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## **REPORT ON ACTIVITIES LEADING TO PREPCOM-1**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Resolution 73 (Minneapolis, 1998) of the Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) resolved to instruct the Secretary-General of the Union to place the question of the holding of a World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) on the agenda of the United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC; now renamed as the “CEB”) and to report to the ITU Council on the results of that consultation. The reaction of the ACC was positive and a number of other organizations and agencies expressed interest in being associated with the preparation and holding of the Summit. In 2000, the ACC again expressed its support for the Summit and adopted an Action Plan for its organization which had been prepared by the Secretary-General of the ITU. Under the Action Plan, the Summit is to take place under the high patronage of the UN Secretary-General and with the ITU taking the lead role in preparations.

2. The 2000 session of the ITU Council considered a feasibility study for the Summit and generally supported its conclusions. The following year, in 2001, the ITU Council considered the Report of the Secretary-General and, in Resolution 1179 (Ref. C2001/114), endorsed the framework for a Summit in two phases, with the first phase in Geneva in 2003 and the second phase in Tunis in 2005.

3. The decision of the ITU Council was endorsed on 21 December 2001 by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 56/183 (see Annex 1) which welcomed the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society at the highest possible level under the high patronage of the UN Secretary-General, with the ITU taking the lead role in its preparations. The Resolution supported the framework for the Summit in two phases which had been endorsed by the ITU Council.

4. The UNGA Resolution further recommended that preparations for the Summit take place through an open-ended intergovernmental Preparatory Committee that would define the agenda of the Summit, decide on the modalities of the participation of other stakeholders in the Summit, and finalize both the draft declaration and the draft plan of action. It invited the ITU to assume the leading managerial role in the Executive Secretariat of the Summit.

### **II. PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES LEADING TO PREPCOM-1**

5. Resolution 56/183 recommends an intergovernmental preparatory process for the Summit in which other stakeholders actively participate and make contributions and calls on governments to actively participate in Summit preparations and to be represented at the highest possible level. To that end, an invitation to the first Preparatory Committee meeting (“PrepCom-1”) was sent by the ITU Secretary-General to Ministries of Foreign Affairs of UN and ITU Member States in February 2002, accompanied by a draft agenda. Invitation letters were also sent to ITU Sector Members, which are mainly entities from the private sector that participate in the work of the Union.

6. Resolution 56/183 further calls for participation in the Summit process by all relevant United Nations entities, other relevant international organizations and relevant intergovernmental organizations. An invitation to PrepCom-1 was sent by the ITU Secretary-General to relevant international and intergovernmental organizations on 10 April 2002.

7. Following a series of information sessions organized by the ITU for Geneva missions about the Summit, a series of informal consultations with the missions were scheduled from January through June 2002. These consultations were co-chaired by the Ambassadors from Switzerland and Tunisia, representing Summit host countries, and with the participation of the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union. The purpose of these consultations was to help develop and discuss the agenda and documents for PrepCom-1. Five such consultations were held with broad attendance and active participation. The consultations among missions also led to the establishment of a provisional Bureau, consisting of 15 States, to consider and further advance the preparation, planning and framework of PrepCom-1. The provisional Bureau met in late May and regularly during the month of June, with the participation of the ITU Secretary-General.

8. In keeping with the views expressed by the ITU membership, as well as the recommendation in Resolution 56/183 that the intergovernmental preparatory process should include active participation by the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, a broad diffusion of information about the Summit has been organized through websites, newsletters, brochures and mass mailings and a variety of meetings and information sessions have taken place.

9. The ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-02), held in Istanbul in March 2002, adopted a number of resolutions that are relevant to the digital divide and the Summit. The ITU, through its Development Sector (BDT), will be involved in establishing links and synergies between development strategies and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

10. A first regional preparatory meeting for the Summit was announced by the Government of Mali for Africa and took place on 28-30 May in Bamako. The Secretary-General of the ITU addressed the meeting and ITU conducted a workshop.

11. The next Plenipotentiary Conference of the ITU will take place in Marrakech in September-October 2002. The Conference is expected to provide input for PrepCom-2 which will contribute toward development of the Summit Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action.

12. The Secretary-General of the ITU has taken numerous steps to bring the matter of the Summit to the attention of leaders and major stakeholders, as well as the media. Most recently, the Secretary-General of the ITU delivered an address to the two-day session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on Information and Communication Technology for Development, held on 17-18 June 2002, to explain the reasons for holding the Summit and to describe the key issues raised by the emergence of the Information Society.

### **III. ORGANIZATION OF THE SUMMIT**

13. The overall managerial responsibility for the World Summit is placed with the ITU under decisions taken by the ITU Council and under UNGA Resolution 56/183. To organize the Summit, the ITU Secretary-General has taken a number of important measures to establish a preparatory process and structure which include the active participation of ITU staff members in all phases of Summit preparations and the provision of necessary administrative services and support.

### **ITU Council Working Group**

14. The ITU Council in 2002 (**Res. 1196**) established a WSIS Working Group to replace the previous Liaison Committee. The Working Group is open to all Member States and Sector Members of the Union and is intended to develop a framework for the substantive contribution of ITU to the Preparatory Committee meetings. More information on the work of the Group can be found at <http://www.itu.int/council/indexgroups.html>.

### **The High-Level Summit Organizing Committee**

15. The Action Plan endorsed by the fall 2000 meeting of the ACC called for the creation of a High-Level Summit Organizing Committee (HLSOC), consisting of those UN agencies interested in participating in the preparation of WSIS. This decision recognized that the subject matter of the Summit is potentially broad and touches upon the areas of interest of numerous UN agencies. The HLSOC is chaired by the Secretary-General of the ITU and is to be supported by an Executive Secretariat. The main task of the Committee is to generally oversee and coordinate Summit planning and preparations.

16. The HLSOC was formally established in March 2001 by email correspondence and consulted by correspondence on various issues. (A list of present HLSOC members and the terms of reference of the Committee is available at [www.itu.int/wsis/hlsoc.html](http://www.itu.int/wsis/hlsoc.html)). The first physical meeting of the HLSOC took place in New York on 18 October 2001 in conjunction with the fall ACC meeting. Working level meetings of the HLSOC were held on 13 March 2002 and 25 June 2002.

### **The Executive Secretariat**

17. Pursuant to the Action Plan, an Executive Secretariat (ES) was established by the ITU Secretary-General in the fall of 2001 at offices provided by the ITU in Geneva. The Executive Secretariat of the Summit is the body that will organize much of the Summit preparations and is composed of experts sent from governments, UN agencies, the private sector and civil society. In May 2002, Mr. Pierre Gagné was appointed as the Executive Director of the Executive Secretariat, following consultations of the HLSOC Members. A number of UN Staff members are working closely with the ES.

18. The Executive Secretariat has prepared relevant documents for Prep Com-1 including documents on the preparatory process, on modalities of participation, on proposed themes and draft rules of procedure. These have been submitted for consideration by PrepCom-1.

## **IV. FINANCES**

19. Apart from the financial support offered by the two host countries, Switzerland and Tunisia, the Summit must be organized on the basis of contributions from all stakeholders. Resolution 56/183 does not provide any funding for the Summit and the budget of the ITU provides only small amounts for Summit activities.

20. Resolution 56/183 invites the international community to make voluntary contributions to a special trust fund established by the ITU to support the Summit as well as to facilitate the effective participation of representatives of developing countries, in particular those from the least developed countries. That fund has been created by the ITU.

21. The estimated cost to organize the first phase of the Summit is approximately 7.8 million Swiss francs. To obtain the necessary funding, the ITU and the Executive Secretariat have developed a fundraising campaign to obtain the necessary support and are in the midst of implementing that campaign. Letters requesting support have been sent by the ITU Secretary-General to States, the private sector and other entities.

22. In 2002, the ITU Council decided to provide for the liquidity of Summit preparations by making some funds available through a loan arrangement. The ITU will consider its financial contribution to the Summit at its Plenipotentiary Conference in Fall 2002.

23. In January 2002, Mr. Guy-Olivier Segond, former State Councilor of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, was appointed Special Ambassador for WSIS. Among his responsibilities, Mr. Segond will spearhead fundraising efforts for the Summit.

## ANNEX 1

### RESOLUTION A/RES/56/183

#### World Summit on the Information Society

*The General Assembly,*

*Recognizing* the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology for promoting the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration<sup>1</sup> and to find effective and innovative ways to put this potential at the service of development for all,

*Recognizing also* the pivotal role of the United Nations system in promoting development, in particular with respect to access to and transfer of technology, especially information and communication technologies and services, inter alia, through partnerships with all relevant stakeholders,

*Convinced* of the need, at the highest political level, to marshal the global consensus and commitment required to promote the urgently needed access of all countries to information, knowledge and communication technologies for development so as to reap the full benefits of the information and communication technologies revolution, and to address the whole range of relevant issues related to the information society, through the development of a common vision and understanding of the information society and the adoption of a declaration and plan of action for implementation by Governments, international institutions and all sectors of civil society,

*Recalling* the contributions to international consensus in this field achieved by the Millennium Declaration and the agreements reached at other international conferences and summits in recent years,

*Taking note* of the action plan presented by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union to the Administrative Committee on Coordination<sup>2</sup> for the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society and the creation, by the Administrative Committee on Coordination, of a high-level Summit organizing committee, chaired by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union and consisting of the heads of United Nations bodies and other international organizations interested in participating in the process leading to the Summit,

*Considering* that the Summit is to be convened under the patronage of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the International Telecommunication Union taking the lead role in its preparation, in cooperation with interested United Nations bodies and other international organizations as well as the host countries,

*Recalling* the ministerial declaration concerning information and communication technologies, adopted by the Economic and Social Council at the high-level segment of its substantive session of 2000,<sup>3</sup> and the subsequent work done in this regard, including the creation of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, as well as the welcoming of the forthcoming Summit by the Council in its agreed conclusions 2001/1,<sup>4</sup>

*Recognizing* the need to harness synergies and to create cooperation among the various information and communication technologies initiatives, at the regional and global levels, currently being undertaken or planned to promote and foster the potential of information and communication technologies for development by other international organizations and civil society,

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<sup>1</sup> See resolution 55/2.

<sup>2</sup> The Administrative Committee on Coordination was renamed the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2001/321 of 24 October 2001.

<sup>3</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/55/3/Rev.1)*, chap. III, para. 17.

<sup>4</sup> A/56/3, chap. V, agreed conclusions 2001/1, para 7. For the final text see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth session, Supplement No. 3*.

1. *Welcomes* the resolution adopted by the Council of the International Telecommunication Union at its 2001 session, in which the Council endorsed the proposal of the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union to hold the World Summit on the Information Society at the highest possible level in two phases, the first in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003 and the second in Tunis in 2005, pursuant to resolution 73 adopted by the Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union at its 1998 session, held in Minneapolis, United States of America;
2. *Recommends* that the preparations for the Summit take place through an open-ended intergovernmental preparatory committee, which would define the agenda of the Summit, finalize both the draft declaration and the draft plan of action, and decide on the modalities of the participation of other stakeholders in the Summit;
3. *Invites* the International Telecommunication Union to assume the leading managerial role in the executive secretariat of the Summit and its preparatory process;
4. *Invites* Governments to participate actively in the preparatory process of the Summit and to be represented in the Summit at the highest possible level;
5. *Encourages* effective contributions from and the active participation of all relevant United Nations bodies, in particular the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, and encourages other intergovernmental organizations, including international and regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector to contribute to, and actively participate in, the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Summit and the Summit itself;
6. *Invites* the international community to make voluntary contributions to the special trust fund established by the International Telecommunication Union to support the preparations for and the holding of the Summit, as well as to facilitate the effective participation of representatives of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in the regional meetings to be held in the second half of 2002, in the preparatory meetings to be held in the first half of 2002 and in 2003, and in the Summit itself;
7. *Invites* the Secretary-General of the United Nations to inform all heads of State and Government of the adoption of the present resolution;
8. *Invites* the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union to submit to the General Assembly, at its fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions, through the Economic and Social Council, for information, a report on the preparations for the Summit.

## ANNEX 2

### Contributions to the Summit (as of 1 June)

1. Donations to the WSIS fund

Government of Switzerland (\$255'000+1 mil.CHF*)	1'413'000 CHF
Government of Japan (62'691'000 yen)	782'000 CHF
World Meteorological Organization	15'000 CHF

TOTAL 2'210'000 CHF

(target: 15.6 mil CHF for two phases)

\*1million CHF is designated for LDC fellowships

2. Staff of the Executive Secretariat (salaries are born by their originating entities)

Government of Switzerland	3 experts
Government of Spain	1 expert*
Government of Japan	2 experts
Government of Romania	1 expert
Government of Korea	1 expert
UNESCO	1 expert*
UNITAR	2 experts*
Civil Society (salaries are born by the Canton of Geneva)	5 experts
KDDI Corporation [Japan]	1 expert*

(\* part time basis)

Expected staff secondment: Telecommunication Information Technology [Lebanon]

3. Facilities of the Executive Secretariat

ITU	offices and computers
Government of Switzerland	furniture

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