



Australian Government

**Department of Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts**

our reference

WSIS Executive Secretariat
c/- ITU
Assistant Executive Director
Mr Charles Geiger
Place des Nations – Geneve 20

Dear Sir

**INITIAL AUSTRALIAN VIEWS ON PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE
TUNIS PHASE OF WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY**

Australia welcomes the opportunity to contribute these views on the Tunis phase of WSIS.

We see the most appropriate, useful and achievable objectives for the Tunis phase overall as:

- A focus on reporting of progress against the Plan of Action agreed in the Geneva phase.
- A final communiqué which highlights achievements against the Plan of Action and areas where further work is required. The need for any “political document” additional to this has, in our view, not yet been demonstrated, particularly given that the Declaration of Principles from the Geneva phase is already in existence.
- Full involvement of civil society and the business sector as partners in delivering results against the existing Plan of Action.

In order to achieve these objectives, we suggest that the preparatory process should have the following features:

- Thematic and/or regionally based workshops structured around progress against the Plan of Action.
- Some form of central coordination mechanism to ensure regular and transparent reporting against the Plan of Action.

If these measures are adopted it should reduce the need for central PrepComm activity, with commensurate savings in the proposed budget for the Tunis phase. Australia does not see the need for 20 days of Prep Comm meetings as currently proposed. The first proposed PrepComm could be replaced by a key regional meeting or a program of

thematic workshops. The second proposed PrepComm could report on regional progress against the Plan of Action and decide on process issues for the Summit; this should be dealt with in 5 days rather than 10.

With regard to thematic meetings, they should be organised on a transparent and accountable basis. The “branding” of the ITU meeting on spam on 7-9 July as a WSIS themed event may have been premature in this regard.

Finally, we note that two significant issues from the Geneva phase are to be dealt with in distinct processes: the UNSG’s Working Group on Internet Governance and the Task group on Financing. Australia supports these activities and looks forward to active participation in them; and we note that they should also reduce the need for extensive PrepComm activity in the Tunis phase.

Yours faithfully

TOM DALE
Senior Adviser
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