



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. PETER THOMSON, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON AGENDA ITEM 16: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT, AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 22 October 2013)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) at the regional and international levels.
3. Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) are critical enablers of economic development and investment, with consequential benefits for employment and social welfare. However, despite the positive trends in connectivity and affordability, including increased Internet access, rapid diffusion of mobile communication and development of new services and applications since the holding of the WSIS a decade ago, the Group is concerned about the continuing gap in digital divide and broadband access between developed and developing countries. We are also concerned that the persistent financial and economic crisis has negatively affected developing countries' capacities to mobilise resources for ICT investment and diffusion.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The World Summit on Information Society was held a decade ago with the objective of addressing the ICT challenge and digital divide facing developing countries. The Group of 77 and China places great importance on the full and effective implementation of the outcomes of both the Geneva and Tunis phases of the Summit, including provisions related to Internet Governance. In an increasingly globalised world, it is important to allow all governments to have an equal role and responsibility for International Internet governance in ensuring stability, security and continuity of the Internet in accordance with paragraph 68 of the Tunis Agenda.
5. The ten-year review of WSIS outcomes, to be completed by the General Assembly in 2015, along the review of the MDGs, is a timely exercise in the context of elaborating the post-2015 development agenda. We believe a digital economy is a source of innovation and productivity improvements for all countries. It is therefore critically important to address the existing digital divide between developed and developing countries, as well as within societies, particularly in the availability, affordability, quality of access, and broadband connectivity.
6. Recognising the importance of utilising ICT in advancing sustainable development and achieving a pro-development global agenda beyond 2015, the Group calls for an appropriate preparatory process to be launched for the WSIS+10 review, drawing on experience from the two phases of WSIS. The ten-year anniversary of WSIS should be the beginning of a new chapter for ICT development in developing countries that builds on the lessons learned over the past decade.

7. Lastly, the Group of 77 and China reaffirms the General Assembly's role in the overall review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, and urges it to agree on modalities for the WSIS+10 review during the current session of the General Assembly. We reiterate our call for the UN funds, programs and specialised agencies to continue providing adequate resources to support the implementation of WSIS outcomes.

I, thank you, Mr. Chairman.