

Dear Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all I would like to congratulate Mr. Karklins on occasion of election. Our delegation wishes him the best of success in a challenging task.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has joined actively WSIS process since the very first preparatory steps for WSIS-1 stage in Geneva. We consider ICT to be an important development engine, and as mentioned by the President of our country Mr. Ilham Aliyev at the Summit last December, "... our main objective – to transfer our black gold – oil resources into the human gold – a real welfare of every citizen of our country."

As some of you may know the government of our country is working actively with an alliance of counterparts both local and international to ensure further growth of ICT as a sector of economy contributing to the development in both urban and rural areas generating employment opportunities the special attention is also paid to e-governance and e-learning issues.

We would like thanking in particular UNDP for the constant support provided to the sector. In the meantime, I would like to underline that the above mentioned activities are based on understanding of ICT's importance for the future of country and global development, where Azerbaijan acts as a partner providing not only political and

administrative but also sustainable financial support to a number of important ICT initiatives both national and regional.

Given above, we believe WSIS is a crucial momentum for all those concerned to consolidate their efforts. The first stage was a success, but this success has been conditioned to the achievements of the process, which started officially with this event – preparations of WSIS-2 in Tunisia.

There are a number of obstacles and problems to get settled, but we hope that working together we can leave these difficulties behind.

Even though rich in the natural resources our country faces a lot of difficulties of the transition period further aggravated by occupation of %20 of territories by the Armenian armed forces and existence of more than a million of refugees.

Still our country is developing fast and we consider ICT to be one of important development engines, and we support fully goals and objectives of WSIS.

I am pleased to announce that Azerbaijani government will donate 10.000 Euros for the second stage of WSIS.

Also, I would like to announce that as a contribution to implementation of Plan of Actions of Geneva Summit and Millennium Development Goals of UN, our government together with UN initiative group – World Summit Award will organize “Global ICT Conference” in late November 2004. All interesting sides to be invited to participate and to share their opinion and experience on digital divide.

Azerbaijan is ready to consider hosting one of thematic meeting – “ICT Enhanced Learning”, which is going to be organized by UNESCO in 2005. This meeting can be combined with UN ICT task force regional meeting, in our view.

We are also looking forward to discuss with organizers of WSIS-2 other of such tangible assistance.

THANK YOU!