

10 June 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Stocktaking
Session, 10 June 2015**

Delivered by H.E. Mrs. Lyutha Al-Mughairy, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman, on behalf of President Kutesa

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to address this stocktaking session of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) on behalf of H.E. Mr. Kutesa, President of General Assembly.

I thank H.E. Mr. Jānis Mažeiks, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia, and H.E. Mrs. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, for assuming the important responsibility of co-facilitators. I am confident that with their able leadership and the support of all Member States this review process will achieve its objectives.

Ten years ago, global leaders adopted the WSIS outcome documents in Geneva and Tunis, which set out the common vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society.

A decade later, considerable progress has been made in the achievement of the objectives outlined in those outcome documents.

According to the Secretary-General's report, the number of mobile subscriptions is almost equal to the world's population. Some 44% of households are estimated to have Internet access, while the capabilities of information and communication technology (ICT) networks and services are now estimated to be 30 times greater than 10 years ago.

These accomplishments have an important development impact, as they contribute to economic and social progress by enhancing productivity, creating quality jobs and encouraging entrepreneurship.

Further, the enhancement of ICT-based services such as e-commerce, e-learning and e-health affords people unprecedented opportunities to improve their quality of life.

However, despite the progress that has been made in employing ICTs to promote development, much work remains.

Concrete actions must be taken to address the digital divide that persists between developed and developing countries. In spite of progress in increasing accessibility to basic ICTs, developing countries, and African countries in particular, fall far behind in access to broadband networks and service which are the benchmarks of the development of information society. Such realities deprive developing countries of opportunities for accelerated economic and social progress.

Greater international cooperation is essential for assisting developing countries, particularly those in special situations, to attract long-term infrastructural investment, enhance capacity building and facilitate technology development and transfer.

This should entail strengthened North-South cooperation, which should be supplemented by South-South and triangular cooperation, as well as a broad partnership that includes governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and civil society.

We should also work to further unleash the potentials of ICTs as a catalyst for broader economic and social progress. This requires mainstreaming the use of ICTs in economic and social development agendas at national, regional and international levels.

It is also critical that enabling policy and legal frameworks are put in place to encourage ICT exploitation, innovation, investment and education.

Special attention should be given to address the gender divide. Efforts must be made to improve women's access to ICT and to maximize its potential as a tool for women's empowerment.

It is also crucial that new challenges such as internet stability and security, and the protection of privacy and data are properly addressed through enhanced cooperation between governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

As we formulate the post-2015 development agenda, it is critical that the important role of ICTs in facilitating inclusive and sustainable development is fully recognized in the new development framework.

References to ICTs for development are already cited in 4 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We must ensure these targets and goals are effectively implemented.

The WSIS+10 review process that starts today provides an important opportunity to not only take stock of what we have done, but also to reflect on opportunities to further enhance our efforts towards the common vision of an information society in the post-2015 era.

Thank you for your kind attention.