

Baku Declaration on Transnational-Eurasian Information Super Highway

A digital revolution has just started, resulting in a fundamental transformation towards a knowledge-based society. The potential scale of its social, economic and political impact is unprecedented; its effects are likely to be greater than any previous technological changes, leaving almost no-one untouched. The technological enablers driving this revolution are information superhighways: national infrastructures of convergent communication, information and media technologies. These information superhighways constitute an inter-related combination of information, creativity, technology and people in order to electronically access, create, control and communicate information at any time and any place across the world.

Key stakeholders of this digital revolution can be corporations, organizations or governments which will drive the generation of data, information and knowledge as well as the development of interactive multimedia applications in combination with the information superhighways as a pre-requisite. **We:**

A. are reaffirming the need for legislators, regulators and businesses to build and run global information infrastructures to establish sustainable value-added services such as high quality healthcare, social development, economic progress and strong democracies;

B. are recognizing the requirement to actively work against inequality and a potentially widening gap of a digital society in terms of computer literacy and information availability with relation to communications, computing, consumer electronics and media;

C. as the Participants of the Baku Regional Ministerial Meeting on the **Transnational-Eurasian Information Super Highway**, hereby agree on the following principles and priorities:

- Much of the infrastructure for transnational information superhighway capable of carrying high volumes, as the basis for the information age are already in place throughout countries of the region. Information superhighway may become one of the best opportunities to date for the countries to ensure a foundation for economic growth and positive social change, enabling participation in today's information society and providing tangible benefits to their citizens.

- Applications are an integral component of information superhighway. Information infrastructures and related applications will reach and connect homes, places of work, hospitals, schools, libraries, government institutions and data centers. Such infrastructures will be capable of delivering innovative applications which will radically transform the nature of our society e.g. from the way we work, towards the provision of healthcare or education.

- The prospect of universal access to information and hence the underlying infrastructure, are an integral component of today's information societies. In this context the ability of regulators to ensure equity and fairness in a digital future is increasingly important; but also severely challenged by the speed of technological and global developments in information networks as well as communication and technology companies. Countries will intensify their efforts in future to establish transnational information superhighway and they will resolve arising problems on the basis of mutual respect and cooperation.

D. as the Participants of the Baku Regional Ministerial Meeting on the **Transnational-Eurasian Information Super Highway**, hereby consider necessary the implementation of the following initial steps:

- **sending** the copies of this Declaration, through diplomatic channels, to the concerned governmental institutions of the countries (Bulgaria, China, Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) that not participated at the Regional Ministerial Meeting.

- **establishing** the Task Force consist of seven experts from the participant countries (Republic of **Azerbaijan**, **Georgia**, Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Republic of **Kazakhstan** on voluntary basis) and organizations (UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development – **GAID**, Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications – **RCC** and Fiber Optical Cable System Trans Asia Europe – **TAE**) to co-ordinate the initiative; and **holding** the meetings of the Task Force in Baku, Azerbaijan.

- **requesting** Minister of Communications and Information Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan to be the Focal Point of the initiative during two years;

- **requesting** the Focal Point to draw up the Terms of Reference and Action Plan of the Task Force and to distribute the drafts among the members within one month; as well as to organize the first meeting of the Task Force during next month after having assembled all the feedbacks for approval the Regulations and Action Plan of the Task Force within a month;

- **enabling** the Task Force members to convene quarterly in Baku, Azerbaijan to fulfill the necessary tasks of the initiative; and the Focal Point to call the next meeting of the initiative members;

- **asking** the Republic of Azerbaijan to take the responsibility of the organizing the Meeting of the Task Force in Baku;

- **requesting** the Focal Point to submit the copy of this Declaration to the United Nations Headquarters and **asking** the GAID Secretariat to provide the assistance to include this initiative to the next year's agenda of the UN General Assembly for discussions;

- **asking** the RCC and TAE Administrations to share the information about this initiative with the member administrations and to provide necessary efforts for this initiative to be entirely supported at the plenipotentiary meetings of these organizations;

The Declaration was acknowledged by the representatives of the countries (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, India, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Slovenia, Ukraine and USA) and the executives of the organizations (GAID, RCC and TAE) participated at **the Regional Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Eurasian Super Information Highway held on November 11, 2008 in Baku, Azerbaijan.** The Declaration is advisory and does not claim responsibility.