

STATEMENT BY MR. SANJAY NIRUPAM, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 50 – INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 64TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 28, 2009



Mr. Chairman,

Permit me to begin by associating my delegation with the statement made by the Chair of the Group of 77 on this important issue of "Information and Communication Technologies for Development".

Mr. Chairman,

If there was ever any doubt on the transformative power of technology, developments in the information and communication technologies serve to unequivocally put them completely at rest.

The mobile phone, the personal computer and the internet, which were a mere fantasy a few decades ago, not only seem indispensable today, but have served as critical inputs for development. Developing countries must, therefore, harness and be assisted in harnessing the benefits of information and communication technologies.

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

Apart from the growth and employment potential in the information and communication technology sectors, such technologies positively impact the development of other sectors of the economy. Further, they also assist in increasing access to remote areas, promoting markets in rural areas, improving public accountability, and enhancing access to information, to name just a few benefits.

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

We are happy that India is one of the success cases of mobile telephone penetration, and that our case 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.

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

In this context, development of the necessary infrastructure, both physical and human resources, must be a major focus. The issue of affordable access is also key. We would like the United Nations to play a more active role in promoting these objectives.

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. Chairman,

I am happy to share that India has been active in using Information and Communication technologies for development. The Information Technology industry today contributes nearly 6% to the national economy and has been a major contributor to our economic growth in recent years. The industry has also generated millions of jobs, both directly and indirectly.

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 areas like road transport, land records, taxes, agriculture, treasuries, education, passport, postal service and identification documents are under the ambit of this Plan.

In addition, India has a special focus on software development in multiple Indian languages. We have also combined our expertise in satellite fabrication and launch to create wide area networks. These aim to reach rural areas through initiatives like tele-education and tele-medicine.

We have embarked upon a gigantic project to assign a unique identification number to all our citizens. One of the leading pioneers of the IT revolution in India has been appointed to head this major national project.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite having to face the down turns of the global recession, the Indian Information Technology sector has been resilient, and remains one of the fastest growing sectors of the Indian industry. Some key areas of success include software development and Information Technology Enabled Services, including Business Process Outsourcing.

We have now also moved to a higher value-addition level of Outsourcing i.e. Knowledge Process Outsourcing. These include valuation research, investment research, patent filing, legal and insurance claims processing, online teaching, media content supply, etc. These activities play an important role in promoting global growth. We must ensure that these are not hindered through protectionist tendencies.

India has also been playing a leading role in international activities in the field of Information and Communication Technologies. We were privileged to host the Third Internet Governance Forum Meeting in India last year.

We have also taken steps to share our experience 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 other developing countries, both in our neighbourhood and beyond. We are happy that some of these efforts have been highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General.

Thank You, Mr. Chairman.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)