

STATEMENT BY MR. GOVINDRAO ADIK, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, ON AGENDA ITEM 17 – 'INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT' IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 26, 2010

Mr. Chairperson,

The impact of Information and Communication Technologies on development is a subject of high importance. It is indeed fitting that you have accorded priority to this issue in the deliberations of the Second Committee.



India associates itself with the statement made by Yemen on behalf of G-77.

Mr. Chairperson,

Information and Communication Technologies have truly revolutionized the way we live. The transformative power of the internet and its ability to process, store and manage flow of information, data and knowledge has created a new world of cyber space. The possibilities of cyber activity are limitless. Its fast changing character and evolution based on ingenious innovation and invention are a tribute to the creative potential of human mind.

Information and Communication Technologies have made the world a global village. Distances, barriers and boundaries have become meaningless. It has altered the way we conduct business, undertake scientific research, manage our weather forecasting systems, decide on cropping pattern in our agricultural fields, control and command our space ships and communicate with people across continents.

The mobile phone, the personal computer and the internet have become the key enabling tools for development. Developing countries must, therefore, harness and be assisted in harnessing the benefits of Information and Communication technologies (ICT).

ICT has altered the way Governments manage their socio-economic programmes and outreach. E-Governance has helped countries revitalize public administration, overhaul public management, foster inclusive leadership and move civil service towards higher efficiency, transparency and accountability.

Mr. Chairperson,

Enhancing the penetration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in developing countries is also one of the targets under Millennium Development Goal 8 as part of the global partnership for development.

It is significant that global mobile penetration is now over 60%, with some developing countries already having achieved 100% mobile penetration. This demonstrates the possibility of developing countries leapfrogging the cycle of technology development.

The mobile penetration in developing countries has enabled governments to bring benefits of financial inclusion through phone banking to the remotest corners of the country. Efficient ICT systems are being increasingly used for providing education, medical services, environment management, electricity transmission, maintaining land records, running community programmes, providing weather information, transport services, among host of other activities.

We are happy that India is one of the success stories of mobile telephone penetration, and that our model is being used as an example in some other developing countries. Our proactive public policies in this sector have served to reduce monopolies, encourage open competition, and promote development of the domestic industry. As a result, mobile telephony costs in India are among the lowest in the world.

While ICT has brought immense benefits to development worldwide, it has some attendant challenges that we must collectively overcome. Cyber attacks pose a grave threat to the security of the ICT systems. The international community must work closely to confront the transnational nature of cyber threats.

The report of the Secretary-General has correctly noted the large disparities in terms of penetration and affordability, particularly in the area of broadband connectivity. Greater efforts are required, particularly by the international community, to bridge the digital divide.

We thank the Secretary-General for the report on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and call on the international community to provide greater financial and technical support for its full implementation.

Mr. Chairperson,

I am happy to share that India has been active in using Information and Communication technologies for development. The Information Technology industry has been a major contributor to our economic growth in recent years.

India is also using Information and Communication technologies to implement an ambitious National e-Governance Plan. This involves the creation of physical infrastructure, setting up appropriate institutional mechanisms, development of policies and standards as well as adopting the necessary legal framework. Various public service areas like road transport, land records, taxes, agriculture, treasury, education, passport, postal service and identification documents are under the ambit of this Plan.

Mr. Chairperson,

Despite the global recession, the Indian Information Technology sector has been resilient, and remains one of the fastest growing sectors of the Indian industry.

India has been privileged to share its ICT expertise with fellow developing countries. A good example is the pan-African e-network project to support tele-education, tele-medicine, e-governance, infotainment, resource mapping and meteorological services across the continent using fibre optics and a dedicated satellite.

We have also been assisting in capacity building efforts in developing countries, both in our neighbourhood and beyond.

Thank You, Mr. Chairperson.

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