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ENGLISH only

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Internet is the focus of today's session. The Internet is on one hand a marvellous means of free expression – to NGO's and to individuals.

On the other hand the Internet can be used as a one-way communication by authoritarian regimes by blocking sites with critical opinions.

Kazakhstan is a typical example.

- **The site of the newspaper Respublika is blocked.**
- **The site of the TV channel K+ is blocked.**
- **The platform Google Blogger is blocked.**

These are only a few examples.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In today's work programme several questions are asked. I will answer two of them – I myself being a former editor.

FIRST: What measures can be provided by governments to support independence of new media? My answer is: Don't interfere, let new media prosper!

SECOND: How to protect privacy? My answer is: Don't overemphasize privacy! It might hamper transparency in the society.

I want to tell you: in Sweden, since nearly 250 years, the rule is:

Everything is publicly available which is not explicitly forbidden.

Unfortunately, in most countries the opposite is true. Kazakhstan is among the worst.

This morning we heard at the Civil Forum that democracy in Kazakhstan is one of the best in the OSCE region. I strongly object!