

WSIS: PROPOSED THEMES FOR THE SUMMIT AND POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

COMMENTS BY SWITZERLAND

Please find below some preliminary Swiss comments with regard to the document WSIS/COM04/PCI/03. The Swiss Authorities are still engaged in internal consultations and will forward more substantive comments in due time.

Switzerland attaches some importance to the following points:

- In order to mobilise public interest it will be important to get a clear and simple message across. There is therefore need for a clear and simple concept with a view to mobilising stakeholders and other international organisations.
- We also wonder whether it would be possible to organise the thematic structure in the form of a grid that would allow for regional input as well as for specific stakeholder input. This could take the form of a subdivision of the overall themes according to the interests of different regional and institutional stakeholders.

The following comments relate to the above mentioned document:

1. We hold the view that the Summit should be broad and comprehensive in its scope (as suggested in Paragraph 5).
2. The relationship between "themes" (Paragraph 3) and "key issues" (Paragraph 7) seems to us neither clear nor convincing. We would like to suggest limiting ourselves, for the time being, to a structure with three main themes. A subdivision may well impose itself once we have more conceptual clarity with regard to the content.
3. In principle we could go along with a proposed three-tier structure, as contained in Paragraph 7 (Vision / Access / Applications). However, in our opinion the terms "Access" and "Applications" fail to reflect the official title of the summit, i.e. "Information Society". They are more technological in nature and relate to ICT rather than to the concept of an Information Society.
4. We would prefer to articulate the structure according to the following dimensions of the theme Information Society:
  - (a) A first dimension under the heading *objectives* could address questions such as the following: What kind of information society do we want? What are the more specific objectives that are necessary to help bridge the digital divide? Possible objectives are *inter alia* access for all, cultural diversity, sustainable development, freedom of information, regulatory framework and enabling environment, rule of law and security. We would expect the Declaration of Principles to fall under this heading.

- (b) A second dimension, *instruments*, could deal with the applications best suited to overcome the problems, how to make best use of the opportunities and to reach the objectives. What is the value-added of ICT compared to other instruments? Under this heading we would like to cover, *inter alia*, education, health, telecommunications, media, knowledge management, e-commerce and e-government.
  - (c) A third dimension under the heading *stakeholders* could address questions such as: Who needs what and who does what? What is the future role of Governments and what is the right distribution of tasks between Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organisations and other stakeholders? Under this heading we would also like to discuss the implementation of the Plan of Action.
5. The structural link between the WSIS and the Millenium Declaration, as contained in Section C and Annex 2, is not necessarily conducive to achieving concrete results. The question as to a possible contribution of ICT to the realisation of the objectives set out in the Millenium Declaration is in our view just one of the many aspects that should be looked into at the Summit. However, it should not determine the structure of debate and outcome.
6. Finally, some drafting suggestions:
- (a) Paragraph 6: delete "PrepCom needs to determine what is the problem that the Summit is trying to resolve." (It would give the wrong signal if we don't know yet what the Summit is supposed to be about.)
  - (b) Paragraph 10: delete "It is likely that the second phase will focus on the specific needs of developing countries." (We feel strongly that already the first phase of the Summit in 2003 needs to address the specific needs of developing countries.)
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