WESTERN ASIA PREPARATORY CONFERENCE
For WSIS
Beirut, 4-6 February 2003

BEIRUT DECLARATION
TOWARDS AN INFORMATION SOCIETY IN WESTERN ASIA
(DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES)
Declaration Structure

- PREAMBLE
- REGIONAL VISION OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY
- OBJECTIVES
- DEVELOPING AN INFORMATION SOCIETY
- ICT PRIORITIES FOR ACTION
- TOWARDS AN ICT STRATEGY
- FOLLOW-UP
PREAMBLE

- Region’s characteristics: Political instability, sanctions, embargo
- Impact on technological development:
  - Infrastructure penetration below World average
  - Uneven distribution of services and facilities
  - Low utilization of ICTs and applications
  - Deprivation of unprivileged segments
REGIONAL VISION

- Far-reaching commitments and policy measures
- Sustainable and equitable transformation
- UN Millennium Development Goals
- Turning point: opportunity to harness ICTs for shaping of the future without risking the loss cultural identity
- ICT threats and challenges, plus globalization transformed into opportunities
OBJECTIVES

- Promoting a common vision for the information society both at the national and regional levels;

- Formulating innovative policies and ICT strategies that benefit socio-economic development, reducing poverty and increasing growth and employment;

- Facilitating attainment of UN Millennium Development Goals;

- Formulating an agenda for action to bridge the digital divide, stressing the needs of youth, women and underprivileged groups;

- Promoting a framework for national, regional and international partnerships;

- Adopting modalities for policy/strategy implementation with emphasis on achieving tangible objectives.
DIRECTIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

1. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ICT POLICY FORMULATION, AND THE ENABLING REGULATORY AND LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT

- Formulating clear national and regional policies
- Removing social and cultural barriers that impede transformation into the Information Society
- Legal, regulatory and policy reform taking into consideration the need for building the Information Society
- Adopting and enforcing standards and norms
DIRECTIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

2. ICT INFRASTRUCTURE

- Enhancing and integrating the infrastructure to narrow the digital divide
- Ensuring governance of Internet and ICT resources
- Developing appropriate ICT indicators
- Securing national domain names
3. ICT APPLICATIONS

- Implementing and standardizing e-government applications
- Promoting e-learning programmes and projects
- Applying e-health
- Restructuring for e-business
- Developing Arabic e-content, applications and tools
DIRECTIONS FOR DEVELOPING AN INFORMATION SOCIETY

4. ICT PRODUCTION AND SERVICE SECTOR

- Developing ICT production capabilities, including software development
- Improving ICT services
- Increasing research and development
- Promoting investment and financing in the sector
DIRECTIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

5. ICT CAPACITY BUILDING

- Developing human resources through education and training
- Building institutions for information and knowledge management
- ICT university programme and post graduate studies
- Promoting research, development and innovation
ICT PRIORITIES

- ICT Policy and the creation of an enabling environment
- ICT Infrastructure expansion
- Government applications
- e-business
- e-learning and e-education
- Arabic (regional) content
- ICT production and service sector
- Capacity building
TOWARDS AN ICT STRATEGY

- Funding to aim the regional capital markets
- Government spending on R and D and higher education
- Regulatory schemes to enhance the private sector in terms of human resource development, infrastructure and institution building
- Stakeholders’ needs to be taken into consideration in the process of transformation to the Information Society
- Effective measures for monitoring performance
- Building partnerships
- Organizational approaches
- Investment promotion strategy