SchoolNetAfrica and other accredited NGOs
on behalf of the WSIS Gender Caucus

Response to the Declaration of Principles and Action Points prepared by the WSIS Secretariat

Input from WSIS-Gender Caucus

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31 May 2003

Dear Pierre Gagne, Executive Director WSIS and Yoshio Utsumi, Secretary General of ITU

On behalf of the WSIS Gender Caucus - a multi-stakeholder group consisting of women and men from national governments, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the United Nations system- we are pleased to contribute with this response to the working drafts of redaction of the Declaration of Principles and Action Plan for the upcoming of the WSIS process. World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

The contribution takes as a starting point the importance of aligning the preparatory process and outcomes of WSIS with the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as stated in section 1 point 3 of the Draft Declaration of Principles. The importance of this alignment has been also been reiteratively highlighted by the United Nations ICT Task Force.

The WSIS-GC, formed during the Bamako regional meeting, has consistently highlighted the need for During the PrepCom 1 and PrepCom 2 the WSIS-GC has been working towards the inclusion of gender equality concerns and targets in in every aspect of the the WSIS process and its outcomes , from policy and planning for action to monitoring and evaluation.

Some of the actions that the The WSIS-GC urges all stakeholders to ensure that there is: would like to accomplish through the WSIS process are:

- Acknowledgement of gender equality and women's rights as a cross-cutting principle [have we suggested language???

- Inclusion of women as leaders and decision-makers in all planning processes for the Summit and recognition that women's perspectives can make a significant contribution to aligning the Summit with the Millennium Development Goals;

- Facilitation and encouragement of women as members of national delegations and representatives of civil society and business by setting targets for delegations to include at least 30% women including gender and ICT experts;

- Inclusion in the theme of applications --design of ICT projects which take women's needs into account, for example by developing technology solutions suited to rural women, women in conflict areas, and applications that assist with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. [have we included this language]

- Development of projects that will collect and, analyze, appropriate gender specific data and reporting mechanisms to evaluate and monitor the impact of ICT developments on women and girls; and

- Implementation of an information dissemination campaign that includes a wide range of media such as radio, drama and print and variety of languages.

While there has been consideration given to We are pleased to acknowledge the mention that gender issues of ssome of these issues has in the draft Declaration of Principles and Action Points, there are . In spite of that, this contribution makes specific suggestions about areas where the Declaration and Action Plan can be strengthened to take account of gender issues deserve a the capital role that gender equality and women's rights play in the creation of and recognition for a successful implementation of an Information Society which facilitates human development.

Sincerely

On behalf of WSIS Gender Caucus
Rosario Gracia-Luque

 Draft declaration of Principles

Based on discussions in the Working Group of Sub-Committee 2
(DT-2 revised)
[[NOTE: the whole text of this Draft Declaration is in square brackets]]

Section I

A. *Building the Information Society: a new global challenge in the new Millennium*

1. **We the representatives of the peoples of the world**, assembled at Geneva from 10-12 December 2003 for the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, declare our common desire and commitment to build a new kind of society, the Information Society, premised on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in which new technologies, in particular information and communications technologies (ICTs) become an essential tool, accessible to all, for the attainment of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world based upon our common humanity in all its diversity.

2. **We recognize** that knowledge, information and communication are at the core of human progress, endeavour, and well-being and that, although the dramatic increase in the volume, speed and ubiquity of information flows, which has been made possible through new information and communication technologies, have already brought about profound changes in peoples lives, and are creating enormous new opportunities, they have yet to benefit the vast majority of the peoples of the world.

3. **We recall** our common resolve as reflected in the Millennium Declaration to promote democracy and respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development and re-iterate our commitment to sustainable development.

4. **We are convinced** that the information and communication revolution is still in its infancy, and the untapped potential of ICTs to improve productivity and quality of life is a serious issue for all of us, particularly for the majority of the peoples of the world who live in developing countries and countries with economies in transition who risk being left behind and further marginalized.

5. **We are fully aware** that our individual and collective ability to create and share knowledge has become a driving force in shaping our future, and that concrete action and global commitment are now required; to ensure that these new technologies accelerate the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals that we set for ourselves at the Millennium Summit.

6. **Faced** with complex and ever-evolving challenges, all of us; governments, the private sector and civil society, have challenges that require new forms of solidarity and cooperation and new or increased roles and responsibilities.

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

7. The Information Society that we seek to build is one which is inclusive, 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.

8. [[**WSIS-GC**]] The Information Society should be people-centered, with citizens and communities at its core, and be at the service of humankind. It should be an environment where information and knowledge are created, shared, disseminated and utilized by all sectors of the population, for their economic, social, cultural and political development.

9. [[**WSIS-GC**]]The Information Society is a new and higher form of social organization, where highly-developed ICT networks, equitable and ubiquitous access to information, safe and secure systems, appropriate content in accessible and multimodal formats and effective communication must enable all

the people to achieve their full potential, promote sustainable economic and social development, improve quality of life and alleviate poverty and hunger.

10. The essential requirements for the development of an equitable 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 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 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 favourable conditions for the production, processing, dissemination and protection of local content.

11. The Information Society must respond to the additional development challenges posed by the digital divide and help to achieve 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.

C. An information Society for all: key principles

12. The Information Society must serve the interests of all nations, in a manner that secures the fair, balanced and harmonious development of all the people of the world. Most particularly, the interests of the developing and least developed countries (LDCs), Smaller Islands Developing States (SIDS), economies in transitions and post-conflict countries, should be addressed, taking into account the unique geographic features and demographic diversity of nations and regions.

13. The Information Society must be oriented towards eliminating existing socio-economic differences in our societies, averting the emergence of new forms of exclusion and becoming a positive force for all of the world's people by helping to reduce the disparities between and within countries.

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

    - The marginalized, including migrants and refugees, unemployed, underprivileged and disenfranchised peoples.

    - The vulnerable, including children and the elderly, the disabled, and those with special needs.

    - Indigenous peoples and communities.

15. [{**WSIS-GC**}]Unequal power relations and other social and cultural aspects have contributed to differential access, participation, control over and access to resources and status for men and women. More attention must be given to overcoming these constraints and ensuring that women can equally benefit from the increased use of ICTs for empowering themselves by full participation in shaping political, economic and social development and improving their lives.

16. Young people constitute the majority of the world's population, and are leading creators and adopters of ICTs. Yet too many of them, especially those in developing countries, remain disadvantaged and disconnected. More and special attention must be given to empower young people as learners, the future workforce, and citizens with special needs.

1) Information and communication infrastructure

17. {{**WSIS-GC**}} Universal, ubiquitous, multimodal and affordable access to ICTs must be an objective of all stakeholders involved in building the Information Society.

18. **Building the infrastructure**: A well-developed and easily-accessed and affordable information and communication network infrastructure is essential for the social and economic progress of countries, and the well-being of all citizens and communities. The improvement of connectivity is of special importance in this respect.

19. **Community access points**: Public access from community centres such as post offices, libraries, and schools, provides an effective means for promoting universal access in particular in rural and remote areas and poor urban areas.

20. **Measuring and mapping the Information Society:** Indicators are essential to measure the evolution of the Information Society, more particularly the needs and performance of developing countries and their particular conditions. Targets should also be set to benchmark the penetration of ICTs services within communities at urban and rural levels.

2) Access to information and knowledge

21. {{**WSIS-GC**}} The right to communicate, the right to participate in the design and the right for citizens to access information are fundamental to the Information Society.

22. {{**WSIS-GC**}} **Access to knowledge**: Individuals and organisations and communities should benefit from access to information, knowledge and ideas. The sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development can be enhanced by ensuring equitable access to information for educational, scientific, economic, social, political and cultural activities.

23. {{**WSIS-GC**}} **Access to public domain information**: A vibrant and rich public domain is an essential element for the growth of the Information Society. Information in the public domain must be easily accessible, manipulable and tailored to user's needs.

24. **Open standards and open source**: Open standards and open source software are basic elements in the development of a more affordable access to ICTs.

25. **Barriers**: Barriers to equitable access result from differences in education and literacy levels, gender, age, income and connectivity, as well as from a lack of user training and cultural and linguistic constraints and particular conditions of access to the relevant technology. ICTs can also be used in order to overcome these and other barriers in society.

26. **Information flows**: A better balance of the information flows should be sought in building the Information Society.

3) The role of governme nts, the business sector and civil society in the promotion of ICTs for development

27. All partners—public, private sector and civil society organizations—have a stake in the development of information and communications and should be fully involved in decision making at the local, national, regional and international levels. Governments should work in close coordination with private enterprise and civil society.

28. **ICTs manufacturing capabilities**: It is essential for governments to encourage technology transfer and investment, including venture capital, in the creation of national and regional ICT production facilities, research and development (R&D), incubation schemes and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Most developing countries are lagging behind in this respect.

29. **Demand-driven applications**: Growth in the demand for applications (such as e-government, e-learning, e-health and e-business) will create a favourable environment for the private sector to invest in the development of new services.

{{**WSIS-GC**}} **New point added: Public and private sector should provide a safe environment in which citizens can make effective transactions**. Likewise, there must be some limitation in place to ensure that

the information collated by the Public and private sector does not go against human rights that every citizen is entitled to.

4) Capacity building

30. [{WSIS-GC}] All people must be enabled to acquire the necessary skills in order to participate actively and effectively in, and understand, the Information Society and knowledge economy thus benefiting fully from the possibilities it offers. Special attention must be paid to training of trainers as well as building the institutional capacities to collect, organize, store and share information and knowledge. Special attention must be also paid to the design of the training programmes by ensuring that they do not reproduce current unequalities and stereotypes.

31. **ICTs for education**: The use of ICTs for education and human resource development, including ICT literacy, should be promoted, with special reference to the requirements of people with disabilities.

32. **Capacity building to enable people to benefit from the opportunities provided by ICTs:** Individuals should be engaged in defining their own needs and in the development of programmes to meet those needs. Technological change requires life-long learning and continuous training by all. Public policy should take into account inequalities in access to quality education and training, particularly in the case of vulnerable groups and underserved or remote areas.

33. [{WSIS-GC}] **Training ICT specialists**: The increasing demand for a wide range of ICTs specialists at all levels must be addressed. This ICTs specialists resource bank must promote the dialogue between experts in a multidisciplinary environment integrating the diversity of races, gender, ethnicities, geographical location and language.

5) Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

34. An adequately developed infrastructure is a precondition for secure and reliable access to information by all stakeholders, and for the upgrading of relevant services.

35. **Secure and reliable infrastructure**: To realise the full benefits of ICTs, networks and information systems must be sufficiently robust to prevent, detect and to respond appropriately to security incidents. However, effective security of information systems is not merely a matter of government and law enforcement practices, nor of technology. A global culture of cyber-security needs to be developed (UNGA Resolution 57/295, of 20 December 2002).

36. **Role of stakeholders**: Governments must promote awareness in their societies of cyber security risks and seek to strengthen co-operation with the private sector and civil society to prevent the use of information resources or technologies for criminal or terrorist purposes, so as to build confidence and trust in the use of ICTs and the Information Society. The community and the family also have a special role to play in this regard.

37. **International cooperation**: International, regional and national efforts to improve ICT security, in both civil and military fields, must be coordinated, taking into consideration the importance of secure infrastructure and data flow, in concordance with international standards and guidelines.

6) Enabling environment

38. The existence of a supportive and predictable policy, legal and regulatory framework is an important prerequisite for enhancing trust in the development of the Information Society.

39. **Good governance:** The Information Society must support participative democracy, transparency, and accountability, at all times upholding the principle of legality. Information is the basis of a well-functioning and transparent decision-making process for both global society and local communities. ICTs can be an important and very effective tool not only for good governance but also for more accessible government.

40. **Market environment**: To maximise the economic and social benefits of the Information Society, governments need to create a trustworthy, transparent, and non-discriminatory legal, regulatory and policy environment, capable of promoting technological innovation and competition, thus favouring investment in the deployment of infrastructures and development of new services.

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.

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 are particularly important for developing countries. 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.

43. **Spectrum management**: The radio frequency spectrum must be managed in the public and general interest and in accordance with the basic principle of legality, with full observance of national laws and regulation and international agreements governing the management of frequencies.

44. **Management of Internet names and addresses:** Internet governance must be multilateral, democratic and transparent, taking into account the needs of the public and private sectors as well as those of the civil society, and respecting multilingualism. The coordination responsibility for root servers, domain names, and Internet Protocol (IP) address assignment should rest with a suitable international, inter-governmental organization. The policy authority for country code top-level-domain names (ccTLDs) should be the sovereign right of countries.

45. Access to information and communication technologies shall be secured in accordance with international law, bearing in mind that some countries are affected by unilateral measures which are not compatible with it and which create obstacles for international trade[1].

7) ICT-Applications

46. The usage and deployment of ICTs create benefits in all aspects of our daily life including government, health care, education and business.

47. **Appropriate applications**: Cooperation and collaboration are enhanced through the development of applications and content suited to local needs that encourage social and economic development, with particular emphasis on serving rural and remote areas, through supporting projects ensuring the sharing of information.

8) Cultural identity and linguistic diversity, local content and media development

48. The Information Society is founded on respect for, and enjoyment of, cultural expression. ICTs should stimulate cultural diversity and multilingualism and governments should develop active policies to that end.

49. **Cultural and linguistic diversity**: Cultural identity, linguistic diversity, multilingualism and local languages are driving forces for the process of developing content for local and international use (UNESCO, Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001).

50. **{WSIS-GC}} Content**: The creation of local content must be accorded high priority. Creativity and the creation, processing, dissemination and conservation of local content can best be stimulated through an adequate balance between intellectual property rights and the needs of the users of information. Means to allow users to participate in the creation of content must be also a high priority. Special attention should be also paid to the role of gender in content creation.

51. **Media**: ICTs strengthen the role of traditional media such as broadcasting and print, which will continue to have an important role in disseminating content in the Information Society.

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[1] Reservations that have been made to this paragraph:

Statement of the United States: "The United States of America reserves on this paragraph and submits its objection to the language, which is inappropriate and is inconsistent with the purpose of the Conference."

Statement of Canada: "Canada appreciates the efforts of the Host Government and other Governments to achieve a consensus text for this paragraph. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, Canada cannot associate itself with the final text of that paragraph."

9) Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

52. [{**WSIS-GC**}] Cyberspace must be subject to universally held ethical values such as truth, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human dignity, shared responsibility, transparency and accountability. All actors in the Information Society must seek to promote the common good and to prevent abusive uses of ICTs.

10) International and regional co-operation

53. The Information Society is intrinsically global in nature. Thus, a policy dialogue based on global trends in the Information Society must take place at global, regional and sub-regional levels in order to facilitate:

- The provision of technical assistance aimed at national and regional capacity-building for the maintenance and reinforcement of regional and international cooperation;

- Technology transfer;

- The sharing of experiences;

- The sharing of knowledge; and

- The development of compatible regulations and standards that respect national characteristics and concerns.

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Draft action plan

Based on discussions in the Working Group of Sub-Committee 2
(WSIS/PC-2/DT-3 revised)

D. [*[NOTE: The whole text is in square brackets]*]

Section I

1. The Information Society is an evolving concept, the realization of which is driven by all societies—and in this process all of them can learn from each other. At present, the Information Society has reached different levels of development across the regions and countries of the world. As such, it would be necessary and more effective to design a flexible Action Plan that can be used as a reference framework and as a source of guidance and inspiration at regional and national levels, and that is established in accordance with the Millennium Declaration Goals.

A. *List of issues*

1) Information and communication infrastructure: financing and investment, affordability, development and sustainability

2. **Bridging the digital divide** : Our countries are committed to taking action to overcome the digital divide, which reflects and is a factor in the differences that exist between and within countries in terms of economic, social and cultural aspects, education, health and access to knowledge.

3. **Universal access**: In order to achieve affordable and universal access in basic services it is essential:

   - To utilize existing and new technologies to provide connectivity to all.

   - To develop connectivity for institutions accessible to the public such as schools, libraries, post offices, etc.

   - To study and promote relevant solutions adapted to the environment for ICTs in remote and rural areas.

   - To establish multi-purpose community access points to ensure inclusive access to information and social services, particularly in rural areas.

   - To evolve the concept of universal access/service to reflect advances and opportunities offered by technology, existing infrastructures, market development and changes in user demand.

   - [**WSIS-GC**] To design information in a multimodal way so that it can be accessed through different devices, i.e. radio, TV, Digital TV, PCs, PDAs, Mobile phones.

4. **Broadband**: It is essential to strengthen regional and international broadband network infrastructure in order to provide the capacity to match the needs of countries and their citizens and for the delivery of new services.

5. **Low cost equipment**: The creation and provision of low-cost access equipment shall be an integral part of the agenda for reducing the digital divide.

6. [**WSIS-GC**] **Low cost connectivity:** Universal access policies shall promote the best possible level of connectivity at a reasonable cost for under-served areas. In particular, unused satellite capacity should be used to improve low cost connectivity in developing countries. The potential of devices such as Digital TV and Mobile phones should be explored so that users that already have these services can have control over and access to information and take full advantage of the benefits of the Information Society.

7. **Convergence** : Technological convergence must be monitored with a view to integrating traditional and new ICTs in order to create alternative forms of access that can help narrow the digital divide.

8. **Interconnection**: The optimization of connections among major information networks should be promoted through the creation of regional traffic hubs to reduce interconnection costs and allow the penetration of access networks to be broadened.

9. **Interconnection fees**: Interconnection fees for the use of networks and infrastructure shall be set on the basis of objective, non-discriminatory and market-led parameters.

10. **Regional infrastructure**: Regional ICT backbones and exchange points should be implemented to facilitate traffic exchange between countries.

11. **Environmental protection:** Governments and the business community must initiate actions as well as develop and implement programmes and projects for the environmentally safe disposal (including recycling) of discarded ICT hardware and parts.

2) Access to information and knowledge

12. {**WSIS-GC**} Individuals and organizations and other groups including communities should benefit from enhanced access to knowledge and information.

13. {**WSIS-GC**} **Access to public domain information:** Information in the public domain should be of high quality, easily accessible for all, including the disabled. This information should be designed in a manipulable way so that users can adapt it to their own needs .

14. **Open standards and open-source software**: Development and deployment of open-source software and standards for ICT networking should be encouraged:

    - Open and flexible international and interoperable standards should be promoted to ensure that all can utilize the technology and associated content and services to their maximum potential.

    - Open-source software, including UNESCO software CDS/ISIS, multi-platform and open platform as well as interoperability standards, should be used more broadly to provide freedom of choice and to facilitate access to ICTs by all citizens, at an affordable cost.

    - Standardization efforts in the field of terminology and other language resources should be intensified.

15. **Information flows:** Guidelines on Internet contracts should be established and existing contracts for Internet traffic renegotiated.

3) The role of governments, the business sector and civil society in the promotion of ICTs for development

16. The full and effective involvement of all stakeholders is vital in developing new ICT applications. The role, responsibilities and goals of each stakeholder should be clearly defined.

17. **Cooperation among Stakeholders:** Increased cooperation and partnerships are needed between governmental and intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, civil society and the media, for effective design and implementation of various initiatives, giving priority to locally-available human resources:

    - The public sector should explore innovative ways to correct market failures and foster competition to bring the Information Society to all sectors of the economy and society, especially those living in poverty.
    - The private sector should play an important role in the development and diffusion of ICTs.
    - Civil society, including NGOs, should work closely with communities in strengthening ICT-related initiatives.
    - Mass media – in their various forms – are recognized as important means of fostering public information, societal development and social cohesion.
    - International and regional organizations, including financial and development institutions should play an important role in integrating the use of ICTs in the development process and making available the necessary resources.
    - International organization should be mandated to mainstream ICTs in their work programmes and asked to prepare action plans to support the fulfillment of the goals indicated in the declaration of principles and in this action plan.
    - {**WSIS-GC**} Governments and other stakeholders should provide the necessary conditions to ensure women's equal access to information and knowledge as well as ensuring their equal role as producers and decision makers in all aspects related to the shaping of IT policies and frameworks.

18. **Resource mobilization:** All stakeholders are urged to mobilize resources for the development of the Information Society. This could include:

    - increasing investment in telecommunication infrastructure,
    - building human capacity,
    - developing policy frameworks,
    - **[{WSIS-GC}]** developing culturally sensitive and gender aware local content and applications.

19. **ICT manufacturing capabilities**: It is essential for governments to encourage technology transfer and investment, including venture capital, in the creation of national and regional ICT production facilities:

    - Priority shall be placed on strengthening local micro-enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through their integration into the digital economy. Partnership mechanisms and business models should be developed for fostering clustering and partnership between SMEs in developing countries and industrialized countries.

    - Public policies must foster innovation and entrepreneurship.

    - The development of technology-based firms should be encouraged through venture capital funds, technology parks and business incubators, franchising IT clubs, together with the participation of academic institutions and research networks.

    - Joint stakeholder efforts to address local obstacles and seek sustainable solutions for infrastructure in underprivileged areas should be encouraged.

    - Governments should implement targeted monetary and fiscal policies to support the development of SMEs in the ICT sector (for instance, by relaxing duties and import taxes, and by initiating investment funds).

4) Capacity building: human resources development, education, and training

20. **[{WSIS-GC}]** An ambitious and innovative approach is required in capacity building, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by ICTs. Technological infrastructure and access should go hand by hand with capacity building. In doing so the infrastructure built and supported by the government and the civil society will be far more democratic and responsive.

21. **ICTs in education:** The use of ICTs could contribute to more efficiency and better quality in education services. They should also contribute to reaching broad target groups:

    - Information regarding the potential of new technologies in education should be disseminated through exchange of information on best practices, awareness campaigns, pilot projects, demonstrations and public discussions.

    - ICTs should be incorporated in school curricula.

    - ICTs should be used to train trainers and to ensure better delivery of education at all levels, including outside the educational structure, at the workplace and in the home.

    - Teacher's skills and curriculum resources need increased support so that teachers can act as a gateway to the Information Society.

    - There should be a large-scale integration of ICTs in primary education to generate a dynamic process towards e-literacy.

    - The capacity of developing and least developed countries to apply ICTs effectively in education must be enhanced through regional and international cooperation.

    - **[{WSIS-GC}]** Gender awareness should be applied across the board in any program related to ICT and education.

22. **Capacity building for ICT use:** People must have enhanced levels of ICT literacy and ICT skills to make the best use of the Information Society:
    - Relevant education and training should be promoted at every level, from primary to adult, to open up opportunities for as many people as possible, and especially the disadvantaged.
    - **[{WSIS-GC}]** Skills to be able to manage and contribute technological change should be also an important part of a capacity building programme.

- **{{WSIS-GC}}** Women should be given equal opportunities for obtaining training in the ICT field and participating in the design of training materials. Women should also be encouraged to be actively sought out and engaged to seek training and take part in the design and conceptualisation of ICTs.
- Young people should be equipped with knowledge and skills in ICTs to prepare them for full participation in the Information Society.
- E-literacy courses should be aimed at training the population in the use of ICTs with a view to producing useful and socially meaningful content for the benefit of all.
- Intergovernmental organizations should provide resources for capacity building in ICTs.
- All those still outside the reach of the formal education system should be offered education and information tailored to their need and culture.
- Community media should be used in capacity building programmes.

23. **Training ICT specialists**: Basic and advanced education should be improved to help create a critical mass of highly qualified and skilled ICT professionals and experts:
    - Education in network infrastructure development and operation is critical for the availability of efficient, reliable, competitive and secure ICT network services.
    - The formation and maintenance of a workforce to act as a pillar of the Information Society shall be undertaken in close cooperation with the private sector and civil society in general.
    - South to North brain drain should be prevented, in particular through the creation by governments of an adequate environment to keep trained people.

5) Security

24. **Secure and reliable infrastructure:** The security of networks has emerged as one of the critical issues for the continued growth of electronic commerce and the use of the new technologies more generally:

    - All stakeholders concerned with ICT issues should take the necessary steps to enhance security, user confidence and other aspects of information and system/network integrity in order to avoid the risk of wholesale disruption and destruction of the network systems on which they are increasingly dependent.

    - This will require appropriate national legislative frameworks that safeguard the public and general interest and that foster electronic communications and transactions.

    - It will also require raising awareness of information security issues, and the rapidly evolving complexity, capacity and reach of information technology, the anonymity offered by these technologies, and the trans-national nature of communication frameworks.

    - Special mechanisms shall be put in place to encourage the banking sector to develop secure and reliable applications to facilitate online transactions.

25. **Information Security**: Effective information security could be guaranteed not only by technology, but also by education and training, policy and law, and international cooperation. The United Nations should be supported in its efforts aimed at:

    - Assessing the information security situation, including harmful interference or abuse using information and communication systems and information resources.

    - Developing methods for protection and creating a rapid reaction organization to deal with security violations, as well as exchanging information and technology to combat violations.

    - Studying the long-term possibility of creating an international convention on the security of information and communication networks.

    Recognizing the principle of fair, equitable and appropriate access to ICTs for all countries, special attention should be paid to the fact that ICTs can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security, and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure within States, to the detriment of their security in both civil and military fields.

26. **Creating a global culture of cyber-security**: In the long term, a "global culture of cyber-security", should be developed, based on a common understanding of regulations and appropriate mechanisms for information and technology exchange and international cooperation. It is important to strike the right

balance between measures to enhance security and the need to ensure the protection of data and privacy as well as to avoid the creation of new barriers to trade. Due attention should be given to the principle of technological neutrality.

27. **Fighting cybercrime** : Protection from civil and criminal offences ("cybercrime") is essential in order to build trust in information networks:

- A multi-pronged approach is needed to tackle cybercrime, on all fronts, with emphasis on preventive approaches, national guidelines and regional and international cooperation. At the same time, action to address cybercrime and to ensure a safe and secure Information Society must respect the sovereignty of nations and maintain respect for the constitutional and other rights of all persons, including freedom of expression.
- Existing legal instruments, such as the *Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime*, offer the international community a foundation from which to build.

6) Enabling environment

28. **Good governance:** To maximize the economic and social benefits of the Information Society, governments need to create a trustworthy, transparent, and non-discriminatory legal, regulatory and policy environment, capable of promoting technological innovation and competition, thus favouring the necessary investments, mainly from the private sector, in the deployment of infrastructures and development of new services:

- Commitment and responsibility should be defined at the national and regional levels.

- With the active participation of all stakeholders, the development of an enabling environment should give due regard to the rights and obligations of all stakeholders in such areas as freedom of expression, consumer protection, privacy, security, intellectual property rights, open-source solutions and management of Internet addresses and domain names, while also maintaining economic incentives and ensuring trust and confidence for business activities.

29. **Market environment**: The availability of telecommunication infrastructures and affordable telecommunications services and ICT equipment are prerequisites for accessing and using ICTs for all:

- Competition, including in the local access network, should be promoted to drive down prices and to ensure the ongoing modernization of networks and services.
- Investment in rural communications should be encouraged through an attractive legal framework.

- Duties levied on ICT hardware and software should be removed.
- Monopoly in mass communication should be avoided and diversity in the sources of information should be promoted.
- In order to secure prompt settlement of disputes, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) should be considered along with normal judicial proceedings.

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.

31. **Spectrum management**: The radio frequency spectrum should be managed in the public and general interest and in accordance with the basic principle of legality, with full observance of national laws and regulations and international agreements governing the management of frequencies.

32. **[{WSIS-GC}]Consumer protection:** There is a real consumer fear concerning the loss of privacy as well as in relation to the fight against illegal and harmful content and the protection of minors. Assurance of the confidentiality of personal information is essential in building the Information Society. Promote the protection of women's human rights against on-line sexual exploitation and gender-based violence without compromising women's rights to information and communication.

33. **Internet governance:** A transparent and democratic governance of the Internet shall constitute the basis for the development of a global culture of cyber-security. An [[international]][[intergovernmental]] organisation should ensure multilateral, democratic and transparent management of root servers, domain names and Internet Protocol (IP) address assignment.

34. **Intellectual property rights:** It is important to ensure a balance between intellectual property rights (IPR) and the public interest:

- While IPRs play a vital role in fostering innovation in software, e-commerce and associated trade and investment, there is a need to promote initiatives to ensure fair balance between IPRs and the interests of the users of information, while also taking into consideration the global consensus achieved on IPR issues in multilateral organizations.
- An appropriate legal framework should be defined for the development of a public domain of information and knowledge.
- [{WSIS-GC}] Protection against unfair use of indigenous and local knowledge should be developed.

7) Promotion of development-oriented ICT applications for all

35. ICTs can support social and economic development. But it is also important to ensure that traditional models are recognized and respected, so that the non-users of ICTs are not marginalized. The following examples are intended to illustrate the potential for this.

36. [{WSIS-GC}] **E-Government**: Public administrations should use ICT tools, integrating old and new media, to enhance transparency, accountability and efficiency—at all levels of government, and in particular at the local level:

- In the delivery of public services to citizens and to enterprises.
- In the design of online services, adapted to the needs of citizens and businesses.
- In the better management of financial, human and public resources and goods.

37. **E-Business:** Enterprises, particularly SMEs, can use ICTs to foster innovation, realize gains in productivity, fight against poverty, reduce transaction costs and benefit from network externalities:

- Through the adoption of an enabling environment and based on a widely-available broadband infrastructure, Governments should seek to stimulate private investment, new applications and content development and foster public - private partnerships.
- Governments should adopt a twofold approach: setting the rules and using e-Business in their interaction with the business community.
- ICTs can be used to bring consumer benefits and satisfaction by widening the choice of potential suppliers, beyond the constraints of location. The private sector should help to raise awareness and to ensure training on the specific issues related to e-Business.
- Use of digital technologies can enhance the role of enterprises in promoting entrepreneurship, liberalizing trade, the accumulation of knowledge, the upgrading of skills, thereby increasing productivity, incomes and jobs and promoting qualitative improvement of working life.

38. **E-learning:** Access to education and knowledge is essential for economic, social and cultural development, and as a means of personal empowerment, community development and business efficiency. Without neglecting traditional literacy, ICT networks have the potential to offer new educational opportunities to all groups in all areas, and a wider delivery of education:

- E-Learning should contribute to achieving universal primary education worldwide through better delivery of education and better training of teachers, and to offer improved conditions for lifelong learning, encompassing people that are outside the "normal" education process, and for improving professional skills.
- [{WSIS-GC}] Implementation of affordable, multimodal, gender aware and universal educational programmes, content, broadband networks and hardware should be promoted.
- The introduction and development of ICTs in various schools and other learning institutions shall be supported through the establishment and maintenance of a human resources network that institutionalizes the ongoing training of teachers and instructors, who are the backbone of innovation.
- Advantage shall be taken of best practices to create high-quality, readily accessible teaching material from all over the world to facilitate knowledge transfer to the national level.
- Special attention shall be devoted to multilingual training and to the use and development of translation software.
- [{WSIS-GC}] New skills developed by the use of ICTs and not included in conventional curriculum, should be included in training materials and syllabus. The teaching of collaborative skills, making use of the potential of ICTs, should be enhanced.

39. **E-health:** Access to healthcare information and services is a basic right. Many countries lack adequate healthcare facilities and personnel, particularly in rural and remote areas. ICTs should be incorporated on a mass scale in the field of health care with a view to improving resource use, patient satisfaction,

personalized care, and the coordination of public health-care systems, private institutions and the academic sector:

- **{WSIS-GC}** ICTs should be used to promote social inclusion of all members of society by enabling equitable access to healthcare services, as well as empowering citizens to better manage their own health, have access to their health information and to participate more effectively in the healthcare process.

- Innovative solutions and options must be devised for providing health services to under-served areas.

- Another e-health priority shall be the prevention, treatment and monitor and control of the spread of dangerous and contagious diseases—specifically HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria—in particular, through the creation of a common information system.

- ICTs can be used to provide e-health supports to specific groups (such as the elderly, the chronically ill and children).

- An ICT-based e-health network should be established to provide medical assistance following humanitarian disaster and emergencies.

- A system should be established to provide e-health services to the populations in remote regions of the globe.

40. **{WSIS-GC} E-employment:** ICTs can provide tools for new job creation and enhance competitiveness and productivity through teleworking, enterprise networking and efficient linking of job seekers and employers. Best practices and new labour laws for e-workers and e-employers should be developed at the international level. The role of the ILO is fundamental in this respect. Telecommuting should be promoted to allow the best brains of the developing world to live in their societies and work anywhere.
ICTs should be also used to encourage women to take full advantage of the Information Society to participate actively in the working environment. Social entrepreneurship programmes should be encouraged by Public and Private sector to provide support mechanisms for women. In doing so they will be supported to escalate the poverty ladder by using the potential of ICTs.

41. **E-environment:** Systems should be established to prevent man-made disasters, using ICTs to monitor the operators of production and transport systems that pose the gravest potential threats to the environment.

8) Cultural identity and linguistic diversity, local content and media development

42. **Cultural and linguistic diversity.** Linguistic and cultural diversity enriches the development of society by giving expression to a range of different values and ideas. For this purpose:
- Information should be presented in the language and cultural context most familiar to the user, thereby further encouraging the use of ICTs.
- To foster mutual understanding, diversity of cultural expression should be preserved and promoted, through the creation of varied information content and the digitization of the educational, scientific and cultural heritage.
- ICTs should be used to help preserve diversity and indigenous knowledge and traditions.
- Means should be developed for enabling access to information resources in different languages, in particular online translation tools.
- Means should be developed for processing information in local languages: for instance, standard character sets and language codes, dictionaries, general and application software.
- Non-written languages should be preserved by using audio support.
- **{WSIS-GC}**Gender aware language should be used across the board.

43. **Content:** Creation of local content should be supported:

- Public policy should foster the creation of varied information content, which helps to preserve and disseminate local and national culture, language and heritage, and to safeguard family and community cohesion.
- Production and exchange of appropriate local content available in a user's mother tongue is of vital importance.
- Developing countries must have the capacity for developing hardware and software, as well as content that is relevant to different segments of population.

- Content referencing, based on public-private partnership to make web content more accessible, should be encouraged.
- Local authorities have an important role to play, because for citizens they represent the first level of contact with the administrations and they could also foster the development of local communities: local content development, digital archives, diverse forms of digital media, content translation and adaptation should be supported.
- Literacy software should be produced in local languages.
- {{WSIS-GC}} Users must be allowed and encouraged to participate in the content creation process.
- Archives should be preserved as the memory of humankind, and systems should be developed to ensure continued access to archived digital information and multimedia content.
- Libraries and archives should be supported as content providers.

44. **Media:** ICT and media as a whole should stimulate linguistic and cultural diversity, including through the facilitation of exchange of local content:

- Investment should be made in regional media content as well as new technologies.

- Independent production and pluralistic media should be supported.

- Appropriate multilateral television networks should be promoted.

9) {{WSIS-GC}} Identifying and overcoming barriers to the achievement of the Information Society with a human perspective

Programmes should be developed to:

- reform decision-making processes in the telecommunications and ICT sector to ensure good governance, greater accountability to all stakeholders and to improve the participation and representation of women and gender equality advocates in all levels of policy making including participation across generations. These programmes should also develop monitoring mechanisms at all levels in the telecommunications and ICT sector to assess the extent of women's greater access and control over resources necessary for their empowerment and to deliver support for capacity building and training that facilitates wide participation by women and gender ICT specialists in policy and decision making.

- facilitate women's active participation in the telecommunications and ICT sector through implementing projects that encourage and support entrepreneurship and women's employment, including women's access to international markets

- maximize ICT contribution to the goals of peace, equality and development by developing and encouraging innovative ICT applications that aim to reduce poverty, eliminate HIV/AIDS, promote conflict resolution and peace building, support women's reproductive and productive roles, facilitate education and literacy and reducing violence against women

B. Objectives

45. Examples of possible concrete and comprehensive actions could include:

a) **Benchmarks:** The following could serve as benchmarks for actions to be taken:
- all villages to be connected by 2010, with a community access point by 2015;
- all universities to be connected by 2005, all secondary schools by 2010 and all primary schools by 2015;
- all hospitals to be connected by 2005 and health centres by 2010;
- 90 per cent of the world's population to be within wireless coverage by 2010 and 100 per cent by 2015;
- all central governments departments to have a website and email address by 2005 and all local governments departments by 2010.

b) **E-Strategies:** Developing national e-strategies for all countries within three years, including the necessary human capacity building.

c) **Global Digital Compact:** Launching of a "Global Digital Compact" as a new pattern for partnership and interaction between governments and non-governmental actors, based on division of labour and specialized responsibilities, as well as on identified specific and common interests, to work together to achieve ICT development goals (e.g. governments create stimulating regulatory environment and fiscal incentives, business bring in technology and made available simple applications, non-governmental organizations undertake awareness campaigns and work at community level etc.) (*a model that could start from the institutional relationships already existing in ITU, with ITU as coordinator*).

d) **Digital development index:** Launching and gradually developing an aggregate ICT Development (Digital Opportunity) Index and publish it annually or every two years in an ICT Development Report, where ranking of countries will be accompanied by analytical work on policies and their implementation. (*ITU is to catalyze and combine in a coherent structure the existing experiences in various organizations, universities, think-tanks etc.*)

e) **Handbook on good practices and success stories**: Elaborating and launching a "Handbook on good practices and success stories", as a compilation of contributions from all stakeholders, in a concise and convincing format, which is to be re-issued periodically and turned into a permanent experience-sharing exercise.

f) **Training content workers:** Equipping and training content workers in the LDCs, such as archivists, librarians, scientists, teachers and journalists in making use of the expertise and operational capacity of the relevant international professional organizations.

g) **Curriculum revision:** Revising the curricula of the primary and secondary schools in all countries, within three years, in order to meet the challenges of the Information Society.

h) **World languages on the Internet:** Create the necessary technical (software and hardware) conditions, which would permit all languages in the world to be present and used on the Internet.

C. Strategies programmes, methods for implementation

46. Governments, the private sector, civil society, the media and multilateral organizations all have a role in the evolution towards an Information Society.

47. **Governments** in particular have a role in setting and implementing comprehensive, forward-looking and sustainable e-Strategies, adapted to the specific requirements of different communities and reflecting the stage of development and the structural characteristics of the national economy. This should include:
    - Establishing regulatory frameworks.
    - Renewing models for public action and actively shaping the transformation towards an Information Society.
    - Preparing the future generation for the Information Society, and creating an environment of continuous learning.
    - Ensuring the full ownership by all stakeholders of the e-Strategies that are elaborated.

48. **Private sector** involvement is crucial for a sound and sustainable development of infrastructures, content and application.
    - The private sector is not only a market player but plays a role in a wider political and social context, i.e. helping countries to develop ICTs and overcome the digital divide.
    - The private sector can be involved in practical partnerships for innovative applications, for instance, in e-Government initiatives.

49. **Civil society** involvement is crucial for creating an equitable Information Society, based on sustainable economic and social development and gender justice:
    - Civil society involvement is vital in the take-up and social acceptance of the Information Society.
    - Civil society can help to strengthen the value aspect in the triangle of regulation, markets and values.

50. **Mass media** – in their various forms – are recognized as essential requirement for freedom of expression and a guarantee of the plurality of information:
    - The media provide an important means of fostering public information, societal development and social cohesion.

51. **Multilateral organizations** have a key role in providing guidance, facilitating peer dialogue, exchange of experience and best practices, offering technical assistance in the design of e-Strategies and, in some cases, complementing the role of governments and other actors.

52. **[{WSIS-GC}]Performance monitoring**: To be effective, beyond the identification of goals, the strategies should include timeframes, indicators and mechanisms for monitoring performance based not

only on quantitative but also qualitative criteria. In the case of smaller countries, regional strategies can contribute to the emergence of larger markets, offering more attractive conditions for private sector investment as well as for a competitive environment. Furthermore ICTs could be of particular relevance in the development context, because they offer opportunities to Public Administrations, help attract private investments and allow for leapfrogging using new and advanced technologies. Strategies should also include gender awareness as well as indicators disaggregated by gender, race and age, to be able to measure the impact of the strategies from a more varied perspective.

53. **Specific initiatives**: The development of a strategy entails understanding what to promote, where to promote it, and how to tailor and implement activities to achieve maximum impact. This should capitalize on existing national, regional and global efforts. Specific initiatives could include:

- Promoting long-term government spending on R&D and higher education, with the aim of mastering and adapting specific ICT solutions.

- Providing incentives and regulatory schemes that would enhance private sector capabilities in terms of human resource development, infrastructure and institution building.

- Providing tax incentives for start up ICT companies.

- Fostering the scale-up of locally successful ICT-related projects dealing with priority applications like health and education programmes.

- Focusing part of the R&D programmes on low purchasing power markets, including research on appropriate technologies and innovative marketing and distribution mechanisms, including the taking advantage of the diasporas.

- Creating a network of IT consultants.

- Developing a platform for showcasing applications.

D. International cooperation and financing

54. **International cooperation**. Close international cooperation among national authorities, stakeholders and international organizations in all aspects of the Information Society is more vital today than ever:
   - To this end, advantage shall be taken of the opportunities offered by regional financial institutions and the UN Regional Commissions.
   - Encouraging entrepreneurship is an important goal. For this, it is necessary to establish certain basic structures, e.g. conducive regulatory frameworks and access to market information for businesses.
   - Encouraging cyber-volunteer programmes, notably in relation to NGOs, activities regarding basic ICT training to marginalized groups, or in relation to specific ICT applications.
   - Fostering a cumulative knowledge process by systematic networking between grassroots initiatives, by creation of websites, by facilitating exchange of information and experience, and through dissemination of good practices.

55. **Financing**: A commitment to financing the different initiatives proposed in this action plan is an essential element in its successful implementation. This will require innovative partnerships between the public and private sectors:
   - It is proposed to create a digital solidarity fund. The international community is called upon to provide technical and financial cooperation at both the multilateral and bilateral levels, in particular with a view to giving the opportunity to less developed countries to create their ICT infrastructure.
   - This could include a commitment by the private sector to provide ICT goods and services at preferential conditions for specific categories of users, notably not-for-profit organizations directly involved in poverty alleviation.
   - Developed countries should make available the official development assistance (ODA) commitments that they announced at the International Conference on Financing for Development. All countries should comply with all aspects of the consensus reached at that conference.
   - Developed countries that have not already done should take concrete action to fulfill the target level of 0.7 per cent of their Gross Domestic Product as ODA.
   - The unsustainable debt burden should be reduced through such actions as debt relief, debt cancellation and other innovative mechanisms geared to addressing the debt problem of developing countries, in particular the poorest and the most heavily indebted ones.

56. **Technology transfer:** It is important to facilitate access, and to transfer knowledge and technology on concessional, preferential and favourable terms to developing countries, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights, with the objective of enhancing the technological capacities and capabilities of developing countries, and improving their productivity and competitiveness in the world market.

E. Follow up

57. [**{WSIS-GC}**]**Indicators** : A realistic international monitoring and benchmarking (both qualitative and quantitative) exercise, through comparable statistical indicators, should be developed to follow up the implementation of the action plan and to evaluate progress towards well identified goals, in particular progress toward the Information Society. Indicators and periodic reports may also provide a basis for benchmarking, peer reviews and contribute to the dissemination of best practices. Indicators should be disaggregated by gender, race and age. By doing so a more varied and rich perspective will be offered when studying the implications projects implemented.

58. **Reporting**: International organizations and UN specialized agencies, particularly ITU, shall assess and report regularly on universal accessibility of ICTs and possible cases of discrimination. They shall also ensure non-discrimination for all members in their programmes, projects and contractual engagements, with the aim of creating equitable opportunities for the growth of ICT sectors of developing countries.

59. **Support for implementation**: Organizations of the UN family should support countries in the follow up on the agreements adopted in this declaration and action plan.

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