

**Speech by Dr. Elizabeth Quat,  
President, Internet Professional Association  
at the Opening Ceremony of Global ICT Summit 2005  
at Bahrain on 14 May 2005**

Minister Dr. Hassan Fakhro, Mr. Admed Al Hujairy, Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and warm greetings to all of you on behalf of the  
delegation from Hong Kong.

1. First of all, I would like to thank the Bahrain Ministry of Commerce  
and Bahrain Internet Society for inviting Internet Professionals Association  
(iProA) of Hong Kong to co-organize the second Global ICT Summit in  
Bahrain. We are extremely grateful and excited for this opportunity to share  
and exchange views and experience with our old and new friends in the great  
Kingdom of Bahrain.

2. This is my third visit to Bahrain, and all three visits were in 2005. I was  
here in March for the Bahrain e-Content Award judging. I was very impressed

by the outstanding quality of the awarded projects as well as by the professionalism and expert knowledge of the penal judges. I have experienced my first Formula One race in Bahrain last month, I was amazed by the event that fully demonstrated the excellent management and organization power of this young and energetic country.

3. Bahrain is no stranger to the Hong Kong financial sectors, but quite new to the Hong Kong ICT industry. There are many similarities between Bahrain and Hong Kong. We are both relatively small economy but a financial centre of the region that offering huge business potential. Hong Kong is the gateway to one of the biggest markets - China, and Bahrain is positioned as the gateway to the booming Middle East Market.

4. Last year during the Global ICT Summit 2004 held in Cyberport Hong Kong, we have signed a MOU with the Bahrain Internet Society on ICT co-operation. The MOU enabled us to strengthen our ties, to build business network, create synergy, and establish a mutually beneficial relationship for driving ICT development. This Summit in Bahrain is the first major event held after the signing of the MOU and offers us great opportunity to learn from each other's best practices, experience and successes. I look forward to

seeing more partnership arrangement, technology exchanges and more frequent visits by both sides in the near future.

5. Another initiative between us is to work together in bridging the Digital Divide and promoting the best practices in e-Usability and Accessibility, which is also one of the missions of iProA. iProA launched the Web Care Campaign in Hong Kong in 2001 and our effort has delivered visible and encouraging results. There are more than 10,000 volunteers participated in the campaign and we have successfully aroused public awareness on the issue as well as encouraged the government and private sector in building no barriers web sites. This year, we have extended our effort to bridging the digital divide in SME by inviting stakeholders from public and private sectors to join hand in launching the SME Entrepreneur Consortium. With our experience in successfully organizing the campaign in Hong Kong, we are happy to work with our Bahrain partners in launching the Bahrain Web Care Campaign during this Summit.

6. With our past successes as an enterport and a manufacturing base, Hong Kong has been undergoing structural transformation to become a knowledge-based economy and a hub for technological development.

7. According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Hong Kong was second in the world after Korea in terms of per capita broadband penetration: 62% of our households are using broadband, and virtually all commercial and residential buildings, and schools are covered by broadband. Our mobile penetration rate stands at 118%, one of the highest in the world. We have a PC penetration rate of 71% and Internet penetration rate of 65% in our households. In the 2005 e-Readiness rankings released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) last month, Hong Kong was ranked first in Asia Pacific and tied with Finland ranking sixth in the world. Hong Kong is one of the earliest in launching 3G services, in respect of the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology, Hong Kong is keeping in the forefront of technology development and adoption. More than 11 million contact-less cards are being used as electronic cash in our city with a population of less than 7 million. The Octopus card has extended its multi-purpose tentacles. It is now accepted on public transport, in convenience stores and many retail outlets. The Hong Kong International Airport also plans to launch an RFID based baggage management system this year.

8. Hong Kong offers the best gateway for Bahrain and Middle East companies seeking to explore the China market. Our affinity with the

Mainland, language capability and rich experience in doing business there make us the best launching pad for entering the significant China Market. The Greater Pearl River Delta (PRD) Region which includes Hong Kong and Macau has a total population of 50 million, with a combined GDP of USD302 billion, is the most prosperous region of Mainland China with huge market potentials. It is also the most popular destination for foreign direct investment in China. Hong Kong provides a favourable and familiar operating environment for our foreign investors. We have a judicial system based on common law, an efficient financial system that permits the free flow of capital, as well as a clean and efficient government that is business-friendly.

9. For foreign companies interested in expanding into the vast Mainland China, the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> China Internet Conference to be held in Beijing in 1-3 Sept 2005 and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Telecom World to be held in Hong Kong in 2006 will offer them golden opportunities. The China Internet Conference is co-organized by the Internet Society of China and Internet Professionals Association. Known as one of the most important ICT conferences in China, last year, more than 3,000 major players from the China ICT industry have participated. This year, this event, for the very first time, will include an International Forum and has invited speakers

and delegations to participate. We have extended our invitation to the Bahrain Ministry of Commerce and Bahrain Internet Society and we are looking forward to welcoming you all in Beijing. In December 2006, the ITU Telecom World, which is commonly known as the “Olympics in telecommunications” will be held in Hong Kong, the very first time outside ITU’s home base in Geneva. We expect that around 150 key government representatives, and over 70,000 trade visitors from around the world will take part in this event. I understand that the marketing team of the ITU Telecom World 2006 is discussing this with Bahrain and I look forward to meeting many of our friends there.

10. The Global ICT Summit 2005 can only be materialized with the tremendous help from all of our organizing parties and, most importantly, the generosity of the sponsors. I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to our sponsors for their contributions. And once again, many thanks to all the members of the local organizing committee for their effort. And thank you to all of you for joining the Summit.

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