

CEO REMARKS MARKING WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS) DAY

In the Name of Allah The Most Merciful Most Gracious and peace be upon his most honorable Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Your Excellency Dr. Sharifa bint Khalfan al-Yahiya Esq., Minister of Social Development

The Patron of this event

Your Excellencies the ministers and undersecretaries,
Esteemed guests

Assalam Alikum Wa Rahmat Allah wa Barakatuh

It is such a glorious occasion to be here together to mark WSIS day. Countries from around the world now share celebrating this day under the directives of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The ITU is the United Nations (UN) body specialized in Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Through this day, the ITU aims at reemphasizing the importance of Information technology by and its efforts in enhancing the countries' relentless pursuit of development, advancement and prosperity. This is sought via enabling individuals to digitally communicate and obtain information and services more easily, which save them a lot of time and effort.

The dawn of the third millennium in which we live in is witnessing great knowledge transformations; ICT has become the base for all economic, industrial and thereby social advancement. Therefore, the Sultanate, via Vision 2020, has sought to adopt the National Omani Digital Society Strategy and E-Government.

The Information Technology Authority (ITA) is endeavoring to implement this strategy via e-Oman Initiative, in coordination and cooperation with various government entities. This strategy's objectives focus on enhancing the national gains acquired during the era of the blessed renaissance, building a better future by creating an advanced digital environment in the Sultanate, and

building the capacities in the ICT field, in order to complement the efforts to achieve Oman Digital Society. The efforts make use of the modern digital technology to improve professional performance and gain knowledge and achieve more economic and civilized advancements.

Your Excellencies the ministers and undersecretaries, Esteemed guests

This year's of WSIS Day celebration comes under an important theme, which is: "Connecting those with special needs to ICT," thus affirming that the world information society can not be achieved unless every individual in the society has equal opportunity in gaining digital skills, and benefit from the various e-services, which is one of the basic principles in launching The National Oman Digital Society and e-government.

The plans includes all segments of the society in order to guarantee access to the benefits of digital technology to all citizens, including people with special needs, who are an active element in the society and therefore must be empowered to actively participate in the information society and contribute in the various fields on national work. The experience clearly indicates that many innovators and pioneers who have enriched the humanity with their scientific, artistic and cultural achievements and inventions despite their handicap.

This makes this segment of the society a national fortune worthy of care and support by empowering it to handle IST and encourage them to digitally innovate and create, in order to contribute with everyone in building Oman Digital Society. Based on the above, the ITA, in coordination with specialize associations to put mechanisms in place that assist in activating IT in the lives of the handicapped, and provide them with equal opportunity to engage in the continuous advancement. This highlights the ITA's belief in the importance of solution that help in bridging the digital divide between the different segments of the society.

Your Excellencies the ministers and undersecretaries, Esteemed guests

The previous period has witnessed relentless efforts on various fields to implement the plans and projects on Oman Digital Initiative by focusing on national ICT capacity building. This is done while taking into consideration achieving the international quality standards approved by World Summit on Information as a strategic goal for the world in 2015, to reach to the best applications and specifications to build Oman Digital Society.

The efforts are continuing now to implement the infrastructure for e-Oman, including the unified government network, e-government services portal, - payment portal, national data center and information security center which will, God Willing, contribute in creating an advanced digital environment and better e-services. The ITA is also continuing its efforts related to providing technical support to government entities and cooperating with them regarding enhancing government services provided by the citizens, residents and visitors of the Sultanate.

To this end, it is implementing the civil services employees training project, which will eventually cover the training of 93 thousand civil service employees, from different government entities in advance ICT field. There are also many projects the will be implemented to develop and train the society, spearheaded by the knowledge society centers which will be established in a number of the Sultanates' governorates and regions. These centers will provide distinguished training to the various segments of the society in the field of digital transactions, to enable them to communicate and interact with the different government services.

We are hoping that this will contribute in eradicating digital illiteracy and provide all citizens, with no exceptions, with the skills that will enable them to benefit from modern IT. We are hoping that the cooperation efforts between the ITA and the government entities will, God Willing, be successful in fulfilling the objectives of the national strategy.

Last but not least, we would like to express our gratitude sponsoring and entities and companies:

- Middle East Information Systems Company.
- Gulf Computers Company.
- Oman Oil Company.
- Oman Telecommunications Company.
- Oman Mobile.

May the Lord Bless all of r Efforts

Assalam Alikum Wa Rahmat Allah wa Barakatuh