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Chair: Mr. Diallo . . . . (Senegal)
later: Mr. Dhanapala (Vice-Chair) . . . . (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 16: Information and communications technologies for development (A/68/65-E/2013/11)

1.   **Mr. Delelegn** (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) at the regional and international levels (A/68/65-E/2013/11), said that the increased access to ICTs around the world in 2012 had not led to progress in closing the digital divide both between and within countries, in terms of availability, affordability and use of ICTs. Moreover, different broadband levels and capacity requirements were creating new challenges, particularly in the developing world. Internet content, services and applications were being accessed increasingly from multiple platforms, particularly mobile devices. However, broadband deployment was slower in some parts of the developing world than in others, putting some countries at risk of increased marginalization, and rendering them unable to benefit fully from economic opportunities that depended on high-speed mobile communication infrastructure. Cloud computing had grown in importance over the previous year. While benefits included greater flexibility, the possibility of significant savings on equipment procurement and use and more reliable security arrangements, a number of challenges remained, such as privacy and security concerns owing to the fact that data in the cloud could be outside national jurisdictions, and the need for an enabling legal framework and a high-quality infrastructure, preferably broadband. In view of the expansion of ICT applications across a variety of sectors, greater focus should be placed on issues relating to wider use, including the role of public governance and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development, the provision of a better infrastructure and an enabling environment, and access to knowledge and information.

2.   The report covered a broad range of activities and initiatives planned or undertaken by United Nations entities and other stakeholders over the previous year in connection with the implementation of WSIS outcomes. He drew particular attention to the WSIS Forum, which had featured high-level dialogues on ICTs in a number of areas, and the seventh annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, the theme of which had been Internet governance for sustainable human, social and economic development. The report also contained further highlights on increased collaboration and engagement, and the working group established to examine the mandate of WSIS regarding enhanced cooperation had held its first meeting and would be meeting again in November.

3.   Noting that a number of United Nations entities and other stakeholders and already begun preparations in connection with the ten-year review of WSIS outcomes (WSIS+10), he said that the conclusions of that review process should feed into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. UNCTAD hoped that the tenth anniversary of WSIS would provide new impetus to strengthen further multi-stakeholder cooperation with a view to building an inclusive global information society and enabling all peoples across the world to access the benefits of ICTs.

4.   **Mr. Charles** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that ICTs were a key enabler of development efforts for the region and probably the single most important facilitator of the regional integration process, known as the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. In implementing WSIS outcomes, some countries in the region, including his own, had begun to tailor national development strategies to achieve sustainable and inclusive development through a focus on innovation and creativity and on mainstreaming ICT activities. The recently adopted Regional Digital Development Strategy identified gaps in ICT development in the region and critical issues, such as broadband development, and proposed mitigating measures.

5.   International Internet governance must be multilateral, transparent and democratic and involve the full participation of governments and all relevant stakeholders. However, the ICT governance agenda continued to be driven primarily by countries with the resources and institutions to respond more rapidly to challenges that might arise, and further efforts were necessary to expand the participation of developing countries in the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). More must be done at the national, regional and international levels to build capacity to mitigate the impact of cybercrime. CARICOM member States were involved in a number of initiatives in that area, including a joint project of the International

Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the European Commission to elaborate draft cybercrime legislation and support policy and the Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative. They received assistance from the International Multilateral Partnership Against Cyber Threats (IMPACT) in establishing a computer security incident response team.

6. Despite some progress, several challenges continued to hamper regional efforts to implement the outcomes of WSIS, including insufficient resources, fragmentation and lack of coordination. CARICOM therefore called on the international community to enhance support for the development of the ICT sector through the provision of additional resources, strengthened partnerships, increased technology transfer and capacity-building tailored to the particular needs of small societies. The role of United Nations entities in mainstreaming the issue of ICTs into its development programming was also critical.

7. Noting that the impact of ICTs on development would be an important theme of the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, he said that preparations for the important 10-year review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes (WSIS+10) should begin at the earliest opportunity. The review should receive a high level of political commitment from all States, given the far-reaching implications of its outcomes for the future of cooperation on ICTs for development.

8. *Mr. Dhanapala (Sri Lanka), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

9. **Mr. Thomson** (Fiji), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that ICTs were a critical enabler of economic development. However, despite positive trends in connectivity, affordability and the development of new services and applications, the Group of 77 and China remained concerned about the continuing digital divide and disparities in broadband access between developed and developing countries. Moreover, the ongoing financial and economic crisis was negatively affecting the ability of developing countries to mobilize resources for the development and dissemination of ICTs. The Group of 77 and China attached great importance to the full and effective implementation of the outcomes of both the Geneva and Tunis phases of WSIS, including the provisions related to Internet governance.

10. All Governments must assume an equal role and responsibility for international Internet governance and for ensuring the stability, security and continuity of the Internet, in keeping with paragraph 68 of the Tunis Agenda.

11. Efforts must be made to address the divide between developed and developing countries as well as within societies, particularly in terms of the availability, affordability and quantity of access and broadband connectivity. He reaffirmed the role of the United Nations General Assembly in the overall review of the WSIS outcomes, which should mark the beginning of a new chapter for ICT development in developing countries, and urged it to take a decision on the modalities for the 10-year review during the current session. Finally, United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies should continue to provide adequate resources for the implementation of WSIS outcomes.

12. **Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the ICT sector had been the major economic driver in Africa over the previous decade, making a growing contribution to a number of other sectors and enhancing regional trade and integration. Although investment in international and national broadband infrastructure had grown, broadband deployment had not kept pace with other regions, raising concerns that Africa might miss economic opportunities that depended on high-quality communications. Of particular concern was the emergence of a new digital divide between countries with high broadband capacity and those with less advanced broadband investment and Internet adoption, notably the least developed countries.

13. Africa was committed to promoting the objectives of WSIS by creating, through the African Information Society Initiative, an enabling environment for the development of national ICT strategies, which currently numbered 45. African States recognized the need for improved capacity-building in policy and regulation. Noting that enhanced intraregional connectivity would foster the development of the region, he called for continued regional and international cooperation and public-private partnerships, and encouraged the United Nations development system to continue its efforts to promote the use of ICTs as a critical enabler of development and as a catalyst for the achievement of

internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

14. Finally, noting that ICTs should be a key priority in the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, he said that the Group of African States remained committed to participating actively in all multilateral processes relating to the WSIS review.

15. **Ms. Ibrahim** (Brunei Darussalam), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, said ICTs were a key driver of economic and social transformation; they were an important tool for achieving the MDGs and must be a key element in the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.

16. Since the two phases of WSIS, good progress had been made towards enhancing ICT connectivity and access to technology in all countries. In order to ensure the effective implementation of WSIS outcomes, continued efforts should be made to strengthen cooperation, including through multi-stakeholder platforms, with developing countries, development partners and other relevant actors.

17. Noting that only 31 per cent of the population in developing countries was expected to have access to the Internet by the end of the year, as compared with 77 per cent in developed countries, she said that ASEAN remained concerned about the widening digital divide. Moreover, the global economic and financial crisis had had a detrimental impact on the financing and investment of ICT industries in the developing countries. It was therefore crucial for Member States, including the private sector, to work together to increase the integrity and reliability of telecommunication networks and to improve the security and resilience of ICT infrastructure.

18. The ASEAN ICT Masterplan was playing an important role in establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community. More than 78 per cent of the citizens of ASEAN had access to ICTs, and more than 11.7 million people were employed in the sector, contributing more than $32 billion annually to the economy. ASEAN was also embarking on a digital revolution in order to facilitate trade, promote economic growth and enable member States to keep pace with developments in other parts of the world.

19. ASEAN appreciated the efforts of the Secretary-General to promote consultations among Governments and all stakeholders in Internet-related public policy

matters, and welcomed the steps taken by United Nations entities, particularly the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to bridge the digital divide and promote the use of ICTs. Because the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies played a vital role in promoting and expanding the ICT sector, ASEAN reaffirmed its commitment and support for the work of the Second Committee in developing an effective and sustainable response to the challenges and opportunities of a truly global information society.

20. **Mr. Busuttil** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, said that the evolution of ICTs and the Internet as drivers of innovation and economic growth continued to present new opportunities for the construction of an inclusive information society and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

21. The European Union and its member States appreciated the work of the United Nations agencies facilitating the WSIS action lines since 2005, and trusted that an appropriate balance of responsibilities would be reflected in the WSIS+10 review process. The recommendations to be made should provide a realistic assessment of achievements and results so far, and ensure that the potential of ICTs in promoting economic growth and development was fully utilized. Moreover, the outcomes of the WSIS+10 process and the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 should be linked.

22. The European Union and its member States reaffirmed their commitment to the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance, ensuring accountability, transparency and independence. The Internet Governance Forum had benefited from the recommendations of the Working Group on Improvements to the IGF, and the European Union supported the renewal, in 2015, of the IGF mandate for a further five years, with no substantial changes.

23. **Mr. Dingha** (Congo) said that considerable progress had been made with regard to ICTs across the world. However, the huge digital divide that remained between countries with high broadband capacity and Internet usage and the least developed countries, in

particular, posed challenges for governments and development partners and attested to the fact that such progress had been unevenly shared.

24. Outlining some of the steps taken by his Government to develop and promote the use of ICTs, he said that the National Development Plan 2012-2016, focused on the modernization and industrialization of the country, gave particular emphasis to the ICT sector. In addition, in order to improve the provision of telecommunication services, new legislation had been drafted, notably on regulation of the electronic communications sector. As part of the national communication policy for 2009-2015, known as the cyberstrategy, a number of fibre-optic links had been established across the country and five mobile telephone companies were now operating there. In order to ensure sustainability, he called on development partners to support Congo's efforts to promote ICTs.

25. Although the number of households with a computer or Internet users was rising, a number of problems persisted, such as access difficulties, the high cost of equipment and services, poor national coverage and limited use of ICTs in the education and health sectors. More must therefore be done to strengthen partnerships and build the appropriate infrastructures.

26. Finally, Congo supported all international initiatives aimed at strengthening the participation of developing countries in Internet governance.

27. **Mr. Becher** (Israel) said that full access to ICTs was critical if low- and middle-income countries were to participate successfully in the global economy; yet two thirds of the world's population could not access the Internet. ICTs had played a large part in his country's transformation from a developing country to an economic powerhouse. Israel's information technology and telecommunications companies were world leaders in a number of areas, and consumers enjoyed an open and competitive telecommunications market.

28. A multi-stakeholder approach was important in addressing global challenges related to the Internet. WSIS+10 would provide an opportunity to consider how best to close the digital divide and harness digital data to keep international development on track, as well as to identify the new challenges for the development agenda beyond 2015.

29. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) said that the least developed countries were lagging behind in ICTs — a critical component to enhance productivity and productive capacity. The international community was far from achieving the target set in the Istanbul Programme of Action to increase significantly access to telecommunication services and strive to provide 100 per cent access to the Internet by 2020. More must therefore be done to support the efforts of the least developed countries to improve Internet connections and broadband use and accessibility.

30. It was surprising that the report (A/68/65-E/2013/11) mentioned the least developed countries in the context of the digital divide only. Future reports should refer to the obstacles faced by those countries and analyze the progress made in mainstreaming ICTs.

31. "Digital Bangladesh" was the main element of his Government's Vision 2021, which sought to make Bangladesh a middle-income country within the next eight years. Noting that Bangladesh had been recognized in the ITU Measuring the Information Society Report 2013 as one of the most dynamic countries in the context of the ICT Development Index, he said that ICTs were being used extensively in the agricultural sector, ensuring an effective distribution system and a fair marketing system. People in remote villages also had electronic access to a number of critical services almost free of charge. Other examples of effective and efficient e-governance included the establishment of over 4,500 union information and service centres to improve service delivery, foster participation, improve transparency and accountability and reduce corruption.

32. However, resource constraints were hampering the development of infrastructure essential for improved services. Coordinated, coherent and demand-driven assistance from Member States and international organizations, as well as focused and country-owned national development strategies, would help the least developed countries, including Bangladesh, to achieve sustainable development, using ICTs as a major tool.

33. **Mr. Pisarevich** (Belarus) said that his country was implementing a number of national programmes to build and improve ICT infrastructure. The Belarus Hi-Tech Park was operating successfully and Belarus had become a major supplier of ICT services in the region. Belarus had been classified as one of the most dynamic countries in the ITU Measuring the Information

Society Report 2013, having climbed five places to 41 on the ICT Development Index. However, many challenges remained, including the need to ensure openness of the information society and close the digital divide between developed and developing countries. More must also be done to protect children and young people from the negative influence of the Internet and social networks, and to fight cybercrime.

34. The United Nations had an important role to play in building ICT capacities, and he welcomed the efforts of United Nations entities in implementing the WSIS outcomes. In view of their critical role for economic, social and environmental development, ICTs should be an integral part of the agenda beyond 2015. He called on the international financial institutions and the private sector to provide funding for their development in the least developed and middle-income countries.

35. **Ms. Cook** (Chile) said that her country recognized the importance of digital development and had recently launched the Digital Agenda 2013-2020. Chile was working at the national level to address new challenges associated with the digital divide, such as ease and quality of access, and remained concerned that the rapid expansion of broadband services was leaving some developing countries behind.

36. Chile was following closely the WSIS outcomes and had participated actively in the development of a regional strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean and within the framework of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD).

37. **Mr. Ashawami Kumar** (India) said that ICTs had vast potential to foster inclusive and sustainable development and served to promote better and more responsive governance, improved service delivery and transparency, and social and economic empowerment. The growth in ICTs over the previous ten years had exceeded all expectations: there were now over 700 million mobile phones in India, and his country had the third largest number of Internet users in the world. The national e-governance plan had brought the Government closer to the people and promoted greater openness and transparency. Tele-education and telemedicine were used to bring services to rural areas, and more than 520 million Indian citizens had already been provided with unique identification as part of a national identification scheme.

38. India was fully committed to the free growth of the Internet and to the vision, set out in the Tunis Agenda, of multilateral, transparent and democratic Internet governance with the full involvement of Governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations. Noting that global Internet governance could be functional, effective and credible only with the involvement of all stakeholders, including those in developing countries, he said that enhanced cooperation to optimize public policies on the use of cyberspace for development should be a common goal. He also highlighted the importance in that regard of respect for basic human rights, such as the inalienable right to privacy and dignity. Finally, WSIS+10 would be an opportunity to assess how cyberspace and its related technologies could be used for development, a goal to which India remained committed.

39. **Mr. García Landa** (Mexico) said that the development agenda beyond 2015 must address technological development, and highlighted the importance of efforts to build national capacities concerning innovation, coverage and access, and to close gaps in Internet and telephony usage. Mexico welcomed the efforts of United Nations agencies to assist countries with low levels of digital penetration and agreed that continued efforts should be made with regard to financing mechanisms. Of particular concern was the growing digital divide between developed and developing countries linked to broadband capacity. Efforts by all governments, in collaboration with regulatory authorities, associations and the private sector, must be made to redress the balance.

40. Access to the Internet was a fundamental right that had recently been included in the Mexican Constitution. His Government had implemented a number of reforms to foster ICT development, access and use, and steps were being taken to increase coverage and build a real information society.

41. In the area of Internet governance, the coordinated and constructive cooperation of multiple actors was essential to strike a balance between open access to the Internet on the one hand and the protection of rights, freedoms and privacy of citizens, businesses and States on the other. Mexico had offered to host the meeting of the IGF in 2014, which would provide an opportunity for a free and open discussion and exchange of best practice on basic aspects of cyberspace governance.

42. **Mr. Msosa** (Malawi) said that ICTs were one of the key pillars of Malawi's economic recovery plan. His country's ICT policy was providing a framework for the deployment, exploitation and development of ICTs to support accelerated socioeconomic advancement. As a result of advances in ICT and a liberalized telecommunications industry, 17 per cent of the population now had use of the Internet as compared to 0.07 per cent in 2005; the use of fixed and mobile telephones among the population had risen from 2.63 per cent to approximately 27 per cent in the same period. His Government had established 36 telecentres offering Internet, telephone and other services to people in rural areas for a very small fee. It was also implementing a regional communication infrastructure programme to improve the quality, availability and affordability of broadband in Malawi and to provide Internet connections to public institutions. His delegation was grateful to the World Bank and ITU for their financial and technical assistance, which it hoped would continue as the country strived to increase Internet penetration levels and make ICT the catalyst for national development.

43. In conclusion, he called on the relevant United Nations agencies to coordinate the initiatives of international organizations and development partners in order to bridge the digital divide and ensure that developing countries could build a reliable ICT infrastructure and become integral players in a globalized world.

44. **Mr. Hirse** (Nigeria) said that ICTs held great potential for poverty eradication and the socioeconomic advancement of developing countries. Nigeria welcomed the continued progress made by African countries with regard to ICTs, including investments in broadband infrastructure, improved connectivity and increased bandwidth and services. However, it was concerned about the continuing gap in digital and broadband access between developing and developed countries. Moreover, the adverse impact of difficult economic circumstances on ICT investment and diffusion could lead to many African countries missing economic opportunities. Greater emphasis should therefore be placed on reducing the cost of broadband connectivity, promoting capacity-building and upgrading the telecommunications infrastructure in developing countries. His Government, for its part, had provided ICT infrastructure and was developing the ICT industry in a number of critical sectors.

45. WSIS+10 must take due account of the progress made in implementing the outcomes at the regional and international levels, as well as of the obstacles and constraints encountered. Noting that ICTs must be considered as part of the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 in view of their impact on development, he said that Nigeria would also support improved capacity-building for policy and regulation.

46. **Mr. Pibulnakarintr** (Thailand) said that ICTs could play a significant role in closing development gaps and must have a prominent place and role in the future development agenda. To close the digital divide at the national level, Thailand was implementing a smart network, government and business policy aimed at expanding communications networks and infrastructure, increasing access to the Government Information Network, and making ICTs more affordable for small and medium-sized enterprises. His country was committed to using ICTs to increase accessibility and promote gender equality and empowerment, and had introduced a distance learning programme to broadcast educational material to institutions in many parts of the country.

47. The use of ICT networks in disaster monitoring, early warning and post-disaster management had been expanded in the Second Thailand Information and Communication Technology Master Plan (2009-2013). The assistance provided in the context of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response had been appreciated and he hoped that the information gathered would be shared with interested Member States and agencies.

48. Finally, Thailand would be hosting, in conjunction with ITU, the Connect Asia-Pacific Summit in November and hoped that the conference would foster collaboration on ICTs among relevant regional actors.

49. **Mr. Jassim Abdulraham Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that, although progress had been made with regard to the more widespread dissemination of ICTs, cloud computing and mobile telephony, a new digital divide was emerging between countries with broadband networks and others, primarily the least developed countries, with less advanced Internet and broadband access. Problems had been compounded by the effect of the economic and financial crisis on the mobilization of resources for ICTs. More must be done

by Governments and the private sector to take advantage of the benefits of ICTs, and all Governments must play a key role in Internet governance.

50. ICTs were an important tool for sustainable development and economic growth and the WSIS+10 review would provide an opportunity to take stock of the challenges faced, the lessons learned and the role played by ICTs towards achieving the MDGs.

51. **Ms. Polelwa** (South Africa) said that ICTs were key drivers of economic growth and of a people-centred, development-oriented and inclusive information society. Although the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society had envisaged a process to address the role of Governments in Internet governance in line with the Geneva Declaration of Principles, the Internet was increasingly dominated and controlled by powerful vested interests, including major corporations that might event try to bid for ownership of domain names relating to developing countries. The Internet must be treated as a global resource, and managed in a fair and transparent manner with the involvement of all stakeholders.

52. With regard to the development of globally applicable principles on public policy issues associated with the coordination and management of Internet resources, organizations responsible for essential tasks associated with the Internet must contribute to creating an enabling environment. She highlighted the importance, in that regard, of inclusiveness, accountability, transparency, compliance with the principles of international law and involvement of all States Members of the United Nations. Enhanced cooperation could lead to the development of a legitimate international framework to ensure the implementation of public policy principles to safeguard the future of the Internet for all stakeholders without exception and not just for those with considerable resources and power.

53. An existing or new United Nations agency should assume responsibility for coordinating an inclusive intergovernmental process consistent with United Nations principles and the Tunis Agenda. Such an entity would develop international public policy with respect to the Internet and have oversight over critical Internet resources and infrastructure. A clearly defined process must be developed to provide for the structured engagement of all stakeholders in that regard and structured relationships must be developed with

existing bodies involved in Internet management to ensure accountability.

54. **Mr. Patriota** (Brazil) said that ICTs acted as a catalyst to help developing countries achieve the goals of poverty eradication, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, participants had emphasized the need for improved access to ICTs, notably broadband networks and services, and closing of the digital divide. However, most poor populations had yet to benefit from the extraordinary growth in ICTs in recent years.

55. The establishment of an open, diverse and reliable information society depended on the adoption of more democratic decision-making processes at the international level. His country recognized the importance of a multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance, and the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee established in 2003 involved representatives of Government, the private sector, civil society and academia. His delegation favoured an inclusive consultation process with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, for the establishment of a multilateral framework for Internet governance and use, and the effective protection of data travelling through the web.

56. Brazil welcomed the inputs from the working group on enhanced cooperation established by CSTD; the group's recommendations should also address the need to promote and protect all fundamental human rights, including the right to privacy. Recalling recent revelations concerning a global electronic surveillance network indicating serious violations of human rights and civil liberties in the name of the fight against terrorism, he said that Brazil repudiated the use of any pretext for violating human rights and civil liberties. States must ensure that measures taken to combat terrorism complied with all obligations under international law. The United Nations must play a leading role in regulating the conduct of States and preventing cyberspace from being used in a way that undermined international cooperation. There was a need for a common set of principles and responsible regulation to harness the full potential of the Internet, while ensuring freedom of expression, multi-stakeholder governance, diversity and respect for human rights, particularly the right to privacy.

57. **Mr. Morozov** (Russian Federation) said that efforts must be made to close the digital divide and ensure that States played a key role in Internet governance. ICTs were an important engine for development, and were experiencing stable, rapid and uniform growth in the Russian Federation. The strategy to build an information society in his country was expected to yield significant improvements with regard to the national information and communication infrastructure, the creation of a scientific and technical basis for innovation and access to reliable ICT services. The Russian Federation had already made significant progress in a number of areas, notably e-governance. According to the United Nations E-Government Survey 2012, it had climbed 32 places to its highest ever rank of 27, which was the best performance of any Eastern European or Commonwealth of Independent States country. The Russian Internet sector and Internet access had continued to grow, with the Russian search engine Yandex now the fourth largest in the world. Further multilateral action was required to promote the wider application of ICTs for human and sustainable development.

58. **Ms. Bubanja** (Serbia) said that, in accordance with the Geneva Declaration of Principles, Serbia continued to support women's empowerment in the use of ICTs. For the third year, it had marked International Girls in ICT Day, which encouraged girls and young women to consider ICT careers. Her country recognized the importance of delivering quality education through online courses open to all and would be hosting, in November, the Regional Preparatory Meeting for Europe for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-14).

59. Although the strong interest shown by major international companies in investing in Serbia's ICT sector was encouraging, much remained to be done if her country was to achieve its goal of becoming a regional ICT hub. Serbia expected the Economic Commission for Europe to assist Member States, particularly those with less developed institutional capacities, in the implementation phase of the new strategy package, roadmap and global goals for intelligent transport systems using ICTs to improve efficiency in transport and freight networks.

60. Although technological advances had great potential for development and poverty eradication, privacy and security concerns must be taken into account. Serbia was continuing to enhance cooperation with other Member States and engage in a multi-stakeholder dialogue on issues such as expanding access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion. Further efforts must be made within the United Nations system to address the remaining challenges, particularly that of ensuring the inclusiveness of the information society.

61. **Mr. Xie** Xiaowu (China) said that ICTs played an important role in China's industrial development. The number of Chinese Internet users had reached 591 million, with mobile phones having become the primary device for Internet use in the country. Information consumption in China was projected to grow at annual rate of 20 per cent up to 2015 to reach 3.2 trillion RMB. By 2020, the fixed broadband penetration rate in Chinese households would reach 70 per cent, the mobile broadband penetration rate would rise to 85 per cent and the number of Internet users would have doubled.

62. Noting that the United Nations had been called on to address the issue that a certain country was abusing its technological advantages to spy on other countries, steal information from organizations and individuals and violate people's privacy, he said that, in elaborating the agenda beyond 2015, development goals must be formulated in a scientific manner taking into account the role of ICTs. Efforts must be made to respect the information sovereignty of all States and protect the fundamental rights of all citizens when establishing multilateral, democratic and transparent international norms that were fair, equitable and efficient. More should also be done by the international community to promote interconnectivity of information flows.

63. **Ms. Robl** (United States of America) said that, in order to build global knowledge societies, efforts should be made to promote the free exchange of information and ideas, while resisting efforts to erect new barriers. The United States remained committed to a people-centred, multi-stakeholder and transparent model of Internet governance. It continued to support the IGF as an optimal setting for Internet governance discussions and looked forward to receiving the recommendations of the working group on enhanced cooperation established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/195.

64. The United States had provided funding to CSTD to support the WSIS review process. Collaborative efforts and the active participation of multi-stakeholder entities were vital to progress in implementing WSIS action lines. In that regard, the United States supported the important work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programmes, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), ITU and UNCTAD, in facilitating implementation and follow-up of the action lines.

65. In the light of recent press reports regarding alleged United States intelligence activities, she wished to reassure the Committee that the United States took the international community's concerns seriously and was reviewing its practices, as President Obama had reported to the General Assembly. Her country's long-standing policies on privacy, human rights and Internet governance had not changed: the United States remained committed to an open, interoperable and secure cyberspace free from arbitrary government interference.

66. **Mr. Gone** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that in his country the ICT sector, which was dominated by mobile telephony, was growing on average by 13.2 per cent a year, and provided direct employment for 6,000 people and more than 100,000 jobs in related areas. ICTs provided about 5 per cent in added value to the gross domestic product and were an essential tool for development strategies at the national and local level. His government was seeking to increase accessibility to ICT equipment among the population, promote the use of computers in areas including education, health and governance, and train workers to enable the country to keep pace with developments and use ICTs as a catalyst for economic and social development. A new regulatory framework had been established in 2012 to protect the rights of consumers, and legislation on e-commerce, protection of personal information and cybersecurity had been adopted in 2013. The Government and the private sector had invested more than $2 million in 2013 in broadband infrastructure and the establishment of third-generation networks. Steps to introduce electronic governance had already been taken, and e-learning, e-health and e-agriculture services would gradually be introduced.

67. The digital divide between developed and developing countries had to be closed, and his country looked forward to the WSIS+10 High-Level Event, which should result in specific and constructive proposals regarding the 2015 development agenda.

68. **Mr. Fowlie** (International Telecommunication Union) provided an update on efforts by ITU with regard to WSIS+10. The High-Level Event to be held in 2014 would be an extended version of the WSIS Forum and would review the WSIS outcomes in relation to the action lines and take stock of achievements with a view to developing proposals for a vision beyond 2015. The preparatory process had been designed as an open and inclusive six-phase process that would result in a statement on the implementation of WSIS outcomes. Much of the input already received from Member States, civil society and the private sector had recommended synergy between the WSIS+10 follow-up and the sustainable development agenda beyond 2015. It was also broadly agreed that the potential of ICTs as a catalyst for sustainable development should be more broadly recognized in the United Nations development agenda, and the United Nations Group on the Information Society had called for the WSIS review output to serve as input for the post-2015 process.

69. The Broadband Commission for Digital Development organized by ITU and UNESCO was making good progress towards its target of universal broadband access, but further efforts would be required to achieve the targets concerning individual and household Internet access and affordability. The Commission had added a new target calling for gender equality in access to broadband to prevent the considerable digital gap from widening further.

70. Lastly, he drew attention to the declaration of the BYND 2015 Global Youth Summit, which outlined specific actions for youth and ICTs in the area of economic development, human rights, environmental sustainability, cybersecurity and health. He thanked Costa Rica for hosting that important event and for ensuring that the declaration became an official United Nations document.

71. **Mr. Šćepanović** (Montenegro) said that his Government recognized the importance and benefits of ICTs and the Internet for developing an information society and promoting economic, social and cultural integration. It was committed to developing its normative framework with a view to harmonizing legislation fully with the highest European and international standards. Particular focus had been given

to the development of infrastructure, education and training, and to raising awareness of the significance of ICTs for national development. The tangible progress made in many areas, including the health-care sector, telecommunications and mobile communications, would serve as a strong platform for future growth and expansion. To that end, his Government had adopted a strategy for the development of information society 2012-2016, which set a number of ambitious goals with the aim of making Montenegro a digital society. Lastly, he hoped that ICTs would be given their rightful place in the development agenda beyond 2015.

72. **Ms. Mohammed** (Bahrain) said that, although the digital divide between developed and developing countries remained a cause of concern, many developing countries had achieved significant progress in the area of ICTs. Her country recognized the vital role of ICTs for development and for achieving the MDGs and the communications market had been liberalized with some 80 registered companies now offering services. Bahrain also recognized the importance of e-governance and had established a supreme committee for information and communication technology as well as an e-Government Authority, which had recently won an award for the best public sector organization in the Middle East. The Authority was endeavouring to make all government services available to citizens electronically through different communication media and its integrated workflow management system had won the United Nations Public Service Award in 2012. Use of the e-government services was increasing, and the number of services provided by the private sector through the national portal was rising. Noting that Bahrain had hosted the 2013 United Nations Public Service Forum in June, she said that cooperation between her country and the United Nations in the area of public service was increasing every year and thanked the Division for Public Administration and Development Management for its support in that regard.

73. **Ms. Teo** (Singapore) said that Singapore was concerned about the digital divide between the developed and developing countries, particularly in terms of broadband access. Noting that her country had benefited from the use of ICTs in development and had ranked second in the Global Information Technology Report for three consecutive years since 2010, she said that Singapore's e-Government strategy was one example of the successful use of ICTs for development.

In order to develop that strategy further, the eGov 2015 Masterplan had been launched, through which views and suggestions were being sought from citizens to ensure better public service delivery. Policies were also being implemented to narrow the digital divide within the country, and included free access to computer resources and training for senior citizens and subsidized computers and Internet access for students and persons with disabilities from low-income households. In order to share its first-hand knowledge of the benefits of ICTs for development, her country had established the Singapore Cooperation Programme, which had organized training programmes for over 80,000 participants from 170 countries since 1992.

74. A review of the WSIS outcomes by the General Assembly in 2015 would be timely, since ICTs were likely to feature in the development agenda beyond 2015, and she highlighted the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach in that connection.

75. **Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan) said that, although the positive trends in the ICT sector were welcome, it was regrettable that the digital divide between developed and developing countries in terms of access to ICTs and broadband penetration continued to grow. Azerbaijan therefore attached great importance to the work of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development and welcomed the WSIS+10 review to be completed in 2015.

76. High-quality telecommunications infrastructure was essential for affordable access to ICTs and for the development of information societies. His country continued its efforts to improve regional connectivity including through the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway, for which it served as implementation coordinator at the regional level. It had also taken note of the proposal on the establishment of the Eurasian Connectivity Alliance.

77. A number of State programmes had been developed to implement the WSIS outcomes. His country's first telecommunication satellite had been launched in February and was expected to provide high-quality broadcasting services for government and corporate clients for 15 years. Noting that 2013 had been declared the year of ICT in Azerbaijan, he said that his country had one of the world's highest number of mobile phone users and Internet users had increased to 70 per 100 inhabitants in 2012. A National Certification Services Centre had been established in

connection with e-Government and e-signature services. At the regional level, Azerbaijan continued to provide experience- and knowledge-sharing between Governments, industry leaders, academics and civil society. From 2 to 5 December 2013, it would be hosting simultaneously, in Baku, the nineteenth Azerbaijan International Exhibition and Conference of Telecommunication and Information Technologies (BakuTel) and an international conference entitled "Global Cyber Security Cooperation: Challenges and Visions".

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.