

Statement By Mr. Muhammad Hassan, Delegate Of Pakistan At The Second Committee On Science And Technology For Development (16 October 2002)

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank the Secretary General for his report on the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society.

Mr. Chairman,

Science and Technology has always provided the momentum behind changes and progress. It has been the leading force in the development of civilization. The momentous changes in the field of information and communication technology have brought unprecedented benefits to human kind.

To ensure that the technological revolution benefits each and every inhabitant of the planet, we need to undertake practical measures both at national and international levels.

At the global level, the role of the UN in promoting access to and transfer of knowledge and technology to developing countries is of critical importance. The two initiatives recently launched or supported by the United Nations namely; the establishment of United Nations ICT Task Force and, holding of World Summit on Information Society are testimony to the immense potential of the United Nations in spreading the benefits of technology all over the world.

Mr. Chairman,

In this regard, my delegation would like to recall that in the Special Session of the General Assembly on ICT for Development, held this year, non-access to technology was recognized as the most important problem being faced by the developing countries. We, therefore, hope that the international community through the above mentioned processes would give high priority to transfer technologies to developing countries on concessional and preferential conditions. In this regard, priority must be given to the implementation of already existing multilateral commitments in the area of technology transfer, particularly through providing incentives as provided for and agreed in article 66(2) of the TRIPS Agreement.

Mr. Chairman

In the same session of the General Assembly, it was also recognized that although access to technology is the key for development, but access alone is not sufficient. Moreover, ICT alone doesn't lead to development. It needs to be integrated into other efforts such as the provision of electricity, infrastructure, computers and other devices alongwith adequate financing and skills from various quarters. We hope that the World Summit on the Information Society will provide us with an opportunity to respond to these challenges in a renewed spirit of cooperation and partnership.

Besides, we would like the World Summit on Information Society to focus on the development of ICT infrastructure by eliminating all barriers that restrict the access of developing countries to ICT. Such barriers only restrict the efforts of small and medium-sized enterprises, especially in developing countries to become useful actors in the global information society in the face of aggressive commercial policies of huge multinationals.

The World Summit on the Information Society should propose both long-term and short-term measures, which would equip developing countries in handling information technology so that they can fully benefit from the information society. This can take place through education,

capacity building, human resource development, and sharing of expertise and experiences. Only then would the international community be successful in achieving a solid and sustainable global information society.

We hope that the Summit would live up to the high expectations of the developing countries. On our part, Pakistan is ready to contribute constructively to the deliberations of the Summit and its preparatory process.

Mr. Chairman,

Science and technology forms an important component of Pakistan's development strategy. The Government of Pakistan has, therefore, adopted a holistic, progressive and participatory approach to its promotion. Our IT vibrant policy is aimed at the development of an extensive pool of skilled IT work force; designing of legislative and regulatory frameworks; providing business incentives for investors; and the establishment of an efficient and cost-effective infrastructure that provides affordable and wide-spread connectivity. Significant steps have been taken to ensure that digital gap is rapidly narrowed.

While Pakistan and other developing countries, have endeavored to strategically place themselves so that they could benefit from the immense potentials of Science and technology, these efforts are unlikely to yield desired results without commensurate efforts by the international community. In such a global effort, the United Nations needs to play a leading role. In this regard, we would like the UN to focus on the following;

- Strengthening the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. In this regard, we welcome the decision of the ECOSOC to annualize its sessions.
- Allocation of sufficient resources from regular budget to finance the activities of the UN system, in particular UNCTAD, focused on promoting science and technology for development.
- Undertake a study by UNCTAD, in collaboration with relevant UN bodies, to identify areas of potential partnerships between UN and the private sector in promoting science and technology for development.
- Explore all possible avenues for launching a capacity building campaign, by the UN Secretariat and Funds and Programmes, to enhance the absorptive capacity of developing countries, including through enhanced South-South cooperation.
- Comprehensive review of the TRIPS agreement. Concrete measures should be taken to operationalize Articles 7 and 8 of TRIPS, which facilitate access to and dissemination and transfer of technologies.

I thank you.