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(BASED ON THE SECRETARIAT'S COMPILATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCES, AND THE STRUCTURE ADOPTED BY SUB-COMMITTEE 2)

Table of content

DECLARATION

- A. Preamble**
- B. Common Vision**
- C. Key Principles**

ACTION PLAN

- A. List of issues**
- B. Objectives**
- C. Strategies, programmes, methods for implementation**
- D. Cooperation and funding**
- E. Follow up**

FROM GENEVA TO TUNIS

DECLARATION

A. Preamble

B. Common Vision

Pan-European Regional Conference

1. The European regional conference proposes the vision of an Information Society, 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 seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
2. The Information Society offers great potential in promoting sustainable development, democracy, transparency, accountability and good governance. 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 development goals set by the Millennium Declaration. There is also a need for a people - centered approach, one that emphasizes social, cultural, economic and governance goals. This approach must ensure that the knowledge and experience of citizens is integrated into this process as the driving force behind the new information society.
3. The Information Society is based on broad dissemination and sharing of information and genuine participation of all stakeholders - Governments, private sector and civil society. Their contribution is vital in the efforts to bring full benefits of the Information Society to all. Governments and other stakeholders should also provide the necessary conditions to ensure women's equal access to information and knowledge, as well as equal opportunities as participants and decision-makers in all aspects, related to the shaping of ICT policies and frameworks. Global and regional initiatives should build upon previous and current initiatives by Governments, regional and international organizations as well as from the contribution of the private sector and civil society. Member States welcomed the active participation of these stakeholders and their contribution to the overall work.

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

3a 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.

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

3b The information society is an economic and social system where knowledge and information constitute the fundamental sources of well-being and progress and that it represents an opportunity for our countries and societies, so long as it is understood that the development of that society within a global and local context requires a deeper appreciation of fundamental principles such as those of respect for human rights within the broader context of fundamental rights, democracy,

environmental protection, the advancement of peace, the right to development, fundamental freedoms, economic progress and social equity. The countries of the region feel that the firm advocacy of their views and priorities in world forums, including the World Summit on the Information Society (2003-2005), should be a key component of the region's strategy on the information society.

3c 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 both 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.

3d The countries of the region represented at the Regional Preparatory Ministerial Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean for the World Summit on the Information Society, bearing in mind the Millennium Declaration and resolution 56/183 as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session,...

Western Asia Regional Conference

4. The untapped potential of ICT to improve productivity and quality of life is a serious issue for many developing countries. If undermined, these countries risk being left behind. Member States are required to take far-reaching commitments and policy measures to transform the existing society into an information society. The process of transformation into an information society should be sustainable and equitable. It should also aim at achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals leading to reducing poverty and unemployment, raising levels of education, improving health services, enhancing empowerment and minimizing loss of environmental resources. The right to communicate and the right to access information for citizens and nations, as well as the recognition and application of intellectual property rights and the principle of free flow of information, should be part and parcel of human rights fundamentals. Finding ways to make the information society serve the needs of developing countries more directly is of profound importance. The regional vision aims at creating a turning point where countries will have the opportunity to harness ICT for shaping their future without the risk of losing cultural identity. This declaration should also help them towards transforming the threats and challenges of ICT and globalization into opportunities for development.

C. Key Principles

a) General Principles: The Summit should be aimed at extending the benefits of the Information Society to all and should be development-oriented

African Regional Conference

5. The Global Information Society should address the interests of all nations, most particularly, the interests of the developing countries;

6. Communication, forming as it does the basis of individual and societal existence, should be managed in a manner that secures the fair, balanced and harmonious development of all the people of the world with particular attention to the needs and aspirations of the most disadvantaged in society and those of African people in particular;

7. As a matter of vital necessity, global and regional available resources should be pooled in order to extend the benefits of ICTs to all inhabitants of the world;

8. Systematically, the specific features of Africa should be taken into account in international decision making;

9. Ensure better gender balance in ICT use while instituting specific programmes that address the need of women particularly those aimed at rural and disenfranchised areas;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

10. The objective of the conference was to discuss how best to work together to contribute to the region's effective transition to an Information Society that will accelerate and enhance regional economic, social, cultural and technological development;

11. The conference emphasized that 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;

12. The Conference endorsed the important role that ICTs can play in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which describe a fundamental set of principles and guidelines for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and gender inequality. Use ICTs as a driving force for the promotion of sustainable economic and technological development by enlarging the gross national product (GNP) through increased technological innovation and continuous research and development resulting in reduced levels of poverty through robust economic growth;

13. Promote strategies to assess and deal with the environmental impact of ICTs;

14. In building an Information Society for the Asia-Pacific region, we should take into account its unique features:

- Gender issues: Unequal power relations and other social and cultural aspects have contributed to differential access, participation and status for men and women in the region. 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 regional small island developing States: These countries, 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;

15. To make significant progress, all countries of the region will need to mainstream ICTs, with special reference to gender, within their national and regional development strategies, and across all sectors.

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

16. The Latin America and Caribbean Conference believe that access to information technologies and their appropriate use should be a fundamental concern of our countries which will help to foster ties of friendship based on the principle of equal rights;

17. The social and economic progress of the countries and the well-being of persons and communities shall occupy a central place in activities aimed at building an information society. The use and benefit of information and communication technologies (ICTs) are in order to satisfy the needs of individuals, communities and society in general;

18. 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;

19. 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;

20. Information and communication technologies foster the flow and exchange of information, encourage the transfer of knowledge and stimulate innovation and human capital formation while helping to ensure that a free flow of information coexists with respect for life, private property, privacy, intellectual property, confidentiality and security;

21. Invoking the use of ICTs as a tool for environmental preservation and sustainability and, in that regard, promoting their use for disaster mitigation and prevention, bearing in mind the vulnerability of the entire region, particularly small island States with fragile ecosystems;

Western Asia Regional Conference

22. To promote a common vision for the development of an information society both at the national and regional levels;

23. To formulate innovative policies and ICT strategies that benefit socio-economic development, favour the reduction of poverty and promote growth and employment;

24. To attain the UN Millennium Development Goals through transforming the region into an information and knowledge society;

25. 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;

26. To promote a framework for national, regional and international partnerships with a view to coordinate efforts towards building the information society;

27. To adopt modalities for policy/strategy implementation with emphasis on achieving tangible objectives.

b) Specific principles

1) Information and communication infrastructure

African Regional Conference

28. All citizens should be provided with the means of using ICT networks as a public service;
29. Technology supply should be diversified through
 - the removal of regulatory, political and financial obstacles to the development of communication facilities and tools so as to meet the specific needs of citizens in all circumstances;
 - the development of data bases on experiences concerning the introduction of new technologies that address the needs of rural areas and their capacity to pay;
30. Cooperation and collaboration should be enhanced through the strengthening of decentralised cooperation as one way of leveraging the reduction of the digital divide;
31. The African Conference is of the opinion that narrowing the digital divide must go with the development of telecommunication infrastructure suited to the need of African people and citizens;

Pan-European Regional Conference

32. 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 centers 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;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

33. Provide equitable and appropriate access for all to well-developed, affordable and easily-accessed information and communication network infrastructures;
34. Provide information and communication services targeted at disadvantaged groups in society, in particular those from lower income groups, to contribute to the alleviation of poverty;
35. In building an Information Society for the Asia-Pacific region, we should take into account its unique features:
 - Geographic and demographic diversity: The region comprises the earth's largest land mass and vast ocean as well as many small islands. The region has over 65 per cent of the world's population, including over 75 per cent of the world's poor. Many countries of the region have very low population densities spread over large percentages of their areas. Many rural populations are also inaccessible, and have limited contact with other communities;
 - Disability issues: There are an estimated 400 million persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. The majority are poor and have been excluded from the benefits of ICT development due to the lack of appropriate or affordable technology for persons with disabilities. More effort, including implementation of disability-concerned regional plans of action and programmes, should be made to ensure equitable access to ICTs for persons with disabilities;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

36. 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;

37. Access by countries to the benefits of the digital revolution requires adherence to the universally accepted principles of non-discrimination within the framework of negotiations based on a spirit of justice and equity;

Western Asia Regional Conference

38. Enhancing and integrating the infrastructure to narrow the digital divide: 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;

39. Developing appropriate ICT indicators: 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

African Regional Conference

40. The promotion of open source software packages that extend the life of investment and user training. Because they are provided free of charge, implementation of open source software programmes is done with minimum cost;

41. The use of voice and touch screen applications that enable a greater number of people to participate in the information society.

42. Cooperation and collaboration should be enhanced through networking on best practices and experiences as a way of building the type of knowledge needed for the harmonious development of new technologies;

Pan-European Regional Conference

43. 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. Public policy should broaden opportunities in providing information for all, including disabled, inter alia by creating content, and thereby redressing inequalities. ICTs have the potential not only to strengthen the effectiveness of public service delivery, but also to involve individuals in shaping government policies. Moreover, communications technology is not an end in itself, but a means of supplying quality content in the information society. In this regard, mass media - in their various forms - are recognized as important means of fostering public information, societal development and social cohesion;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

44. Enhance the sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development by ensuring equitable access to information for educational, scientific, economic, social, political and cultural activities, leading to a vibrant public domain of information;

45. In building an Information Society for the Asia-Pacific region, we should take into account its unique digital divide disparities: In the region as a whole, there is a noticeable disparity in access to, and use of, the latest ICTs, including Internet access and broadband availability, between and within countries. 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;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

46. 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;

Western Asia Regional Conference

47. Removing social and cultural barriers that impede transformation into the new information society: Countries in this region have diversified social and economic characteristics ranging from countries belonging to the low-income category to countries belonging to the high-income category. Illiteracy rate and poverty levels are high. Women participation and lack of job opportunities in the regional labour market are further sticky issues. Continuous political instability, sanctions and embargo are considered main causes.

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

African Regional Conference

48. All partners, public, private sector and civil society organizations, more specifically small and medium size enterprises, have a stake in the development of communications and should be fully involved in decision making at the local, national, regional and international levels;

49. The full participation of the civil society and the private sector should be elicited at all levels of local, national, regional and international decision making related to the information society. These should be pursued by:

- 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

50. All the principles of the declaration of the Africa Conference and plans of action should be pursued within competent institutions so that the building of information society can be managed with the full participation of all the relevant stakeholders. In this context, the Africa Regional Conference reiterates its full support for those global initiatives that have been adopted at the global as well as regional and continental levels. It particularly requests the international community to give its full support to the African Information Society Initiative (AISI), the recommendations of

the African Development Forum (ADF'99) and the ICT component of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In this connection, the ICT programme of NEPAD should federate all the ICT initiatives of the continent and mobilize resources for funding of the major African projects. It further requests that the various networks and foundations working to promote the use of new information and communication technologies and to narrow the digital divide, especially the Global Knowledge Partnership and the ANAIS network be given the support and resources they need.

51. Bilateral and multilateral funding agencies should:

- pay particular attention to financing infrastructure facilities and content suited to the needs of the people and citizens;
- pay particular attention to the involvement of the representatives of the civil society in all decisions relating to ICT development.

52. The African Conference request that development partners contribute to the forging of innovative and constructive partnerships among donors, public authorities, the private sector and civil society in order to develop ICTs and content and build the infrastructure;

Pan-European Regional Conference

53. International policy dialogue on 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 best practice experiences will also pave the way for new forms of international co-operation;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

54. Facilitate the important role played by the private sector and civil society in the development of diversified information and communication technologies, networks and services in the Information Society. Concurrently, acknowledge the significant role of governments in terms of creating stakeholder partnerships that engender trust and confidence, promote fair competition, and encourage innovative private sector investment and new initiatives, and promote global and regional cooperation, while protecting consumers and safeguarding public interests;

55. Continue the ongoing spirit of cooperation and solidarity among the countries of the Asia-Pacific region;

56. In building an Information Society for the Asia-Pacific region, we should take into account its unique features:

- Pioneering role in selected ICT areas: Within the region, some countries have been pioneering, *inter alia*, broadband, satellite and mobile telecommunication services, among others, which are having a significant impact on the way people communicate and on the delivery of government and business services. The experience gained by those countries in this field can be shared with others to promote good practice at local, national, regional and global levels.
- Institutional stability: Generally speaking, the region is institutionally stable. Such stability will enable the region to attract more investors, including innovators, entrepreneurs, operators, manufacturers and vendors in the field of ICTs;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

57. 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;

Western Asia Regional Conference

58. **Developing ICT production capabilities:** The importance of the ICT sector has grown over time, especially in the developed world. However, this has had little resonance in the region, which is 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. The ICT sector accounts for an insignificant share of the region's production sector GDP. It is essential for governments to encourage investment in the creation of regional ICT production facilities. If the ICT production sector begins to grow more rapidly than the rest of the economy, it is anticipated to make an effective contribution to growth and productivity performance in the region;

59. **Improving ICT services:** The growth in the demand for applications should spawn the dynamics for creating a favorable 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

African Regional Conference

60. Cooperation and collaboration should be enhanced through:

- the development of training plans that familiarise people with new technologies, their use and the legal framework of the information society;

61. Institutional, human and administrative capacity should be strengthened at the local, national, regional and international levels in order to achieve greater complementarities among all initiatives being taken to build the information society.

62. The African Conference request that development partners pay particular attention to human resources training and development, particularly teachers and students so as to promote content and infrastructure development with the view to facilitate the emergence of an African service industry based on ICTs;

Pan-European Regional Conference

63. It is important for Governments to develop comprehensive and forward-looking education strategies. People should be enabled to acquire the necessary skills in order to actively participate in and understand the Information Society and fully benefit from the possibilities it offers. Individuals should be engaged in defining their own needs and in the development of programs to meet those needs. These skills integrate ICT - related specific notions with broader knowledge, and are generally obtained through primary, secondary and higher education, on-the-job training, but also increasingly through distance learning. 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. ICTs open completely new

opportunities for e-learning. New forms of partnership between public and private sectors are needed in this field;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

64. In building an Information Society for the Asia-Pacific region, we should take into account its unique productive workforce: the region's economic growth depends on a large, productive workforce capable of fully utilizing ICTs. Given the strong integration of the region into the global economy, this would maintain and enhance the competitive position of its enterprises, leading to the growth of decent employment;

65. Promote the use of ICTs for capacity-building and human resource development, including ICT literacy, with special reference to the requirements of people with disabilities;

Western Asia Regional Conference

66. Developing human capacity through education and training: 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. The possibility of establishing virtual schools for graduate studies and research shared by a number of universities in the region should be explored. The design, production and dissemination of ICT-based educational systems at all levels need to be actively promoted. Enhancing rational, socially and economically sustainable, as well as culturally enriching exploitation of the benefits presented by ICTs for improving education and training should be pursued seriously;

67. Building institutions: Institutional capacities to collect, organize, store and share information and knowledge are as critically important as human capacities. In fact, they are necessary complements to human capacities and need to be developed to capture the benefits of the information society. The application of information technology in public institutions such as schools, hospitals and clinics, libraries, government departments and agencies should be pursued. Particular attention should be directed to R and D activities through the establishment of centers excellence for specific areas of technology. Programmes that develop SME capabilities to become globally competitive through ICT should also be initiated;

5) Security

Pan-European Regional Conference

68. To realise fully the 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 - security must be addressed through prevention and supported throughout society, and be consistent with the need to preserve free flow of information;

69. 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;

70. In order to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs, Governments should promote awareness in their societies of cyber security risks and seek to strengthen international co-operation, including with the private sector;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

71. Ensure the security and reliability of information and communication networks so as to build confidence and trust in the Information Society;

72. By providing a secure environment for communication, ensure that the use of information and communication services does not place vulnerable groups at risk;

Western Asia Regional Conference

73. Ensuring governance of Internet and ICT resources: The issue of Internet security is critical for the region. 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*

Pan-European Regional Conference

74. 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;

75. The Information Society is, by nature, a global phenomenon and issues such as privacy protection, consumer trust, management of domain names, facilitation of e-commerce, protection of intellectual property rights, open source solutions etc. should be addressed with the active participation of all stakeholders;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

76. In building an Information Society for the Asia-Pacific region, we should take into account its unique features: Imbalance of information flows: While there is substantial internal international trade within the Asia-Pacific, North American and European regions, the same cannot be said for the flow of information between these regions. There is potential for growth in information flows between the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world, as well as between countries within the region;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

77. 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 best practices;
- the sharing of knowledge; and
- the development of compatible regulations and standards that respect national characteristics and concerns;

78. 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 trade¹;

Western Asia Regional Conference

79. Formulating clear national and regional policies: 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 information technology for development. They need to enunciate their own national vision, galvanize the necessary political will, at the highest level, devise national strategic frameworks, establish national priorities and create an environment conducive to the rapid diffusion, financing, development and use of information technology;

80. Reforming legal, regulatory and policy matters: The existence of a supportive and predictable legal framework is an important prerequisite for enhancing trust in ICT and e-business, and thus promoting its development and dissemination. Although there is a general consensus that the current legal infrastructure is generally applicable to electronic transactions, most national laws were developed in the absence of electronic systems. Review should be carried out of relevant legislation, where appropriate, with the aim of identifying and removing factors that prevent enterprises from using ICT, particularly in e-business. In fact, e-business raises a number of legal issues, questions and uncertainties concerning the validity, legal effect and enforceability of transactions conducted through electronic means, in a legal environment based on paper. The existing requirements in national and international law for the use of written documents and manual signature in international trade transactions are considered major obstacles to the development of electronic commerce at global level. Other areas involving legal issues relevant to electronic transactions include: data protection, taxation, custom duties, security and authentication, intellectual property rights, privacy, liability of Internet service providers, illegal and harmful content, Internet governance, electronic payment systems, consumer protection, jurisdiction, applicable law and dispute resolution mechanisms;

81. Adopting standards and norms: Governments of the region should seriously consider adopting established ICT related standards and norms, particularly those considered language dependent. Norms and standards should meet user needs for information exchange and enable straightforward search and navigation and the widest possible range in terms of access to systems
 Securing national domain names: The responsibility for root directories and domain names should rest with a suitable international organization and should take multilingualism into consideration. Countries' top-level-domain-names and Internet Protocol (IP) address assignment should be the sovereign right of countries. The sovereignty of each nation should be protected and respected. 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;

¹ 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."

7) ICT-Applications

African Regional Conference

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

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

83. 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;

Western Asia Regional Conference

84. 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. Basic government services should be provided online by a target date. Modest achievements have already been made in countries of the region, but many services still have limited interactivity due to lack of awareness and training of the average citizen;

85. Introducing concepts such as e-democracy and e-governance in the decision-making process of local and national governments is essential. Procedure for auditing government applications and monitoring performance should be in place. The development of secure and seamless access to e-government services depends on deployment and the effective use of electronic authentication means. Access to government services can be facilitated by providing multilingual content and making it available on various platforms. Initiatives regarding e-government should exist at regional, national and local levels. A great deal could be achieved in the region through the activities of UNPAN and the task force created at ESCWA for UNPAN activities. It is hoped that global standards for e-government are established by an appropriate international body to ensure accepted implementation practices by different governments.

86. Promoting e-learning programmes and projects: 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. Legal, economic and social issues that are considered as obstacles to the development of the e-learning process in the region should be identified. Learning networks offer the potential of educational opportunities to all segments of the society and present opportunities to disadvantaged groups to practice learning anytime anywhere. A change in the mindset towards management of education, curricula design, self and distance learning is required;

87. Applying e-health: 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.

88. Restructuring for e-business: The restructuring of business processes to make use of digital technologies is essential to the region, particularly for small and medium size enterprises (SME's) and public policies should support this process. These policies should also aim at strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit of the business community. Developing countries may focus on ICT-based trade as precursor to full fledged e-commerce. The impact of e-commerce in many countries in the region has so far been limited, with very few organizations committed to the new environment of trading over the Internet. Legislations should be reviewed with the aim of removing factors that prevent enterprises from doing business over the Internet. Banking procedures and security issues associated with payments and transaction authentication are also responsible for the present reluctance to use e-business procedures;

89. Launching other applications: Most economic and social sectors of the region lack applications that aid management in the decision making process and raise the internal efficiency of enterprises, thus enhancing their capabilities to produce better and more competitive products and services. Sectors such as agriculture, irrigation, industry, transportation, tourism and environment would greatly benefit from the application of effective tools and software, such as GIS, for the solution of problems facing these sectors;

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

African Regional Conference

90. The creation of local content should be accorded high priority;

91. Technology supply should be diversified through:

- the implementation of an operational plan of action geared to the cultural and linguistic specificities of all countries, in particular those in Africa;
- Investment and funding strategies should be pursued through assistance with content creation and democratisation of access with particular emphasis to women and the youth;

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

93. The rich cultural diversity of Africa should be showcased and widely disseminated in cyberspace;

Pan-European Regional Conference

94. The Information Society is founded on respect for, and enjoyment of, cultural expression. New ICTs should stimulate cultural diversity and plurilinguism and enhance the capacity of governments to develop active policies to that end. Access and contribution to knowledge and information broaden the contents of the public domain and foster mutual understanding and respect for diversity;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

95. Preserve the rich and diverse cultural heritage and social values of the Asia-Pacific region in the information age;

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

97. In building an Information Society for the Asia-Pacific region, we should take into account its unique cultural and linguistic diversity: This region enjoys a richness of ancient and modern cultures, including diverse languages, social traditions and customs. Of the more than 6,800

languages in the world, 3,500 (51 per cent) are spoken in the Asia-Pacific region, including languages without written scripts;

Western Asia Regional Conference

98. Developing e-content applications and tools: This region is unique amongst other regions of the world in that its peoples share the same culture and language. Active steps towards encouraging the production of Arabic 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 Arabic language, including Arabic 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

11) Other issues

African Regional Conference

99. 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 man kind which is disseminated in all media including new multimedia systems;

100. The strengthening of networks that can increase individual participation in local, national, regional and international democracy;

101. Democratic debate should be instituted on the new institutional and regulatory arrangements being made to define the social, cultural, economic, technical and ethical challenges posed by the new information and communication technologies;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

102. 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

ACTION PLAN

A. List of issues

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

African Regional Conference

103. The African regional Conference request:

- that africa should benefit, in the framework of NEPAD from the immediate, massive and coordinated mobilisation of all the development partners to provide such financing as

would guarantee public service, universal access and content creation that address the essential needs of the people of Africa;

- the study and promotion of relevant solutions adapted to the environment for ICTs, especially in the rural areas;
- establishment of public access points and the creation of an African backbone using innovative communication infrastructure;
- pilot studies should be promoted for replication at the local, national and regional levels with the view to securing access to new ICTs at affordable cost, particularly in the rural areas;

104. The African Conference invites partners to study how best to optimize the cost of access to ICTs with the view to identifying the rules for organising the international connectivity market and the sharing of markets at the national level.

105. African states should formulate coherent national and regional policies and strategies for ICTs development (taking into account the multimedia convergence) which are likely to attract private national and international investments;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

106. 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. In this regard, in addition to enhancing people's awareness of the advantages of using ICTs, reliable, advanced and appropriate, ICT technologies and services infrastructure are required. 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 by using new technologies to enhance network efficiency and provide the capacity to match the needs of the countries in the region;

107. 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;

108. High-quality access, attainable through broadband, has great potential to help better deliver essential services required to meet basic human needs through applications such as e-education and e-health, as well as e-business and other ICT applications. Also, new technologies, such as wireless and satellite networks can assist remote areas, including small island nations, to gain access to information and knowledge;

109. Community information and communication centres are critical to ensure inclusive access to information and social services, particularly in rural areas;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

110. Promoting the build-out of information and communication technology infrastructure and technological innovation. 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. The digital transition in the radio broadcasting sector shall take into

account the possibilities of each country so as to permit the adoption of compatible systems that can coexist with analog transmission, as well as type approval of common standards;

111. Improving access services. The provision of access to telecommunications infrastructure at a reasonable cost, including broadband systems, the strengthening of the national software and services industry, the adjustment of international agencies' policies on tenders in order to permit the participation of qualified local industries, and development strategies are key elements in reducing the digital divide. The application of information and communication technologies in organizational units of interest to society, such as universities and research institutions, hospitals and clinics, small and medium-sized enterprises, schools, municipalities and other institutions shall, in view of the role they perform in society, be placed at the top of the connectivity agenda;

112. Fostering the efficient use of infrastructure. 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;

113. Furthering and promoting the development and establishment of performance evaluation and dissemination systems and 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;

Western Asia Regional Conference

114. A regional ICT backbone 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;

115. ICT infrastructure: Narrowing the information and communication divide and providing services at affordable cost to ensure homogeneous availability of ICTs for all;

2) Access to information and knowledge

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

African Regional Conference

116. The full and effective involvement of civil society and local stakeholders in developing new ICT applications should be secured;

117. Among other things, African fora and seminars should be organised with the objective of collecting and showcasing local experiences for the benefit of all stakeholders

118. The Africa Conference welcomes the regional and global initiatives being taken to narrow the digital divide particularly from ECA, ATU, ITU, the G8, the UN ICT Task Force, UNDP, UNCTAD, the Francophonie Agency, OECD, the World Bank, the Commonwealth Telecommunication Organisation, bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies, NGOs and civil society organisations and invites the traditional partners of Africa to heighten the priority to narrowing the digital divide in their development policy, particularly with the European Union under the Cotonou Agreement;

119. African states should:

- Fully involve African civil society organisations in the formulation of the operational strategy and implementation of the ICT component of NEPAD;
- Set up national committees bringing together the three components of the information society, namely the public sector, the private sector and civil society;
- Actively involve the youth in national and regional ICT activities;

120. Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations should actively and effectively promote and implement concrete projects in their respective areas of competence so that African people and citizens can fully benefit from ICTs;

in particular:

- ECA should continue to pursue the implementation of AISI in terms of the formulation and implementation of National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) policies and strategies and the related sectoral plans;
- ITU should pay particular attention to Africa in the implementation of Istanbul declaration and plan of action on the digital divide by taking into account those priority areas set out in the Yaounde Declaration;
- UNESCO should mobilize all its national committees with the view to secure the participation of all stakeholders, especially civil society organisations, in the WSIS preparatory process by requesting them to submit proposals that will help the preparatory process along;
- UNITAR should mobilize its teams and partners to propose training plans in consult with local stakeholders (within the context of the international centre for training local stakeholders), associations, international organizations and academic institutions in the member countries concerned;

121. As a way of narrowing the digital divide, participants in the Africa Regional Conference request that the local initiatives and experiences of local authorities in the more advanced countries should be shared with the local authorities of African countries. For that to happen, the Africa Regional Conference requests the competent bodies of local authority, particularly the World Federation of Local Authorities and the International Union of Local Authorities to commit all their members to developing decentralised forms of cooperation that will narrow the digital divide;

122. The Africa Regional Conference welcomes the initiatives taken by the cities of Lyon, Geneva, Bamako and Tunis to promote e-governance locally and commends the Lyon initiative to organise the World Summit of Local Authorities on the Information Society to be held before the Geneva Summit in 2003. The Conference urges all bilateral and multilateral funding agencies and private corporations to give this initiative their full support;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

123. 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. 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;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

124. Promoting and strengthening national programmes for the development of the information society based on proactive national strategies. The main stakeholders in the information society shall be identified and encouraged to participate in national activities. In addition, the role, responsibilities and goals of such activities must be clearly defined. With support at the highest political level, it is essential that steps be taken to foster close collaboration among public agencies and programmes while also ensuring that non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society and academic institutions make a significant contribution to the process and the continuity of such initiatives;

125. Seeking out ways of financing activities directed towards building an information society within a national development context. Proactive policies should be aimed at encouraging private and public investment in connectivity and ICT services. It is necessary to secure the participation of business enterprises in the development and implementation of national and regional development priorities and projects in order to create a virtuous circle that will not only attract and retain business enterprises in the region, but also boost local activity having a greater technological content. 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. Legislation and domestic, regional and international financing mechanisms can provide the foundations for setting up new high-technology firms and enabling small and medium-sized enterprises to finance, on a competitive basis, the capital-intensive process of introducing information and communication systems into their organizational structures. National financing mechanisms can be strengthened if, by legitimate means, developing countries generate their own resources by placing their export products on all markets, free of protectionist barriers to international trade. Structural adjustment programmes should not jeopardize the development of the information society;

126. Encouraging the development of businesses based on information and communication technologies and, in particular, e-commerce. 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. Measures are needed that will encompass a broad array of instruments, including the use of information technologies in customs systems, management systems and transport optimization, in order to facilitate, streamline and harmonize e-commerce, which must be accompanied, as an essential component, by improved market access opportunities for developing countries. The modernization of physical infrastructure and regulatory frameworks and the training of human resources can contribute to a substantial increase in commercial efficiency and create a climate of trust through the adoption of effective consumer protection legislation;

127. Reinforcing international cooperation. 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. The countries represented at the Conference reaffirm the need for the developed countries to make available the official

development assistance (ODA) commitments which 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 fulfil the target level of 0.7% of their GDP as official development assistance;

128. Establishing regional and sub-regional working groups on specific topics can allow for a smoother, more coherent and harmonious transition to the information society, permit the deployment of regional integration efforts and help to increase bargaining power at the international level. The Latin American and Caribbean countries are committed, as a matter of priority, to more active participation in global forums as well as in existing regional and sub-regional institutions. They are also committed to the formation of new and transformation of existing international partnerships through, inter alia, the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Network (LacNet) of the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force. In this regard, the countries of the region call upon the international community to adopt appropriate, creative mechanisms to ensure the full participation and representation of the region in these forums in order to guarantee the widest possible contribution to the process of configuring the global information society;

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

African Regional Conference

129. The African Conference request a set of concrete proposals for ICT use in education and training in Africa should be developed for submission to the second Prepcom meeting;

Pan-European Regional Conference

130. E-learning is about development of skills to access knowledge, which addresses numerous issues such as local content, multi-lingual and cultural 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;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

131. In building an Information Society for the Asia-Pacific region, we should take into account its unique youth issues: Youth forms the majority of the population in the Asia-Pacific region 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;

132. Developing human resources:

- 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;
- 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;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

133. Reinforcing the development of a sufficient supply of qualified human capital. 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;

134. Emphasizing the education of key users of information and communication technologies, including but not limited to teachers, civil servants, physicians, nurses and community leaders. Incentives shall be created to encourage adaptation to new forms of communication and interaction. The countries must endeavour to minimize the common problem of skills mismatches by actively seeking out suitable professional profiles and constantly updating textbooks;

Western Asia Regional Conference

135. ICT production and service sector: Promoting the creation of endogenous capabilities within the region to meet regional demand as well as possible export;

136. Capacity building: Spreading awareness about ICTs and the information society amongst all citizens, and, at the same time, increasing investment in education and training with particular emphasis on quality higher education, graduate programmes and research that meet the priority needs of the region;

5) Security

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

137. Among the challenges to the region 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 transnational 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;

138. 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;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

139. Establishing appropriate national legislative frameworks that safeguard the public and general interest and intellectual property and that foster electronic communications and transactions. 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.

6) *Enabling environment*

African Regional Conference

140. African States should:

- adopt policies to stimulate the building of ICT infrastructure and providing universal access particularly in rural and remote areas through innovative and Africa-friendly solutions;
- remove duties levied on ICT hardware and software until the second phase of WSIS takes place in Tunis in 2005;
- adopt the “African charter” on radio broadcasting as a framework for the development of policies and legislations regarding information technologies and broadcasting in Africa;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

141. 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;

142. Establishing legal, regulatory and policy frameworks: 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;

143. Ensuring 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;

144. Copyright holders and distributors of content should be cognizant of the need to ensure that content is accessible for all, including persons with disabilities. In this connection, access requirements should be included in legal, regulatory and policy frameworks, where appropriate;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

145. 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;

146. Adopting suitable regulatory frameworks that provide for the existence of sound, independent regulatory agencies that will ensure access to terminal equipment, networks, services and software markets under conditions of competitiveness, quality, diversity and state-of-the-art technologies. Competition shall be promoted as the best way to drive down prices and to ensure the ongoing modernization of networks and services. Given the importance of technical standards in the development of the information society, the countries of the region shall regularly carry out in-depth economic and technical analyses to make sure that the regional information society is neither locked out of global trends nor locked into particular technological solutions. Consideration shall be given to open source-code standards, services and models;

Western Asia Regional Conference

147. ICT policy and the creation of an enabling environment: Formulating a practical policy through clear initiatives that take into consideration the removal of socioeconomic barriers between privileged and unprivileged segments of societies;

7) Promotion of development oriented ICT applications for all

Pan-European Regional Conference

148. E-Government: More Efficient and Accountable: 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;

149. E-Business: More Competitiveness and Better Jobs: 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. Use of digital technologies can enhance the role of enterprises in promoting entrepreneurship, the accumulation of knowledge, the upgrading of skills, and thereby increasing productivity, incomes and jobs and promoting qualitative improvement of working life. Special attention should be given to small and medium enterprises both as beneficiaries and promoters of e-business;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

150. The following initiatives can support social and economic development, including the emergence of e-communities, while at the same time ensuring that traditional models are recognized and respected, so that the non-users of ICTs are not marginalized:

a) e-government

ICT networks can offer better public services to citizens by more efficient and effective dissemination of information and delivery of essential government services. E-government can also generate a greater sense of community participation, and improve informed decision-making and development programme implementation;

b) e-business

Through the application of ICT, businesses in all sectors can achieve increased productivity and profitability, reach wider markets, lower their transaction costs and control inventories more effectively. On the consumer side, ICTs can bring to consumers greater satisfaction through their interaction with many potential suppliers, beyond the constraints of location;

c) 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 of the Asia-Pacific region. Implementation of affordable and universal educational programmes, content, broadband networks and hardware should be promoted;

d) 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;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

151. Enhancing public-sector performance through the adoption of e-government tools for the sector's modernization and good governance. The steps taken to this end shall reflect an approach that combines electronic information-based services for citizens (e-government) and the provision of online services for the public with the reinforcement of participatory elements (e-democracy). It is necessary to find avenues for the integration and linkage of the various public-sector authorities that will permit the establishment of a one-stop user window to provide citizen-oriented e-government services. It is also necessary to emphasize the importance of citizen access to information on public administration for citizen participation, transparency and accountability in government activities. Special e-government applications shall be designed and used to serve as a catalyst in encouraging firms and individuals to prefer online transactions;

152. Incorporating the use of information and communication technologies 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;

153. Developing and implementing networks, progress performance measures and innovative e-learning mechanisms. 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 deal with the problem of information overload and facilitate knowledge transfer to the national level. The development of a capacity for critical analysis of material available in cyberspace shall form part of this effort. Special attention shall be devoted to multilingual training and to the use and development of translation software. Priority shall be placed on expanding the networking capabilities of regional research institutions by consolidating advanced academic networks and reinforcing national innovation systems through digital networks;

Western Asia Regional Conference

154. E-government: Enabling public administration reform to achieve transparency, accountability and good governance;

155. E-business: Enhancing intra-regional (Western Asia region) trade and export transactions through electronic networks;

156. E-learning and e-education: Ensuring continuity and availability of information and knowledge for all, thus enhancing employment opportunities for all.

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

African Regional Conference

157. The development of solutions and the promotion of ICT initiatives to sustain local African creativity;

158. Support should be provided to the ICT activities of the African Language Academy;

159. A special fund should be set up for digitizing African archives and libraries which form the cultural heritage of the continent and can be part of Africa's contribution to the information society;

160. African States should:

- recreate the "African news exchange";
- establish a multilateral African television network;
- invest in African media content as well as new technologies;
- develop independent production;

Pan-European Regional Conference

161. E-Society: Broader Local Content and Applications: In the Information Society, the involvement and participation of all, irrespective of gender or economic status, as well as the facilitation of ICT use in daily life and work, is a major objective;

162. Governments should actively promote the involvement of different stakeholders in the development of applications that improve overall quality of life, particularly in key areas such as education and health, both globally and at the local community level. 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;

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

163. 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. Promoting broadband networks in the Asia-Pacific region 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;

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

164. Promoting the development of high-quality local material and the local utilization of existing global material while respecting intellectual property rights. Solutions that address national needs can ensure the participation of the whole of society, provide opportunities for sensitization and local capacity-building and make the voice of the region heard in the information society. Steps should be taken to promote broad-based, inclusive access to the information society for the population, not only as consumers or users, but also as stakeholders or full-fledged participants, that is to say, as suppliers, innovators, creators and originators of content and applications. The creation and preservation of indigenous, local and traditional knowledge and the promotion of multilingualism in cyberspace are fundamental. To these ends, the best possible use must be made of resources by sharing socially useful software applications and content;

165. Strengthening the multimedia sector in the countries. This sector performs a very valuable economic, social, cultural and political function in the information society. The reinforcement and expansion of the countries' culture industries are of great importance for the region's presence and visibility in the global information society and for the reaffirmation of the region's multicultural identity;

Western Asia Regional Conference

166. E-content: Encouraging standards, presence and management of Arabic digital content on electronic media and on the Internet.

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

10) Other issues

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

167. Guaranteeing that human rights, including the right to development, are protected and promoted in the information society. All persons have the right to freedom of thought and expression; this right includes the freedom to maintain opinions without interference and to seek out, receive and share information and ideas through any communication media, subject to national laws and international agreements. The exercise of this right will be facilitated by educational opportunities for all;

11) Actions specific to the WSIS and its preparatory process

African Regional Conference

168. The establishment before the second Prepcom meeting of the Geneva Summit of:

- a training fund that would familiarise participants with all the issues concerning the development of the information society;
- a “high level scientific committee” that will make recommendations to the second Prepcom meeting about the challenges facing the information society particularly when it comes to developing countries, especially those in Africa;
- an information and advisory structure that would facilitate the participation of African civil society organisations and SMEs in the preparation of the World Summit;

- a solidarity fund to secure the full and effective participation of African civil society organisations and SMEs in the preparatory process.
169. African States should contribute fully to the preparations for both phases of WSIS, namely Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005;
170. The World Summit in Geneva and Tunis should respectively:
- adopt in Geneva, in December 2003 a plan of action for developing infrastructure suited to the needs of people and citizens of developing countries, with particular attention to African and other least developed countries (LDCs);
 - adopt in Tunis, in 2005 any other additional plan of action for narrowing the digital gap that would address the needs of developing countries, particularly those in Africa;
171. The Executive Secretariat of WSIS should:
- take special care to secure the participation of African civil society in the preparation of the Summit by:
 - keeping all African NGOs permanently informed in their working languages of progress made in the preparation of WSIS;
 - securing the participation of civil society representative in all the national, regional or global events leading up to World Summit.
 - make sure that the bureau of the **Africa Regional Conference** is able to monitor all the preparations leading to the Prepcom and the World Summit in close collaboration with the bureau of the PrepCom.

B. Objectives

C. Strategies, programmes, methods for implementation

Pan-European Regional Conference

172. It is important for the 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. 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.

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

173. National and regional e-strategies: Comprehensive ICT strategies that have been endorsed at the highest political levels and that include clear goals need to be formulated at community,

national, regional and global levels in order to create the Information Society. These strategies will be encouraged to be designed and implemented through collaboration and participation of all stakeholders. In this regard, awareness of the vast potential of the positive use of ICTs should be promoted among all concerned.

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference

174. Devoting special attention to the adoption of strategies and policies to facilitate the penetration of information technologies for the promotion of exports and investment in the region.

Western Asia Regional Conference

175. Towards an ICT strategy: 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. At the national level nearly every country has recognized the importance of ICTs for development. Regional initiatives such as those of the League of Arab States, UNDP's Programme on ICT for Development in the Arab Region (ICTDAR) and UNESCO Regional Programme promise significant results. Global initiatives such as the UN ICT Task Force provide a clearinghouse for best practices in ICT. Funding should aim at the regional capital markets to provide venture capital and investment funds for launching ICT companies and projects that have a regional dimension. It should also promote long-term government spending on R and D and higher education, with the aim of mastering and adapting specific ICT solutions. It should provide incentives and regulatory schemes that would enhance private sector capabilities in terms of human resource development, infrastructure and institution building. Taxation systems that provide abatements and incentives for start up ICT companies should be initiated. Member States should ensure that all stakeholders' needs are taken into consideration in the process of transformation to the information society. The strategy should take into consideration the specific requirements of varied communities and should serve the objectives of the national economy of the Member States. Quantitative as well as qualitative means should be deployed using indicators, target dates and other effective measures for monitoring performance. Regional strategies should encourage the creation of larger markets, providing a viable and competitive environment for regional investment and cooperation.

176. Information technology is the critical determinant of the processes of globalization and interdependence as reflected in the emergence of a networked knowledge-based global economy. Building partnerships among all stakeholders, developed and developing countries (particularly amongst developing countries), the public and private sectors, as well as civil society/non-governmental organizations is essential. Efforts aimed at successfully integrating developing economies into the global economy, increasing employment, eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable human development must take full account of the role of information technology as the driving force of this new economy. International aid and partnerships are particularly important for the development of the vertical ICT sector. Such aid should be encouraged provided minimum or no strings attached.

177. Organizational approaches that combine most effectively, the skills and resources of both the public and private sectors to bolster investment should be adopted, including exemption from taxation for export and import of ICT products and services. In considering the development of an institution capable of carrying out an investment promotion strategy, both the institutional framework of the agency, its internal structure, and capacity and marketing skills, should be taken into account. In developing an investment promotion strategy, it is necessary to determine the short- and long-term objectives of investment promotion and to find the appropriate balance between various investment promotion activities, taking into account important factors such as the investment environment, the comparative advantages of the country and the region, and global developments, recognizing the change of these factors over time.

D. Cooperation and funding

E. Follow up

FROM GENEVA TO TUNIS