The World Summit on Information Society and its implications for the Latin American and Caribbean Region

Executive Summary

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2. In accordance with the WSIS Framework and the recommendations of the UN-ICT Task Force:

- Multilateral, bilateral development organizations and national governments jointly will have to promote and facilitate a process of participatory dialogue in the Latin-American and Caribbean Region (LAC) that will lead to concrete actions in:

  (a) The improvement of access to ICT infrastructure, information and knowledge;
  (b) The strengthening of the institutional and political frameworks that will permit the expansion of the knowledge economy;
  (c) The creation of the necessary conditions in order to allow an active participation of the private sector in the development of the Region through ICT;
  (d) The promotion of ICT as a tool contributing to good governance; and
  (e) The search of technical and financial support in ICT toward the attainment of the MDGs.

3. Objectives:

- Organizing and implementing a series of sub-regional and regional meetings that will allow the ICT national authorities of Latin America and Caribbean to illustrate their needs, aspirations, future plans and actions in the area of ICT for development and e-government.
- Developing an “ICT/e-Government Regional Roadmap” to be presented at the WSIS.
Specific Objectives:

(a) Supporting countries in the Region towards a stronger presence and attendance during the WSIS in Tunis and intermediate events;
(b) Strengthening the countries’ planning and decision-making capability in ICT for development and e-governance;
(c) Supporting the inclusion of ICT in the development strategy of countries in the Region and the identification of joint, concrete actions that can implement such strategies; and
(d) Supporting the achievement of a regional consensus as a negotiating tool towards the accomplishment of a global strategy and, in particular, for the attainment of financial and technical support in order to ensure the application of ICT toward the achievement of the MDGs.

4. Financial Overview:

- IDB: US$ 149,000 (From the Italian Trust Fund for ICT)
- UNDESA: US$ 195,000 (From the Italian Trust Fund)
- ICA: US$ 50,000
- Industries Canada US$
- ITU US$
- CITEL US$
- Local: US$ 30,000
- Private Industry US$ 100,000

5. Coordination with other institutions

The proposed program consists of a close collaboration with various multilateral and bilateral organizations, the government of Italy and notably:

- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (DESA);
- Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (ICA);
- Ministry for Innovation and Technologies (MIT) of Italy;
- United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force (UN-ICT TF);
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU);
- Executive Secretariat of the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS);
- Inter-American Commission for Telecommunications (CITEL)
- Industry Canada

The operation will be implemented jointly by the IDB, ICA and UNDESA with the active participation of the Government of Italy. A team of consultants and specialized personnel that will implement daily activities, logistics, inter-institutional coordination and communication with the beneficiary countries in the Region will be hired to complement the staff assigned for this operation.

A **Steering Committee** with representatives of the participating organizations, (Guillermo Castillo, IDB; Arie Hoekman, UNDESA; Claudia Ogliialoro MIT-Italy; and Angelica Ospina, ICA) will coordinate efforts and properly represent all political and technical elements, in particular it will cover review and approve the work plans, selection of participating countries, supervision of project’s progress, and assessment of outcomes. Approval of the work plan is the next step to be undertaken by the SC.
6. Scheduled Activities & Expected Products

- **Sub-regional seminars**
  Awareness raising aimed at informing and educating decision-makers, on the outcome of the Geneva phase of WSIS and its implications for the Region. Topics discussed would be: connectivity, the development of ICT as an intersectorial activity, sub-regional and regional integration through ICT, digital strategies and development of e-government plans.

  **Dates and venues:**
  (a) Mercosur [Argentina, July 29-30, 2004]
  (b) Central America, Mexico, Dominican Republic [Costa Rica, Aug 30-31, 2004];
  (c) Andean Pact [Colombia, Sept 23-24, 2004]; and
  (d) Caribbean [Barbados, Oct 28-29, 2004].

  **Results expected from the sub-regional seminars:**
  (a) A negotiated document reflecting the various national and regional ICT and e-government strategies;
  (b) A series of documents/proposals for the implementation of digital strategy and e-government programs and projects in the countries of the Region;
  (c) A document/proposal of concrete actions in the area of applications of ICT toward the achievement of the MDGs, and the outline of actions and responsibilities;
  (d) Proposals for project financing.

- **Regional Seminar**
  This event will be an opportunity to share and consolidate knowledge, experiences and decisions gathered during the above-mentioned sub-regional sessions. The Seminar will work on a consensus in order to give the Latin American and Caribbean Region an effective role at the Summit in Tunis. Such regional consensus will represent the negotiating mechanism for countries towards the effective development of the information society in the Region with a strong international support.

  Participants to this seminar will be public sector officials and regional leaders at the highest level, with the active participation of the private sector, the civil society and the governments of the Region.

  The seminar would be an integral part of the preparatory process of the Tunis phase of WSIS in 2005. The organization and implementation of the event will be coordinated with the WSIS Executive Secretariat and the ITU.

  **Tentative dates and venue:**
  As of today, there is an official request of the government of Brazil to the WSIS Secretariat to organize the event; this Technical Cooperation will support the above-mentioned request and we will work in a coordinated manner with the Brazilian officials [Tentatively: Brazil, December 2-3, 2004]

  **Results from the regional seminar in Brazil** will consolidate those of the sub-regional seminars, and generate in a proposal of action in the area of ICT for development in the Region from a perspective of regional technological integration.
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- **Awareness seminar** to be held in Geneva/Tunis during the 2nd Preparatory Committee Meeting of the WSIS [February 2005].
  
  This will allow the thorough involvement of the diplomatic representatives of the Region, key players of the preparatory phases of the WSIS.

- **A seminar will be organized during the Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the IDB** [Okinawa, Japan March 2005], on the theme of ICT for MDGs.

  The event will highlight the presence and participation of the Region in the process toward Tunis and define concrete actions for the period from April through November 2005. The Bank will **present statistical information on the development of the information society in the Region together with a study on the evolution and advancement** of the various activities and actions realized in the Region in preparation to the second phase of WSIS.

  At this event, the IDB will present a financing tool to allow financing of programs outlined in the road map.

- **Seminar in Tunis 2005 – Immediately before WSIS.**

  The objective of this seminar will be the drafting of a document illustrating needs, opportunities, interests and financing tool of the Latin American and Caribbean Region. The document will feature all the activities implemented in the framework of this technical cooperation and will reflect national and regional strategies, plans of action, products, indicators and financial needs.

  **Result of the process and activities Okinawa/Tunis:**

  A regional declaration will be drafted outlining the political stand and plan of action of the Region in the area of information society that will be presented in the plenary session of WSIS in Tunis in November 2005.

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