



STATEMENT MADE BY MR SIVUYILE MAQUNGO, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON BEHALF OF THE G77 AND CHINA, ON AGENDA ITEM 49: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT, IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 27 March 2006)

Madame Chairperson,

The draft resolution on the World Summit on the Information Society as contained in document A/60/L.50, under agenda item 49, is the result of a long and unique process that started in December 2003 in Geneva and ended in November 2005 in Tunisia, involving governments, private sector and civil society.

We would therefore like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Tunisian Government for hosting a successful Summit during November 2005 as reflected by its outcomes in the form of the "Tunis Commitment" and the "Tunis Agenda".

Madame Chairperson,

The need for a multi-stakeholder approach reflects the reality of today's global system in which it is required that all partners become involved to create an information society that is inclusive, people centered and development focused.

The G77 and China is particularly pleased that it has been acknowledged that Information Communication Technology (ICTs) can also be a powerful tool for development, and that it can offer many opportunities to the disadvantaged sectors of society. Indeed, the creation of an inclusive and development-orientated Information Society is in the best interests of the majority of humanity, because most of the peoples of the world, especially from the developing countries, are confronted by the challenge of exclusion, in the context of the global economy, in whose development modern information and communication technologies play a vital role.

Within the context of this august body, it is important to recognise that the proper use of ICTs could assist in the eradication of poverty and to attain the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Madame Chairperson,

By the adoption of this resolution we transmit our intention to implement the outcome of the Geneva and Tunis Summits. We indicate, amongst others, our reaffirmation that the international management of the Internet should be a multilateral, transparent and democratic process, with the full involvement of governments, private sector, civil society and international organisations. Accordingly, one of the fundamental challenges facing all of us is to build multilateral and multi-stakeholder institutions and systems rooted within the UN system to ensure inclusive and equitable access to ICTs within the context of an Internet Governance system that is legitimate, transparent and accountable.

The importance of enhanced cooperation, which will involve all relevant organisations and all stakeholders in their respective roles, is also being emphasized. Furthermore, the important role of the UN, through Ecosoc and the possible strengthening of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, is also being addressed.

In conclusion, Madame Chairperson, we need to ensure that progress on the implementation of the Geneva and Tunis Summits are monitored and followed-up and in this regard we welcome the proposal to request the SG to submit a report to the GA, through Ecosoc, that will, amongst others, look at recommendations on the follow-up process. The international community, in particular the UN, need to remain engaged to ensure that the digital divide between the developed and developing world is bridged to contribute to the eradication of poverty and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Madame Chairperson, South Africa, on behalf of the G77 and China, is proud to co-sponsor the draft resolution introduced by H. E. Mr Montasser Ouaili, Minister of Communication Technologies of Tunisia.

I thank you.

