DRAFT PROPOSAL T0 WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

UNGA-Link UK greatly appreciates the invitation to send WSIS a written contribution to proposed Summit themes, and supports the WSIS statement on Applications "to harness the potential of knowledge and technology for promoting the [development] goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration".

UNGA-Link UK proposes to WSIS that in addition a Global Policy Network on Preventing Armed Conflict should be initiated electronically. The Network should be open to the UN system and representatives of Member States, and to accredited NGOs, other civil society organizations and business entities. The Secretariat and accreditation should be within the UN system, possibly undertaken jointly by ITU and an appropriate UN department.

BASIS OF THE PROPOSAL
The proposal requires that the Applications of ICT should be broadened to cover the prevention of armed conflicts, which is included in the Millennium Declaration of Heads of State and Government: "We will spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war, whether within or between States…We resolve, therefore…to make the United Nations more effective in maintaining peace and security, by giving it the resources and tools it needs for conflict prevention, peaceful resolution of disputes, peacekeeping, post-conflict peace building and reconstruction…"

In seeking this extension of the Applications, UNGA-Link UK is following the lead of the Civil Society Sub-Committee on Content and Themes at WSIS Prepcom 1, in its first-stated Principle: "The Summit should be oriented to the goals of peace, conflict resolution, equality, sustainable development, reduction of poverty and health issues".

The first Report (2002) of the UN Secretary-General on Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration states in the section on Preventing Armed Conflict: "…the international conflict management system can and must invest in capacities for structural and operational prevention at all levels, from local to national, from regional to international, and from bilateral to multilateral…This entails the creation and nurturing of civil society and of mechanisms and institutions that allow for public dialogue, the peaceful resolution of tensions, the rule of law, and the equitable allocation of resources and opportunity".

Moreover, the Secretary-General's report *Prevention of Armed Conflict* (2001) states: "The United Nations is not the only actor in prevention and may often not be the actor best suited to take the lead. Therefore, Member States, international, regional and subregional organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and other civil society actors also have important roles to play in this field."

BACKGROUND OF THE PROPOSAL
UNGA-Link UK made three proposals at the Geneva World Civil Society Forum (WCSF)
in the Working Group on Civil Society-International Organizations Cooperation , Session 8 (18 July 2002). The proposals were adopted as Recommendations of the Working Group. Proposal No 3 was as follows:

Proposal to initiate a Global Policy Network on Preventing Armed Conflict
This proposal is derived from two reports of the UN Secretary-General: *We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century* (A/54/2000) and *Prevention of Armed Conflict* (A/55/985-S/2001/574).   * * * * *

In the former, "global policy networks" are described as "coalitions for change" which "bring together international institutions, civil society and private sector organizations, and national governments, in pursuit of common goals".

Prevention of Armed Conflict, which has the endorsements of the Security Council and the General Assembly, carries a pledge "to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention". In effect, after five and a half decades of neglect of Chapter VI of the Charter (Pacific Settlement of Disputes), the UN now recognizes that prevention is better than "cure" (that is, enforcement measures under Chapter VII). The Report also recognizes that preventing armed conflict is not the preserve of the Security Council and Member States (as is the case with enforcement measures) but requires the cooperation of "outside actors, such as regional organizations, NGOs, civil society and the business community". Moreover, the GA resolution approving the Report "invites civil society actors to consider the report and the recommendations addressed to them" (*Go Between* 2001, no.87).

With these legitimizations, it is proposed that WCSF should endeavour to initiate a Global Policy Network on Preventing Armed Conflict. Advice could be sought from within the UN on approaches to some governments to consider the proposal. If the Global Policy Network is established, it could consider any of the means for the peaceful settlement of disputes given in Article 33(1) of the UN Charter, both in general and as applied to a particular dispute. The Policy Network might also decide to discuss the proposal for a UN Dispute Settlement Service, which was initially proposed by Sierra Leone in 1994 and remains on the agenda of the GA Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on Strengthening of the Role of the Organization.

----

30 October 2002

UNGA-Link UK (UK Network for Civil Society Link with UN General Assembly)
PO Box 10363
London NW2 2ZN
UK

Tel/Fax: 44 (0)20 8455 5005
e-mail: **alison.williams8@btopenworld.com**

web: **www.ungalink.org.uk**