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DRAFT DECLARATION

Based on the

DISCUSSION IN THE WORKING GROUP OF SUB-COMMITTEE 2

A. Preamble

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

B. Common Vision

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

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

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

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

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

17 Full exploitation of the new opportunities provided by information and communication technologies (ICTs) and of their combination with traditional media, as well as an adequate response to the challenge of the digital divide, should be important parts in any strategy, national and international, aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of combating

poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and gender inequality.¹ Without the widespread and innovative use of ICTs, the MDGs may prove impossible to attain.

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

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

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

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

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

C. Key Principles

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1) Information and communication infrastructure

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

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

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

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

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

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

36 It is advisable to devise ICT-specific indicators, which realistically reflect needs and performance of developing countries. Such indicators should take into account the particular conditions of developing countries where several people often share access to the Internet and a whole community may share usage of ICT equipment and infrastructure. Targets should also be set to benchmark penetration of ICT services within communities at urban and rural levels.

2) Access to information and knowledge

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4) *Capacity building*

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

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

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

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

5) *Security*

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

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

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

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

6) *Enabling environment*

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

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

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

56 Access to information and communication technologies shall be secured in accordance with international law, bearing in mind that some countries are affected by unilateral measures which are not compatible with it and which create obstacles for international trade².

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

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

² Reservations that have been made to this paragraph:

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

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

transparent and should take into account the needs of the public and private sectors as well as those of the civil society.

7) ICT-Applications

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

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

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

62 Member States should ensure that all schools, universities and other learning institutions have Internet and multimedia access for educational, training, re-skilling and research purposes. Attention must be directed to the training of teachers to adapt to the new learning environment. Legal, economic and social issues that are considered as obstacles to the development of the e-learning process in the region should be identified.

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

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

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

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

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

67 Technology supply should be diversified through:

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

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

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

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

9) Ethical dimensions of ICT

10) International co-operation

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

- the provision of technical assistance aimed at national and regional capacity-building for the maintenance and reinforcement of regional and international cooperation;
- the sharing of experiences;
- the sharing of knowledge; and
- the development of compatible regulations and standards that respect national characteristics and concerns.

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

11) Other issues

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