

**MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER SYED YUSUF RAZA GILANI ON THE WORLD
TELECOMMUNICATION & INFORMATION SOCIETY DAY 17TH MAY 2010**

In the ecosystem of Information Society, Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs) are playing its catalytic role. The importance of ICTs lies in its ability to create greater access to resources in time-critical situations. The success stories of progressing nations show that when ICTs are placed in an enabling environment and adapted to the needs of those who use them, they can improve livelihoods. As these innovations grow in importance, so, too, does the need to bridge the digital divide for betterment of life and disaster management.

The importance of telecommunications was on display after the earthquake which devastated northern areas Pakistan and most recently in Haiti, especially during the reconstruction phase. ICTs are becoming a catalyst for development and have the ability to raze geographical, social, economic and cultural barriers. The theme of this year's observance, "Better Cit, Better Life with ICTs, " is a reminder that there is a need to take initiatives aimed at achieving greener, safer, healthier, prosperous, inclusive and well-managed cities backed by progressive and innovative policies which treat cities backed by progressive and innovative policies which treat cities and electronic technologies in parallel.

Connectivity and informational capacity will determine wealth and power in our time. The poverty will not just be measured by income or assets but also by the ability to create processes receive and disseminate information. Government of Pakistan (GoP) policies and public-private joint initiatives for promotion of innovation and ICTs advancement under the umbrella of National ICT R&D Fund and Universal Service Fund will serve to reduce the economic gap between technological "haves and have not's". The fiber optic connectivity among districts of Pakistan wills serve as digital highways leading towards prosperous Pakistan. National ICT R&D Fund Company has to inculcate the innovative culture of R&D in ICT arena.

Internationally, we need to strengthen ties with multilateral agencies like International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to further promote ICTs; particularly as a means of leveraging the social capital especially for education, health, transportation, commerce, good governance and emergency communications.

On this day, I would like to encourage members of the society and decision makers at the national and local government levels, to do a lot more advocacy to encourage institutions and organizations to incorporate and prioritize ICTs into their operational and development plans in line with the far-reaching ITU initiatives.