United Methodist Church, the General Board of Church and Society

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ACTION PLAN OF WSIS

From the United Methodist Church, the General Board of Church and Society
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Thank you for the opportunity to submit this contribution to the working documents of WSIS.

Italics = current paragraphs
Bold =   input from the United Methodist Church

Section 1, paragraph 1

After , *At present the Information society has reached different levels of development across the regions and countries of the worlds,*

Because the ability to communicate is considered a human right, the present communication gap must be prioritized.   The necessary and most effective way to address this present gap . . ..

Section 1, paragraph A2 "Bridging the Digital Divide"

After, *Bridging the digital divide . .*

Communication is a human right.   Therefore, our . . .

Section 1, paragraph A1. 3 "Universal Access"

More bullet points:

To develop and privilege technology systems which are appropriate to local environments (i.e. community radio, local newspapers, local newsletters and other forms of community and not for profit media)

To encourage, through regulatory frameworks, a diversity of media coverage and perspectives in order to discourage media monopoly

To mobilize financial, scientific, business and citizenry commitment to the development of alternative, renewable energy sources as a public good, which is a prerequisite for universal access to communication infrastructures.

Section 1, paragraph A1. 5 "Low Cost Equipment"

After, *"The creation and provision of low-cost access equipment shall be an integral part of the agenda for reducing the digital divide . ."*

NGOs, operating at the grass roots need to integrate the fact that accessibility to low cost communications equipment is essential to social, economic and sustainable development. Civil Society and Government must privilege low cost equipment initiatives.

Section 1, paragraph A1.6 "Low Cost Connectivity"

After, *"improve low cost connectivity in developing countries"*

Civil Society and government must facilitate low cost connectivity initiatives.

Section 1, paragraph A1.11 "Environmental Protection"

After *"for the environmentally safe disposal (including recycling) of discarded ICT hardware and parts"*

Education and incentives for environmentally safe disposal of discarded ICT hardware and parts must be privileged.

Section 1, paragraph A2:12 "Access to Information and Knowledge"

After *"individuals and organizations should benefit from enhanced access to knowledge and information"*

Receiving and sharing local knowledge must be privileged. Priority and economic incentives should be given to knowledge and information which serve sustainable development initiatives in local communities and which aid in the meeting of the Millennium Development Goals.

Section 1, paragraph A2.13 "Access to public domain information"

After *"easily accessible for all, including the disabled"*.

All information should be available or at least indexed in multilingual format.

Section 1, paragraph A3: "The role of governments, the business sector, civil society . ."

After, *"The role of governments, the business sector, civil society,*

Including NGOs

Section 1, paragraph A4.21: "ICTs in education"

Another bullet point:

Local, community initiatives in and for education should be privileged.

Section 1 A4.23 "Training ICT specialists"

After, *"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,"*

Including NGOs

Two other bullet points

Incentives for those trained and specializing in integrating knowledge from and to local, traditional knowledge bases should be privileged

Incentives for creative, innovative ways that ICTs can aid in indigenous persons ability to share the diversity of traditional culture should be privileged.

Section 1 A6.29 "Market environment"

After *"The availability of telecommunication infrastructures and affordable telecommunications services and ICT equipment are prerequisites for accessing and using ICTs for all."*

The ability to access a public knowledge base and communicate on'es own knowledge base is a human right and should not depend upon profitability.

Section 1 A7.38 "E-learning"

After *"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."*

Because there is an ability to promote traditional literacy and the wisdom found within the indigenous knowledge base, as well as providing access for traditional societies to modern society, ICTs . . .

After*: "E-learning should contribute to achieving universal primary education worldwide through better delivery of education and better training of teachers, and to offer improved conditions for lifelong learning, encompassing people that are outside the "normal" education process and for improving professional skills "*

Universal primary education delivery possible through e-learning should always be in the service of community-centered sustainable development practices and priorities and in the service of the Millennium Development Goals.

After*: "Implementation of affordable and universal educational programmes"*

Which are able to be locally augmented for content and values should be promoted. Affordable broadband . . .

After*: "Advantage shall be taken of best practices to create high-quality, readily accessible teaching material from all over the world to facilitate knowledge transfer to the national level"*

And to the community level.

Section 1 A7:39 "E-Health"

A new bulletpoint:

The best and most possible practices must be encouraged in every community. A diversity of community health workers and practices must be integrated into the health knowledge base.

Section1 A8:44 "Media"

After *"investment should be made in . . "*

Community and

After *"Independent production and pluralistic media should be supported."*

Public regulatory frameworks should discourage monopolies

Section 1 C:46 "Strategies, programmes, methods of implementation"

After *"Governments, the private sector, civil society,"*

Including NGOs

Section 1 C:47 "Governments"

After *"Establishing regulatory frameworks"*

Which encourage access and discourage monopolies, which encourage privacy as security and discourage monitoring as security.

Section 1 C:53 "Specific Initiatives"

After *"Creating a network of IT consultants"*

who prioritize ICTs in the service of community based economic, social and sustainable development.