

STATEMENT

BY

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DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA  
AT THE CONSULTATIONS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNET  
GOVERNANCE FORUM**

**Geneva**

**16 February 2006**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the G-77 and China, I would like to thank Secretary General Kofi Annan for convening today's consultations in accordance with the mandate given by the Tunis Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society. We welcome this opportunity to discuss issues agreed in both phases of WSIS. Your continued commitment to internet governance related issues will help us launch and keep on track this important post-Tunis phase.

We would also like to thank the initiative taken by the Government of Greece to brief the G-77 and China on the preparations for the holding of the Internet Governance Forum in Greece.

Today's consultations are timely. They give us the opportunity to think collectively about the follow up and implementation mechanisms with reference to the creation of the Internet Governance Forum.

We intend to present the views of the Group of 77 and China regarding the overall direction of the Forum. Members of the Group will make substantive and detailed contributions during the consultations. We look forward to seeing the views of the G-77 and China reflected in the output of these consultations, and in the future work that may be undertaken in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

The World Summit on the Information Society belongs to the United Nations series of summits that focused on economic and social development issues.

The information society should be seen as an important phase and requirement for achieving the developmental objectives by bridging the digital and the development divides. International consensus clearly emphasized the development orientation of the Tunis Summit. This is aptly reflected in the opening sentence of the Geneva Declaration of principles where the representatives of the peoples of the world declared the "common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life". This is the guiding principle of all our work and must continue to be accorded primacy during the follow up and implementation of the Geneva and Tunis outputs.

The Internet Governance Forum, in all its aspects, must help achieve a development oriented Information Society. All dimensions of the IGF including its mandate, work, agenda, structure, composition, frequency and venues of meetings must be development sensitive. We look forward to working with all stake holders in ensuring that this development orientation that was reflected in the Geneva and Tunis consensus continues in the post-Tunis phase.

Mr. Chairman,

The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society gives a very clear mandate for the IGF. In the implementation of this mandate, the Internet Governance Forum provides a unique opportunity for us to harness the potential of information and communications technologies in meeting development objectives. Internet access and easy connectivity are critical to this endeavour.

It would be useful to recall and highlight those elements of the Tunis Agenda that were geared towards clarifying the development aspects of internet governance. This may not be an exhaustive list but an effort to introduce development oriented clarity to the discussion at these consultations.

The G-77 and China would first like to draw attention to paragraph 65 which reads:

"We underline the need to maximize the participation of developing countries in decisions regarding Internet governance, which should reflect their interests, as well as in development and capacity building."

We must not lose sight of the clarity in this paragraph with regard to participation of developing countries in the decision making process on internet governance with a view to reflecting and realizing developmental objectives. The intent of this paragraph needs to be operationalized through a work program on Internet Governance – a process wherein the IGF would carry utmost significance. G-77 and China believe that this paragraph offers a holistic and systemic perspective on Internet Governance.

On the issue of participation, paragraph 5 emphasizes the need to "ensure that all stakeholders, particularly from developing countries, have the opportunity to participate in policy decision-making relating to Internet governance, and to promote and facilitate such participation". G-77 and China would like to see this reflected clearly in the work of the IGF.

The Tunis Agenda opens the door for us to think creatively about the role of all stakeholders in supporting developmental issues. It also highlights the importance of corporate responsibility linked to positive contribution to the economic and social development of developing countries. We look forward to seeing the IGF as a vehicle for the realization of corporate responsibility for development. This indeed would form a bench mark with regard to the extent of development orientation of the Forum.

Mr. Chairman,

The importance of interconnectivity and transfer of technology has been highlighted in paragraph 49 of the Tunis Agenda which clearly sets the direction. It states and I quote "... We commit to foster and provide guidance on development areas in the broader Internet governance arrangements, and to include, amongst other issues, international interconnection costs, capacity building and technology/know-how transfer."

Mr. Chairman,

We have highlighted only some of the overall development themes of the WSIS. We hope that the consultations will be guided by these principles and inputs from all stakeholders towards ensuring development oriented architecture of Internet Governance.

It is time to put the Tunis commitment to action based on the agenda provided for an inclusive and people centred information society by our leaders in Tunis.

I thank you sir.

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