

Speech by
Mr Uffe Toudal Pedersen,
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DENMARK,
at the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society
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Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Information and communication technology – ICT – is the most powerful and efficient enabler in today's world. This is the case for all countries – rich and poor alike.

ICT is the key technology to stimulate sustainable economic growth – and to improve the quality of life for people all over the World.

ICT supports the struggles of individuals to take a stronger responsibility for our own lives – and for participating actively in forming the societies we live in.

ICT has the potential to advance human empowerment, human rights, democracy and peace.

ICT therefore has a major role to play if we want to fulfil the ambitious goals we set for ourselves with the Millennium Declaration five years ago.

The World Summit on the Information Society is of vital importance if we want to spread these positive benefits and potentials of ICT to all corners of our globalized World.

The single most important subject of this Summit concerns Internet Governance.

Denmark believes that the private sector and civil society should continue to have the lead role in the development of the Internet – to the benefit of citizens, businesses and governments alike.

We therefore have to find a way to ensure true legitimacy to the governance system without jeopardising further development of the Internet.

A governance system at the international level, which cannot introduce any form of content control! But a governance system, which can protect the core infrastructure of the Internet!

Ladies and gentlemen,

We can all do better in our mutual struggle to ensure an inclusive global Information Society.

And we all have to work harder to protect freedom of expression – the most vital corner stone of the Information Society. Countries, which do not understand this, will in the long run loose in the global competition on investment and economic growth.

Each nation must put the development of the information society high on its national agenda. Developing countries have in particular an important task in integrating their national e-strategies with national poverty reduction strategies.

But it is also important for developing countries to work much harder to fight corruption, to ensure political liberty and economic freedom, to invest in health and education of their people, and to promote the rights of women.

It is important for all countries – rich as well as poor – to work actively to reap the maximum benefits of globalisation.

The challenge is to adapt the economy to rapid changes, to be part of the new international division of labour with products of high quality and to ensure that benefits are spread out to all groups in society.

The Danish Government has for many years acknowledged that the future of the Danish society depends on the ability to create and use knowledge and technology. We aim to strengthen the emphasis on research, education, innovation and entrepreneurship.

We already know that the use of ICT by enterprises, public institutions and private households has an enormous impact.

And the area is constantly being developed for the purpose of promoting overall growth in the business sector, ensuring sustainable development, obtaining service improvements and creating efficiency gains.

However we also have our challenges.

To reap the full benefits from ICT, it is necessary to move from basic use to integration across all sectors of society. And in view of the technological development, security issues are in focus more than ever.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are looking forward to the outcome of the processes that will follow from this Summit. Results that should lead to a prosperous and successful roll-out of the Information Society and to the benefit of all in the Global Community.

Thank you for your attention. And warm thanks to the organizers of the Summit.