

Press Release on the Outcome of WSIS

Geneva, December 10, 2003

The United States welcomes and joins in the global consensus that has emerged this week in final preparations for the United Nation's World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). We believe that the keys to prosperity in the Information Society are education, individual creativity and an environment of economic and political freedom. Access to information is at the core of a truly inclusive Information Society.

"The success of the WSIS lies in the extent to which the global community has outlined a vision of the information society that truly enhances our lives and embraces and encourages freedom in all regions of the world", said Ambassador A. Gross the Head of the U.S. Delegation to the WSIS.

As part of the WSIS process, the global community has come together for the first time to recognize that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are a key element of political progress, economic growth, and social development. By agreeing to the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, the United States reaffirms our commitment to the importance of the use of ICTs to promote peace, security and stability and to enhance democracy, respect for human rights, open and transparent government and the rule of law.

Throughout the rigorous preparatory process, the United States has emphasized a set of priority issues that highlight the fundamental building blocks of an Information Society – infrastructure development, human capacity building, and network security. We are pleased that through the adoption of the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, the international community recognized these elements as critical to achieving our common vision.

The delegates to the WSIS identified and achieved consensus on a series of difficult issues that represent key challenges presented by the Information Society. First, States have affirmed their commitment to freedom of the press, as well as to the independence, pluralism and diversity of the media. The United States believes that the principle free flow of information, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, lies at the heart of the Information Society.

Second, states agreed that achieving ubiquitous and affordable access to ICT infrastructure and services requires a stable, predictable and fair national economic climate that can attract private capital and the development of human capacity through education and training.

The WSIS also recognized that building confidence and security in the use of ICTs is a critical element of the Information Society and that all stakeholders must act nationally and cooperate internationally to foster a global culture of cyber security. The United States welcomes the plan of action that will involve all participants in this global effort.

In addition, a global consensus was developed around a multi-stakeholder approach to the Internet. “We are pleased that commercial and economic interests from around the world will continue to have a center seat at the table in the development of the Internet,” said Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce Michael D. Gallagher. “That model has served the United States and the world digital economy very well. The progress at this WSIS Conference will continue the worldwide dialogue on how to boost the growth of the Internet and extend the global benefits that come from open markets and commerce.”

The WSIS also acknowledged the importance of intellectual property to the Information Society. The United States believes that the contributions made to the Information Society by creators and inventors are essential. Through existing intellectual property protection agreements these contributions are protected so that innovation and creativity by all people are encouraged. The wide dissemination of knowledge is also important to the Information society and we are pleased to have this reaffirmed by the WSIS.

We believe that the Summit will be another step to enable all of our citizens to reap the benefits offered by the Information Society. The United States notes with great satisfaction the commitment of the WSIS to the inclusion of all stakeholders in the development and expansion of the information society. We are committed to working in close partnership with governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations to implement the common vision of the future set out in the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action.

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