

Setting a global vision for the Information Society

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The United Nations hosted a global conference in Geneva during December 2003, concluding the first part of a major initiative entitled the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

The Summit addresses a number of themes, including how information and communication technologies can contribute to achievement of the UN Millennium Development goals. It also aims to deliver a global economic stimulus by ensuring that political leaders recognize the need for an appropriate framework that:

- reduces existing barriers to global transactions
- respects the needs of developing countries
- ensures broad participation in decision-making
- adapts existing policies to the on-line environment.

The UN has called on global leaders to take steps to ensure that the Information Society is built on a secure foundation, including:

- necessary agreements to promote and safeguard security of networks
- addressing citizen concerns on privacy, authenticity and linguistic diversity in the on-line world
- curbing criminal and fraudulent use of networks.

The second part of the process follows the Geneva meeting, leading to a further Summit in Tunis in November 2005.

The Summit is focusing the attention of global political and business leaders on the key opportunities and challenges offered by ICT, particularly within the developing world. With tourism playing such a vital role in a growing number of these countries' economies, the outcome of this three year project should be of interest to strategic planners in the hotels sector across EMEA.

For full details of the World Summit on the Information Society, go to www.wsis.org.