowledgement of the interlinkages between ICT and human rights, in particular the notion that the same rights that people have offline must be protected online. CARICOM also urges continued global commitment to multi-stakeholder and multilateral collaboration in the implementation of

WSIS action lines in support of the full implementation of an information society for all.

**Mr. Sareer** (Maldives) It is my great pleasure to speak here today, and I want to extend my sincere congratulations for the tremendous work that has been done by the facilitators and their very able team.

A decade ago we gathered in this forum to discuss the impacts of information and communications technologies (ICT) and their role in the development of societies. Little did we know that we were at a turning point in the way humankind was making a transition into a fundamentally different era of the Information Age.

This year has been a hugely impactful one here at the United Nations. With the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the successful conclusion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), and just three days ago, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as our achievements, a good outcome for the 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process will be another milestone achieved. One thing in common across these processes and outcomes is the recognition of the enormous potential that ICT has in realizing sustainable development for all, and the ambitious targets that we have set for ourselves in these processes will find deep interlinkages with our goals for ICT and the implementation of one will find resonance in the success of the other.

The Maldives today is pleased to speak as the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) on behalf of the 44 small island developing States (SIDS) that are our members and observers. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the South African Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/70/PV.76).

The world as we know it has changed drastically since we met to discuss the growing significance of ICT in Geneva and Tunis. The SIDS, like all other countries, big or small, vulnerable or with robust economies, have seen the revolutionary momentum that knowledge societies have brought forth. We have also understood the opportunities that ICT present. For SIDS, ICT services are the key enablers of economic and social development and greatly enhance operational efficiencies in service delivery. That is why in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (Samoa Pathway),

our blueprint for sustainable development priorities, clearly identified the need for enhanced access and use of information and communications technology infrastructure networks for sustaining high levels of economic growth. It is why the Samoa Pathway identified investing in technology and related capacity-building in ICT as a key means of implementation. It is why our national development strategies have for years taken these into consideration, be it in investing in technology for advancements in health, education, disaster-risk reduction, people-centred development, or combatting climate change.

Small island developing States face unique challenges, by which they are identified as a special case in the context of sustainable development. Our geographical isolation, dispersion over large expanses of area, and vulnerability for environmental risk and natural disasters signal great potential for ICT as a tool to enhance development efforts. At the same time, our small size, remoteness from markets and subsequent inability to achieve economies of scale, and limited technical and human capacity, pose significant risks to the development and use of ICT. And it is these challenges that we must address specifically for the potential benefits of the information society to be realized in small island developing States.

One of the founding principles of the WSIS is addressing the digital divide. Lack of access to affordable and reliable technologies remains the key challenge to ICT deployment in SIDS. Efforts need to be made for capacity-building to enable access. Lack of access is coupled with non-interpretability of data received. The digital divide continues to widen because access to information, in and of itself, does not result into knowledge. The digital divide can be bridged only when content and technology are geared towards local needs and priorities while enhancing the capabilities of end users to make productive use of data.

We are happy to note that the draft outcome document takes into account the role of ICT in disaster and humanitarian assistance. As we have witnessed time and again, information and communications systems can greatly reduce the economic and social impacts of natural hazards. We have also recently observed an increasing number of countries utilizing the power of ICT in disaster-risk management in their national contexts, which is being done through advancements in remote sensing, geographic information systems, seismic surveillance systems, improved tsunami

monitoring networks and even using ICT to streamline emergency warning capabilities.

For small island developing States, some of the most vulnerable countries to all sorts of natural hazards, disasters and climate change, it is imperative that there be adequate knowledge-sharing and technology transfer, which would go a long way towards ensuring that small island States like ours could also benefit from these technological advancements. Therefore, while we welcome the call for greater investment in that field, we also take the opportunity to call for greater cooperation between developed and developing countries so that there is adequate capacity-building and technology transfer to increase resilience in our societies.

It is imperative that the management and development of ICT, including that of the Internet and broadband services, are framed within the context of a multi-stakeholder, multilateral, inclusive and transparent process — and perhaps, most importantly, one that is directed towards development and which remains depoliticized. In that regard, it is important to recognize the importance of enhanced participation in decision-making and agenda-setting of those processes so that every voice, small or large, is heard loud and clear.

As we close a great year for multilateralism, let us now turn towards the more important task at hand: implementation. We have in our hands the ability to truly transform our world. Let us not waste that opportunity. Let future generations define us not by our inaction but by our action.

**Ms. Soto Ruiz** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico thanks Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly, for organizing today's high-level event.

It is a great honour for my delegation to participate in today's meeting, which concludes with the review process of the General Assembly 10 years after the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society. I wish to thank the Permanent Representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Latvia for their outstanding leadership of the process to achieve the draft document (A/70/L.33) that we will surely adopt tomorrow.

The world has changed considerably since the Millennium Declaration of 2000 and since the agreements adopted at the World Summits on the Information Society in 2003 and 2005. Since then,

information and communications technologies (ICT) has played an increasingly greater role in the development of our countries. Mexico has supported that vision, and today ICT is a fundamental tool for economic and social progress. For that reason, in 2013 Mexico embarked on an ambitious reform agenda that includes telecommunications reform, which fosters competition and promotes infrastructure development in the sector; we also established a universal digital inclusion policy as a State obligation and recognized Internet access as a right of all citizens. That reform, together with the national digital strategy, provides the basis for strengthening Mexico within the information society, closing digital divides, combatting poverty and promoting sustainable and inclusive development.

To strengthen our compliance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), Governments must be more open, inclusive, transparent and innovative. We must change to meet the demands of a society that is more informed, participatory, empowered and responsible for its own development. It is also essential to develop mechanisms that allow us to monitor the implementation and evaluate the impact of public policy based on data-driven evidence. By promoting principles that drive the data revolution for sustainable development, Mexico is spearheading the efforts of the international community to improve access to standardized, comparable and interoperable public data through the International Open Data Charter. To date, the Charter has been adopted by 18 Governments and is supported by more than 15 civil society organizations, the private sector and multilateral organizations to increase the accessibility, comparability, usefulness and impact of open data throughout the world.

Regional cooperation is critical to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. Cooperation allows us to share best practices and to learn from each other. Mexico has the privilege of chairing the monitoring mechanism for the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean, which is one example to the world of how we can stand united and strong as a region to face the challenges of inclusion within our societies in the information and knowledge age. For Mexico, the Internet is a unique platform for innovation — an unlimited platform that encourages development, education, health, environmental protection and public participation. Mexicans aspire to meet those challenges with the use of the Internet as a



powerful, cross-cutting tool to achieve the development of our nation and its people.

In Mexico, we believe that the Internet is capable of promoting gender equality and cultural and linguistic diversity, adapting to the needs of local content, and helping to overcome the challenges of certain vulnerable groups and minorities. That is why Mexico acknowledges the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and welcomes its focus on the principles according to which the Internet was created — a free, neutral, open, resilient and decentralized global network based on a model of multi-stakeholder governance. Such principles were already agreed in the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit on the Information Society and reiterated in the current process. Mexico restates its offer to host the discussion on the future of Internet governance at the eleventh meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, in 2016.

Mexico renews its commitment to building a Government of the future today. We are celebrating a decade of technological progress giving humankind the opportunity of fulfilling a sustainable development agenda enabled by technologies with exponential impact that democratize access to better conditions for development and create more egalitarian societies. Today, Governments have not only the opportunity, but the obligation to create better living conditions for our nations, and to achieve the full transformational potential of technology for every human being. My delegation hopes to see everyone here at the next Internet Governance Forum.

**Mr. Sayan (Turkey):** It is a great pleasure for me to be here for the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. It is a very important gathering to review the progress achieved, challenges and the way forward in the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit in the 10 years. The Summit's process provides an excellent platform by engaging Governments, the United Nations family, civil society and the private sector. Over the past decade, we have witnessed the way in which the Summit's process contributed to achieving development targets in information and communications technologies (ICT) in every nation.

In today's world, information and communications technologies play an important role for sustainable growth and development. ICT changes how we conduct business, use public services, interact with one another

and even enjoy our daily lives. We even have our phones connected to the Internet right next to our beds, and our daily living habits have changed tremendously in the past 10 years. It seems that they will continue to change. In that context, I am very proud to share Turkey's major ICT goals, contained in our strategic Vision 2023. Such goals include expanding the economy to rank among the top 10 in the world, transitioning to a knowledge-based society, building an international hub for ICT, maintaining ICT-based economic growth and enhancing high-speed broadband access for all.

In line with that vision, Turkey is taking bold steps in order to create a fully transformed country using ICT in e-government services. We recently successfully held an international mobile telecommunications advanced auction, in which the successful telecommunications operators will provide international mobile telecommunications services to enhance high-speed mobile Internet and further the value-added of mobile services and applications in Turkey. We also aim to provide one of the first 5G services by 2020.

As a Group of Twenty (G-20) member, Turkey hosted the G-20 Leaders Summit in Antalya last month. The digital economy was also an important topic in the G-20 meetings. The digital economy is a growing part of the global economy. ICT connectivity affects many sectors, and there is a strong correlation between ICT and an increase in gross domestic product. Despite those achievements, the digital divide remains on our agenda. We need to find ways and means to provide affordable access to ICT. Connectivity must be our core focus. There are different models and examples of best practices for financial mechanisms to build connected countries and a connected world. Public-private partnerships, universal service funds and official development assistance should be used to the fullest extent to reach those goals. We attach special importance to the digital divide and are changing our regulations on service and service quality measures in an effort to overcome the digital divide. We believe that development in ICT will help all other fields of economic and human development.

Very recently, the United Nations set new targets for the world with its Sustainable Development Goals. We believe that information and communications technologies are one of the most important tools for reaching those goals. For quality education, decent work and economic growth, we have to explore and improve the ways in which we use ICT. For sustainable

cities and better social services in all sectors, we need to deploy ICT in the heart of all our policies. As information technology is part of our daily lives, upholding human rights, especially freedom of speech in the context of Internet-related policies, remains all the more relevant. Internet governance challenges our systems, and we are here to find a methodology that is people-oriented, aimed at innovation and development in a multi-stakeholder approach. All human rights, as well as our responsibilities that exist offline, must also be applicable and protected online. In that regard, we believe that most of our attention should be paid to the safety and security of all Internet users, especially children.

Today's children are digital natives. There are some advantages to that in some respects, yet they are also more vulnerable to harmful attacks over the Internet. Ensuring their safety and security is not only our duty towards them but also an obligation to make the future of ICT safe. Therefore, in Turkey, special packages to protect children and family have been made available by Internet service providers free of charge since 2011. All stakeholders should contribute to that end. In Internet usage, there is no mediator between content providers and children. Therefore, content providers should act with a balanced approach towards children. They should offer robust, simple and informative reporting mechanisms for all Internet users. The safety of every child and young person should be ensured by protecting them from illegal Internet practices with practical measures.

In today's world, data usage is increasing exponentially in both mobile and fixed networks, thanks to new applications and products and services, especially since network neutrality discussions and over-the-top services have revolutionized the way of delivering ICT services. Over-the-top services create added value, but on the other hand they affect the whole broadband ecosystem, in particular the network operators' revenues and the ability to finance network deployment. We invite all stakeholders and countries that have no specific rules or approaches to net neutrality to discuss those two issues to evaluate the pros and cons.

Ten years after the Summit, another hot topic is privacy. It is important to provide rules for guaranteeing the right of citizens to Internet access so that they can express their opinions freely. It is also equally important to respect privacy and data protection on the Internet.

We should protect the balance between personal rights and data-driven innovation and economy. That approach will unlock the economic value of personal data on one side and foster economic growth on the other. We believe that protecting the rights of Internet users against illegal content would be a great contribution to the development of the Internet economy. Internet intermediaries should also fulfil their responsibilities in the implementation of national laws to combat the illegal content of the Internet. We need to work together to prevent any illegal action, including the misuse of the Internet for terrorist purposes. Social media platforms should not be used as means of propaganda by terrorist organizations. Close cooperation between international organizations, Governments and non-governmental organizations and Internet intermediaries is required to combat the illegal usage of the Internet.

When we look at the legacy of the Summit, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) shines with its success. As the proud host of the ninth IGF in 2014 in Istanbul, we are happy to state that the IGF defined itself as the annual gathering place for Internet Governance and provided a platform for all stakeholders to have their say. In that regard, we could claim that the IGF is a perfect example of the multi-stakeholder Internet governance model. At today's event, as we extend the mandate of the IGF, we believe that the IGF should also take a few more steps forward. We believe that the IGF should provide tangible outcomes for all stakeholders.

In 2012, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development prepared a report on improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (A/67/65) as a response to requests by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. We believe that it is time to open the recommendations that begin with developing more tangible outputs and carefully reviewing them to make the IGF more relevant and capable of finding solutions to problems.

**Mr. Hesse** (Austria): We would like to recall paragraph 68 of the 2005 Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, which states that

“We recognize that all Governments should have an equal role and responsibility for international Internet governance and for ensuring the stability, security and continuity of the Internet. We also recognize the need for development of public policy by Governments in consultation with all stakeholders” (*see A/60/687, para. 68*).

In the light of the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), we would like to emphasize the importance of the global and open nature of the Internet. Austria also supports the extension of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum as the most important instrument to further develop a communication environment for the twenty-first century. The free flow of information is the foundation of the information society and can be ensured only if human rights, including the freedom of opinion and expression, as well as the right to privacy, are adequately protected.

In that context, it is important to keep in mind that the rights that people have offline must also be protected online. That also applies to journalists, media workers, bloggers and human rights defenders. One aspect that has not yet been mentioned today and that is not a comfortable one is the safety of journalists. Promoting the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the safety of journalists in particular, is a priority of Austria's work in the area of human rights. In that context, social media are becoming a particularly important source of communication. Citizen journalism is playing a crucial role in imparting information, including on political developments, that is not covered by traditional media. Blocking should therefore not preclude access to specific information that cannot be accessed by other means. In that context, the principles of necessity and proportionality are especially important. Exceptions must be defined narrowly and in accordance with those principles.

We all subscribe to the idea that the Internet and information and communications technologies (ICT) in general are important tools for improving the quality of life for all citizens. And it is quite obvious today that ICTs are a determining factor in any socioeconomic progress, and will of course be so in future. But that is only one side of the coin. The other is that we are dealing with inequalities of access, particularly access to basic resources and primary health care and education, at all levels, globally and nationally. According to a recent report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in most countries the gap between rich and poor is the widest it has been in 30 years. The richest 10 per cent of the population of the OECD countries earns 9.6 times the income of the poorest 10 per cent. And beyond its impact on social cohesion, growing inequality is damaging to long-term economic growth.

That said, developing an inclusive information society is vitally important to our information society agenda. We are focusing on specific initiatives aimed at increasing digital competence and skills. We must ensure that no child leaves school without digital skills, so that all have the foundation they need for lifelong learning. And, of course, we have to intensify our efforts, especially in order to integrate tens of thousands of refugees into the European job market generally and Austria's in particular.

I would like to end by saying that ICTs alone will not change the inequalities that exist in our countries, but that they are, of course, essential tools for sustainable development.

**Mr. Trigona** (Malta): Earlier this year, at UNESCO's stimulating CONNECTing the Dots Conference in Paris, I continued to advocate the application of the legal concept of the common heritage of humankind to the Internet's critical infrastructure, as I have been doing since way back in 1997 at the World Internet Forum held in Kuala Lumpur, in Malaysia, and as I reiterated most recently at the Commonwealth Youth Forum held during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta last month.

At that time, as well as since then, I raised the sharply contrasting choices facing the world community regarding the Internet. The first is whether the Internet should be left to develop alone or we should endeavour to bring it into the fold of the common heritage of humankind. The second is whether the Internet should be left unprotected — governed only, as it were, by the law of the jungle, as a *res nullius* — or should be internationally recognized and protected in the interests of present and future generations, considering that it is increasingly constructed internationally as a *res communis omnium*, common property, and therefore eminently appropriate for stewardship management as part of the common heritage of humankind.

We have come a long way since then, as testified to by the conferences earlier this year in Paris and The Hague. The original resistance to the notion of the Internet as the common heritage of humankind had slowly but surely already started to evaporate in the face of rising cybercrime, as I recall from Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly debates on these points in the late 1990s. That resistance was soon to be tackled through the intergovernmental Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, which was also

adhered to by major non-European countries. But other developments had also started eating into the old positions held by those who still doubted the benefits of institutionalization.

The operating mantra on Internet governance was first of all a pure multi-stakeholder model. That is now generally accepted. Moreover, it is contextually better supported by the “humankind” in the “common heritage of humankind”, which undoubtedly covers all stakeholders. That also justifies improved mechanisms aimed at equitably narrowing the digital divide, wherever it is, for the benefit of humankind, particularly in developing countries, including by further intensifying capacity-building programmes, as was so commendably articulated in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Similarly, the complex privacy debate demands an enveloping framework that the notion of the common heritage of humankind can provide for all stakeholders. The basic point is that the paradigm of the common heritage of humankind gives us highly sought-after global policy coherence. In other words, we are faced with, and henceforth must deploy all our endeavours to overcome, the challenge presented by globalization, which has spread *de facto* but is not yet regulated *de jure*.

Secondly, even the old adage “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” is now no longer completely applicable, what with the developing strains and cracks in the edifice that have emerged recently, as manifested in the cybersecurity deficit that is already demanding a variety of governmental interventions across the globe. The adage is therefore making way for regulation of the Internet, not only by applying general principles of international law to cyberspace, but also by customizing rules for the Internet by analogy with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Thirdly, ours is a review process in which we are obviously still operating within the United Nations remit of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) itself. Even 10 years ago, the Working Group on Internet Governance declared that it recognized that any organizational form for the function and oversight of governance should adhere to the following two of three principles: first, that no single Government should have a pre-eminent role in relation to international Internet governance, and secondly, that the organizational form of the governance function should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement

of Governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations.

It is therefore clear that our overriding objective should be protecting the Internet and the global information ecosystem that it supports for the benefit of present and future generations, while enhancing universal accessibility to them. That is why more attention and support should be given to cybersecurity and the valid work done by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security over the past six years, as well as to the work on cybernorms done at Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Toronto. The footnotes to my circulated statement include all the hyperlinks to the working documents I have cited.

Very much to the point were the five principles listed by the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Kerry, when he declared in his lecture on 18 May in Seoul, Korea, that beyond the recognition that basic rules of international law apply in cyberspace, the Internet needs rules to be able to flourish. The question arises if the suggested rules are already *de lege ferenda*, that is, elements of a future international convention on the Internet, since Kerry admitted that “even with these principles, ensuring international cyberstability will remain a work in progress”. He went on to say that

“[w]e still have a lot of work to do to develop a truly reliable framework, based on international law, that will effectively deter violations and minimize the danger of conflict.”

He claimed, furthermore, that those five principles are “universal concepts that should be appealing to all responsible States, and they are already gaining traction”. That those principles seek to regulate inter-State behaviour in cyberspace says much for these new-found Government responsibilities. They contrast sharply now with the original euphoric glee of some excited cybergurus’ pronouncements 20 years ago, denouncing Governments and urging them not to tamper with cyberspace, which they declared to be completely independent, as was stated in *A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace*, by the now famous John Perry Barlow, issued in Davos, Switzerland, on 8 February 1996.

As it happens, precise cyber-geolocation has since reintroduced the possibility of enforceable national



jurisdiction. We have come a long way since resistance to the application of international law to the Internet on the basis of such groundless euphoria first began to fall flat — first, because it was increasingly apparent that it was bad science, technologically defective and untenable; secondly, because of the loss of trust that resulted when reliance on what turned out to be non-existent weapons of mass destruction were sought to justify the 2003 Iraq war; and thirdly, because of the more dramatic and widespread loss of trust produced by Edward Snowden’s revelations in 2013.

I do not have time here to list Mr. Kerry’s five principles, which I have footnoted for ease of reference, but it is manifestly obvious that we are now definitely back to the basic business of the United Nations of transforming power into law through diplomacy — in fact, back to negotiating new legislation on the Internet. We have an impressive model. This very building and the Organization itself are living testimony, 70 years on, to the commitment of the victors at the end of the Second World War to transforming power into law through diplomacy and turning swords into ploughshares.

No one has observed this more closely than Admiral Michael Rogers, Director of the National Security Agency of the United States. On 27 May, at a cyberwarfare conference in Estonia, he cited the 1967 Maltese initiative proclaiming the seabed and its subsoil beyond national jurisdictions as the common heritage of humankind, as expressed in article 136 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. One would like to hope that this could be an example for an analogous law of the Internet. To quote Admiral Rogers,

“Can we create a global commons that enables open, reliable, safe and resilient communications, a flow of information and ideas ... and a framework that maximizes its use for all of us? ... I would like to see if we can create something equivalent to the maritime world in the cyberworld that enables us to keep moving information, keep moving commerce, keep moving ideas on a global basis.”

Information as a shared, pooled resource had previously been thoroughly analysed by Nobel Prize laureate Elinor Ostrom, together with her colleagues at Duke University. Earlier still, we thrived on the commendable research work of the United Nations Development Programme on global public goods and the Internet as such a public good, although that

categorization, like those of “global public resource” and “global public facility”, does not in itself generate international rights and obligations, unlike the common heritage of humankind. Nor, in general, does reliance on the concepts of conflict of laws and private international law adequately resolve all Internet disputes in areas where such concepts are applicable — or at all, where extraterritorial legislation is involved. Once designated as common heritage, the critical infrastructure of the Internet would delineate clearly which aspects of its physical and content layers could be left to private international law and which parts of the logical layer would come under its remit.

It should be noted that the international legal principle of the common heritage of humankind is to be found not only in international treaty law but is now also part of international customary law. Besides its presence in UNCLOS, we find it in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1979 Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and other Celestial Bodies and the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, with its 1991 Protocol on Environmental Protection. It has now also been embedded in another Maltese initiative, resolution 43/53 of 1988, which proposed conserving the climate as part of the common heritage of humankind, leading ultimately to last Saturday’s historic and legally binding conclusions on climate change at the Paris Climate Change Conference, based on the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Here it is also worth mentioning the 1997 UNESCO Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and its Declaration on the Responsibilities of Present Generations Towards Future Generations of the same year.

Moving on from the geopolitical and legal justifications for the concept of the common heritage of humankind, among the many academic contributions advocating international regulation of the Internet under it, I would like to highlight four. First, in 2004, is John Matthiason’s proposal in a concept paper, “A Framework Convention: An Institutional Option for Internet Governance”, done for the Internet Governance Project.

Secondly, in 2006, New York University School of Law published a Jean Monnet Working Paper by Augusto Segura Serrano on “Internet Regulation: A Hard-Law Proposal”.

Thirdly, in March 2015, Dennis Broeders presented to the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands his report

on “The public core of the Internet: an international agenda for Internet governance”, in which he proposes categorizing the Internet’s backbone as an international neutral zone and a global public good, for which we should work towards establishing an international norm — and why not one, I would say, based on the common heritage of humankind — prohibiting Governments from appropriating or interfering with it, with the goal of keeping the Internet’s infrastructure operational and trustworthy and, I would add, peaceful. He recommends disseminating such a standard through relevant United Nations forums, as well as regional organizations such as the Council of Europe, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the African Union. It would lay the foundations for what could eventually expand into a broader regime.

Fourthly, and more specifically, my former student Jovan Kurbalija, now a friend and colleague with whom I worked on this project from the beginning, outlined his thoughts in a December 2013 blog post on international inviolability for the root zone, later developed into an October 2014 DiploFoundation policy brief, which holds that the inviolability of the Internet root zone could be categorized as having the status of common heritage of humankind and could come under the management of humankind as a whole, leading to an international Internet root convention.

The fact that not only were participants in Brazil’s successful 2014 NETmundial Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance deeply convinced that Internet governance problems cannot be solved on a national basis alone, but also the European Union (EU), which as a result is seeking to diplomatically reconcile and broker the extreme geopolitical players at both ends of the spectrum, shows us the relevance of the EU’s Action 97. Committed as we Europeans are to the EU’s digital single market, can that be achieved sustainably without a global digital single market? And if not, under what legal regime? For that, I would suggest the common heritage of humankind.

The persistent advocacy for international regulation of the Internet is obviously separate from the Russian and Chinese cyberpact, concluded earlier this year, in which, among other stipulations, the two sides agreed on a range of trust- and confidence-building measures and joint promotion of norms of international law in

order to ensure national and international information security, especially under the auspices of the platforms of the relevant international organizations, the United Nations, the OSCE and the International Telecommunication Union.

I would like to conclude with one basic statistic, which is that the United States is the technology leader of the Internet, while China has the largest number of users. That makes our tasks much more urgent. These are a few of the many reasons compelling us to ask the Secretary-General to consider placing an item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its next session entitled “Protection of the Internet as part of the common heritage of humankind”.

**Mr. Schnorr** (Germany): I would like to begin by thanking our two co-facilitators, who made a key contribution to moving our negotiations forward here in New York over the past few weeks.

Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered this morning by the observer of the European Union (see A/70/PV.76).

Today, modern information and communications technologies (ICT) is linking people and businesses together on every continent, in every sector and at an ever faster pace. It can connect and integrate societies that are far distant from each other. And it can enable global discourse between citizens as well as leaders. It is the Internet’s global nature that makes it a key to unlocking social and economic success.

Since the Geneva and Tunis meetings of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), we have made great strides in setting up a global information society. We have greatly expanded Internet coverage. The number of users has soared. At the same time, the cost of using it has fallen dramatically. However, we must continue to work to bridge the digital divides that still exist, not only between developing and developed countries but also between various groups within our societies. Germany remains strongly committed to supporting our partners, who have built a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society that includes the protection of fundamental human rights. Individuals should enjoy the same universal human rights online that they do offline. Joint initiatives undertaken by Brazil and Germany have played no small part in the considerable progress that has been made in this area in recent years,

in both the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

We believe that WSIS has shown itself to be a successful platform that has enabled us to conduct ongoing international discussions and set agendas for ICT and development. It is regrettable, however, that too many new issues have been piled onto the process, tending to obscure its core elements and the importance of the 2005 Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. The Agenda was about the chances and opportunities that new developments in information technology can offer our societies, our economic and social development and the people's free communication. Germany believes that what is crucial is talking about smart uses of ICT in ways that are adequate to the needs of all — something that can have a considerable impact on our peoples — rather than having fundamental discussions on who controls the Internet or who should take responsibility for its governance.

From Germany's point of view, the answer to those questions is quite simple. The Internet should never be at risk of being controlled by a single set of stakeholders, whether businesses, Governments or any other group. Every stakeholder group should assume responsibility for Internet governance, which can be practiced in many different places and ways. In that regard, we appreciate the fact that multi-stakeholder processes are highlighted in today's draft outcome document (A/70/L.33). In Germany's view, it is vital to ensure that the Internet represents a level playing field for all its users, because that is a prerequisite for maintaining its innovative power. We should all try to integrate and involve an even greater number and variety of stakeholder groups in future negotiations, such as those we have had in New York in the past few days. The organization of the NETMundial Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance, held last year at the invitation of the Brazilian Government, could serve as a blueprint for future events.

In our opinion, the draft resolution we will adopt shortly is imbued with the same spirit that prevailed in Tunis and Geneva and made the WSIS agenda possible. Since then, a new generation of Internet users has arisen in every country in the world, with new goals and fresh ideas. We hope our document will be interpreted not as something that fences them in but as a tool that can serve as a launching pad for new ways of thinking.

**Ms. Forzi** (Italy): I would like to begin by thanking the United Nations for the hospitality that we are all enjoying. Let me first express Italy's appreciation for the commendable hard work of the co-facilitators in the lengthy preparations for this meeting, and to all the stakeholders for their valuable contributions to the success of the process.

As we all know, the main goal of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was to bridge the digital divide between the developed and developing countries and to facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through the use of information and communications technologies (ICT). Italy, together with the European Union and its member States, has been deeply engaged in the WSIS process all through these years and has supported numerous projects aimed at implementing WSIS action plans and bridging the digital divide. The WSIS forum has achieved important goals in its role in coordinating information exchange and creation, and in sharing knowledge and best practices related to its 11 courses of action on information and communication technologies.

Italy is fully committed to promoting the importance of ICT in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. In this area, the Internet will play a key role, which is why Italy supports multi-stakeholder governance structures that are based on a coherent set of global principles for Internet governance, consistent with human rights and fundamental online freedoms, including freedom of expression, the right to privacy, the right to data protection and freedom of peaceful assembly and association. All citizens should have the right to access to ultra-broadband Internet of reasonable quality if they are to be adequately included, electronically, in the global community.

Italy welcomes the renewal of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum, which has gathered together the contributions of the various stakeholders in an inclusive way over the past 10 years. In conclusion, we welcome today's draft outcome document (A/70/L.33) and look forward to working with the Assembly on this ambitious project.

**Mr. Mor Solá** (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Spain aligns itself fully with the statement delivered this morning by the observer of the European

Union (see A/70/PV.76). I would also like to make a statement in my national capacity.

I would like to begin by expressing our gratitude for the role of the two co-facilitators, without whose efforts it would not have been possible to achieve an agreement as ambitious as today's draft outcome document (A/70/L.33). We hope that it will give a collective impetus to achieving a more people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society. I would like to express Spain's firmest possible support for that goal.

In the decade that has passed since the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society, information and communication technologies (ICT) have made great strides that are rapidly transforming the social, economic and cultural reality of humankind. The expansion of broadband and digital agendas, as well as increasingly greater access to mobile devices, are turning ICT into strong vectors for sustainable development.

This year, we witnessed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) — a comprehensive, universal and transformative document that has led to a paradigm shift in the way we understand sustainable development. New challenges have arisen that call for all countries to commit to the sustainability of our actions in the three dimensions of the Agenda: the economic, social and environmental dimensions. ICT should help to facilitate the implementation of the Agenda and its means of implementation.

Spain underscores the importance of mainstreaming human rights as one of the pillars of the review of the World Summit on the Information Society, ensuring equal rights between the virtual and physical worlds. Another cross-cutting priority is the empowerment of women and girls in the broad range of issues related to ICT. The gender gap, reflected in the lower number of women who have access to and use ICT in comparison to the number of men, must be addressed by ensuring equal opportunities between men and women and promoting women's access to ICT-related education and professions.

The establishment of clear legal regimes with balanced and foreseeable obligations for all players in the digital environment is one factor that can contribute the most to stimulating investment in digital networks, services and content. The promotion of free competition and fair and equitable tax systems is also

necessary to encourage innovation and the creation of new businesses. Likewise, international cooperation, including in the private sector, can curb acts of cybercrime and practices that do not respect human rights, in particular the right to privacy, and consumer fraud, which is protected by the cross-border nature of the Internet.

Technological progress is a significant driver of economic growth. It is estimated that a 10 per cent increase in Internet connection speeds leads to an average 1.4 per cent increase in economic growth in developing countries. However, despite recent progress, there is still a significant and growing digital divide between countries in terms of the accessibility, scope and use of ICT, as well as broadband access. Investment in ICT infrastructure and policy reforms in developing countries can help to reduce poverty and inequality between and within countries, without overlooking the importance of alleviating existing inequalities in middle-income countries, which have specific challenges and needs.

To close the digital divide, our approach must be multidimensional and include a deeper understanding of what we mean by "access". It must be increasingly focused on the quality of access and connectivity, with an open and neutral Internet. Furthermore, bearing in mind that 60 per cent of the global population will be concentrated in cities in 2030, Spain believes that ICTs are catalysts of smart cities that can address water, energy and clean air needs in a more sustainable manner.

In conclusion, the balanced development of the information society is one of the keys to a better future for all. Information technologies offer all parts of the world a new opportunity for sustainable growth. It is our collective responsibility to help ensure that that opportunity is made available to all, without leaving anyone behind.

**Ms. Rantala-Engberg** (Finland): Finland welcomes the draft outcome document (A/70/L.33) of this high-level meeting, which provides the basis for future work on follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Finland remains strongly committed to the WSIS process. We would like to ensure a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society. Over the past 10 years, we have seen this goal partly fulfilled. Wider, increased and evermore advanced use of information and



communications technologies has greatly changed our societies, economies and the development landscape. The WSIS process has been important in creating a shared commitment and in accelerating that development. Still, there is a lot of work ahead of us. Strong global cooperation and increased commitment to multi-stakeholder partnerships for smarter, more practical and sustainable solutions to the challenges our planet is facing are needed.

It is timely to revisit the link between the WSIS process and the larger global development agenda. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) is from now on the most important framework for the whole United Nations system and all Governments. The WSIS process is a significant contributor to the Agenda. It is our view that the link between the WSIS process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be strong and functional, and we note that the outcome document includes that objective. The follow-up high-level meeting in 2025 will serve that purpose well.

The WSIS process has greatly influenced Finland's development policy and cooperation. Over the past 10 years, we have invested significantly in laying the preconditions for digital development, growth and innovation, supporting information society development and cybercapacity-building in developing countries. In addition to financial contributions, Finland has invested in sharing its own experiences and expertise in this field. It must be stressed that in this process it is vital to ensure that no one is left behind. All groups, including civil society; the private sector; and vulnerable groups, such as minorities, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities, must be able to participate in digital development and related decision-making in the shaping of the information society.

One of the most pressing digital divides is the gender divide. We need more concerted efforts to ensure that girls and women can benefit from the digital opportunities of our time. The world cannot afford to make use of only half of its human potential for growth and innovation. That is why the participation and representation of women in the information and communications technologies sector, including women's education, employment and leadership, is of crucial importance.

In order to be able to meaningfully contribute to global development, we need the Internet to be open,

free and secure. The Internet should be protected and nurtured as a global public good. Our economies and societies depend on the free flow of and access to information. Internet universality, to use the new guiding concept of UNESCO, must be our target. That encompasses the realization of human rights, including freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of assembly and association, and right to privacy. We also need to pay increased attention to the strengthening of the rule of law and democracy. All human rights and freedoms apply online as they do offline.

Finland wishes to emphasize that successful governance of the Internet requires the participation of and effective cooperation among all stakeholders: Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, and technical and academic communities. Finland is committed to an open and inclusive multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance. We are pleased that the draft outcome document reiterates and reaffirms these principles. The process towards enhanced cooperation was agreed upon in Tunis 10 years ago. We acknowledge the need for continued dialogue on it.

We appreciate the fact that the high-level meeting decided to extend the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) by 10 years. The IGF is a key outcome of the WSIS process. It facilitates discussions among all stakeholders and identifies issues to be tackled in other forums as well. Positive steps have been taken to improve the IGF. Finland has believed in the IGF since its inception and has been a major contributor to the IGF Trust Fund. We encourage other Governments to contribute as well.

As we live in today's interconnected world, we meet multidimensional challenges. We must remember how a world connected by information and communications technologies can offer us enormous possibilities. We need strong cooperation among all stakeholders to make sure today's WSIS outcomes will be implemented globally, regionally and nationally. I would like to reaffirm that Finland will remain an active participant in this endeavour.

**Ms. Arango** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to address this high-level meeting on behalf of the Government of the Dominican Republic.

The Dominican Republic shares and supports the fundamental principles and the vision of World

Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), reaffirmed by the Group of 77 and China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, to create an information society oriented around social, cultural, economic and technical development and building partnerships with all stakeholders to help narrow the gap between developed and developing countries.

For the Dominican Republic, a Caribbean middle-income country, this regional and global process of revising the WSIS agreements and action lines has contributed to enriching the national consultation process for the design of the new Dominican Digital Agenda 2016-2020, in which we emphasize the inclusion of gender equity and equality as a cross-cutting issue and its total alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We welcome the focus in the draft outcome document (A/70/L.33) on the digital gender gap, expressed by the commitment that this call generates for all countries to overcome it and guarantee the existence in the near future of an equitable information society that supports equality. We also appreciate the central role of information and communications technologies (ICT) at all levels of education, permeating school curriculums and giving new generations innovative tools for a better future.

Our Government attaches high importance to the focus this process gives to the crucial role of ICT as a catalyst for development and in the realization of the SDGs. That is why we wish to propose that, in addition to working in partnership with all stakeholders and calling on United Nations entities to facilitate mainstreaming of the WSIS action lines in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), a working group be created to draft clear and measurable indicators to ensure such mainstreaming and that these indicators be made available to countries and stakeholders in order to ensure that the SDGs benefit from the enormous potential of ICT.

In reference to security and confidence in the use of ICT, we salute the progress of the draft outcome document. However, we would like to make sure that, within national and regional strategies, the need to deal firmly with online harassment, intimidation and abuse that in most cases are suffered by women and girls is taken into account.

We support the call to find innovative funding mechanisms to advance the commitments made in

Geneva and Tunis, which were revised in the 10-year review of WSIS for developing countries, including middle-income countries. Funding for these agendas is critical for the global implementation of the agreements of the 10-year review and for enabling everyone to be connected by 2030.

Finally, we reiterate our deep appreciation for the participatory and democratic character of this review process, for the enthusiastic integration of all stakeholders, for the efforts undertaken through new technologies so that more people worldwide can meet and participate in this process, and for the significant coordination efforts of and the collaborative work with United Nations agencies, including UN-Women, vigorously promoted by the facilitators.

**Ms. Lucas** (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity given to me to speak on the occasion of this high-level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Luxembourg fully endorses the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/70/PV.76).

A lot of ground has been covered since 2003 with respect to the 2005 World Summit on building a people-centred and inclusive information society that favours development. Luxembourg fully supports this vision of the Information Society put forward at the summits in Geneva and Tunis. While real progress has indeed been made, notably through the multi-stakeholder approach that is the heart of the Information Society, and thanks to technological development, it is clear that further efforts are required to make this vision a reality. This is especially true as new challenges and dangers have emerged over the past 10 years. It will be important to take this into account in future, without altering the foundations of our shared commitment over the past decade.

This overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society has come in time to reaffirm our commitment in the light of these new developments and to reflect the new situation in the field of sustainable development and eradication of poverty, following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) at the United Nations Summit in September. This Agenda rightly recognizes the importance of information and communications technology (ICT) to the realization of sustainable development goals,

echoing the broad guidelines adopted in the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society which also contribute the achievement of these objectives.

With its strong long-term commitment to development cooperation and confident in its selection of information and communications technologies as a pillar of its economy, Luxembourg fully subscribes to the conclusion that ICT is a key element for achieving sustainable development. It is in this context that we support the development of these technologies in Luxembourg's cooperation partner countries, particularly in Africa.

The draft outcome document to be adopted during this high-level meeting (A/70/L.33), which was sensitively facilitated by our colleagues, the Permanent Representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Latvia, clearly specifies the complementary efforts needed to realize the vision developed as part of the World Summit on the Information Society. It rightly underscores the importance of bridging the digital divide to create technical potential for ICT to serve as instruments for development. However, it would be false to measure our progress in spreading ICT from a purely economic perspective.

We are particularly pleased that the draft outcome document underscores the need to take stock of the achievements made in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are essential elements of an inclusive information society that focuses on people and development. It is only in that way that all human beings — men and women, young and old — all over the world will be able to benefit from the opportunities created by the information society. We also welcome the fact that the draft outcome document expresses the wish to see the next high-level meeting of the General Assembly, in 2025, fuel the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We believe that the commitments made in the context of the draft outcome document will contribute significantly to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and sustainable development. The Assembly can count on Luxembourg at this crucial phase in the implementation of our commitments.

**Mr. Wang Min** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to start by congratulating President Mogens Lykketoft on convening today's meeting. We assure him of our active support and

cooperation to help bring the event to a successful conclusion.

China supports the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/70/PV.76).

Ten years ago at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society were unanimously adopted, articulating a collective pledge to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society. Today, we are gathered here in New York to look back on how the Summit's outcomes have been implemented over the past decade, to identify and make sense of the opportunities and challenges in information communication technologies (ICT) for development, and to explore ways of establishing a multilateral, democratic and transparent global Internet governance architecture. Today's meeting is timely and highly relevant.

Over the past decade, ICT has been evolving by leaps and bounds, and the Internet has been making our life much easier and giving a powerful impetus to social development and progress. More than ever before, humankind has become one tapestry of tightly interwoven interests and destinies, each strand inseparable from the rest. We must, however, also be aware that the goals set in the Tunis Agenda are far from accomplished and a gaping digital divide remains. Internet governance has lagged behind Internet and information technology development. Other issues, including cybersecurity challenges and inequitable distribution of critical Internet resources, are becoming ever more prominent.

After multiple rounds of arduous negotiations, Member States agreed on a draft outcome document (A/70/L.33) for the 10-year review of WSIS, which will be adopted at this high-level meeting. We hope that today's meeting and the draft outcome document will fully address the fervent wishes and aspirations of the developing world at large for ICT-driven economic and social development, contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), and enable the Internet and information technology to generate greater benefits for the peoples of all countries. In that connection, China wishes to share the following views and observations.

First, bridging the digital divide is a top priority in promoting the development of the information

society. Information access and communications are an integral part of the 2030 Agenda and an important means for implementing it. The Agenda sets forth a number of clear goals, including the full commitment to universal access to ICT applications and helping developing countries improve their communications infrastructure, step up their ICT capacity-building and scale up their information technology empowerment as a whole. That will help them to overcome the digital divide and partake of the digital dividend as quickly as possible. It is incumbent on the international community to strengthen cooperation to achieve such goals, and developed countries should assume greater obligations as assistance providers by contributing further resources.

Secondly, ICT for development is an important means for promoting the development of the information society. China commends the international community for its efforts to that end. We deem it necessary to improve the interconnectivity of infrastructure worldwide, strengthen collaborative sharing and international cooperation in Internet technology, encourage innovation in the way in which information technology interfaces with the various dimensions of the social fabric, vigorously promote the Internet economy and strengthen ICT capacity-building in developing countries, thereby enabling ICT to make a tangible contribution to development.

Thirdly, improved global Internet governance architecture is a sine qua non in promoting the development of the information society. Active efforts should be devoted to the establishment of a multilateral, democratic and transparent global Internet governance architecture that provides assurances for equal participation in Internet governance among the parties, for rational distribution of essential Internet resources, and for joint management of critical Internet infrastructure. While China supports the involvement of Governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in global Internet governance within the purview of their respective roles and responsibilities, we do not think that this model should favour one side over another, and we oppose giving businesses and NGOs disproportionate prominence while relegating the role of the Government to the sidelines.

Fourthly, in promoting the development of the information society, one effective safeguard is an energetic response to the challenges to cybersecurity.

President Xi Jinping said that cybersecurity and information technology empowerment are the two wings that enable a bird to fly and the two pairs of wheels that drive a vehicle. They are inseparable and mutually enhancing. Currently, developments in cyberspace are influencing developments in the international situation and vice versa. Cybersecurity has become an important new variable that bears on international relations.

In that context, we should hold fast to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in cyberspace and lay a foundation for a peaceful, secure, open and cooperative cyberspace. China is in favour of formulating an international code of conduct on cyberspace. Different countries have different Internet security concerns that should be fully respected, and cybersecurity should be jointly defended through dialogue and cooperation on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit. In order to effectively address the threats of cybercrime and cyberterrorism, China advocates the negotiation and elaboration of a comprehensive and balanced international convention against cybercrime within the United Nations framework.

As a major player in the Internet world, China is a builder and defender of and contributor to cyberspace. It always has been and always will be. The second World Internet Conference will take place in Wuzhen, in China's eastern province of Zhejiang, between 16 and 18 December, under the theme "An Interconnected World Shared and Governed by All — Building a Community of Common Destiny in Cyberspace". His Excellency President Xi Jinping will attend the opening ceremony and deliver a keynote speech. The Conference will hold discussions on topical and emerging issues related to the Internet, making a positive contribution to the development of cyberspace in general and the Internet sector in particular.

The Internet has been a powerful engine for social development. It is transforming the global community into a community of common destiny, integration and interdependence. China stands ready to work with the rest of the world and do its part for the creation of a better, more prosperous cyberspace, enabling the Internet to generate greater benefits for humankind as a whole and achieve sustainable economic and social development across the world.

**Ms. Zhakhmetova (Kazakhstan):** I am honoured to be here today and to have the opportunity to highlight



some of the key outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The outcomes have, without a doubt, changed the way people live and think since the meetings in Geneva and, subsequently, in Tunis were held. However, further action should be taken to make digital opportunity more available, thereby minimizing the inevitable digital divide that exists within the countries, as well as between developed and developing countries. It is also essential that we work toward providing Internet access to everyone equally, and that we provide fixed and mobile broadband connection, especially in rural areas.

As rapid changes continue to take place in Internet technology and governance, we have to ensure that social networks become truly interactive and can be put to good use to support democratic processes, human rights, and the sharing of medical and scientific advances, thus promoting general human well-being. There has been increased debate concerning online privacy and surveillance; this can also be looked into with a view to providing guidelines for the future.

Kazakhstan, as an integral part of the world's information society, shares all of these concerns and challenges. We have a clear understanding of the Summit's huge symbolic value: it brought into the international mainstream the idea that information and communications technologies (ICT) have tremendous potential to promote development. The role of ICT in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, bridging the digital divide, and creating a transparent Government, has become vital in Kazakhstan.

Over the past 10 years, Kazakhstan has created the infrastructure for electronic governance. Seventy per cent of our citizens have Internet access. More than 700 electronic services are available to everyone, and about 40 per cent of citizens receive more than 100 million governmental services online. This year, in response to global changes, our President has adopted 100 specific steps, at least 10 of which are aimed at creating a transparent Government and open information society. With regard to each of those steps, tremendous work has been done to change legislation. One piece of legislation provides for further ICT development by enhancing usage of cloud computing, implementing enterprise architecture, and prioritizing open source. Another law is intended to create an open government and increase the amount of open data that can be provided by Government ministries. The law also aims to open ministry budgets and to enhance citizen

engagement in decision-making processes. The third law lays the foundation for the creation of a unified Government services centre for citizens, which makes it possible to receive Government services in one place. All of these measures have been implemented to make ICT available to all the people of Kazakhstan and to create the conditions necessary to transition into an innovative information society.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Latvia and the United Arab Emirates, for their outstanding contributions and tremendous work.

**Mr. Ružička** (Slovakia): I wish to offer my congratulations to all for surviving the barrage of information received throughout the entire day. At the outset, let me express my deepest gratitude to both co-facilitators, Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, and Ambassador Jānis Mažeiks, Permanent Representative of Latvia, for leading this process to a successful conclusion, as well as for their tremendous job during negotiations on the outcome document.

Information and communications technologies (ICT) have revolutionized our ways of living and working; have transformed economies; and have had an inevitable impact on the way people live in many regions of the world. ICT brings almost everything that is happening around the world, good or bad, to our living rooms, instantly. Often ICT creates a desired reality by offering us information that is easier to digest. It even makes up stories, creating a virtual reality. ICT gives all of us the opportunity to create our own virtual world and share it with others. This is the twenty-first century, the age of information. I am sure that my 14-year-old daughter is at this moment communicating with her friends via Skype, watching my statement, and waiting to criticize me this evening when I come home.

Trends like mobile technologies, cloud computing, big data, business intelligence and social networks have a multifaceted impact on every aspect of our lives. However, the Internet still has not become a reality for everyone. Access to the Internet, information, knowledge and opportunities is still not evenly distributed. But we have a chance to change that for our common benefit. Let us not miss the opportunity, but instead grasp it.

The year 2015 was a successful year in the area of climate change and sustainable development. The

international community concluded historic agreements on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and, most recently, at the twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris. This framework of three historical documents creates a qualitatively new environment for global cooperation and a new opportunity. Perhaps symbolically, the Conference on climate change was concluded prior to the premiere of *Star Wars*, signifying that we are not heading in that direction. We created a manual for a sustainable planet; but we have to read the manual and implement it. A business-as-usual approach cannot be taken here either by Member States or international organizations.

The Agenda we have set requires improved cooperation in the area of information as well. It also requires an improved environment for universal access to global communication services. The Internet and informatization may substantively contribute to the achievement of many of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular with regard to addressing poverty, education, and enabling businesses to improve performance and look for new opportunities in the areas of banking and health-care services.

Consequently, what steps should we take? What do we need to do? We have to bridge the digital divide. We have to make Internet and communication services accessible to all. We have to create an enabling environment. We have to support open, inclusive, but also responsible and transparent Internet governance. We have to encourage enhanced cooperation, and achieve greater inclusiveness by strengthening collaboration with all stakeholders, both public and private, in developed and developing countries. We have to respect human rights, and ensure that the rights individuals enjoy in real life are respected online as well, in particular freedom of expression, the right to privacy and the protection of personal information and data. We have to build confidence, responsibility and security in the use of ICT. Where there is the will, there is potential for development. Owing to the principles of universality, synergy and affordability, we can multiply every dollar spent to develop infrastructure to enable improved accessibility to ICT in those parts of the world with less coverage. The return on that investment will be significant.

Allow me to make a few remarks on the innovative potential of ICTs. They contribute to the development of

business sectors with high added value; have potential for employment growth, especially for young people; and may increase global competitiveness. Take, for example, several initiatives considered and introduced by Government of Slovakia to support innovative companies. We have established a multifaceted set of incentives to support start-ups focused on information and communications technologies. We have created an entrepreneurial environment that can help entities with unique ideas, and attract foreign partners with high innovation and research potential. We are supporting well-educated and -trained human capital in the fields of robotics, cybersecurity and information technology. We have created a knowledge-based society and participate in the digital single market. We engage public administration in digital works, which is at times a difficult task. We witness similar difficulties here in the United Nations, where occasionally time is needed before the benefits of introducing new technologies can be seen.

The Slovak Republic fully subscribes to the World Summit on the Information Society. We are ready to share our best practices with anyone who may be interested and looking for cooperation with more advanced countries, as well as those who seek to boost their economies. Slovakia will join efforts to implement the World Summit vision beyond 2015. We will support multi-stakeholder cooperation and the engagement of all relevant players, including effective partnerships, by involving the private sector, civil society, technical and academic communities and international organizations.

**Mrs. Nusseibeh** (United Arab Emirates): Let me express my delegation's deep thanks for the Assembly's stewardship of the 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society and for the support of the Secretary-General throughout this process. Today's high-level meeting is a clear affirmation of the important role of the United Nations in our collective global efforts to achieve the World Summit's vision.

The United Arab Emirates is honoured to have served, at the President's request, as co-facilitator of this important and timely review. I would like to thank the co-facilitator, Latvia, for its excellent collaboration over the past six months. We would also like to express our thanks to all Member States, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, including the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), as well as representatives of civil society, the private sector and academia, who have made the 10-year review

process of the World Summit an exemplary platform for collaboration among all stakeholders of the information society.

In October, my co-facilitator and I had the pleasure of attending this year's annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum in Brazil to discuss the topic of empowering sustainable development and to receive inputs from a range of World Summit communities. The strengthened engagement with the multi-stakeholder community since the adoption of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society in 2005 has undoubtedly enriched the process considerably.

Today, in my national capacity, I would like to associate the United Arab Emirates with the South African statement delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/70/PV.76) and to share key messages from the experience of the United Arab Emirates in realizing the vision of the World Summit on the Information Society.

The United Arab Emirates has long recognized the potential of information and communications technologies (ICT) as a critical driver of development, and our national experience has illustrated the potential of ICT for innovation and economic transformation. We have invested heavily in the ICT sector and, just as importantly, built an enabling environment for the sector to thrive. Those investments have laid the foundations for our ICT sector to flourish, develop and set trends at a local and regional level with the aim of delivering effective change-management approaches to Government and the private sector.

The results speak for themselves. In 2015, the ITU ranked the United Arab Emirates among the most dynamic countries for having recorded above-average improvements in the levels of ICT access, usage and skills over the past five years. Today 100 per cent of our population has mobile phone subscriptions, and the World Economic Forum ranks us first in the world for mobile coverage and penetration. More than 90 per cent of people in the United Arab Emirates regularly use the Internet. The Forum also ranks our Government first worldwide for ICT use and Government efficiency, ICT impact on access to basic services and the importance of ICT to our Government's vision of the future.

We believe that national ICT development has supported our emergence as a logistics and shipping hub, a global finance centre and a leader in Government service industry. Independent telecommunications

regulators, public-private partnerships and openness to foreign investment are some of the key determinants of the expansion of that sector and our economy. Building on those accomplishments, in its 2021 vision, the United Arab Emirates Government has set the ambitious goal of providing world-class public infrastructure and Government services for all our citizens and residents in the United Arab Emirates. However, as noted consistently through the 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society, the potential of ICT remains inaccessible for too many people worldwide. The digital divide, both within and among countries, has grave consequences for development; those without access to ICT are becoming increasingly marginalized.

To address this, the draft outcome document (A/70/L.33) is firmly rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which all our leaders committed to at United Nations Headquarters in September. The United Arab Emirates is especially pleased to see the draft outcome document's calls for universal Internet access by closing the digital and gender divide and bringing the remaining 60 per cent of the global population online.

The United Arab Emirates believes the time has come to extend the principle of leaving no one behind to ICT. In that context, we welcome the draft outcome document's calls for immediate measures to achieve gender equality in Internet usage by 2020 and commend the commitment to enhance women's education and participation in ICT, not only as users, but also as content creators, entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders.

In the United Arab Emirates, our early investment in girls and women is bearing fruit. Today, women and girls constitute more than half of our university graduates, including in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. I am pleased to note that the gender divide in Internet use in the United Arab Emirates is marginal, but we still have work to do.

Yet, as much as the Internet can positively impact societies, there are some darker aspects in the way the Internet is being used, and those challenges have emerged in the past years. Far too often extremist networks have used the Internet for propaganda and recruitment, allowing them global and immediate access to vulnerable populations. That must be stopped and we must work collectively to find the means to do so.

However, as much as the Internet can be used by extremists and terrorists as a tool for recruitment and radicalization, it can also be a powerful tool for tackling the root causes of extremism by promoting positive counter-narratives, enhancing societal participation, encouraging critical thinking and moderation, and creating economic opportunities. The 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society has rightly recognized that threat, and Member States have clearly expressed their concern about the growing use of ICT for terrorist purposes and cybercrime. We commend the outcome document's focus on the importance of building confidence and security in the usage of ICT.

In closing, the United Arab Emirates extends its deep appreciation to the President for convening this high-level meeting. It represents an important milestone on the path towards the full achievement of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society. Throughout the process of the 10-year review of the World Summit we have identified the achievements, lessons learned and challenges of the past decade and built a firm a foundation and collective understanding for moving them forward.

The United Arab Emirates is fully committed to the World Summit on the Information Society process, and we look forward to continuing to work with all stakeholders in service of the World Summit vision.

**Mr. Jang Keun Lee** (Republic of Korea): I would like to first express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the President and the two co-facilitators, the Ambassadors of Latvia and the United Arab Emirates, for their efforts and stewardship in steering the review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. I congratulate them as well as all other delegations that have engaged in the negotiation process on the successful finalization of the draft outcome document (A/70/L.33), which will be adopted tomorrow. That milestone document will guide the international community in realizing the vision of the people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society for another 10 years beyond 2015.

Since the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva and in Tunisia, significant progress has been made in the past decade at the national, regional and global levels to achieve the Summit vision. In particular information and communications technologies (ICT) have been playing a catalytic role

in the rapid development of the Internet and mobile communications. That in turn has revolutionized our daily lives and created new jobs and industries, while making it possible to easily share knowledge across all sectors, from one corner of the world to the other.

Despite the unprecedented progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, however, bridging the digital divides within and among countries still remains a major challenge. Strengthening confidence and security in the use of ICT is essential in order to fully harness the benefits of ICT for development. Internet governance, based on inclusive, transparent, democratic and multi-stakeholder cooperation, is also an important issue that should be addressed moving forward.

In considering all of those challenges and realizing the vision of the World Summit on the Information Society, the Republic of Korea is of the view that the multi-stakeholder model, which guarantees the participation of Governments, businesses, civil societies and other stakeholders, is critical. In today's interconnected world, complex challenges can no longer be resolved without the cooperation and collaboration of all relevant actors. All stakeholders — including Governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and the technological community — should come together to address such challenges, while simultaneously harnessing the potential of ICT, in particular to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

My delegation believes that addressing the digital divide is the most important and urgent task for all stakeholders in fulfilling the World Summit vision. Increased investment in broadband networks and services should be made. We also need to seek ways to better employ ICT to achieve economic and gender equality, as well as social inclusion. Efforts for capacity-building, technology transfer and the creation of multilingual content are also essential.

Access to the Internet for all is a goal that can be achieved. Indeed, Korea was once a country lagging far behind in telecommunications. In 1980, our telephone penetration rate was a mere 7 per cent. However, today we enjoy high rankings in both information technology use and the ICT development index, as well as in the United Nations e-government index. As a result of large-scale investment in national broadband infrastructure for



high-speed Internet, as well as regulations promoting a competitive telecommunication market, Korea is now one of the most wired and high-speed countries in the world. New initiatives employing the Internet as a platform, such as e-government, e-health and banking and digital media, are revolutionizing the lives of Korean people.

As the President of my country, Ms. Park Geun-Hye, made clear in her speech at the Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), held in Korea in October 2014, the Republic of Korea is ready and willing to share its experience of economic development through ICT utilization with the international community. Korea has been assisting developing countries in scaling up their ICT capacities to create more viable, vibrant economies and enhance connectivity. We have provided training programmes and policy consultations for ICT policymakers of developing countries and support to build their own e-government initiatives. We have also established the Global Cyber Security Centre for development, which facilitates the capacity-building of developing countries in information protection. Furthermore, President Park Geun-Hye announced, during her recent visit to UNESCO, a five-year initiative for science, technology and innovation for a better life, which is to provide consulting services in science, technology and innovation policies and also support the nurturing of human resources in developing countries. Based on Korea's experience in expanding broadband networks, establishing e-government and pursuing innovation-based economic policy, my Government will work closely with the international community, including the United Nations, the ITU and UNESCO, in realizing the goals and vision of the World Summit on the Information Society and the implementation of the outcome document.

Finally, we are pleased to work with all stakeholders during the high-level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, especially at this momentous time of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. Once again, we welcome the outcome document and hope that the next high-level meeting, in 2025, will be filled with abundant accomplishments across our increasingly interconnected and high-speed globe.

**Mr. Martinon** (France) (*spoke in French*): At the end of a process that was launched a few years ago

and that involved many principal institutions of the United Nations system — including the International Telecommunication Union, a 150-year-old lady who has some beautiful days ahead of her, UNESCO and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development — I would like to now make two general conclusions following these long months of review of the commitments and principles that we adopted 10 years ago.

First, we all agree on the development objectives, but our discussions were complicated by differences in our approaches and, too often, by misunderstandings among ourselves. We all share the same objectives in terms of development and the same certainty that information and communications technologies (ICT) will continue to play a decisive role in achieving them. We have updated our objectives by agreeing in September on a 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (resolution 70/1) and by agreeing, a few days ago in Paris, to commit ourselves in a binding way on climate change.

Secondly, we share the same belief that innovation and the new information and communications technologies are a major advantage when it comes to sustainable development. In that regard, I could list the impact of new technologies on the environment, specifically with the growth of intelligent cities, which will be an essential element of coming environmental policies. For all those reasons, France and the European Union wanted to align the review of the World Summit on the Information Society with that of the 2030 Agenda.

For 10 years, despite the significant technological progress that has significantly changed the ways of life and behaviour, the digital divide remains, despite all of this, too large as a result of inequalities in terms of connectivity and access to technology. We must help the 65 per cent of homes in developing States that still do not have access to the Internet to enter the information society, and we must ensure, in particular, that it is open to women, children, the elderly and to persons with disabilities.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development of July launched a mechanism for facilitating technology. I stress France's desire to see that United Nations and multi-stakeholder mechanism succeed. France will continue to specifically implement information and

communications technologies for development by a number of local initiatives, including in sub-Saharan African countries. Having said that, we continue to have differences with regard to our approaches, and I would like to address them now, as I believe that they are largely based on misunderstandings.

First, all of us are aware of the risks to development represented by the threats associated with cybersecurity. The harmonious development of a country is unquestionably linked to its mastery of reliable and secure communication systems. In that regard, I wish to pay tribute to the work carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts, under the authority of the United Nations, to develop a normative framework that is tailored to cyberspace with respect for existing international law and especially the Charter of the United Nations.

In terms of our fight against cybercrime, we have noted in recent weeks among ourselves that the initially regional nature of the Convention on Cybercrime is seen by some as a hurdle in turning it into a universal instrument. I would like to emphasize that at the very least it is a remarkable tool that has proved its efficiency and robustness. Many countries outside Europe are members, including emerging States, and have used it as a direct source for their national legislation. Our common enemy is transnational cybercrime. So why not make a priority of trying to be as effective as possible in this area?

Secondly, we also firmly believe that the development of information and communications technologies should be based on respect for universal human rights as they are defined in, for example, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. I would also cite the NETmundial Multistakeholder Statement — rightly cited in our draft outcome document (A/70/L.33) — adopted, as the Assembly is aware, at the end of the Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance, organized at the initiative of Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff. In our view, it is a particularly successful example of the multi-stakeholder approach that should inspire us.

As has been said more than once today, human rights must also apply online. I would like to emphasize that freedom of opinion and expression, which also includes the freedom to inform and be informed, as well as the protection of authors' rights, is at the heart of the Internet and represents the foundation for all

other fundamental freedoms. Censorship, whether by States or businesses, should be prohibited. We would also like to plead for particular protection of bloggers, who are facing new threats and are among their first victims — the victims of censorship and sometimes of imprisonment and even the death penalty. Finally, we should recall that national legislation should respect the principles of proportionality and transparency when it comes to access to individuals' personal data.

Thirdly, we have become mired in false debates on global Internet governance. We are all agreed in wanting it to be genuinely open, transparent, inclusive and democratic, and yet we argue with one another about words rather than how best to solve concrete problems. We believe that if this debate is conducted in the abstract it cannot result in a peaceful consensus. We understand the frustrations of some and the worries of others. I would therefore like to bring up several very basic points.

First, we are here in the temple of the United Nations. It is here, at the United Nations, that we should come together to discuss these issues. France believes that the United Nations and multilateralism should continue to be the foundation of the international system, for we have no credible or legitimate alternative.

Secondly, it is clear that the history of the Internet was created first by teachers, researchers and engineers, then by entrepreneurs and eventually, above all, by its users. Today, States without private stakeholders in this area are completely unequipped to deal with the sophistication of the technologies and the scale of the challenges involved. They need that private support in order to promote and protect the public interest. Since the Geneva and Tunis summits, France has supported a multi-stakeholder approach, and for the past several years the French Government has relied on a national digital council, created a few years after Brazil's Internet Steering Committee, which represents private stakeholders and is consulted on draft legislation and major issues related to digital development.

However, it is only States that can claim to have the public interest at heart, and only States that possess the democratic legitimacy that enables them to represent the people, who are citizens first and Internet users second. We must be certain that States will continue to be able to ensure that that public policies related to the Internet and information and communications technologies are effective if they are to be able to

effectively protect everyone's aforementioned online rights. We cannot claim to want a single, unfragmented Internet without taking the views of States into account. Any attempt to govern it while disregarding States' specific and general responsibilities and legitimate concerns will lose any claim to the legitimacy that is a prerequisite for acting in the name of all the people.

We also support the extension of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), because we believe it is vital to ensure that at least once a year the major challenges of digitizing the world are discussed as openly and inclusively as possible. But we believe the IGF must continue to evolve if it is to be more open to those who are not community insiders, more welcoming to all Internet stakeholders in developing countries, more transparent about its procedures and a better representative of users, who should see it as a useful meeting place. We believe the best way to make progress is by taking better account of the contribution of national forums, particularly when it comes to selecting speakers and contributions. In that regard I would like to commend our Brazilian friends, who came up with an excellent IGF in João Pessoa.

I would like to conclude by noting that fast, universal and affordable Internet access is one of France's top priorities, and we will need the investment of all to achieve it.

**Mr. Morales López** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to address today's high-level meeting reviewing the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. I would like to begin by acknowledging the excellent work of the co-facilitators of the process, the Ambassadors to the United Nations of Latvia and the United Arab Emirates, for their tireless efforts to reach consensus on the draft outcome document we will be adopting (A/70/L.33).

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of South Africa, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and of Ecuador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/70/PV.76).

Colombia fully supports the fundamental principles of the World Summit on the Information Society, and we especially share the view that information and communications technologies should have a more people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented approach, with the aim of achieving a better quality of life and having a positive economic and social impact.

This is precisely the spirit of our national policies and our 2014-2018 Living Digital plan, aimed at putting Colombia in the vanguard of the development of social applications that target our poorest citizens and achieving more efficient and transparent Government through information and communications technologies.

The Agenda of the World Summit on the Information Society remains as relevant as when it was first created. While significant progress has been made in implementing it, challenges remain regarding the need to improve recognition of the importance of the role that information and communications technologies play in sustainable development. It is crucial that we address the digital divide between and within countries efficiently and effectively, especially by ensuring genuine access in rural areas and closing the gender gap. It is equally important to have adequate and sustainable financial mechanisms for implementing the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society and to ensure the continuity of the multi-stakeholder model for decision-making at the international level. Strengthening international cooperation will be crucial to fighting cybercrime and ensuring human rights and freedom of expression online, as well as to strengthening the mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the results of the World Summit on the Information Society.

Information and communications technologies affect all three dimensions of sustainable development, and in that regard, we are convinced of its enormous importance in speeding up implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and making a reality of the vision our leaders have planted in this new global agenda for sustainable development. It is vital that we create synergies and real convergences at every level between the review of the results of the World Summit on the Information Society and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and we are therefore pleased that the outcome document calls for that.

The creation, development and dissemination of new technologies and innovations and related knowledge, including technology transfer, carried out on favourable and preferential terms, are powerful drivers of economic growth and sustainable development. In that context, we are pleased to see that the draft outcome document reiterates the need to strengthen not only the financial mechanisms, but also those related to technology transfer in order to

facilitate the strengthening of innovation capacities in developing countries.

Lastly, Colombia reiterates the central role of international cooperation in bridging the digital gap at all levels, promoting the positive effects derived from the use of ICT, fostering greater trust and security in

the use of these technologies, and guaranteeing that scientific and technological processes are directed towards the promotion of the well-being and the development of our societies.

*The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.*