

For an Information Society Accessible to All

Welcome Address by Montasser Ouaili, Minister of Communication Technologies, Republic of Tunisia, to the participants of the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, 16-18 November 2005)

Following the holding, in Geneva, of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, Tunisia will have the honor of hosting, on 16-18 November 2005, the second phase of this Summit. This global event, the first of its kind in this millennium, constitutes an historic opportunity to move ahead on the path of building a global, balanced and equitable information society.

Quite appreciative of the results achieved and the documents adopted during the Geneva phase of the Summit, and in view of the uniqueness, complementarity, interaction and convergence of the two phases, Tunisia remains deeply convinced that the success of the World Summit on the Information Society as a whole depends essentially on the active involvement and constructive participation of all stakeholders of the international community.

Tunisia thus relies on the full contribution of all the concerned parties to the various stages of the Summit, in order to offer it the success expected at the level of objectives and mechanisms, and to make sure it comes up with tangible results that meet the requirements of this century and establish the information and communication technologies as a strategic catalyst for the action of economic, political, social and cultural development; the aim being to meet the expectations of the international community and contribute to materializing the Millennium development objectives.

Today, we appreciate the mobilization and the growing interest of all components of the international community in enriching reflection and deepening the debate launched during the Geneva phase, in order to take best advantage of the information and communication technologies, and develop a common approach for the purpose of narrowing the digital

divide and establishing a balanced information society accessible to all. In his Declaration during the Geneva Summit, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali described this society as “one that offers all countries equal opportunities to benefit from the advantages of technologies, one that encompasses all countries and allows all persons and peoples, with no discrimination or exclusion, to have access to networks and to sources of knowledge and information”.

Tunisia reiterates its commitment and determination to provide all conditions of success to the second phase of the Summit which, we hope, will be the phase of solutions and will constitute a landmark date for all humanity in the process of building a society of knowledge and intelligence, based on solidarity and accessible to all.

Initiator of the Summit and host to its second phase, Tunisia, the land of hospitality and tolerance, will be delighted to welcome, during the second phase of the Summit on November 16-18, 2005, all representatives of Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector. It cherishes the hope that the Tunis phase will constitute the crowning step for the Summit, through the achievement of results reflecting the expectations and aspirations of the international community.