



**Remarks by Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze  
United Nations Under-Secretary-General  
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva  
Inauguration of “Diplomacy Island” in “Second Life”**

**Geneva Centre for Security Policy (WMO Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor)  
Tuesday, 22 May 2007, at 18:30**

**Mr. Minister  
Ambassador Fust  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

**It is a pleasure to be with you at the inauguration of “Diplomacy Island” in “Second Life”. I will admit that the thought of “virtual diplomacy” is a little disconcerting for someone who has spent an entire working life in “real life” diplomacy. I am therefore glad to see so many “real” colleagues here, because today’s event may indeed take place in cyberspace, but the potential benefits of increased, coordinated and concerted use of information and communication technologies – ICTs – are very real.**

**To me, this launch is an opportunity to focus attention on the important role that ICTs can play in development and in realizing the Millennium Development Goals – our common vision a better future. ICTs can help generate income by linking**

producers and markets, it can create additional employment opportunities, and help raise educational standards. The key is participation by citizens themselves. The United Nations is working with all stakeholders – Governments, other international organizations, civil society and the private sector – to help harness this potential of ICTs for all. The United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development are some of the central instruments.

### Dear Friends:

The name of this new virtual diplomatic hub is – I find – almost a little misleading. Because, the objective of “Diplomacy Island” is not to be distinct and set apart, but to link up on many levels. It is a tool for connecting diplomats, for bringing the world of diplomacy to a wider audience, for raising awareness of individual countries and of their collective concerns. The power of diplomacy – whether it is real or virtual – is exactly its ability to build bridges – between countries, between communities and between people. The United Nations is itself one of the platforms where such diplomatic interaction takes place, and where understanding and respect are built. “Diplomacy Island” provides an additional avenue for

**engagement and exchange, which should be welcomed.**

**“Diplomacy Island” highlights how cyberspace can be used to broaden the knowledge of particular countries beyond their regions. When embraced and used appropriately, the web does not necessarily undermine identities, but can be employed as an instrument for preserving and propagating cultures and traditions.**

**In conclusion, allow me to commend the efforts of our host country in promoting the use of ICTs for development and for diplomacy. Switzerland’s work – not to mention Ambassador Fust’s personal interest and drive in this regard – are a demonstration of a strong commitment to multilateral diplomacy and multi-stakeholder collaboration.**

**For many people, new technologies hold both perils and promise. I hope that this creative use of the Internet and the opportunities that it presents will show that the promise outweighs the perils.**

**Thank you very much.**