



**STATEMENT BY MS. JANIL GREENAWAY, MINISTER COUNSELLOR,
DELEGATION OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP
OF 77 AND CHINA, IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE ON AGENDA ITEM 46:
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR
DEVELOPMENT (New York, 23 October 2008)**

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group would like to thank the Secretariat for the reports contained in documents A/63/72-E/2008/48 and A/63/180, on implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) and the report of the Executive Director of UNESCO on communication for development, both of which will inform our deliberations on information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development.

Madam Chair,

2. It is universally accepted that science and technology, including information and communication technology, holds tremendous potential for eradication of poverty and promotion of socio-economic development. Yet this development potential remains largely unfulfilled. The technological divide between rich and poor countries remains large despite significant advances in the development of a broad spectrum of new technologies.

Madam Chair,

3. Progress on the MDG Goal 8 on Global Partnership for Development, and in particular meeting the target of making available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies in support of development, is severely lacking. This key target should become a focal point for the international community's efforts required to harness the power of technology in support of the MDGs, and to fully implement the outcomes of WSIS.

Madam Chair,

4. In this era of globalization and interdependence ICT's are vital to developing countries' participation in the global economy and for helping to reap some of the benefits of globalization.

5. The Group of 77 and China remains of the view that a development-oriented information society is in the best interest of all humanity. ICTs have proven instrumental to the socio-economic progress achieved by many countries, developed and developing. Greater emphasis is therefore needed on transfer of such technologies to developing countries, as well as the development and dissemination of such technologies within developing countries.

6. In its resolution A/62/201 on science and technology for development, the General Assembly called for "continued collaboration between United Nations entities and other international organizations, civil society and the private sector in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, with a view to putting the potential of information and communications technologies at the service of development through policy research on the digital divide and on new challenges of the information society, as well as technical assistance activities, involving multi-stakeholder partnerships." This underscores a key part of the role of the wider UN

System, i.e. the promotion and facilitation of multi-stakeholder partnerships at all levels in support of developing countries' efforts to use ICT as a tool for national development.

Madam Chair,

7. We note that the report of the Secretary-General concludes that progress towards implementation of the outcomes of WSIS "seems" to be on track. This suggests that there is some uncertainty over exactly how much progress has been made. The report also points to the need to benchmark progress towards the attainment of the specific targets and goals set out in the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society - a need which was also highlighted by the 2007- 2008 CSTD intersessional panel. This is an important point for follow-up action.

8. We urge the UN System and the international community to take concrete actions in this regard, so as to facilitate monitoring implementation of WSIS outcomes, as well as other inter-governmentally agreed mandates on ICTs. These actions should include, inter alia, providing more support to the Global Digital Solidarity Fund, established within the context of the WSIS, and which is the only existing financing mechanism aimed at contributing to reducing the digital divide, as is indicated in the Secretary General's report.

9. Further, more emphasis should be placed on reducing the cost of communication technologies, including the cost of broadband connections; and on capacity-building for greater use and application so as to support countries efforts to increase access to such technologies and to be able to adopt these technologies to meet local needs.

10. Public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder approaches to activities aimed at furthering implementation and achieving set ICT goals, benchmarks and targets are increasingly important.

11. In conclusion, the Group is of the view that the strong development orientation of the outcome of the WSIS remains very relevant to the international community's efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and this is the context within which monitoring and implementation should be pursued. More so, the Group emphasizes that information and communication technology is a vital tool for socio-economic development. As such we remain hopeful that the full and effective implementation of both the Geneva and Tunis phases of the WSIS will lead to developing countries benefitting fully from ICTs. The continued insistence by developed countries that these technologies can only be made available through the private market will not lead to a fulfillment of the objective. We therefore urge the UN System to focus on monitoring progress and follow-up in particular the transfer of technology to facilitate a development oriented information society.

I thank you Madam Chair.