

Brief on TF on Financing – Facilitated by UNDP

Context and Role of the Task Force

- This is a task force of the Secretary General and its work needs to be located within a context of responding to developing country concerns regarding the need to strengthen financing for development and for ICT for development within that framework given its importance for social and economic development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- The TF aims to address the financing issue emerging out of WSIS-Geneva by focusing on producing a report that is action-oriented with a set of recommendations that can be used to facilitate negotiations at the inter-governmental level leading up to and during the Tunisia-phase of WSIS. At Geneva, the negotiations were seen as being disadvantaged because there was no comprehensive information available on the range and effectiveness of existing financing mechanisms which could provide a *diagnostic* to assess the need for additional funding and new financing mechanisms.

Scope and Focus of the Report

- The TF will look at ICT in its role as a development tool as well infrastructure. Given the data and conceptual difficulties in accurately assessing the contribution and financing of ICT within education, health, etc. (where it is often buried as a component), the TF will attempt to explore these issues for a selection of sector/s and lessons learned from major initiatives in these areas.
- The financing picture will be addressed through a presentation of trends and quantitative data as well as through the use of case-studies and lessons learned from sectoral studies
- In this context, the report will focus on the roles of all major stakeholders and contributions across a range of resource mobilization and financing modalities: domestic resource mobilization, international and domestic private sector investment, ODA. It will also explore complementarities between these modalities including innovative public-private financing modalities that can work to reduce risk, strengthen the contributions of public and private partners or mobilize new constituencies.
- The Digital Solidarity Fund, which has been setup around the time of WSIS, will be addressed within the context of public-private partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms.
- While the focus of the report is on financing, where necessary it will highlight key issues such as capacity development and supportive policy frameworks without which existing and/or additional financing would not have a desired impact.

Composition of the Task Force and organization of its activities

- The work of the task force will be carried out in two phases, with the first phase focused on information gathering and research prior to the formal launch of the Task Force. This will be achieved through collaboration with the key players and institutions and the contributions of a *resource* group and *consultative mechanisms* involving stakeholders, regional entities etc.
- Consultations and information-sharing with stakeholders take place through virtual means (e.g. WSIS-online and other fora), outreach at key upcoming global and regional meetings, and through dedicated consultations where possible.
- A smaller *expert group* (5-6 people) with expertise in financing, ICTD and IT infrastructure will be constituted to draft background materials and inputs for the report based on contributions, information gathering and research undertaken.
- A proposal for the composition of the taskforce will be presented by mid-July and the task force itself is expected to formally meet in End September /Early October to assess expert and stakeholder contributions and focus on recommendations.

- The proposal for the composition of the taskforce itself is that it be fairly small (16-18 people) consist of participants from developing as well as developed countries, not be too "high-level", but rather be oriented to "experts/individuals" persons who between them would have an understanding of ICT for development, finance, policy issues and be cognizant of the WSIS inter-governmental issues and processes so as to provide guidance and finalize a report that is perceived to be credible for the WSIS process, decision-makers in ICTD and stakeholders.
- The draft report is expected to be circulated in November and finalized by mid-December.
- The WSIS prepcom process is expected to focus on the financing issue and the report at the upcoming February 2005 prepcom.

Timeline for Activities

April -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secretariat constituted with outreach to experts, partners at stakeholders at regional/global fora as feasible;
11th June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brainstorming meeting with experts and partners to discuss scope and composition of the task force and content of report.
June- July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experts recruited to provide background papers and undertake research. ▪ Reporting on progress at WSIS- PrepCom 1 (24-26 June), information sharing with stakeholders and informal consultations at Hammamet, Tunisia. ▪ Launch of virtual consultation process on WSIS-online and outreach to stakeholders to secure inputs. ▪ Finalization of the scope and composition of the Task Force
Mid-Late September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch of the Task Force with Initial findings/reports presented for its review. <p>(first meeting – in person)</p>
End - October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First drafts of report chapters with case studies, etc., following consultations as needed
Early-November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Circulation of draft report of the TF for comments and virtual consultations
Mid-November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compilation and incorporation of comments received into the report
End-November/Early-December 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final in-person TF meeting, key working group members and secretariat to finalize and launch report, chaired by UNDP Administrator <p>(second and final meeting in person)</p>
Mid-End December 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submit Report to the SG