ICFTU, IFJ, UNI, EI on behalf of Global Union Group.

World Summit On The Information Society
PrepCom 2, Geneva, February 2003

Global Unions Action Points[1]

The Declaration and Action Plan of the World Summit must adopt principles that ensure the information society is based on social inclusivity, equality of opportunity, and cultural diversity. The future cannot be left simply to market forces to shape. The questions of social development and poverty eradication must be among the core objectives of the Summit.

In particular, the international trade union movement calls for:

1. Safe and healthy, secure and fair working conditions, built on principles of social justice and gender equality, to be enjoyed by all workers in the information society.

2. Recognition and application of fundamental rights and core labour standards of all workers in the information society, the right to privacy and to free access to the intranet of the enterprises for workers, workers' representatives and trade unions.

3. The reinforcement of dialogue between trade unions, employers and government to facilitate change in response to economic developments associated with the spread of the information society. The forging of social partnership is also vital in effectively mobilising information and communication technologies (ICTs) as development tools.

4. Actions to confront the digital and social divide to combat the negative social effects of the implementation of new information technologies: only through the creation of decent jobs, the provision of primary education and lifelong learning, the improvement of health services and the tackling of gender inequalities poverty can be eradicated. In order to achieve the UN millennium goals the adoption of employment-friendly, inclusive and productive information technology strategies is required.

5. Computer literacy and education for all are vital elements of the information society. Access to information can only be meaningful if illiteracy is eradicated. At the same time the information society must enhance the provision of quality education through lifelong learning (primary, secondary, tertiary education, in-service education and other forms of education) which provides for the ability to critically assess and evaluate information.

6. Guaranteeing people's right of access to information through freedom of information laws in all member states of the United Nations. Laws to guarantee access to basic information and communication services must be adopted by all states. Moreover, by taking advantage of ICTs, all levels and all sectors of government should actively pursue policies to achieve greater transparency for citizens.

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[1] This statement has been drafted by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Union Network International (UNI) and Education International (EI), on behalf of the Global Unions group, which includes the ICFTU, the Global Union Federations (GUFs) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD; The Global Union Federations comprise UNI, IFBWW, IUF, IMF, PSI, EI, ITGLWF, IFJ, ITF, ICEM and IAEA.

7. Promoting policies to build up the infrastructure of the information society by ensuring the responsible re-investment of telecommunications profits made in developing countries to benefit those countries, whether that re-investment comes from the public or the private sector.

8. <u>Promoting the value of partnership</u> with representatives of the trade union movement at all levels (international, regional, national, local, and enterprise level) in working to bridge the digital divide. Trade unions are both an important sector of civil society, and a core element of global industry. Labour, together with civil society, business and governments have to create a common movement to overcome the social and the digital divide.

9. <u>The introduction of information technology must strengthen, and not undermine, democracy, public infrastructure and public service</u>. Public services should increasingly take advantage of ICTs to provide effective public services, and for this process they are increasingly reliant on information technology. The core data, infrastructure and systems supporting these services should not be transferred out of the hands of democratically accountable agencies into the hands of an unaccountable private sector. Open technical standards, including through the open-source software movement, can help ensure that this does not happen.

10. <u>Uniform legal protection of communications privacy</u> is needed to avoid interference and monitoring of Internet traffic and personal communications. For exceptional cases at the workplace regulations and collectively negotiated agreements are required to determine who can carry out the monitoring and under which conditions. Where information services are subject to content rules they must not be intrusive, nor go beyond existing laws. Editorial independence of media professionals and creators must be protected.

11. <u>Actions to promote pluralism, minority culture and diversity of opinion</u>, through respect for freedom of expression, respect for public service values in information services, regulations to avoid monopolistic positions and development programmes to promote local content services as well as access to basic communications technologies.

12. <u>Commitment to universal service principles</u> in broadband connectivity and adequate regulatory structures for the information society that defend creators' rights and oppose legal barriers to access and copying of information, strengthen democracy, promote quality and tolerance and provide for the regulated development of electronic business with the aim of generating long-term employment and improved living standards.

This statement of issues to be included in the Declaration and Action Plan embraces the statements and objectives prepared by Global Unions for the WSIS.

<u>Geneva, 25 February 2003</u>

For more information, see http://www.global-unions.org/wsis