

***Delegation from***  
**The Republic of Slovenia**

***Represented by the***  
**University of Heidelberg**

The issues before the World Summit on the Information Society are: Information and Communication Technologies: Narrowing the Digital Divide, Cultural identity in the Information Society, and Transparency in Governance through ICT's.

Recognizing the importance of the revolution in ICTs as a mean of shaping the future of the world and in achieving the development goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration, the Republic of Slovenia wants to be a reliable and active partner within the global dialogue on the "Common Vision of the Information Society" (Declaration of Principles) and fully supports the increased efforts to establish a global vision and a global dialogue by cooperation. We believe this dialogue to be of vital meaning to build the framework of an all-inclusive and equitable Information Society that supports general human progress and well-being.

### **I. Information and Communication Technologies: Narrowing the Digital Divide**

All citizens, regardless of their capabilities being able to use technologies or not, shall have equal opportunities to take part in decision-making processes what will even more strengthen the fundamental principles of democratic society. As Slovenia is a friend of freedom and democracy that has fought for those values while being at war for its independence and freedom quite recently we have been able to see the benefits of developing a information society very clearly. Freedom always includes freedom of information as part of the democratic process. Change can never take place without information. Freedom of information is indispensable. Thus we want to encourage the richer states of this world to support our model of establishing "partnerships for freedom". A rich country is taking responsibility for a poorer one by helping them establish an information society that serves democracy in this society. Helping to narrow the Digital Divide is no longer to be only a question of finances. It should also be a question of international relations among students, scholars and economy. Both partners would win by pursuing our model: The poorer states by gaining knowledge and financial support, and the bigger states would especially profit by greater involvement of all groups in society because of the concreteness of the project, as there is no longer a mere contribution to a general fund. In general, the richer states wouldn't need to pay as much for development aid as they do today, as there are more actors. Especially private actors would be involved in the paying process. This model would especially strengthen the identification of every citizen with this problem.

### **II. Cultural identity in the Information Society**

Our goal as the Slovene society is to participate in global information and knowledge society. That implies generation and improvement of skills and simultaneously enables access to knowledge. Consequently with such confidence in using ICT citizens raise their self-esteem to face the challenges of post-modern life. As we have learnt the importance of fighting for an own cultural identity, we see ICT's as an outstanding instrument to safeguard linguistic and cultural diversity. The usage of new technologies can call attention to the cultural identity of this specific state and therefore be a stepping stone for guarantying the rights in national and international documents. Therefore we encourage all states affected by threats for their cultural identity to take this opportunity as a chance to guard their freedom. Moreover, we encourage all States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to increase their efforts to help to establish a fix legal order to secure the right of expression (included the right of usage of ICT's) for those ethnic minorities.

### **III. Transparency in Governance through ICT's**

ICT can contribute to fostering empowerment and participation and making government processes more efficient by encouraging communication- and information-sharing.

Citizens are encouraged to participate in the democratic process through ICT mechanisms, which is especially important for marginalized communities. By bridging the digital divide the Slovene government has put all its efforts to enable a participatory political culture. In 2001 the Slovene government set information society as a priority task within the context of sustainable development, not only as a top-level technological issue but undoubtedly also as the priority on the general social agenda. Slovenia aims to implement the transition of public administration of the Republic of Slovenia into an information society, with the emphasis on the introduction of electronic commerce as a basic characteristic of an information society. Additionally, the Slovene Government has set up an Action Plan to strengthen democracy participation in Slovenia. We do believe that ICTs can revitalize representative democracies, and helps to involve citizens and to hold governments accountable. Therefore we remain firmly committed to call upon all Member States to see and profit in equality from the multiple latent chances founded in the development of an Information Society, especially the chances for the betterment of the relationship between citizens and government. While obstacles to be overcome are many, we do believe that the betterment of the world is possible through increased cooperation among states concerning the implementation of the objectives being aimed in the course of this summit.