

Statement of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the Swiss Federation of Journalists (FSJ) to the second Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

We, the signatory organisations:

Conscious of the absence of consideration of the role of the media during the official preparatory work for the WSIS

Concerned that the Summit almost exclusively focuses on new technologies of communication

Aware of the advantages offered by new technologies, but worried by their dangerous potential effect on quality and reliability of information

Willing to use the information society to reinforce international solidarity, promote peace, tolerance and the respect of all people

Convinced that the WSIS offers a unique opportunity for developing a concrete partnership within the information society

Call on all participants to the WSIS, and especially national delegations to the Summit:

To recognise the fundamental importance of articles 19, 27 and 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to commit themselves to apply these articles in a concrete manner. Such articles relate especially to freedom of expression and the right of information. Their respect implies that information remains a public good; that free access to public sources of information is guaranteed; that journalists are free to exercise professional independence; and that public service broadcasting remains independent

To acknowledge that the rights, duties and protection of journalists stemming from the public's right to be informed apply equally to "traditional" media and new technologies in every country

To limit, through legislation, excessive media concentration that undermines pluralism and free expression and sees information only as a commodity

To commit themselves to a tripartite effort to support media both of developing countries and media serving vulnerable sectors in every country. Such efforts require professional training, respect for professional independence, security and protection of journalists, support to local content and community media, durability of materials and software, easier access to new technologies.

We call for these concerns to be taken into account in the preparation of the WSIS and to be included in the final Declaration and Action Plan of the Summit.

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

Swiss Federation of Journalists (FSJ)
Geneva 17th February 2003