Egypt

WORKING DOCUMENT PRESENTED TO PREP-COM II

In consideration of the results of Prep Com I and its informal meeting,

In light of the final declaration of the Africa Regional Conference for WSIS (Bamako, 28- 30th of May 2002), The Istanbul Action Plan 2002, and Resolution Plen/7 (Marrakech, 2002) and its annexes concerning ITU input to the World Summit on the Information Society,

In reference to the actions and recommendations of "The Arab Working Group for the WSIS" commissioned by the Council of Arab Ministers for Information and Communication Technology, to prepare for the World Summit on the Information Society,

And acknowledging the different contributions made by the international community in the process of preparation for the World Summit on Information Society,

The Egyptian administration would like **to call for** and **to endorse calls for** the following actions to be incorporated in the first draft of the declaration of principles or of the action plan of the World Summit on the Information Society:

**I.   "Information and communication infrastructure: financing and investment, affordability, development and sustainability.
Wide spectrum of partnerships for investments".**

<u>Proposed elaboration:</u>

- The starting point for any action concerning infrastructure and content development should stem from a national "e-strategy". E-strategies are plans for communication and information technology reflecting commitments of each country, its special conditions and aligning itself with national priorities. To ensure effectiveness and applicability, formulation of e-strategies should involve relevant stakeholders and include regulatory and policy issues. E-strategies should prioritize targets, with clear objectives and policies.
- Countries should be offered appropriate support, in developing their e- strategies including financial and technical support.
- Countries need to develop mechanisms to quantify, measure and benchmark ICT conditions in order to produce an appropriate e- strategy and enable its development.
- "E-strategies" require revision and benchmarking.

- Special attention should be given to inclusion of remote, underprivileged areas and women in e-strategies.
- Affordability: Resorting to Public Private Partnerships (PPP) for the deployment of national and regional Internet backbones, including local Internet exchange points, facilitating setting up of internet exchange points and national ISP associations in developing countries.
- Encouraging PPP by delineating the necessary policies, legislations and mechanisms for governing the telecommunication sector, its liberation and integration in the world economy.
- Making use of PPP to offer affordable access devices including affordable PCs for greater flexibility and competitiveness in the work force.
- Thinking of ways to bring "wireless fidelity (wi-fi) applications" to developing countries, making use of unlicensed radio spectrum to deliver cheap and fast internet access.
- Investing in and deploying broad band communication to bring social and economic benefits and to improve the quality of life of the citizenry.
- Encouraging joint stakeholders' effort to address local obstacles and seek sustainable solutions for infrastructure in underprivileged areas.
- Supporting aggregation of an ICT-cluster of private sector or NGOs active in field for relevant concerted actions.

Actions/ Policies:

- As a first step towards formulation of e-strategies, calling upon developing countries to prepare white papers outlining specific obstacles to ICT deployment in their countries and national goals, to be used as indicators for international effort.
- Creating a resource center for e-strategies including pool of experts and models.
- Creating a universal access fund for infrastructure especially geared to underprivileged areas and women.
- Launching Diaspora networks to gather a pool of experts and best private sector practices.
- Establishing venture funds to finance high-risk initiatives in infrastructure.
- Using affordable and accessible terminal equipment for end- users.
- Establishing national network access points (NAPs) linked to the global internet.
- Building incentive programs to attract FDI and encourage partnerships.
- Utilizing new broadband technologies for access, using different technologies; avoiding discrimination in choice of technologies for connections.
- Reducing cost of network infrastructure and services by increasing the local content in telecommunication projects via the frame agreements with international vendors.
- Attracting new investments in value added and content services via the international telecommunications free zone service (e.g. call centers).
- Ensuring affordability and deployment of infrastructure and working out new business models for the deployment of communication services in new communities.
- Affordability and access could be secured by creating "ICT public areas or centers". All public areas and facilities should be exploited as appropriate access points. Special attention should be given to post offices due to their high level of penetration and large numbers in developing countries. Access points need to offer integrated services.
- Encouraging creation of national registries for domain names.
- Establishing a network of hubs for internet access, linked through traditional and non traditional media (radio, TV…) and refurbishing old technologies.

- PPP to license operators to build, own and operate infrastructure for provision of services.

II. "Identifying and overcoming barriers to the achievements of the information society with a human perspective".

Proposed elaboration:
- Synthesizing obstacles through regional preparatory conferences and seeking tailored solutions.
- Addressing obstacle of lack of awareness about ICT usages/ benefits as being a major and prevalent hindrance to the establishment of the Information Society in developing countries.
- Identifying/ addressing obstacles in formulation of e-strategies as starting point for any action related to establishment of Information society.

Actions/ Policies:
- Launching national e-awareness campaigns concerning ICT benefits to society.
- Enhancing e-awareness through programs tailored to different stakeholders.
- Adding an e-awareness dimension to different ICT applications/ programs.

III. "[Universal and equitable] access to information society and communication sciences and technologies [including technology transfer] and access to and creation of information and knowledge based on culture and linguistic diversity".

Proposed elaboration:
- Content development is instrumental in reflecting the diversity and richness of different cultures.
- Digitization of national heritage ensures its preservation and visibility worldwide.
- Developing content relevant to different segments of population and use of local languages/ dialects.
- Establishing basis for research, development and innovation for development of suitable technologies and sustainable Information Society.

Actions/ Policies:
- Creating content development champions on the national level to encourage development of local information networks and coordinate with relevant authorities.
- Using codes/ standards in software allowing for usage of different languages.
- Establishing open source software community to develop relevant applications.
- Inciting international developers of software to offer their software at discounted prices to developing countries.
- Engaging widespread translation and localization effort.
- Encouraging and supporting national and international programs for digitization of heritage.
- Encouraging development of software in indigenous languages.
- Investigating possible business models to encourage greater accessibility of poor people to relevant content.
- Encouraging PPP initiatives with international companies to help developing countries master the most recent technological developments in ICT
- A depository of R & D in ICT is needed in ITU and in relevant international organizations.
- Establishing win- win formula to include developing countries as members of RTD programs of international agencies and/ or governments.

IV.   "The role of governments, relevant UN organs and agencies, relevant international, regional and national organizations including financial and development institutions, business sector, civil society/NGOs, academic institutions, media and other relevant actors in the development of an information society including the promotion of ICT for development".

<u>Proposed elaboration:</u>

- Multilateral organizations should integrate ICT for development as a strategic, cross-cutting theme in their own developmental effort.
- Bilateral and multilateral effort should target national e-strategies priorities, for consistency and coherence.
- There is a need for one international body (ITU) to ensure synergy between donor agencies and bilateral effort targeting development in the field of ICT to avoid duplication of effort and redundancy.
- Encouraging international corporations operating in developing countries to include a training component of local working force in ICT related subjects.

<u>Policies/ actions:</u>

- Creating a global knowledge management initiative to be used as a repository for knowledge concerning ICT for development.
- Supporting suggestions to empower ITU to play a more active role as the repository of knowledge and expertise for the provision of ICTs for all, for using ICTs for development and for raising confidence and security in the use of ICTs (especially the BDT unit of the ITU – which focuses on developing countries).
- Encouraging partnership of international organizations with Software companies to develop software at minimal cost, especially for SMEs' management.

V. "Capacity Building: human resources development, education, and training".

<u>Proposed elaboration:</u>

- Giving special attention to disenfranchised and marginalized segments of the population (youth, women, people with special needs, illiterates…) through innovative partnerships to disseminate knowledge using ICTs.
- Capacity building should be an integral part of any initiative for technology transfer or access.
- Including a capacity building dimension in all projects, notably e-government and e-learning.
- By virtue of its being the largest potential client for ICT deployment and in view the size of government authorities in developing countries, training for government officials would have a high value added.

<u>Policies/ actions:</u>

- Encouraging/ promoting/ and supporting ICT illiteracy eradication among children, with special attention to girls through special incentives for trainers, effort of NGOs and the private sector.
- Enhancing teacher training and proposing measures for favoring the use of internet in schools and distance learning programs.
- Including basic ICT skills training in schools and universities curricula.

- Encouraging international corporations operating in developing countries to devote percentage of working time of skilled human resources to free training of local civil society in ICT related subjects.
- Connecting research and education networks of developing and industrial countries and supporting them by appropriate infrastructure (high-speed networks or bandwidth pooling)
- Conducting ICT skills training for government employees.
- Increasing the opportunities of training/ education for women and people in underprivileged areas through distance training.
- Developing revolving funds to finance ICT illiteracy eradication in schools and universities.
- Developing free online training, as well as online database of training opportunities available worldwide.
- Giving special attention to ICT training of members of diplomatic missions from developing countries who could act as good communicators/ conveyors of changes and developments in different Information Societies.

VI. "[Information network security]
[Global ICT governance, including information security and network security, data protection, consumer security and user privacy]
[Information security and network security]
[Information security]"

Proposed elaboration:
- Information society is a global phenomenon, issues such as privacy protection, consumer trust, domain names, IPR should involve all stakeholders.
- In order to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs, governments should promote awareness in their societies of cyber security risks.
- Networks and information systems should be robust to prevent, detect and respond to security incidents, as well as detect and prevent them.

Actions/ policies:
- Developing countries should be fully involved in the formation of policies concerning information security. Developing countries' involvement should be subsidized financially and through increasing capacity building of policy makers.
- Developing the necessary framework to the implementation of digital signatures.
- Supporting initiatives to develop a stable and globally recognized framework of standards that would enhance confidence building; a role to be invested in the ITU.
- Exploring policies, regulatory and legal frameworks to address issues related to security, piracy and legal aspects of electronic commerce, to be implemented at the national level.
- Endorsing call for international cooperation among governments, private sector and civil society to enable coordinated actions for legal provision of security.
- Supporting suggestion for ITU to assess information security and misuse of information and telecommunication systems, establishing methods of emergency security incident response, and considering elaboration of international convention on information and communication network security.
- Resolving issue of IPR in order to encourage development in ICT area.

VII- "[[Enabling a [national and international] environment notably] [policies and regulatory frameworks] [and establishing codes of conduct for business enterprises]]".

Proposed elaboration:
- Starting by leveling capacities of developing countries to participate on equal footing in international decision making at the technical level (e.g. forums to standardize and manage the internet).
- Addressing issue of spreading understanding of global internet and other ICT technical and policy issues.
- Developing countries need to have capacity to assess effect of decisions concerning ICT and participate in the implementation process.

Actions/ policies:
- Creating ICT policy awareness through international forums.
- Building technical and policy capacity of developing countries through independent authoritative technical/policy research and analysis to be championed by ITU. In such case, a global network of independent institutes for public policies research on ICT issues with nodes in all developing countries is recommendable in addition to small scale research activities by developing countries on ICT decision making.
- Strengthening national policy institutions and processes by improving information flow and policy coordination between government departments and agencies on ICT subjects.
- Encouraging participation of experts in national delegations to international forums and establishing parallel forums on regional and sub regional levels concerning key issues such IP telephony and 3rd generation mobile system and related dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Improving structure and methods of ICT policy forums by holding meetings in the regions of developing countries to reduce costs.
- Creating forums for the exchange of experience, along the lines of the ITU symposium for regulators.
- Strengthening national policy institutions by improving information flow. Implementing knowledge management techniques and disseminating them.

VIII. "Promotion of development oriented ICT application for all (e.g. education, health, culture, poverty eradication, e-government, employment, business, e-commerce, local content, environment, prevention and early warning systems, vocal and tactile applications)".

Proposed elaboration:
- Developing applications that facilitate the access and use of ICT.
- Shifting from focus on physical infrastructure to information structure in terms of creating suitable funding mechanisms, objectives and strategies.
- Focusing on applications and content geared to marginalized groups.
- Focusing on women and youth.
- Developing citizen driven applications

Proposed Action:

- Using ICT integrated applications as government enabler, fostering synergy, ensuring smooth delivery of citizen driven services.
- Developing ICT applications geared to remove bureaucratic obstacles to investment.
- Using ICT applications to offer information useful for decision making process at political, social and economic levels. Use ICT to decrease government spending through use of prototypes and exchange of expertise.
- Using ICT applications in e-health by improving delivery of medical services in remote and underprivileged areas, medical follow up, data bases and continuous education for doctors through life-long learning.
- Using e-learning applications for a more qualified citizenry, to foster creativity and innovation and increase employability.
- Establishing databases for investment.
- Developing e-campaigns on national causes
- Developing applications for illiteracy eradication.
- Developing electronic medical records to allow rapid information transfer.
- Enhancing the internet based recruitment scheme.
- Developing portals for cultural information and documentation.
- Developing translation applications for portals to the local language.
- Initiating a program of assistance with technical and financial inputs from appropriate forums.
- Using all possible outlets for applications usage including phone, internet.
- Establishing interactive public services, and public procurement.
- Targeting e-services in sectors having high value added, using interoperable interfaces, using broad band connections and ensuring accessibility from all types of digital terminals.

IX. "Encouraging the participation of SMEs especially from developing countries in the ICT field".

Proposed elaboration:

- E-readiness of SMEs should be measured and benchmarked according to relevant standards pertaining to developing countries: e.g. clustering network access, networked learning, networked society, networked economy, and network policy.
- Enhancing the skills of SMEs in ICT.
- Providing the necessary financial, infrastructural and legal frameworks for the operation of SMEs in the field of ICT.
- Increasing competitiveness of SMEs by increasing their e-readiness.
- Fostering innovation of SMEs

Actions/ policies:
- Developing special partnership mechanism and business models for fostering clustering and partnerships between SMEs in developing and industrialized countries.
- Establishing the necessary legal framework and infrastructure to achieve standardization of e-commerce.
- Developing SME portals; a combined access to public authorities to facilitate SMEs' operations.

- Developing models of sustainability for various ICT projects and initiating pilots by international agencies to be adopted and generalized later by SMEs; for instance franchising IT clubs.
- Developing SMEs' incubators.
-   Donor funded ICT infrastructure projects in developing countries should be partially implemented by companies from developing countries to achieve a greater value added and technology transfer. Establishing e-business support network for SMEs; as a resource network to share expertise and know how to strengthen coordination action in support of SMEs in the field of e-business .
- Encouraging establishment of micro credit facilities and risk capital funds for micro credit facilities for SMEs.
- Developing alliances with international companies.
- Encouraging entrepreneurial portals.
- Assessing what ICT needs/ requirements are of SMEs in developing countries. Identifying gaps in knowledge and expertise.
- Establishing an incentive system in different relevant entities for SMEs using ICT in developing countries.

X. "Follow up and assessment"

The Egyptian administration is flexible to include the item: "follow up and assessment" as appropriate as a separate theme or to be reflected in the plan of action or final declaration as per international consensus.

Proposed elaboration:

Developing a follow up and assessment mechanism for the World Summit on the Information Society to measure related achievements/ developments of the international community, in the light of the declaration and action plan from December 2003 to Tunis 2005

Policies and Actions:

- Developing indicators geared to developing countries conditions.

- Involving developing countries in the decision making process for formulation of qualitative and quantitative benchmarks and indicators covering the different dimensions of e-strategies and for measuring barriers to information society.

- Identifying national authorities mandated to undertake such task, to ensure coordination and recognition of indicators on the international level.