



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY NATALIA HANDRUJOVICZ, THIRD SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF ARGENTINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 16: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT, AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 26 October 2011)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 16 entitled "Information and communication technologies for development".
2. In the world of today, information and communication technologies are vital to developing countries' full participation in the global economy and to harness the benefits of globalization. They hold tremendous potential not only for eradication of poverty and promotion of socio-economic development, but also for bridging the technological gap between developing and developed countries. ICTs have a prominent role in promoting inclusive growth and development.
3. Although significant advances and explosive growth in new technologies have been made in recent years, for the majority of the poor the developmental promise of science and technology, including information and communication technologies, remains unfulfilled. Creating links between knowledge generation and development is one of the greatest challenges facing the developing countries.
4. Furthermore, the G77 and China expresses concern about the growing gap in broadband provision between developed and developing countries, as well as about the new dimensions that the digital divide has taken on, with respect to the quality of available access, and what it can offer to users. In this regard, we believe that more efforts need to be exerted towards bridging the gap between developed and developing countries in Internet access and broadband connectivity.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) was held to address the challenge of the digital divide facing developing countries. The G77 and China remains hopeful that the full and effective implementation of both the Geneva and Tunis phases of the Summit will deliver the desired results to developing countries from ICTs, in support of the MDGs.
6. The Summit (WSIS) recognized, in paragraph 68 of the Tunis Agenda, that "all governments should have an equal role and responsibility for international Internet governance and for ensuring the stability, security and continuity of the Internet". It also highlighted that the Internet governance-related outcomes of the Summit (WSIS), namely the process towards enhanced cooperation and the convening of the Internet Governance Forum, are to be pursued by the Secretary-General through two distinct processes, which may be complementary.
7. In this regard, the Group attaches great importance to the Internet Governance Forum, which through its multi-stakeholder nature, has proven to be very useful in providing a framework for an open dialogue on public policy issues related to the Internet among all concerned parties. The G77 and China also underlines the importance of the need to improve the Forum in accordance with

General Assembly resolution 65/141. We also support the Secretary-General to continue to play a facilitating role to promote consultations among Governments and all stakeholders in Internet-related public policy matters.

8. In this context, the Group notes the report of the Chair of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum. Moreover, we would like to stress the decision of the ECOSOC, in paragraph 28 of its resolution 2011/6, to extend the mandate of the Working Group until the fifteenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in order to complete its task in accordance with its mandate, and urges the Working Group to submit its recommendations to the Commission at its fifteenth session, which shall constitute an input from the Commission to the General Assembly, through the ECOSOC.

9. We would like to remind that policy authority for Internet-related public policy issues is the sovereign right of States. In this regard, on the process of "enhanced cooperation", the G77 and China takes note of the consultations convened by the Secretary-General, including the meeting held in New York in December 2010 and invites the Secretary-General to hold further open and inclusive consultations involving all Member States, especially developing countries, and other stakeholders in their respective roles and responsibilities, as stated in paragraph 35 of the Tunis Agenda with a view to assisting the process towards enhanced cooperation in order to enable Governments on an equal footing to carry out their roles and responsibilities in respect of international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet.

Mr. Chairman,

10. We acknowledge that ICTs are a powerful tool for socio-economic development. It can offer many opportunities to the disadvantaged sectors of society, by enabling them to enjoy the benefit of economic growth and development through enhanced connectivity. Moreover, proper use of ICTs can help in the achieving of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. Greater emphasis is therefore needed on transfer of such technologies to developing countries, as well as the development and dissemination of such technologies within developing countries. We welcome the ongoing work by ITU, UNIDO, UNESCO, UNCTAD and other UN agencies and regional commissions in bridging the digital divide, and promote the use of ICTs as means to enhance productivity and improve the quality of life. We also urge the UN System to focus on monitoring progress and follow-up in transfer of technology to facilitate a development-oriented information society.

11. In conclusion, we are convinced that the large gaps that remain in access to and affordability of ICTs must be closed. There is a need to upgrade the quality and quantity of existing telecommunication infrastructure in developing countries. It is the view of the Group that for developing countries to be able to benefit from information and communication technologies a greater emphasis should be placed on reducing the cost of such technologies, including the cost of broadband connections, and on capacity-building for greater use and application in the developing world.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.