

GLOCOM, on behalf of Japan NGO Coordination Committee for WSIS

Comments from Japan NGO Coordination Committee for WSIS
May 31, 2003

Please accept these comments and proposed alterations prepared by the Japan NGO Coordination Committee for the WSIS working documents for the Draft Declaration of Principles and Draft Action Plan.

The Japan NGO Coordination Committee is an ad hoc committee of NGOs interested in participating the WSIS process in Japan, most of the members also actively participated the Asia Pacific regional preparatory meeting held in January in Tokyo. The Japan NGO Coordination Committee has been conducting consultations on the working documents.

**Members of the committee that are NGOs accredited for the WSIS PrepCom process are underlined below:*

The members who participated include:

Kenji Saga (Chairman of Study Group on the Digital Divide issue, The Japan Society of Information and Communication Research)

Takeo Nobusawa (BHN Association)

Eiji Hayashi (BHN Association)

Kouichirou Shinohara (BHN Association)

Shiro Harada (University of Tokyo)

Hisako Fujimoto (Shimin Digital Solutions)

Tadahisa Hamada (JCAFE)

Satomi Oku (United Nations Student Association of Japan)

Kengo Yashima (United Nations Student Association of Japan)

Motohiko Nagaoka (Area Information Associates)

Yoshiharu Shimamoto (Center of the International Cooperation for Computerization)

Nobuo Sakiyama (Japan Chapter of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility)

Izumi Aizu (GLOCOM)

Secretariat: GLOCOM (Center for Global Communications, International University of Japan), Contact: Izumi Aizu izumi@anr.org

A. On Draft Declaration of Principles

Addition to Section A

Comment 1: We believe that the current draft does not mention enough about the positive role of Information and Communication for the Information Society, especially in the context of the war in Iraq and post conflict situations and therefore we like to propose to add the following new item.

[New and modified sentences are indicated with underlines.]

3. We recognize that knowledge, information and communication play a critical role in building and maintaining world peace by enabling the affordable and timely dissemination and sharing of information that can promote, expand and enforce mutual interaction, understanding and trust among different peoples, communities, nations and states over geographical distance.

We also confirm that in the event of natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, or in the event of wars and conflict situations, knowledge, information and communication are a vital means to prevent or minimize possible harm, support humanitarian emergency and rescue activities, and promote rehabilitation and restoration after such disasters or in post-conflict situations.

Reorganizing Section B

Comment 2: Section B is somewhat confusing in terms of the structure, and we propose to re-write the whole section. We propose to reorganize current paragraphs # 7 to # 11 into new paragraphs #7 and #8 with itemized sentences as follows: The new paragraph #7 tries to articulate the ideal state of Information Society, especially claiming the use of the concept “vernacular” to emphasize and represent more bottom-up, community based approach.

We use parts of the existing six sentences in the new paragraph #8 from the old paragraph # 10, and added four new items using some phrases from the previous paragraph #9 and 11.

B. We declare our Common Vision of the Information Society:

7. What we seek to build is an Organic, Inclusive, Equitable and Vernacular Information Society.

- This is an Organic Information Society where all the members are connected with and interdependent on each other regardless of the physical distance between them thanks to globally extended communication networks. Hardships for some are problems for the whole global society.

- This is an Inclusive Information Society where all persons, without distinction of any kind, are empowered freely to create, receive, share and utilize information and

knowledge, in any media and regardless of frontiers, as well as to participate in its governance.

- This is an Equitable Information Society where enhanced knowledge, information and communication contribute to alleviate existing inequalities including poverty and hunger and improve quality of life for all persons, as well as to achieve sustainable economic and social development.

- This is a Vernacular Information Society that originates from the unique character of each component community. The immediate goals or appropriate methods for communities are not uniform, and are determined based on communal initiatives. This society respects and is energized by cultural and linguistic diversity.

8. The essential requirements for the development of an Organic, Inclusive, Equitable and Vernacular Information Society include:

- The respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. Notably the right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the right to hold opinions without interference and seek to, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers in accordance with article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to unhindered access by individuals to communication media and information sources,
- The commitment to democracy and good governance as well as the existence, in accordance with the legal system of each country, of independent, pluralistic and free mass and other communication media in their various forms, as an important means of fostering public information, societal development and social cohesion.
- The governance based on the participation of all the people concerned, especially those from marginalized regions and sectors of society.
 - The highly-developed ICT networks, equitable and ubiquitous access to information, appropriate content in accessible formats, effective communication and appropriate use that enable all the people to achieve their full potential.
- The adherence to international undertakings with respect to peace and security, sustainable development, equality, solidarity, tolerance, human dignity, economic progress, and the protection of the environment and building of new values, trust and norms with respect to the use of ICTs.
- The worldwide commitment to bridging the digital divide, especially supporting the prompt introduction of appropriate and vernacular ICTs as well as building related literacy, that fit the actual economic, social, cultural, linguistic and educational conditions and needs of peoples
- Achieving the Millennium Development Goals of combating poverty and hunger, eliminating illiteracy, reducing infant mortality, improving the status of women, improving maternal health, combating disease and promoting environmental sustainability.
- The building of an environment that inspires confidence and trust in using ICTs, and ensures security of networks and information, in particular the protection of privacy.
- Ensuring the adequate development of human capacity in order to be able to fully exploit the benefits that ICTs and building public awareness on the capabilities of ICTs

to improve the lives of people by circumventing traditional obstacles like distance and time.

- The nurturing of creativity and support for the flourishing of free flow of a multiplicity of ideas from a diversity of sources, recognizing cultural identity in all its variety, linguistic diversity, and multilingualism as well as the creating favorable conditions for the production, processing, dissemination and protection of local content.

Comment 3: Modify the current paragraph #14 with underlined additions as follows:

14. Empowerment and inclusion are fundamental characteristics and objectives of the Information Society. Accordingly, special attention must be made to:

- The marginalized, including migrants and refugees, unemployed, underprivileged including homeless, street children and victims of natural disasters and military conflicts, and disenfranchised peoples.
- The vulnerable, including children and the elderly, the disabled, and those with special needs
- Indigenous peoples and communities

Comment 4 We propose to add the following underlined sentences into the current paragraph # 41.

41. **Policy-making and national strategies:** Strengthening the policy-making capacity in the area of ICTs to enhance national and regional ICT policy-making processes and institutions is of utmost importance. ICTs will advance development if related efforts and programmes are integrated in national development strategies.

By ensuring the participation of all affected people in the planning and decision-making process (of objectives, means, process evaluation, system) and enforcement to a national e-Strategy and an action plan, these national e-Strategies can contribute to the interests of all nations and all the peoples of the world.

Comment 5 We propose to add the following underlined sentences into the current paragraph # 42.

42. **Standardization:** Standardization is one of the essential building blocks of the Information Society. International policy dialogue at global, regional and sub-regional levels should promote the identification and application of interoperable standards, the transfer of know-how and the provision of technical assistance. The development and use of open standards that allow for cultural diversity, established through legitimate procedures securing enough participation of all the parties concerned, especially those from developing countries and marginalized sectors, are particularly important. In this regard the increased use of open-source software can contribute greatly to increasing access and to adding to the diversity of choice of software for consumers.

Comment 6 We propose to add the following underlined sentences into the current

paragraph # 44.

The term “Internet governance” is vague and misleading and there is potential expansion of its coverage other than management of domain names and IP addresses. We also believe that the roles of state and its governments should be limited to minimum and the private sector self-regulatory system of current ICANN with participation of many governments should be maintained and supported instead of increasing the governments’ role.

"44. **Management of Internet names and addresses:** The management of Internet's unique identifier systems must occur through open and transparent means, supporting private sector-led industry self-regulation, while taking into account the needs of the public sector and civil society, and respecting multilingualism. To ensure the global interoperability, stability and security of the Internet, the coordination responsibility for root servers, domain names, and Internet Protocol (IP) address assignment should rest with a private sector organization operating in the global public interest. The policy authority for country code top-level-domain names (ccTLDs) should be coordinated at the global level and should be the responsibility of the government or public authority and Internet communities in those countries, regions or territories."

On Draft Action Plan

Comment 7: We propose to add the following underlined sentence to the current paragraph #30.

30. Standardization: The development of the Information Society must be based on platforms of internationally interoperable technical standards, accessible for all, and technological innovation of ICTs, as well as systems to promote the exchange of knowledge at global, regional and sub-regional levels, through any media. Considering the importance and binding nature of such standards, concrete procedures must be established and followed in all standards-making bodies to secure enough participation of all the parties concerned, especially those from developing countries and marginalized sectors, and to allow for cultural diversity.

Comment 8. We propose to add and modify the following underlined phrases and sentence to the current paragraph #33.

33. **Management of Internet names and addresses:** The open and transparent coordination of the Internet shall constitute the basis for the development of a global culture of cyber-security. A private sector organization operating in the global public interest in a democratic and transparent manner, shall preserve and enhance the operational stability, reliability, security, and global interoperability of the Internet's unique identifier systems.

END

