Report of the Second Meeting of the
Preparatory Committee

WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Geneva, 17-28 February 2003

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I   Introduction

1   In its Resolution 56/183 of 21 December 2001, the General Assembly of the United Nations welcomed the resolution of the Council of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) endorsing the proposal put forward by the ITU Secretary-General for the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society. The General Assembly also invited ITU to assume the leading role in organizing the Summit and its preparatory process, in cooperation with other interested organizations and partners.

2   The General Assembly further recommended that the preparations for the Summit take place through an open-ended intergovernmental preparatory committee that would define the agenda of the Summit, finalize both the draft declaration and the draft plan of action, and decide on the modalities for the participation of other stakeholders in the Summit.

II   Organization

A   Opening and duration of the meeting

3   The Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on the Information Society held its second session from 17 to 28 February 2003 in Geneva. The committee held four Plenary Meetings and 9 subcommittee meetings.

4   Mr Adama Samassékou, President of the Preparatory Committee, opened the first Plenary Meeting. Opening addresses were made by Mr Yoshio Utsumi, Secretary-General of ITU and Chairman of the High-Level Summit Organizing Committee (HLSOC), and, on behalf of the host country, by Mr Moritz Leuenberger, Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications.

B   Agenda of the first Plenary Meeting

5   The Preparatory Committee adopted the agenda of the first Plenary Meeting as contained in Document WSIS/PC-2/ADM/4. The agenda was as follows:

1) Opening of the first Plenary Meeting of PrepCom-2
2) Approval of the agenda of the first Plenary Meeting
3) Approval of the agenda of PrepCom-2
4) Organization of work at PrepCom-2
5) Election of the Chairman of Subcommittee 2 and of the Rapporteur for PrepCom-2
6) Accreditation of NGOs, civil society and business entities
7) Report of the ITU Secretary-General on activities leading to PrepCom-2
8) Report of the President of the Preparatory Committee
9) Reports from the regional preparatory conferences
10) Other business

C   Agenda of the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom-2)

6   The Preparatory Committee adopted the agenda of PrepCom-2, as contained in Document WSIS/PC-2/DOC/1. The agenda was as follows:

1) Approval of the agenda
2) Election of the Chairman of Subcommittee 2 and of the Rapporteur for PrepCom-2
3) Accreditation of NGOs, civil society and business entities

4)   Report of the ITU Secretary-General

5)   Report of the President of the Preparatory Committee

6)   Reports from the regional preparatory conferences

7)   Multi-stakeholder round tables (informal part of PrepCom-2)

8)   Report on the outcome of the round tables

9)   Draft WSIS Action Plan and draft WSIS Declaration

10)   Report of Subcommittee 2

11)   Arrangements for the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee

12)   Adoption of the report of the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee

13)   Other business

D   Organization of work

7   The Executive Secretary informed participants about the annotated agenda (Document WSIS/PC-2/ADM/3) and the draft time management plan (Document WSIS/PC-2/ADM/2).

E   Election of officers

8   Based on the Bureau's recommendation that the chairmanship of the subcommittees should rotate at each session of the Preparatory Committee, the Preparatory Committee was asked to elect a new chairman for Subcommittee-2. That agenda item was postponed to Thursday, 20 February 2003 at 1000 hours, at which meeting of the Plenary H.E. Mr Yasuaki Nogawa (Japan) was elected by acclamation.

9   The Preparatory Committee further elected by acclamation Mr Andrey Pirogov (Russia) as Rapporteur for the second session of the Preparatory Committee.

F   Accreditation

10   The Preparatory Committee approved the lists of entities having requested accreditation (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/9 Annexes 1 and 2), and took note of the list of entities in consultative status with ECOSOC which had indicated an interest in participating in PrepCom-2 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/9 Annex 3).

G   Report of the ITU Secretary-General on activities leading up to PrepCom-2

11   The ITU Secretary-General and Chairman of the High-Level Summit Organizing Committee (HLSOC) provided a report on the activities he had undertaken, as well as on those undertaken by the United Nations system, for PrepCom-2. He also provided information on activities undertaken by ITU, including its Plenipotentiary Conference (Marrakesh, 2002), in relation to WSIS (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/2 and Add.1).

H   Report of the President of the Preparatory Committee

12   The President of the Preparatory Committee provided a report on the activities he had undertaken for PrepCom-2 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/10 and Corr.1).

I Reports from the regional preparatory conferences

13 The Preparatory Committee heard reports from the following regional preparatory conferences:

• African Regional Conference, Bamako, Mali, 28-30 May 2002 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/4);

• Pan-European Regional Conference, Bucharest, Romania, 7-9 September 2002 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/5);

• Asia-Pacific Regional Conference, Tokyo, Japan, 13-15 January 2003 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/6);

• Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference, Bávaro, Dominican Republic, 29-31 January 2003 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/7);

• Western Asia Conference, Beirut, Lebanon, 4-6 February 2003 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/8).

J Attendance

14 In accordance with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 56/183, the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on the Information Society was open to the full participation of all States that were members of the United Nations or any of the specialized agencies.

15 The following 146 States were represented: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People′s Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Korea (Republic of), Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uganda, Uruguay, Vatican, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

16 The European Community was also represented in line with the Rules of Procedure.

17 Palestine, having received a standing invitation from the United Nations General Assembly, was represented at the PrepCom

18 The following United Nations bodies were represented: International Trade Centre, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations ICT Task Force, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Development Fund for Women, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, United Nations Mission to Kosovo, United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, United Nations University, United Nations Volunteers.

19   The following specialized agencies were represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Labour Office, International Telecommunication Union, The World Bank, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Universal Postal Union, World Health Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization and World Meteorological Organization.

20   The following invited intergovernmental organizations were represented: Agence National de la Francophonie, Asociación Hispanoamericana de Centros de Investigación y Empresas de Telecomunicaciones, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, African Telecommunications Union, The European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), Commonwealth of Independent States, Commonwealth Science Council, Commonwealth Secretariat, Council of Europe, Inter-American Development Bank, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Telecommunication Satellite Organization, League of Arab States, African Union, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Telecommunications, Red de información tecnológica Latinoamericana.

21   A large number of non-governmental organizations and business sector entities, including ITU Sector Members, participated.

K   Documentation

22   The second meeting of the Preparatory Committee had before it the following official, administrative and working documents:

• Draft agenda of PrepCom-2 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/1);

• Report of the ITU Secretary-General on activities leading to PrepCom-2 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/2 and Add.1);

• Outcome of the informal meeting of Subcommittee 2 of PrepCom-1 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/3);

• Report of the African Regional Conference, Bamako, 28-30 May 2002 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/4);

• Report of the Pan-European Regional Conference, Bucharest, 7-9 November 2002 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/5);

• Report of the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference, Tokyo, 13-15 January 2003 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/6);

• Report of the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference, Bávaro, 29-31 January 2003 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/7 and Corr.1);

• Report of the Western Asia Regional Conference, Beirut (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/8);

• Accreditation of NGOs, civil society and business sector entities to the WSIS (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/9);

• Report of the President on the preparation process leading to PrepCom-2 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/10 and Corr.1);

- Round tables (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/11);
- Consolidated document of input from regional conferences (WSIS/PC-2/TD/GEN/1(Rev.2));
- Draft Declaration based on the discussion in the working group of Subcommittee 2 (WSIS/PC-2/TD/GEN/0002);
- Draft Action Plan based on the discussion in the working group of Subcommittee 2 (WSIS/PC-2/TD/GEN/0003);
- Draft time management plan (WSIS/PC-2/ADM/2);
- Draft annotated agenda (WSIS/PC-2/ADM/3);
- Draft agenda of the first Plenary Meeting (WSIS/PC-2/ADM/4).

These documents can be found on the WSIS website at the following address: http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/.

III   Visionary Panel

23   A Visionary Panel took place on the afternoon of Monday, 17 February 2003. The Panel was chaired by the Secretary-General of ITU and moderated by Maria Livanos Cattaui, Secretary-General, International Chamber of Commerce. Visionary addresses were delivered by:

–   H.E. Mr Ion Iliescu, President of Romania

–   H.E. Maître Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal

–   Professor Lawrence Lessig, Stanford Law School, United States

–   Mr Jacques Attali, Writer and Chair, PlaNet Finance

The texts of these addresses can be found on the WSIS website at: http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/.

The President of the PrepCom conveyed an expression of appreciation.

IV   Multi-stakeholder thematic round tables

24   In accordance with Annex 2 of the final report of the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom-1), eight multi-stakeholder thematic round tables were organized on Tuesday, 18 and Wednesday, 19 February 2003 as an informal part of PrepCom-2 on the following themes:

1) ICT infrastructure and financing
2) Access to knowledge, open access, cultural and linguistic diversity and local content
3) ICTs and security
4) The needs of special groups
5) Capacity-building
6) Enabling environment: legal and regulatory framework
7) ICT applications and services
8) The role of the different stakeholders in the information society

Reports on the outcome of the multi-stakeholder round tables were made to the Plenary of the Preparatory Committee on Monday, 24 February 2003, under the authority of the President, Mr Adama Samassékou. Document 11 (WSIS/PC-2/DOC/11) contains a compilation of these reports and can be found, in six languages, on the WSIS website at the following address: http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/.

V   Draft WSIS Action Plan and draft WSIS Declaration and Work of Subcommittee 2

25   Subcommittee 2 met nine times during PrepCom-2 under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr Yasuaki Nogawa (Japan) and took the following action:

> i)   A small working group was set up under the chairmanship of Mr Adama Samassékou, President of PrepCom, to work on the establishment of a general structure for the draft Declaration of Principles and Action Plan of the World Summit on the Information Society. Subcommittee 2 approved this general structure on Friday, 21 February 2003, as a basis for further work.
>
> ii) The Executive Secretariat was requested to revise the compilation document on the outcomes of regional conferences, in accordance with the above-mentioned general structure. The revised document is contained in Document WSIS/PC-2/DT/1(Rev.2).
>
> iii) A working group, open to all States, was established under the chair of Ms Lyndall Shope-Mafole (South Africa) to begin work on the draft Declaration of Principles and Action Plan of the World Summit on the Information Society. The Observers' statements were heard each day in Subcommittee 2, for a period of some thirty minutes, immediately after the daily progress report of the Chairman of the Working Group.
>
> As of Thursday, 27 February 2003, the working group was open to all Observers.

26   On the afternoon of Thursday, 27 February 2003, the Chair of the Working Group reported to the Subcommittee on the progress the group had made on the draft Declaration and Action Plan. It was noted that, owing to time constraints, it had not been possible to include all inputs received in those draft working documents, but that these had been noted in synthesis tables, which would be further updated. The working group recommended to the Subcommittee that:

> a) the two documents (WSIS/PC-2/DT/2 and WSIS/PC-2/DT/3, as revised, and the compilation table related to WSIS/PC-2/DT/3,) represented work in progress from the working group. These documents should serve as the basic working documents for the further work of the PrepCom. All of the text should be in square brackets;
>
> b) the Chair of the Working Group, with the help of the Executive Secretariat, should be mandated to complete the work of incorporating the comments made into the two documents and should provide a revised draft by 21 March 2003. The working documents would then be posted on the website and sent to all accredited participants;
>
> c) the inputs from the Observers at the meetings should be incorporated into the revised documents.

27   The Subcommittee took note of the report of the Chairman of the Working Group, but was not able to reach agreement on recommendation c) concerning inputs from Observers.

28   The Plenary agreed that inputs from Observers would be reflected in a separate section of the revised documents with a distinct title, on the understanding that proposals by governments would constitute the basis of negotiations. The PrepCom adopted the report of Subcommittee 2

(annexed) with the above understanding and agreed that the two documents (WSIS/PC-2/DT/2 and WSIS/PC-2/DT/3), once revised pursuant to the above recommendations, should serve as the basic working documents for the further work of the PrepCom.

VI   Inter-sessional mechanism

29   At its last Plenary on Friday 28 February 2003, the PrepCom adopted a proposal which outlines the work to be carried out over the inter-sessional period between PrepCom-2 and PrepCom-3. That proposal is attached to this report.

VII   Arrangements for the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee

30   PrepCom-2 is responsible for deciding on the date and venue of PrepCom-3. It was decided that PrepCom-3 would be held in Geneva, at the CICG, from 15 to 26 September 2003.

31   The Secretary-General of the ITU provided information on the possible structure and framework of the Summit. The core Summit event would be held over a three-day period, from 10-12 December 2003, at Palexpo, in Geneva. The primary responsibility for the organization of the core Summit event, which could also include high-level roundtables, would rest with the Executive Secretariat. Side events and parallel events would be organized in addition to the core Summit event. The assignment of rooms for these events would rest with the Host Government. Guidelines on the organization of these side and parallel events would soon be developed, and posted on the WSIS website.

VIII   Other business

32   At its third Plenary Meeting on Monday, 24 February 2003, the Preparatory Committee heard brief statements from UNESCO, a representative for the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the International Chamber of Commerce and the Bureau of Civil Society Caucus.

33   The third Plenary Meeting was informed by the President of the PrepCom about consultations that had taken place on the articulation between Geneva and Tunis, including the formation of a coordination group consisting of the host countries, the ITU Secretary-General and the President of the PrepCom. This group will cooperate closely until 2005.

34   The President of the PrepCom informed that the first phase would result in a Declaration of Principles and an Action Plan setting forth a vision and covering the essential issues associated with the information society. The second phase of the Summit, following on from the results of the first phase held in Geneva in 2003, would deal with the transition towards a knowledge society. It could result in the adoption of an instrument in the form, for example, of a charter, as well as of a Tunis Agenda enshrining digital solidarity at the global level and setting forth regional action plans. The second phase would be preceded by structured preparations during 2004 and 2005 which would include the organization of PrepComs.

35   The Tunisian Government announced that the dates of the second phase, to be held in Tunis, would be 16 to 18 November 2005.

36   On the morning of February 28th, the Preparatory Committee heard brief statements from H.E. Mr Omar Hiale, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva, Mr Roberto Zachmann, ILO, Mr Nasr Hajji, Parliamentarian and former Secretary of State to the Prime Minister in charge of Post, Telecommunication Technologies and Information, Morocco, Ms Ayesha Hassan of the International Chamber of Commerce and Mr Gabou Gueye of Union Network International.

IX   Adoption of the report of the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee

37   The report of the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee was adopted during the final Plenary Meeting, on Friday, 28 February 2003. The Rapporteur was entrusted with the task of finalizing the report, with the support of the Executive Secretariat.

X   Annexes

Annex 1   *Report of Sub-committee 2 (Ref. DT/5 (Rev1))*
        Appendix 1 to Annex 1 *- Draft Declaration (Ref. DT/2)*
        Appendix 2 to Annex 1 *- Draft Action Plan (Ref. DT/3)*
Annex 2   *Proposal for the next steps of the work of the PrepCom of the WSIS, including the intersessional period (Ref. DT/6 (Rev1))*

ANNEX 1

REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE 2

Sub-committee 2 met nine times during PrepCom 2 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr Yasuaki Nogawa (Japan) and took the following action:

(i)   A small Working Group was set up under the Chairmanship of Mr Adama Samassekou, President of PrepCom, to work on the establishment of a general structure for the draft Declaration of Principles and Action Plan of the World Summit. This general structure was approved, as a basis for further work, by the Subcommittee on Friday 21 February.

(ii)   The Executive Secretariat was requested to revise the compilation document on the outcomes of regional conferences. The revised document is contained in document (Doc.WSIS/PC-2/DT/1(Rev.2)-E).

(iii)   A Working Group, open to all States, was established under the Chair of Ms. Lyndall Shope-Mafole (South Africa) to begin work on the draft Declaration of Principles and Action Plan of the World Summit on the Information Society. The Observers' statements, for a period of about thirty minutes, were heard each day in Subcommittee 2 immediately after the daily progress report of the Chair of the Working Group.

As of Thursday, 27 February 2003, the Working Group was open to all Observers.

(iv)   The Chair of the Working Group informed the Subcommittee, in the afternoon of Thursday, 27 February 2003, of the progress it had made on the draft Declaration and Action Plan. It was noted that because of time constraints, it had not been possible to include all inputs received in these draft working documents but that they had been noted in synthesis tables, which would be further updated. The Working Group recommended to the Subcommittee that:

(a) the two documents (WSIS/PC-2/DT/2 and WSIS/PC-2/DT/3 and the synthesis document relating to WSIS/PC-2/DT/3, as revised) annexed to its report, and which represent work in progress from the Working Group, serve as the basic working documents for the further work of the PrepCom. All of the text would be in square brackets.

(b) the Chair of the Working Group, with the help of the Executive Secretariat, be mandated to complete the work of incorporating the comments made to the two documents and provide a revised draft by 21 March 2003. The working documents would then be posted on the website and sent to all accredited participants.

[(c) the inputs from the Observers at the meetings be incorporated into the revised documents.]

[(v) The Subcommittee took note of the report of the Chair of the Working Group and agreed to recommend to the Plenary that the two documents (WSIS/PC-2/DT/2 and WSIS/PC-2/DT/3) attached to its report, once revised, should serve as the basic working documents for the further work of the PrepCom].

Appendices: 2

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Appendix 1 to Annex 1

DRAFT DECLARATION

Based on the

DISCUSSION IN THE WORKING GROUP OF SUB-COMMITTEE 2

A. Preamble

1   An inclusive global information society is one where all persons, without distinction, are empowered freely to create, receive, share and utilize information and knowledge for their economic, social, cultural and political development.

2   The World Summit on the Information Society offers an historic opportunity to realize this vision.

3   By harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies, in all areas of human life, we can now provide new and better responses to vital and longstanding issues, such as in poverty reduction and wealth creation, as well as equity and social justice.

4   Knowledge has always been at the core of human progress and endeavour. Yet now, as never before, knowledge and information constitute the fundamental sources of well-being and progress. Our individual and collective ability to create and share knowledge has become the driving force in shaping all our futures.

5   Today, the dramatic increase in the volume, speed and ubiquity of information flows that has been made possible through new information and communications technologies has already brought about profound changes in the demands and expectations upon government, business, civil society and the individual.

6   Meanwhile the information and communication revolution is still in its infancy. The untapped potential of ICT to improve productivity and quality of life is a serious issue for many developing countries, which risk being left behind.

7   Faced with complex and ever-evolving challenges, all stakeholders have critical choices to make. New forms of solidarity and cooperation, new modes of social and economic organization and new ways of thinking are called for.

8   In order to translate the rhetoric of the information and communication revolution into equitable growth and sustainable development on a global scale, and to realize the potential of ICTs to empower people, all stakeholders need to embrace fully their new roles and responsibilities.

9   Information and communication technologies (ICTs) should be regarded as a tool and not as an end in themselves.

10   In all parts of the world remarkable success has been witnessed in using information and knowledge for individual and collective development. The Summit provides a platform to allow the dissemination and replication of such success stories and best practices. In so doing it will contribute to reducing disparities, including those of the "digital divide".

11   To take advantage of the unprecedented win-win situation that an information society can yield, concrete action and global commitment are now required.

B. Common Vision

12   The Information Society is an economic and social system where knowledge and information constitute the fundamental sources of well-being and progress and represent an opportunity for our countries and societies. The development of that society should take place within a global and local context of fundamental principles such as those of respect for human rights, democracy, environmental protection, the advancement of peace, the right to development, fundamental freedoms, economic progress and social equity.

13   The vision of an Information Society is one where all persons, without distinction of any kind, exercise their right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to [create,] seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

14   The concept of an Information Society is one in which highly-developed ICT networks, equitable and ubiquitous access to information, appropriate content in accessible formats and effective communication can help people to achieve their potential, promote sustainable economic and social development, improve quality of life for all, alleviate poverty and hunger, and facilitate participatory decision-making processes. Hence they enable the sharing of social and economic benefits by all, by means of ubiquitous access to information networks, while preserving diversity and cultural heritage.

15   The Information Society should be people-centred, with citizens and communities at its core. It should be at the service of humankind, including disadvantaged and marginalized groups and those with special needs. To reach its full potential, the Information Society requires the genuine participation, contribution and commitment of all, especially Governments, private sector and civil society.

16   The Information Society we envisage is one that reduces poverty and creates wealth to satisfy the basic needs and rights of all peoples. The Information Society offers great potential in promoting international peace, sustainable development, democracy, transparency, accountability, and good governance.

17   Full exploitation of the new opportunities provided by information and communication technologies (ICTs) and of their combination with traditional media, as well as an adequate response to the challenge of the digital divide, should be important parts in any strategy, national and international, aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and gender inequality.[1] Without the widespread and innovative use of ICTs, the MDGs may prove impossible to attain.

18   The right to communicate and the right to access information for citizens should be considered a basic human right.

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[1] Elements from para 2-4 of the UN Millennium Declaration to be inserted later.

19   The use of ICTs in human resources and human capacity development, including ICT literacy, should be promoted as a continuous and fundamental requirement of the Information Society, with special reference to people with disabilities. Education and training, the fostering of science, innovation and technology deserve full and adequate support.

20   Recognising that confidence, trust and security are essential to the full functioning of the Information Society, guarantees should be provided to users of media, communication and information networks against cybercrime and child pornography as well as protection of privacy and confidentiality.

21   Preservation of cultural identity and linguistic diversity of hallmarks of a successful information society. Creativity and the creation, processing dissemination and conservation of local content can best be stimulated through an adequate balance between intellectual property rights and the needs of the users of information.

22   The existence of independent and free communication media, in accordance with the legal system of each country, is an essential requirement for freedom of expression and a guarantee of the plurality of information. Unhindered access by individuals and communication media to information sources shall be ensured and strengthened in order to promote the existence of vigorous public opinion as a pillar of civil responsibility in accordance with article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international and regional instruments dealing with human rights.

C. Key Principles

23   The Summit should be aimed at extending the benefits of the Information Society to all and should be development-oriented. The Global Information Society should address the interests of all nations, most particularly, the interests of the developing countries, in a manner that secures the fair, balanced and harmonious development of all the people of the world.

24   A primary aim of the Information Society must be to facilitate full utilization of information and communication technologies (ICT) at all levels in society and hence enable the sharing of social and economic benefits by all, by means of ubiquitous access to information networks, while preserving diversity and cultural heritage.

25   In building an Information Society, we should take into account:

−   Gender issues: Unequal power relations and other social and cultural aspects have contributed to differential access, participation and status for men and women. In this regard, more attention should be given to overcoming these constraints and ensuring that women can equally benefit from the increased use of ICTs for empowerment and full participation in shaping political, economic and social development;

−   Special circumstances of Small Island Developing States (SIDS): These countries, with fragile ecosystems vulnerable to environmental hazards, and characterized by small, homogenous markets, high costs of access and equipment, human resource constraints exacerbated by the problem of "brain-drain", limited access to networks and remote locations, will require particular attention and tailored solutions to meet their needs;

26   The social and economic progress of countries and the well-being of persons and communities shall occupy a central place in activities aimed at building an information society.

27   The information society shall be oriented towards eliminating existing socio-economic differences in our societies, averting the emergence of new forms of exclusion and becoming a positive force for all of the world's people by helping to reduce the disparity between developed and developing countries, as well as within countries.

28   The information society should serve the public interest and the aim of social well-being by contributing to the eradication of poverty, the creation of wealth, the promotion and enhancement of social development, democratic participation, linguistic diversity and cultural identity, while at the same time ensuring equal opportunities for gaining access to information and communication technologies and at all times upholding the principle of legality to ensure its efficient and orderly use.

29   It will be necessary to formulate an agenda for action aimed at achieving specific objectives leading to the transition into an information society, emphasizing the needs of youth, women and underprivileged groups by selecting appropriate and affordable technologies for implementation, thus bridging the digital divide.

1) Information and communication infrastructure

30   Access to information and free flow of information are fundamental human rights. Equitable and appropriate access for all is essential for a well-developed, affordable and easily-accessed information and communication network infrastructures. All citizens should be provided with the means of using ICT networks as a public service.

31   An adequately developed infrastructure is the precondition for secure, reliable and affordable access to information by all stakeholders, and for the upgrading of relevant services. The improvement of connectivity is of special importance in this respect, and it is undertaken by the public and the private sectors, acting in partnership. Community-led development is a critical element in the strategy for achieving universal access to information and knowledge. Community access centres and public services (such as post offices, libraries, schools) can provide effective means for promoting universal access in particular in remote areas, as an important factor of their development. Moreover, in order to ensure greater affordability, policy action should aim at setting up an appropriate open and competitive environment.

32   Information and communication services should be provided to disadvantaged groups in society, in particular those from lower income groups, to contribute to the alleviation of poverty.

33   In building an Information Society, we should take into account the unique geographic features and demographic diversity of nations and regions.

34   Universal access to information and communication technologies shall be an objective of all the stakeholders involved in building the information society, in accordance with the legal framework in force in each country.

35   While technology is significantly improving and costs are decreasing, it is important to ensure that access to information will be made available to all segments of the population. This is still not the case in many developing countries. Rural communities and poor strata of the population still cannot afford information services. Through a combination of new and more efficient technologies, common and shared access, open systems, and universal service provision, information and its ensuing knowledge should be considered vital, and prioritized and delivered accordingly.

36   It is advisable to devise ICT-specific indicators, which realistically reflect needs and performance of developing countries. Such indicators should take into account the particular conditions of developing countries where several people often share access to the Internet and a

whole community may share usage of ICT equipment and infrastructure. Targets should also be set to benchmark penetration of ICT services within communities at urban and rural levels.

2) Access to information and knowledge

37   Individuals and organisations should benefit from access to information, knowledge and ideas. Notably, information in the public domain should be easily accessible. Information is the basis of a well-functioning and transparent decision-making process and a prerequisite for any democracy. Knowledge is the key agent for transforming both our global society and local communities.

38   The sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development can be enhanced by ensuring equitable access to information for educational, scientific, economic, social, political and cultural activities, leading to a vibrant public domain of information.

39   It is recognized that the barriers to equitable access result from differences in education and literacy levels, gender, age, income and connectivity. In this context, particular attention should be given to least developed countries, economies in transition and post-conflict countries.

40   The integration of all socially vulnerable sectors, including, but not limited to, older adults, children, rural communities, indigenous peoples, differently abled persons, the unemployed, displaced persons and migrants shall be a priority objective in building the information society. To that end, barriers to participation, such as illiteracy, the lack of user training, cultural and linguistic constraints and particular conditions of access to the relevant technology, shall be overcome.

3) The role of governments, the business sector and civil society in the promotion of ICTs for development

41   All partners—public, private sector and civil society organizations—have a stake in the development of communications and should be fully involved in decision making at the local, national, regional and international levels. This will require:

- forging new forms of partnership based on complementarities among the various categories of public, private sector and civil society stakeholders;

- establishing and/or strengthening at the local, national, regional and international levels, institutions that will create greater coherence and achieve better synergy in developing the information society.

42   The transition to the information society shall be led by the Governments in close coordination with private enterprise and civil society. An integral approach shall be taken that provides for an open and participatory dialogue with the whole of society in order to incorporate all stakeholders involved in the process of building a common vision for the development of an information society in the region.

43   The importance of the ICT sector has grown over time, especially in the developed world. However, developing countries are lagging behind in terms of ICT manufacturing capabilities, imports of embodied ICT technology and, more importantly, research and development (R and D), incubation schemes and venture capital investment. It is essential for governments to encourage investment in the creation of regional ICT production facilities.

44   The growth in the demand for applications should spawn the dynamics for creating a favourable environment for the private sector to invest and meet the challenges that applications present in moving towards the information society. The demand created by e-government, e-learning, e-health and e-business applications should induce the introduction and development of new services.

4) Capacity building

45   People should be enabled to acquire the necessary skills in order to participate actively in and understand the Information Society and benefit in full from the possibilities it offers. Individuals should be engaged in defining their own needs and in the development of programs to meet those needs. Technological change will progressively require life-long learning and continuous training by all. Public policy should take into account inequalities in access to quality education and training, particularly in the case of vulnerable groups and underserved or remote areas. Specific attention has to be paid to training of trainers.

46   The use of ICTs for capacity-building and human resource development, including ICT literacy, should be promoted, with special reference to the requirements of people with disabilities.

47   Building and exploiting processes for education, establishing new institutional forms, including incubation schemes and technology-based business start-up support programmes as well as other enterprise promotion modalities, and creating training and technology assessment networks that specifically target educational systems, are of utmost importance.

48   Institutional capacities to collect, organize, store and share information and knowledge are as critically important as human capacities.

5) Security

49   To realise the full benefits of ICTs, networks and information systems should be sufficiently robust to prevent, detect and to respond appropriately to security incidents. However, effective security of information systems is not merely a matter of government and law enforcement practices, nor of technology. A global culture of cyber-security needs to be developed.

50   ICTs can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure within States, to the detriment of their security in both civil and military fields, as well as in relation to the functioning of their economies. It is also necessary to prevent the use of information resources or technologies for criminal or terrorist purposes.

51   Governments should promote awareness in their societies of cyber security risks and seek to strengthen international co-operation, including with the private sector so as to build confidence and trust in the Information Society.

52   The issue of Internet security is critical. National and regional efforts should be coordinated, taking into consideration the importance of secure infrastructure and data flow in concordance with international standards and guidelines.

6) Enabling environment

53   The existence of a supportive and predictable legal framework is an important prerequisite for enhancing trust in ICTs and e-business.

54   To maximise the economic and social benefits of the Information Society, governments need to create a trustworthy, transparent, and non-discriminatory legal, regulatory and policy environment, capable of promoting technological innovation and competition, thus favouring the necessary investments, mainly from the private sector, in the deployment of infrastructures and development of new services.

55   In building an Information Society, we should take into account the imbalance of information flows.

56   Access to information and communication technologies shall be secured in accordance with international law, bearing in mind that some countries are affected by unilateral measures which are not compatible with it and which create obstacles for international trade[2].

57   Strengthening the policy-making capacity in the area of ICTs to enhance national and regional ICT policy-making processes and institutions is of utmost importance. ICTs will advance development if related efforts and programmes are integrated in a national development strategy. Governments are the primary actors, in concert with the private sector and civil society, in the pursuit of access for all to ICTs for development.

58   The responsibility for root directories and domain names should rest with a suitable international [inter-governmental] organization and should take multilingualism into consideration. Countries' top-level-domain-names and Internet Protocol (IP) address assignment should be the sovereign right of those countries. Internet governance should be multilateral, democratic and transparent and should take into account the needs of the public and private sectors as well as those of the civil society.

7) ICT-Applications

59   Cooperation and collaboration should be enhanced through the development of applications and content suited to local needs.

60   The effort to build an information society shall encompass access to information and communication technologies, the utilization of these technologies through the articulation of local, regional and global actions, and their use for public and social purposes in such areas as government, health care and learning.

61   E-government empowers citizens through access to information, improves interactions with business and industry, and leads to better delivery of government services to citizens and more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be greater convenience, improved efficiency of the economic system, increased transparency and less corruption, leading to increased possibility for developing countries to attract foreign investments and financial assistance.

62   Member States should ensure that all schools, universities and other learning institutions have Internet and multimedia access for educational, training, re-skilling and research purposes. Attention must be directed to the training of teachers to adapt to the new learning environment.

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[2]   Reservations that have been made to this paragraph:

Statement of the United States: "The United States of America reserves on this paragraph and submits its objection to the language, which is inappropriate and is inconsistent with the purpose of the Conference"

Statement of Canada: "Canada appreciates the efforts of the Host Government and other Governments to achieve a consensus text for this paragraph. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, Canada cannot associate itself with the final text of that paragraph."

Legal, economic and social issues that are considered as obstacles to the development of the e-learning process in the region should be identified.

63   Healthcare applications over networks could provide unique opportunities for patients and practitioners alike, particularly for those from developing countries provided the infrastructure supports such applications. Healthcare is becoming information intensive. Hospital management systems need to be encouraged and the Internet increasingly used to obtain medical information. Health information networks between points of care, such as hospitals, laboratories and homes, electronic health cards and online health services have already been implemented or are being considered in many developed countries. Member States should take advantage of the success achieved in this field.

64   The restructuring of business processes to make use of digital technologies is essential, particularly for small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) and public policies should support this process. These policies should also aim at strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit of the business community.

8) Cultural identity and linguistic diversity, local content and media development

65   The Information Society is founded on respect for, and enjoyment of, cultural expression. New ICTs should stimulate cultural diversity and plurilingualism and enhance the capacity of governments to develop active policies to that end.

66   The creation of local content should be accorded high priority.

67   Technology supply should be diversified through:

- the implementation of an operational plan of action geared to the cultural and linguistic specificities of all countries.

- Investment and funding strategies should be pursued through assistance with content creation and democratisation of access with particular emphasis to women and the youth.

68   Multilingualism should be promoted and cultural diversity maintained as the driving force for the process of developing content for local and international use.

69   ICTs can strengthen traditional media such as broadcasting and print, which will continue to have an important role in disseminating content in the Information Society.

70   Active steps towards encouraging the production of local content should be taken. Steps involve the establishment of conditions for development of digital content and local multimedia industries including intellectual property right provisions, promotion of tools for the management of local languages, including internationalised domain names, as a means for promoting multilingualism and investment in projects aiming at the promotion of this objective.

9) Ethical dimensions of ICT

10) International co-operation

71   The information society is intrinsically global in nature. Thus, a policy dialogue based on global trends in the information society should take place at the world, regional and subregional levels in order to facilitate:

- the provision of technical assistance aimed at national and regional capacity-building for the maintenance and reinforcement of regional and international cooperation;

- the sharing of experiences;

- the sharing of knowledge; and

- the development of compatible regulations and standards that respect national characteristics and concerns.

72   International policy dialogue on the Information Society at global, regional and sub-regional levels should promote the exchange of experience, the identification and application of compatible norms and standards, the transfer of know-how and the provision of technical assistance with a view to bridging capacity gaps and setting up international cooperation programmes, in particular in the field of creation of content. Sharing success stories and experiences will also pave the way for new forms of international co-operation.

11) Other issues

73   Every citizen should be guaranteed freedom of expression and protected access to information in the worldwide public domain as part of their inalienable right to freely accessing the information constituting the heritage of humankind, which is disseminated in all media. This may involve the strengthening of networks that can increase individual participation in local, national, regional and international democracy.

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Appendix 2 to Annex 1

DRAFT ACTION PLAN

BASED ON DISCUSSIONS IN THE WORKING GROUP OF SUB-COMMITTEE 2

ACTION PLAN

1.   The Information Society is an evolving concept, the realisation of which is driven by all societies - and in this process all of them can learn from each other. At present, the Information Society has reached different levels of development across the regions and countries of the world. As such, it would be necessary and more effective to design a flexible Action Plan which can be used as a reference framework and as a source of guidance and inspiration at regional and national levels.

A. List of issues

1) Information and communication infrastructure: financing and investment, affordability, development, and sustainability

2   Our countries, aware of the need to generate equal opportunities for access and use of information and communication technologies, are committed to taking action to overcome the digital divide, which reflects and is a factor in the differences that exist between and within countries in terms of economic, social and cultural aspects, education, health and access to knowledge.

3   In order to achieve affordable and universal access it is important to enable existing and new technologies to provide connectivity to all, in particular through institutions accessible to the public such as schools, libraries, post offices and multi-purpose community centres. Special attention should be paid to:

- how ICTs can benefit the disadvantaged, through innovative initiatives;

- the study and promotion of relevant solutions adapted to the environment for ICTs in the rural areas;

- establishment of public access points and the creation of IP backbones using innovative communication infrastructure.

4   The development of the Information Society must be based on platforms of internationally interoperable technical standards, accessible for all, and technological innovation of ICTs, as well as systems to promote the exchange of knowledge at global, regional and subregional levels through any media. As a sharp increase in the volume of international and regional Internet traffic is anticipated, it is important to strengthen regional and international broadband network infrastructure to provide the capacity to match the needs of countries and their citizens.

5   Community information and communication centres are critical to ensure inclusive access to information and social services, particularly in rural areas. Universal access policies shall promote the best possible level of connectivity at a reasonable cost for under-served areas. Technological convergence must be monitored with a view to integrating traditional and new ICTs in order to create alternative forms of access that can help narrow the digital divide. The creation and provision of low-cost access equipment and multi-purpose community access points shall be an integral part of the agenda for reducing the digital divide.

6   The optimization of connections among major information networks should be promoted through the creation of regional traffic hubs to reduce interconnection costs and allow the penetration of access networks to be broadened. Fees for the use of networks and infrastructure shall be set on the basis of objective, non-discriminatory parameters.

7   Regional ICT backbones should be implemented to facilitate exchange between countries and avoid the hub and spoke effect where information leaves the region and returns after transiting through other regions. The development of the infrastructure necessary for connectivity requires complementarities between determined government policies to ensure connectivity and private sector participation. Steps towards liberalization, privatization and competition, and the removal of excessive levels of tariffs are essential.

2) Access to information and knowledge

3) The role of governments, the business sector and civil society in the promotion of ICTs for
    development

8   The full and effective involvement of all stakeholders is vital in developing new ICT applications. The role, responsibilities and goals of each stakeholder should be clearly defined

9   The public sector should explore innovative ways to correct market failures and bring the information society to all sectors of the economy and society, especially to those living in poverty. The private sector plays an important role in the development and diffusion of ICTs, while civil society, including NGOs, works closely with communities in strengthening ICT-related initiatives. Increased cooperation and partnerships are needed between governmental and intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and civil society, for effective design and implementation of various initiatives, by giving priority to locally-available human resources.

10   All stakeholders are urged to mobilize resources for the development of the Information Society, including through increasing investment in telecommunication infrastructure, human capacity building, policy frameworks and the development of culturally sensitive local content and applications. International and regional organizations, including financial and development institutions, have an important role to play in integrating the use of ICTs in the development process and making available the necessary resources for this purpose.

11   Priority shall be placed on strengthening local microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises through their integration into the digital economy. Public policies must foster innovation and entrepreneurship. The development of technology-based firms shall be encouraged through such mechanisms as venture capital funds, technology parks and business incubators, together with the participation of academic institutions and research networks. In addition, special mechanisms shall be put in place to encourage the banking sector to develop secure and reliable applications to facilitate online transactions.

4) Capacity building: human resources development, education, and training

12   In order for people to make the most of the Information Society, they must have enhanced levels of ICT literacy and ICT skills. To achieve this, relevant education and training should be promoted at every level, from primary to adult, to open up opportunities for as many people as possible, and especially for the disadvantaged. The capacity of developing and least developed countries to apply ICTs effectively must be enhanced through regional and international cooperation.

13   ICTs can contribute to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, and the sharing of knowledge and information. Teachers act as a gateway to the Information Society, and their skills development and curriculum resources need increased support. It is also important to improve both basic and advanced education in science and technology. This will help to create a critical mass of highly qualified and skilled ICT professionals and experts that will continue to serve as a foundation for the region's ICT development. It is recognized that education in network infrastructure development and operation is of particular importance, and is critical to the availability of efficient, reliable, competitive and secure ICT network services;

14   E-learning is about development of skills to access knowledge, which addresses numerous issues such as local content, cultural identity and linguistic diversity and intellectual property rights. Access to knowledge is an essential tool in economic, cultural and social development. The potential exists for all those still outside the reach of the formal educational system to be offered education and information tailored to their need and culture. Education empowers people to overcome poverty, therefore e-learning is one of the most important issues in the bridging of the digital divide;

15   In building an Information Society, we should take into account Youth, which forms the majority of the population in many developing regions and is a force for socio-economic development. Equipping young people with knowledge and skills on ICTs to prepare them for full participation in the Information Society is an important goal.

16   It is essential to disseminate information regarding the potential of new technologies through the exchange of information on best practices, campaigns, pilot projects, demonstrations and public discussions. "E-literacy" courses should be aimed at training the population in the use of information and communication technologies, and these courses should provide ICT users with the skills they need to utilize and produce useful and socially meaningful content for the benefit of all socio-economic levels. The formation and maintenance of a workforce to act as a pillar of the information society shall be undertaken in close cooperation with the private sector and civil society in general.

5) Security

17   Establishing appropriate national legislative frameworks that safeguard the public and general interest and intellectual property and that foster electronic communications and transactions is essential. Protection from civil and criminal offences ("cybercrime"), settlement and clearance issues, network security and assurance of the confidentiality of personal information are essential in order to build trust in information networks. Multilateral, transparent and democratic Internet governance should form part of this effort, taking into account the needs of the public and private sectors, as well as those of civil society.

18   Among the challenges to be faced are the general lack of awareness of information security issues, the rapidly evolving complexity, capacity and reach of information technology, the anonymity offered by these technologies, and the trans-national nature of communication frameworks. Recognizing the principle of fair, equitable and appropriate access to ICTs for all countries, special attention should be paid to the fact that ICTs can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security, and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure within States, to the detriment of their security in both civil and military fields. A multi-pronged approach is needed to address these challenges, and cybercrime, on all fronts, with emphasis on preventive approaches, national guidelines and regional and international cooperation. At the same time, action to address cybercrime and to ensure a safe and secure Information Society must respect the sovereignty of nations and maintain respect for the constitutional and other rights of all persons, including freedom of expression.

19   All stakeholders concerned with ICT issues should take the necessary steps to enhance security, user confidence and other aspects of information and system/network integrity in order to avoid the risk of wholesale disruption and destruction of the network systems on which they are increasingly dependent. Effective information security could be guaranteed not only by technology, but also by education and training, policy and law, and international cooperation. In the long term, development of a "global culture of cybersecurity", based on a common understanding of regulations and appropriate mechanisms for information and technology exchange and international cooperation, should be promoted;

6) Enabling environment

20   The transition to the Information Society requires the creation of appropriate and transparent legal, regulatory and policy frameworks at the global, regional and national levels. These frameworks should give due regard to the rights and obligations of all stakeholders in such areas as freedom of expression, privacy, security, management of Internet addresses and domain names, and consumer protection, while also maintaining economic incentives and ensuring trust and confidence for business activities. In order to secure prompt settlement of disputes, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) should be considered along with normal judicial proceedings.

21   Competition shall be promoted as the best way to drive down prices and to ensure the ongoing modernization of networks and services.

22   Working towards open and flexible international and interoperable standards is an important issue for all countries so as to ensure that all can utilize the technology and associated content and services to their maximum potential. Development and deployment of open-source software should be encouraged, as appropriate, as should open standards for ICT networking.

23   It is important to ensure a balance between intellectual property rights (IPR) and the public interest. While intellectual property rights play a vital role in fostering innovation in software, e-commerce and associated trade and investment, there is a need to promote initiatives to ensure fair balance between IPRs and the interests of the users of information, while also taking into consideration the global consensus achieved on IPR issues in multilateral organizations;

24   Managing the radio-electric spectrum in the public and general interest and in accordance with the basic principle of legality, with full observance of national laws and regulations and international agreements governing the management of frequencies.

25   Specific proposals from the Africa region include:

- adopting policies to stimulate the building of ICT infrastructure and providing universal access particularly in rural and remote areas through innovative and Africa-friendly solutions;

- removing duties levied on ICT hardware and software until the second phase of WSIS takes place in Tunis in 2005;

- adopting the "African charter" on radio broadcasting as a framework for the development of policies and legislations regarding information technologies and broadcasting in Africa.

7) Promotion of development-oriented ICT applications for all

26   Information and Communication Technologies can support social and economic development, including the emergence of e-communities. But it is also important to ensure that traditional models are recognized and respected, so that the non-users of ICTs are not marginalized. The following examples are intended to illustrate the potential for this.

27   E-Government: ICT tools will make policies more accountable and transparent and will enable better monitoring, evaluation and control of public services and allow for greater efficiency in their delivery. Public administration can make use of ICT tools to enhance transparency, accountability and efficiency in the delivery of public services to citizens (education, health, transportation etc.) and to enterprises;

28   E-Business: Enterprises both large and small can use ICTs to foster innovation, realize gains in productivity, reduce transaction costs and benefit from network externalities. In support of this process, Governments need to stimulate, through the adoption of an enabling environment services, regulatory framework for the promotion of private investment applications and content, based on a widely available broadband infrastructure, and foster public - private partnerships. On the consumer side, ICTs can bring to consumers greater satisfaction through their interaction with many potential suppliers, beyond the constraints of location.

29   E-learning: Access to education and knowledge is essential for economic, social and cultural development, and as a means of personal empowerment, community development and business efficiency. ICT networks have the potential to offer unprecedented educational opportunities to all groups in all areas. Implementation of affordable and universal educational programmes, content, broadband networks and hardware should be promoted. The introduction and development of ICTs in various schools and other learning institutions shall be supported through the establishment and maintenance of a human resources network that institutionalizes the ongoing training of teachers and instructors, who are the backbone of innovation. Advantage shall be taken of best practices to create high-quality, readily accessible teaching material from all over the world to facilitate knowledge transfer to the national level. Special attention shall be devoted to multilingual training and to the use and development of translation software.

30   E-health: Access to healthcare information and services is a basic right. Many countries lack adequate healthcare facilities and personnel, particularly in rural and remote areas. The use of ICTs promotes social inclusion of all members of society by enabling equitable access to healthcare services, as well as empowering citizens to better manage their own health and to participate more effectively in the healthcare process. ICTs should be incorporated on a mass scale in the field of health care with a view to improving resource use, patient satisfaction, personalized care, and the coordination of public health-care systems, private institutions and the academic sector. Innovative solutions and options must be devised for providing health services to under-served areas. Another e-health priority shall be the prevention, treatment and control of the spread of diseases, specifically HIV/AIDS.

8) Cultural identity and linguistic diversity, local content and media development

31   Linguistic and cultural diversity enriches the development of society by giving expression to a range of different values and ideas. It can facilitate the spread and use of information by presenting it in the language and cultural context most familiar to the user, thereby further encouraging the use of ICTs.

32   Public policy should also foster the creation of varied information content, which helps to preserve and disseminate local and national culture, language and heritage. Local authorities have an important role to play, because for citizens they represent the first level of contact with the administrations and they could also foster the development of local communities. Promotion of cultural diversity and identity, including the creation of varied information content and the digitalisation of the educational, scientific and cultural heritage is an important priority in the development of the Information Society. Research on the social and cultural impact of ICTs should be continued.

33   Promoting broadband networks could not only support research, business and personal activities, but also help to preserve cultural diversity and indigenous knowledge and traditions. In this context, an effort should be made to support multilingual domain names, local content development, digital archives, diverse forms of digital media, content translation and adaptation. The development of standard and recognized character sets and language codes should also be supported.

34   Specific proposals from African States include to:

- support the African Language Academy;

- recreate the "African news exchange";

- establish a special fund for digitizing African archives and libraries

- establish a multilateral African television network;

- invest in African media content as well as new technologies;

- develop independent production.

9) Identifying and overcoming barriers to the achievement of the information society with a human perspective

10) Other issues

B. Objectives

35   Examples of possible concrete and comprehensive actions could include:

a)   The following could serve as **benchmarks** for actions to be taken:

- all villages to be connected by 2010, with a community access points by 2015;

- all universities be connected by 2005 and all secondary schools by 2010 and all primary schools by 2015;

- all hospitals to be connected by 2005 and health centres by 2010;

- 90% of the world's population to be within wireless coverage by 2010 and 100% by 2015;

- all central governments departments to have a website and email address by 2005 and all local governments departments by 2010.

b)   Developing national **e-strategies** for all countries within three years, including the necessary human capacity building.

c)   Launching of a "**Global Digital Compact**" as a new pattern for partnership and interaction between governments and non-governmental actors, based on division of labour and specialized responsibilities, as well as on identified specific and common interests, will work together to achieve IT development goals (e.g. governments create stimulating regulatory environment and fiscal incentives, business bring in technology and made available simple applications, non-governmental organizations undertake awareness campaigns and work at community level etc.) (a *model that could start from the institutional relationships already existing in ITU, with ITU as coordinator*).

d)   Launching and gradually developing an aggregate **ICT Development (Digital Opportunity) Index** and publish it annually or every two years in a **ICT Development Report**, where ranking of countries will be accompanied by analytical work on policies and their implementation. (*ITU is to catalyse and combine in a coherent structure the existing experiences in various organizations, universities, think-tanks etc.*)

e)   Elaborating and launching during the Geneva phase of the Summit a "**Handbook on good practices and success stories**", as a compilation of contributions from all stakeholders, in a concise and convincing format, which is to be re-issued periodically and turned into a permanent experience-sharing exercise.

f)   **Equipping and training content workers in the LDCs**, such as archivists, librarians, scientists, teachers and journalists in making use of the expertise and operational capacity of the relevant international professional organizations.

g)   Revising the **curricula** of the primary and secondary schools in all countries, within three years, in order to meet the challenges of the information society.

h)   Create the necessary technical (software and hardware) conditions, which would permit all **languages** in the world to be present and used on the Internet.

C. Strategies programmes, methods for implementation

36   It is important for Governments to promote comprehensive and forward-looking national strategies for the development of the Information Society, involving private sector and civil society. Private sector involvement is crucial for a sound and sustainable development of infrastructures, content and application. National e-strategies need to be adapted to the specific requirements of varied communities and reflect the stage of development and the structural characteristics of the national economy. Such strategies can benefit from existing knowledge and experience and exchanges notably on best practices would play a key role, allowing countries to learn from one another through peer dialogue.

37   To be effective, beyond the identification of goals, the strategies should include timeframes, indicators and mechanisms for monitoring performance based not only on quantitative but also qualitative criteria. In the case of smaller countries, regional strategies can contribute to the emergence of larger markets, offering more attractive conditions for private sector investment as well as for a competitive environment. Furthermore ICTs could be of particular relevance in the development context, because they offer opportunities to Public Administrations, help attract private investments and allow for leapfrogging using new and advanced technologies.

38   The development of a strategy entails understanding what to promote, where to promote it, and how to tailor and implement activities to achieve maximum impact. This should capitalize on existing national, regional and global efforts. Specific initiatives could include:

- promoting long-term government spending on R and D and higher education, with the aim of mastering and adapting specific ICT solutions;

- providing incentives and regulatory schemes that would enhance private sector capabilities in terms of human resource development, infrastructure and institution building.

- providing tax incentives for start up ICT companies.

39   The development and establishment of performance evaluation and dissemination systems should be promoted, together with mechanisms that include community measures and indicators that reflect the efforts and progress made by the countries of the region in establishing facilities for ICT access and use within a community context.

D. Cooperation and funding

40   Close international cooperation among national authorities, stakeholders and international organizations in all aspects of the information society is more vital today than ever and, to this end, advantage shall be taken of the opportunities offered by regional financial institutions. The international community is called upon to provide technical and financial cooperation at both the multilateral and bilateral levels. There is a need to reaffirm the need for the developed countries to make available the official development assistance (ODA) commitments that they announced at the International Conference on Financing for Development. It is necessary for all countries to comply with all aspects of the consensus reached at that conference. The countries represented at the Conference call upon those developed countries that have not already done so to take concrete action to fulfill the target level of 0.7% of their GDP as official development assistance.

E. Follow up

<center>**FROM GENEVA TO TUNIS**</center>

<center>*** * * * * * * * ***</center>

ANNEX 2

PROPOSAL FOR THE NEXT STEPS OF THE WORK OF THE PREPCOM
OF THE WSIS, INCLUDING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD.

1   PrepCom II provides a mandate to the President of the PrepCom to supervise the Intersessional Process including the convening of a formal open ended intergovernmental drafting group to a five-day meeting to be convened in July 2003. The PrepCom II gives the mandate to the drafting group to advance negotiations. This meeting should be open to observers within the rules of procedure of the PrepCom.

2   PrepCom II requests the chairperson of the Working group of sub-Committee 2 to consolidate the comments received until 28 February 2003 into the basic working document as approved in the report of sub-committee 2. These documents shall be consolidated, refined and drafted in the traditional UN Summit format and language. These documents shall be put on 21 March 2003 on the WSIS website.

3   PrepCom II decides to set up an intersessional mechanism based on the membership of the Bureau to refine further the documents for the meeting of the above mentioned drafting group. The outcome of each meeting will be put on the WSIS website.

4   The final outcome of the intersessional mechanism will be the basic working document for the discussion of the July meeting.

5   Further comments to the basic working document may be submitted electronically by the end of may. All comments shall be put on the WSIS website.

6   PrepCom II provides a mandate to the Secretariat to prepare a reference document that contains the comments referred to in paragraph 5, and which easily identifies where these contributions may be included in the basic working document.

7   Prep Com III will consist of two full weeks of negotiations of all issues related to the Summit. All documents (agenda, time management plan, etc) should be circulated in advance of PrepCom III.

8   Text coming from PrepComIII should be sufficiently mature to guide leaders' preparation for the Summit.

9   A roadmap to the Geneva phase of the Summit will be developed by the Executive Secretariat and the Host Government and circulated as soon as possible. The roadmap will include:

-   Description of substantive preparations for Summit

-   Description of all parallel activities related to the Summit

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