



WSIS



African Preparatory  
Conference for the WSIS  
Accra 2005



African Union



Economic Commission for  
Africa

The Africa preparatory conference for the World Summit on the  
Information Society (WSIS)

**ACCRA COMMITMENTS FOR WSIS TUNIS 2005**

**04 February 2005  
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## ACCRA COMMITMENTS FOR WSIS TUNIS 2005

The Africa Regional Conference, preparatory to the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society was held at the Accra International Conference Center at Accra, Republic of Ghana from February 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

Participating in the Conference were representatives of the African countries, delegates from many other countries and people representing African and international organizations, the private sector and civil society.

On the basis of the outcomes and taking into account the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the first phase of the Summit in Geneva, the Conference adopts the following:

### • Key Principles

The African information society community agrees on the following general principles:

- Building the information society must be inclusive of all stakeholders including Government, as well as private sector, civil society and the United Nations and other regional and international organizations
- Building the information and shared knowledge society will contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals to improve quality of life and eradicate poverty by creating opportunities to access, utilize and share information and knowledge
- The international community will tackle information society building on the basis of commitments to remove obstacles to bridging the digital divide.
- Building an inclusive information society requires the use of the languages of the concerned populations
- The utilization of ICT technologies will advance the geographic and political unity of the African continent and strengthen, expand and facilitate growth of the African economy for the betterment of our peoples' lives
- Building the information society requires the construction and maintenance of an adequate ICT infrastructure

### • Development orientations

- ICT can contribute positively to sustainable development
- Building the information society should be development oriented and take into consideration especially the development needs of African LDCs
- Providing universal, equitable and affordable access to ICT will create access opportunities for all
- The adoption of African languages as working languages in the public domain, is a requirement to the development of the continent and to the preservation of the cultural and linguistic diversity in the Information Society

- A collective action of all African stakeholders is mandatory for the integration of gender perspective in the information and shared knowledge society in general and ICTs in particular
- Africa's youth will play a key role in bridging the digital divide in establishing an Information Society that focuses on people in development over profit and technology
- The African continent with its high illiteracy rate and vulnerable populations should develop specialized centers and relevant materials to overcome these major handicaps
- Civil society and the private sector will play a key role in the development process in general, and especially in building the Information Society
- Scientific and Technological Research will focus on the concomitant development of society and efficient use of technology
- Media is catalyst of social changes and can, through multichannel partnership, foster the implementation of WSIS Plan of Action

• **Resource mobilization including human resources**

- Develop need oriented approaches in establishing national, sub-regional and regional e-strategies
- Pay particular attention to human resources training and development, particularly teachers and students so as to promote content and infrastructure development with the view to facilitate the emergence of an inclusive information society in Africa
- Provide increased attention and support to human resource development and education for the information society with emphasis on the youth and women in order to increase African contribution to the global knowledge economy;
- Develop specialized centers and relevant materials for illiterate and vulnerable populations
- Use the existing technical organizations to help reinforce capacity building at all levels of ICTs
- The Digital Solidarity Fund and existing financial mechanisms should be mobilized to face the challenges of implementing the action plan

• **International cooperation**

- We call upon international and regional organizations to assist African countries in the implementation of the WSIS decisions including the urgent development and implementation of a broadband ICT infrastructure as anticipated by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

• **Operational Aspects**

The African information society community agrees that short, medium and long term plans are required to realize and implement the general objectives set forth by the Geneva Action Plan. To achieve this, we recommend that the following:

**a. The way to Tunis 2005**

- **WSIS Targets:** The Tunis Summit will be the second and last phase of WSIS and will be an opportunity to strengthen confidence in building the information society as efficient means to improve human conditions. Accordingly the African stakeholders are invited to cooperate in order to defend the African common positions regarding the main issues raised by the international debate.
- **Indicators:** To assess the implementation of the information society, a specific set of basic indicators should be established and used to evaluate progress in the process. Composite indicators should also be developed to reflect the trends between countries. All institutions involved with ICTs at the national, sub regional, regional and international levels are encouraged to work in partnership and in close cooperation with national statistics offices in collecting, processing and disseminating ICT indicators. Activities of the global partnership on ICT indicators should be continued and strengthened.
- **Stock-taking:** African countries are invited to establish an information gathering mechanism at the national level with the involvement of all concerned parties.

**b. General Implementation Strategies**

It is recommended that African countries establish national e-strategies based on the overall social economic goals of the countries including the poverty reduction programs.

Regional and international cooperation should contribute to national capacity building and to the development of national, regional and sub-regional implementation strategies. In this regard the support of the regional organizations to the process is essential.

**c. Financial mechanisms**

Africa calls for support for the Digital Solidarity Fund that would complement and not duplicate other mechanisms of funding the Information Society. The fund will be global in scope and be utilized to bridge the digital divide and development divide in the world. It is further recommended that existing financing mechanisms should continue to be fully utilized to fund the growth of new ICT infrastructure and services.

Africa should develop a plan of action containing specific ICT development projects, which are properly costed to be presented at WSIS 2005 for financial resource mobilization.

#### **d. Internet Governance**

- Special attention should be given to the composition and the role of the present Internet governing body with a view to ensuring its legitimacy as a fully representative authority
- Africa should participate actively in international organizations dealing with Internet Governance. In this regard special attention should be given by international bodies dealing with Internet Governance to the needs and interests of the developing and least developing countries
- Special attention should be paid to the Integration of African Languages and to multilingualism in the Internet
- Internet Governance aspects should be mainstreamed in the establishment of national and regional e-strategic plans
- An appropriate participatory management of the Internet should include all stakeholders (Government, private sector, civil society, and intergovernmental organizations)
- Appropriate regulatory frameworks should be established to deal with public policy issues related to Internet Infrastructure and Applications (e-commerce, spam, cyber-security, privacy, etc.) and to enable the implementation of national, sub-regional and regional Internet exchange points and relevant technical regional institutions (Ex: AfriNic)
- Efforts should be made so that all CCTLDs are managed by respective countries

#### **e. Partnership**

- Multistakeholder partnership is needed to overcome the challenges ahead the implementation of WSIS Action Plan in particular, and ICT for development in general
- It is also necessary to create an environment as well as mechanisms conducive to an effective Public and Private Partnership (PPP)

#### **• The way ahead: After Tunis 2005**

- The African Community agrees on the need to establish appropriate implementation mechanism involving relevant national, sub-regional, regional, and international bodies.
- Adequate financing mechanisms should be sought to implement the long term action plans dedicated to the building of the information society.
- Follow up mechanisms should be based on existing institutions and use a multi-stakeholder approach.

## **RESOLUTION ON FINANCING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY AND BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**

We, representatives of the governments of the African States, meeting at this African Regional Preparatory Conference for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Accra, Ghana, within the framework of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI), having taken note of and discussed the report of the Task Force on Financing Mechanisms.

1. Note that the Report of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms' conclusions regarding the adequacy of the existing mechanisms highlight several areas which require additional sources of financing and explain that they may not suffice, but do not explicitly call for clearly cut alternative mechanisms to fill the resource gap;
2. Recalling that the Digital Solidarity Fund proposed by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), adopted by the African meeting of ministers in charge of information and communication technologies in Dakar in April 2004, has been approved at the Summit of African Heads of State in Addis Ababa in July 2004, in order to contribute to bridging the digital divide worldwide;
3. Welcome the decision taken by His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, in his capacity as President of the African Union, to launch the Digital Solidarity Fund on 14 March 2005, and invite the participation of all the African States in its establishment;
4. Call upon all African Governments and other African stakeholders to participate in the operationalization of the Digital Solidarity Fund.
5. Stress that international cooperation among all stakeholders of the information society is vital and needs to be strengthened with a view to bridging the digital divide and invite Governments and all stakeholders from all the regions of the world to support the Digital Solidarity Fund and participate in its implementation.
6. Call upon the African Union to take necessary measures to bring the resolution adopted today by the African Regional Preparatory Conference to the attention and support of the other WSIS regional preparatory conferences, to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee.

## **Resolution on e-strategies**

We, representatives of the governments, private sector and civil society of the African States, meeting at the African Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society, held at Accra within the framework of the African Information Society Initiative (AIS),

**Considering** the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, and

**Considering** that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has affirmed that e-strategies play a key role in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development,

**Note with satisfaction** the support provided to African countries by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and its partners,

**Note that** the challenges and problems encountered in the development and implementation of e-strategies are many and various.

**We recommend:**

**With respect to Government,**

1. Develop by 31 December 2006 a national e-strategy which should include local and sectoral particularities and ensure the dissemination, accessibility and adoption of ICTs by all levels of society.
2. Include the national documentary information and access to knowledge policy (libraries, documentation centres and archives) as well as the geo-information policy in the national e-strategies development process.
3. Incorporate in the good governance and development strategies the adequate processing of administrative, scientific and technical information.

**With respect to international organizations and cooperation agencies,**

1. Continue to assist African States in the development of a national e-strategy to be implemented by identifying specific projects and mobilizing funds.
2. Support the development of performance indicators for ICT.
3. Assist for setting up a regional agency with a technical resource centre capable of identifying the needs of each sector of activity, the corresponding applications and technologies and African public and private expertise.

## **Resolution on African languages in the Information Society**

**We**, the participants in the African Regional Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Accra from 2 to 4 February 2005,

**Having taken note** of the decisions contained in the Declaration of Principles and Plan of action adopted during the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held at Geneva in December 2003,

**Considering** the need to promote African languages as working languages in all areas of public life at the local, national and regional levels,

**Considering** the role of African languages in the protection and promotion of African culture in a society of interaction and sharing for the benefit of all,

**Considering** African societies' contribution to world civilization, to which they owe much to their cultural and linguistic diversity,

**Reaffirming** our shared, steadfast desire to support the development of the African Information Society with a view to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD),

**In view** of the recommendations made at African conferences on languages, and

**In view** also of the recommendations made at the Accra 2005 workshop on "African languages and open source software: Creativity in the service of African renaissance".

**Affirm** our determination to take action in order to:

- Officially recognize the value of African languages by establishing them as working languages for all aspects of daily life in African countries and communities in the context of the promotion of complementary functional multilingualism.
- Speed up the establishment of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) as a specialized institution of the African Union.
- Establish in Africa a centre for human resources training and development in the field of applied African linguistics.
- Support the creation of a network of public libraries which will integrate use of African languages to foster access to information for all in an inclusive information society.
- Incorporate Free and Open Source software as an integral component of digital solidarity.
- Request that the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) should consider the linguistic digital divide as one of the factors to be eliminated in order to build an inclusive Information Society and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

**Adopted in Accra on 4 February 2005**