



**World Summit on the Information Society
UNESCO between Geneva and Tunis**

**Group of the Friends of the Chair
First meeting, Geneva, 22 October 2004**

Statement by UNESCO

UNESCO appreciates the process established by the Chair through his 'Group of friends' and thanks for the opportunity to comment on the structure and outline of the *Final Document(s)*.

We are gratified that the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action recognize the values and principles that UNESCO has been promoting consistently as essential to build inclusive and pluralist knowledge societies. These are "Freedom of expression" "Universal access to information and knowledge", "Preservation and promotion of cultural diversity, multilingualism and local content"; and "Equal access to quality education".

UNESCO believes that the second phase of WSIS and indeed the *Final Document(s)*, should illustrate how we can build "Knowledge Societies" by operationalizing these four principles and translating them into action.

Specific comments on the Chair's "Non-Paper"

A. Concerning the "basic principles"

UNESCO suggests using the *Final Document(s)* as a platform to share solutions, wise practices, and lessons from current implementation experiences. We believe the emphasis must be on practical implementation of the Plan of Action. It is crucial that this process has full engagement with civil society and the private sector as action needs all stakeholders.

UNESCO believes that the structure of the document should reflect the areas of issues (chapters of the Declaration of Principles/Plan of action) rather than the structure of the preparatory process.

B. Concerning the Outline of the *Final Document(s)*

UNESCO's recognizes the value of separating the document in two main parts.

The "*political chapeau*" should be kept short and refer to the emerging consensus on "knowledge societies" that is based on an enlarged policy agenda embracing ethical considerations, social inclusion, cultural diversity, human rights and inter-cultural dialogue.

UNESCO also values the proposed four chapter of the "*Operational part*" of the document.

This part should be the core of the document.

The focus of the first chapter should clearly be on stocktaking and implementation. It should maintain clear links to the structure of the WSIS Action Plan and record input from all

stakeholders. It should be complemented by an online platform that provides dynamic solutions for monitoring progress, tracking changes and facilitating relationships.

In order to be able to report coherently on the outcomes of the thematic meetings organized by UNESCO and all other stakeholders, guidelines on the organization and expected outputs of such thematic meetings are needed urgently.

There should also be some means by which these outputs can be fed into the Tunis Summit.

UNESCO suggests reserving Chapter I for reports on the substance of the implementation activities and covering the issue of organizational implementation mechanisms in Chapter IV “The way ahead”.

Chapter IV should also include a part related to the issue of measuring the progress in implementation of the Action Plan, particularly in achieving the indicative targets included in Chapter 6 of that Plan.

Conclusion

UNESCO is committed to maintaining the momentum from Phase I with a strong focus on the implementation of the Action Plan and a presence in the process and events leading up to Tunis.

UNESCO's WSIS Action Directory, an online platform providing access to information on UNESCO's contribution to the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society in December 2003 is at www.unesco.org/wsisdirectory.

UNESCO's activities that operationalize the Organization's concept of “Knowledge Societies”. can be accessed by the categories of the WSIS Action Plan, UNESCO four principles for Knowledge Societies, regions and countries, types of actions, and by UNESCO's main fields of competence.