



**Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the  
United Nations**

**Conférence des ONG ayant des relations consultative avec  
L'ONU**

**First Meeting of the Group of Friends of the Chair (GFC)  
Of the PrepCom of WSIS, Tunis Phase  
Geneva, 22 October 2004**

Mr Chair,

I welcome the opportunity to address the Group of Friends of the Chair and wish you all the best in your deliberations. You have an ambitious task ahead of you, as shown in the work plan distributed by you. I am not speaking on behalf of Civil Society, - there was not enough time for online consultations - but as President of the Conference of NGOs (CONGO).

As CONGO, we recognize the openness and inclusiveness expressed in allowing civil society to address the GFC on three occasions over the next months. We nonetheless regret that civil society has not been given any formal membership on the GFC. This is an unfortunate step backwards, particularly immediately following the first meeting of the WGIG, which will have civil society participation and membership.

In the current debate in the UNGA on the Cardoso Report and at many other occasions, as CONGO we have highlighted the spirit, modalities and methods of work of the WSIS framework as an example of not only good but best practices, and we very much hope we can continue to do so through finding further enhanced mechanisms of interaction.

Having said this, let me come to the agenda of today's meeting, and first congratulate you, Mr. Chair, for having established in your non-paper such clear and straight forward elements for discussion, both regarding the basic principles as well as the structure of the Final Document.

### Basic Principles

At this early stage just a few points

- CONGO reiterates the focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).. We have said from the outset that the challenge we face is to incorporate ICTs as critical components into achieving the MDGs. The Tunis Summit should be approached in the larger context of the Millennium Declaration and +5 assessments and the Final Document should therefore reflect the enormous opportunities to accelerate implementation which will not be possible without meaningful cooperation and communication among all stake holders and at all levels.
- We agree with seeing WSIS Tunis as the continuation of WSIS Geneva and that political issues or language where consensus has been reached should not be reopened.
- Rather, WSIS Tunis, in its political Chapeau, should strongly reaffirm the Geneva Declaration, highlight the special needs and context of Africa and in its operational part, identify achievable mechanisms to implement the Plan of Action.
- One way of doing it could be by slicing each principle of the Declaration as a lens to measure implementation in that area. Overall continuous Stocktaking and Reporting could be done along the lines of the MDG Country reports.

Mr. Chair, we welcome your forward way in your proposal for the structure of the document which promises good coordination with the Task Force on Finance and the Working Group on Internet Governance. We will follow closely this process and look forward to enhanced interaction.