Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor, let me congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and wish you every success in your work.

Serbia has aligned itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union, yet I would like to take this opportunity to discuss some issues of particular concern for my country.

Mr. Chairman,
Technological revolution transformed the world in which we live. Today, we witness and welcome impressive growth rates in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT). Serbia believes that we should actively take advantage of new technology and improved connectivity to empower people with information on the progress towards these targets.

In line with Article 12 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles, Serbia continues to actively support women’s empowerment in the use of ICT. For the third time, we marked this year International Girls in ICT Day. While this Day seeks to create a global environment that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider careers in the growing field of information and communication technologies (ICTs), we believe that bringing these technologies to women and girls, as well as to poor and other vulnerable groups, has a potential to prevent their marginalization and secure their economic and social empowerment.

Within cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union and with the assistance of its Telecommunication Development Bureau, Serbia will host, in November this year, the Regional Preparatory Meeting for Europe for the World Telecommunication Development Conference to be held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in February next year.

Serbia is also successfully replicating positive experiences in this field, achieved in countries such as India, for instance, and the strong interest of major international companies in investing in Serbia’s ICT sector is encouraging. However, there is still much to be done and we shall continue to work hard in order to achieve our goal of becoming a regional hub for ICT.

Serbia expects that, in addition to securing progress towards the indicators agreed in paragraph 6 of the Geneva Plan of Action, we shall make progress in encouraging people to actively use these technologies as well. We also believe that we have to capture all positive trends of the ongoing revolution in delivering quality education through massive online open courses to all those interested.

Mr. Chairman,

In Europe, we expect that the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) will provide adequate support to each Member State, especially to those States with less developed institutional capacities, when it comes to the implementation phase of the new strategy package, road map and the global goals for intelligent transport systems using ICTs to improve efficiency in transport and freight networks. The ECE should strive to reduce the digital divide in Europe and devote adequate capacities for it.

While the technological revolution holds a great potential for development and poverty eradication, we also have to consider rising privacy and security concerns. The security concerns should bring us together to work jointly in addressing our common threats. However, they should take fully into consideration the privacy concerns and ethical principles for any behaviour that fails to do so, reduces the resources and potential that we need for development efforts.

Mr. Chairman,
In conclusion, Serbia will continue to promote and enhance cooperation with other Member States in order to improve communication for development overall. This cooperation will include the establishment of policies for multi-stakeholder dialogue, including with community members, so as to strengthen upstream policy dialogue and overall national development processes, including issues such as expanding access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion.

From the United Nations system, we expect to strengthen its efforts to address the remaining challenges ahead of the World Summit on Information Society +10 (WSIS+10), particularly those ones which are related to ensuring the inclusiveness of the information society.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.