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Statement of the European Caucus

Draft political chapeau and implementation plan – Chapter 2 Financing

Mr Chairman, I represent the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters and I speak here today on behalf of the European regional civil society caucus. I wish to make some general points on the Political Chapeau and Implementation Plan and some specific recommendations on the question of financing which is addressed in Chapter 2.

At this first substantive discussion of the Draft political chapeau and implementation plan we wish first to remind governments of the declaration of civil society at the Geneva Summit in 2003. In that statement, tabled at the closing plenary, civil society organisations articulated a clear vision grounded firmly in human rights principles and in sustainable development priorities. We found there was a degree of convergence with governments on the Principles but divergence in perspectives on the Plan of Action.

Government of the north and south have a responsibility to engage with civil society to ensure effective implementation but this requires addressing our different perspective on the Plan of Action. The Political Chapeau and Implementation Plan of the Tunis phase is an opportunity to retake this discussion and, in particular, to ensure that the Action Plan and its implementation is oriented towards the implementation of internationally agreed human rights standards and internationally agreed sustainable development goals.

This includes ensuring that investment is oriented towards a vibrant civil society capable of holding governments to account, defending human rights and empowering people and communities. This includes ensuring that commitments to 0.7 per cent development assistance are met. This includes ensuring that aid is not confused with trade. This includes ensuring that investment is oriented towards community-driven solutions. This includes substantive engagement in discussion on new and innovative financing mechanisms. This includes support for initiatives from the south such as the Digital Solidarity Fund. This includes addressing not only the digital divide, but also the communications divide including support for independent and community media and other civil society communications initiatives and appropriate technology solutions.

Government of the north must ensure that, on the principles and priorities, they have their own house in order. Internal commitment to human rights and social development can not be secondary to economic growth or discarded on the grounds of national security. They should be demonstrably consistent with external policies on aid and investment.

Governments, north and south, must ensure their approach to financing communications for development is assessed to ensure positive not negative impact on the realisation of human rights. It must be gender sensitive and consider the rights of minorities. It must be rooted in the social and economic needs of the south, especially the least developed countries and people and communities most at risk of social and economic exclusion.