Declaration of Amsterdam

"The Digital Road to Recovery"

A Call for Action

Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 25-27 May 2010

WITSA's 17th World Congress on IT

Hosted by:

ICT~Office Nederland

Co-hosted by the:

Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs

City of Amsterdam

Supported by the:

Spanish Presidency European Council 2010

European Commission

Introduction to the Declaration of Amsterdam

The world is confronted with unprecedented challenges. We are living through the most serious global financial and economic crisis for decades. We need to address a host of longer term issues such as promoting innovation and competitiveness in a globalized economy, responding to environmental concerns, improving energy efficiency, handling demographic change, ensuring public safety and modernizing public services to citizens and businesses.

Proper use of information and communication technology (ICT) is not only an essential factor for economic recovery, but also for tackling many of these challenges in the long term. ICT accelerates innovation and creates growth and jobs in almost all sectors of the economy. ICT has a profound impact on citizens and society as a whole. The digital economy is a reality which will increasingly take shape in the coming decades.

Over the last 50 years, the importance of information and communication technology on society has increased exponentially. ICT has penetrated into all 'veins' of daily life. Without ICT, governments cannot function properly, hospitals and factories cannot be run and wages cannot be paid, to give just a few examples. ICT plays a key role in modern society. It can, and should, make significant contributions to solving major social challenges so that our society is prosperous, internationally competitive, healthy, safe and sustainable. ICT as an 'innovation axis' is an important enabler for all sectors within a knowledge economy. It can take care of the transfer of knowledge within sectors and between sectors. In this context it should be stressed that governments and the ICT industry should be strongly committed to free, balanced, open and fair trade as a driver of productivity, innovation, job creation, improved competitiveness and quality of service.

Between 25-27 May 2010, WITSA's 17th World Congress on IT (WCIT 2010) has brought together more than 4,000 executives, government leaders and academics from over 90 countries. WCIT 2010 is hosted by the Dutch trade association ICT~Office, co-hosted by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and the City of Amsterdam, and supported by the European Commission. WCIT 2010 is an official event of the Spanish Presidency of the European Union.

One prominent outcome of WCIT 2010 is the presentation of the Declaration of Amsterdam. Subtitled 'The Digital Road to Recovery', this statement is spelling out commitments to direct the use of ICT to stimulate growth and address key societal challenges such as climate change, healthcare and eInclusion.

It is important to turn the Declaration of Amsterdam and its messages into action. The WCIT website doa.wcit2010.org contains a Discussion and Action Forum to engage a wide range of stakeholders. Here, you will be able to read the Declaration and to present the initiatives you will undertake to implement its contents. The results provide input for a process that will continue beyond Amsterdam, towards the next WCIT in 2012 in Montreal, Canada.

Declaration of Amsterdam and Call for Action to all stakeholders

We, the participants at WITSA's 17th World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT 2010) in Amsterdam between 25-27 May 2010, endorse the vision of a sustainable prosperous society, where information and communication technologies (ICT) empower each person to improve their quality of life, where every individual or organisation, if they so wish, can participate more fully in the economic and social dimension of society and where trust is at the core of social order and economic prosperity in a connected world.

To realize this vision we need to address a number of major global challenges such as:
- *effectively regenerating economic growth and stimulating sustainable economic development,*
- *substantially improving energy efficiency, decreasing energy consumption and reducing production of greenhouse gases,*
- *significantly improving the quality of life and enhancing trust and confidence,*
- *constructively exploiting opportunities from globalisation.*

To address these challenges in a full and timely manner, the intelligent use of information and communication technologies is an important enabler. We will, therefore, endeavour to make every effort possible to exploit the full potential of ICT for these ends. We encourage others to do the same. In doing so, we preferably will strive for solutions that do not favour any specific technology or business model.

All stakeholders, jointly and individually, should adopt the actions outlined below. These can also be seen as a first step towards implementing the Granada Ministerial Declaration and the EU Digital Agenda and will be recommended for support by the G20 countries at their summit in June 2010 in Toronto, Canada.

Effectively regenerating economic growth and stimulating sustainable economic development
Sustainable economic growth is essential to maintain the levels of prosperity in the developed world and to enable emerging and developing economies to achieve their fair share of global wealth. In the ten years between 1995 and 2005, ICT drove nearly half the productivity gains in most industrialized countries and an increase in broadband penetration has a positive effect on GDP growth. We need to regenerate sustainable growth to combat rising unemployment in large parts of the world, to achieve the 2020 sustainability targets, reduce excessive public deficits and create growth opportunities for developing countries which often suffer most from the current crisis. Access to ICT and the knowledge, content and information provided via the internet is an important element of an inclusive information society and is essential for broader sustainable economic growth. The following actions are proposed to fully exploit the potential of ICT in this respect:
- Governments and businesses should step up **investment in the use of ICT** and in applied R&D **to boost productivity**, **stimulate innovation** and **promote education**.
- The ICT industry and governments should work closely together to **accelerate** the roll out and **deployment of high speed broadband** (including mobile and next generation networks), and extend this to remote and underserved communities and regions.

- The ICT industry and governments should work closely together, along with academic and other educational institutions, to close the gap between the demand for, and **supply of**, **ICT professionals**. Failure to do so will have a detrimental effect on sustainable economic growth.
- The ICT industry and governments should both step up efforts to **engage women in ICT-professions** at large in order to address staff shortages, develop diversity and increase innovation power.
- The ICT industry, the wider business community and governments should work closely together to **raise the level of eSkills of professionals in the public and private sectors**, particularly in SMEs.
- Governments, business and consumers and their organizations should work closely together to **enhance internet access to digital content**, protect creators' rights, encourage simple and legal means of access and promote innovative business models.
- **Global availability of interoperable ICT solutions** will help to advance the above aspirations, promote competition and enhance consumer choice. Governments can lead by example and support interoperable solutions in public services, preferably based on open standards. In the Granada Ministerial Declaration on the European Digital Agenda, Spain 19 April 2010, the EU Ministers have committed to embed innovation and cost effectiveness into eGovernment though the systematic promotion of open standards and interoperable systems.
- Governments, the ICT industry and the wider business sector should jointly examine how to best **protect the critical role that ICT infrastructure and services increasingly play** in the economy and society.

Improving energy efficiency, decreasing energy consumption and reducing greenhouse gases

The current financial and economic crisis, coupled with rising concerns over the health of our planet, tell us that we have to act smarter, greener and faster. ICT as an enabler will have a key role to play in improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gases and increasing sustainability within the ICT sector itself, and even more importantly, in all sectors of society. ICT can enable this change through better monitoring and control, by fostering awareness and triggering new patterns of behavior. It has the capacity, at any moment, to confront organizations and individuals with the full impact of their actions on sustainability. International strategies to tackle climate change need to make full use of ICTs as one of the most powerful tools available that can produce the desired changes without having negative effects on prosperity or individual lifestyles. Action will need to be taken by all stakeholders.

- The ICT industry should lead by example by **improving the energy efficiency of its business processes, products and services** at an average 2% per year between now and 2020, with recognition given to leaders and best practices.
- Governments should lead the way aiming at a **reduction** by 30% of their **carbon footprint of public services** by 2020.
- Stakeholders from both the private and public sectors should work together to **accelerate** the development and **deployment of smart systems**. These include smart energy grids, smart mobility systems, smart buildings, smart governments, smart water systems and smart cities.
- Stakeholders, including consumer organizations, should work together to **increase substantially consumers' awareness** and understanding **of their energy consumption**, and empower them to manage and control this use more efficiently. This could be achieved by making the energy impact of products and services more transparent through internationally comparable energy ratings.

- Governments should collaborate to agree on **global standards** for the **transparency of energy ratings**.
- Authorities should be encouraged to make **energy efficiency** an essential condition in their **procurement policies**.

Significantly improving the quality of life and enhancing trust and confidence

As ICT becomes more pervasive and private and public services are increasingly delivered over the internet, access for all to ICT is becoming a social and economic necessity. The internet must be available and accessible at affordable prices to everyone, including those with disabilities. As many people as possible must become fully digitally literate. Furthermore, high quality healthcare and efficient public services are important factors for a good quality of life across the globe. Intelligent and innovative use of ICT can make healthcare and public services more efficient and more personal. Trust and security are the foundations on which our economic and social lives are built. Use of the internet may be hampered, however, by the lack of confidence and trust among citizens who may feel that their rights are not as well protected as in more traditional forms of communication. Cybercrime, data loss and privacy breaches bring uncertainty and undermine trust and confidence in the virtual world. To address these issues, the following actions are proposed:

- Governments should consider introducing a universal right of access to the internet.
- Governments should support policies that enable fair and effective competition between providers of ICT products and services, with the goal of encouraging high availability and use of these items at affordable prices.
- Governments are encouraged to work closely with the ICT industry and use all the means at their disposal, such as projects, procurement and legislation, to **achieve ICT accessibility for all user groups and communities**, including the elderly and people with disabilities.
- Governments, the ICT industry and other stakeholders should work closely together to develop and implement substantial awareness, education and training programs. These should be incorporated into educational systems to reach both children and adults with the aim of **achieving a globally digitally literate population by 2020**.
- Governments should recognize that public spending on ICT for health can make healthcare more efficient, effective and sustainable. This empowers patients and triggers innovation. They should commit themselves to **fostering the opportunities ICT offers for health** and stimulate **the use of common eHealth standards** and cross-border data exchange.
- The ICT industry should cooperate closely with housing authorities and homecare providers to **empower elderly people to live longer independently** and be active in society. The same attention should be given to the delivery of formal and informal quality care. They should encourage the relevant authorities and insurers to address any administrative or institutional barriers.
- Governments should commit themselves to **transparent government services** and provide online access for citizens and businesses to the relevant information and eGovernment facilities.
- Governments should **involve their citizens**, including young people, who can be considered to be digital natives, in their policy making.
- Governments, working closely with the ICT industry and other stakeholders, should **develop** by 2012 **a charter of citizens' and consumers' rights** and responsibilities in the **digital environment**. This should focus on transparency, trust, security and privacy.

- Governments, businesses and civil society should work closely together to ensure that **trust, security** and **privacy** are as fully safeguarded on the internet as they are in the real world.
- Governments should **agree to** sign the Council of Europe's **Cybercrime Convention**, which entered into force in 2004. Future international agreements on action to combat cybercrime should use this convention as a basis.

Constructively exploiting opportunities from globalization

The internet is a global phenomenon with great local impact. It creates opportunities for all countries and every citizen in the world. However, today, these opportunities are unevenly distributed. To address this imbalance it is necessary to reduce the digital divide between the developing and the developed world. Access to the internet, and to the information and knowledge it contains, needs to be improved. The deployment and diffusion of ICT can also promote pluralism. Governance of the internet needs to be representative for every country in the world.

- Governments should create, in close consultation with the private sector, the appropriate framework to **foster investment in high speed ICT infrastructure** in developing and emerging countries.
- Governments in developed and developing countries, the ICT industry and other stakeholders should work closely together to construct and **implement awareness, education and training programs**. These should be adapted to developing and emerging countries' needs to raise their levels of digital literacy and eSkills.
- The ICT industry is encouraged to develop and bring to the market **ICT products and services that meet the needs of developing countries** and are fit for use in their emerging ICT infrastructures, which are often based on mobile technologies.
- Governments should ensure that the overall **framework of internet governance** continues to evolve in line with the Tunis World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) principles of transparency, multilateralism and democracy.
- Governments should **advance increased internationalization of internet governance** as a whole, especially coordination and management of the domain name system, which should comply with the best governance standards.
- All stakeholders should agree to support the **maintenance and development of the Internet Governance Forum** (IGF) as an open place for meeting, dialogue and exchange of best practices between governments, civil society and the private sector.
- Governments, particularly in developing and emerging countries, should work on, and be helped with, **fast-track appropriate ICT legislation and policies**. These should boost job creation, tackle cybercrime, strengthen cyber security and improve general service delivery to citizens.

Call for Action!

All organizations supporting the Declaration of Amsterdam undertake to participate in at least one major project in the spirit of this Declaration and to report back on its progress. At the 18th World Congress on IT in 2012 in Montreal, Canada, a general revision and overall assessment of what has been achieved can then be carried out.