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The Arab Group

The Arab League

Permanent Mission of the Arab League
To the United Nations and International Organizations
Geneva

Arab Group Document

Common Arab Position
on
Subjects under consideration in preparation for WSIS

This document constitutes the contribution by the Arab Group to PrepCom-3, in preparation for the second phase of WSIS, Tunis. It sets out the Arab Group position concerning the various items under discussion, in the same order as was adopted in the document prepared by the Group of Friends of the Chair (GFC), and the outcome of PrepCom-2.

In preparing this document, due account was given to the importance of reaching agreement on the main subjects, taking into consideration the agreements reached during the first phase of WSIS.

The Arab Group reserves to itself the right to review its position in the light of the general results of negotiations undertaken in the framework of WSIS.

A. Political chapeau

The text presented by GFC during PrepCom-2 in Geneva in February 2005 is considered to be acceptable in principle.

B. Operational part

Chapter One: From principles to action

The Arab Group considers that it is important to deal separately with implementation and follow up.

- In relation to implementation the Arab Group suggests:

1. That the UN specialized agencies should, each in its own sphere of competence, undertake the activities required by the plan for building the Information Society.
2. That coordination between organizations should be the responsibility of ITU.
3. That close cooperation should be maintained between ITU and UNESCO, since most of the tasks of the Plan fall within the sphere of competence of these two organizations.

-In relation to follow up, the Arab Group considers the option that follow up and evaluation should be taken up by the United Nations System Chief Executive Board to be appropriate for follow up and stocktaking.

Chapter Two: Financial Mechanisms for bridging the digital divide:

Following are the views of the Arab Group concerning the items left pending in doc. WSIS II/PC-2 Doc.11 of March 2005:

1. Para. 20 c): Maintain the original text and remove brackets.
2. Para. 33 c): Alt.2 should be maintained.
3. Para. 37 c): Integrate Alts. 3 and 4 in the annex, to read as follows:

“Promoting awareness of the possibilities generated by different software models (free, open-source and proprietary software), with special attention to achieving low total cost of ownership and effective high-level interoperability.”
4. 37f): Integrate the proposed texts of the original and alternative texts, to read as follows:

“Accelerating the pace of financing ICT infrastructure by promoting North-South flows and South-South cooperation, together with improving the ability to access existing financing facilities.”

5. 37g):): Integrate the proposed texts of the original and alternative texts, to read as follows:

“Providing the financial support to leverage multiple sources in support of programmes oriented to digital inclusion to achieve identified investment objectives in key areas notably broadband, rural and regional projects, and development of local language content, capacity building, and creative industries. Multilateral, regional and bilateral development organizations should consider the establishment of a virtual forum for information sharing between all stakeholders on potential projects and possible financing sources.”

6. **37 h):** Maintain the original text and remove brackets.

7. **37 j):** Modify original text to read as follows:

“Development of an innovative and rapid response policy and regulatory mechanism to intervene in support of ICT sector policy initiatives”

8. 37 l: Remove brackets at the end of the paragraph.

Chapter three: Internet governance

Having studied the Preliminary Report by the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) and having reviewed the proposals of the Group in section 5 therein concerning action to be taken, and also the recommendations in paras. a) and b) of section 5 concerning Internet governance mechanisms and related questions, the Arab Group presents its views as follows:

1. The Arab Group supports the Working Group's proposal to establish an open ended forum for discussion and dialogue concerning all subjects related to Internet questions, with the participation of all stakeholders: Governments, public sector, and civil society. However, such forum would not be enough to deal with all Internet related questions, especially public policies and supervision.
2. Regarding the proposals of the Working Group concerning global public policies and supervision, the Arab Group, after reviewing the

four models presented, considers that the first model, i.e. that of establishing a world council on the Internet, would meet the minimum requirements to deal with the subject of public policies and supervision, and therefore is the best among the presented models.

3. As for institutional coordination, the Arab Group considers the recommendation presented by the Working Group is ambiguous, and therefore the Arab Group reserves its right to revisit the subject when it has received further clarifications.
4. The Arab Group initially supports the recommendation by the WGIG concerning national and regional coordination, and would propose rewording of the present text to reflect respect for sovereignty of States and leaving the selection of mechanisms to States to decide what is suitable for their respective circumstances.
5. The Arab Group also supports the recommendations by the Working Group on questions related to the internet in general and considers that implementation of such recommendations is important.

IV. The Way Ahead

The Arab Group considers that this subject should be taken up as part of the follow up of the implementation of the Action Plan, and emphasizes

the importance of separation between implementation and follow up aspects of the Plan.