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English only

Caritas Internationalis (CI) *

Contribution to the “Draft Declaration of Principles”

to be submitted, for adoption, to the

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Geneva 2003

Introductory Remarks

1. The present contribution from CI is based on Document WSIS03/PCIP/DT/4 (Rev. 3), issued on 18 July 2003 after discussions during the WSIS inter-sessional mechanism. In view of the volume of that document (12 pages) and the abundance of material already contained therein, CI will limit itself to contribute herein only a few number of principles, aspects, ideas and commenting points, which fall within the field of its own goals and its competence and are, in its view, up to now missing in that document, but merit to be taken on board in the final draft declaration to be submitted to the above Summit for adoption.
2. This contribution will thus follow the above document's structure, paragraphs and footnotes (all still in square brackets) as well as the sequence of paragraphs as

* *Caritas Internationalis (CI)* is a Confederation, created in 1924, of currently 162 Catholic relief, development and social service organizations active in 201 countries and territories. Its work is aimed at spreading charity and social justice and at building up a better world, especially for the poor, weak, marginalised and oppressed, who legitimately expect that dehumanizing poverty, exclusion, intolerance and discrimination, unacceptable living and working conditions as well as unjust social, political, economic and cultural structures be eradicated. – As one of the world's largest humanitarian networks, CI is – on the basis of the social teaching of the Church, focussing on the dignity of each human being, whatever the latter's creed, race, gender or ethnicity may be, - mandated with fostering integral development, emergency relief, advocacy, peace building, respect for human rights and support for proper stewardship of the planet's environment and resources. Being part of the civil society and providing a beacon of hope for tens of millions of women, men and children in times of hardship and distress, CI assists them and advocates on their behalf, if appropriate together with others, at the national, regional and international levels, including, of course, the UN system and related organizations. – CI held most recently its 17th General Assembly (convening only every fourth year) in Rome (7-12 July 2003) under the 'leit-motif' of “**Globalising Solidarity**”.

given therein, to which reference will be made respectively for the texts, which CI proposes for insertion, wants to support or associate itself with particularly or simply has to comment upon.

3. Time and prevailing circumstances permitting, CI will submit, at a later stage, also a short contribution to the “Draft Action Plan, refined through the intersessional mechanism and incorporating government contributions”), dated 20 June 2003, as contained in Document WSIS03/PCIP/DT/5).

Detailed Text Proposals by CI

4. **Re para. 1:** CI proposes to insert, in the sixth line, after the word “knowledge”:

“, so that justice, peace, truth, freedom and solidarity prevail in our world, in which the dignity of the human being and its upholding must remain paramount.”

5. **Re para. 2:** CI proposes to insert at the end of this paragraph the following sentence:

“ICTs should also foster those peoples own efforts to better their individual and collective standards of living, in order to achieve full human development.”

6. **Re para. 5:** CI proposes to insert, in the sixth line, after the word “Goals]”, the following half-sentence:

“..., as any effort undertaken to achieve such goals will contribute to creating progressively more social justice and solidarity in our world.”

7. **Re para. 6:** CI, fully supporting its contents, proposes to insert:

- a) in the second line, in front of the words “solidarity, partnership and cooperation” the word “intensified”, and
- b) at the end, after the words “the principles established” the words “in the present Declaration.”.

8. **Re para. “NEW 7C”:** CI supports the incorporation of this text, but proposes to replace, at its end after the word “and” the following six words and replace them by:

“to eradicate, to every extent possible, hunger, dehumanizing poverty, violence, discrimination, intolerance, oppression, social exclusion and marginalisation, so that all persons of this world be empowered to come to the fullness of their humanity as part of a true global community.”.

9. **Re para. 7- 8:** CI supports this text, including the proposal in square brackets by UNESCO.

10. **Re para. 7B:** CI fully supports this text, too.

11. **Re para. 14:** CI also supports this text and proposes to add at its end:

“, - who all deserve – in the spirit of greater solidarity amongst all human beings on this globe – help and assistance in their endeavor for advancement and integration in the Society at large.”

12. **Re para. 10:** CI proposes that , under the there listed “essential requirements”, the tenth indent read as follows:

“ - Partnership and globalised solidarity among all stakeholders;”

13. **Re para. 21-22:** CI proposes to add, in the fourth line, between the words “cultural” and “activities” the words:

“as well as religious”.

14. **Re para. 27:** CI proposes to replace, in the last line, the word “and” by a comma and insert there, after the word “partnership”, the words:

“ and solidarity”.

14. **Re para. 38A:** CI supports therein the last square bracketed “text reinserted at the request of Switzerland” (see footnote 14 in the said document).

15. **Re para. 41:** CI agrees, in essence, with the contents of this paragraph.

16. **Re para. 46:** CI fully supports the contents of this paragraph on “ICT-Applications”.

17. **Re para. NEW 47D:** CI equally fully supports the “new text proposed by GLOCOM” (see footnote 25 in the said document). As an Organization constantly and heavily involved in disaster and emergency relief activities and interventions of all kinds all over the globe, CI is very well aware of the enormously important role ICTs play in this respect and of the ever increasing potential they can contribute to, and put at the disposal of all those working in this specific sector, the scope of which may regrettably, but very well become even wider in the future, - last but not least due to the current societies’ handling of environmental phenomena and problems well known to all concerned (or, regrettably again, disregarded by some!). – This issue, to CI’s surprise and disappointment, currently covered only by those just five lines in that new paragraph is, in the view of CI, clearly under-evaluated, - rated and –treated in the current draft declaration for the forthcoming Summit and deserves much broader emphasis and treatment, which, as it is herewith proposed, should be remedied indeed during Prep.Com3.

18. **Re para. 49:** CI proposes, for obvious reasons not requiring any further comment, that the beginning of that paragraph should read:

“ Cultural heritage, which self-evidently includes any religious one, ...”.

19. **Re para. 51:** CI, though basically agreeing with the contents of this paragraph, is, once again, surprised and disappointed, by the fact that only one and even such a short paragraph is devoted in the current draft to the subject matter of “Media”, which in a “Declaration of principles” related to the “Information Society” not only merits, but simply calls for a much broader and more in depth treatment (cf., for a similar matter, already paragraph 17 above). It is proposed and hoped by CI that such a better treatment be given to that matter by PrepCom3. – As the press and “Media” in

general are not within the purview of the proper competence of CI, the latter leaves it to entities more competent in this area to ensure such more adequate treatment by drafting appropriate texts dealing with the “Media” in its multifold forms and with the inseparable role ICTs play in relation thereto. – In this context and at this stage, CI simply considers it worthwhile to point to one specific aspect of both interest and concern not only to CI, but certainly to many others working in comparable fields or to similar ends. The “Media”, in all its forms, be it written press, radio, TV etc., have undoubtedly an information-role vis-à-vis the members of the Society they address and reach. This implies a fact-finding -analyzing, -evaluating and -commenting and therewith their public orienting role as well as a certain critically controlling function. In addition, as CI holds and suggests, the “Media” could and should also exercise more and certainly more frequently a further, additional or complementary function, namely that of drawing their public’s attention to precisely the values and principles of each respective Society, such as those so frequently referred to in the current “Draft Declaration” under study, and to the manifold activities daily undertaken by so many organizations, institutions, entities and bodies of both the public and private sectors and by so many individuals, - all trying very hard to ensure in practice the realization of such values and principles. Such a “positive approach” is, in CI’s view, quite compatible with the other role and function of the “Media” referred to previously above. In taking this approach, the “Media” could, on the generally plane, contribute considerably to orienting the public and its individuals towards a less violent, discriminating, intolerant, excluding or marginalising society and thus to promoting human dignity and peace, to spreading solidarity and social justice and to maintaining hope for a, though slow and still far from efficient and satisfying, betterment of our societies. They could also, at the same time and in particular, encourage thereby those numerous ones in need or even in despair, e.g. those (partly) enumerated in the current paragraph 14 of the “Draft Declaration”, to turn themselves to the sources from which they could receive help or assistance to help themselves. In taking such an approach, the “Media” could even become voices or ‘advocates’ for the cause of those in need and despair and assist them to become their own ‘advocates’, in the sense of CI’s understanding of “advocacy” as a tool for bringing about a better and more just and peaceful world, by promoting the globalization of solidarity and by seeking as many voices as possible in the public debate, in order to influence and direct the attitudes of, and decisions by, policy makers, so that they put into practice those worthwhile goals for the real benefit of all people.

20. **Re para. 52:** CI appreciates and fully supports the contents of this paragraph, at the end of which it, however, proposes to add the following sentence:

“Any such global networks should be established in a spirit of solidarity, i.e. among all sides concerned and involved, and of true ‘partnership’, which implies a long term commitment to agreed objectives, based on shared values, strategies and information; it should be further characterized by feedback and joint planning, a display of transparency and accountability on both sides and by a genuine openness and sensitivity to the other’s needs, feelings, expertise, experience and wisdom, - as only such effective partnership brings about benefits for both those sharing and receiving.”

21. **Re para. 53:** CI basically agrees with the whole contents of this paragraph, but proposes to add, after the five indented points, at the end thereof the following:

“In order to identify and determine relevant ICT-related issues and problems at the grassroots level and to stimulate reflection and analysis on their proper

and best solutions at either the national, regional or international level, all governments will endeavor to consult and cooperate with international, regional and local organizations, institutions, entities and bodies, in particular NGOs, having solid field experience in the respective field(s) under consideration, prior to deciding on what action to initiate, at which level – either exclusively or simultaneously - , how and by whom; it being understood that any such initiative may equally emanate from the one of the latter just referred to above , which should then consult the respective government concerned.

Geneva, 12 August 2003
