World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society

POLITICAL DECLARATION OF THE "II WORLD SUMMIT OF CITIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY"

Bilbao, November 11, 2005

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A - PREAMBLE

We, mayors and local and regional authorities representatives, meeting at the Second World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society on 9-11 November 2005 in Bilbao:

1. *Recognising* the commitments made at the *First World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society*, held in Lyon on 4-5 December 2003;

2. *Incorporating* the contributions gathered during the preparatory process leading up to the Bilbao Summit, and very particularly those made at the regional conferences and thematic seminars, which counted on the participation of an extensive number of Local and Regional Authorities and the associations and networks that represent them, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Network of Local Authorities for the Information Society IT4ALL;

3. *Recognising* that information and communication technologies are essential tools for development that must be at the service of globalisation based on freedom, peace, equality and respect for cultural diversity;

4. *Recognising* the role of all the organisations of Cities and Local and Regional Authorities that have contributed towards preparing this Declaration; United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and all its sections (CEMR, UCLG-ASPAC, FLACMA, UCLG-MEWA, UCLG Africa, UCLG North America, UCLG Euroasia, Metropolis), International Association of Francophone Mayors, Arab Towns Organization (ATO), European Committee of the Regions (CoR), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE), the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), the Association of Basque Municipalities (EUDEL), Eurocities, ELANET, CITYNET, the Union of Latin American Capital Cities (UCCI), the Standing Committee Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of the Local and Regional Authorities (COPPEM), the Network of Local Authorities for the Information Society - IT4ALL, Global Cities

Dialogue, the European Regional Information Society Association (eris@), Telecities, SIDAR Foundation Universal Access, the Wireless Internet Institute (W2i)

5. *Recognising* the role of *United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)* in promoting the international Local Authorities Agenda and in encouraging, in cooperation with the networks active in this field, digital inclusion and activities to achieve the Information Society.

6. *Committing* to safeguarding the principles that were adopted by the World Council of *United Cities and Local Governments* in Beijing, which form the basis for the draft of Bilbao Plan of Action, which can be used as a tool in order to implement the contents of this Declaration;

7. *Undertaking* to support the efforts of the United Nations to develop a fairer and more inclusive Information Society, especially within the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the Millennium Declaration;

8. *Undertaking* to support a global cyber-culture which is respectful of human values as promoted by the Charter of the United Nations and by the organisations of Cities and Local Authorities, particularly taking into account freedom of opinion and expression, as stipulated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

9. *Fully assuming* the principles and values that must guide local action with regard to the development of the Information Society, as stated in the "10 Principles of Bilbao";

B - PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

We, mayors and local and regional authorities representatives, assume the principles and values ("10 Principles of Bilbao") that must guide local action with regard to the development of the Information Society:

10. I- *"Freedom of communication and universal access to information and knowledge are fundamental rights of each and every citizen"*:

11. II- *"The information era must lead to the strengthening of all human rights and the development of democracy in accordance with the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights"*;

12. III- *"The potential of information and communication technologies must contribute, above all, to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals"*;

13. IV- *"The development of the Information Society must benefit all citizens, without exception, and bridge the digital divide, with special attention being paid to the most disadvantaged groups, to persons with disabilities and to the inhabitants of the most isolated areas, particularly rural communities";*

14. V- *"To promote effective democratic decentralisation with relevant powers and sufficient financial resources";*

15. VI- *"Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, dialogue between civilisations, and the diversity of the media";*

16. VII- *"To promote transparency in the management of local and regional affairs and encourage people participation";*

17. VIII- *"To combat gender inequality and discrimination through the use of information technologies";*

18. IX- *"To promote cooperation between local and regional authorities around the world through exchanging information and knowledge, and developing joint projects that enable the Information Society to progress";*

19. X- *"To develop North-South and South-South solidarity as a means of combating social and economic inequality, contributing in the process to the creation of a fairer and more equitable Information Society";*

C - COMMITMENTS

We, mayors and local and regional authorities representatives, adopt the Bilbao Declaration and commit ourselves to the following priority actions:

20. *To call* for an immediate and tangible commitment from representatives of cities and local authorities throughout the world to do everything within their powers to ensure that citizens benefit from the advantages of Information and Communications Technologies, particularly though facilitating universal access to knowledge and culture;

At local and regional level

21. *To work* actively towards the development of our cities and regions, using Information and Communication Technologies as an instrument for sustainable development in all its dimensions, for each and every community, to bridge the North-South divide, and for all citizens, against marginalisation and social division;

22. *To implement* in our cities and regions an e-local agenda (Digital Local Agenda), designed to promote the Information Society, taking into account in particular the socio-economic and cultural environment, and based on the broad participation of citizens and social actors, with the ultimate objective of fostering sustainable development;

23. *To strengthen* the enabling role of local and regional authorities in guaranteeing adequate and secure technological infrastructure and in promoting ICT-based applications for inclusive services;

24. *To promote*, insofar as it is possible, the use of free software and other tools that facilitate inclusion and digital solidarity;

25. *To facilitate* the mobilisation of resources for digital inclusion, by engaging, if necessary, in new financing mechanisms;

26. *To prompt* all local and regional organisations involved in the development of a more equitable Information Society to implement the commitments of this Declaration.

At global level

27. *To promote* decentralised cooperation programmes between cities, local and regional authorities and their associations throughout the world to help bridge the digital divide;

28. *To work together* by actively participating in cooperation initiatives between local authorities and other stakeholders including states, the private sector, the international financial institutions, and the United Nations system;

29. *To promote* digital solidarity, by:

   a. supporting the Digital Solidarity Fund, and contributing to its financing, on a voluntary basis, through appropriate financing mechanisms such as the Geneva Principle;

b. developing any type of decentralised financing mechanism, in the context of peer-to-peer cooperation programmes, established on a voluntary basis, and including other means for cooperation such as knowledge sharing, training and technical advice, among others;

c. supporting other solidarity funds that can contribute to the bridging of the digital divide;

30. *To encourage instruments* as the Digital Solidarity Agency, IT4ALL Network and other similar initiatives as a way to increase the feasibility of the projects supported by these solidarity schemes.

D - REQUESTS

We, mayors and local and regional authorities representatives, call on:

States and the international community

31. *To recognise* the role of local and regional authorities in developing an Information Society that responds to the aspirations and needs of all citizens;

32. *To adopt* legislative and financial measures that allow local and regional authorities to fulfil their role in creating a fairer and more equitable Information Society;

33. *To support* programmes and actions aiming to build the capacity of local and regional authorities to face the numerous challenges raised by implementing the Information Society;

34. *To support* local and regional authorities in working toward greater accessibility and high speed connectivity in whatever form, in all of our local areas, and particularly in schools, health institutions, local and regional government premises and public spaces open to citizens and businesses, and to provide regulatory relief where necessary;

35. *To support the implementation* of the Digital Local Agenda by including it in international and national plans for the development of the Information Society, by recognising the subsidiarity principle inherent therein and by stimulating long-term public-private partnerships;

36. *To contribute towards overcoming the digital divide*, by allocating resources to the financial mechanisms and programmes established for this purpose.

The private sector and technology companies

37. *To cooperate* with local and regional authorities in implementing projects that promote the Information Society, to make the investments required to guarantee access for all, including those who live in rural areas or other places considered to be unprofitable, and to contribute to initiatives for e-inclusion and digital solidarity;

38. *To support the implementation* of the Digital Local Agenda by building long-term partnerships with the public sector;

39. *To contribute towards overcoming the digital divide,* by allocating resources for specific financial mechanisms and ICT development programmes.

The international financial institutions

40. *To allocate funding* to support the strengthening of local and regional authorities and the development and implementation of action plans for cities and regions;

41. *To support* decentralised cooperation programmes aiming to bridge the digital divide and the inclusion of Information and Communication Technologies in public services in developing countries;

42. *To contribute towards overcoming the digital divide,* by allocating resources for specific financial mechanisms and ICT development programmes.

The Tunis World Summit on the Information Society

43. *To include* the results of the Bilbao Summit, set out in this Declaration, as official document of the Tunis Summit, and to promote the guidelines set out in the Bilbao Plan of Action on a voluntary basis.

E - MONITORING OF THIS DECLARATION

We, mayors and local and regional authorities representatives, hereby agree:

44. *To request* that UCLG ensure follow up to the Summits in Bilbao and Tunis by monitoring the implementation of Bilbao Declaration, as well as of the local and regional authority commitments, particularly those relating to the increasing inclusion of Digital Solidarity in local Development Cooperation Strategies, support for initiatives such as the Digital Solidarity Funds, and the requests to other actors set out in this Declaration.