ICT Task Force Series 8

The World Summit on the Information Society:

Moving from the Past into the Future

Opening Statement by
Kofi Annan

Preface by
Yoshio Utsumi

Edited by
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Opening Statement[1]

Kofi Annan
Secretary-General, United Nations

We are going through a historic transformation in the way we live, learn, work, communicate and do business. We must do so not passively, but as makers of our own destiny. Technology has produced the information age. Now it is up to all of us to build an Information Society.

This Summit is unique. Where most global conferences focus on global threats, this one will consider how best to use a new global asset.

We are all familiar with the extraordinary power of information and communications technologies.

From trade to telemedicine, from education to environmental protection, we have in our hands, on our desktops and in the skies above, the ability to improve standards of living for millions upon millions of people.

We have tools that can propel us toward the Millennium Development Goals; instruments with which to advance the cause of freedom and democracy; vehicles with which to propagate knowledge and mutual understanding.

We have all of this potential. The challenge before this Summit is what to do with it.

The so-called digital divide is actually several gaps in one.

There is a technological divide – great gaps in infrastructure.

[1] Opening Statement made during the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva, 10 December 2003

There is a content divide. A lot of web-based information is simply not relevant to the real needs of people. And nearly 70 percent of the world's web sites are in English, at times crowding out local voices and views.

There is a gender divide, with women and girls enjoying less access to information technology than men and boys. This can be true of rich and poor countries alike: some developing countries are among those offering the most digital opportunities for women, while some developed countries have done considerably less well.

There is a commercial divide. E-commerce is linking some countries and companies ever more closely together. But others run the risk of further marginalization. Some experts describe the digital divide as one of the biggest non-tariff barriers to world trade.

And there are obvious social, economic and other disparities and obstacles that affect a country's ability to take advantage of digital opportunities.

We cannot assume that such gaps will disappear on their own, over time, as the diffusion of technology naturally spreads its wealth. An open, inclusive information society that benefits all people will not emerge without sustained commitment and investment. We look to you, the leaders assembled here, to produce those acts of political will.

We also look to the business community, which I am glad to say is represented here in impressive numbers. The future of the IT industry lies not so much in the developed world, where markets are saturated, as in reaching the billions of people in the developing world who remain untouched by the information revolution. E-health, e-school and other applications can offer the new dynamic of growth for which the industry has been looking.

We look to civil society groups, in particular for their rich knowledge of hopes and concerns at the local level, among communities that are eager to join in the global exchange of ideas and information, but may also feel their identities are threatened by a pre-packaged global culture.

And we look to media organizations, which are both creators of content and essential watchdogs. At the World Electronic Media Forum[2], broadcasting leaders from all the world's regions adopted a declaration in which they pledged to do their part for development and social cohesion. It is vital that they retain their freedom to do so, as spelt out in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Indeed, the right to freedom of opinion and

[2] Held in Geneva on 9 December 2003

expression is fundamental to development, democracy and peace, and must remain a touchstone for our work ahead.

Information and communication technologies are not a panacea or magic formula. But they can improve the lives of everyone on this planet.

Yet even as we talk about the power of technology, let us remember who is in charge. While technology shapes the future, it is people who shape technology, and decide what it can and should be used for.

So let us embrace these new technologies. But let us recognize that we are embarked on an endeavour that transcends technology. Building an open, empowering Information Society is a social, economic and ultimately political challenge.

There is no comparison between the technologies of the atomic age and those of the information age. Nonetheless, something written half a century ago by the American nuclear scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer seems strangely prescient and applicable today. And I quote:

> *The open society, the unrestricted access to knowledge, the unplanned and uninhibited association of men for its furtherance – these are what may make a vast, complex, ever growing, ever changing, ever more specialized and expert technological world, nevertheless a world of human community.*

We must remember that.

Preface

Yoshio Utsumi
Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Secretary-General, World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

Building the Information Society: Time for Action

The digital revolution, particularly in the fields of information and communication, has extended the frontiers of the global village, making a profound impact on how the world functions and interacts. Unfortunately, too many communities still remain unhooked from this phenomenon, creating a new knowledge gap.

Bridging this digital and knowledge divide and avoiding the inequities of the past has taken on unprecedented urgency, especially in the aftermath of the devastating tsunamis that struck the Indian Ocean region in December 2004. The use of communication devices saved many lives, but wider access to information and communication technologies and early warning infrastructure could have saved many thousands more.

At the same time, recent strides in ICT have wrought fundamental changes in the way people think, behave, communicate, work and earn their livelihood. They have forged new ways to create knowledge, educate people and disseminate information. They have restructured the way the world conducts economic and business practices, runs governments and engages politically. They have provided for the speedy delivery of humanitarian aid and healthcare, and a new vision for environmental protection. With increasing access to information and knowledge, people are empowered to achieve their development goals and, through improved communications, help create a more just, prosperous and peaceful world.

ICT have a major role to play in the least developed regions of the world. They help connect individuals, small companies or groups of farmers and artisans in the poorest and most isolated areas of the world and bring them to the attention of national and even global markets. This makes it possible to leapfrog poor transport infrastructures so that distance

from markets is no longer a drawback. ICT can also improve governance by giving a voice to people who have been isolated, invisible or silent, allowing them to speak out regardless of their economic status, gender or location.

Mandated by its Constitution to "extend the benefits of the new telecommunication technologies to all the world's inhabitants", ITU has been a driving force behind these changes and the emergence of the Information Society. For the past 140 years, the International Telecommunication Union has worked relentlessly to harmonize national policies worldwide, bridge technological differences, foster interconnectivity of systems: in other words, to facilitate the availability of information and communication technologies on a global basis. But access to the benefits of ICT has not been even, among and within countries, between urban and rural areas, between the rich and the poor, between the educated and the illiterate, between men and women.

Given the enormous potential of information and communication technologies to improve people's economic, social and cultural well-being in a knowledge-based digital economy, ITU proposed the holding of a World Summit to agree on a global vision to harness these technological resources for the common good, and it has taken the lead role in organizing the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), fostering a truly inclusive, multi-stakeholder process.

A Catalyst for Development

The World Summit on the Information Society, which met in Geneva in December 2003, gave shape to a shared vision and put forward a concrete plan of action to build a development-oriented, equitable and inclusive Information Society "where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting sustainable development and improving their quality of life".

In November 2005, world leaders will meet again in Tunis in the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society to reaffirm their commitment, hammer out the specifics that will translate the Action Plan objectives into measurable results and devise strategies to help connect all people as well as accelerate achievement of the development goals enshrined in the Millennium Declaration.

Unique in the history of global summits, the two-phase format allows for concrete follow-up action and stocktaking. The Tunis phase also opens the gateway to Africa and the developing world, with sharper focus on the use of ICT to achieve specific goals to end poverty and hunger, combat ill health and disease, prevent environmental degradation,

achieve universal literacy, and empower people and communities. While information and communication technologies alone cannot solve the world's problems, they are critical tools in meeting these global challenges. Bringing together technological know-how with the multifaceted expertise of its many stakeholders, the World Summit on the Information Society is widely recognized as an action-oriented "Summit of Solutions".

In meeting the challenges of the new Millennium and ensuring that the benefits of the Digital Age are not denied anyone, ITU has launched a global multi-stakeholder effort – Partners to Connect the World – to forge global partnerships for development. As a concrete output of the Summit, this initiative will consolidate and scale up existing development-oriented connectivity projects and stimulate new partnerships to ensure connectivity by 2015.

As Secretary-General of the World Summit on the Information Society, I urge everyone – especially world leaders in government, the private sector and civil society, heads of international organizations and all those with a vision for the Information Society – to attend the Summit in Tunis and participate in the many events including ICT4all. If this is to truly be a Summit of Solutions, the time for action is now.

Introduction

Wolfgang Kleinwächter
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Ambassador and Delegate of the Swiss Federal Council for the WSIS

The WSIS Process: A Long Journey into the Future

This is a "Constitution for the Information Age", said the Swiss President Pascal Couchepin after the adoption of the WSIS Declaration of Principles by the 12,000 delegates from more than 150 nations who came to Geneva in December 2003 to attend the first World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The eleven principles, according to President Couchepin, will guide us into the future when we travel through the global and borderless cyberspace. According to the Plan of Action, which was also adopted by the World Summit, until 2015 all villages of the world and more than three billion people should be online.

The Geneva Summit gave a green light to the journey into the future, but this will be a long road. The reality of today's information society is still characterized by imbalances, inequalities and the digital divide. Although there are now nearly one billion individuals who have access to the Internet, five billion have not. To bridge the digital divide, enormous efforts, a new thinking and a lot of digital solidarity is needed. But the process has started and WSIS has opened the door.

In the last 15 years, the United Nations organized a number of summits: from the Environment Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992), the Human Rights Summit in Vienna (1993) and the Women Summit in Beijing (1995) to the Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2000). But while the World Summit on the Information Society can be seen as part of this world summits chain, WSIS is also different. WSIS is much more than bridging the digital divide. The information society is not a single-issue problem. The

information revolution penetrates all parts of our lives. It affects the way we learn, work, communicate, do business, educate our children and entertain ourselves. The WSIS process is about how we are going to organize the globalized world of tomorrow where the Internet makes everybody neighbours, just one click away.

Discussions around the information society go back into the 1960s, when concepts of the post-industrial society (Daniel Bell) or the technotronic society (Zbigniew Brzezinski) were introduced into the intellectual debate. In the 1970s Alvin Toffler (*The Third Wave*) and Marc Porat (*The Information Economy*) linked these concepts closer to the information revolution. But it needed the breakthrough of the Internet in the early 1990s to understand the long-term radical consequences of the information age. When Nicholas Negroponte wrote his "*Being Digital*" (1995), Dave Tapscott his "*Digital Economy*" (1996), Manuel Castells his "*Network Society*" (1998) and Lawrence Lessig his "*Code and other Laws of Cyberspace*" (1999), it became clearer step by step, that this development is more than the introduction of a new generation of information and communication technologies. It is about convergence, globalisation and the future of our society on this planet Earth.

It was not a surprise that the information society became a subject of policy and global diplomacy. In 1995 the Group of Seven (G-7) convened a high-level Ministerial Conference on the Global Information Society in Brussels, which can be seen as the starting point for a new approach to meet the global challenges of the information age.

Three years later, the challenge reached all the 180+ member states of the United Nations. In 1998 the WSIS process started formally in Minneapolis where the ITU had its Plenipotentiary Conference, and Tunisia proposed the convening of World Summit on the Information Society. Resolution 73 (1998) gave the Secretary-General of the ITU a mandate to investigate the feasibility of an Information Society Summit. The United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) supported the idea but proposed to put the Summit under the umbrella of the United Nations as a whole because the substance of such a conference would go far beyond the more technical mandate of the ITU. The 56th General Assembly of the United Nations finally fixed the framework for the Summit, when it adopted United Nations Resolution 56/183 at December 21, 2001.

United Nations Resolution 56/183 formulated the general aims and principles, endorsed the idea to organize the Summit in two phases and invited not only governments and intergovernmental organisations, but also the private sector and civil society to participate in the process.

A High-Level Summit Organizing Committee (HLSOC) was established in early 2002 with all Directors-General from all United Nations Specialized Agencies as members. The first

Preparatory Meeting (Prepcom 1) took place in Geneva in June 2002. After five regional Ministerial Conferences in Bamako, Bucharest, Tokyo, Bavaro and Beirut, Prepcom 2 (Geneva, February 2003) started to frame the numerous concepts, ideas and proposals into a more coherent strategy.

But as governments, private sector and civil society moved from the mountains of visions to the valleys of realities, the different stakeholders realized that this WSIS process was much more complex and controversial than originally expected. The involved parties started to recognize that bridging the digital divide is only one aspect of tomorrow's global information society. The list of disputed issues grew longer and longer and included not only information infrastructure development and human capacity-building, but also human rights, media freedoms, cybersecurity, data protection, intellectual property rights, cultural diversity and Internet governance. The agenda soon embraced subjects like e-Commerce, e-Government, e-Health, e-Learning, e-Culture, e-Content, e-Traffic, e-Everything.

The controversy about the substance of the issues was additionally complicated by a procedural controversy. While United Nations Resolution 56/183 invited both governmental and non-governmental actors to participate in the WSIS process, it did not specify the individual roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders. This lack of clarity did lead unavoidably to disputes on who should be involved in policy development, decision-making and implementation. In particular civil society, but also the private sector, asked for a full involvement into the process with access, speaking and voting rights. But while the original turmoil turned slowly into trust and created a new spirit of multi-stakeholder cooperation, it remained difficult to translate the input of civil society and private sector into real impact on the intergovernmental level.

Prepcom 2 did not settle anything. An additional Intersessional Meeting was convened in Paris, in June 2003. But regardless of this extra week of negotiations, Prepcom 3 (Geneva, September 2003) was also unable to agree on the proposed final documents, a Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action.

The key conflicts centred primarily around five issues:

- Human rights and freedom of expression;
- Intellectual property rights and free access to knowledge;
- Fighting cybercrime and protection of privacy in cyberspace;
- Financing the digital solidarity agenda; and

- Internet governance.

Neither Prepcom3bis (November 2003) nor Prepcom3bis+ (December 2003) reached a consensus on all issues. In particular the questions of Internet governance and financing remained open until the very last minute. Only 24 hours before the official opening of the Summit, Prepcom3bis++ reached late after midnight a compromise: Governments agreed to disagree and to postpone the conflict. They established a Task Force on Financial Mechanism (TFFM) and a Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) to look into the controversies and come up with proposals for the second phase of the Summit, scheduled for Tunis in November 2005.

With these compromises, the green light was switched on. When United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan opened the Summit, he made the point that WSIS is primarily about the future, it is about the start of a process that will lead mankind into a still unknown territory. "Technology has produced the information age. Now it is up to all of us to build an Information Society," said Annan. "This Summit is unique. Where most global conferences focus on global threats, this one will consider how best to use a new global asset." And he added: "While technology shapes the future, it is people who shape technology, and decide what it can and should be used for. So let us embrace these new technologies. But let us recognize that we are embarked on an endeavour that transcends technology. Building an open, empowering Information Society is a social, economic and ultimately political challenge."

The Geneva Phase of the Summit was seen as a success. While it did not produce new facts and figures, it proved that the WSIS process has already changed slowly the general environment:

1. It has created a higher level of public awareness for the challenges of the information age;

2. It has adopted a framework of guiding principles which give further action a clear orientation;

3. It has further promoted the level of global communication, coordination and cooperation on interdependent issues, which are negotiated in different organization;

4. It has launched a process with clear and concrete formulated targets and an implementation mechanism; and

5. It has developed a new level of collaboration among governments, private sector and civil society and has introduced "multi-stakeholderism" as a new principle for global diplomacy.

Geneva was only a start. While the road to the Summit was difficult and stony, there are a lot more mountains on the horizon which are waiting to be conquered. With the further development of the Internet, new and difficult problems will enrich the WSIS agenda. Issues like spam, cybercrime, phishing, and identity theft will put the controversial question of Internet governance more into the center of the debate. The Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) will present its report in July 2005, and it is without any doubt that the recommendation of this group will play a central role in the preparation of the Tunis Summit. Even more, the way that the Internet will be governed in the future will have consequences for the management of other global issues, which will emerge from the further development of the Information Society.

WSIS II will take place in Tunis, in November 2005. The way from Switzerland to Tunisia has already produced first results. After Prepcom 1 in Hammamet (June 2004), the Task Force on Financial Mechanism presented its final report and enabled Prepcom 2 (Geneva, February 2005) to agree on the establishment of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF). The DSF was launched in March 2005 in Geneva. Another series of regional and thematic WSIS conferences – from Damascus and Accra to Cairo, Tokyo and Rio – have proved, that the process moves from reflections to actions. Prepcom 3 (Geneva, September 2005) will deal also with follow-up and implementation mechanisms.

WSIS II in Tunis takes place just seven weeks after the 2005 World Summit (New York, September 2005), where heads of states will discuss the progress the world has made with regard to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To promote development and to reduce poverty in our world, information and communication technologies are much more than only useful tools. The MDG process and the WSIS process are interlinked. They cannot be separated. The unlimited potential of the Information Society is a key source for a successful struggle for development and against poverty. And without sustainable development a global information society remains an empty concept.

Both the MDG process and WSIS have formulated concrete targets for the year 2015. There is an objective need to coordinate the process of implementation, and it would make sense to combine the efforts with regard to the preparation of follow-up events. The year 2010 could become the next check-point and then MDG+10 and WSIS III should be organized as a joint project.

*

Any world summit is challenging to design and to organize: the World Summit on the Information Society exceptionally so. This book describes, through the voices of some of its major actors, essential parts of the complex undertaking of the WSIS, from conception to realization. The work of many participants culminated in the Geneva Declaration and Plan of Action, as well as in the ICT4D Platform.

When moving forward, it is important to remember history. WSIS already has a history of its own. This book is not a history book. But the stories, the contributors to this book tell us, are part of this history. The target audience of this book goes beyond the "usual suspects" and insiders, who has lived and worked in the "WSIS spaceship" for more than two years. The book will reach out to a broader public, because the Information Society is for everybody. The individual articles of this book will enable readers to get a better understanding of the complex issues raised by the WSIS process. It gives the opportunity to see the different perspectives of different players and stakeholders, the controversies and conflicts, which will continue to exist when the process goes ahead. Readers will get first-hand information and personal impressions on how WSIS I was done by governmental negotiators, who have been heavily involved in the deal-making inside and outside the conference halls of the International Geneva Convention Center and the Palais des Nations where most of the sessions took place. Representatives of the private sector and civil society give their perspectives and write about the expectations they have when they discuss the future of the WSIS process. And academic observers add some theoretical analysis which helps to put single issues into a broader context.

The editors owe special thanks to the staff of the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force (UNICTTF), who helped with the editorial and technical work. And thanks goes to all who helped to make this book happen.

PART I

POLITICS and DIPLOMACY

Section 1

Intergovernmental Organisations

The Millennium Development Goals, WSIS and the United Nations

Shashi Tharoor
Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, United Nations

In a play by George Bernard Shaw, millionaire arms dealer St. Andrew Undershaft describes poverty as "the worst of all crimes". Of course, Shaw did not mean us to give any credence to Undershaft's views, but rather to take issue with them.

Nonetheless, there is something criminal about the continuing existence of desperate poverty, some forty years after US President Lyndon Johnson declared that the end of poverty was within our grasp.

Of course, ending poverty is no simple task. In addition to the resources and tools, it requires, at a minimum, serious desire, commitment and action by people all over the world. And, just as the causes of poverty are manifold, deriving from history, from geography, from politics and from economics, so too what we must do to eradicate it is complex and will take time.

It was to ensure that, at the dawn of a new century, people everywhere were moving in the direction of, in the words of the UN Charter, "better standards of life in larger freedom," that world leaders gathered at the United Nations in September 2000, adopted the Millennium Declaration – committing themselves and their nations to undertake a series of concrete actions to promote peace, development and human rights.

To add substance to those commitments, a set of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was created – time-bound and quantifiable targets, the achievement of which would address poverty. These targets sought to ensure that people everywhere were able to enjoy the human rights long ago established by the United Nations – the rights of each person on the planet to health, to education, to shelter and to security.

The eight Goals seek to: "eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development". The target year States set themselves for achieving those Goals is 2015.

When Professor Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the MDGs, said that "this generation has the ability to achieve something that no other generation could have – the ability to eliminate poverty altogether by 2025, and to make the world safe and prosperous for all," part of what he was referring to was the enormously powerful tools that we now possess as a result of new technologies.

The importance of access to new technologies for those in need was recognized by the 146 heads of State and government who adopted the Millennium Declaration. They promised to "ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies … are available to all" (paragraph 20).

This broad commitment was rendered more specific in the Millennium Development Goals. Goal 8 includes a target to work with the private sector to make all the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies – available to people in less developed countries.

Indeed, it was clear to the world's leaders in 2000 that information and communication technologies would make an invaluable contribution to meeting all of the Millennium Development Goals. They understood that greater access to ICTs, as they are called, would improve farming practices and assist micro-entrepreneurs, would help prevent AIDS and other communicable diseases, would promote women's equality and would foster environmental protection. And our leaders were correct. All over the developing world, electronic commerce, distance education, telemedicine and e-governance are improving the quality of life for countless people.

So we have the commitments and the tools. What next? A report produced earlier this year (2005) by Professor Sachs and a team of experts, titled *Investing in Development: a Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, identifies the missing element as follows: "Billions more people could enjoy the fruits of the global economy. Tens of millions of lives can be saved. The practical solutions exist. The political framework is established. And for the first time, the cost is utterly affordable. Whatever one's motivation for attacking the crisis of extreme poverty – human rights, religious values, security, fiscal prudence, ideology – the solutions are the same. All that is needed is action."

The Millennium Development Goals and the World Summit

One of the next steps towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was to develop the means to manage and share the benefits of the information revolution of the late twentieth century. The information revolution, unlike the French Revolution, is at present one with much liberté, some fraternité and no égalité. And its twin, globalization, is yet to deliver the goods, or even the tools to obtain them, to many in great need. The 400,000 citizens of Luxembourg have access to more Internet bandwidth than Africa's 760 million citizens. The dividing line between North and South is not just the poverty line but the fibre-optic and high speed digital lines. If "digital divide" is a cliché of our time, it represents a reality that cannot be denied.

Governments decided to address this at a two-phase World Summit on the Information Society. The first phase of this Summit took place in Geneva in 2003, and the second will meet in Tunis later this year. The Summit's Declaration of Principles expressly sets out its challenge as "to harness the potential of information and communication technology to promote the development goals of the Millennium Declaration" (paragraph 2), adding, "we aim at making full use of the opportunities offered by ICTs in our efforts to reach the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration" (paragraph 60).

The Plan of Action, like the Millennium Declaration, sets 2015 as the year in which it hopes to achieve its targets, which include linking, via technology, villages and communities, universities and primary and secondary schools, scientific and research centres, public libraries, cultural centres, museums, post offices and archives, health centres and hospitals, and local and central government departments (paragraph 6).

Other targets include improving the availability of information in all languages on the Internet, and ensuring that everyone in the world has access to television and radio.

The Summit targets encompass the broad array of issues that governments and people must address to put technology at the service of a better world. Information about all those targets can be found at the Summit website (www.itu.int/wsis). But I will focus on two issues that, as the senior information officer of the United Nations, I am most involved in.

The first of these is the search "to encourage the development of content and to put in place technical conditions in order to facilitate the presence and use of all world languages on the Internet" (paragraph 6).

This is in fact three targets in one. It involves encouraging the development of local content, fostering technological development and expanding the presence of world languages on the Internet.

Developing countries have made strong progress in the number of Internet users, even if in 2002 around 20 per cent of Internet users were still accounted for by 20 per cent of the world population. Since there were no significant gains in computer distribution, gains in Internet access were mostly through shared access, such as community telecentres and shared public points of access. An expansion of Internet access in developing countries, including through shared access, offers hope of more widespread global distribution of Internet users.

The global figures are a little skewed because just one country accounts for much of the progress in the developing world. China accounted in 2001 for an estimated 22.5 million Internet users, and today it accounts for an estimated 520 Internet service providers and 600 Internet content providers. The growth of the Internet sector in China is likely to remain strong, if not explosive, with the number of users projected to eventually overtake the number of users in the United States.

That said, even Africa, which is often low on the connectivity scale, has been making progress. At the end of 2003, there were around 14 million Internet users in Africa, up from just 4.5 million in 2000, ITU reports. It is clear that the number of Internet users in Africa is growing at as fast a rate as any world region. South Africa accounts for one quarter of African Internet users, and North Africa now accounts for 35 per cent of the total.

We are, therefore, making progress in getting the world on-line. But all media principally reflect the interests of their producers, and whether we look at television, radio or the Internet, what passes for global media is really the media of the developed West. In 1999, OECD nations owned 93 per cent of Internet hosts, and this inequality had only slightly improved by 2002, according to a survey conducted by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Information about the developing world, of course, is not missing from global media, but what passes for "my world" in the media of the West is too often the West's perception of my world. Most of the globe's Internet hosts are based in industrial countries, and most of the content is produced in, and for, Western countries, in Western languages. So while the developing world's access to the Internet is improving, I fear this content divide might turn out to be more resistant to our plans and our entreaties – something the WSIS process must find ways to overcome.

Clearly, if the Internet is to live up to its potential to transform the lives of subsistence farmers, for example, by helping them learn about better crop techniques, or by improving their access to markets, then what is actually on the Internet must be comprehensible to them, and it must be suited to their needs.

With local commitment and international assistance, this content gap can be overcome. One developing country that has made a strong effort to promote local content is Mali. Mali is developing material for the web that will allow it to use information technologies to meet a strong demand among its citizens for higher education and to give them access to appropriate information about health and medical practices. It has also started to promote tourism and the sale of its arts and crafts over the Web. The Internet is used to relay weather information, financial news and training to farmers and entrepreneurs. Much visual and audio information is also produced to reach the illiterates in rural areas.

The efforts in Mali are also helping preserve that country's cultural heritage and providing its people with information about their history. The National Museum of Mali is using digital techniques to record and restore ancient manuscripts, and it is using the Internet to exchange information on the latest restoration and conservation methods.

Another example of a successful initiative outside the West is the creation of Internet Clubs in Egypt. These clubs make affordable access to the Web available to all Egyptians, especially those less privileged. Hundreds of clubs have been launched, each with an instructor available to train users in basic computer skills, software applications and web design. One result is that Egyptians are now creating their own knowledge pool, tailored to the concrete needs of users and community groups. To date, the clubs have allowed 100,000 Egyptians to use the web, and Egypt aims to establish the one thousandth IT Club by the end of 2005.

In my own country, India, a Wi-Fi bus is bringing connectivity to rural areas in a district of Karnataka. As the bus, which is equipped with Wi-Fi Internet access, drives around the district it stops at local villages and links to a communally-owned computer, housed in a computer kiosk.

There are many such examples across the developing world and they have improved lives – proof that we have it in our power to use technology to advance towards the Millennium Development Goals. But these successes remain the exception, rather than the rule, and our goal must be to find solutions for everyone.

The second World Summit issue on which I am particularly focused is freedom of expression. At the Geneva phase of WSIS, States described a free press "as an essential

foundation of the Information Society" (paragraph 4). It is a truism that "knowledge is power", and as UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said, "information is liberating." The virtues of access to technology, of relevant information, and of content in a language you understand are all moot unless the legal and political infrastructure of your country allows you access to information.

There can be little argument that information and freedom go together. The information revolution is inconceivable without political democracy, and vice versa. In fact, the spread of information has already had a direct impact on the degree of accountability and transparency that governments around the world must deliver if they are to survive.

How much information technology can deliver economically is also linked to political freedom. To take full advantage of the international economic access that information technologies provide, countries need to open up to the outside world, to liberalize their mass media, and to resist government control and censorship of information. There is widespread recognition today that restricted access to the flow of information directly undermines development. And global interdependence means that those who receive and disseminate information have an edge over those who curtail it.

The United Nations has been in the forefront of the struggle to advance freedom of information. The legally binding International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is only the broadest of the international treaties and declarations the UN has developed to guarantee freedom of opinion and expression. We have set the standards, but we have not yet won the battle.

Let's not pretend the issue of freedom of expression is easy. In the fight against terrorism, some countries have enacted or are considering measures that restrict press freedom or, more subtly, have used disinformation and misinformation in an effort to steer the debate. Here a delicate balance must be found between ensuring national security and maintaining an independent, critical press. The fight against terrorism cannot be won unless the media are allowed to play their crucial role of informing citizens and acting as watchdog.

In many countries, media concentration and media ownership by large conglomerates present another subtle challenge to a vigorous, independent press and endanger its role as a check-and-balance to political and economic power. Democratizing access to information can serve as a check not only on governments, but also on press barons and media magnates.

And all countries impose limitations on traditional media – through laws against slander and libel, for example. The Internet – a "media without a passport" – poses new challenges to

even the most benign governments as they seek to find the right legal environment to foster legitimate freedom of expression, without allowing other legitimate rights to be trampled. This is another issue that WSIS will grapple with.

Leaders of both developing and developed countries must take the information challenges faced at WSIS seriously, and recognize that infrastructure development is a priority. They must assess and support the most appropriate technologies, help promote access and training, and choose a legal framework that guarantees access to information.

In the words of the United Nations Secretary-General, "let us embrace these new technologies, but let us recognize that we are embarked on an endeavour that transcends technology. Building an open, empowering information society is a social, economic and, ultimately, political challenge." If we succeed in meeting it, we will have helped make a better world.

WSIS and UNESCO

Abdul Waheed Khan
Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

In many ways, the two meetings of the World Summit on the Information Society are landmark events in the global dialogue. For the first time ever, issues such as equitable access for all persons to information and knowledge, digital divide and fair sharing of the benefits of information and communication are being discussed by all nations of the world during a process that started in 2002 and will go far beyond the second Summit meeting in Tunis, in November 2005.

The adoption of the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action at the first Summit meeting in Geneva and its commitment to taking concrete action to narrow the digital divide and use information and communication to attain international development goals are major achievements. They are also global acknowledgement of the critical role of information and knowledge in all aspects of human development.

Over the past decade, ICT has triggered a revolution, affecting education, culture, society and many other spheres of our lives, and this revolution is only just beginning. We continue to find that access to information and knowledge facilitated by ICT is increasingly determining patterns of learning, cultural expression and social participation, as well as providing opportunities for development, more effective poverty reduction and the preservation of peace. Indeed, knowledge is playing, and will continue to play, a pivotal role as a principal force of social transformation.

In light of these technological advances and their pervasive societal and ethical implications and impacts, UNESCO's mandate to "promote the free flow of ideas by word and image" and to "maintain, increase and spread knowledge", takes on new dimensions. It exerts an even greater moral responsibility on the Organization to contribute proactively to addressing potential challenges, maximizing benefits and supporting equitable access to the

opportunities provided by the free flow of information and communication through the use of appropriate technologies.

For these reasons, UNESCO seeks to extend the debate. While technology and infrastructure are very important, UNESCO's understanding of the changes of societies goes beyond technological transformations.

Since the beginning of the WSIS process, UNESCO has continuously promoted the concept of "Knowledge Societies". Including dimensions of social, cultural, economic, political and institutional transformation, it is centred around a holistic, multidimensional and development-oriented vision, and captures the complexity and dynamic of the changes that are taking place.

Inclusiveness must be central to knowledge societies. All persons, without distinction, must have access to its benefits and must be empowered to create, receive, share and utilize information and knowledge freely – whether this be for reasons of economic improvement, social recreation, cultural expression and enjoyment, or civic participation. Within this concept, ICT is a tool dedicated to human development, not an end in itself.

The growth of knowledge societies depends on the production of new knowledge, its transmission through education and training, and its dissemination through ICT. Scientific research and discovery, and associated technological applications, are the driving forces behind the creation of knowledge societies.

UNESCO's concept of knowledge societies is founded on four principles: freedom of expression; universal access to information and knowledge; respect for human dignity and cultural and linguistic diversity; and quality education for all.

Freedom of expression is the first cornerstone of knowledge societies where individual freedom must be respected and honoured. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the "freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers". In knowledge societies, all citizens should not only have the potential but also the right to express their ideas and opinions freely. Openness, dialogue and respect for wisdom in societies can only be ensured if freedom of expression for all citizens is guaranteed.

Universal access to information and knowledge is another fundamental building block of knowledge societies. The concept of universal access is underpinned by the presence of several essential supporting components, namely: availability of communication infrastructure and connectivity; availability of content relevant to the user; affordable

services within reasonable distances; and users with the necessary information literacy skills to use these services and to add value by developing, exchanging and creating new services.

Public accessibility to a wide range of content needed by citizens for their lives and work, including data, publications, artistic works, radio and TV programmes, and informatics applications should be ensured.

The rights of creators, severely affected by rampant e-piracy, should be reaffirmed. However, limitations and exceptions to copyright have traditionally allowed, under specific conditions strictly defined in international conventions, preferential access to copyrighted works for precise purposes such as news reporting, teaching, library activities or use by the disabled. These provisions should be clearly applied in the digital environment.

Support and attention should also be given to open source software and information provided under "open access" terms, as well as to efforts promoting low-cost, high-quality scientific, medical, and other commercially published electronic works to developing countries.

Respect for cultural/linguistic diversity is the third essential building block of knowledge societies. In addition to art and literature, culture encompasses lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, languages, traditions and beliefs. Cultural diversity is the common heritage of humankind and the understanding of and respect for other cultures is a prerequisite for building knowledge societies.

A central feature is the need for policies as well as actions that support plurality and diversity, so that citizens can access and create information and knowledge in their own languages and within their own cultural frameworks. The creation of environments conducive to the development of local content in digital format and the preservation of digital heritage will benefit present and future generations.

The fourth building block of knowledge societies is quality education for all. Knowledge societies are necessarily societies with strong learning imperatives. Knowledge societies are societies in which new paradigms of learning are emerging and exceptional investments, both intellectual and financial, in new learning will be needed.

Learning as a process of progressive change from ignorance to knowledge, from inability to competence, and from indifference to understanding has never before been so crucial. As this learning process becomes increasingly complex and non-linear going far beyond the acquisition of basic literacy skills, age-old methods of learning are becoming insufficient and conventional methods limiting the learning process to the four walls of a classroom and a

one-time learning experience are passé. ICT makes it possible to create learning communities across age, class and status, language, skill, gender and spatial boundaries.

The need for provision of lifelong learning and for education that is accessible, affordable and of high quality is rapidly increasing. ICT helps changing modes of learning as it provides open and flexible solutions and can be highly cost-effective. This does not mean that we do not need to build schools. But we need to combine traditional and new methods.

UNESCO, through instruments such as the *Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace* and the *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, has established foundation principles for building knowledge societies that have been echoed in the Summit Declarations. There are many actions being undertaken with Member States to support the implementation of these commitments within the framework of their national policies and legislations.

The role of WSIS cannot be overstated in placing the issues of access to knowledge and its role in responding to development challenges, as well as the digital divide, centre-stage on the international agenda and in the public's consciousness. The Summit in Geneva provided an important platform for promoting UNESCO's concept of knowledge societies.

Over half of the areas identified in the WSIS Action Plan fall within UNESCO's mandate and fields of competence, particularly those related to access to information and knowledge, capacity-building, e-learning, e-science, cultural and linguistic diversity, media as well as ethical dimensions.

Presently, UNESCO's focus is on operationalizing its concept of knowledge societies and it concentrates on implementing many of the recommendations of the Geneva Action Plan. UNESCO's actions include up-stream policy initiatives including the preparation of studies, recommendations, guidelines, implementation of grass roots projects and training initiatives, provision of information management tools as well as knowledge management and monitoring services.

The Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society was a critical milestone in international cooperative efforts to promote knowledge societies and to understand their prerequisites. UNESCO is working unstintingly to maintain this momentum and to advance the WSIS process. The phase leading up to the second Summit in Tunis will provide an opportunity to assess progress made since Geneva on implementation plans and actions, to explore new initiatives and solutions and to mobilize future partners.

UNESCO is committed to fostering the creation of equitable and just societies, supporting human rights and human development in all spheres and working for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The necessary political, social, economic and attitudinal changes to realize these goals will not occur overnight. This will require persistent long-term actions that combine a range of multidisciplinary skills and perspectives. UNESCO is committed to work with its partners to help implement these actions.

The Social Dimension of Technological Development: WSIS and the International Labour Organization

Juan Somavia
Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO)

We live in a world of deep-seated inequalities. Two in five people live in poverty today, struggling to survive on less than $2 a day. According to ILO estimates, close to 185 million people are without a job.[1] A further 550 million work in poverty.[2] Including their families and dependants, some 2.8 billion people lack the standard of living that is decent, dignified and human. The figures become even more tragic in the face of the unprecedented amount of wealth created in the world economy over the past decades. Globalization is evolving in such a way that what is added to the wealth of the world does not reach those who need it most, but enhances the good fortune of the already wealthy.

Why am I citing these figures and raising the issue of inequality, joblessness and poverty? Simply to remind ourselves that the ultimate goal of any endeavor such as the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) ought to be the elimination of inequalities and eradication of poverty. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are only a means to this end. Unless we establish a firm link between ICTs and development, we are doomed to fail in our commitment to building "a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society" that would contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as stated in the declaration that marked the end of the first phase of the WSIS in Geneva.

In my contribution to this volume, I would like to argue that the missing link between ICTs and development is indeed the missing link between ICTs and decent work. Eradication of poverty in a sustainable manner requires creating decent work opportunities for all. As I

[1] ILO (2005), Global Employment Trends Brief 2004, Geneva.
[2] ILO (2004), World Employment Report 2004-05: Employment, Productivity and Poverty Reduction, Geneva.

stated in my report "Working out of poverty"[3], work is the best route out of poverty and, by extension, identifying the interrelationships between ICTs and decent work would be the main contribution of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to a successful outcome of the WSIS. Building this link underscores the importance of the social, as well as economic, dimension of technological development, which is encapsulated in the relationship between ICTs and the world of work.

The divide between the rich and the poor conceals many facets of disparity – economic, social and political; structural and infrastructural; local, national, regional and global. The digital divide is but one of the various dimensions of inequality, the rectification of which was indeed the driving force behind the WSIS. However, it should be viewed in the broader context of widening socio-economic gaps. The interlinkages between ICTs, physical and social infrastructure, productivity, economic growth and competitiveness as well as the scale and quality of employment are crucial to convert the digital exclusion into economic and social inclusion.

ICTs are therefore deeply embedded in not only economic development but also social development. They touch upon every area of our lives. As a revolutionary new set of technologies, ICTs are unique in many ways. Owing to their generic nature, ICTs have affected not only every single branch of each industry but also every service in the economy. Earlier revolutionary technologies such as electrification or mechanization were also pervasive in that sense, but the pervasiveness of ICTs is unique in affecting every firm and organization as well as every function within them. Most research, development and design work, much market research, various routine administrative and accounting activities, and many production processes have become dependent on the use of these general purpose technologies.

The international context within which this new set of technologies was born and has been growing also reinforces their pervasiveness. Several interrelated trends in the world economy in the past decades have impacted upon, and have been influenced by, the diffusion of ICTs. Globalization of economic activities, tertiarization (increasing weight of services in world output) and the increasing importance of knowledge in global production processes are the most notable of these trends. Together, they not only enabled the rapid dissemination of ICTs, but also contributed, via demand effects, to further advances such as the convergence between telecommunication and computer technology, dramatic decline in the price of information processing and rapid growth in international electronic networking.

[3] ILO (2003), Working out of Poverty, Report of the Director General to the 91st session of the International Labour Conference, Geneva.

The recent report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization entitled "A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All" also identified ICTs as one of the main drivers of globalization through facilitating trade, investment and capital flows across national borders. The increasingly footloose nature of international production, which is leading to the emergence of global production systems whereby different components of a production process are undertaken at different locations across the globe, is also to a large extent enabled by ICTs.

ICTs are not only enablers of globalization but also transformers of it. The digital revolution enabled by the rapid advance of these technologies is affecting every aspect of the production process, thereby transforming the economic structure and social dynamics in every industry. This is such a revolutionary set of technologies that they require reorganization of work and reskilling of workers to reap full benefits. ICTs boost efficiency and productivity as long as they are accompanied with the right organizational structures, the right skills for effective use and the right social learning processes.

ICTs set in motion a process of "creative destruction". They make jobs in certain production segments, industries and locations redundant, but create more productive ones in others. There are serious social adjustment costs involved in the changing fabric of job distribution as a result of such restructuring. A strategy for effective ICT implementation has to involve accommodating institutional and industrial structures as well as sound industrial relations in order to have a positive impact on competitiveness, growth and decent employment. Institutional preparedness, especially of the labour market, is crucial. Organization and voice, social dialogue, fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as social protection, such as active labour market policies, are prime components of such preparedness.

Therefore, within the framework of ongoing structural change in the global economy, the dynamics of technology, growth and employment are in perpetual interplay. ICTs, in fostering enterprise development, productivity, economic growth, trade and competitiveness, offer a strategic opportunity for policy development that would touch upon all these spheres. We need, however, to establish clear interlinkages between integrated policies in these fields and poverty reduction in order to make headway in reaching the MDGs and to attain the goal of a fair globalization that creates opportunities for all.

The report of the World Commission highlights decent work for all as the main channel out of poverty. A fair globalization, the report argues, is possible if and when we are able to offer a fair chance at a decent job to all. In order to mobilize ICT for development, we need to establish the links between these technologies and decent work. An integrated policy

approach to ICT is critical to the achievement of the goals set in the Millennium Declaration, including its objective of an inclusive globalization.[4]

I would therefore like to call for a stronger emphasis on issues related to the world of work as well as on the social dimension of ICT development and globalization during the second phase of the WSIS and its follow-up. The ILO with its unique tripartite structure has plenty to contribute to making WSIS more relevant to the wider development agenda. Our constituents are concerned over the inadequate consideration given to decent work in the WSIS proceedings so far, and I am their voice in expressing the need for a paradigm shift in the treatment of ICTs from mere technologies into socially embedded development tools.

[4] Paragraph 5 of the Millennium Declaration.

The World Summit on the Information Society and the World Intellectual Property Organization

Kamil Idris
Director-General, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations family, whose activities are aimed, in particular, at promoting intellectual property (IP) protection. Intellectual property is playing an increasingly important role on the international stage, as "works of mind", or IP, such as inventions, designs, trademarks, books, music, and films, are now shared and enjoyed by people worldwide.

As a specialized agency of the United Nations, WIPO's mandate concerns intellectual property protection at the international level. With its 182 Member States, WIPO is committed to a global vision of equal participation in policy-making on intellectual property issues for the Information Society. Through its Economic Development Sector and technical assistance programs, WIPO promotes equal opportunity for all countries in responding to the challenges and realizing the benefits of the digital age.

WIPO actively participated in the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which resulted in the adoption of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action (Geneva, December 10 to 12, 2003). WIPO continues its work in preparing for the Summit, to be held in Tunis, in November 2005.

This Summit is expected to make a major contribution to the development of the Information Society, and the effective protection of IP rights is an essential component of this development.

Intellectual property is a powerful tool which is fundamental to economic, social and cultural development, and which supports the creation and innovation that are essential elements of

the Information Society. The intellectual property system protects creators and innovators and helps to sustain vibrant industries that support developing and developed economies alike, thus reducing the digital divide. All countries have limitless intellectual assets, seen, for example, in their intellectual heritage, traditional knowledge and human ingenuity. WIPO works with its Member States to ensure that appropriate recognition and protection of intellectual property exists. This is a critical component in promoting wealth creation and cultural diversity in the Information Society.

The Declaration of Principles and Action Plan reflect another important message. That is, a fundamental goal of the intellectual property system is to maintain a balance between intellectual property rights, on the one hand, and the legitimate interests and expectations of the public and users of information, on the other. The intellectual property system helps to create an enabling environment of trust and security, necessary for sharing our knowledge freely. Effective and balanced protection of intellectual property rights is fundamental to an inclusive Information Society.

Intellectual property is constantly evolving in the light of technological change, and WIPO is working to ensure the intellectual property system does not lag behind. The two WIPO Internet Treaties – the WIPO Copyright Treaty and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty – came into force in 2002. They represent an international consensus on how best to adapt the protection of copyright and related rights to the networked environment. Copyright law is sufficiently flexible to support a variety of innovative business models – for example, it applies to both proprietary and open source models of software development. In the field of Internet domain names, WIPO has contributed to rules-based dispute resolution under the Uniform Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) and has, to date, dealt with more than 7,000 cases. In addition, WIPO's two Internet Domain Name Processes address conflicts between trademarks and Internet domain names, resulting in implementation of a successful administrative system for resolving domain name disputes. Overall, the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center has dealt with more than 22,000 domain name cases. In addition, the WIPOnet project has established a permanent worldwide digital network of information on intellectual property. The first phase of the WIPOnet has now been deployed, with the aim of enhancing national digital capacity.

The World Summit is addressing the implications for policymakers of a world where value lies increasingly in intellectual rather than physical capital, and where access to knowledge is critical to many spheres of human activity, including human development. In this regard, WIPO welcomes the recognition by the World Summit of the contribution of intellectual property to the Information Society (see Article 42 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles). WIPO stands ready to assist in implementing the Plan of Action and to participate in the

next steps in this process. It also hopes to contribute to reaching the shared goals for the future of the Information Society.

WSIS and the WTO: Trade in the Information Age

Supachai Panitchpakdi
Director-General, World Trade Organization (WTO)

One thing that has struck me about the World Summit on the Information Society is its diversity and the multitude of interests it has brought together. It has demonstrated that all segments of human activity – political, economic and social – recognize the great potential of the communications revolution that is upon us. WSIS originated out of concern about the so-called digital divide, the gap between the haves and the have nots in terms of access to new communication technologies. As WSIS took shape it also came to address the various uses and applications for which these technologies can be harnessed to benefit the broad cross-sections of society and promote the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

I feel the contribution WTO can make and the role it can play in the Information Society, while dealing only with certain aspects, are very important. WTO is an organization that addresses international economic issues, with a mandate relating specifically to trade among nations. Given this mandate, WTO has the greatest relevance and impact in relation to promoting access – helping to narrow the digital divide. This is because all the opportunities that the Information Society may offer ultimately rely on putting in place modern communications infrastructure and services and extending them as broadly and affordably as possible.

If the necessary infrastructure is in place, governments can more successfully promote their economic development through enhanced trade and create more income-generating opportunities for their citizens. Securing modern communications infrastructure not only makes it possible, for example, to provide international call centres and remote business processing services, but also affords greater scope for taking advantage of distance learning, on-line health services and e-government applications. As a result, the mandate and

objectives of WSIS and the WTO intersect in several key respects. Let me explain how this works.

First, under the WTO's Information Technology Agreement (ITA) more that 60 governments have chosen to eliminate customs duties and other import fees on trade in information technology equipment. These undertakings have contributed to reducing the cost for business and consumers of such products as computers, computer peripherals and telecommunications equipment. In many countries, exceedingly high tariffs had once applied to the importation of these products.

Second, WTO commitments to open markets for basic telecommunications services have stimulated policy reforms that put telephony, both fixed and mobile, in the hands of many people and segments of the population that heretofore had little or no hope of access. At least 90 governments have taken commitments under the WTO's services agreement to allow new entrants to compete with the former telecom monopolies to extend services to what is now an ever-expanding base of consumers. Moreover, these services are being provided at more affordable prices than anyone would have thought possible a decade ago. By introducing competition also in Internet access and the network capacity it requires, the telecom commitments have also dramatically expanded Internet availability and reduced the cost of Internet services around the world. The WTO also developed a blueprint for pro-competitive regulatory practice in the telecom sector that has been widely accepted. It was designed to ensure that telecom reforms can succeed in their objective of drawing upon competition to extend access to communications.

Third, over 75 WTO Member Governments have committed to open their markets for supply of computer and related services. These services constitute not only the underlying infrastructure for modern communications technologies, but also provide an increasingly wide array of new applications for users. Developing countries who have growing software industries will also find that most industrialized economies have agreed to import these services across their borders, often through on-line supply, with few, if any, trade restrictions.

Fourth, negotiations to further extend commitments on these and other information technology-related goods and services continue under the current round of trade negotiations – the Doha Development Agenda. For the ITA, expanding both the membership and coverage of the tariff concessions is under consideration. For trade in services, both developed and developing countries have expressed an interest in further opening markets in areas that support IT development strategies. These areas include both basic and value-added telecommunications and computer services. Also included are other

IT services, such as call centres and business processing services, in which an increasing number of developing countries have a comparative advantage. Though considerably less common, undertaking market access commitments on distance learning and e-health services is also being considered by some governments as a means of helping make such services more readily available to their citizens.

Needless to say, the global infrastructure for e-commerce extends beyond telecommunications and computer services and equipment to include also the markets for services such as financial payments mechanisms, advertising, and delivery services – linkages that have not been overlooked in the Doha negotiations. With a view to ensuring that benefits of e-commerce can be more widely felt in both developed and developing countries, and by small- and medium-sized enterprises, negotiators are paying more attention today to market access for on-line supply of many kinds of services. As a result, there is also consideration of commitments on more open markets for on-line distribution services by which many goods can be purchased and paid for electronically and for cross-border supply of various types of professional services. Such commitments contribute to the "death of distance" by substantially reducing some of the disadvantages of lack of proximity to major markets.

These important ways in which the interests of the Information Society and the role of the WTO intersect seem not always to have been self-evident and hence have run the risk of being overlooked in the larger body of WSIS interests and stakeholders. I recognize that each organization and government, as well as other stakeholders, public and private, non-profit or otherwise, has a role regarding certain elements of the WSIS Plan of Action, perhaps more so than others. For WTO, the way I see it, the WSIS "lines of action" where it has the greatest impact are: the promotion of ICT for development; the information and communication infrastructure; the enabling environment; e-government and e-business applications; and international cooperation. At the same time, I value and wholeheartedly support the activities of the many other organizations and stakeholders in the areas of their respective competence and responsibility. We have truly set out common goals in the WSIS Declaration and, collectively, have much work yet to accomplish to meet its ambitious targets.

Towards an Inclusive and Development-Rich Information Society: Linking Financing Issues and Development Agendas

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> "The cause of development occupies pride of place in my proposals - in particular, the need for urgent action in 2005 to ensure that our world starts to make real progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, and achieves them by 2015. To achieve the goals, we must harness the potential of ICT. The September Summit, and the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in November in Tunis give us opportunities to make vital progress in doing so. In 2005, we must fully integrate the global ICT agenda into the broader UN development agenda. And we must ensure strategic coherence in implementing the decisions taken at these important meetings."[1]

WSIS was important in bringing together a multiplicity of actors and stakeholders concerned with the emerging Information Society, its possibilities and the challenges to its evolution. The latter included not only concerns related to financing its development in various parts of the developing world but also those related to how best to address issues pertaining to the "governance" of various aspects of the Internet's architecture and ways of contributing to its future development; to rights and to questions relating to inclusion and security, and a consideration of roles, responsibilities, and ways of approaching issues that the emerging information and network society enables but that requires moving away from business and development as usual.

This reflection is concerned with one of those issues –specifically with the development aspects of the financing discussion at WSIS, including through the work of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) for ICTD. In so doing, it alludes to the connections with the broader development context which would strengthen the case for financing ICTD and

[1] Kofi Annan, The Secretary-General's Message to the Eighth Meeting of the United Nations ICT Task Force, Dublin, 13-14 April 2005, in: http://www.unicttaskforce.org/perl/documents.pl?id=1510

discusses some of the challenges and opportunities for engaging with the wider group of development practitioners and making linkages to other development summits.

Dimensions of the Financing Question at WSIS

At one level, the "financing question" at WSIS could be seen as being about whether there is a need for a new global financing modality such as a new global fund.[2] Underlying the proposal for such a funding mechanism were a broader set of concerns relating to the effectiveness of existing mechanisms and their potential to respond to the emerging development opportunities and challenges faced by countries and regions within countries in making a case for and leveraging such financing.

The Task Force on Financial Mechanisms, set up in the wake of WSIS-Geneva,[3] as requested, undertook a review of the main existing financing mechanisms. It explored trends in financing as well as promising practices and challenges involved in attracting and accessing financing from and by the private sector (external and domestic investment in ICT, equity and re-investment of profits, and access to domestic finance), public financing and provisioning (public sector investment in infrastructure, e-government and the financing of related activities), the effectiveness of modalities such as universal access funds at the national level[4] and the financing of infrastructure, capacity development and integration into the development sectors through development cooperation.

The report highlighted a number of areas of concern and looked into various ways in which the effectiveness and *development impact* of current financing mechanisms could be improved. In terms of taking stock of the current assignment of roles and responsibilities, it not only pointed to the vibrancy of the private sector and ways that it could be still more effective given the right enabling environment amongst other things, but also highlighted the importance of the domestic public sector and development cooperation.[5] It pointed to the

[2] A proposal for a digital solidarity fund was made by President Wade of Senegal at the time of WSIS-Geneva. A voluntary digital solidarity fund endorsed by a number of nation states, regions and cities has since been launched. See http://www.dsf-fsn.org/ Prepcom 2 in the lead-up to WSIS-Tunis welcomed this fund and saw it as playing a complementary role to the existing financial mechanisms.

[3] WSIS-Geneva requested the Secretary-General to setup a task force under his auspices to undertake a review of the adequacy [of existing mechanisms] in meeting the challenges of ICT for development. See http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsis/doc/S03-WSIS-DOC-0005!!PDF-E.pdf For the report of the Task Force, see http://www.itu.int/wsis/tffm/index.html

[4] In the report of the TFFM, the discussion of Universal Access Funds (UAF) includes funds such as Telecommunications Development Funds, Rural Development Funds, and any other funds established to support and finance access to ICT in currently underserved areas. See section 3.2.3 of the TFFM report at http://www.itu.int/wsis/tffm/final-report.pdf

[5] For an example of another recent report looking into public and private roles in infrastructure development, see World Bank (February 2005) "Financing Information and Communication Infrastructure Needs in the Developing World: Public and Private Roles" http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ict/resources.nsf/InfoResources/04C3CE1B933921A585256FB60051B8F5.

role of multi-stakeholder approaches and mechanisms in addressing gaps and challenges and to the valuable role that local communities and authorities can play in providing access and services, and stressed the need to ensure that this role/niche is addressed within the context of policy/regulatory frameworks and financing mechanisms. It assisted in contributing to an agreement on the voluntary digital solidarity fund (see contribution by Shoji Nishimoto in this volume).

Development Divides and Digital Bridges

Given the limitations in access to, and hence the use of, these technologies, many of the discussions at WSIS were framed in the context of the more infrastructure-related dimensions of ICT and there were repeated calls for the need to bridge the *digital divide*. While there was also a focus on the importance of ICT as an enabler of development, with a critical role to play in achieving national and global development agendas[6], the short-hand remained largely infrastructure-focused.

The relationship between the infrastructure aspects and the Information Society levels are not necessarily only sequential, but can be seen to be more mutually re-enforcing. Infrastructure and service provision can be thought of in tandem. A focus on using ICT for development effectively can, and has, helped to stimulate investment and to make it more self-sustaining both through the generation of demand but also through stimulating a decline in the cost of provision and hence further expansion of demand for ICT.

Going forward, one could contend, it is necessary to operate on two tracks: on the one hand to consider policy, financing and implementation issues as regards "IT is as if development mattered" and on the other, to foster "a realization of development's full potential in the age of information and communication technologies".

As regards the former, a number of "openings" in the Task Force report and demarcation of areas for future work have been highlighted, particularly by civil society actors.[7] To the extent ICT can be considered to be *public goods* themselves or can enable the delivery of or access to other services and knowledge which are considered to be public goods, how can

[6] For the focus and role in achieving the goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration, see WSIS Plan of Action: "4. The objectives of the Plan of Action are to build an inclusive Information Society; to put the potential of knowledge and ICTs at the service of development; to promote the use of information and knowledge for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration..." http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsis/doc/S03-WSIS-DOC-0005!!PDF-E.pdf page 1

[7] For e.g., see Bread for All (2005) "Who pays for the Information Society: Challenges and Issues for financing the Information Society" http://www.ppp.ch/cms/IMG/Financing_IS.pdf . For an exploration of open access, public goods and community networks see Sean O'Siochru (page 9-11); Also see "Financing the Information Society in the South: A global public goods perspective" by Pablo Accuosto (ITeM) and Niki Johnson for APC at http://rights.apc.org/documents/financing.pdf and other contributions at http://www.choike.org/nuevo_eng/informes/2697.html

financing be mobilized for them in this context? Related to this, what is the place and experience of more "open access"[8] approaches and the role of public financing of common infrastructure facilities? What is the role for community-owned networks in the provision of access and services? In what ways can the importance of providing development services and catalyzing development provide an effective basis for prioritizing infrastructure and access in currently underserved areas? What are the ways in which development priorities and the right to development need to be taken into account as regards the formulation and implementation of property rights regimes?[9] What is the role for *open source* and *open content* approaches? Where do they work best? In the WSIS process context, some of these issues have also been picked up by the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) cluster focusing on the development aspects of Internet governance, particularly as regards the governance dimensions and issues relating to financing universal access.[10]

However, the area of exploration and future work relating to the second track – the integration of ICT into development agendas – and the linkages that need to be made between WSIS and the upcoming September Summit being organized as a five-year follow-up to the 2000 Millennium Summit is more in the nature of work-in-progress at many levels.

Linking Development Agendas and Summits

While the use of ICT in contributing to achieving the development goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration is a theme that is highlighted prominently in the WSIS-Geneva Plan of Action and Declaration, as well in the preparatory processes leading up to WSIS-Tunis, for it to be effective it needs to be matched with a consideration of the role of ICT for MDGs by those who work on the MDGs and poverty reduction. Analogous to other summits, WSIS brought together the various constituencies of the ICTD community, but not other development decision-makers, non-ICT private sector and stakeholders. The support of the latter is important in many ways for the implementation of the development goals of the WSIS agenda and essential for its integration into the broader development

[8] For a research project exploring open access, see InfoDev (September 2004) "Open Access: New Technologies, New Business Models to Enable Access For All" at http://www.infodev.org/section/programs/enabling_access/open_access. The open access approach is seen to 'reflect the shifting paradigm in the telecommunication sector predicated on the separation of infrastructure from services.' The project seeks to explore (1) opportunities for leveraging new technologies to increase access and functionality of existing infrastructure; (2) the design and implementation of open access models for infrastructure; and (3) the potential role of public financing in expanding infrastructure roll-out in Sub-Saharan Africa.

[9] The issue of strong IPR, the potential for *open source* software and *open content* licensing policies have been taken up in the context of the many of the WSIS preparatory meetings and WSIS discussions. In the context of WIPO, please see page 68 of the following http://www.wipo.int/documents/en/document/govbody/wo_gb_ga/pdf/wo_ga_31_15.pdf . For coverage see, http://www.ip-watch.org/weblog/index.php?cat=13&res=1024_ff&print=0 and http://www.iprsonline.org/

[10] See Draft Cluster 5 Working Paper (April 25, 2005) at http://www.wgig.org/docs/WGIGPaper-Cluster4-development.pdf

agenda. However, there are few formal possibilities for making a bridge between the summits. The role of national delegations and stakeholders at the national level, but also at the context of the summit processes at the global level, is key if there is to be an understanding of the potential of a development-rich and inclusive Information Society and if the financing of it is to acquire the traction it needs.

To many in the wider development community, ICT appears to be a development priority competing for much-needed and limited funds but is one that is seen to be able, in many instances, to secure financing through a greater involvement of the private sector. While the role of the private sector is pivotal, public financing and development cooperation are also needed. More specifically, what is at stake here and how does it matter? From the development point of view, the issue of bridging the so-called digital divide should not be the focus for itself, important though that is. It is critical because while the digital divide is a reflection in large part of existing social and economic divides, bridging it and facilitating effective use of ICT can enable countries to bridge these other development divides in potentially more effective ways since ICT is important as a catalyst and an enabler of social and economic transformation. What is lost by not focusing on and being able to deploy ICT as an enabler is being able to catalyze new types of development, entrepreneurial, investment and other economic opportunities; what is lost is countries missing out on a more effective use of existing development resources that would result from a more *joined-up/integrated* approach to the delivery of public services, and through fostering greater accountability, transparency and interaction with citizens; it is a question of formal students and other stakeholders missing out on new types of learning opportunities and innovation and capacities to craft new solutions to address existing challenges and problems; it is a question of potentially perpetuating existing forms of inequities within and across countries as required skills, investment potential and development effectiveness are increasingly dependent upon or related to ICT. These are just some of the development costs that need to be factored into a discussion of financing of ICTD.

These insights are even more relevant to the achievement of the goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration which, given their high-level of commitment, provide a useful set of measurable targets against which to craft ambitious but realistic national strategies and anchor development cooperation and multi-stakeholder actions. They need to be seen as a set of inter-related goals rather than as a collection of separate targets. What this perspective brings to a discussion of financing the MDGs is that the cost is not simply a sum of the different parts. With a consideration of the inter-linkages, in many instances, the total costs can be lower than might be otherwise thought to be. ICT brings an added element to this discussion given its role in facilitating integrated approaches, new forms of partnership and collaboration and contributing to the development of new cost-effective and scalable

solutions. It is thus essential that both as a cross-cutting element and as a development tool it is recognized as a potentially important contributor to the achievement of these other development priorities and that the discussions of financing of ICTD are interconnected to the discussion of financing of the MDGs.[11]

Important steps in recognizing the role of ICT in this context have been taken by the report of the United Nations Millennium Project and by the Report of the Secretary-General. In the report of the Secretary General, "In Larger Freedom"[12], it is pointed out that, "…The unprecedented combination of resources and technology at our disposal today means that we are truly the first generation with the tools, the knowledge and the resources to meet the commitment, given by all States in the Millennium Declaration, 'to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want'" (par. 27). "In Larger Freedom" also stated that "Information and communication technologies can significantly contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals" (par. 68). And "Similarly, without dynamic, growth-oriented economic policies supporting a healthy private sector capable of generating jobs, income and tax revenues over time, sustainable economic growth will not be achieved. This requires significantly increased investments in human capital and development-oriented infrastructure, such as energy, transport and communications" (par. 37).

The report of the United Nations Millennium Project makes a case for telecommunications (which can easily be and should be broadened to ICT) as a component of core (development) infrastructure and highlights the importance of infrastructure – including telecommunications networks—to achieving the goals throughout its report. For example:

> If every city has a reliable electricity grid, competitive telecommunications, access to transport, accessible and affordable housing for the poor, a water and sanitation system, and access to global markets through modern ports or roads, jobs and foreign investment will flow in—rather than educated workers flowing out.
>
> Investing in core infrastructure, human capital, and good governance thus accomplishes several things:
>
> - It converts subsistence farming to market-oriented farming.

[11] For some early insights here, see UN ICT Task Force paper (2005) http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsis/doc/S03-WSIS-DOC-0005!!PDF-E.pdf

[12] See Report of the Secretary General (2005) , "In larger Freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" at http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/report-largerfreedom.pdf

- It establishes the basis for private sector–led diversified exports and economic growth.

- It enables a country to join the global division of labor in a productive way.

- It sets the stage for technological advance and eventually for an innovation-based economy. (Page 7)

The importance of ICT use and integration in the development sectors and government is also highlighted. For example:

> Governments must also invest in the physical infrastructure of the public administration to improve service delivery and reduce opportunities for corruption. Some examples include:
>
> - Communication and information infrastructure for all levels of government, including computer and telecommunications services for government offices, public hospitals, land registries, schools, and other public institutions.
>
> - Information systems to improve the speed, reliability, and accountability of public sector transactions and systems to share information across branches of government….
>
> - Modern technological capabilities for the customs bureau, to speed shipments, reduce smuggling, and control cross-border movements of illegal or dangerous goods.
>
> - Modern technological capabilities for law enforcement, including national criminal databases, information systems to improve response times, and adequate dissemination of information to local law enforcement.
>
> - Electronic government procurement and logistical systems, for example, to ensure reliable access to essential medicines in government clinics and hospitals. (Page 115 and also on pages 125, 135)

The report also specifically takes up the importance of ICT and ICT infrastructure in the context of regional infrastructure priorities for Africa (pages 156 and 177) and small island states (page 178), land-locked countries with special needs (pages 205 and 222).[13]

These are important openings that need to be taken further by the various members of the ICTD community that have an important role to play in linking and integrating the various development agendas at the summit level and in practice.

[13] See UN Millennium Project (2005) "Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals" at http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/index.htm

WSIS and the United Nations ICT Task Force

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The greatest paradox and challenge of our times is a glaring gap between the resources and technology available, on the one hand, and actual progress towards eradication of poverty and ensuring life in dignity for all of humanity, on the other. Indeed, there are significant investment opportunities that could be productively tapped for empowering people and promoting development where the needs are most urgent. Technological solutions to most development problems are known. For example, software has been developed for permitting illiterate people to use computers and for localizing Internet content. Affordable medicines exist to prevent some of the most dangerous diseases. Enough food can be produced on the planet to eradicate even the notion of famine. And yet, these resources and technologies do not get fully, effectively and sustainably employed in global development efforts. As a result, paraphrasing the words of former chairman of the United Nations ICT Task Force, José Maria Figueres Olsen, while some countries extract value from globalization, others see globalization extract value from them. On the other hand, as Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said, "The ICT age has dawned, but not yet for all. Let us show that we can unite the great promise of ICT with the needs of the poor."

In the late nineties, the General Assembly of the United Nations considered the question of economic and social effects of globalization and the policies needed to address them. The Assembly recognized that the information revolution, and in particular the Internet, were having a profound impact on the global economy and on development and agreed that information and communication technologies (ICT) should be put at the service of development. Taking up this challenge, in July 2000, the Economic and Social Council adopted a Ministerial Declaration on "Development and international cooperation in the XXI century: the role of IT in the context of a knowledge-based global economy". For the first time, Member States agreed that for the success of an effort to harness the potential of ICT for advancing development, all stakeholders – including governments, the private

sector, civil society, multilateral institutions – must be brought together in a new alignment of forces to support development.

At the request of ECOSOC, the United Nations Secretary-General established an ICT Task Force – the first body created by an intergovernmental decision of the United Nations in which all members, representing governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations, have equal rights. A major component of the Task Force's mandate and plan of action has been to provide a platform for bringing together not only different stakeholders, but also different constituencies within each stakeholder (such as different ministries within a government), in open and inclusive discussions on the ways to enhance to impact of ICT on development.

As a multi-stakeholder body, the Task Force performs a unique role in promoting awareness of how ICT can help transform development-performance and prospects and serves as a catalyst for policy reform and building partnerships among key stakeholders. The Task Force has served as a bridge between the ICT community and the broader development community, helping to integrate ICT into the United Nations development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The multi-stakeholder nature of the Task Force, along with its link to the Secretary-General, have brought world wide participation, legitimacy and a broad, cross-sectoral representation that is essential for policy dialogue in this area.

The main focus of the work of the ICT Task Force has always been ICT for development, rather than information and communication technologies per se. It was therefore quite natural for the Task Force to seize the major opportunity and vehicle provided by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to work actively for creating an inclusive development-oriented information society. Recognizing the role that the ICT Task Force played in helping to place development, rather than technology, at the "heart" of WSIS, the Secretary-General of the United Nations extended the initial mandate of the Task Force so that it could continue to support WSIS leading up to the Tunis Summit.

The Task Force contributed to the WSIS process in many ways. Through its regional networks in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab States, and Europe and Central Asia, it organized events around the developing world to bring specific regional perspectives to WSIS. And, as a multi-stakeholder body, the Task Force was instrumental in making WSIS a truly multi-stakeholder enterprise in which the private sector and civil society played a critical role.

Taking advantage of its world-wide reach, the Task Force has also organized several global forums on key substantive issues that are being addressed in the WSIS, such as the Global

Forum on Internet Governance (New York, March 2004), the Global Forum on Enabling Environment for Digital Development (Berlin, November 2004), and the Global Forum on a Multi-Stakeholder Approach to Harnessing the Potential of ICT for Education (Dublin, April 2005). These forums provide an open, inclusive and neutral platform for a productive dialogue among key stakeholders, thus contributing to a better understanding of ICT for development issues and to promoting consensus amidst the diversity of opinions and views within the development community. By organizing several parallel events during the Geneva Summit and planning similar events at Tunis, the Task Force has succeeded in bringing various stakeholder perspectives into the Summit process. The Task Force remains fully committed to contributing effectively to the Tunis phase of WSIS.

This year, the world has an opportunity to achieve a historic breakthrough in the fight against global poverty. The United Nations will convene a Summit of World leaders in New York this September to review progress made in implementation of the Millennium Declaration since its adoption in 2000. The 2005 World Summit is also expected to develop a global response to the challenges and threats of the 21st century as outlined in the Secretary-General Kofi Annan's report "In Larger Freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all".

The second phase of WSIS will culminate in the Tunis Summit in November where world leaders are expected to define practical steps that should lead towards the goal of a universal and inclusive information society.

These two major events may seem to be two separate streams, but their goals are, in fact, closely intertwined. For, it is unlikely that the goal of reducing extreme poverty by half by 2015 can be realized without innovative solutions and investments that create new opportunities for the poor to better their own lives. Bridging the digital divide is one key to integrating the poor into the world economy through access to information and communication technologies. By the same token, a universal information society is hardly conceivable in a world that is deeply divided between the affluent few and the majority who live in abject poverty.

The 2005 World Summit will focus the world's attention on the causes of poverty eradication and sustainable development. The WSIS Tunis Phase, on the other hand, will emphasize the need for innovative and collaborative approaches to address these problems, with a focus on the use of ICT in the service of development. The United Nations ICT Task Force will continue to mobilize multi-stakeholder support to strategically align the outcomes of these two events, so that the full potential of ICT can be brought to bear on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Section 2

Governments

Global Diplomacy and Information Society

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Although the nexus between information and communications technologies (ICT) and foreign policy is not always immediately apparent, it is profoundly important. The role of ICTs in driving globalization and economic integration cannot be underestimated. At the same time, technology is changing individual lives by providing opportunities for creativity, innovation and communication to citizens around the globe. Considering the dramatic changes at both the macro and micro levels that have been brought about by the digital revolution, it is no wonder that we increasingly see the integration of ICT policy and diplomacy. Information technology is an essential element to achieving fundamental U.S. foreign policy objectives. These include:

- Expanding the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy;
- Igniting a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade; and
- Developing agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of global power.

The United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was guided by the need, according to the United Nations General Assembly, to "marshal the global consensus and commitment required to promote the urgently needed access of all countries to information, knowledge and communication technologies for development so as to reap the full benefits of the information and communication technologies revolution." The General Assembly recognized the need to include technology in the ongoing international dialogue on development, globalization and human rights.

The Department of State has primary authority for the conduct of foreign policy with respect to U.S. international communications and information policy. To achieve this mission, we work in close coordination with numerous other U.S. Government agencies as well as with representatives of U.S. private sector and civil society. This includes, for example, our work on WSIS, on spectrum and standards issues at the International Telecommunication Union, and U.S. participation in other ICT organizations and forums such as the OECD, CITEL and APEC. By promoting policy and regulatory reform, we encourage the worldwide deployment of communications and information technologies, infrastructure and services. We strongly believe that the global deployment of these technologies and services help to spur social and economic development, especially in developing countries where the need is greatest.

World Summit on the Information Society

WSIS is an integral factor linking global diplomacy and the development of the Information Society. The global community has come together for the first time to affirm that information and communication technologies are a key element of political progress, economic growth, and social development. We are pleased that, through the adoption of the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, the international community universally recognized that infrastructure development, human capacity building, and network security are critical to achieving our shared vision of a global, inclusive information society. By agreeing to the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, the United States reaffirmed our commitment to the importance of the use of information and communication technologies to promote peace, security and stability, and to enhance democracy, respect for human rights, open and transparent government and the rule of law.

A global consensus emerged at the World Summit that a multi-stakeholder approach to the development of information and communication technologies and, in particular the Internet, is essential. Stakeholders include governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society. The delegates to WSIS identified and achieved consensus on key challenges presented by the Information Society in which we now live: First, governments affirmed their commitment to freedom of the press and freedom of expression. Second, governments agreed that achieving ubiquitous and affordable access to information and communication infrastructures and services requires a stable policy and regulatory environment that attracts private investment, fosters competition, and promotes the development of human capacity through education and training. Third, WSIS recognized that building confidence in the security of information and communication technologies is critical and that cooperation is needed to foster a global culture of cyber security. Fourth, WSIS acknowledged the importance of intellectual property protection to the Information Society.

Diplomacy and Development of the Information Society

Information and Freedom

We cannot underestimate the pivotal role that telecommunications and IT play in globalization – technologies such as the Internet, wireless phone service and satellite TV are transforming politics, society and individual lives in ways unimaginable only a few years ago. Development of these technologies greatly expands opportunities for the United States to achieve foreign policy goals of empowering people through technology and offering fuller access to a wealth of educational opportunities, information resources and forums for exchange of ideas.

Countries that invest in information technology can maximize the potential of their most precious resource – their citizens. The Geneva Declaration of Principles recognizes the important role of capacity building in the areas of education, technology know-how and access to information as the keys to a knowledge economy. Prosperity in an information economy depends upon support for education, individual creativity and an environment of economic and political freedom. We have observed that societies built upon a foundation of respect for the hopes and aspirations of their people are much better positioned to benefit from the Information Society.

Advances in the global information architecture have also promoted the cause of freedom. Democracy is strengthened by the access to knowledge and the ability of citizens to exchange ideas in an environment free from fear and restrictions. One of the central achievements of the WSIS is the recognition of the right to freedom of opinion and expression as well as freedom of the press as the essential foundation of the Information Society. The sharing of ideas made possible through new technologies and new connections both within a country as well as to the rest of the world can have a powerful impact on how people relate to their government and what they expect from it.

An atmosphere of peace, prosperity and democracy spurs innovation and entrepreneurship. As U.S. Secretary of State Rice notes, "These three goals – security, opportunity and freedom – are linked. We know that security shelters the prosperity that opportunity brings. Security and prosperity, in turn, allow human creativity to flourish – but human creativity can only flourish fully in freedom."

Rule of Law

An integral element to an enduring democratic society is the sanctity of the rule of law, which the Geneva Declaration also recognizes as an essential element of building an

enabling environment for the Information Society. For example, e-government can harness the power of information and technology to make government more open, more transparent and more accessible to all. The United States is committed to working with our partners around the world to demonstrate the benefits of upholding the rule of law and to promote the benefits of greater openness and transparency.

The WSIS recognized that, in building an information society, it is essential to first ensure that the fundamental building blocks are in place. First, governments most focus on creating, within their own nations, the appropriate legal, regulatory and policy environment that encourages privatization, competition, liberalization, and intellectual property protection and enforcement. We should never lose sight of the fact that the private sector is the primary investor in, and innovator of, infrastructure, products and services. A stable legal environment where the private sector can invest and innovate is essential to ensuring a sustainable information society.

Conclusion

The United States is committed to working with other nations to help create an environment that sustains the rapid growth of information and communication technologies. These technologies are creating an information society that liberates and empowers individuals. They are linking the world ever more closely together and accelerating economic growth and the cause of freedom around the world. The World Summit on the Information Society has advanced the international dialogue on how information and communications technologies can advance development. Our challenge now is to move from concepts to action and to ensure that all our people fully enjoy the benefits of the Information Society.

Information and communication technology is a key to the future prosperity of all nations. Prosperity in the United States owes much to this technology. Today the information and communication technology industry comprises only eight percent of all enterprises in the American economy, but it produces 29 percent of U.S. exports, generates high quality jobs, and contributes strongly to our productivity growth in all sectors. An estimated 40% of U.S. productivity growth between 1995 and 2002 has been attributed to information technology. Our ability to seize the opportunities afforded by information and communication technology depends upon a philosophy of shared optimism about the power of individual creativity and entrepreneurship as the ultimate source of economic strength.

These human capabilities are universal. Every country has the potential to develop an information-based economy.

Technical innovation does not occur in a vacuum. It relies on an infrastructure of science, of skills, and of a nurturing environment for entrepreneurial fulfillment. My country is deeply committed to this algorithm of technology-based innovation. We endeavor to be a leader in its application. Our President, George W. Bush, has made continual development of the science and technology infrastructure for ICT a high priority. Our Government today invests more than $2 billion annually in information technology research and development activities including aspects of large scale and broadband networking, advanced computing, software and information management technologies.

The United States is already demonstrating its commitment to expanding international digital opportunity by incorporating information and communication technology throughout our international assistance efforts. Our Digital Freedom Initiative, for example, launched in Senegal earlier this year and expanded to Peru and Indonesia in November, is helping entrepreneurs make more effective use of information technology, leveraging existing infrastructure to expand connectivity, and promoting pro-growth policy and regulatory reform. We hope to expand the program to a dozen countries over the next five years.

Realizing this potential depends on the cultivation of science, skills and business infrastructure. Innovation in the development and use of ICTs depends on three key principles:

First, domestic policies must encourage investment in research and innovation. This means supporting privatization, competition and liberalization. Private investment is by far the largest source of funds for deployment of the world's communications and information networks, but its power cannot be released without stable and positive social and business environments.

Second, investment in human capacity to utilize ICTs is essential. Infrastructure without people capable of using it is doomed. A trained and well-educated workforce is required to bring it to life. A vital communications infrastructure expresses the full range of cultural imagination, without the divisive barriers of censorship. Uncensored print and broadcast media bring new perspectives on old issues, and stimulate timely responses to emerging social needs. We call upon all countries to affirm and implement Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Third, all consumers, innovators, and producers of content must have confidence their work will not be in vain. ICT products - tools, networks, media content – must be protected to the maximum possible extent. Respect for intellectual as well as physical property is a necessary part of the social infrastructure for success. This is an issue that transcends national

boundaries, but together we can create a global culture of network security that seeks to protect users, no matter where they live.

These are the principles of success. Each nation that applies them will, we have no doubt, advance the prosperity of its people and the quality of its way of life.

The United States believes that this Summit is poised to take a significant step to enable all people to reap the benefits offered by the Information Society. We are committed to close partnership with governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations to implement the common vision of increased prosperity through information technology.

Serving Citizens: e-Government for Everybody[1]

Erkki Liikanen
Former European Commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society

We see the Information Society as a global society; a society in which we have the opportunity to communicate better with each other; a society allowing us to learn more about each other and from each other's experiences.

The term "Information Society" was adopted by the European Union at an early stage. It is a concept that we have come to appreciate, that we value and that has become a basis for our lives. The Political Declaration agreed at the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society constitutes a common vision for the development of a global Information Society. It will be based on:

- The respect for our common fundamental values, such as human rights, freedom of access to information and the empowerment that the Internet gives to disadvantaged groups;

- The respect for diversity at all levels – linguistic and cultural. This diversity is an expression of the differences between peoples and societies all over the world;

- A pro-competitive legal and regulatory framework. This can mobilise investment and foster growth and development, based on market forces; and

- Policies taking into account the need for solidarity and social cohesion.

As a partner, we are already discussing this in our bilateral and multilateral engagements. As a major donor, we are mainstreaming ICTs and increasing these commitments in accordance

[1] Based on a statement made at the Plenary Meeting of WSIS, Geneva, December, 10, 2003

with our partners' priorities. And as a participant in the WSIS, the European Union has given ample proof of its commitment to this Summit during the preparatory process.

The Information Society concerns all citizens and not only a fifth of the world's population. This constitutes two major challenges for the coming fifteen years:

Firstly, how do we mobilise ICTs to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and to bridging the digital divide? Here, I believe that efforts focused on e-learning, e-health and e-government can make a real difference for citizens.

Secondly, how do we enable many more citizens of the world to participate in the Information Society? This means creating the conditions for affordable access and services. Furthermore, this opens new perspectives for private public partnerships to develop new technological solutions and new models for encouraging the take-up of those solutions.

Today we have transformed the principles agreed at the Geneva Summit into a Plan of Action. This concerns a wide range of topics such as access to information and knowledge, capacity-building, ICT applications, enabling environment, e-commerce, security and so forth. Here civil society and the private sector play a pivotal role. The Summit rightly recognises the principle of digital solidarity. We have agreed on an agenda, which fully mobilises the potential for future cooperation.

I consider the Plan of Action endorsed at the Geneva Summit as a point of departure. It could give renewed impetus to the development of a truly global Information Society for all. It is an invitation for stronger cooperation and new partnerships. It shows the value of international and multilateral mechanisms.

This Summit will give new incentives to citizens world-wide. It will contribute to economic growth. It is a new adventure. It marks the development of a new frontier very different from frontiers in the territorial sense. It is a Cyberspace – a space without limits, except those of our creativity and imagination.

Strengthening Cooperation, Promoting Development and Moving Towards the Information Society[1]

Wang Xudong
Minister of Information Industry of the People's Republic of China

In today's world, information technologies and information industry have promoted social productivity, improved people's living standard, transformed people's mode of production and lifestyle so much that humankind is moving towards the Information Society.

As a developing country, China attaches great importance to the information industry. It is implementing a leapfrog development strategy characterised by the mutual reinforcement of informatization and industrialization, which has yielded positive results. With an annual addition of over 90 million in recent years, China now has over 500 million telephone subscribers and more than 78 million Internet users. Electronic and information products manufacturing has become a fairly large industry. In China, hundreds of millions of households are using TVs, phones and the Internet, reaping more and more benefits from informatization. Information industry has developed into a leading pillar and basic industry of China's national economy and is playing a significant role in the social and economic development.

We believe that the Information Society is the result of human civilization and progress. As such, it should be a people-centred, development-oriented and inclusive society, which benefits all peoples and countries. However, we should not fail, in the process of economic globalisation and ICT development, to see the increasing disparity in wealth and the enlarging "digital divide" between the developed and developing countries, and the least developed countries facing the risk of being marginalized in the information area. The international community should get ready actively to meet this challenge. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of my observations in this regard.

[1] Based on a statement made at the Plenary Meeting of WSIS, Geneva, December, 10, 2003

First, coordinated economic and social development is essential to building the Information Society. Without properly tackling the fundamental issue of development, we will get nowhere. In the first 20 years of this century, China will be devoted to building a well-off society in an all-around way which will benefit hundreds of millions of people, featuring a more developed economy, improved democracy, higher level of science and education, thriving culture, social harmony and a better life. China will also speed up rural economic development, continue to implement the strategy of developing its western region and revitalize the old industrial bases in the north-east and other areas so as to achieve balanced development between urban and rural areas as well as in different regions. In the information and communications field, China will go all out to enable more people to benefit from informatization and industrialization by improving the information infrastructure and the capability of the manufacturing sector, promoting the use of information technologies, developing communications in rural areas and providing universal service.

Second, a peaceful, stable, fair and reasonable international development environment is a must for building the Information Society. The international community should pay attention to the interests of the increasingly marginalized disadvantaged countries and groups, and lead the economic globalization towards a direction that enables all-win results and coexistence among different countries and groups. The developing countries should, through their own efforts, explore development modes of the Information Society that suit their own national conditions, and China will work unremittingly toward this end. We call on the developed countries to fulfill their obligations to render active and effective help in providing capital, technologies and human resources to enable the developing countries to keep up with the pace of development of the global information network. Governments, related international organizations, private sectors and civil societies should be encouraged to strengthen cooperation in building the Information Society and bridging the digital divide. We appeal for more participation and coordination by intergovernmental organizations in such issues as Internet-related public policies to create a favourable international environment for the development of the Internet.

Third, efforts should be made to build up a harmonious, inclusive and coexistent information society. While freedom of speech should be guaranteed and human dignity and rights safeguarded by law and system, social responsibilities and obligations should also be advocated. The international community should fully respect the differences in social systems and cultural diversity. This is the basic norm for building the Information Society.

Fourth, an important guarantee for building the Information Society is to build more information networks and strengthen information security. Efforts should be made to

strengthen infrastructure, promote the use of ICTs and aggressively develop the Internet. Measures should be taken to actively and effectively prevent the use of information technologies and resources for pornographic, violent and terrorist purposes as well as for criminal activities endangering national security so as to ensure the healthy development of information and networks.

The Chinese Government is ready to join hands with other countries to quicken the pace towards the Information Society and to materialize the blueprint set out in the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations.

Building Dynamic Partnerships among Stakeholders: From the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to the World Summit of Solidarity (WSS)

Adama Samassékou
President of the WSIS Geneva Preparatory Committee, President of the African Academy of Languages and Former Minister of Education of the Republic of Mali

When I had the great honor and privilege, in the name of Mali and Africa, to become the President of the Prepcom of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in July 2002 in Geneva, I quickly realized that this was a very specific Summit.

First, it is specific because of its topic: it is the first time that the United Nations organizes a Summit on the Information Society, a new and complex theme which required a long and difficult period to reach a shared vision regarding this question. This is what the Geneva phase of the WSIS was essentially dedicated to.

Second, it is also specific because it is organized in two phases. As a result of a political compromise between the two countries wishing to host the WSIS, the articulation of the Summit in two phases happened for the first time in the history of United Nations summits. Its articulation, in Geneva in 2003, then in Tunis in 2005, proves to be very beneficial for this demanding process, because it makes it possible, in the long-term, to address complex and sensitive questions, thus providing an opportunity to discuss the issues over time and to progressively build consensus.

Last but not least, this Summit is specific because it brings to the negotiating table, in one process, stakeholders who differ by nature and status, with different and sometimes divergent concerns, all wishing to contribute to the construction of a new society and determined to defend their interests, by claiming a specific role and place. Indeed, when the

General Assembly of the United Nations called for the Summit[1], it invited Governments to participate in the WSIS and encouraged intergovernmental organizations, in particular international and regional organizations as well as non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector, to actively contribute to the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Summit and in the Summit itself.

In such a context, my first concern, as the President of the Preparatory Committee, was to raise awareness among the different stakeholders regarding the complexity of the process, to agree on the nature of the Summit, its important issues and challenges, as well as, of course, the ways and means to address these issues and find solutions to the challenges at hand.

I identified three main issues of this new type of Summit:

- To transform the digital divide into opportunities and especially into digital perspectives for all, in particular for the large majority of humanity living in the South, reducing in this way the social and economic divide;

- To accelerate the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), by ensuring optimal use of the new information and communication technologies in all fields;

- To promote linguistic and cultural diversity.

In sum, all involved stakeholders agree today that the essential global issue and the main objective of WSIS is to examine the means to place this digital revolution at the service of human development, not only by overcoming the digital divide, but also and foremost by addressing the social and economic divide, ensuring that new information and communication technologies do not kill our cultures and languages. In this way, we will ensure no citizen is excluded or marginalized from the Information Society.

The intense thinking process and exchange during the preparatory process of the first phase of WSIS has lead to the conclusion, reflected in the Geneva documents, that information and communication technologies are not an aim per se. They are a means at the service of human beings and social groups. The participants of the Geneva session of the Summit agreed that cultural and linguistic diversity, the role of media and freedom of the press in the Information Society, the question of capacity-building and human resources, multiple applications in the field of education, health, environment, commerce, employment or prevention of natural disasters are major issues of society which need to find their place in

[1] A/Res/56/183 : http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/background/resolutions/56_183_unga_2002-fr.pdf

the WSIS Geneva Declaration. Technological issues have also not been neglected. The security of networks, the use of open source software or Internet governance have been prioritized on the list of challenges which the Summit must address, in the second phase of the process, as well as the question of financing of the digital divide.

Considering these challenges and the perspective of building a bridge between the Geneva 2003 and the Tunis 2005 phases, it was important to address the following three challenges:

- First, if not eliminate, at least reduce the great mistrust between the various stakeholders of the Summit, and to ensure that Governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations learn to work together in a complementary manner, in order to build a consensus regarding the solutions to the major questions raised by the Information Society.

- Second, to construct a good articulation, both from the point of view of the objectives and the content, between the two phases of the Summit: if the credibility of the Summit was demonstrated in Geneva, Tunis now has to broaden its perspective and ensure that the commitments taken in the context of the World Summit on the Information Society become sustainable.

- And finally third, make of this Summit a starting point for a new era for international relations, where ideologies of negative and destructive competition are gradually replaced by universal solidarity.

Considering the great number of issues, challenges and stakeholders, it was essential to identify the best strategy, the essential leverage which was to guarantee some chances of success of our Summit: it seems to me, in retrospect, that efforts to address the first of the three challenges represent this leverage.

Indeed, at the very outset, the will to enable all interested parties to participate has clearly been expressed by Governments and has been reflected not only in the rules of procedure of the Preparatory Committee, but also in the Summit itself, as well, and foremost, through concrete facts. This represents one of the key achievements of the preparatory process: new means of involvement of civil society and the private sector have been developed and have been used extensively throughout the lengthy series of preparatory meetings. The perspectives of many sectors of civil society, the private sector and international organizations have been heard and found their way into the texts. There has been gradual progress from specific to more structured contributions, acknowledged by all stakeholders, transforming **the input into true impact**. In response to my call to "get organized", civil society has – for the first time in the history of United Nations summits – established an

"International Civil Society Bureau". Participants witnessed history in the making as joint meetings between the intergovernmental Bureau of the Preparatory Committee of the Summit, the Civil Society Bureau and the Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI) were held, making the two latter quasi-institutional partners of Governments.

To involve all partners at the moment of the negotiations should have enabled them to naturally establish partnerships for the subsequent phases of the process. Each stakeholder – governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society – can, and must, bring a unique contribution to the challenges already identified or in the process of being so: digital divide, inequalities of access, reinforcement of security of networks, capacity-building, creation of diverse content, and development of diversified applications. It is unlikely that each partner – whether governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector – individually has the necessary means to have a major impact. Even if it were the case, coordinated efforts result in the achievement of the same objectives in a more effective or timely manner.

New alliances will therefore be more and more common: the Information Society inevitably leads to a governance of partnerships, in a participatory operational way, at the national level, as well as worldwide.

The time has come to mobilise all stakeholders of the Information Society, in order to build new partnerships taking into account the needs of all social groups, in particular the most disadvantaged ones, thus allowing all to reap the benefits of these new information and communication technologies. The time has come to allow each citizen to acquire a digital culture.

In this regard, the articulation of the Summit in two phases provides an excellent opportunity which will allow us to **better develop, in the long term, new partnerships in the service of the society of information and shared knowledge**. This is why the *process* itself – with an emphasis on the value of the principle of inclusion – is as important as the *objectives* of the Summit. And this is why we were vigilant to make sure **that the procedure does not kill the process**.

The ambition of the Summit, concerning a global project of society, represents enormous challenges. Beyond the technological and societal issues already cited, there exists an even more inclusive vision. If it is true that the Information Society enables circulating information and knowledge throughout the world; if it is also true that all of humanity can now potentially share knowledge and know-how; if it is true that creating and disseminating educational, scientific, cultural and informative contents is made possible for all populations around the globe, then it is possible to envisage a new solidarity among human beings, the

social groups and the nations in the entire world – a solidarity based on sharing knowledge, a true solidarity based on better understanding of the Other and on mutual respect.

This is where the real reach of this new type of Summit is evident. Not only through concern of integration of all key actors of the Information Society and through a participative approach; not only through developing partnerships at an international level and through the vision of global solidarity among peoples and nations, but also and foremost with **a political ambition to reinforce multilateral cooperation in a new form**.

I am deeply convinced that this Summit – because it is dealing with global politics of human society as a whole – could be the precursor of a new generation of Summits. It is desirable – probably indispensable – that in a world which is increasingly globalized, we make a qualitative shift, **moving from United Nations Conferences dealing with development questions to summits of Heads of States and Governments, called for every two to three years**, where the decision-makers of this world – which are the highest authorities of all Member States of the United Nations – participating on an equal footing in the future of our world, will meet as a General Assembly to discuss the important issues of our future society in construction, based on the reports prepared by the main stakeholders of the Information Society. It is through such a shift we can build progressively this **new project of a world society based on the values of solidarity and sharing**.

This is where, in my opinion, the greatest challenge of our process lies. The question is how do we go about building this new world society. From my point of view, the WSIS can be the starting point:

- By reinforcing the commitment of the different stakeholders regarding the implementation of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action, through the adoption, in Tunis, on one hand, of a political document which could be called "**Fundamental Principles of Digital Solidarity**", and which would establish the basis for the rights, obligations and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the Information Society, and, on the other hand, an operational document, grouping the **Regional Plans of Action**, and which would allow to perfect the generic Plan of Action, focusing on the specificities and priorities of the various world regions.

- By considering creating – at the level of the United Nations – a specialized agency in charge of providing the legal framework for the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships at the national, regional and international levels – responding in this way to a certain extent to the concern expressed in the Cardoso

Report and contributing to **the emergence of a partnership-based world governance**.

Inclusion, partnership and solidarity are key-words which characterize the entire preparatory process of the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society.

The success of Geneva will have been to lay the foundations of this new society – the society of shared knowledge – characterized by **real partnerships** which need to be built and reinforced **among the main stakeholders of the Information Society**, a partnership based on a new spirit of cooperation, listening to the Others, and, foremost, based on an active solidarity among States, among peoples and citizens of the world, **each being conscious of the interdependency between Actors**.

At a time when the new world order is searching for itself, where the absence of benchmarks constitutes the only benchmark, humanity urgently needs the input of all components in a spirit of equal footing and solidarity, **in order to transform imposed competition into wished-for interdependency, in other words, into voluntary solidarity**.

In Geneva, we have created a new spirit, the spirit of the WSIS, which is based on mutual respect, openness to the Others, active listening, **a constructive dialogue in the spirit of a partnership and the constant search for a consensus and dynamic compromise**.

When we speak about solidarity, this is what is at stake. And in the African culture, to speak about solidarity, this is what is meant: to express, through a sincere dialogue, a true commitment to address the specific concerns of the Other and a constant availability for common action, reflecting in this fashion a great awareness of a shared destiny!

This is what we mean by Digital Solidarity, which is, the African vision of solidarity applied to a Digital Society. In this way, from the Spirit of Geneva to the Commitment of Tunis, our common path should help us to make of this Summit "**the World Summit of Solidarity**".

Searching for Consensus

Asko Numminen
Ambassador, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

The Geneva phase of the WSIS was a historic event. It raised the Information Society to the highest political level on the agenda of the United Nations and increased awareness of the potential of new technology for human development. The political leaders of the world committed themselves to create a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society based on common principles and agreed upon joint action to achieve these goals.

The preparatory process of the Geneva phase was difficult for many reasons. When the idea of WSIS was originally invented in ITU, the Information Society was approached from a rather technology-centred perspective. During the preparatory process it became evident that the approach to the Information Society had to be more comprehensive and social. The Summit also had to address the fundamental values of the Information Society and take position on the importance of human rights and freedom of expression. These questions have never been easy in the United Nations context.

WSIS is a summit to consider how new technology can be used as a tool for development. The developing countries made a strong call for development-orientation – action to bridge digital divide and action to have benefits for all. These objectives were fully justified and shared by all parties and, in fact, these were the main motives to organize the Summit. But, as often, positions differed on the best ways and means to achieve these goals, and this often lead to traditional North-South controversies which had to be accommodated in the negotiations.

The Information Society is a new theme on the United Nations agenda. Diplomats who negotiated for their governments had to learn completely new concepts which, earlier, were only known to the professionals in ICT. Occasionally the sessions of preparatory committee

looked more like academic seminars where the basic meaning of new issues like "Internet governance", "spam", "open source software", "radio frequency spectrum" and "technological neutrality" had to be clarified. The negotiators of the final documents of the Summit had to go through an extensive learning process. These new concepts caused uncertainty and sometimes lack of mutual trust, especially in the beginning of the process. There were many problems for which the existing United Nations documents could not offer a precedent.

WSIS has been a unique process in involving all stakeholders, governments, business community and civil society whose contribution to the Information Society is indispensable. This inclusive character of the preparatory process has enriched the dialogue and contributed positively to the progress. On the other hand, the huge number of different contributions caused new challenges for the preparations. After the second preparatory meeting, the WSIS Secretariat had 800 pages of contributions for the Plan of Action. Condensing this vast material into a negotiable draft without losing the essential content was an immense task. Moreover, especially during the two first meetings of the Preparatory Committee (Prepcom), participation of the NGO-stakeholders created many procedural problems since according to the traditional United Nations rules, negotiations take place between the Governments only. New modalities had to be found in order to respect these rules and, on the other hand, to allow maximum participation by all stakeholders whose role is vital in building an inclusive Information Society.

The third, and, as originally planned the last, session of the Prepcom in September 2003 was in fact the first formal Preparatory Committee to focus really on substance. The preparations were under heavy time pressure.

It was clear that this immense task could not be done in two weeks in September. The work had to be continued firstly in informal consultations in Geneva and thereafter formally in the resumed sessions of Prepcom on 10-14 November and on 5-6 December 2003. The decision to convene the resumed session in November was made "subject to the availability of resources". Unlike the other United Nations summits, WSIS preparations rely on voluntary contributions and in September 2003 nobody could guarantee that the costs of the resumed meeting could be covered. WSIS Prepcom did not only work under time pressure – financial pressure was also heavy.

It was also evident that the most difficult political issues could only be resolved at the latest stage right before the Summit itself. And late it happened. The last open paragraph on the financial mechanisms of the Digital Solidarity Agenda was adopted on 9 December so late that the United Nations interpreters had already left the meeting. The interpretation was

provided by the members of the Swiss delegation. In this respect the WSIS made also history in the United Nations.

In the September meeting of the Prepcom 3, Ms Lyndall Shope-Mafole of South Africa continued her able role as the facilitator on the Declaration of Principles. As the Chairman of Sub-Committee 2, I was able to concentrate on the Plan of Action.

The main tasks were quite clear on the Plan of Action:

- to create and maintain a constructive negotiating atmosphere and a will for consensus;
- to ensure that the Plan of Action is fully in line with and complementary to the Declaration of Principles;
- to produce a negotiable, well-structured draft Plan of Action with as much agreed text as possible; and
- to ensure that the search for consensus will continue in informal consultations and in the formal resumed sessions of the Prepcom 3 on the best possible basis.

In order to produce a negotiable draft of the Plan of Action, the Sub-Committee had to first have an open discussion of the document prepared by the Executive Secretariat based on numerous written contributions. This general debate took several days of the first week and it required a lot of patience when the meeting already was working under heavy time pressure. But it was an absolutely necessary part of the process without which the next crucial step – creation of Chairman's streamlined draft – would not have been possible. The substantive issues had to go through the "intergovernmental filter" – a term which was invented by the first Chairman of Sub-Committee 2, Ambassador Pablo Macedo of Mexico.

The next step was taken during the weekend when the Finnish delegation and some able members of the Secretariat withdrew to the ITU building, worked together 24 hours and prepared the Chairman's new text based on all the contributions. The new draft was accepted as the new basis for negotiations.

The negotiations on the Chairman's draft were divided into smaller groups led by the following countries

1. Financing (Sweden)

2. Media (Switzerland)
3. Security (Italy for the European Union)
4. Capacity-building (Costa Rica)
5. Enabling environment (Brazil)
6. Access to Information (Kenya)
7. ICT applications (Egypt)
8. Infrastructure (Saudi Arabia)
9. Cultural diversity (Argentina)

The work in sub-groups was important for efficient use of time available and also for creating the common will for consensus. Responsibility for, and ownership of, the progress was shared by all.

The Friends of the Chair negotiated texts for the introduction, objectives, international and regional cooperation and the follow-up, and integrated the outcomes from the sub-groups into the overall text. This negotiating machinery brought about the fundamental building blocks of the Plan of Action which was the main result of the Prepcom 3.

The objectives of the Plan of Action were linked to the development goals of the Millennium Declaration to be achieved by 2015. By that year more than half of the world's inhabitants should be ICT-connected. The operative action lines were structured according to the eleven key principles. The Digital Solidarity Agenda emerged as a response to the call by the developing world to bridge the digital divide.

While progress was made on the Plan of Action, difficulties mounted on the Declaration of Principles. After the September meeting the main attention had to be focused on this key document which would contain the political message from the Heads of State and Government.

The outstanding issues of the Declaration were subject to informal consultations lead by the Chairman of Sub-Committee 2 on 20 and 30-31 of October. The purpose of these consultations was to identify the main difficulties, seek possible solutions and further build up the spirit of cooperation and will to compromise. The consultations demonstrated a genuine desire by all sides to make progress and compromise. Small working groups

produced important elements for possible agreements and strengthened mutual confidence and understanding.

Informal consultations were not formal negotiations. However, they were supposed to offer solutions on how the outstanding issues should be resolved. The Chair's task was to arrive at the common elements of consensus and to find the right modality to work it out, for example:

- the problem is a matter of language: the Chair will draft a proposal
- the problem is not a new one in the United Nations: let's seek a precedent
- the problem is one where ICT expertise is needed: let's ask advice and language from the ITU
- the problem is a matter of balanced substance: let's form a small group to strike the balance
- the problem is impossible to be resolved at this stage: let's leave it for the final stage.

As a result of these consultations, the President of the Preparatory Committee, Mr. Adama Samassékou, distributed a new non-paper on 24 October. This document was an important step forward in shaping the final form of the Declaration. It served as a basis of discussion in the further informal consultations on 30-31 October. These consultations turned out to be a drafting exercise. Thereafter new small informal groups were convened in Geneva to advance consensus: Internet Governance (chaired by Italy), Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (Egypt), Human Rights (Canada), Intellectual Property Rights (Brazil), Security (Russia) and Financing (Sweden).

As an outcome of this process a new draft was prepared in the name of President Samassékou, and it was accepted as the formal basis for negotiations in the resumed session of Prepcom 3 in November. Some important substantive issues had to be left pending but the work of this informal phase was highly successful. The formal negotiations could be started on a new and well balanced draft which already contained a lot of agreed language.

The resumed session of Prepcom 3 had a clear task: to clean the table for the final negotiating package by producing as much as possible agreed texts on the Declaration and Plan of Action. The outstanding issues had to be limited to the minimum for the final end-game under the leadership of the host country Switzerland. In a positive atmosphere

important progress was made. About 80% of the content of the final documents were agreed upon. The following main issues had to be left to the final negotiations:

- Freedom of expression and the role of media in the Information Society

The last difficulty was how to refer to the right to freedom of opinion and expression as an essential foundation of the Information Society and specifically to the Article 19 and 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Moreover, the freedom of the press and the independence, pluralism and diversity of media in the Information Society were matters which had to be left for the late round of negotiations.

- Financial mechanisms to bridge the digital divide, including the Digital Solidarity Fund

There was a consensus on many important points of the Digital Solidarity Agenda, including on the creation of enabling environment to attract private investments, on the Official Development Assistance and on the outstanding indebtedness. However, there was no consensus on the creation of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund.

- Internet governance

Gradually an agreement emerged on the general requirements for the international management of the Internet. It should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, private sector, civil society and international organizations. It should also ensure an equitable distribution of resources, facilitate access for all and ensure a stable and secure functioning of the Internet, taking into account multilingualism. Nevertheless, no consensus was reached on the institutional basis for further development of Internet governance.

- Information and network security

Importance of the confidence and security in the use of ICTs was stressed by all, and a consensus was reached on the need to promote a global culture of cyber-security in cooperation with all stakeholders. Difficulties concerned the balance between measures to increase information and network security and the need to ensure the free flow of information. Similarly, a balance had to be found on the necessity to prevent the use of information resources and technologies for criminal and terrorist purposes and the need to respect human rights.

- Intellectual property rights

It was extremely difficult to find an agreed text which would balance the importance of the intellectual property protection to encourage innovation and creativity and the importance of wide dissemination, diffusion and sharing knowledge in the Information Society.

WSIS is a summit in two phases. Both phases are equally important with different focus. Geneva was a summit to agree on the fundamental principles of the Information Society and on general action lines to turn these principles into a reality. Tunis will focus on more concrete action for implementation and follow-up. Hopefully, Tunis will also resolve those two major issues which were left outstanding in Geneva – financial mechanisms and Internet governance. Preparatory processes for these two phases have similarities but, at the same time, clear differences. The most important factor for the successful outcome of both phases is anyhow the same – the famous political will to reach consensus. The progress made in the preparations for the second phase has already shown that this political will exists also for Tunis.

Last Minute Diplomacy: The WSIS in Geneva 2003

Marc Furrer
Secretary of State for the WSIS, Switzerland

In our search for a satisfactory conclusion to the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, we were essentially faced with two major challenges whilst leading the negotiations for a Declaration of Principles and an Action Plan. The first challenge was the fact that the Information Society is such a diverse topic. It covers practically all aspects of political, social, cultural and economic life. We therefore had to downsize the vast range of potential WSIS issues to a negotiable volume. The other challenge was the negative attitude towards the whole summit process exhibited by many important partners. Some important representatives from civil society, business and also Governments and international organizations did not believe that the negotiations would lead to a successful conclusion. This was mainly due to the difficult preparatory process, where for a long time little progress had been made. But it was also due to the fact that people did not have much confidence in the political sensitivity of the ITU. There were widespread doubts as to whether the ITU was capable of contributing substantially to the political substance of the WSIS, as it was seen as an organization with a purely technical orientation, with little awareness of the political or social aspects of the Information Society.

The first challenge – that of the diversity of the WSIS issues – was something that we knew we would be able to cope with. The second problem was distinctly more difficult: we knew that we had to live with this negative attitude and that we needed to succeed, although many people were expecting the first phase of WSIS to be a failure. It was as if you were going to climb a tall and difficult mountain – as a mountaineer, you have to be sure that you will reach the top and disregard the fact that most people down in the valley don't rate your chances.

So how was the broad range of WSIS issues brought down to something more manageable – i.e. negotiable? This was achieved at the Paris *intersessional meeting* in July 2003 and at Prepcom

3 in September. It was a tremendous effort led by my South African colleague Lyndall Shope-Mafole and then by my Finnish colleague Asko Numminen. They achieved this by grouping a host of issues into a package that we would be able to negotiate later. This package was a paper with a clear structure but with a lot of bracketed text – meaning that we had a basis of agreed substance, but we also had a lot of disagreements as indicated by all the text in brackets. On a number of substantial issues such as human rights, Internet governance, intellectual property rights, the role of the media, network security and financing, a consensus on a common text had yet to be reached.

Exhausted, but the top of the summit in sight

At the end of *Prepcom 3 resumed* on November 14, the Prepcom decided on an additional two days of *Prepcom 3 resumed* to be held on December 5 and 6, and it also decided to entrust the host country Switzerland with the task of supervising informal consultations on all outstanding issues in order to facilitate agreement. As head of the Swiss delegation, I took the lead during this last phase of the negotiation process. Or to speak in mountainclimbing-terms: For the last difficult ascent to the summit, I had to take the lead. And like in mountaineering, the climbers were tired, hungry, probably scared sometimes, but they could see the top, which pushed them on.

From now on, the Swiss delegation was no longer defending the position of its country, but had turned into a facilitating team of the host country that was responsible for whether the WSIS would be able to agree on a Declaration of Principles and an Action Plan or not. Our idea was to take the package of issues where negotiations had become deadlocked and break them down into single issues, with the aim of preparing the ground for an agreement on the whole text by first dealing with each issue individually. I, therefore, created negotiation groups for all the issues mentioned above plus an additional group for all the "other brackets", i.e. for all other paragraphs where it had not yet been possible to reach agreement on a common text. These included paragraphs on issues such as occupied territories, universal access and domestic legislation, volunteers, labor standards, abusive use of ICT and the concept of defamation of religions – a concept that was introduced at a very late stage of the proceedings. For each of these negotiation groups I nominated a leader who had to organize, chair and stimulate the negotiation of a single topic. Each of these leaders was essentially responsible for the outcome of the negotiations in one or two of these groups. The aim was to get rid of all the brackets or reduce them to an absolute minimum. All the negotiation groups reported to me constantly, so that I could lead the negotiation on the whole package by keeping well-informed and by intervening if necessary. As Switzerland is a small country and because we didn't have that many experienced negotiators in our delegation, most of us led two of these negotiating groups: I led the groups on the role of

the media and on the issue of financing ICT4D. This combination proved to be helpful. Frédéric Riehl led the intellectual property rights and the security groups, Markus Kummer the human rights and Internet governance groups, and Daniel Stauffacher led the group dealing with the "other brackets" – some of which experienced United Nations representatives like Nitin Desai and Maurice Strong said could not be resolved before the very end of negotiations, but they would be resolved.

Behind the scenes, we had been preparing the ground for this facilitating work as early as October. We also engaged former Swiss president Adolf Ogi to informally discuss some key issues with some key countries. After the formal decision at the end of *Prepcom 3 resumed*, we had to negotiate in special sessions in order to progress each of the issues. This was a special challenge for the representatives of the diplomatic missions in Geneva, as the experts from the capitals had left after the Prepcom and the Geneva diplomats had to act independently on the basis of instructions from their capitals.

Progress in the negotiations on the most controversial issues

Of all the topics where agreement was still outstanding, I expected the subjects of human rights, the role of the media and Internet governance to be the most difficult ones on which to reach consensus. This was because of the rather harsh and uncompromising statements of some delegates concerning these subjects during *Prepcom 3 resumed* – some did not want the right to freedom of opinion and information to be prominently stated, or did not want to see a separate chapter about the role of the media in the Information Society, although the media are essential for spreading content throughout the Information Society. On the other hand, some Governments and civil society representatives placed the role of the media and of freedom of expression at the very heart of the Information Society and of the WSIS. These positions were clearly at loggerheads and the search for common ground for the text of a Declaration or Action Plan seemed to be a difficult one.

The situation regarding the issue of Internet governance was similar: some delegations insisted on dealing with all Internet-related aspects of the Information Society in the WSIS documents, others did not want to discuss or change anything at all, especially with regard to the actual management of the Internet and its main resources, particularly with regard to the actual ICANN system based on private contracts under US law. Not just some Governments, but also many representatives from the private sector argued that Governments should not interfere in the private sector-led management of these Internet resources.

So two months before the Summit, human rights, media and Internet governance seemed to me the most difficult issues to be resolved. But I was wrong: The most difficult issue for all

participating countries to agree upon was that of financing ICT for development (ICT4D). Finding a compromise in the political texts for this topic proved to be more difficult than I had expected. In fact, the issue of financing ICT4D would prove to be the last where a text could be found on which all delegations would agree.

During these informal consultations we negotiated each and every issue separately in the groups. But we knew that we would not be able to compose a final text on which everyone agreed before *Prepcom 3 resumed II* on December 5 and 6. Over those two days, the first issue for which we were able to find wording accepted by all delegations was network security. The compromise here was to state that it is necessary to prevent the use of information resources and technologies for criminal and terrorist purposes, but by stating also that all action in this regard must respect human rights and free access to information.

On a second issue, we were able to remove the brackets in the paragraphs about intellectual property rights. This was more difficult than expected. The solution here was to convince delegations that the WSIS was not the right forum for going into this question in depth, but to leave the subject to the organization that is competent in this subject and where experts of all nations are represented – i.e. the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Finally, all delegations agreed to a formulation that establishes a careful balance between intellectual property protection and the wide dissemination, diffusion and sharing of knowledge – both are important to encourage innovation and creativity in the Information Society.

During Saturday, December 6, we were able to find an agreement on the issues of human rights and the role of the media. With regard to human rights there had been some fear that these were not mentioned explicitly enough in the text and that the role of the media would be completely put to one side. Finally, all delegations agreed that the Declaration of Principles should confirm the fundamental democratic values and contain the necessary reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially the freedom of opinion and expression as outlined in its Article 19. This freedom is fundamental also with regard to free access to the Internet.

The issue of the role of the media could be resolved by agreeing that the issues of the media and the freedom of information should be given a chapter of their own in the Declaration of Principles and in the Action Plan. We were able to reach agreement on this point by declaring the principles, though without blaming any individual countries for not obeying them. As it stands now, the media chapter of the declaration represents a new standard for press freedom at the highest political level. This is important as we now have a WSIS declaration that reaffirms our commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and of

information as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of the media, which are essential to the Information Society. That was the best that we could achieve and it now allows us for example to criticize some governments for violating the freedom of the media, and we can now call on them to provide free access to information and the Internet. Of course, a political declaration of a summit can only set the principles – but if this is done well, the implementation can work according to these principles. And I hope that these principles in the policy documents of the WSIS will contribute to increased freedom of the media and to improved access to the Internet, which is sadly still one of the main problems in the Information Society.

At a late hour on the night of Saturday, December 6, after long discussions in the negotiation group led by Markus Kummer, we also reached agreement on the wording with regard to Internet governance. The perseverance of the Chairman, possibly combined with exhaustion on the part of the delegates, finally led to a result: We were realistic enough to know that during the Geneva phase of the WSIS – when this new and controversial subject was globally discussed for the first time – it would not be possible to find a solution on all outstanding issues concerning governance of the Internet, the exact role ICANN should play in future, etc. However, what we were able to agree upon – and this was far from easy – was the foundation of a process for dealing with this issue which for many countries was *the* key issue of the WSIS. The compromise that overcame the impasse was the idea to set up a working group under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General, including all relevant organizations of the business sector and civil society, which would analyze the relevant issues related to Internet governance and make recommendations to the Tunis phase of the WSIS. This result of the Geneva negotiations may not appear overly spectacular, but in fact it represents a breakthrough on this issue since it is the start of an international dialogue involving all stakeholders about something that some delegations had for a very long time declared as a topic not up for discussion at all.

In addition to these "big" issues, we had to reach agreement on the various "other brackets". We negotiated these predominantly in bilateral talks. Most of these issues are not WSIS-specific – they crop up in many world summits and negotiation on them has almost become routine, if not even a ritual. But nevertheless, these points must be taken seriously. Because if only one country abstains from consenting on one single point, the whole text is worthless: Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed by everybody.

The last great obstacle: financing ICT for development

So at some time after midnight on that Saturday night, there was consent on all issues of the declaration and the Action Plan – except the one concerning financing ICT infrastructure

and services. So it was decided that there should be one last day of extension of *Prepcom 3 resumed II*: This was to be December 9, the very day before the official opening of the world summit itself on December 10.

During *Prepcom 3 resumed* in November and in the weeks thereafter, the discussions on financing ICT4D had become more and more difficult. There were two strongly opposing positions. Basically, all countries shared the view that the financing of the use of ICT for development purposes should be enhanced. But whereas many countries from Africa, with the support of Latin America, were urging the creation of a new compulsory Digital Solidarity Fund, which should provide additional financing for ICT4D projects (such as e-education, e-health, telecom infrastructure, etc.), many northern countries, especially the European Union and Japan, strongly opposed the idea of creating a new fund, arguing that instead of creating another inefficient and bureaucratic mechanism, the many financing mechanisms already in existence (such as funds, bilateral cooperation, public-private partnerships and so on) should be adapted, improved and used more efficiently. The African countries made their positions clear: For them, nice words were not enough. They wanted binding commitments and compulsory mechanisms that would guarantee the financing of ICT4D. Both positions were following a logic of their own, especially when the national situation and the freedom of movement of the many governments (which is limited due to the pressure of domestic affairs) of the North and of the South were considered, and it was difficult to reconcile these.

In the early December discussions of the negotiating group on financing, the differences between these two positions got larger rather than smaller. The announcement of the creation of a Geneva-based voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund made during this time at a WSIS preparatory conference of cities and local authorities in Lyon and the behind-the-scenes lobbying by some of its initiators for the support of this fund did not help to narrow the gap between the two positions; on the contrary, it made negotiations even more difficult.

Nevertheless, we continued to negotiate in smaller circles trying to identify and to eliminate the last brackets in the text. To that end, I led several negotiations with each side separately. I was looking for acceptable wording during closed meetings with the European and the African delegations separately. At the end, I was carrying proposals from the African meeting to the EU meeting and back. Only by playing this role as the "go-between", could I identify the areas where the two positions overlapped and where there might be room for compromise. Finally, exactly 24 hours before the opening of the Geneva phase, we came up with a solution acceptable to both sides.

This had happened without the two disagreeing parties, the European and the African delegations, sitting together at one table. It had to work with me as the "medium" or as the "go-between". The proposal that was accepted stated that all existing financial mechanisms should be fully exploited and that a thorough review of their adequacy in meeting the challenges of ICT4D should be conducted by a Task Force under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General which should be presented in a report by December 2004. Based on the conclusions of this review, improvements and innovations of financing mechanisms, including the effectiveness, the feasibility and the creation of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund, should be considered at the second phase of the WSIS. This compromise clearly highlighted the fact that all countries agreed that less-developed countries need more help in financing ICT infrastructure and services. However there was not yet agreement on how this should be done. This agreement on how to improve financing of ICT4D will be one of the main issues of the Tunis phase of the WSIS.

Hope, exhaustion, despair – success…

By agreeing on the financing issue exactly one day before the opening of the Geneva summit, we had overcome the last obstacle to a successful conclusion of negotiations. After many people had already declared the Geneva phase a failure, we were finally able to present an agreed Declaration of Principles and an Action Plan to the heads of States. The political basis of the WSIS process was thereby created!

This last minute success was only possible because finally, all parties showed their willingness to work hard in order to create a substantial result in Geneva. Some parties had to adapt their initial positions and move markedly to enable a consensus to be reached. For this constructive approach, I would like to sincerely thank all delegations. The Geneva phase demonstrated that if we do not give up too quickly, it is possible to find a way for globally agreed solutions – even when it is a case of delicate issues such as freedom of information or Internet governance.

One person has to take the lead and the responsibility for the negotiation process – but success is only possible if there is a good team working in the background to support and complement the negotiations. That is why I thank all my colleagues in the facilitating team, in my delegation and in the WSIS Executive Secretariat for their efforts.

What in addition to the good will of all partners and a good team is necessary to bring negotiations to a successful end? It is possibly a big amount of patience and a good timing. You have to take your time to listen and to respect every intervention but you also have to sense, when the right moment to intervene has come, so the discussion stays on track. It is an art to find out which "rhetorical detours" are necessary and which ones are just a waste of

time. My way of negotiation was characterized by the Italian Ambassador, who led the EU-group, as "a mixture of kindness and brutality". Indeed I could listen to all proposals with due patience and understanding for hours. But in moments, when I realized that the negotiating partners lost their good will and the aim to achieve an agreement or when they lost the respect and tolerance to their opponents, I had to intervene sometimes in a fierce way. I did that usually in a bilateral talk, by taking, for example, heads of delegation aside to tell them: "Look if you continue like this we will not get anywhere – and you will have to take the responsibility…" It usually worked. It could happen at odd hours and in odd places. For example well after midnight in the corridor of the conference center by drinking liters of Cola-Light. Or it happened over lunch in one of the excellent restaurants in Geneva, or by smoking Havanna cigars and drinking the best rum late at night at an Ambassador's residence.

Finally, everything is about human relations. By talking to an African Minister about my cousin who used to work as an engineer in a cooperation-project in the forests of his country for many years and who got married there, I could overcome his resentments and his skepticism against me. After this talk late at night on the car-park, we got on very well, and he sensed that my position was to build bridges between Africa and Europe – from then on he trusted me as a fair mediator.

It is the result of an agreed Declaration of Principles and a Plan of Action for the WSIS but also these human experiences and contacts that made all the efforts and all the moments of despair we sometimes had after late-night negotiations worthwhile.

A Tribute To Those Who Made It Happen

Daniel Stauffacher
Ambassador and Delegate of the Swiss Federal Council for the WSIS

When the Swiss Government appointed me to be their chief representative in the hosting process of the WSIS, the project was by no means completely mapped out. Here I pay a personal homage to those who, in my opinion, really helped design the phase 1 and whose contributions were instrumental in forging a fruitful outcome. These are people who I met personally, and collaborated with along the way, so I have chosen to recount our meetings and work chronologically. My goal is also to describe the kind of planning and creative thinking required from the representatives of the host country of a United Nations world summit or of any international conference of political nature.

I heard about the idea of a world summit on the topic of "Information Society" for the first time in Spring 1999, while I was working as Ambassador of Switzerland on the organization of the World Summit for Social Development, a follow-up conference (Copenhagen plus 5) to take place in June 2000 in Geneva. It was there that I met Mr. Mohammed Harbi, Chief of Staff of ITU Secretary General, Pekka Tarjanne and then Yoshio Utsumi. When Mr. Harbi asked me if Switzerland would be interested in becoming a candidate to host the WSIS, I immediately forwarded his inquiry to my Government in Bern. Indeed, Mr. Harbi had participated in laying the foundations for the WSIS concept, formally introduced by Tunisia at the Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis in 1989. Mr. Harbi proceeded to escort and shelter this proposal through the decision-making process of both the ITU and United Nations. He naturally became, after his retirement from the ITU, the first acting Executive Director of the WSIS Executive Secretariat.

Preparations for candidacy

The official response from the Swiss Government came the following year, in August 2000. Marc Furrer and Charlotte Sgier, Deputy Head of International Affairs of the Swiss Federal

Office of Communications (OFCOM) asked me if I would be interested in helping to prepare and manage the application of Switzerland to host the WSIS, and later to participate in its organization. Of course I was honored to accept this challenge. Ms. Sgier ultimately became an instrumental figure as the personal Assistant to Adama Samassékou, the WSIS Prepcom Chairman, and a key staff member of the WSIS Executive Secretariat. The preparation of the Swiss candidacy as WSIS host country would have been utterly impossible without a group of dedicated individuals. These were from my Secretariat, Bruno Romazzotti, Isabelle Caccia, Gabrielle Bucher and André Collomb, the former Deputy Secretary General of the City of Geneva as well as Robert Hensler, the Chancellor, and Jérôme Koechlin, Chief of Protocol of the Canton of Geneva at the time.

During the fall of 2000, we proposed an initial budget to be reviewed by the Swiss Government; in September 2000, I prepared the formal submission to the ITU of the Swiss application for the hosting of the WSIS in Geneva. Then Guy-Olivier Segond, State Councilor of the Canton of Geneva, Swiss Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Francois Nordmann, Ambassador Erwin Hofer in Bern and I embarked on our promotion campaign. We had to convince not only the ITU and other United Nations Agencies in Geneva, Rome and Vienna, but also the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the all-powerful and influential "38th floor" in New York and the Council of ITU to promote Geneva as a host for the WSIS.

Laying the conceptual foundations of the WSIS

In June 2001, as soon as Mr. Utsumi and the ITU Council had taken the decision to hold the WSIS in Geneva and Tunis, I prepared the strategic concept note for the Geneva Summit. This founding document described key success criteria, general prerequisites and implementation conditions as well as management issues and milestones. In October 2001, I presented some of these key elements to the first High-Level Summit Organizing Committee held at the United Nations in New York under the Chairmanship of Mr. Utsumi.

It soon became apparent that the vision and the scope of this Summit were dramatically different from stakeholder to stakeholder: the expectations of the civil society and the business sector were far from those of many Governments and international organizations. This is why we took the crucial step of inviting roughly 45 experts of the Information Society to a two days brainstorming session to reflect on the various aspects, issues and potential content areas of the WSIS.

In organizing this major endeavor, known as the "Coppet Meeting", I appreciated the full commitment of Art Levin and Mohammed Harbi of the ITU and the great organizational and moderating skills of Hilary Bowker, a former CNN anchor with whom I had worked for

the Social Summit. The famous "flower of Coppet" bloomed there: it was designed as a graphical metaphor showing one core, the Summit, with six petals representing the potential areas of content and side events. The credit for the flower of Coppet belongs to the working group chaired by Ms. Lyndall Shope-Mafole, including among others, Ridha Guellouz, Tunisia, Walter Fust, Head of the Swiss Development Cooperation, and Paul Verhoef of the EU Commission, both initiators of the idea.[1] With Walter Fust, we also further developed the concept of "ICT4D" as an integral part of the side events, by then called the "Summit Events" and coordinated by Bruno Romazzotti of the Swiss Executive Secretariat and Pierre Gagné, Executive Director of the WSIS Executive Secretariat. Gerolf Weigel, from the Swiss Development Cooperation office, with the support of Otto Frei and his team took the lead in implementing the "ICT4D" Platform, thereby contributing significantly to the success of the Geneva Summit.

Connecting to the Summit content

Given the eminent role that UNESCO and the media, both traditional and electronic media, but also schools, universities, libraries and archives have played in shaping the emerging information society – a fact that was confirmed in Coppet – it was clear that the original concept, limited to technical issues such as Internet access, was incomplete.

In fall 2001, I had the chance to recruit Alain Modoux, former Assistant Director-General of UNESCO. His role was to develop the relations with the media and include them in the WSIS process. Upon his recommendation, I invited Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations in Spring 2002 to organize the 2003 World Electronic Media Forum as part of the "Summit Events" of WSIS in December 2003 in Geneva. Abdul Waheed Khan, the present Assistant Director-General of UNESCO – with whom I participated in many regional and thematic preparatory meetings of WSIS – also played a major role in broadening the understanding of the Information Society and defining the conditions and prerequisites to make it happen.

The second element missing in the original concept was the development dimension of the Information Society and its connection with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Therefore, in addition to the ICT for Development Platform with its over 30,000 visitors launched as one of the "Summit Events", we welcomed the World Bank, represented by Bruno Lanvin with whom the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs organized the Infodev Symposium. The Swedish Ambassador and IT for Development specialist Astrid Dufborg was an ardent defender of the development dimension, along with UNDP

[1] Coppet Diagram "*A Network Series of Events*" at http://www.wsisgeneva2003.org/pdf/Coppet_Diagram.pdf and Coppet Workshop Report at http://www.wsisgeneva2003.org/pdf/coppet_workshop_report.pdf

Administrator Mark Malloch Brown. She also chaired the Prepcom working group on financing of ICT for Development on several occasions.

Shaping an identity and forming an operational team

The evocative logotype of the WSIS, designed by Johann Terretaz from the Geneva agency Twice2, was chosen by ballot by all the staff of both WSIS and Swiss Executive Secretariats. Mohammed Harbi assisted me in selecting the event management company MCI Group. Their team was to become crucial for the organization at the PalExpo site in Geneva: Richard Torriani, the lead manager for logistical planning and preparation also supervised the implementation. He was a fully integrated team member in the Swiss Executive Secretariat (SES) while Roger Tondeur, MCI's CEO was always available and supportive. Also Bruno Lurati, CEO of PalExpo, with his staff, as well as Mr. Lagraña and Ms. Elaine Baron and Patricia Janin from ITU, played an essential role in planning and executing the logistics of the WSIS, which meant to host nearly 50 heads of states, over 11,000 participants and 30,000 visitors to the ICT4D Platform.

Diplomacy at work during the preparatory phases

Soon after the announcement of the selection of Tunis and Geneva summit locations, Mr. Utsumi, Secretary General of the ITU asked me and the Tunisian Ambassador Hatem Ben Salem (now Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs) as well as Minister counselor Mr. Koubaa to launch the diplomatic process in Geneva and New York.

With Mr. Koubaa and Art Levin, we wrote the very first draft of the first General Assembly Resolution regarding WSIS in 2001, and with Mr. Koubaa I co-chaired the informal working group on rules and procedures for the Prepcom and the Summit. I was subsequently elected Chairman of Subcommittee I of the Prepcom in June 2000. With Ambassador Ben Salem, I co-chaired the informal Bureau of the Prepcom from fall 2001 to June 2002. By then, former Minister of Education Adama Samassékou had been elected Chairman of the Prepcom and Ambassador Ben Salem and myself became the Vice-Chairs of the Bureau.

During Prepcom I, I had to chair some of the lengthiest, most difficult and politically sensitive negotiations regarding the rules and procedures on the participation in the WSIS of the Civil Society, the business sector and the international organizations.

I remember Ambassador Bernard Kessedjian from France, Minister Anneli Vuorinen from Finland, Ambassador Sha Zukang from China, Ambassador Pablo Macedo from Mexico (who was also the first Chairman of Subcommittee II dealing with the content of WSIS), US Ambassador David Gross and Dick Beaird, Deputy US Coordinator for International

Communications and Information Policy, Counselor Kumar Ramanathan of India and Counselor Roushdy Alaa el Din of Egypt as key actors in designing a globally acceptable solution. Charles Geiger, who became Executive Director of the WSIS Executive Secretariat in the second phase of WSIS, was extremely helpful as Secretary of Subcommittee II along with Jöel Desaules, member of the WSIS Executive Secretariat.

A series of meetings with the Ambassadors and Missions in Geneva was organized with the goal of mobilizing and assisting Governments in preparation of the Prepcom process. Mr. Alain Modoux of my Secretariat took the lead in organizing the first informal information session hosted by the two host countries, Switzerland and Tunisia, in April 2002 to provide the Permanent Missions of Geneva with an overview of the many issues related to the Information Society. We were able to invite such eminent speakers as Elmar Brok, member of the European Parliament, Emanuel N. Ole Kambaine from Tanzania, V. Ranjit Khosla from India and Paul Saffo from the USA.

Aiming high and achieving commitment

The WSIS process was connected to the highest political level of the United Nations in New York and linked to the MDG process thanks to the efforts of the United Nations ICT Task Force, under the leadership of José-Maria Figueres and Sarbuland Khan of DESA. The United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, under whose patronage the Summit was held, created a Steering Group for the WSIS in New York, formed under Deputy-Secretary-General Louise Fréchette with Nitin Desai, Mark Malloch Brown and Shashi Tharoor. Later on he appointed former Under-Secretary-General Nitin Desai as his Special Representative for WSIS, while the Swiss Government appointed former Swiss President Adolf Ogi and Maurice Strong as his special advisors. The Director-General of United Nations Office in Geneva Sergei Ordzhonikidze also made an invaluable contribution by making available his facilities and his highly qualified staff in the field of protocol, security, information and administration. Thanks to Professor Klaus Schwab, Jose-Maria Figueres and Sarbuland Khan of the United Nations ICT Task Force, we were also able to organize information sessions and discussion groups during the World Economic Forum meetings in New York and Davos. Julianne Lee from the United Nations ICT Task Force Secretariat was seconded to my Secretariat for the organization of the "Presidential Couchepin-Schwab WSIS-Roundtables": these four informal discussion groups brought together, at the beginning of the Summit, forty Heads of State, presidents, CEOs of companies and leaders of international organizations, representatives of universities, of the civil society and of the media.

The forging of the Geneva Declaration and Plan of Action

Drawing a common vision of an emerging information society, accepted by all Governments, and with the support of all stakeholders in the shape of the Geneva Declaration and Plan of Action was not an easy task. This process started in Bamako at the Regional Preparatory Conference for Africa, with the production of the first elements for the work begun under Prepcom I, in June 2002 and continued in the September meeting on content and themes under the able Chairmanship of Ambassador Pablo Macedo.

Defining the topics and issues to be included proved exceedingly difficult and controversial. In December 2002, I was asked to organize the so-called "Glion I" workshop with President Samassékou, the Executive Director for the first phase of WSIS and Executive Director of the WSIS Executive Secretariat, Pierre Gagné. Under his able Chairmanship, this informal brainstorming session with experts from all regions and all walks of life produced a first comprehensive outline and initial examples of wording for a political declaration. Mr. Waheed Khan from UNESCO, Mr. Pape from ITU, Bruno Lanvin from the World Bank, Dennis Gilhooly from UNDP and Faryel Beji from Tunisia were among those who most actively contributed to the resulting Chairman's paper.

This document was not accepted as the formal basis for negotiations by Prepcom II, but many of its parts and text elements were introduced by delegations to build the structure and nurture the content of the final declaration of Geneva. Romania played a very active role in defining the content and scope of the WSIS under the leadership of Minister Dan Nica and Ambassador Anda Filip who also played a very active and helpful role on the Geneva diplomatic front. I collaborated with them as ex-officio member of the Bureau for the preparation of the Bucharest Regional Preparatory Conference for Europe, where again important building blocks for the final document were made.

The Regional Conferences for Latin America and Asia Pacific held in the Dominican Republic and in Japan were equally enriching; they brought to light the various regional differences and perspectives. Ambassadors Shotaro Oshima and Ruben Nunez assisted by Counselor Isabel Padilla, played a key role in preparing these conferences with the diplomatic community in Geneva. The Regional Conference in Tokyo was memorable, as it probably best managed to involve the Civil Society in the deliberations and the drafting of its documents.

For procedural reasons the Member States could not agree on President Samassékou's Chairman paper as a basis for negotiations – even though it was originally thought to be an informal paper, with the simple intention to assist all stakeholders in developing a common vision of the WSIS. Numerous difficult and lengthy Bureau Meetings followed Prepcom 2,

trying to find ways and means to bridge the gap between opposing views both on the process and the expected outcomes.

During the "Paris meeting" at UNESCO between Prepcom 2 and Prepcom 3 from 15-18 July 2003, in Paris under the able Chairmanship of Lyndall Shope-Mafole from South Africa, we started to negotiate and draft texts, together with members of the civil society. Based on this excellent work Ambassador Asko Numminen from Finland, Chair of the Subcommittee II was able to lay the groundwork of the Geneva text as we know it today. Thanks to Minister Anneli Vuorinen of the Finnish Mission in Geneva and his deep knowledge of United Nations affairs, the multilateral system and the content of previous summits linked to the MDGs, a small and informal "steering group", including President Samassékou, Secretary General Utsumi, Ambassador Habib Mansour, Pierre Gagné, Minister Koubaa, Charlotte Sgier, Tim Kelly and myself was able to move the text along with the Member States. This serious and renewed interest of the Member States, taking control of the process, was understandably not appreciated by the civil society groups, but we were running out of time.

The host country's ultimate intervention

As it is customary in summits and large political conferences, the Host Government would be asked in the final stages of negotiations – in particular when these are blocked or running in circles – to take the role of mediator and moderator of the negotiations. To anticipate the moment when the WSIS Prepcom Bureau would ask Switzerland to take over, I was defining the major hurdles in each area of interest of the countries, and starting to map out a space in which a compromise package could eventually be designed. This was done during the September Prepcom 3 meeting in Geneva with key and active delegations. The main areas of concern included Internet governance, financing of ICT for development, human rights, the role of the media, intellectual property rights and network security.

I was then asked by my Government to activate the network of about 25 key Ambassadors and Minister-Counselors of the Geneva diplomatic community, the "Friends of the Host", which was instrumental in the success of the final negotiations under the leadership of Marc Furrer. We coordinated the overall package of the negotiations, and I had the privilege to moderate some of the most sensitive political issues linked to the development of the Information Society. Along with Marc Furrer, Markus Kummer of the Swiss Foreign Office and Frédéric Riehl of OFCOM, we constituted the Swiss negotiating team for the final negotiations. With regard to those negotiations, over which I presided, the constructiveness and professionalism of the United States, Cuban, Iranian, European Union, Canadian and Egyptian Delegations remains memorable to me. I would like to thank the following fellow

Ambassadors and colleagues who participated in numerous meetings, working dinners or lunches over a period of two years and thus contributed so much to the final success of WSIS: Ambassadors Mohamed-Salah Dembri, Algeria; Michael Steiner, Germany; Toufiq Ali, Bangladesh; Felipe de Seixas Correa and Carlos Antonio da Rocha Parahnos, Brazil; Jorge Ivan Mora Godoy, Cuba; Joaquin Perez-Villanueva y Tovar, Spain; Kevin Moley, David Gross and Richard Beaird, Sally Shipman, USA; Leonid Skotnikov, Andrey Pirogov and Yuri Grin, Asko Numminen, Anneli Vuorinen, Finland; Bernard Kessedjian, Michel Peissik, Marc Giacomini, Martine Baranger, France; Tassos Kriekoukis, George Papadatos, Greece; Hardeep Singh Puri, Ramanathan Kumar, Mohammad Reza Alborzi, Peiman Seadat, Mohsen Esperi, Iran; Mary Whelan, Ireland, Yaakov Levy, Israel, Paolo Bruni, Valentino Simonetti, Italy; Mme Najat Al-Hajjaji, Lybia, Shotaro Oshima, Yasuhito Tamada, Japan; Mme Amina C. Mohamed, Kenya; Janis Karklins, Latvia; Norbert Frick, Lichtenstein, Mme Rajmah Hussain, Malaysia; Sinaly Coulibaly, Sékou Kassé, Mali; Omar Hilale, Morocco; Gustavo Albin, Pablo Macedo, Enrique Ochoa, Karla Tatiana Ornelas Loera, Mexico; Pius Ikpefuan Ayewoh, Nigeria; Thoralf Stenvold, Norway; Shaukat Umer, Abdul Basit, Qazi Khalilullah, Baloch Mumtaz Zahra, Pakistan; Mrs. Anda Filip, Petru Dimitriu, Romania, Ousmane Camara, Daouda Maliguèye Sene, Senegal; Astrid Dufborg, Sweden; Jean-Marc Boulgaris, Amadeo Perez, Francis Gruber, Danielle Werthmueller, Switzerland, Habib Mansour, Samir Koubaa, Khaled Khiari, Tunisia; Ms. Ileana di Giovan Battista, Enrice Vaca Narvaja, Argentina; Love Mtesa, Zambia, Sipho George Nene, South Africa; Chistopher Westdal, Canada; Miguel Alcaine, El Salvador; Maria Teresa Lepatan, Philippines; Alda Fernandes, Portugal; Ivana Milovanovic, Serbia and Montenegro; Mohd Hamid Mohd Jaafar, Dk Mazlizah Pg Hj Mahalee, Brunei; Sha Zukang, Yin Chen, Xiaolei Zhang and Yang Xiaokun, China.

A success to share with many

Thanks to a strong Declaration and Plan of Action, combined with more than 300 effective and diversified Summit events, including the ICT4D Platform, the Geneva Summit was a true success, politically, but also in terms of logistics, protocol and security.

This success would not have been possible without the extraordinary efforts and willingness to collaborate of key people at the ITU and the United Nations in New York and UNOG Geneva, of people from the Canton of Geneva and from the Swiss Government at federal level. The event management company MCI was a key partner, which played a critical role and with whom we can share the success of the WSIS.

In my function as co-chair of the Security Group together with the Chief of Staff of the Geneva Police Raphael Rebord and as Chair of the Protocol and Logistics Group of the

WSIS preparations, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Mehmet Ulkumen, Chief of UNOG Protocol; Roland de Stickere, Drew Donovan, Chief and Deputy of Security of UNOG; Hamid Radjy (ITU); Mehmet Ulkumen, Chief of UNOG Protocol; Maingwarnen Paratian, Chief of ITU Protocol; Markus Schneider, Fedpol; Colonel Gaillard , Swiss Army; Lieutenant-Colonel Alain Brenneisen, Swiss Border Guard; Simone Niati, Airport Protocol Services; Jean-Luc Chopard, Chief of Protocol of the Canton of Geneva; and last but not least Robert Hensler, Chancellor of the Canton of Geneva.

Also I would like to thank my own team, above all my assistant Gabrielle Bucher, then Alain Modoux, Bruno Romazzotti, Christi Dufour, Barbara Erskine Favre, Marianne Kopf, Damien Marti, Juan Pekmez, Pascale Morand, Roberto Rivola and Mary Rotondo. A special thanks goes to Richard Torriani of MCI, who planned, prepared and executed all the physical, logistical and human and financial resources aspects of the Summit, as well as to the Palexpo team under the leadership of Bruno Lurati. From the ITU and WSIS Executive Secretariat, I would like to mention, of course, Pierre Gagné, the head of the Executive Secretariat, as well as his able staff, Milda Hedblom, Juan Luis Castro, Marie Thorndahl, Mehdy Davary, Louise Lassonde and Toru Nakaya.

Finally I would like to mention three individuals who made a great contribution to the overall success of the Summit in giving advice, providing leadership or just being present when things got really rough: former Swiss President Adolf Ogi, Maurice Strong and Nitin Desai.

Section 3

Private Sector

Politics and Diplomacy: Business Experience with WSIS from Geneva to Tunis

Maria Livanos Cattaui
Secretary-General, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

Information and communications technologies (ICTs) have become essential vectors of development and economic growth. No country, rich or poor, at any stage of its development, can afford to ignore the vital role of ICTs nor any aspect of the Information Society. It is equally clear that the integration of ICTs and the promotion of an information society for all require the driving forces of business. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in Geneva in 2003, underscored how an appropriate enabling environment for investment and conditions that promote innovation and entrepreneurship allow business and ICTs to become this driving force in development. Critical components of the fundamental building blocks of the Information Society can only be put in place with the involvement of business in aspects of the diplomatic and political issues at all levels – national, regional and international.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the voice of worldwide business, brought together the collective global experience of companies and business associations to form the Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors, or CCBI.[1] The business leaders speaking at the Summit in Geneva and the CCBI-led events highlighted that ICTs indeed act as a stimulus for development by bringing competition into the markets, attracting investment, both foreign and local, and by creating more affordable and greater consumer choices. By taking the necessary steps to integrate ICTs in the economy and by removing obstacles, entrepreneurship and innovation are enhanced, thus creating jobs and stimulating economic growth and social development.

[1] See http://www.businessatwsis.net and http://www.iccwbo.org/home/menu_electronic_business.asp, for more information about ICC and CCBI's activities and substantive inputs to the WSIS Geneva , 2003 and WSIS Tunis, 2005.

The Summit in Geneva also brought to the forefront the key role that business has in making the integration of ICTs a reality. Many of the sensitive and difficult issues cannot be addressed effectively unless business is part of the solution process. Including business in the work done by the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) and the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) has been critical. Business will not only be responsible for the "health" of the sectors involved but also for implementing the development possibilities. Thus, it is most welcomed and significant that business has been an integral part of the processes involved in addressing these two issues. Innovative and long-term approaches and solutions will be needed, for which business support, involvement and investment are clearly essential.

The future of ICTs and the Internet depends on business taking part in all discussions so that, in partnership with others, their full potential can be realized. As proposals for WSIS are revised and debated, rejected and expanded, as the clamour of often conflicting interest groups in defence of their various agendas reaches a crescendo, a fundamental reality cannot be ignored: only the private sector can deliver the Information Society on any significant scale and to the benefit of people everywhere.

Information and Communication Technology for Development

Rainer Händel
Director, Standards Coordination and Services, Siemens Communications

The ICT industry's role in the WSIS process can be characterized by:

- Stimulating the exchange of views between political and industrial leaders and ICT users to create awareness of the needs of the future Information Society;
- Contributing to ensure a commitment to create a legal and commercial framework to stimulate investment in information society infrastructure and contents; and
- Aiming at the adoption of a worldwide, agreed, concise and realistic Action Plan based on the Principles of the Information Society and supporting its implementation.

The envisaged Action Plan was successfully finished at WSIS I in Geneva; now its realization is the big issue, where industry can give support in many ways.

Industry not only offers technical solutions for ICT infrastructure and services to overcome the digital divide, but also has profound knowledge on how one can effectively and quickly cooperate globally in daily work by means of modern ICT. Industry has been doing a lot in disseminating such knowledge to their partners all over the world. This comprises exchange of information with customers, between colleagues in joint ventures, or in international organizations such as the ITU and its regional agencies.

The greatest challenge, however, still seems to be the rapid build-up of the required network infrastructures. Here industry offers products, complete network solutions, assistance in drafting business cases, build-operate-transfer models, etc.

In technological terms, there are basically two ICT infrastructure approaches:

- The "classical" network solutions, successfully implemented in many places around the world, based on several dedicated networks for (fixed and mobile) telephony, data transfer, Internet traffic, TV distribution, etc.;

- The "modern art of networking", i.e. convergence of networks to a single, high-performance multi-service network, based on the Internet protocol (IP) and offering end-to-end broadband capability and guaranteed quality of service. Such a network is often called Next Generation Network (NGN).

Next Generation Networks can be seen as an evolution from both PSTN/ISDN[1] and IP networks to a **unified public network for electronic communications based on IP**. Such multi-service networks need harmonized interfaces and defined protocols in order to allow interoperability and "seamless" end-to-end applications.

Where current network infrastructure is insufficient, the NGN concept allows to skip a step in technical evolution, which may be of special interest to developing countries. They should consider this promising technological alternative at an early stage in their infrastructure planning.

Convergence on an IP-based network means that all classes of services can share one single network, thus considerably reducing operational and maintenance costs. A voice-only network will be unused for a significant portion of every day (rather: night). During the night the cost-effectiveness of the network is dismal. Once data traffic, e.g. generated by the Internet, is added to the network with its different peak time, average utilization goes up considerably.

Note that unlike the present Internet, NGNs will have quite new features and capabilities in order to facilitate enhanced network/service performance and support legal requirements such as lawful interception and emergency communications:

- High reliability, network integrity and availability

- Guaranteed Quality of Service (more than best effort)

- Safety and security (comprises access to data and services, user authentication, data integrity, confidentiality)

[1] PSTN: Public switched telephony network; ISDN: Integrated Services Digital Network

- Data protection and privacy (e.g. in billing)
- Lawful interception
- Access to caller location information for calls to emergency services (e.g. in Europe calls to the emergency number 112)
- Carrier selection, carrier pre-selection and interconnection, with interfaces towards both traditional networks and NGNs
- Unique numbers, a comprehensive scheme for number allocation (enough numbers for all NGN services) and number portability
- Directories as an essential access tool for publicly available services
- Access to, and affordability of, publicly available services for disabled users

Industry can assist network operators and service providers through information, education, case studies, network planning, etc., and thus help creating a vast knowledge base. Taking up local needs and considering them for international ICT standardization is a further means of support. (Preferably this should, however, not lead to diverging standards for essential infrastructure technologies; a global standard better supports economy of scale and helps cut production costs. In the case of ICT terminals, simple low-cost versions may often be a good option, as long as they comply with basic network interfaces and protocols.)

Siemens has made contributions to bridging the digital divide in many cases. In the following, a few examples of recent or ongoing activities to foster the Information Society are given:

- Our office in Kabul, Afghanistan, functions to coordinate all local activities enabling us to offer local ICT solutions to meet the war-torn nation's many distinctive challenges with locally grown knowledge. Similarly, our support of the UNICEF initiative *Back to School* in Afghanistan is an investment in the future of the global information society – another bridge across the digital divide. The campaign enables more than three million children to attend school.
- Enhancing the standard of school education in South Africa: The focus lies on providing much needed resources for disadvantaged learning institutions, especially rural and township schools which have high pupil/classroom ratios. Siemens

contracts local suppliers to manufacture tables, desks, cupboards and other furniture, and projects are funded appropriately.

- Tele-education project for GSM operators in Africa (together with ITU-D)

- Siemens is a founding member of Econsense – A Forum for Sustainable Development, which was created by representatives of the German economy. This organization is made up of leading German and global companies and organizations that have integrated sustainable development into their corporate strategies.

- Active participation in the Global eSchools and Communities Initiative, a United Nations ICT Task Force initiative, which comprises deployment of ICT solutions (hardware, software, connectivity), content, user training and support, technical support and maintenance, monitoring and reporting.

- In Cabo Verde, previously an isolated island chain off Africa's Atlantic coast, Siemens joined forces with Cabo Verde Telecom, the local carrier. Together we completed a fiber optic network linking all the tiny islands in the archipelago, thus improving their connection to the global network.

- In Vietnam, over 60% of the country's communities are linked by *communal cultural points*. These provide information and communications free of charge to even the most rural areas of the country, allowing people to use postal and telecommunications services or simply read books and newspapers online from around the world. Siemens donated 100 PCs to Vietnam.

Section 4

Civil Society

Multi-Stakeholderism and Civil Society

Renate Bloem
President, Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organisations

United Nations Resolution 56/183, by which the General Assembly officially endorsed the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society, raised many hopes among NGOs used to working with the United Nations, because it encouraged "NGOs, civil society and the private sector to contribute to, and actively participate in, the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Summit and the Summit itself". This resolution could potentially represent a turning point in the history of the United Nations – civil society relations, as the latter, as well as the private sector, had never before been so closely associated in the preparation and the holding of a United Nations summit. During the world conferences of the nineties, NGOs had indeed started to get organized and speak with a common voice at NGO fora, but these were "parallel" to the official events and sometimes even distant, both physically (see Beijing) and in the spirit (see Johannesburg) from the intergovernmental negotiations. Despite the undeniable impact of the NGO lobbying and advocacy activity on the intergovernmental deliberations, one could not speak yet of a true partnership between the United Nations and the emerging "global civil society".

On the basis of the above-mentioned GA resolution, the WSIS could on the contrary represent an innovative approach and set a positive precedent, coupled by the fact that this time "civil society" at large was invited to participate in the event. Despite the ambiguity of this concept, the fact that formal non-governmental organizations didn't have the "monopoly" of the interaction with the United Nations was seen by many as a positive and forward-looking indication.

However, when during the First Preparatory Committee (Prepcom 1) meeting civil society/NGO representatives were excluded already from the discussion on rules and procedures, – including on arrangements for accreditation of NGOs and other actors – they became very angry and frustrated: although a Civil Society Division (CSD) had indeed been

created within the WSIS Secretariat, the real possibilities of interaction with governments were very limited and civil society felt that it was de facto excluded from the preparatory process.

It was at this point that we – civil society activists from the North and the South – decided to become more proactive and organize ourselves. The Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO), because of its longstanding experience of UN-civil society relations and of its mandate to facilitate the participation of civil society in United Nations activities, was pushed to the forefront by fellow NGOs. Together we started to convene daily civil society plenary meetings, which CONGO was asked to chair, in order to brief one another on current issues and determine a common strategy. We created the first sub-committees and the first thematic caucuses. We also succeeded to clearly distinguish ourselves as civil society apart from the private sector or business entities.

Despite the deception and relative failure of this first Prepcom, we kept the ball rolling. Several regional civil society gatherings were key in pushing forward our common agenda and trying to get more space in this Summit, according to the wording of the GA resolution. The Asian Civil Society Forum, organized by CONGO in December 2002 – shortly after the 1st Prepcom – called for a stronger inclusion of civil society, and adopted a methodology to arrive at the final outcome document that was taken over by the Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting held in Tokyo shortly there after.

Our efforts finally brought some results. At the second Prepcom, we were able to create three institutional arrangements to enable us to interact with the governments on a more equal footing: the Civil Society Bureau (CSB), the Civil Society Plenary, and the Content and Themes Group. The establishment of a Civil Society Bureau as a counterpart to the Intergovernmental Bureau was the first central step to the realization of the vision that governments, the private sector and civil society are partners when it comes to designing and building our societies of tomorrow. Structured through "families" as entities representing different elements of civil society, it complemented the Content and Themes Group that coordinated the substantive input from the Caucuses and the Civil Society Plenary that gave legitimacy to the overall activities. Civil society had thus organized itself in a way that allowed maximum participation and diversity of opinion. It created also the possibility both on-line and off-line to shape common positions for input into the ongoing negotiations of the outcome document.

At Prepcom 3 expectations were high among civil society activists about the effectiveness of the above-mentioned three institutional arrangements. We all hoped that these mechanisms

would lead us "from input to impact". However, after two weeks of extensive networking and intensive negotiations, feelings among representatives of civil society organizations were mixed. Even though everybody welcomed the creation of these new entities, their effectiveness still needed to be improved to channel successfully our input. There was a real danger that they were seen as a simple cosmetic operation that concretely didn't help channeling our aspirations.

And civil society had some reasons to be frustrated. The suggestions it had made for input into the Summit Declaration and Plan of Action during the Intersessional Meeting in Paris had almost completely been overlooked and ignored by governments. The emphasis NGOs and civil society organizations attach to human rights in the Information Society and to the fact that this needs to be explicitly mentioned in the outcome documents of the Summit had not been taken over in the official negotiations. The importance we attach to the concept of Internet governance and to having an information society that does not focus exclusively on technology but is open to the needs of all people had also been overlooked. The Plan of Action, as proposed, would not help humanity to bridge the digital divide. Concretely, while civil society proposed to put people at the centre of the Information Society, the draft Declaration and Plan of Action were still bureaucratic and technology-driven. From 86 recommendations made by civil society during an intersessional meeting in Paris, 49 – more than 60 per cent – had been totally ignored. Among the most important items that had disappeared were the importance of local authorities and communities in developing their own local content; the unhampered and unfiltered access to publicly available resources without manipulation and control; freedom of information as a means to reduce corruption; special needs for developing countries, and non-commercial groups in frequency allocations.

Yet thanks precisely to the existence of the Civil Society Bureau, we were able to prepare the meeting with the Intergovernmental Bureau and convey to them our general feeling of frustration. Even though as civil society we don't share the same views on all issues, we succeeded to speak out with "one voice" and echo this voice also in a large way in front of the press.

But in order to be more effective in our negotiation style, we realized that we had to improve the functioning of internal democracy. It is not easy to organize the expression of so many points of view, which may even be divergent. Transparency in decision-making, accountability to one's constituency and legitimacy of the organizations elected to represent the "families" in the Bureau are issues that are not solved once for ever. To some extent civil society still needs to learn "the rules of the game". Governments are often well-disposed and willing to cooperate with us, but governmental delegates don't have the same flexibility as we do to propose, negotiate and adopt any proposal. Most of the time, they have to refer to

their capitals for approval, whereas we are able to take decisions more quickly and defend our points of view.

Finally after almost two years of intensive preparations, negotiations and passionate involvement – at the international, regional and national level – we came in Geneva to the end of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, the third United Nations Summit of the new millennium.

From a procedural and formal point of view, the preparatory process of the Summit has opened a door to a new era. In 2002, at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg, world leaders accepted the adoption of a "multi-stakeholder approach". By the establishment of the Civil Society Bureau, this "acquis" has been taken over by the WSIS process and even reinforced, which constitutes a major breakthrough towards the achievement of more democratic governance at the global level. The structure of the Summit itself has reflected this change as it will radically differ from previous United Nations summits: instead of an official conference and a parallel, often remote and distant NGO Forum, the WSIS was conceived as a flower, with the core constituted by the governmental negotiations and the petals by side-events organized by civil society, that constituted official parts of the Summit itself.

Further, civil society delegations had been allowed to participate on an ad hoc basis in the negotiations, while at the same time not challenging Governments as the ultimately responsible carriers for the success or the failure of the summit.

After some deadlock at the end of Prepcom 3, we as civil society had adopted a double strategy. We were still committed to the process and to the success of the event, but we were also ready to produce our own declaration, should the benchmarks and minimum standards we had set at the end of Prepcom 3 not be met.

These relate to the North-South divide and the compelling need to bridge the digital divide, notably by creating funding mechanisms that would contribute to achieving the targeted goal of 0.7% of GNP for development cooperation and, thereby, work towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders acknowledged that "the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people". In order to come to this end, it says, there must be "policies and measures, at the global level, which correspond to the needs of developing countries and economies in transition and are formulated and implemented with their effective participation".

Substantively, the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted in Geneva after last-minute major improvements, reflected to some extent our aspirations and the concrete inputs we had tried to give during the whole preparatory process.

As civil society we were proud and **united** that we helped to move the discussion from ICTs as an end in itself to ICTs as a means to social and economic development. And although we became often frustrated during the process that our contributions were heard but not taken into consideration, we moved slowly from **input to impact**. We established essential benchmarks – our ethical framework –, and after the deadlock at Prepcom 3 started to write our own Declaration which became an official document of the Summit.

We are now in the second phase toward Tunis and seem to live in a new era, in which civil society debates the value of multi-stakeholderism and questions with whom to form partnership alliances. Civil Society at WSIS, although having made such an enormous step forward in the multi-stakeholder approach and having been recognized as an indispensable partner, is after Prepcom 2 in the second phase still very much divided about its own functions in this process. The months ahead towards Tunis will show if this new approach will survive and lead us into an inclusive information and knowledge society.

Civil Society in the WSIS – A Rite of Passage

Karen Banks
Director, Association for Progressive Communication (APC)

> *While direct participation by citizens in politics dates back to the roots of civilization, civil society as a concept, indicating direct participation by active individuals and groups to promote non-commercial, general policy interests and broad social change, has only been formally recognized in recent years.*[1]

WSIS is the most recent example (but certainly not the only example) of an international policy process that formally recognizes civil society as a legitimate actor and a so-called "equal player" at the multi-stakeholder table.

For many civil society actors, from both developed and developing countries, WSIS was their first encounter with international lobbying, advocacy and political negotiation. In some cases, it was their first opportunity to engage with their own government representatives in an environment that enabled a certain degree of access, participation and dialogue, often difficult to find at home.

People came to WSIS armed with papers, passion, optimism, commitment and agendas, determined to make the most of what was heralded as a unique experiment in an international policy process.

Some left along the way, angered and frustrated that they weren't heard by their duly elected government representatives, by the emphasis on tools, technology and markets; by the refusal of powerful interests to acknowledge the place of community-led, bottom-up solutions to global problems (such as community media, free and open source software and

[1] Paraphrasing of introductory text describing civil society participation in Internet governance, by civil society members of the Working Group on Internet Governance

universal design for all); by the reluctance of the powerful few to share benefits and resources with those the process deemed to serve – the millions of people who live in poverty, are disempowered, are unable to access the means necessary to take control of their lives.

Those who stayed with the process had to constantly shift gear, regroup and restrategise – constantly adjusting to the changing configuration of civil society as old colleagues left and new ones, struggling to navigate the terrain and find their place both on and offline, joined the process; responding to the challenge of a well-organized, pro-government civil society lobby from Tunisia that expressed opinions and values that were often at odds with civil society's long-developed advocacies; and attempting to make sense of a second two-year phase, which, with the absence of the issues of financing and Internet governance, left most civil society actors feeling like they had been invited to the wrong party.

The First Phase

Whilst the first phase of WSIS presented great challenges, civil society established ways and means to coordinate the efforts of hundreds of individuals and organizations, through a collective of over 30 regional and thematic caucuses. Through its collective action and multiple voices, not to mention thousands of hours of drafting, it shifted the emphasis of the process to one which placed people, rather than technology, at the heart of its vision of information and communication societies.

Generally speaking, the first phase was characterized by a spirit of cooperation, trust, consensus-building and solidarity. Most delegates expressed a willingness to be open to understanding complex social, political and economic issues, demonstrated for example, by the solidarity expressed between civil society – north and south - around the Digital Solidarity Fund.

This solidarity was most eloquently expressed through the civil society Declaration "Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs" the development of which was itself a demonstration of this spirit of cooperation: "Working together both on-line and off-line as civil society entities, practicing an inclusive and participatory use of information and communication technologies, has allowed us to share views and shape common positions, and to collectively develop a vision of information and communication societies".

The Second Phase

The second phase, however, presented a range of challenges that have hampered the work of civil society to the extent that it has, as a collective entity, become fragmented, disoriented

and lacking the fundamental trust and honesty that characterized the first phase. This has of course impacted severely on its ability to intervene effectively and substantially in the process.

Whereas during the first phase, civil society was largely able to present consensus positions on critical issues, the somewhat disabling environment we have found ourselves in during the second phase has meant that many have chosen, by necessity, to seek out and develop "like-minded" coalitions around specific issues – a sharp departure from the strategy of phase I.

The reasons for this are complex, and with the benefit of hindsight, it could be surmised that this is a normal process, possibly even a desirable one, and to be expected in the maturation or development of civil society as global actor on this particular international stage.

Although the "seeds of discontent" were emerging towards the latter stages of the first phase, events during the Hammamet Prepcom made it clear that civil society was at a crossroads in WSIS and had some very tough decisions to make.

As we prepare for the Tunis Summit, we are still struggling to deal with these events openly and honestly and have tended to revert to the creation of processes and rules (not in itself a bad thing) that we can use to ensure a modicum of respect and set parameters that will allow us coordinate and intervene as an effective entity.

The Hammamet Prepcom – seeds of discontent

Human rights, "north-south" issues and questions of representation and meaningful participation of civil society and a lack of clarity regards the objectives of the second phase were some of the key elements contributing to the rather dramatic events of Hammamet.

The Human Rights Agenda

The Prepcom took place against a backdrop of, on the one hand, wariness and caution regards holding the second phase in a country with a poor record on human rights, specifically with respect the right to assemble, protest and associate, and freedom of opinion and expression; and on the other hand, seeing Tunis as an opportunity to extend support and solidarity to local independent NGOs (a practice common to civil society advocates no matter the country they are active in) and an opportunity to leverage the process to encourage local authorities to improve their human rights record. In addition, acknowledging the importance of an African country hosting an international United Nations Conference,

particularly considering the primary objectives of WSIS – alignment with the Millennium Development Goals and adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The "North-South" Agenda

Governments were unable to reach consensus on issues of **financing mechanisms** and **Internet governance** during Phase I. In general, Governments were split along traditional north-south lines with regards perspectives, issues and possible solutions. Civil society had, however, made some progress in deepening understanding of these issues (particularly Financing mechanisms) and supported the call from Southern Governments for the establishment of new development models and financing mechanisms.

This was an important gesture of solidarity and a beginning – certainly for many European organizations – of understanding what role they could play in bringing pressure on their Governments to redress this situation.

However, civil society did not sufficiently address the issue of representation and meaningful participation of southern-based organizations, nor did it understand the implications of **not doing so**, with respect the second phase, particularly with the process being held in Tunisia. This situation was evident in the "visible" leadership or facilitation roles certain civil society actors played, particularly regards coordination of thematic caucuses, the civil society Content and Themes group, and chairing of the Civil Society Bureau.

It was even more compounded by the use of the "virtual plenary" space where English language dominated and discussions tended to be dominated by native English speakers.

The "Implementation Phase"

The third element was a lack of clarity (certainly at the beginning of the second phase) with regard to the aims of the second phase.

Some talked of setting benchmarks and indicators; others of building great databases of best practice to showcase at the Summit in 2005; others of creating multiple layers of networks which would hub around the 11 themes of the Action plan – though questions of what form these activities would take, who would lead them, and who would pay for it all, loomed large. Though civil society contributed significantly and gave tacit support to the Geneva Declaration, it had not approved or endorsed the Action Plan, being given little to no access to the process of its development.

The "Incident"

The incident that ignited the seeds of discontent in Hammamet centred around the right of a representative of an independent, legally recognized, Tunisian human rights organisation to speak on behalf of the WSIS Civil Society Human Rights caucus.

Objections from pro-Government Tunisian Civil Society groups took the form of calling for an "African woman" to speak (which confused many as Tunisia is an African country), and that either all governments were referred in the statement, or none. The statement of course raised some general concerns regarding the human rights record of the Tunisian Government, specifically with respect to its hosting of a United Nations Summit which takes the United Nations Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights as its guiding framework.

Such was the opposition, a very well-organized and coordinated strategy to suppress all criticism of the Tunisian Government, that civil society was held captive to negotiating its way through this process for the entire three days of the Prepcom. It was unable to organize and strategise around any other issues and "the incident" was resolved through no less than an intervention from the President of the Prepcom, calling for the right of the independent Tunisian human rights representative to speak on the final day of the meeting.

The manner in which pro-government Tunisian civil society representatives implemented this strategy was complex and "obtuse" – often masquerading behind protests of lack of transparency, lack of democracy and a very successful attempt to construct and widen an image of a north-south divide amongst civil society actors.

After Hammamet, after Tunis

The tragedy of Hammamet is that critical complex issues including civil society representation, north-south solidarity, meaningful developing country participation, the universality of human rights, and strategies for consensus building and the space for the development of diverse positions – have been largely dealt with through bureaucratisation of civil society's ways of working.

This is not to discredit the enormous efforts of those who are committed to the WSIS process, believe in the United Nations system and the value of the multi-stakeholder approach. But in the absence of open reflection and honest dialogue in a safe environment, we will only be able to bring a superficial resolution to our experience, rather than deepening understanding, rebuilding trust and strengthening our resolve to work together for common objectives.

There is no question of the value civil society brought to the WSIS process. Irrespective of particular positions of specific actors from Government, the private sector or intergovernmental bodies by and large, it is recognized that civil society contributed enormously – in spite of our many weaknesses and flaws – to the quality of discussions and outcomes documents, animated and mobilized cross-sectoral interest in information society issues, and helped to place the ICT and media agenda on the tables of every government.

But what next? This year, the international processes that have provided civil society with platforms to advocate their positions have culminated in the review of the Millennium Development Goals and the WSIS process will end with the Summit in Tunis. New international discussion and decision-making spaces will emerge. Though the exact form and nature of them is uncertain, they will, due in no small part to civil society's work in the WSIS, be or should be, multi-stakeholder.

There is an insurmountable amount of work to be done at the national level implementing our priority actions and holding Governments accountable to the principles and commitments made in over a decade of United Nations conferences. But we are hugely under-resourced; we have to rely on ICTs to facilitate and coordinate most of our regional and international work, and in that respect, we are hampered by cultural, social and linguistic barriers. Many feel and are un-represented, and for millions the very concept of civil society is a new one, in some cases, a non-existent one.

The way of the civil society actor in WSIS has not been an easy one but one from which so many lessons have been learnt. Let's hope that we have the courage and honesty to address the challenges that we've been presented with and be open to finding sustainable solutions to real problems, to be respectful of differences whilst not sacrificing our beliefs and values, to fully exploit the potential we have as legitimate actors and demand our rightful place at the table.

All said and done, WSIS provided a nexus – a space that attracted a rich and diverse array of people and organizations from almost every part of the world, with extraordinary skills, experience and know-how, providing the possibility to connect, collaborate and build coalitions and alliances that we hope live well beyond the WSIS process, and continue to contribute to shaping visions of a fairer, more just and sustainable world.

A New Diplomacy for the 21st Century? Multi-Stakeholder Approach and Bottom-Up Policy Development in the Information Society

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Is WSIS the beginning of a "New Diplomacy"? For the first time in the history of United Nations-sponsored governmental "World Summits", non-governmental actors like private industry and civil society became directly involved into the political process. The so-called "multi-stakeholder approach" opens the door for a new bottom-up policy development process (PDP). It challenges the traditional "secret diplomacy" with its "last-minute horse-trading behind closed doors". And it introduces new principles like openness, transparency and rough consensus into global negotiations.

The WSIS framework was fixed in United Nations Resolution 56/183 (December, 21, 2001). It invited the private sector and civil society to "actively participate in the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Summit and the Summit itself" (para. 5).

Resolution 56/183 followed a practice, introduced by the G-8 Digital Opportunity Task Force (DotForce) and the United Nations Information and Communication Technology Task Force (UNICTTF), which included both governmental representatives and experts from industry and civil society. However, the mandate of DotForce and UNICTTF was limited. They did not take decisions but recommended governments what to do. WSIS, in contrast, adopted a Declaration and an Action Plan with a number of (politically) binding commitments.

The problem was that para. 5 did not clarify what the "invitation" means in practice. The only thing the resolution said was that the "intergovernmental preparatory committee" should "decide on the modalities of the participation of other stakeholders". There was no

specification, whether "other stakeholders" should have access, speaking, negotiation and/or voting rights.

Consequently, the vagueness of this "invitation" produced bitter controversies among Governments themselves and between governmental and non-governmental participants. When Prepcom 1 (June 2002) drafted the "WSIS Rules of Procedures", the more restrictive-oriented governments blocked any innovative mechanism. Rule 55 reduced the input of observers to the traditional United Nations mechanisms: written contributions and limited speaking rights "by invitation only".

But the following process – more than ten Prepcoms and regional conferences – undermined Rule 55. Efforts by some Governments, to keep non-governmental observers out of the conference room, produced turmoil before the closed doors. During the "InterSessional" (July 2003), the chair of "Working Group 2" used its "right to invite" and opened the door to observers with limited speaking rights in negotiation groups. The idea was that governments if they start negotiations on a certain paragraph, interrupt formally the negotiations and invite observers to make a statement to the point. Such "stop-and-go-negotiations" would *de jure* not change the character of inter-governmental negotiations, but could bring de facto innovative input and transparency to the process.

As a result, the discussion on the practical meaning of the "multi-stakeholder approach" became dynamized. And this invitation challenged the non-governmental stakeholders to counter the governmental argument, that "observers" are not representative and unable to speak with a coordinated voice by organizing themselves and demonstrating legitimacy, expertise and constructive engagement.

While the creation of a WSIS Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI), led by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and representing hundreds of transnational corporations and SMEs around the globe, was expected, the unexpected surprise was that also civil society created an open, transparent and inclusive mechanism which gave the hundreds of institutions and individuals, representing thousands of citizens and netizens, a place in the process.

A WSIS Civil Society Plenary (CS-P), accessible for everybody, emerged as the main body. A subgroup WSIS CS Content and Themes Group (CS-C&T) coordinated the work of more than 25 WSIS Civil Society Caucuses, Families and Working Groups. Additionally, a WSIS Civil Society Bureau (CS-B), composed of 23 so-called "Civil Society Families" (from media to NGOs to trade unions to volunteers to youth, etc.) organized the formal interaction between civil society, the WSIS Secretariat and the Intergovernmental Bureau.

Such a structured bottom-up policy development process – from individual experts and interest groups on the ground (NGOs/CSOs) to more formalized constituencies (Caucuses) to a coordination group (CS-C&T) to a political oriented plenary (CS-P) – produced a new quality of balanced and substantial "positions" and "negotiable language" and confronted governments with a new challenge: They had to deal not only with their own controversies on issues like human rights, Internet governance or cyber-security, but also with substantial interventions from observers. While some Governments saw this as enrichment, others felt this as undermining their sovereignty.

A good example is the discussion of Internet governance. When Governments created during the InterSessional (July 2003) an Ad Hoc Working Group, non-governmental observers participated in the meeting and offered welcomed special expertise. But during Prepcom 3 (September 2003), when observers with their laptops started blogging live from inside the group sessions – as it is common in the meetings of the private Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) – some governments pushed the observers again out of the room. Also during Prepcom3bis (November 2003) and Prepcom3bis+ (December 2003), observers, like ICANN President Paul Twomey, had to leave the room. Ironically, some Governmental delegates, who did not agree with the exclusion, informed privately in detail the observers sitting outside the conference room.

Such a "revolving door" to the negotiation room with a total uncertainty, whether "input" will lead also to "impact", provoked in particular civil society, to draft its own declaration. This was further pushed forward by the recognition that governments are unable to agree on more than the lowest common denominator. Civil society argued that when governments are blocked by the principle of consensus, other stakeholders have to step in to move things forward. Consequently the Governmental WSIS Declaration was complemented by a Civil Society WSIS Declaration. While the first one says what could be reached by consensus today, the second one says what should be done to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Nevertheless, some civil society proposals finally made their way into the governmental documents. While the idea to enrich individual rights on free speech with access and participation rights was watered down, some points on Internet governance, intellectual property rights and privacy in cyberspace were taken.

Again, Internet governance is an interesting case. The Civil Society Internet ICT Governance Caucus made a number of formal and informal interventions in the WSIS process, arguing that no single organisation alone – ITU or ICANN – should "govern the Internet". It proposed developing a mechanism where different constituencies with different core responsibilities should improve consultation, cooperation and coordination taking into

account primarily the interests of Internet users. This is partly reflected in Recommendation C6.13b of the Action Plan, which asks United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan "to set up a working group on Internet governance in an open and inclusive process that ensures a mechanism for the full and active participation of governments, the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries". For the first time governments recognize *expressis verbis* that both private industry and civil society have to play an "important role" in future Internet governance.

Such an "official recognition" of non-governmental stakeholders is an indicator that "trilateralism" as a global governance model for the Information Age moves further forward. It is still unclear how such a "triangular mechanism" will be designed and resourced in detail. It is still unclear how co-regulatory mechanisms with shared responsibilities can lead to a sustainable development. But WSIS I is only the beginning of a journey into the unknown territory of cyberspace. After Geneva 2003 it will be difficult to sail back to the old top-down power policy of the Industrial Age.

PART II

PRINCIPLES and ACTIONS

Section 5

History and Theory

The Forgotten History of Global Communication Negotiations at the League of Nations

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WSIS represents the highest and broadest platform of global negotiations on communication which ever has taken place. Surely the ITU, the oldest specialized United Nations agency, has handled the international regulation of telecommunication and radio spectrum for over a century; UNESCO has contributed to the development of mass media and other information systems since its foundation sixty years ago; and the United Nations itself held already in 1948 a historical Conference on Information, which among other things drafted the Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, none of these other platforms has reached the profile and prestige of WSIS.

On the other hand, WSIS has not yet produced more than good intentions: a declaration and a plan of action. True, the declaration exists also as a version by the non-governmental organizations – a manifestation of the new multi-stakeholder culture – and in this respect WSIS paves the way towards a more democratic global governance. But still it is too early to say whether the high profile and prestige of WSIS remains in history as a platform to turn visions into reality or merely as a show-place – a late repeat of the dot-com bubble at the level of international diplomacy.

In any case it is important to realize that WSIS is not a unique event without historical roots. On the contrary, it should be seen as a crystallization of long-term developments in political, economic and cultural spheres. And in this respect it stands for a long history of multilateral negotiations concerning communications.

A relatively well-known story of global negotiations on communication is found in the celebrated history of the 60-year-old United Nations and UNESCO, including the rise and fall of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). But there is a

prehistory to this post-World War Two period: a forgotten story of the League of Nations. Actually the roots of WSIS lead to Geneva in 1925 as much as they lead to San Francisco or London in 1945.

After World War One it was believed that a new era was to begin in international relations. The horrors of war were fresh in people's minds; there was a need to prevent future wars and to establish conditions for lasting peace. Power politics and secret diplomacy were regarded as major reasons for the outbreak of war. Now the time had come to replace them by international cooperation, collective security and open diplomacy. The League of Nations was established in 1920 to channel these aspirations; it was the first great exercise of the world in organizing itself for peace.

One of the leading ideas that the League had was to work in public and to give wide publicity to its activities, marking the dawn of open diplomacy. The League also relied upon the influence and impact of public opinion in international relations; President Woodrow Wilson even called the League "the court of public opinion". Accordingly, the press was incorporated into the system of international relations in an unprecedented manner – comparable only to the step taken earlier when the press assumed its central role in bourgeois democracy by operating as the "fourth estate" next to the legislative, executive and jurisdiction powers.

It was in this spirit that the delegate for Chile said at the 12th plenary session of the League Assembly on 16 September 1925: "We must stimulate among the people that new spirit which the war produced and which the League of Nations is trying to spread throughout the world... A universal bond of feeling unites all men and all peoples on the question of peace and the welfare of the working classes. The Press is the vanguard of these ideas, and that is why I submit the following draft resolution to the Assembly." The proposed resolution was thoroughly discussed by the Assembly and adopted unanimously on the same day in the following form:

> The Assembly,
>
> Considering that the Press constitutes the most effective means of guiding public opinion towards that moral disarmament which is a concomitant condition of material disarmament:
>
> Invites the Council to consider the desirability of conceiving a committee of experts representing the Press of the different continents with a view to determining methods of contributing towards the organisation of peace, especially:

a. By ensuring the more rapid and less costly transmission of Press news with a view to reducing risks of international misunderstanding;

b. And by discussing all technical problems the settlement of which would be conducive to the tranquillization of public opinion.

The resolution became the first overall position regarding the mass media that has ever been taken by the international community through its multilateral organization. It is a remarkable resolution not only because of its historical nature but also because of its political and professional substance. It sets the agenda for a deliberation of technical problems, not only in loose relation to a political context (as is the case of WSIS), but explicitly subordinated to the overall objective of peace and international understanding. Moreover, it combines press and disarmament – two topics which over the decades have become more and more sensitive separately, not to speak of them in combination.

The resolution was followed up by a round of consultations with various countries and international associations (replies from more than 25 countries by March 1926), a meeting of 16 news agencies in August 1926, a meeting of press bureaux of 17 countries in October 1926, as well as an ad hoc committee drawn from the members of the International Association of Journalists accredited to the League of Nations in January 1927. On the basis of these preparations the League Council decided in March 1927 to convene a Conference of Press Experts in Geneva on 24-29 August 1927.

Accordingly, the Prepcom of those days led to a major meeting in less than a year, and the conference itself was extremely productive. It was attended by over a hundred delegates from 38 countries, and it adopted a number of resolutions amounting to a programme: In order that journalists may have every facility in residing, travelling, securing news and improving their professional equipment, and that news itself may be free at the source, expediated in every possible way in its transmission, protected before and after publication against unfair appropriation, and given the widest possible dissemination, to the end that the work of the Press may be made more effective in its responsible mission accurately and conscientiously to inform world public opinion and hence to contribute directly to the preservation of peace and the advancement of civilisation.

The results of the Conference were welcomed by the League Council at its subsequent session in September 1927. The most technical issues were referred to the Organisation for Communications and Transit, while other resolutions including those on protection of news and on professional facilities of journalists were followed up by the Council in consultation with different governments. However, no spectacular achievements seem to have taken

place in this area in the course of the following few years. This shows that despite good intentions and even euphoria, practical steps to implement were slow and few.

Still the League went on in this field, and the next milestones were in the early 1930s in the context of the 1932-33 World Disarmament Conference – and a deteriorating international situation. The Conference of Governmental Press Bureaux and Representatives of the Press was convened in Copenhagen in January 1932. The scope of this Conference was less technical than that of the 1927 Geneva Conference with its main concern on the inaccurate news, the rest covering follow-up of the earlier Geneva Conference and cooperation of official press bureaux.

The Copenhagen Conference was followed up by the Second Conference of Governmental Press Bureaux and Representatives of the Press, convened in Madrid on 7-11 November 1933. It reviewed the action taking under the earlier Copenhagen resolutions and considered various related problems such as the right to correct false information in the international field, the intellectual role of the press, broadcasting and international relations, and the status of press correspondents in foreign countries. However, its resolutions full of good intentions were never put to practice. The mounting contradictions in the international political atmosphere paralyzed these activities.

Apart from these expert conferences, mass media emerged as a central issue in the World Disarmament Conference preparation which started already in 1925, soon after the first resolution on media. In the early 1930s the Polish, Swedish and Spanish delegations made proposals regarding "moral disarmament" and the flagrant contradictions between demands for reduction of armaments or demands for total disarmament and an increasingly violent propaganda of hatred tending to promote disorder and even war – false information about other countries which appear in the press. When the Conference was finally convened in 1932, it appointed among others a special Committee on Moral Disarmament. However, despite a draft text with four Articles on this topic to be included in the General Convention for the Limitation of Armaments, the moral disarmament remains but a footnote in history – most interesting and intriguing, but still a footnote.

Towards the end of the Disarmament Conference in 1933 the international situation was deteriorating all the time, and what happened outside the League had severe influence on the fate of the Conference. Philip Noel-Baker, the British statesman and Nobel Prize winner who at the time was Personal Assistant to the President of the Disarmament Conference and later wrote a book about the Conference and on the reasons why it failed, has stated that the chances of success for the Conference would have been much greater if the time for it had been earlier, in 1931 or even 1930. The same assessment was confirmed at the symposium

"The League of Nations in retrospect", held in Geneva in 1980 where it was stated that "the Disarmament Conference came far too late" and that "the collapse of the Disarmament Conference cannot be imputed to the League of Nations".

As pointed out by Noel-Baker, in many countries there were people who thought the League and disarmament were utopian nonsense since "whatever you do, war will come". Such an attitude was to be found in certain circles both within and outside governments. It was not only a spontaneous attitude but also something that was deliberately mobilized by anti-disarmament lobbies. For example, in Britain some private manufacturers of arms were eager to support and re-arm Hitler, and this support of the military-industrial complex had all the effect of creating the illusion of public support for the militarist Ministers in the Government. The same happened in France where most important newspapers were brought under the control of the Comité des Forges – the Private Arms Manufacturers of France, with a merciless campaign against the League and its Disarmament Conference. Likewise in Germany, the Hugenburg Konzern bought more than half of all the daily newspapers and key other media using them against the Treaty of Versailles, against the League and against disarmament. And it worked. As Noel-Baker has noted, in this struggle the internationalists have won all the arguments, but the bureaucrats and militarists have won all the material victories that count.

Still, there was some progress in the League of Nations in the beginning of the 1930s, particularly regarding the "modern methods utilized in the cause of peace", along with the general development of film and broadcasting media. The first manifestation of these media emerging outside the conventional press was the attention devoted to the educational use of "cinematography". Thus film was not primarily considered as a political factor related to peace but rather as an educational method within the overall framework of "intellectual co-operation".

Radio – or as it came to be called by the 1930s, "broadcasting" – was the real "modern means" that captured the attention of international politics at the League. Here also a point of departure was the educational use of the medium: on 24 September 1931 the League Assembly passed a resolution relating to the intellectual cooperation, in particular to an enquiry being carried out by the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation on the educational aspects of broadcasting, and this resolution recommended that the enquiry "should cover all the international questions raised by the use of broadcasting in regard to good international relations". The resolution, backed by the consideration of moral disarmament, launched a five-year process which culminated on 23 September 1936 in the adoption and signing by the Plenipotentiaries of 28 States the International Convention on

the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace – an instrument still in force, although outdated in many respects.

WSIS: Can the International Community Learn from History?

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In her book *March of Folly* the late historian Barbara Tuchman[1] analyzed human history as the persistent pursuit of courses of action that are contrary to the collective interest. She demonstrated that politicians in particular are insensitive to learning from their errors, "…to recognize error, to cut losses, to alter course, is the most repugnant option in government" (1985: 481).

In 2003 the international community addressed for the third time within 55 years in a major way information and communication issues. This raises the question whether the third exercise – the WSIS – can learn from past mistakes. The two earlier attempts were rather unsuccessful. They caused strong antagonisms and offered no real solutions to the problems they confronted.

The Freedom of Information Conference

Early in its history the United Nations put the issue of freedom of information on its agenda. In 1948 the United Nations Conference on the Freedom of Information was convened at Geneva from 23 March till 21 April. Fifty-four countries were officially represented and, on the initiative of the UK, professional news people were also included. The conference produced numerous resolutions and three draft treaties on Freedom of Information (proposed by the British delegation), the Gathering and International Transmission of News (proposed by the US delegation), and the International Right of Correction (proposed by the French delegation).

[1] Barbara Tuchman (1985). *The March of Folly*. London: Sphere Books.

Eventually only the French text became a convention but with only a few ratifications. As the US delegation had taken the initiative to commit the United Nations to the US concept of freedom of information, the Soviet Union and its allies were put in a reactive position. They responded to the US proposals for a free flow with demands for regulation. They were a minority in the United Nations bodies and most of their motions to qualify the free flow standard were defeated. This demonstrated the emerging Cold War antagonism.

At the conference there were confrontations between those who advanced a largely liberal-economic position in defense of newspapers and news agencies, and those who challenged this as sanctioning of commercial monopolies and propagandistic practices. Serious objections were made by the Soviet Union against a concern for the freedom of information that was exclusively based upon commercial claims. The Soviet Union Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrei Gromyko, claimed that the proposed freedom of information was in fact the freedom of a few monopolies. The doctrine of the free flow of information obscured, in his opinion, the interests of bankers and industrialists for whom Wall Street represented the summit of democracy. The Soviet Union also claimed that the freedom of information could not mean freedom for fascist propaganda. Other delegations equally stressed the need to prevent the establishment of news monopolies under the guise of freedom. Some nations, such as Yugoslavia, drew attention to the wide disparities in available means of mass communication and claimed that freedom should be linked with the standard of equality.

The only constructive outcome of the 1948 conference was the formulation of what became Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the international standard provision on free speech.

The Roaring Seventies

The second time the United Nations became heavily involved in information and communication issues was in the 1970s with the debates on the New International Information Order (NIIO) which in 1978 was re-baptized as the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO).

This demand expressed the Third World concern about disparity in communication capacity along three lines. There was concern about the impact of the skewed communication relations between North and South on the independent cultural development of the Third World nations. Then there was concern about the largely one-sided exports from the North to the countries of the Third World and the often distorted or totally absent reporting in the media of the North about developments in the South. A third line of concern addressed the transfer of media technology. On balance it was concluded in the early 1970s that preciously little technology had been transferred and that by and large only technical end-products had

been exported from the industrial nations. This was often done under disadvantageous conditions so that in the end the technical and financial dependence of the receiving countries had only increased.

As from its Algiers summit in 1973 the Non-Aligned movement continuously articulated its position of strong support for the emancipation and development of media in the developing nations. UNESCO became the most important forum for this debate.

In the end the debate did not yield the results demanded by the developing countries. Their criticism of the past failures of technical assistance programmes was answered by the creation of yet another such programme: the International Programme for the Development of Communication. The programme would from the outset suffer a chronic lack of resources.

The debate in the 1970s also produced the insightful MacBride Report that offered many useful recommendations for the improvement of world communication. Most of these recommendations were not implemented by the international community.

Moreover, in 1981 there were clear indications that the opponents of the Third World demand for a new information order had not yet been satisfied and by 1983 two major member states, the USA and the UK announced their withdrawal from UNESCO.

In the effort to maintain a fragile international consensus the UNESCO General Conference began to erode the original aspirations of the NIIO proponents and shifted from the need to establish a regulatory structure to the new order as "an evolving and continuous process". (Paris, General Conference, 1982, res. 3.3). Gradually UNESCO withdrew support from all research, documentation or conference activities intended to contribute to the establishment of new information order and moved towards a "new strategy" (for the Medium-Term plan 1990-1995) with an emphasis on the free flow of information and the freedom and independence of the media, priority to operational activities, and importance of information technology.

The concerns about the North/South information-communication disparity may have found almost universal recognition in the international community, but the concrete accommodation of these concerns was seriously contested. In the end, the international community lacked the political will to deal with cultural and technological dependency and with the improvement of the technical conditions for news production and the free circulation of educational and cultural materials.

What eventually emerged from all the political commotion was a very modest and inadequate form of multilateral cooperation on the issue of mass communication development (through the IPDC). Discord remained on fundamental principles and a general unwillingness in the rich regions of the world to provide a type of assistance that would resolve the problems that were already in 1961 reported by UNESCO.

Participation in world communication requires that actors have access to the technologies that make cross-border movements of data, information and knowledge possible. Given the stark disparity in communication capacity between the industrialized countries of the North and the Third World countries, there has been (since the early 1950s) considerable concern about Third World acquisition of communication technology.

The 1970s debates did nothing to meet this concern. No binding and effective multilateral accord on the international transfer of technology was reached. Declarations, resolutions, programmes of action and draft codes of conduct were produced but all without effective implementation measures.

The Essential Challenges

If the WSIS is to demonstrate that the international community can learn from the mistakes of the past, three key challenges will have to be met.

The Technological Challenge

The notion of the Information Society is embedded in the contemporary technological culture. This is the prevailing way of society's interaction with technology. An interaction which is largely determined by irrationality and irresponsibility and which can be summed up with the help of three metaphors: the Titanic, Cassandra and Dr Frankenstein.

- The Titanic represents a strong belief in the perfection of technology: the ship cannot sink, and it is not necessary to have enough life boats on board. As a results the real risks of technological innovations are not taken seriously. The modern technological culture demonstrates a strong drive towards a risk-free society. This aspiration to achieve a risk-free control of social processes is seriously hampered by the unpredictable, fickle human species. Actually, the human being is increasingly seen as the real risk factor. As a result modern societies develop all kinds of activities to reduce this risk, like the expansive monitoring of human conduct through the ubiquitous camera surveillance and the electronic registration of people's movements. The logical next step in this process is the replacement of humans with humanoid robots.

- Cassandra is the daughter of the Trojan king Priamus who warned the Trojans that there were Greeks in the wooden horse. She was gifted with the ability to foresee the future, but she was also cursed by Apollo with the punishment that no one would listen to her warnings. This is characteristic of the technological culture: warning voices are ignored. In situations where decision makers experience a new era, a winning mood, and the pressures of time and competition: all traffic lights will be ignored, the dissidents will be silenced and technology choice becomes a matter of flying blind.

- Dr Frankenstein features in the novel written by Mary Shelley in which the doctor who creates a monster flees from his laboratory and is haunted by the monster who challenges him to take responsibility for what he has created. The metaphor raises the critical question about accountability for technological innovation. Who is accountable when things go wrong? Who takes responsibility if we resolve the digital divide and subsequently face insurmountable environmental problems: the exceedingly high levels of global energy consumption, the rate of CO_2 emission from printers and computers and the volume of electronic waste caused by the rapid rate of obsolescence of mobile phones and computers?

The Moral Challenge

A key question is "what should a decent information society look like?" The only universally available normative framework is the human rights regime. However, this regime is violated around the world and around the clock. Its moral principles are solid enough, but from its inception the international community has made the deliberate political choice to keep their enforcement very weak. There is worldwide generous lip service being paid to human rights, but in fact there is no real serious concern about their promotion and protection. This is dramatically demonstrated now that after 9/11 in so many countries – with convenient and largely unfounded references to security – civil and political rights are eroded.

The Social Challenge

The main focus of the WSIS is on "information". Yet, the real core question is how we should shape future "communication societies". In fact for the resolution of the world's most pressing problems we do not need more information processing but the capacity to communicate! And, ironically, as our capacity to process and distribute information increases, our capacity to communicate and to converse diminishes.

Most presentations of future information societies are based upon flawed assumptions with regard to information, such as: more information is better than less information, or more

information creates more knowledge and understanding, or open information flows contribute to the prevention of conflicts, or more information means less uncertainty, or if people are properly informed they act accordingly, or more information equals more power.

A very popular information myth proposes that once people are better informed about each other, they will understand each other better and be less inclined to conflict, a very attractive assumption but not necessarily true! Deadly conflicts are usually not caused by a lack of information. In fact they may be based upon very adequate information that adversaries have about each other. As a matter of fact one could equally well propound the view that social harmony is largely due to the degree of ignorance that actors have vis-à-vis each other. Many societies maintain levels of stability because they employ rituals, customs and conventions that enable their members to engage in social interactions without having detailed information about who they really are.

The development of "communication societies" implies the need to learn the art of social dialogue. This requires the capacity to listen, to be silent, to suspend judgment, to critically investigate our own assumptions, to ask reflexive questions and to be open to change. Such requirements conflict with the spirit of achievement-oriented modern societies where people have no time and patience for dialogical communication.

Epilogue: to be continued

If one critically assesses the outcome of the WSIS Geneva phase in 2003, the conclusion has to be that the international community failed to live up to these three challenges. However, the WSIS continues and the Tunis phase provides another chance to prove Barbara Tuchman wrong.

Globalization and Information Society

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The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has opened a new phase in global communication governance and global governance generally. The WSIS process has identified the problematic issues in global communication, indicated the range of views on how to deal with them, provided various blueprints of what should and could be possible in the way of solutions, and explored ways of dealing with these questions in the future. To that extent, WSIS has crystallized a new paradigm in global governance in which information and communication issues are central, and in which new actors, particularly those rooted in civil society, are increasingly involved. This is good news for democracy even if it must be taken with a large grain of salt.

Global governance is based on the interaction and interdependence of a wide array of actors and policymaking arenas. Needless to say, power is not equally distributed among actors, and some sites of decision-making are more important than others. National governments still wield tremendous leverage, although national sovereignty is no longer absolute. Multilateral bodies, transnational corporations, and international treaties powerfully constrain the role of every nation state. Global governance is therefore increasingly referred to as a multi-stakeholder process. The WSIS experience has transformed this framework most notably by recognizing the place of civil society as an essential partner in this process.

It is no coincidence that this issue has crystallized in the sphere of communication. WSIS is the third attempt by the United Nations system to deal globally with information and communication issues. In 1948, in the optimistic climate of the post-war era, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights spelled out, for all, what the great revolutions of the 18th century had struggled to obtain for Europeans and Americans: that the capacity to seek, receive and impart information is a basic human right. In the 1970s, in the post-colonial climate of the cold war, the non-aligned nations sparked a debate on a "new world

information and communication order", drawing attention to such questions as the inequalities in north-south information flow, the cultural bias of technology and the lack of communication infrastructure in the so-called third world. 1948 was a moment of consensus, but the debates of the 1970s were fraught with conflict, as is well known. Both had something in common, however: an exclusive reliance on states and governments as legitimate actors or porte-parole for people.

WSIS promised to be different. Conceived and launched in 1998, WSIS arrived in a context marked by buzzwords such as "technological convergence" and "globalization". The politics of WSIS was marked not only by consensus and conflict among the world's governments, but by a larger politics of definition, pitting governments against nongovernmental actors, namely NGOs and other civil society associations. In the immediate wake of the Geneva phase of WSIS, most observers agree that it was civil society that kept the debate on track, re-introduced the crucial elements left unresolved or unrealized in 1948 and the 1970s, and organized itself responsibly to put forward a vision truly reflective of the interests of the world community. If civil society had not reared its difficult head at WSIS, it would have had to be invented.

That said, the nature of civil society involvement in WSIS – and by implication, in the future of global governance – should not be idealized. It needs to be deconstructed and understood. The story of civil society involvement in WSIS needs to be written and analyzed and that work is now underway. But there can be no question that the creation of autonomous, open and inclusive structures, such as the WSIS Civil Society Plenary – despite their shortcomings – provide a model for the blending of issues and process which should inspire all those who are thinking about possibilities for a new global politics, not only in communication but in global affairs in general.

WSIS is the first United Nations summit where civil society was officially invited to be a participating partner – although understanding of what such "partnership" might mean was highly contentious. Many saw this as a fabulous opportunity, and they were disappointed. But the rules and parameters of global governance have shifted as a result of WSIS. Obviously, official decisions continue to be negotiated in intergovernmental structures. But the gains made by civil society will resonate. For the first time since the creation of the United Nations, a formal structure was created for inclusion of civil society: the establishment of an official "Civil Society Bureau" made up of representatives of civil society organizations participating in the Summit creates a precedent in international relations.

The autonomous structures created by civil society participants themselves, meanwhile, form the basis of a new model of representation and legitimation of non-governmental input to

global affairs. Importantly, civil society maintained a high degree of cohesiveness throughout the preparatory process and was able to mobilize and gather together disparate resources in order to produce strong and high quality input reflecting a wide consensus. Culminating in the Civil Society Declaration entitled *Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs*, the collaboration of dozens of disparate groups in this process remains one of the key successes of WSIS.

Civil society had to struggle hard to maintain a minimally acceptable degree of participation. Official meetings were open or closed according to the unilateral decision of government delegates, and the real impact of the numerous contributions of civil society remained weak. An informal study done in September 2003 by a volunteer group of researchers showed that 60% of the proposals of civil society up to that time had been completely rejected, 15% were sort of taken into account, and 25% had made it in to the then-current working documents in some form.[1] In order to achieve such results, civil society had to develop a sophisticated series of networking activities. Alongside the activities within its own autonomous structures, necessary for establishing positions and achieving consensus, civil society lobbied friendly government delegations and was thus able to influence the outcome in certain targeted areas. It also organized its own side events in Geneva, including The World Forum on Communication Rights, The Community Media Forum, Media Liberties in the Information Society, as well as participating in several events of the World Electronic Media Forum[2] and the ICT for Development platform[3]. Finally, an entirely parallel set of activities were organized under the heading of WSIS? WE SEIZE![4], an alternative event organized outside the Summit complex, thus marking not only a geographic but also an ideological distance from the Summit proper. Put simply, the organizers of WE SEIZE! rejected the social, political and economic premises on which the debates and discussions surrounding WSIS were based. They proposed instead to reimagine the role of communication in the organization of society.

So, despite its disappointment in the tangible outcomes – to be expected – civil society has already moved towards a new paradigm and has begun to articulate a new conception of society based on communication between human beings. It is not a question of building a more equitable information society, but of developing a communication society, reviewing structures of power and domination that are expressed and sustained through information and media structures.

[1] Does Input Lead to Impact? How Governments treated Civil Society Proposals in Drafting the 19 September 2003 Draft Plan of Action. 24 September 2003. Available on-line at http://www.worldsummit2003.de/en/web/467.htm
[2] See http://www.wemfmedia.org/
[3] See http://www.ict-4d.org/Marketplace/en/default.htm?languageId=en
[4] See http://www.geneva03.org/

Independently of the official outcome of the Summit, the great achievement of civil society remains the great degree of coordination between the entities making it up, the development of networks, expertise and common projects, exchange of ideas and particular ways of doing things, as well as articulation of an alternative discourse within the respectable and visible framework of a high-level United Nations meeting.

The civil society declaration adopted unanimously at the plenary session on December 8, 2003, is thus more than a political document outlining a set of principles; it is the concrete manifestation of a long process that could lead to a profound change in the ways in which non-government actors can influence international relations. It is an accomplishment that can reassure civil society in its quest for a more effective role in the sea changes currently taking place in global governance.

In short, the WSIS experience has put information and communication firmly on the global agenda and has also opened a space in which to explore new ways of dealing with global issues. This bodes well for the democratization of communication and its use as a vehicle for human development.

The WSIS process has shaken the status quo of global governance. It should be seen as a laboratory experimenting with a new distribution of power involving emerging as well as established social forces. WSIS is above all a space for confrontation between opposing communicational paradigms. The opposition to the current dominant model has been reorganized in a new political space where civil society is called upon to be increasingly present. WSIS exemplifies, therefore, the important trends emerging in global governance, encouraging civil society to participate more actively in defining a new global public sphere and to integrate more deeply to developing public policy on a world scale.

Collective Learning in the World Summit on the Information Society

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From the beginning, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process has come under criticism. One prominent strand of this criticism argues that the WSIS has raised unrealistic expectations of increased global cooperation and concerted action that simply cannot be fulfilled given existing political and institutional realities. Proponents of this view note in particular that the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action agreed at the December 2003 summit in Geneva, which concluded Phase I of the process, do not have the binding force of international treaties. Nor were these texts accompanied by concrete national commitments to do anything in particular that governments were not already doing. Moreover, at the time of writing (Spring 2005), the prospects are unclear for significant implementation and follow-up efforts following the November 2005 summit in Tunis, which completes Phase II of the process. As such, these critics charge that the agreements reached to date are merely collections of "pie in the sky" aspirations and "lip service" statements that governments can easily sign off on and then forget about.

While the desire for strong agreements and hard commitments is understandable, international policy dialogues and negotiations need not achieve these outcomes to count as worthwhile endeavors. On the one hand, many international policy issues are tackled, often effectively, through a variety of "soft law" instruments such as recommendations, declarations, guidelines, voluntary standards, or even custom. Normative frameworks that lack "teeth" can still set standards of behavior and performance that can be used to encourage or pressure parties to comply in the years to follow. Moreover, soft agreements sometimes serve as preliminary, consensus-building steps on the way to stronger

arrangements, including in other forums. On the other hand, if we shift our attention from the formal products of international cooperation to the process itself, it is clear that the simple act of engaging in dialogue can lead to notable improvements. Participation can provide governments and other parties with incentives to take steps on a decentralized basis to institutionalize programs and policies where none existed, or to bring those that do exist into closer alignment with what their counterparts are doing. Mutual adjustment toward a shared target can even make formal international agreements unnecessary, e.g. if there is harmony among what the parties are doing individually and this is sufficient to address an issue. As such, sometimes the process of cooperation itself is as important as the formal product, if not more so.

Viewed in this context, the WSIS does not look bad. It has provided the world community as a whole with a first opportunity to participate in an inclusive dialogue on a broad range of issues associated with the global information society. Certainly the process has generated some broad, baseline norms on both substantive and procedural aspects that can be built upon to encourage more collective action going forward. Similarly, it has contributed significantly to the institutionalization of global information society issues on the agenda of intergovernmental relations; in international organization work programs; within and among stakeholder communities (government, business, and civil society); and at the national level, particularly within developing countries. These by-products of cooperation may seem diffuse and hence more difficult to observe quickly than whether strong agreements have been negotiated, but they help lay the foundation for long-term progress nonetheless.

In this chapter, I focus on another foundation-laying byproduct of the WSIS process: collective learning. Like norm development and issue institutionalization, collective learning is a somewhat slippery concept because it is difficult to operationalize and measure, much less to definitively demonstrate its impact. While scholars have struggled with these challenges in many detailed studies of learning in international cooperation and global governance, my much more modest objective in this brief chapter is merely to be suggestive.[1] I argue that the WSIS process has promoted patterns of collective learning about the global information society that will have ripple effects across multiple levels, stakeholders, organizations and issues going forward. Collective learning matters because it builds individual and organizational capacity; helps the participants in international cooperation to sort out the issues and to identify their interests and negotiating preferences; and builds shared, intersubjective understandings of policy problems and the range of viable and unviable responses. Learning generally is not an independent cause of increasing and

[1] For an example of a more detailed treatment, see William J. Drake and Kalypso Nicolaïdis, "Ideas, Interests and Institutionalization: 'Trade in Services' and the Uruguay Round." In, Peter Haas, ed., Knowledge, Power and International Policy Coordination, a special issue of International Organization, 45 (Winter 1992), pp. 37-100.

successful cooperation, as other factors such as power relations, material interests, and bargaining dynamics also come into play. But while it is not a sufficient condition of cooperation, it is often a necessary condition, particularly in policy space characterized by a high degree of complexity, uncertainty, and rapid change. And for much of the world, the global information society is such a policy space.

As is demonstrated in the relevant scholarly literature, there are many ways to categorize types of collective learning and assess their respective roles in international cooperation. For present purposes it is sufficient to radically simplify by focusing on two basic dimensions of the phenomenon: *procedural learning* about the formal rules and rule-governed conduct of a global dialogue; and *substantive learning* about the issues and interests in play. Within both dimensions, we can further distinguish between *incremental* and *transformational* learning. The former refers to learning that proceeds in small but potentially progressive steps within the boundaries of existing understandings of and approaches to a given issue. The latter refers to learning that fundamentally alters how an issue is defined, understood, and addressed. Reading these two binary distinctions against each other yields four types of collective learning that have been evident in the WSIS process.

Incremental Procedural Learning

The first type of learning pertains to actors' understandings of the formal rules and actual conduct of the WSIS process. With respect to formal procedures, civil society organizations (CSOs) that often had limited experience in intergovernmental settings had to learn how to organize themselves into an effective coalition, play by the rules, and optimize their opportunities to speak in plenary sessions, lobby governments, and so on. Similarly, with respect to the conduct of the process, everyone involved has had to learn how to deal with counterparts that are used to different modes of operation. For example, those observers that have been invited to join national delegations have had to figure out whether and how they could work within governments' requirements concerning information dissemination and the maintenance of coherent national positions. More broadly, business and civil society participants accustomed to open and fast-moving debates have had to adjust to formalistic and heavily structured intergovernmental procedures. Conversely, governments and business have had to learn how to deal with civil society counterparts that dress and behave differently, usually show up with laptop computers, demand Wi-Fi connections and full transparency, and email or blog the details of the discussions to readers around the world in real time.

Going further, the agreement to conduct WSIS as a multi-stakeholder dialogue in itself reflected learning. For some actors, this learning has been truly incremental, and even

grudging. Particularly in the early stages of the process, a great many developing country governments had reservations about or were actively opposed to allowing active business and especially civil society participation, and they wasted a lot of time by demanding that these observers sit silently or be ejected from various meetings. But as the process wore on, much of this opposition abated, whether due to changed convictions or tactical calculations. Indeed, many formerly disinclined governments have learned not only that they could live with having observers in the room, but also that this could be substantively and politically useful in advancing the debate.

This shift has been particularly noteworthy with respect to CSOs. Whereas the private sector's control of information and communication technology (ICT) industries made it a force that had to be dealt with, CSOs were alleged to be comparatively unimportant actors of questionable provenance that did not need to be at the table for WSIS to succeed. But as the process moved forward, CSOs projected "soft power" by demonstrating technical expertise, normative influence, and the ability to improve negotiating texts by highlighting otherwise underemphasized or overlooked issues and dimensions. To be sure, the collective learning here remains less than universal among governments, many of which still fail to recognize that the observers can be useful allies on certain issues. Moreover, it is broader than it is deep; for example, while CSOs are now more or less welcome to participate in the WSIS' agenda-setting debates, they are not in other aspects of the process. Yet while there are pronounced limits in the extent and depth of commitment to multi-stakeholderism, a small threshold has been crossed.

Transformational Procedural Learning

Thus far, this sort of learning seems to have been very limited in the WSIS. The only example that comes readily to mind involves the United Nations Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG). True, some governments would have preferred a purely intergovernmental group, e.g. under the auspices of the ITU, and only in the end agreed to a multi-stakeholder formula. Nevertheless, they did agree that unlike the larger WSIS process, governments, business, and civil society participants would work in the WGIG as equal peers, with international organizations representatives limited to the role of observers. Arguably, that decision opened the way to some incipient transformational learning in various quarters.

As the WGIG discussions have evolved, it has become clear that the private sector and civil society participants – which have been relegated to observer status with limited rights to speak in other WSIS contexts – can more than hold their own. Indeed, it is now widely recognized that these stakeholders have frequently played leading, catalytic roles in the

WGIG's discussions and in the preparation of texts.[2] Moreover, if the open consultations and WSIS preparatory committee debates about the WGIG process are any indication, governments generally appear to appreciate that peer-to-peer multi-stakeholderism is proving effective and impressive.

The most promising example of incipient transformational procedural learning concerns the post-WGIG future. In debating the possible creation of a new omnibus forum for Internet governance issues, virtually no delegation has stood up in open session to say that these should be purely intergovernmental. To the contrary: a number of key governments that previously were unenthusiastic about or even opposed to having business and civil society at the table now routinely state that of course, any new body must be multi-stakeholder in composition. While some of these shifts may be attributable to tactical recognitions of political realities rather than heart-felt convictions, they reflect transformational learning all the same. And in other cases, the change appears to be deeper. Public pronouncements and private conversations alike indicate that a growing number of governments now "get it" and recognize that multi-stakeholderism is necessary not only to enhance legitimacy or co-opt potential opponents, but also to effectively govern a highly distributed arena in which businesses and CSOs are key and technically competent players.

That said, it is much too early to tell whether learning within and from the WGIG experience will have any broader impact. Some analysts and stakeholders seem inclined to believe that the WGIG constitutes a watershed in international cooperation, and that future global policy processes on ICT and perhaps even other issue-areas will have to adopt a similar model. In this context, the United Nations' proposed Global Alliance for ICT Policy and Development and the recommendations of the UN's Cardoso Commission Report are sometimes cited as harbingers of a broader shift toward multi-stakeholderism. Others of us are less sure. Internet governance may be a special case. Further, even here there are limits, in that governments do not appear to envision multi-stakeholderism extending beyond consultations, agenda setting, and technical operations into actual decision making. Nor are there indications of any willingness to consider spreading the model into exclusionary bodies such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Trade Organization (WTO), or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In parallel, the private sector does not appear to be eager to involve governments and civil society in many of the industry bodies that play key roles in various domains of ICT global governance. In short, while the ground does seem to be moving somewhat, it is very unclear whether this is a light tremor or an incipient tectonic shift.

[2] While the present author is a civil society member of WGIG, I doubt that anyone associated with the process would contest this observation.

Incremental Substantive Learning

In terms of frequency, this is undoubtedly the most robust of our four categories. The reasons are fairly obvious. On the one hand, because governments opted not to restrict the agenda to just a few issue-areas, as the United States in particular had proposed, the WSIS deliberations began with a wide range of topics on the table. And as the process progressed, the open agenda meant that many more issues could be added into the mix. While governments also were involved, CSOs played a new and special role in this expansion. The global mobilization of diverse groups with specific interests and agendas led to effective demands for the inclusion of, or heightened attention to, issues like human rights, mass media, the public domain, cultural and linguistic diversity, free and open source software, community-level ICT, and the need to consider the special challenges relating to gender, age, minorities, indigenous peoples, and marginalized social groups. In parallel, CSOs and some governments successfully pressed for recognition of the issues' multidimensional character. While the early secretariat drafts of the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action were rather technocratic and focused on the need to build out information infrastructures, subsequent versions gave notably more emphasis to social and cultural dimensions and embraced "people-centered" development and policy as a key theme. The net result was that in both quantitative and qualitative terms, the range of items that had to be thought through expanded substantially.

On the other hand, WSIS pulled together in one policy space an unprecedented range of actors, many of whom previously had not attempted to master and define positions on all of the issues in play. This applied in particular to many developing countries and specialized CSOs, but even the industrialized country governments and global business probably encountered at least some issues or dimensions they had not worked through. In short, the combination of a wide range of multidimensional issues and a huge and heterogeneous array of participants created the conditions, and requirement, for a significant degree of incremental substantive learning.

In the Geneva phase, incremental learning about the issues was driven in particular by the negotiation of the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. Whether the matter at hand was Internet interconnection charging, spam, voice over IP, intellectual property, the socio-cultural aspects of network access, network security and information security (and the boundary between these), or something else, the need to take positions on a multitude of proposed provisions provided the occasion to think things through. Of course, the extent to which actors actually did this varied; on any given issue, there were undoubtedly participants that adopted stances without first engaging in deep reflection or probing debate with their colleagues. For some, the rather general level at which the two documents are pitched may

have provided the temptation to fall back on easy assumptions or simply align themselves with bloc partners. But for others who cared enough to use the opportunity to work out a position or to try and persuade their counterparts, there certainly were incentives to increase their understanding of substantive problems.

In the Tunis phase, the focus has narrowed to development financing, Internet governance, and Plan of Action implementation and follow-up. As the debate shifted from general declarations to potential actions and the stakes thereby increased, participants had to drill down into and really engage the issues. Collective learning ensued, irrespective of various stakeholders' differing levels of satisfaction with the conduct and outputs of these three exercises to date. The report of the United Nations Task Force on Financial Mechanisms and related discussions in and out of the Task Force gave everyone a clearer picture of the range of extant ICT4D arrangements, and of the political and functional impediments to improving the mix. The WGIG has produced a plethora of working papers on individual issues and issue clusters, many of which governments and other participants have deemed helpful in understanding Internet governance. In the summer of 2005, the WGIG will release an integrated report that hopefully will deepen that understanding. Also helpful have been the many input papers and comments submitted by stakeholders around the world and posted on the WGIG website. As for implementation of the Plan of Action, one suspects that work on this topic has improved at least some participants' grasp of the issues, although this is more difficult to judge because the key dialogues have been restricted to exclusionary bodies like the ITU and the WSIS' Group of Friends of the Chair.

Incremental substantive learning has been evident not only with respect to the issues, but also with regard to the stakeholders' interests and their implications for the negotiations. By engaging in intensive small group interactions and enduring long plenary sessions, WSIS participants have learned where their counterparts stand on the broad array of topics, and why. In some cases, this has involved deepening their understandings of previously stated positions, e.g. by digesting more detailed explanations based on the functional merits or on political considerations that constrain and drive actors' policy stances. In other cases, it has involved hearing for the first time from actors, most notably many developing countries and CSOs, that had not articulated stances on all of the issues before. Either way, such learning has helped participants understand how the interest configurations line up per topic and what, in consequence, may or may not be possible in terms of forging agreements. Participants thereby have been more able to recalibrate their own preferences and tactics in an evolutionary process of mutual adjustment. Whether this process has promoted consensus-building or has hardened alignments into opposing camps varies across cases, but either way it has been an important byproduct of WSIS that will affect future ICT policy dialogues.

Transformational Substantive Learning

This is the most interesting form of collective learning in global policy dialogues, and in some respects it is the most important as well. Transformational substantive learning can be likened to a Kuhnian paradigm shift, in that it involves the fundamental redefinition of the organizing assumptions, terms of discourse, and policy objectives that shape a global issue-area. Invoking the term may invite cynical jokes, particularly from world-weary veterans who have sat through lengthy international meetings without ever encountering a "big idea." But in fact, international policy dialogues have often generated or at least supported the development of such learning. Consider, for example, the case of climate change, which has certainly redefined much of global environmental policy. Similar dynamics are evident with respect to human rights policy, international trade policy, or, more recently, the burgeoning development of humanitarian intervention, conflict management, and peace building as a global policy arena. In these and other cases, governments and other participants have collectively relearned what the overarching problematique is about and have reconfigured their policies and programs accordingly.

Transformational substantive learning is no stranger to the global ICT policy arena, either. The transition from the long century of government ownership and monopoly control toward liberalization and competition in telecommunications was driven in part by the spread of new ideas and collective relearning. The idea that international telecommunications services should be viewed as international trade in services and brought under the aegis of the WTO was certainly transformational. Or, recall that while the global digital divide initially was narrowly framed in terms of Internet infrastructure and access, this later gave way to a more nuanced and multidimensional understanding of the social, cultural, economic and political barriers to developing countries' participation in the global information society. The collective rethinking of global governance mechanisms for technical standardization, international satellite services, networked intellectual property, and so on offer additional examples. In these cases and other cases, substantive learning went beyond incremental shifts within the existing framing of the relevant issue-areas to game-changing redefinitions of policy problems and responses. Whether these changes were good or bad, consensual or contested, or universal or limited in terms of the domain of actors involved are secondary matters; the point is simply that such learning occurred and was heavily promoted by participation in international institutions.

In the WSIS context, it is not obvious that transformational substantive learning has occurred with respect to any individual issues. But there has been transformational learning with respect to the interrelationship between these issues. As a baseline for comparison, recall the long-standing tendency to address global ICT policy issues on a fragmented, stand-

alone basis. Topics like telecommunications regulation, spectrum management, Internet names and numbers, privacy protection, intellectual property, e-commerce, security, culture and content and so on ad infinitum have evolved as fairly separate spheres of analysis and activity. Each has attracted specialized expert communities who go to different meetings, participate in different international institutions, read and write in different publications, and so on. While this is a natural consequence of the complexity and internal diversity of the various issue-areas, it arguably has had a limiting effect on our collective understanding of ICT global governance.

The WSIS process has chipped away at this fragmentation. Bringing many of the key issues together under one roof as the subject of an integrative dialogue has contributed to the incipient social construction of "the global information society" as a recognized, overarching global policy space. Within such a space, individual issues are effectively remapped as interrelated parts of a whole, both of which often can be more productively analyzed and tacked in a holistic manner.[3] In fields like climate change and sustainable development, the creation of compelling, encompassing rubrics has helped to catalyze the formation of global expert communities, policy processes, and programs concerned with both part-to-part and part-to-whole interrelationships. Similarly holistic learning has been visible in the WSIS process.

At the micro-level, individuals and organizations specializing in one issue-area, like poverty or freedom of speech, have become interested in nominally distinct issue-areas like international telecommunications accounting and settlements or intellectual property. This reflects an emerging recognition that their primary concerns are linked to and impacted by other issues, and that on substantive and tactical grounds there can be virtues to recasting them as part of a larger set that requires a coordinated response. At the macro-level, a civil society coalition comprising a highly diverse range of actors converged on the "global information society" agenda and, after feeling its way around the space to identify shared and divergent preferences, collectively developed a civil society declaration for the Geneva summit that applied core principles to a broad range of interrelated policy challenges. The development of the intergovernmental Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action involved roughly parallel dynamics, as does the current debate on the possible establishment of follow-up and implementation mechanisms for the post-Tunis world.

[3] The Club of Rome takes this aggregation and holism even further, proposing that the set of all crucial problems – political, social, economic, technological, environmental, psychological and cultural – facing humanity constitutes a "world problematique," or the problem of all problems. As the organization notes, "the complexity of the world problematique lies in the high level of mutual interdependence of all these problems on the one hand, and in the long time it often takes until the impact of action and reaction in this complex system becomes visible." See, The Club of Rome, http://www.clubofrome.org/about/world_problematique.php

The debate on Internet governance provides a particularly clear illustration of the dynamics and transformational implications of holistic learning. Again, to appreciate the change that has occurred, one must begin with the status quo ante. For historical reasons that need not be recounted here, the nearly standard practice has been to equate the term, "Internet governance," solely with the social organization of Internet identifiers and the root server system and, by extension, the functions performed by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). This "narrow definition" was inconsistent with the empirical reality that there are a variety of collectively applicable, private and public sector rules, procedures and programs that shape both the Internet's infrastructure (physical and logical) and the transactions and content conveyed thereby. By focusing attention on only one, albeit critical, piece of the governance puzzle, the narrow definition had a number of deleterious, limiting effects on policy discourse, analysis, and practice.

As the WSIS dialogue progressed, participants continually raised a variety of issues that go well beyond the scope of the narrow definition and asked why these should not be considered to be instances of Internet governance as well. By what logic, they asked, can collective rule systems pertaining to intellectual property, security, privacy, e-commerce, and so on be deemed to be outside the realm of Internet governance? Similarly, where there are pressing international issues like interconnection charging or spam that are not currently the subject of effective rule systems, should not these be treated as priorities for the potential enhancement or expansion of Internet governance? In short, through an iterative process of dialogue and collective learning in which problems were posed and linkages were drawn, participants converged around the need for a broader, holistic conception that could encompass the full range of Internet governance mechanisms and facilitate their systematic evaluation and coordinated improvement.

In the Geneva phase, this emerging holism was reflected in many of the preparatory meeting interventions and documents, innumerable hallway conversations, and most importantly, the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. The latter is particularly notable in this respect. The mandate given to the proposed WGIG was broadly cast to include the development of a working definition, the identification of the relevant public policy issues, and the development of a common understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of various actors. None of this would have been necessary if Internet governance was still understood to mean just ICANN and related functions. Moreover, the plan then listed fifteen related priority policy issues, with naming and numbering simply mentioned alongside such matters as the establishment of national and regional Internet exchange centers, consumer protection, privacy, electronic commerce, technical standardization, and spectrum management.

In the Tunis phase, we have moved much further down this road, and its transformational implications have become apparent. For example, the WGIG has based its work program on a broad understanding, and has undertaken an explicitly holistic assessment of the full governance terrain. We have evaluated a wide range of public and private sector governance mechanisms and related issue-areas in light of integrative, horizontally applicable dimensions, including the extent to which they conform with the Declaration of Principles' statement that Internet governance "should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations."[4] The WGIG report to be released in July 2005 will convey the results of this assessment and offer options for policy reform that go well beyond the governance of the Internet's logical infrastructure (e.g. the root server system and names and numbers). Among these will be alternative options (in the likely event the group cannot agree on every point) on the possible establishment of a new body designed to promote holistic analysis and dialogue on the full range of governance mechanisms and issues. As I have written elsewhere, such a body would be valuable in that it could facilitate, *inter alia*, the

- multilateral and multi-stakeholder inclusion of the entire global community in Internet governance deliberations;

- systematic and universally accessible monitoring and information exchange about disparate governance developments;

- comparative, cross-sectoral evaluation of governance mechanisms, with an eye toward "lessons learned" and best practices that could inform individual and collective institutional improvements;

- assessment of horizontal issues applicable to all arrangements, e.g. the promotion of transparency, accountability, inclusion, and other principles of "good governance";

- identification of weaknesses and gaps in the governance architecture, i.e. "orphaned" or multidimensional issues that do not fall neatly within the ambit of any existing body; and,

[4] World Summit on the Information Society, "Declaration of Principles---Building the Information Society: A Global Challenge in the New Millennium." WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/4-E, 12 December 2003, pg. 6. http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html

- identification of potential tensions between separately developed mechanisms, and possibly some enhanced coordination among them.[5]

The open consultations held during the WGIG meetings and other discussions appear to indicate that many governments and other stakeholders favour the establishment of a new body that could take on these functions. Some governments would go further by mandating such a body not only to monitor and debate the issues, but also to take decisions, perhaps even by adopting "hard" instruments. In addition, there appears to be growing support for enhanced governmental input into/oversight of ICANN, whether it be through the above-mentioned body or a something separate. Of course, the fate of such proposals depends on a variety of factors, such as the course of the bargaining between the release of the WGIG report and the Tunis summit, the interrelationship with any other Tunis recommendations on follow-up and implementation, and the positions taken by the global private sector and the industrialized countries, especially the United States. But whatever happens in the end, surely the collective learning that has led to an increasingly holistic orientation qualifies as transformational, in that it has fundamentally altered how Internet governance is defined, understood, and addressed. Even if no new bodies are created, the game has changed.

Conclusion

The WSIS process clearly has promoted collective learning on both procedural and substantive matters. This learning will inform and enhance the ways in which global information society issues are conceived and tackled going forward, whether in new WSIS-engendered mechanisms or simply in other, existing institutional environments. In this respect, the WSIS has already made an important contribution to the governance of the global information society.

[5] See, William J. Drake, "Reframing Internet Governance Discourse: Fifteen Baseline Propositions." In, Don MacLean, ed. Internet Governance: A Grand Collaboration New York: United Nations Information and Communication Technology Taskforce, 2004, pp. 122-161 at http://www.unicttf.org/perl/documents.pl?id=1392). Also published as a working paper of the Social Science Research Council's Research Network on IT and Governance, 2004 at http://www.ssrc.org/programs/itic/publications/Drake2.pdf

WSIS and Multi-Stakeholderism

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The World Summit on the Information Society, as a political highly symbolic event, has developed around a number of catchwords, amongst them are connectivity, development and digital divide. I suggested elsewhere (Padovani 2004) that "convergence" should be added as an underlying conceptual nexus: convergence in technology, in strands of debate (O'Siochru 2004), but also in actors' orientations and discourse as well as in policy-making practices. WSIS has offered a window of opportunity to collectively re-define the communication agenda for the 21st century: a process-aware agenda in which the idea of multi-stakeholder conduct of political processes emerged as a symbolic nexus, both in discourse and in praxis. I will briefly discuss what WSIS has shown in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of the multi-stakeholder approach, as a contribution to the development of participatory practices in ICT and communication policies in the future.

The multi-stakeholder approach can be conceptualized as a mode of governance (Kooiman 2003) that involves actors of different nature (governmental and non-governmental), expressing different interests, in a political process characterized by interaction among actors and interconnection among levels of authority. This is not something completely new in the arena of International Relations, and particularly in the recent history of United Nations Conferences and Summits (Dodds 2002, Hemmati 2002); yet the wide acceptance of the term should be placed in the broader context of global political transformations at the dawn of the third millennium. The new formula can be seen as a response to the articulation of global politics or cosmopolitan democracy (Held et. al 2000); a way to face the challenges posed by a "shifting in the location of authority" (Rosenau 1999) that characterizes global decision-making processes, producing forms of politics that are perceived as more and more distant from the people and "opaque" (Neveu 2000) and have therefore raised strong contestation "from below".

Furthermore, it should be stressed that the idea of effective stakeholders' participation in deliberation and decision-making processes at the global level has developed in parallel, and sometimes in close connection, with Information Society-related initiatives and strategies as in the cases of the G8 Digital Opportunity Task Force, the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, the Global Knowledge Partnership, the eEurope strategy and finally WSIS. This testifies to the awareness of the need to address the needs and challenges posed by the development of knowledge societies through the involvement of all those who will contribute, benefit and act as citizens of such societies: national and local governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector entities and civil society organizations.

Yet the multi-stakeholder approach risks becoming "a practice without a model": **while there is a growing recognition of the need to innovate traditional policy-making practices, the idea of what multi-stakeholder dialogues can be, how they should be developed and to what extent they should affect the political process does not seem to be clear**. Moreover there is a wide variety of processes which can be defined as multi-stakeholder, yet the underlying assumptions concerning the different stakeholders, their interests and the aim and scope of their interaction are not clear nor shared. Thus, **multi-stakeholder processes**, practices and models appear today, not just as a way to conceive participatory governance to overcome criticism concerning the legitimacy of global institutions: they are **a major challenge in themselves**.

In this context, WSIS promised from the outset to bring something new into the governance of communication, raising strong expectations within the different sectors involved. As stated by the European Union:

> This UN Summit offers an excellent occasion to experiment with a new formula and show the public at large that inclusive processes are not only of interest to them, but also possible. [...] The preparatory process is almost as important as the political outcomes of the Summit itself. The format and positioning of the Summit will be key factors for an event which will attract attention and activate a decentralised follow up process, not only at political level but also in society at large. (EU, 2002)

In calling for the World Summit on the Information Society, the United Nations had invited "... intergovernmental organisations, including international and regional institutions, non-governmental organisations, civil society and the private sector to contribute to, and actively participate in the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Summit and the Summit itself" (United Nations, Res 56/183). Thus a four-actors understanding of the multi-

stakeholder approach deployed throughout the process; and formulas like "multi-stakeholder" and "all stakeholders" has pervaded the official documents (Padovani and Tuzzi 2004a), strengthening the symbolic participatory dimension, but also making the rhetoric clear, and the difficulties emerge, when the formula was to become reality. The WSIS process has shown potentialities and critical aspects of the multi-stakeholder approach.

The positive side

Multi-stakeholder dialogues can certainly help in tackling the complex issues we are confronted with in the emergence and development of knowledge societies, which are characterized by strong discrepancies, potentially growing divides but also by the co-presence of different media, new and traditional, all involved in the sharing and diffusion and circulation of information. Information, communication and culture are at the heart of all social processes; therefore no aspect of human and social life can be overlooked in developing "a common vision". This requires the articulation of knowledge, expertise and resources; it requires listening to different experiences and voicing of different needs. WSIS has proven how important (yet not always easy nor satisfactory for all) this articulation of voices is, through the definition of an enlarged agenda (if compared with the initial plan for discussion) in which infrastructural aspects are paralleled by the recognition of the human and cultural rights dimension; and reference to enabling regulatory environments goes together with the centrality of capacity building through education, training and research.

Dialogues among subjects who express different interests can contribute to more effective policy-making, especially if we consider the need for stakeholders to be involved not just in the identification of needs, but also in the creative elaboration of possible solutions and in the very implementation of policies. This way, if roles are identified and interest respected through the policy-making process, multi-stakeholder dialogues can also strengthen the legitimacy of governing institutions and governance mechanisms, avoiding the risk of cooptation of non-governmental stakeholders within a top-down mechanism without real participation. Yet this requires an operational structure and a normative basis.

The WSIS tripartite secretariat and the Civil Society Bureau instituted at the second Preparatory Committee of phase one were attempts to address the first aspect, through the development of functional structures to facilitate communication exchange among sectors. Both have been interesting innovations, which have not only contributed to a more direct exchange among governmental and non-governmental actors in the process; they have also "forced" those involved to organize themselves accordingly and develop a new cooperative awareness.

Rule 55 of the Rule of Procedure adopted at the First Preparatory Committee of phase one offered the normative basis, yet one which appeared not satisfactory for some stakeholders and raised criticism while reducing from the outset non-governmental expectations with regard to the multi-stakeholder dialogue. Nevertheless, the tension that exists between the productive dynamics and the structural constraints to participation can potentially lead to success in some areas.

Furthermore, **multi-stakeholder processes** take several forms and take place at different levels, from the local to the global, and therefore they **offer flexible mechanisms** for the conduct of political processes. This can be considered as a positive aspect; at the same time it opens the space for problematic issues, such as legitimate participation and representation of interests, which will be discussed below. Here I focus on flexibility as a resource, which would also include the **connection between formal and informal processes**: WSIS has proven how it may well be within the more informal spaces that innovative practises develop. This has been, for instance, the case of the encounters between the European Union official delegation and the civil society sector, which seems to have produced what some officials already consider "a positive tradition".

With specific reference to the policy field of ICT and communication, I believe the **multi-stakeholder concept** can be useful as a way **to articulate in a broader and more concrete way the dimension of "inclusion"**. If we aim at "people-centred and inclusive" information societies, the multi-stakeholder approach offers the ground on which to develop and understanding of inclusion as technologically supported, socially focused and grounded on participatory policy making. If, however, a multi-stakeholder process is organised and managed in such a way that it is reduced to mere window-dressing, the opposite of the initial goal, i.e. inclusion, will be achieved, namely, frustration, discontent and disengagement.

Finally, when multi-stakeholder processes develop in a concrete space, as in WSIS, there can be a number of positive side (yet not marginal) effects. One of them is that meeting physically to take part in a multi-stakeholder exercise has favoured the encounter of women, young people, media professionals, communities and coalitions especially in the case of the civil society sector, coming together "from different continents, cultural contexts, perspectives, experiences and competencies, members of the different constituencies of the emerging global civil society …" (Civil Society Declaration, Geneva 2003) to talk to each other, hear and be heard. Civil society as a stakeholder has proven to be itself plural and articulated, yet capable of producing collective meanings and coherent positions as well as linkages which will last in the future (Padovani, Tuzzi 2004b). This strengthening of linkages within a multi-faceted reality operating "from below", and the learning process that accompanied this, can be seen as the main positive outcome, though an unintended and

unexpected one. It provided a meaningful basis for the conduct of future dialogues and the development of common agenda's and strategies.

Problematic aspects

It has appeared clearly during the WSIS process that **different logics, languages and political cultures enter the scene, when different stakeholders share the same political arena**. Different expectations from the Summit as well as different motivations for being involved have certainly affected the dialogue. Even more problematic is the fact that stakeholders represent different conceptions of the political process, as they are themselves the expression of different political experiences; and this emerges in the way each of them articulate their belonging to a "sector" and its functioning, in the way they conceive the dialogue with other stakeholders and its function, and in the language they use among themselves and with others. Communication in highly diversified groups is a challenge and this should be taken into due consideration.

The very **concept of "stakeholders" is often ambiguous as it refers to constituencies which are highly differentiated within themselves**. This is particularly the case for civil society organizations, as they may be highly formalized non-governmental organizations as well as highly informal trans-national networks or indeed small national grass-roots organisations; they can have a profound knowledge and experience of global politics (formal and informal rules, languages, etc.), but they can also be completely new to the context and need the expertise of others in order to articulate their presence effectively. Civil society actors can certainly express the views of different constituencies and have diverse priorities, as well as gather in a global arena with more or less cooperative attitude and will to contribute to the creation of a true constituency for that particular occasion. Yet diversification pertains to the private sector as well, since it should always be recognized that small and medium enterprises have often very different interest and priorities with respect to major trans-national firms, which normally have a much better understanding of negotiation mechanisms and a longer and more structured experience of participation in global settings. Also, the fact that some stakeholder may not belong to any of the "formalized" sectors can pose a problem. With specific reference to WSIS, and for ICT policy in general, the role played by local authorities has shown that new categories of stakeholders should probably be considered in the future. It is not rational nor effective to place local authorities within a non-governmental sector since they are actually "representative governments" in themselves. Such conflation of different actors risks weakening the position of each actor. Finally, the whole picture appears even more problematic if we recognize the little knowledge and understanding stakeholders have shown with reference to other constituencies and their

acting within the process; and it should be said this was particularly true for individual governments' understanding of the civil society sector.

One of the most problematic aspects of the multi-stakeholder approach is the very meaning of "participation" in political processes and the underlying vision of governance. Here again expectations, political and organizational cultures and the overall understanding of the role of global forums come into the picture. Beyond the different theoretical perspectives concerning the possibility or non-possibility to improve the democratic quality of international relations, I am here referring to what stakeholders perceive as the goal for their respective roles in taking part of a dialogue. Different degrees of "active participation" derive precisely from such understanding: do we promote multi-stakeholder dialogues just to have more efficient mechanisms for information sharing? Or do we think of multi-stakeholderism as a way of conducting deliberative processes, through issue identification and consensus-building, while the decision-making power remains within traditional institutional bodies? Or do we, finally, think of effective and full participation (even the "right to participate" was stressed by civil society in its Declaration) as the way to foster good governance and of "making citizenship a reality, supporting active citizens … through participation in decision making processes" (EU IST call 4, 2004)?

If we refer to the formal rules and mechanisms set up for WSIS, Rules of Procedure n. 55 stated that civil society and business sector entities accredited to participate could designate representatives to sit as observers at public meetings. According to some stakeholder this formula already falls short of the expectations, making clear that the "active participation" foreseen by Resolution 56/183 meant in reality "silent observation". Yet it is interesting to recall that in the course of the process a few innovative mechanisms were developed, which testify to the fact that a multi-stakeholder context can "help" the political processes to innovate, fostering learning processes through which stakeholders' conceptions of multi-stakeholder dialogue can also be transformed. Initially non-state actors could submit written contributions, to be published on the official website. Then a "stop and go" mechanism was put in place (Kleinwächter 2004). Here again, the process had some shortcomings, with governments initially willing to conduct their negotiations in the presence of non-state actors; but then requiring them to leave the room when it became clear that this level of "participation" made problematic the diplomacy of "playing with words". Notwithstanding this, the "stop and go" procedure did show that there was some flexibility alongside the fairly strict "rules". The inclusion or, as other would claim co-option, of civil society representatives within official delegations, as was the case with Germany, Switzerland and Canada, is also an example of how the rules of procedure can be bent or by-passed. Eventually, it has been accepted as part of the process to have space for oral contributions from non-governmental actors on specific topics to be addressed by the governmental

subcommittee. Here the policy learning process appears more interesting than the actual mechanisms that have been put in place, while the core issues concerning "effective participation" still remain open. It should also be recalled that even within the same category of stakeholders perspectives may vary widely in this regard, as we have demonstrated with reference to the civil society groups attending WSIS (Padovani and Tuzzi 2004).

Another crucial element in multi-stakeholder processes is the "power dimension". This aspect is closely linked to what was discussed above and would require a much longer discussion. For the purpose of this chapter I will just refer to few very concrete aspects which are central to any exercise of power, be it hard or soft, high or deep, in a multi-stakeholder context: resources, knowledge and skills. High-level political summits are highly formalized settings, which require an understanding of the underlying norms and assumptions, which relate to the language and cultural environment of diplomatic practice. Previous experience is a crucial resource, as well as the availability of information, documentation and facilities (even for simple reproduction of documents). The issues that are being discussed, especially in the case of the WSIS, are highly complex and for some aspects only understandable by specialists, thus needing a deep understanding of processes, themes and language. A summit also tends to be held in expensive places for few days, if not weeks, and this does not facilitate participation, especially for non-governmental actors from developing countries. All this should be taken into consideration when discussing multi-stakeholder dialogues: pre-existing knowledge, availability of information, access to relevant actors in the process and even time and financial resources all make a difference in building the power base for stakeholders to participate.

Finally, **among the problematic issues** that are most often raised but rarely discussed in depth, are the **dimensions of legitimacy and representativeness of stakeholders**; which is most often recalled in reference to civil society organizations, but may well be the case for other stakeholders. During the WSIS process there have been attempts to clarify this issue: civil society groups have several times stated they had no presumption of being "representative of" a wider global constituency but only members of, gathered in Geneva and elsewhere to bring their specific knowledge and experience, to voice their concerns and to contribute, where possible, in defining priorities and solutions. The very fact that they have been formally invited is a recognition of their "legitimacy", which, as expressed in the recent Report by the Panel of Experts on United Nations-relations to Civil Society (2004) derives from what they do and not from who they are. Yet the "who" is important, especially when it becomes a diversified constituency. The issue remains a relevant one, as it is sometimes used as an argument to marginalise critical positions. The notion of representativity is to be redefined beyond representation through the ballot-box, in order to take into account the complex composition of civil society, especially its increased capacity

to build coalitions on a national as well as trans-national level. Meeting both physically and virtually in the WSIS community, through the several mailing lists, working groups and caucuses, has fostered another learning processes, which produced the setting up of a structure for participation (the civil society sector internal structure), capable of translating competence, knowledge and ideas into legitimate and productive input. A structure centred on the principles of inclusiveness and outreach to others in other spaces, thus creates a multi-level modus operandi from the global to the local, while continuously revising its working methods and mechanisms in order to guarantee respect for those very principles.

I have tried to articulate a few critical points concerning multi-stakeholder processes, starting from my personal experience at WSIS but placing this reflection in a broader context. More could be said, since governance modes are being transformed from the local to the global level; information and communication technologies are offering opportunities for collaborative exchange and information sharing which has proven to be crucial for political participation; initiatives stimulated in local spaces more and more affect the global context; while networks of people, initiatives and information flows are changing the very nature of the political space in which we act.

The challenges this situation poses to political processes are evident, while responses and possible solutions are still to be thoroughly and creatively imagined and developed. For this reason, multi-stakeholder discourse and practices, at different levels and in different policy environments, should be a matter of collective reflection in order to develop a better understanding of their potential – an understanding that should start from a critical analysis of existing experiences and be focused on the idea that the multi-stakeholder approach can be a meaningful tool if considered within the horizon of innovative participatory governance for the knowledge society and if seen as a step-by-step learning process for all actors involved.

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The WSIS Wars: An Analysis of the Politicization of the Internet

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The notion of the Information Society seems to conjure the ideal of universal interconnectedness and global solidarity. The Internet seems to promise a common medium to bring people together, transcending borders, races, and religions. Ultimately, we all share a desire to think, hold opinions, and communicate. The Information Society, thus, is both a catalyst to and an expression of our unity.

This appealing vision, however, is farthest from the truth. It should be no surprise that with something as fundamental to our nature as communication and thought – the bedrock of the Information Society as it has been expressed throughout time – there were bound to be big differences in the way we approach the issues, just as there are major differences in everything else; our values, languages, and cultures. This diversity, of course, is what makes for the vast richness of the world we inhabit – and for the difficult, at times tense, world of international relations that policymakers must mediate.

The Internet now falls squarely into the wider realm of international relations. This is a sign of its maturity as a medium. Rather than something worthy of exceptional treatment, it is an admission that the Information Society is a basic part of society; as such, it is akin to everything else that unites and divides us. And so too with WSIS, what appeared to be a largely uncontroversial United Nations summit – to pay homage to computers and the Internet – became fractious. Indeed, the very logo of WSIS is self-deceiving in this way: It depicts a sphere (to represent the world) with five arrow-like lines of different colors coming together to a single point (to suggest unity from diversity).

But such harmony failed to materialize in three areas examined below: process, policy (in areas like freedom of expression, intellectual property, the digital divide and Internet governance), and the rapport among stakeholders (from civil society and the business

community). These tensions cannot be easily bridged; rather, they underscore how the politicization of the Information Society will likely grow more fractious, not less, as the Internet continues to develop.

Process

From its earliest preparatory phase, conflicts bedeviled the summit. First, the selection of the city of Geneva for the event was considered by some developing countries as unacceptable; it seemed to reinforce what they perceive as a historical bias against them, a divide made more pronounced now that it includes a digital dimension. The gangly compromise was a two-part summit, the second half in a developing country. Tunisia was chosen – which is ironic, since its domestic actions contradict many of the principles of WSIS, particularly free expression and an unfettered media.

This should have signaled to observers that the entry of the United Nations into the "information society" theme would politicize the issue in debilitating ways. It would require uncomfortable political compromises based on national vanities rather than the topic's merits in order to move forward, such as splitting the Summit into two parts. Indeed, choosing Tunisia falls into the same category of intergovernmental irony as making Libya the chairman of the UN Commission on Human Rights in 2003, or organizing the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

Additionally, by elevating the issue to a formal United Nations summit, this by nature escalates the importance of the topic inside governments. As a result, issues about the Information Society that were treated by less political and less visible parts of the government – as science and technology policy or as a media and cultural matter – were shifted to foreign ministries and long-standing diplomats, who are more accustomed to power politics and less knowledgeable of technology issues and the Internet's inherent requirement for cooperation and interdependence.

Policy

Some classical intergovernmental controversies emerged, such as over freedom of expression and intellectual property. As always, difficult yet suitable compromises were reached. However, two newer issues – regarding the digital divide and so-called "Internet governance" – overshadowed those more traditional tensions.

Freedom of Expression

In the case of freedom of expression and human rights, China wanted to use the WSIS documents to weaken the principles that are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the country is regularly criticized for violating. Cuba and Vietnam supported China's position of downplaying freedom of expression. This was rebuffed by the US and Europe, though not as much as always. In particular, the US seemed to soften its stance on the issue (perhaps feeling that in an age of terrorism, such an absolutist position could have negative consequences). One loophole that essentially legitimizes censorship in the WSIS Declaration are points noting a need to respect "cultures" (written throughout the document) and to uphold "morality, public order and the general welfare" (paragraph 5). Indeed, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, in a press conference, justified his country's censorship of the Web under the banner of preserving morals and culture, and further noted that the country's policy is no different than that of France.

Intellectual Property

Regarding intellectual property, Brazil and developing countries like Cuba sought to formally promote open source software. The United States, influenced by Microsoft, strongly opposed this. Over the course of numerous prepcom meetings (one which stretched past midnight only days before the Summit began), an agreement was reached that the final wording of both the "Declaration of Principles" and "Plan of Action" would refer to "different software models, including proprietary, open source and free software" (Declaration, paragraph 27; nearly identical wording appears in Plan, paragraphs 10.e, and 23.o). Thus open source is mentioned but not promoted per se. The US also added wording on respecting existing intellectual property treaties. The parties agreed that they would ultimately treat intellectual property matters not at WSIS, but at the issue's institutional homes: the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization.

Digital Divide

Despite significant growth rates of the Internet and computing in developing counties, there was a large-scale call, led by Senegal and other African nations, to alleviate the unequal spread of technology around the world through a special fund. One proposal was a surcharge of 1% on technology goods and services sold around the world to allocate to developing counties. When this idea was rejected on its face, the Summit created a voluntary fund (the cities of Geneva and Lyon were the first donors, giving almost $400,000 apiece). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) issued a report that identified around 30 existing digital divide programs, which was used by developed countries to quell the calls for new aid. WSIS also established a working group, comprised

mainly of governments, to reexamine the idea and report to the Summit's second phase. In an inadvertent symbol of the degree to which the developing world's problems surmount technology-financing matters for more fundamental concerns, the "inaugural ceremony" of the International Digital Solidarity Fund in November 2004 in Geneva was postponed due to an outbreak of hostilities in Côte d'Ivoire that required a number of presidents to attend an African Union meeting. In 2005, the group sought cities to agree to its "Geneva Principle" for "a 1% contribution on public ICT procurement contracts paid by the vendor on his profit margin."

Internet Governance

The WSIS summit marked the moment when governments' unease about their inability to control the Internet was formalized, and the need to address those concerns became a priority. The term "Internet governance" was used in two ways. First, it described ways that Internet problems seem to require national or international action (such as to address spam, network security, interconnection rates, etc.). Second, it referred to the Internet's domain name system and the desire for multilateral influence to replace US control of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). The tensions led to the creation of a Working Group on Internet Governance, and the confusion of commingling these two matters with the same term meant that its first order of business was to define what "Internet governance" means! Some countries, from China to France, expressly yet covertly used the WSIS process to open the issue of US control of ICANN. The working group will report back to the WSIS process in the months prior to the second phase with recommendations for governmental roles, but the real negotiations will likely take place after the Summit, in bilateral settings, in preparation for the expiration of the US government contract with ICANN, and the ITU plenipotentiary conference, both in 2006.

Stakeholders

In addition to substantive issues, WSIS had to deal with the symbolic relationships among stakeholders. The Summit tried to bring together the tripartite power-structure of modern times: governments, civil society and business. In this, the Summit was found wanting, and the second phase in Tunisia does not seem likely to remedy the shortcoming. Of the 11,000 registered attendees on the eve of WSIS I in December 2003, industry had such a poor turnout that attendees from the media outnumbered business two to one (with around 1,000 to 500 people, respectively). Meanwhile, nations brought 4,600 delegates, not considerably more than attendees from NGOs who numbered 3,300. (The remainder came mainly from intergovernmental organizations.)

Multi-stakeholderism is one of the central issues facing international relations in all dimensions, not just regarding technology or "Internet governance." For years, the United Nations has sought to forge closer ties to industry and non-governmental groups; so many transnational problems the world faces, from the spread of communicable diseases to climate change, require the work of more players than just governments. Similarly, the lead United Nations agency in charge of WSIS, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), has also sought to reach out to other stakeholders – in this case, private telecom operators and equipment vendors, in an era when state-run monopoly telecom carriers are waning. However, the efforts to broaden the dialogue did not work well.

Civil Society Groups

Non-governmental organizations felt that their agendas lost ground, rather than gained it, because of the summit. This was due to the uneasy relationship with governments during the process as much as from the substantive policy differences. For instance, at an early prepcom for WSIS I, Pakistan demanded that civil society observers vacate the session so governments could talk among themselves, which fueled mistrust among civil society groups. Indeed, before the final WSIS Declaration and Action Plan was actually released by governments, civil society groups had already issued an alternative Declaration (entitled "Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs") that more heavily favored free expression, among other things.

There were other tensions: printed materials from civil society groups were prohibited from being placed in certain areas were delegates could get them, which was felt to unfairly restrict information. Some materials were allegedly thrown away by the WSIS organizers. In another instance, protesters outside the hall were forcefully blocked by Swiss police from expressing their opposition. All this, ironically, at a summit where governments aimed to encourage *information*!

The relationship with civil society groups soured for another reason – that although less visible (indeed, intangible) – left a lasting impression: the terrible wireless Internet access in the Summit venue. Provided by SwissCom, the wireless access was extremely expensive, almost impossible to connect to, and the service quality was poor. It seemed yet another example of how governments "didn't get" the importance of the Information Society (though it is probably more driven by Switzerland's commercial interests from the industry of intergovernmentalism). As one civil society organizer remarked: "The governments are here talking about the Information Society – but we *live* the Information Society; this is the way we communicate and organize." The difficult and costly access undermined their efforts to organize and discuss issues at the very event.

There are signs that the friction between government and civil society, rather than be eased by the second part of the summit, will actually grow worse. This is because while the developed world has grown accustomed to non-governmental groups and indeed learned to work with them in many instances, the developing world – less experienced in confrontational democratic governance – see them as meddlesome outsiders, threats to their power, and often encouraged or financially-backed by foreign groups. This tension became apparent the first preparatory committee meeting for WSIS II in Hammamet, Tunisia in June 2004, when Tunisian civil society delegates – in reality, planted shills for the authoritarian government of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali – disrupted the proceedings by loudly heckling a speaker from a Tunisian civil society group who criticized the country's human rights abuses. This incident was deemed unacceptable by Western diplomats in attendance, and led to a formal complaint by the European Union to the Tunisian authorities.

Business Community

The third group the summit hoped to bring on board was industry. Considering that the Information Society is made up of computers and communications, which are largely developed and furnished by the business sector, it is a vital community to include. However, industry for the most part ignored the event. No chief executive from a major international technology company attended, save for Nokia, which was a conference sponsor. In general, the business community outsourced their participation to a lobby group, the International Chamber of Commerce. The ICC, in turn, was especially keen to take on the responsibility, since doing so increases its clout in international policy circles.

The global technology industry remains largely uninterested in participating in the Summit; by June 2005, six months before the second phase, few senior executives were aware of WSIS. The media coverage of the first WSIS revealed the lack of importance the business community placed in the event; for instance, the *Wall Street Journal* never mentioned the Summit in its pages.

Conclusion

What explains the discord? Ultimately, it can be traced to practical factors, as well as a fundamental ideological conflict. On a practical level, the disputes emerged for three reasons. First, it was an assemblage of the "losers of Internet 1.0" – the countries that came to the Internet later than others, but which aim to dominate the next iteration of the technology. Countries like China, Brazil, India, and even Japan and France recognize that their economies depend on the Internet, yet also understand that America's early lead gives it

disproportionate influence in how the network evolves. WSIS was a chance to put things on a more equal footing, by placing the issues in a multilateral setting.

Second, the Iraq War. An overlooked factor that helps explain why WSIS became so fractious is the context of international relations as the preparatory committee meetings took place. America was in the midst of the invasion of Iraq that was hugely unpopular worldwide; many countries were thus annoyed with the US, and took out their irritation at the first diplomatic opportunity, WSIS. Furthermore, many governments saw in ICANN the same sort of unilateral approach that the US took in invading Iraq.

Third, a practical reason to explain the conflict is the efforts of the ITU dating back from 1996 to educate its member-states about the need for a multilateral approach to Internet management in the same way as the global telephone system is run. Countries that would ordinarily have little interest in the technical aspects of the Internet since they hardly use the network and often restrict it – like Syria, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Pakistan and others – were encouraged to place "Internet governance" on the diplomatic agenda. As a result, WSIS experienced the irony that those countries which most lacked an information society were also the most militant to impose their views on how the Information Society should move forward.

In addition to these practical factors, there is an underlying ideological difference in governmental approach towards progress and development: whether it should be led by the public sector (governments) or the private sector (which includes both business and what is termed "civil society"). The governmental approach generally relies on centralized control, where the private-sector approach is more decentralized and experimental. For instance, one Chinese official justified government control of ICANN on grounds that the Internet otherwise would be "anarchy." The term was used as if inherently pejorative; and in so vast a country whose history includes eras known by names such as "the Period of Warring States," uncertainty is understandably regarded as dangerous. But it is a view that is sharply at odds with the American Silicon Valley approach, where the notion of "disruptive technology" is feted as the hallmark of progress and the term "anarchy" used in the title of books as something beneficial.

Ironically, these differing approaches – that is played out at WSIS not only in the area of Internet governance, but for the digital divide and freedom of expression, among others – resembles the debate over communism and capitalism that consumed the 20th century. That it is now applied to the sphere of technical innovation rather than economics suggests that the frictions are likely timeless ones. Ultimately, the challenges the Information Society poses are not so new after all.

Section 6

Development, Financing and Capacity-Building

Human Capacity-Building: The ICT for Development Platform at WSIS 2003

Walter Fust
Director-General, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC)

In recent years, many organisations have begun to explore multi-stakeholder partnerships as a way to address complex development challenges. These types of partnerships consist of strategic alliances between the public and private sectors as well as civil society and promise a holistic, efficient, inclusive approach to development – one where organisations work together in complementary ways.

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) re-confirmed the importance of the multi-stakeholder approach in current international affairs. For example, the ICT for Development (ICT4D) Platform – a combination of exhibition and forum – (a parallel event to the WSIS) was a true multi-stakeholder gathering bringing together actors from all sectors of society. This event was organised by the Global Knowledge Partnership and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and aimed at showcasing concrete action and solutions for promoting information and communication technologies (ICT) for development.

The ICT for Development Platform was unique for its multi-stakeholder approach but not that alone. For one thing, it was by far the biggest event organised within the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Over five days it attracted more than 35,000 visits; among them some twenty heads of state or government. Even more significantly perhaps, it was the largest-ever event to discuss and demonstrate the role of ICT for development.

The platform's multi-stakeholder approach turned out to be highly effective. At the exhibition, which was designed as a kind of a global information village, more than 250 governments, organisations and companies from 80 countries showcased several hundred

real-life solutions. The range of activities that were presented was enormous, stretching from grassroots initiatives using cell phones to spread information on market prices, to Internet applications for health systems led by universities and Governments, to literacy programs using appropriate computing facilities initiated by large scale private sector companies.

The ICT4D Platform was an ideal meeting place for development actors with the opportunity to exchange and debate in a place where all representatives come together on an equal footing. This way, the platform led to the creation of numerous partnerships and stimulated many projects and initiatives. It was also the place to communicate future common programmes.

Mr. Adama Samassékou, former Minister of Education of Mali and President of the WSIS Preparatory Committee, summed up the general feeling at the closing ceremony: "The ICT for Development Platform was the heart of the WSIS. It has made clear to everybody that we need to start sharing knowledge and information at once if we want to bridge the many divides which separate rich from poor, urban from rural, men from women, majorities from minorities and young from old. And it has shown that information and communication technologies have a huge potential to facilitate and accelerate this process." Mr. Samassékou's assessment was echoed by the participants. But what made the platform so successful?

Why use a multi-stakeholder approach?

The Global Knowledge Partnership, itself a multi-stakeholder partnership, understands its approach in an inclusive and goal-oriented way. A partnership could thereby be considered multi-stakeholder, if parties are drawn from government, business and civil society, and if they strategically aggregate the resources and competencies of each to resolve the key challenges of a given issue. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are neither outsourcing arrangements nor client-contractor relationships, but they pursue a shared vision and promote a work ethos that exploits mutual self-interest. These partnerships are founded on principles of shared risk, cost and mutual benefit. While the overarching goals within a multi-stakeholder partnership should match, the different ways to achieve these goals might differ strategically from one stakeholder to the other. However, partnerships will last as long as there is value-added for everybody involved, and as long as the common action shows more impact than the single activities put together.

Each stakeholder group brings its distinctive perspective into the partnership, whereas no single stakeholder category can tackle the challenges on its own. This is particularly true in the sector of information and communication technologies and in the development context

in which the private sector, the governments and civil society organisations each have a distinctive role to play.

The World Summit on the Information Society has come forward with a Declaration and an Action Plan, striving for an information society for all and promoting the use and equitable access to information and communication technologies. It will be important for the realisation of the WSIS Action Plan, to work together, find synergies and pull on the same string to make things happen effectively. In order to come to an engagement of all parties involved, it is decisive to include the different stakeholders in the process and to create ownership of the ideas and necessary promises shared in the WSIS Declaration and Action Plan.

This is why all stakeholders and actors involved in development processes related to transmitting information and generating knowledge were invited to the ICT4D Platform with a clear orientation for concrete action.

A new formula: multi-stakeholder meeting place and discussion forum

In all phases of the ICT for Development Platform, emphasis was put on a multi-stakeholder and regional balance. The organisations of the different platform-elements were guided by an International Advisory Panel (IAP), carefully composed respecting the principle of this double balance. In any multi-stakeholder activity it is crucial to ensure that the interests and differences of strategic operation are taken into account in all phases and aspects of the common endeavour. This principle was applied throughout the conceptualisation and implementation of the ICT for Development Platform.

The overarching goals of the ICT4D Platform were twofold:

- To showcase, present and discuss approaches, technologies and tools, concrete projects, solutions and trends on how to use information and communication technologies effectively for development; and

- To foster new partnerships for common action and synergies in ICT for development.

The International Advisory Panel opted for a very simple structure of the event in order to achieve these goals. On the one hand, the platform was to be a huge exhibition, where practitioners and policy makers could meet informally, exchange and discuss. This is where participants could network, get to know each other and discuss amongst themselves concrete action for the future. On the other hand, the ICT for Development Forum allowed panelists

and participants to debate technical, economic and financial challenges, innovative approaches and methods in a conference style structure.

The organisers were overwhelmed by requests to have a presence and to participate actively in the ICT for Development Platform from all parts of the world,. While some organisations could unfortunately not participate, the organisers made sure that the stakeholder and regional balance was respected both within the exhibition space and within the forum as organisers of conference events and as panelists.

By the huge response of organisations, companies, governments and even universities, it became clear that using ICTs effectively in development was a goal that was of high priority to all these different stakeholder groups. It also showed that the exchange of methods and best practices across sectors was needed.

ICT for Development Platform: thematic focus throughout

Within the framework of the ICT for Development Forum some 50 interactive panels, discussions, workshops and seminars took place. High-profile participants including key innovators, leading CEOs, top-level government leaders and grass-roots practitioners discussed the role, potential and limits of information and communication technologies for development.

Both the exhibition and the forum centred on five distinctive as well as cross-cutting themes and sub-themes, which had been identified by the organisers and the International Advisory Panel as being at the core of ICT for development and responding to the activities and priorities of the different stakeholder groups[1]:

Innovating for equitable access

Access/connectivity, first/last mile innovation (including wireless) – Financing of ICT for development (financial mechanisms) – Affordable solutions – Open solutions / Open source software

Fostering policy and implementation

[1] To make the outstanding wealth of knowledge compiled during the ICT4D Forum available to a wider audience, a book with the title "*The ICT for Development Platform: Showcases, Debates and Action*" has been published. This book has the same thematic structure as the original ICT4D Platform. It can be ordered at www.docudisp.ch. The full content of the book is also available on http://www.globalknowledge.org/ict4d and will regularly be updated and expanded.

e-Strategies and policies – e-Governance (including security) – e-Commerce and e-Business

Enhancing human capacity and empowerment

Capacity-building (formal and non-formal education/skills, development/ e-learning) – Women/gender – Youth – Indigenous communities/ people – Health

Strengthening communications for development

Enhancing communication through media – Intercultural communications – Humanitarian aid and disaster information systems – Conflict prevention and resolution

Promoting local content and knowledge

Local culture, knowledge and content – Indigenous knowledge – Local media

Cross-cutting themes

Multi-Stakeholder Partnership/Networks – ICT and Poverty Reduction – ICT and the Millennium Development Goals, Entrepreneurship/sustainability/replicability and up-scaling potential – Innovation – Women/Gender – Youth

The ICT for Development Platform as a large-scale multi-stakeholder gathering: lessons learned

The ICT for Development Platform was, with its orientation and structure, and with the goal to include all sectors into a political summit process, an experiment. The outcome and high interest confirmed the presumption that multi-stakeholder partnerships, and with it common multi-stakeholder dialogues, are of increasing importance in development today and tomorrow. On top of that, some lessons can be drawn out of the structural design of the event: the combination of broad conceptual ownership and linkages and the efficient, dynamic and lean operational structures were probably most important in ensuring the Platform's success.

Broad ownership and participation by all stakeholder groups: It was essential to bring on board the major players at an early stage and to establish dynamic linkages to existing knowledge, experience, processes and action. Both the Global Knowledge Partnership and the

International Advisory Panel were essential in this regard. The IAP was established immediately at the start of the planning process and included members from all stakeholder groups and different regions of the world.

Easy thematic structure of exhibition and events: There is a tremendous demand for access to tangible information and knowledge on specific themes. The arrangement of knowledge around the five thematic streets of the exhibition and the related priority areas of the ICT for Development Forum gave a good overview of different thematic clusters and helped to orient the visitors to experiences relevant to their specific needs.

Open platform for networking and showcasing: The approach of the Platform, which was essentially demand- and market-driven, provided ample space for innovation, creativity and spontaneous contacts and partnerships within a broad thematic framework. Considering the big differences regarding the resources available to the different stakeholder groups, it was crucial to balance the market mechanisms with well-targeted support to grass roots organisations, small entrepreneurs and governments from developing countries.

The overall response to the ICT4D Platform suggests that there is a need and interest for multi-stakeholder gatherings in development. These can well be connected to political processes that favour mainly governmental participation, but they can also stand alone and be action oriented. As it is the goal of practitioners and different stakeholders in development to support positive and effective changes for reducing poverty and empowering people, it is necessary to call for similar activities: to exchange knowledge, to advocate together and to create synergies.

It is time to get a broader perspective on development processes and look at today's challenges in alternative ways. Multi-stakeholder events help do that. Moreover, a common dialogue needs to be translated into common action in order to put all our strengths together for achieving common goals.

The Financing Question at WSIS and the Task Force on Financing Mechanisms for ICTD[1]

Shoji Nishimoto
Co-Chairman, Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) and Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP

The "financing question" at the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) *specifically* related to the proposal for a new global financing mechanism in the form of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) and its role in relation to existing financing mechanisms.[2] However there were also *broader* questions relating to roles, policies and financing options vis-à-vis transformations in the ICT-related sectors and the growing importance of ICT for development and concerns about the so-called "digital divide".

The ICTD sector is in transition in more ways than one. The telecommunications, IT, media and entertainment/cultural sectors have seen, and continue to see, major disruptions in their ability to operate according to "business as usual" and secure a return on past investments. This is due to technology-related transformations which have lead to increased convergence, a dramatic decline in costs and the emergence of new options to provide connectivity to ICT for development services, especially for people in rural areas.

Concurrently traditional models of financing and public and private sector roles were being questioned in the context of trade-related agreements, a rethinking of priority areas of development cooperation, and the emergence of new actors. Since the late 1990s, there was a focus in many quarters on securing a greater role for the private sector in areas that had hitherto been regarded as the domain and responsibility of the public sector. The private sector was seen as being suited to capitalize on the technological dynamism of the ICT

[1] These views are personal views of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations Development Programme.
[2] This was proposed by President Wade of Senegal and has since been launched as a foundation under Geneva Law.

sector and bringing in much needed investment resources, where competition and a conducive policy environment existed.

However, the public sector has a role to play in supporting the development of content and network development in poorly served areas, in part through the formulation and implementation of national e-strategies.

Also intersecting with these transformations was the growing use of ICT for development, albeit if uneven in scope and subject to skepticism from various quarters. For those of us active in the field, there was visible evidence that even in situations where the cost of ICT was high and access relatively limited, ICT could offer solutions that saved time and facilitated greater access to services, markets, and governments and was used by stakeholders for a variety of purposes.

And while the transformative potential of ICT was yet to be broadly grasped, it had become increasingly clear to all stakeholders that development in the digital age is very different and challenges and opportunities needed to be more forcefully addressed. Many representatives from developing countries at WSIS were saying that they had effectively missed out on the "new" Industrial Revolution, and that they wanted to ensure that they were able to proactively respond to this development opportunity.

The issues at stake for financing and development go beyond bridging the "digital divide". The fundamental issue is a global recognition of ICT's development potential and, conversely, of the social and economic costs arising from not fully exploiting this potential: whether this is a lack of access by rural and poorly served regions to emerging investment and trade opportunities; the ineffective use of public resources that occurs when opportunities for low-cost delivery of public services are not exploited; or the inability to share knowledge, experiences and learning in diverse fields across the global network.

It is in this context that the WSIS was seen as providing an opportune moment to take stock of the effectiveness of current financing mechanisms and approaches in addressing challenges and facilitating the building of an inclusive and development-rich information society.

Approach to the Finance Question in the Context of WSIS

As the space to consider these issues in the context of the formal preparatory process leading up to the WSIS-Geneva Summit was for all practical purposes quite limited, the assignment was given to an independent Task Force on Financial Mechanisms that was to be

setup under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary General.[3] More specifically, the remit of the Task Force was to undertake a review of "their ['existing financial mechanisms'] adequacy in meeting the challenges of ICT for development", so that "based on the conclusion of the review, improvements and innovations of financing mechanisms will be considered including the effectiveness, the feasibility and the creation of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund, as mentioned in the Declaration of Principles."[4]

The Work of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms for ICTD

The Task Force was facilitated by UNDP in collaboration with the World Bank and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and OECD/DAC. It was multi-stakeholder in nature and drew on expertise from developing countries, from "innovators" in capacity development and other areas, from development finance institutions and agencies, as well as private sector, civil society and international organizations.

There was a short period of time to bring together disparate data, to consider complicated issues, and to work within a framework that recognized that there were competing demands being made on available development resources. As my background is in development banking/financing and ICTD, I was anxious to get a good diagnostic of the situation and to have the report facilitate an evidence-based dialogue, not only in WSIS, but also in the development institutions and private sector.

The background questions informing the work of the Task Force included the following: Was there a need for development financing institutions and development cooperation agencies to reconsider their recent policies on infrastructure-related financing that had resulted in sharp declines in resources allocated to ICT infrastructure and network access or had these policies been vindicated by the growing involvement of the private sector? Was the shift to mainstreaming of ICTD effective? Was it in turn catalyzing investments in infrastructure and access or was mainstreaming being hindered by the lack of adequate infrastructural foundations? What financing mechanisms and modalities have been effective in addressing the needs of under-served areas? What is the role of community-owned and -based organizations? What new types of instruments are needed to support emerging innovative entrepreneurs and actors?

The report provides a number of strong findings, and highlights various options and recommendations for the improvement and innovation of existing mechanisms. To the Task

[3] See http://www.itu.int/wsis/tffm/index.html
[4] See WSIS Plan of Action, page 12 at http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsis/doc/S03-WSIS-DOC-0005!!PDF-E.pdf

Force members it became clear that a *range of mechanisms* was needed to effectively address the financing of ICTD, and that the proposed Digital Solidarity Fund could be seen as playing a complementary role. The report found that developing countries faced a number of challenges in accessing a number of existing mechanisms. It highlighted the importance of specifying the role of ICT in national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies and PRSPs. As far as the question of *adequacy* of existing mechanisms, its findings indicated that there are a number of areas in which current approaches to ICTD financing had not devoted sufficient attention to date. In many instances, the Task Force found that the means were at hand to bring about dramatic change for currently underserved areas and populations. In other instances, there were critical gaps that required new forms of concerted attention particularly in the context of regional backbone issues in Africa and special situations such as those faced by small island states. The report attempted to be forward-looking in considering approaches that could leverage newly emerging technologies and the contributions of different stakeholders.

In summary, the report of the Task Force was able to facilitate dialogue and contribute to advancing agreement on the DSF in the context of the recent Prepcom in the lead up to WSIS-Tunis. More generally, I hope that it serves to bring attention to the wide range of issues that need to be addressed if the much needed financing is to be mobilized, and if such financing modalities are be effective in ensuring high development impact.

Private Sector and Multi-Stakeholderism in the WSIS Process

Ayesha Hassan
Senior Policy Manager, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

The World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Tunis, November 2005 will take place in one of the regions that most awaits the benefits of information and communication technologies, as well as the promotion of the Information Society. Business looks towards WSIS Tunis with optimism and caution. The decisions that will take place during the remaining preparatory process for the Summit will impact the participation of and messages from business in Tunis.

Financing mechanisms

At a preparatory meeting for Tunis in February (Prepcom 2) governments welcomed the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF), which aims to fund ICT related initiatives in less developed and developing countries. However, such welcoming seems premature before the originators of the fund have made clear the principles and processes by which any resources provided by it would be collected and distributed. Business looks for assurances from the DSF that all its sources will be contributed solely on a voluntary basis, none of it mandatory. Concerns about the voluntary nature of the fund, its accountability and its allocation will continue until satisfactory progress has been made on these matters.

For development to be sustainable, business stresses the importance of an enabling environment that:

- empowers people,
- facilitates the exercise of freedom of expression and other rights,
- promotes the free flow of information,

- encourages innovation and investment,
- unleashes the entrepreneurial spirit, and
- stimulates productivity for people, society, enterprises and governments.

A voluntary fund has to be complementary to existing financial mechanisms, especially in providing seed funding to encourage the provision of other forms of contributions, including those in kind.

It is important to stress that business applauds the principles for the Information Society that were agreed at WSIS Geneva. Now we must look ahead, not re-open existing agreements and previously agreed issues and lose the progress of the past three years. Business, along with other players, is ready to contribute to further growth of the Information Society.

ICT-oriented actions and initiatives

At the Geneva Summit there was a parallel event on development, the ICT4D Platform, which was judged a success. In Tunis, there will be an ICT 4 ALL whose goal of sustainable development for all will, it is hoped, be closer. Business knows that this goal can only be attained if the elements of an enabling environment noted above are in place.

Coming out of the WSIS process, we must ensure that this environment remains friendly and welcoming to the private sector's role in the Information Society. CCBI continues to believe that the operational part of Tunis should focus on showing progress on the commitments made at WSIS-Geneva to complement its Declaration and Plan of Action.

In that regard, particular recognition should be given to areas/countries where progress has been made on the commitments in the Declaration and Plan of Action. The essentials are:

- the creation of the appropriate environment for ICT infrastructure,
- education and capacity-building,
- policy, legal and regulatory frameworks that are pro-competitive, spur investment and foster entrepreneurship,
- the rule of law and the protection of intellectual property, and
- the liberalization of telecommunications infrastructure and trade.

Follow-up and implementation mechanisms

We recommend that the follow-up mechanisms for WSIS be closely related to the core of the United Nation system and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Such mechanisms must continue to include business as a major and important player. It is recommended that the processes and approach that have so successfully included all voices, such as the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG), could be retained as a model of an inclusive forum for discussions and actions.

Conclusion

Business would like to put forward the following summary points:

1. Continue the inclusion of business actors and consider the multi-stakeholder approach, as agreed in Principle 1 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles, to be the guiding principle of all WSIS implementation and follow-up mechanisms.

2. WSIS Plan of Action implementation and any follow-up mechanisms should be established under the responsibility of the United Nations Secretary-General.

3. Business and other actors can only effectively engage in implementation and follow up mechanisms if they are associated early on in the definition of these mechanisms.

Innovative Financial Mechanisms, Digital Solidarity and the "Geneva Principle"

Alain Clerc
Executive Secretary, Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF)

The idea of "digital solidarity" emerged for the first time during a conference organized in Geneva in 1996, chaired by Mr. Alpha O. Konaré, President of Mali, and Mr. Guy-Olivier Segond, then President of the Geneva State Council, discussing new technologies for development in Africa. The proposal received further support in the "Bamako 2000" conference, one of the most important events organised by civil society on the Internet and its implications for development. The concept of "digital solidarity" was then made official in 2002, again in Bamako, by the Assembly of African States within the framework of the African Regional preparatory conference for the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS, Geneva, December 2003).

President Abdoulaye Wade became its spokesperson in proposing specifically the creation of a global Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) to reduce the digital divide. However, at first, he did not manage to convince his peers to participate in the campaign. The Fund was rejected by the WSIS process. Nation States retained only the principle of digital solidarity without matching it with financial resources to reduce the digital divide!

Anticipating this setback, President Wade had made the same proposal at the first Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society, held in Lyon just days before the Geneva Summit of Heads of States. The mayors and presidents of local and regional authorities – more sensitive by nature to the concerns of the citizens, and especially to the economic, social and cultural value of the information and communication technologies (ICTs) welcomed the Senegalese President's initiative and decided, on the spot, to create the global Digital Solidarity Fund.

To the surprise of the Heads of States and Government representatives, the two spokespersons of the Lyon Summit, Mr. Gérard Collomb, Senator-Mayor of Lyon, and Mr. Christian Ferrazino, the Mayor of Geneva, announced the creation of the Fund during the plenary at the Geneva Summit. The following day, the press and media covering the World Summit on the Information Society reported that local authorities' mobilisation around President Wade's initiative represented its main achievement!

It was then at the Geneva Hôtel-de-Ville that the promoters of the Fund got on with the practical issues of instituting the global Digital Solidarity Fund. Six months later, the Fund was legally established in the form of a Swiss law foundation recognized of public utility and placed under the surveillance of the Swiss Confederation. Around fifteen cities and local authorities and two Nation States engaged financially to ensure the inception of activities, while the City of Geneva offered fully equipped offices.

Thanks to local authorities' determination, the global Digital Solidarity Fund was taking shape "right under national Governments' nose". The United Nations Commission created during the Geneva Summit, under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General – to reflect on financial mechanisms to bridge the digital divide – was invited to take note.

Reassured by the dynamism of local authorities, President Wade again stressed the importance of the Fund at the Summit of the African Union in Addis Ababa (July 2004). The member States of the African Union gave their full support to the Fund. Later on, French-speaking States endorsed the Fund in Ouagadougou, at the 10th Summit of Francophonie, and the European Council of Ministers for Economy and Finance noted, in February 2005, that the Fund "should take its place as an original and complementary instrument alongside existing financial mechanisms".

Finally, on Friday, 25 February 2005, all Members States of the United Nations meeting in Geneva for the Preparatory Committee (Prepcom) for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Tunis in November 2005, unanimously endorsed the creation of the global Digital Solidarity Fund. They particularly praised the innovative financing mechanism proposed by the Fund.

Governments' consent would certainly not have been achieved if cities and local authorities had not, on their side, continued mobilising in favour of the Fund, particularly by working on its innovative financing mechanism. Compared to other proposals (Tobin Tax, President Lula's fund to combat hunger and poverty, etc.) and the reflection processes developed by the French Government (i.e. Landau Report) and by the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, the idea behind the Digital Solidarity Fund is both simple and realistic. As opposed to grand, consensual United Nations universal declarations, the Fund

relies on the support of actors willing to commit in a concrete way to the reduction of the digital divide. The Fund is voluntary and complementary. It gives priority to community actions and only responds to requests coming from non-solvent markets (bypassed by the private sector). It aims to create new employment and breathe life into the segments of society neglected by larger financial institutions.

The finance mechanism proposed by local authorities is at once original, simple and effective. Called the "Geneva Principle" by President Wade, it has the remarkable advantage of widening the base of solidarity by including both public entities (local governments) and the private sector. It requests, on a voluntary basis, that public authorities and the private sector include a digital solidarity clause in all their calls for bids related to ICT, requiring the vendor who wins the market to contribute one percent of the transaction to the Digital Solidarity Fund. This trivial levy on the businesses' profit margin offers a number of significant advantages:

- Multiplied by all involved actors, it ensures a substantial cash flow to the Fund (i.e., a European city of 500,000 inhabitants can annually generate approximately 500,000 Euros for the Fund).

- Contributions to the Fund do not represent a tax, but rather an investment, as, through the mobilization of these new resources, the Fund renders new markets solvent to investment. It widens the base of cooperative action by involving two crucial players: on one hand, the public authority (or the private business) that makes the call for bids, and, on the other hand, the vendor who provides the services. A label of "digital solidarity" is awarded to those two partners. Today, several businesses are already engaged in the process, contributing to the Fund and proving that the proposed financing mechanism is working.

- In addition, the digital solidarity percent makes it possible to find sources of financing other than the traditional resources for development. These funding sources are not sufficient to respond to developing countries' financial needs for heavy infrastructure, but, instead, they enable a necessary and complementary response by including marginalized populations in the development of the Information Society.

- In calling for greater transparency in the development of public markets, the mechanism carries with it, in addition, a educational dimension, particularly appropriate in some countries (e.g., fight against corruption).

In this way, the involvement of local authorities in development policies also assures greater traceability of public aid, insofar as the Fund has no chance of functioning if not absolutely transparent. The mayors and presidents of local authorities – directly under the control of their constituencies – cannot commit unless they are absolutely assured that their investment leads to concrete results on the ground.

The Association Internationale des Maires Francophones (AIMF), under the impetus of its President, the Mayor of Paris, Mr. Bertrand Delanoë, and the new world organisation of cities United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) have given their full support to the Fund and invited all their members to implement its financing mechanism. Next November, the Second Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society will be held in Bilbao, Spain, where the widening of the DSF base will be the focus of deliberations.

The creation of the global Digital Solidarity Fund and its innovative financing mechanism represents several "firsts" in the history of the international relations.

It is the first time that an initiative brought forth by local authorities has been subsequently endorsed by Governments. More than just a rare and successful ingress of the local into the global, it is a significant turnaround of the situation, with a commitment of local communities to fully participate in international efforts for development.

It is the first time that a new financing mechanism has been created to respond to the challenges of the Millennium Declaration (raising an additional 60 billion dollars) and proven to be effective. The Tobin Tax continues to miss the mark, President Lula's Fund, as attractive as it may seem, is having a hard time materializing, and other solidarity funds, though voted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly, have yet to prove operational.

It is the first time that civil society and the private sector are involved, side by side with Governments, in efforts for development. The Fund also functions on a tripartite basis, equally involving in its management Governments, the private sector and civil society.

It is the first time that local authorities are engaging, in the framework of a concerted action at the global level on the development front, with their own initiative and with additional resources. The "United Cities and Local Governments" is from now on closely related to the global Digital Solidarity Fund and considers it as its "development bank".

The global Digital Solidarity Fund was officially inaugurated in Geneva on 14 March 2005. The inaugural ceremony was co-chaired by Olusegun Obasanjo, President of Nigeria and President of the African Union, and by Mr. Guy-Olivier Segond, President of the Fund, in

the presence of the "founding father", President Abdoulaye Wade, and other Heads of States and Government officials from around world, with the active and effective participation of local authorities, the private sector and civil society. The global Digital Solidarity Fund represents, de facto, the concrete translation of the concept of new governance, offering a concrete response to the challenges of development in the 21st Century.

Several months before the United Nations Millennium +5 Summit, the Fund is proposing a fresh perspective on available options to bridge the digital divide. In his report for the 59th Session of the General Assembly, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", the Secretary-General of the United Nations underlines that "to fully utilize the potential of information and communication technology (ICT), we need to address the digital divide, including through voluntary financing mechanisms, such as the recently launched Digital Solidarity Fund".

With Governments from around the world, with local authorities and the private sector acting on their commitments, the global Digital Solidarity Fund can effectively contribute to building a new global solidarity movement. This may prove to be the most valuable contribution of the Information Society to the Millennium Development Goals.

WSIS: Challenges and Policy Issues in Latin America and the Caribbean

Carlos M. Jarque
Manager, Sustainable Development Department, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

A new knowledge-based economy and information society have emerged and are transforming the way people, societies and governments live, learn, work and relate to each other. At the heart of the digital revolution is the power of information and communication technologies (ICT), which allow people to access information and knowledge almost instantaneously, anywhere in the world.

In a competitive economy, increases in productivity that result from the combination of information technology applications and re-engineering of processes create conditions for economic growth. Debate continues as to whether or not this increased productivity and "new economy" is entirely new, or if technology is challenging us to understand more deeply how economies have always operated. Nonetheless, the message is clear: the role of information and knowledge in development must be better understood and effectively integrated into development strategies, policies, programs and projects.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) believes that information technology issues are, at their core, human development issues. Access to information and the tools needed to build and apply knowledge are essential to achieve social, political and economic objectives.

In the three years since the IDB adopted its first strategy on information and communication technology, the Bank and the countries of the Region have gained experience in applying ICT to addressing different development issues. At present, the IDB is working to promote ICT as a priority within the agendas of its borrowing member countries; create and strengthen existing institutional capacity; increase the number and quality of ICT projects and programs; develop mechanisms to transfer lessons learned, best

practices and training of human resources; encourage the establishment of public, private and civil society networks; and increase the level and quality of public expenditures assigned to ICT.

The ultimate success of Latin America and the Caribbean's political and economic reforms will depend in large part on the Region's ability to become a full-fledged participant in the information revolution. Democratic institutions can succeed only if citizens, firms and civil society organizations have the information they need to make informed decisions and to hold government accountable. In the economic sphere, full access to information will help the Region to compete in the global economy, while ensuring an equitable distribution of the benefits of development to all sectors of society.

While we recognize that the main challenges of the Information Society are global, we also acknowledge that the Inter-American Development Bank has a special role in implementing changes regionally and enhancing the capacity of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to develop according to their respective needs and vision, to build upon existing partnerships, and to redefine roles and responsibilities at the regional, national, and local levels.

The World Summit on the Information Society: The Road to Tunis

At the global level, the IDB played a significant role in the first World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in Geneva in December 2003. It is now helping to coordinate the contributions of the countries of the Region in the Summit's second phase, to be held in Tunis in November 2005.

The meeting in Geneva and the follow-up to it, with their largely open and participatory processes, proved how this Summit went beyond technological issues, embracing a discussion grounded in the larger picture of economic and social development, a discussion of technology as a tool for improving human life.

The Tunis Summit will be, as it has often been said, a *Summit of Solutions*: government, civil society and industry leaders will seek solutions on the ambitious targets set to be achieved by 2015, such as connecting remote villages with ICT and establishing community Internet access points; connecting all universities, secondary and primary schools, scientific and research centers, hospitals and health centers; and ensuring that more than half of the world's inhabitants have ICT within easy reach. These targets complement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by world leaders at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 – to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation

and gender inequality. Without the widespread and innovative use of ICTs, the MDGs may prove impossible to attain.

Nonetheless, this Summit is not meant solely as a "development conference", but rather as a gathering where the interests of both developing and developed countries will be taken fully into account, so that the voices of all countries are heard.

The Tunis phase of WSIS should stress the importance of the strengthening of the social, economic and political *adjustment mechanisms* that enable individuals, organizations and countries to make and implement decisions that ensure that development responds to the unique values, needs, conditions and resources of each country and that everyone participates and benefits from the development created by the widespread deployment of ICT. It should also emphasize how social and economic development is dependent on many factors, which should be addressed through an overall development strategy. Factors such as political stability, macroeconomic governance, transparency and accountability of national and local administrations, the rule of law, physical infrastructure, and basic literacy should also be addressed in an explicit manner, and ICT should not be seen as a substitute. However, the integration of ICT into overall national development strategies can help facilitate implementation, expand the scope and coverage, and increase the results for most of these factors.

In the objective of tackling the task of incorporating the Information Society paradigm into the development agenda, we should address some fundamental issues in Tunis:

1. identify the "building blocks" of an Information Society and the regional characteristics and particularities of the transition towards the Information Society;

2. identify the policies that can help the country through an "optimum" transition path;

3. encourage efforts and initiatives, especially regional ones, leading to the implementation of regional/national strategies and action plans; and

4. work together with the countries as well as regional institutions in order to provide adequate programs and financing tools likely to support strategies and action plans.

The Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action reveal a clear commitment and represent a significant foundation for the work we have ahead. We also welcome the work undertaken by both the United Nations Task Force on Financial Mechanisms and the

United Nations Working Group on Internet Governance and it will be key to integrate their conclusions and indications in our endeavors in the Region.

In the follow-up to the Summit, we think that it will be critical to devise a mechanism that is able to coordinate and ensure the implementation of WSIS and its conclusions, a truly efficient platform for policy and partnership dialogue, through the engagement and collaboration of all stakeholders.

The stakes are high. The digital revolution offers unprecedented promise to help meet the aspiration of people everywhere for a better life and can create real opportunities for poverty alleviation and wealth creation. One of our biggest challenges is to create a knowledge-based economy that helps to overcome, not exacerbate, poverty and inequality. Our goal is to put information technology applications at the service of efficient, equitable and sustainable development.

The Inter-American Development Bank and other organizations in the region and around he globe must act as catalysts to encourage an ICT revolution that will help us to achieve our ultimate objective, which is to reduce poverty and create opportunities for all citizens. We walked together with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on the road to Geneva; we are now ready to walk with them on the road to Tunis, supporting them on the implementation of policies and goals that were established internationally.

Cities and Regional Governments in the WSIS: From the Lyon Summit 2003 to Bilbao 2005

Louise Lassonde
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Cities and regional governments have used the process of WSIS to prepare the ground for a new relationship between international development and public policy at the local level. In this respect, the cities and regional governments seek to bring a solution to the current global situation that neither public aid to development nor the mobilization of citizens have been able to radically modify.

Globalization coupled with decentralization leads cities and regional governments to assume greater responsibilities in development and to claim their place in international debates. The information society – and its technological tools – is a new field in which cities and local authorities wish to master their choices, whether it be infrastructure or the creation of e-content.

Cities want to set their information society strategy and priority objectives in function of their needs and local sensibilities. Certain cities have enabled the participation of citizens (e-democracy); others have tried to develop their cultural heritage. A great number, in the North as well as the South, have evaluated the new opportunities offered by the Information Society technologies in the social, cultural, educational, as well as economic fields.

Referring to the United Nations, the reform announced by the Secretary-General promised to open the door to a representation of cities as distinct actors, similar to parliamentarians, who do not want to be associated with civil society. Their argument is that they are "elected"; therefore they belong to another category of players than associations and NGOs. However, during the entire WSIS process and up to now, cities and local authorities have formally continued to be a part of "civil society" such as that defined by the rules of the United Nations.

The States are not in a hurry to question the current distinction between state actors and all the other players, including the private sector, which offers cities and regional governments little chance to have their voices heard, or to have a weight in the international debate, if they are content with the place to which the system relegates them.

Cities invite themselves in the WSIS

Cities and regions entered the process of the WSIS through the Bureau of Civil Society. In fact, within the framework of their mandate, the civil society division of the Executive Secretariat of the WSIS tried to support cities and local authorities so that they could establish an autonomous and well structured process in order to improve their vision of the Information Society, and above all, elaborate their own plan of action to be recognized by States as an indispensable level in a relationship of three levels: *State – Regional government – City.*

However, being one of the families of the Civil Society Bureau did not give cities and regional governments satisfaction due, on the one hand, to the weak interactions with other categories of civil society, and on the other hand, to the institutional nature of local authorities, which requires a specific institutional framework to make legitimate decisions. Thus, very early on in the process, cities and local authorities set up their own Summit, totally outside the WSIS, while participating at the margins of the prepcom of the WSIS and following its thematic debates.

The major protagonists and the process

The commitment of the Canton of Geneva has offered civil society, including cities and local governments, a strategic framework and a forum for self-organization indispensable to its participation in the WSIS process. The political impetus in favor of local authorities was essentially carried out by the City of Geneva and Greater Lyon. These two cities have truly taken charge of the process as well as the strategic political reflection on the positioning of cities and regions in the global debate on the Information Society.

Lyon associated with Geneva to commit cities and regions to embrace the theme of the Information Society and to define what is at stake today for local authorities. Thus, the First Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society was organized in Lyon 5-7 December 2003. It was innovative in that it was the first Summit organized as a specific contribution of cities to global dynamics that were originally launched by States. It developed in parallel to the WSIS and established its own logic, its own rules and relationships between its players. All major associations of Cities and regional governments were actively involved

in the Lyon Summit: Citynet, FLACMA, Global Cities Dialogue, Eurocities, AIMF, PDM and many others.

During Phase I of the WSIS, Greater Lyon assured the leadership of the process. Senator Mayor of Lyon Gerard Collomb committed himself personally in the process; Pierre-Alain Muet, deputy mayor, assumed the direct leadership of the Summit. The mayor of Geneva, Christian Ferrazino, welcomed the delegation of cities attending the Lyon Summit to Geneva and actively contributed to profiling the Lyon Summit in the final phase of the WSIS. For their part, the Basque public institutions supported the organization of regional preparatory forums which took place in southern countries in order that the action plan truly be the expression of the vision of players on the ground on every continent.

Gerard Collomb and Christian Ferrazino together presented the results of the Lyon Summit to Kofi Annan, and, acting as a duo, addressed the participants at the closing session of the WSIS, which was also a first in the history of United Nations summits. This invitation was due to the open mind of the Swiss President of the Summit who used his discretionary power to grant the floor to non-State speakers.

What makes the Plan of Action of Cities different from the WSIS Plan of Action?

The preparation of the Lyon Summit used a different path than WSIS. Politically, elected officials had to be mobilized through their regional, national or thematic associations, especially Europeans, who already had structured networks around the issues of the Information Society and multimedia content creation. This mobilization was the first, on a global scale, around the theme of the Information Society, providing cities of southern countries a forum for meetings and dialogue that nourished decentralized cooperation projects.

Strategically a Declaration and a global Plan of Action had to be formulated, to provide cities and regional governments a framework for developing their concrete actions. The Declaration was adopted following a long discussion on a draft text compiled on the basis of work conducted by cities during the process. As for the Action Plan, it was formulated as a result of four regional conferences organized in Shanghai for Asia Pacific, Nouakchott for Africa, Curitiba for Latin America, and finally Bilbao for Europe.

The process of the elaboration of the Action Plan was totally different from the process of the prepcom of the WSIS. In fact, the methodological and scientific bases for the process prevailed over political considerations. During the regional conferences cities and regions were requested to identify their priority areas, the difficulties encountered, the success factors of their local policies, and finally, to define together the conditions for the

sustainability of good practices. The summary of these contributions went into the production of an Action Plan, based on an analysis shared by elected officials and their technical experts, which prepared the ground and provided the principles around which cities and regional governments intend to develop their information society polices. Above all, this process highlights the dimension of legitimacy and ownership by the elected officials of their Action Plan, which today remains the strategic framework of the second phase of WSIS.

The outcomes and perspectives

Two years later, in 2005, the same players are at the heart of Phase II of the process. The stakes have evolved. In the meantime, cities have organized themselves around a global organization, United Cities and Local Governments. City-to-city cooperation is intensifying and now also touches the themes of the Information Society. However, without a doubt the most interesting fact is that two great subjects that did not find a satisfactory response in the framework of the WSIS – financing, on the one hand, and the passage from strategy to action on the other – were taken up by the cities, which gave them concrete results.

In fact, the city of Geneva supports the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF). Greater Lyon, for its part, is establishing a Digital Solidarity Agency (DSA) which will provide to cities, and also to States, the private sector and the academic community, diverse services aiming to put together the necessary competencies for an efficient action and will provide quality control for projects potentially financed by the DSF. Finally, the Basque public institutions remain equally very present through the hosting of the II Summit of cities and local authorities in Bilbao 9-11 November 2005.

Phase II of WSIS consolidates the pro-active role of cities in the establishment of new standards relative to the Information Society. There is a deliberate desire to create a multi-partner framework of action gathering cities, regional governments, enterprises, academic experts, players on the ground, and also States. The protagonists of the Lyon-Bilbao process have been a driving force in the inclusion of cities and regional governments in the international debate around the Information Society. The next steps of this process may be promising.

Volunteers: An Essential Building Block for a Society of Shared Knowledge

Viola Krebs
Director, ICVolunteers and Focal Point of the WSIS Volunteer Family

It was at the African Regional Conference in Bamako in 2002 that the volunteer sector first became involved in the process of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Since then, volunteers and volunteer organizations have actively contributed both to the preparatory process of the WSIS, the Geneva Summit and the Tunis phase. As one of the families of the International Civil Society Bureau, the WSIS Volunteer Family brings together organizations working with volunteers both locally and at an international level[1], as well as volunteers themselves. In this article, I would like share some of the outcomes of the work and active participation in the WSIS of a sector that is often underestimated, or even overlooked. The concepts presented in this paper synthesize the outcomes of a collaborative effort of the Volunteer Family. They also outline some of the challenges before us for the future of a society of knowledge accessible to all.

Volunteering is a global fact of life, a mass social phenomenon involving hundreds of millions of people around the world who offer their time, skills and knowledge for the well-being of their neighbors, community or society at large.

Volunteers have played an active role in information technologies since the genesis of the modern information age. Many of the key components we use each day, are in fact, to a great extent, the result of volunteer effort. Well-known examples include Internet protocols, open source software and the World Wide Web itself.

[1] Among others, the WSIS Volunteer Family includes ATD Quart Monde, CIVICUS (World Alliance for Citizen Participation), the European Volunteer Center (CEV), the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Netcorps-Cyberjeunes, OneWorld, and ICVolunteers (International Conference Volunteers). The latter has to date served as the focal point and secretariat of the WSIS Volunteer Family. Throughout the entire first phase of the WSIS, the civil society Volunteer Family closely collaborated with the United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV) and the United Nations Information Technology Service (UNITeS).

Volunteers are teaching the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and working at a grassroots level to reduce the digital divide between those who have access to technology and those who do not, through human capacity-building and literacy programs. Volunteers are also raising awareness about the possibilities of these technologies (e.g. by providing outreach to local users in community telecenters).

Furthermore, volunteers can facilitate the production and dissemination of local content, enhancing cultural and linguistic diversity through ICTs.

New forms of volunteering have emerged through the availability and use of ICTs. One such application is Online Volunteering (also referred to as e-volunteering), a new way of collaborating through the Internet, with a different continent or in one's own city. In this way, volunteers translate documents, create Internet sites for non-profit organizations, advise local communities through online fora and chat facilities on technical issues related to ICTs, regardless of the distance between partners, often combining onsite and online collaboration. In this sense, ICTs are opening up attractive new opportunities for involvement, especially for young people, which can be enhanced through increased collaboration between the volunteer sector and university networks. The availability of technology can thus result in a significant increase in the number of people who are able to contribute their time, skills and knowledge to development, including people living in other parts of the world, homebound individuals and people with disabilities.

Online resources can help the volunteer sector conduct more successful recruitment and awareness raising campaigns. Successful examples include www.hacesfalta.org, a volunteer portal offering volunteer opportunities in Spain and Latin America; www.onlinevolunteering.org, the online volunteering site of United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV); and the www.SeniorWeb.nl, a Dutch web site involving older persons in a society with an increased number of retirees, to name just a few.

While volunteerism largely happens in the informal and non-profit sector, multi-actor partnerships can strengthen and enhance it. One such form is employee volunteering, building partnerships between the volunteer sector and the private sector. "Employee volunteering" or "employee engagement" may be described as the giving of employees' time and skills to the benefit of the communities in which they operate. This is done through a three-way partnership between the employer, employee and the beneficiaries of the volunteer effort. Forms of corporate volunteering can also increase the chances for youth on the labor market, as employees or even as entrepreneurs, for example setting up local cybercafés. Private, public and voluntary sector organizations constitute an enormous reserve of resources, skills and expertise, which can be called on to support local schools,

communities and organizations. Businesses on the other hand, benefit from a much-improved public image, and better skilled and motivated employees.

Volunteers can help train ICT trainers, but also get training themselves by exchanging knowledge. In the context of a developing country, this increases the critical mass of qualified ICT specialists available locally, and reduces the dependency on personnel coming from abroad. Sylvie Niombo, Director of Azur Développement, an NGO training women on the use of ICTs in the Congo (Brazzaville), points out that many young students are still leaving the Congo to study in Europe, because locally, there are no or very few opportunities for such training: While some Congolese information technology specialists have been trained in higher education schools in Kinshasa, the demand remains much greater than the training opportunities available. Development structures such as NGOs, associations, and cooperatives generally do not have the means to hire qualified personnel, limiting the effectiveness of the organization. Volunteers thus bring much needed assistance, contributing to the success of local projects.

Achievements to date

Volunteerism happens at both a formal and informal level. In the information and knowledge society, many of the volunteers work at the local level. Therefore, in the spirit of a bottom-up approach, the WSIS Volunteer Family and the Youth Caucus have strived to get voices heard and projects presented which involve volunteers and youth in ICTs from around the world.

As one of the main outcomes of the work achieved by the Volunteer Family, the Volunteer Action Plan presented to Governments in December 2003 is designed to: (1) strengthen the contributions of volunteering to transform the Information Society into a society of shared knowledge accessible to all, and (2) improve the way in which volunteers and volunteer organizations make use of these technologies.

Through the creation of a Working Group on Volunteering and ICTs, the development of specific language related to volunteerism was included in the WSIS Plan of Action in which governments acknowledge that "everyone should have the necessary skills to benefit fully from the Information Society." It further states that "volunteering, if conducted in harmony with national policies and local cultures, can be a valuable asset for raising human capacity to make productive use of ICT tools and build a more inclusive Information Society. Activate volunteer programs to provide capacity building on ICT for development, particularly in

developing countries."[2] In the Civil Society Declaration, volunteers are mentioned in the context of poverty reduction and human capacity building.[3]

Further, achievement and activities include:

- Organization of several meetings and conferences (Brussels, Dakar, Geneva, Edinburgh, Bogotá, Barcelona, Bamako).

- Creation of an online library on "Volunteerism and the Information Society" and a report titled "Volunteering and ICTs: Establishing the framework for action" (www.worldwidevolunteer.org/wsis2003).

- Creation of a documentary film titled "Something out of Nothing", an inquiry on the role of the Internet in Senegal and Mali and the lessons that can be learned from it.

- Organization of a photo exhibition under the title "Something out of Nothing: Volunteerism and the Information Society, Crossroads between the North and the South", illustrating the digital divide in a concrete manner. The exhibition brought together ten artists from Europe, Africa and America who showed some 80 photographs.

If nothing else, the efforts of the Volunteer Family in the first phase of the WSIS have underscored the tremendous diversity and broad-reaching aspects of information and communication technologies. These technologies have the power not only to affect us globally, but also to touch us locally.

The concept of the Information Society suggests that there is only ONE such society. It also assumes that we are either part of it or excluded from it. Yet, local communities have each their own culture, language and way of thinking. This is why the notion of a single information society seems somewhat limiting. Volunteers are a key resource and driving factor in empowering communities to use ICTs effectively and sensibly in each of our societies. Volunteers are agents of solidarity all over the world, in the South and in the North, promoting values of mutual help and exchange.

[2] WSIS Plan of Action, C4. Capacity Building, point 11, http://www.itu.int/wsis/
[3] WSIS Civil Society Declaration, 2.1.1. and 2.4.5.

Ways forward and challenges ahead of us

Electronic networking was a key factor in the outstanding success of the International Year of Volunteers 2001 (IYV 2001). The General Assembly resolution A/57/L.8, after IYV 2001, recognized the contribution of volunteering to economic and social development, and urged governments to support and invest in volunteer action. While precise and global statistics on volunteerism do not exist, volunteering is estimated to constitute between 5 and 11% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).[4] To illustrate this point, it is worth mentioning the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, where ten million people volunteered in 2000 to vaccinate 550 million children. The total value of this support was estimated at ten billion US dollars.

It has already been acknowledged by the United Nations and governments around the world that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will not be achieved without massive involvement of the world's citizens as volunteers. One of the stated goals of the WSIS is to devise ways in which ICT can be applied to help reach the MDGs. Strengthening the connection between Volunteering and ICT will constitute an important step towards of the attainment of these goals.

As previously mentioned, the phase 1 report of the WSIS Volunteer Family[5] was entitled "establishing the framework for action". The Tunis phase is now a time to implement some of the priorities identified. To achieve this goal and in the spirit of cooperation, the WSIS Volunteer Family and the WSIS Youth Caucus have joined forces to work on national campaigns around the world and develop partnerships for cooperation for the years to come.

However, it is important to keep in mind some of the major challenges before us:

First, for volunteers and volunteer organizations there is a need to work at all levels of action, described by Dr. Kumi Naidoo of CIVICUS (World Alliance for Citizen Participation) as the macro-level (governance), the mezzo-level (policy), the micro-level (operational).[6]

Second, there is a need for people to recognize that the scope of volunteerism is much broader than is often understood and goes well beyond the common stereotype of cookie baking. Volunteerism includes social activists, open source software programmers, and others making very real impacts on social, political and economic levels. It is an essential

[4] United Nations Volunteers Programme.
[5] http://www.worldwidevolunteer.org/wsis2003
[6] Ibid.

factor in turning youth into active citizens of tomorrow, and giving retirees a place to continue making use of their skills and knowledge acquired over a lifetime. In this way, volunteerism helps not only to bridge the digital divide, but also the divide that too often separates generations.

Third, by offering their time and skills, volunteers are able to achieve a lot with a small investment. However, it is important for governments and other potential donors to recognize that a minimal investment is indispensable to cover basic expenses for volunteers, if they are to be effective. Only if volunteers are given the place they deserve, alongside other stakeholders, can they make use of their full potential, in areas such as capacity-building in the use of ICTs towards the attainment of the MDGs.

The Geneva phase of the Summit has been an encouraging beginning towards the construction of a society of shared knowledge, where ICTs are more than just technical tools, but where their social and human dimension is fully being considered. Thanks to the inclusion of the volunteer sector in the Summit process, it was possible for the WSIS Volunteer Family to contribute actively to this vision.

As H.E. Mr. Adama Samassékou, President of the WSIS Geneva phase Prepcom, points out, "volunteers commit themselves to the environment in which they are operating and serve as catalysts, paving the way for the future. Initiatives focusing on South-South volunteering, such as the CyberVolunteers Program launched in the context of the Summit, can further contribute to a society of shared knowledge, where volunteers listen to people and in this way bring a community approach. They come to learn in order to serve better."[7]

In the months and years to come, we need to further strengthen cooperation between the volunteer sector, governments, academia, the private sector, and other civil society organizations. In doing so, volunteers can in fact help governments implement their objectives and goals in a spirit of accompanying, cooperation and solidarity in action.

Websites about Volunteering and ICTs

World Wide Volunteer, online library on volunteerism and ICTs:
www.worldwidevolunteer.org/wsis2003
UNITeS, United Nations Information Technology Service: www.unites.org
Energize: www.energizeinc.com and www.e-volunteerism.com
World Volunteer Web: www.worldvolunteerweb.org
IAVE Colombia: www.iavecolombia.org/ic_cmsi.htm

[7] ICV Newsletter, first quarter 2005, http://cyber.icvolunteers.org.

Specific ICT Volunteering Projects
Computers for Schools Kenya: www.cfsk.org
CyberVolunteers Program: http://cyber.icvolunteers.org
EduCities: www.educities.edu.tw
ELEM: www.elem.org
European Commission, Ploteus Portal: www.ploteus.net
Freeflex: www.freeflex.nl
Geekcorps: www.geekcorps.org
Iko Poran (IKP): www.ikoporan.org
Internet Child Safety Foundation (ICSF): www.icsfonline.org
Hacesfalta: www.hacesfalta.org
National Centre for Volunteering, England: www.employeevolunteering.org.uk
NetAid: www.netaid.org
Netcorps-Cyberjeunes: www.netcorps-cyberjeunes.org
Net Corps Americas: www.netcorpsamericas.org
One World: www.oneworld.net
Online News of the Commission on Human Rights: www.ngochr.org
Online Volunteering: www.onlinevolunteering.org
ProVobis National Volunteer Centre, Romania: www.voluntariat.ro
SeniorWeb, Netherlands: www.seniorweb.nl
Taking IT Global: www.takingitglobal.org
Time Bank UK: www.timebank.org.uk
Volunteer Development Scotland, 2003: www.vds.org.uk
Volunteering Ireland, 2003: www.volunteeringireland.com
Women of Uganda: www.wougnet.org

WSIS Volunteer Family
ATD Quart Monde: www.atd-quartmonde.org
CIVICUS (World Alliance for Citizen Participation): www.civicus.org
European Volunteer Center (CEV): www.cev.org
International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE): www.iave.org
ICVolunteers (International Conference Volunteers): www.icvolunteers.org
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC): www.ifrc.org
Throughout the entire first phase of the WSIS, it closely collaborated with the United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV): www.unv.org

Section 7

Human Rights, Media Freedoms, Cultural Diversity and Intellectual Property

Media Freedoms and Article 19

Ronald Koven
European Representative, World Press Freedom Committee

A large part of the struggle for consensus on final texts for the first World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) centered on getting authoritarian governments to admit the simple reality that the news media are central to that information society. This is so obviously the case that those governments finally had to give in and to recognize that media are indeed at the core of the new environment.

Not only are news sites originally created online amongst the most popular, the traditional news media have entered cyberspace as well. There were 1,456 daily newspapers in the United States in 2003, and there were 1,343 daily newspaper web sites, according to the World Association of Newspapers' annual "World Press Trends". In Italy, the report showed there were 99 dailies and 91 web sites; Germany: 372 dailies and 264 sites; Britain: 107 dailies, 91 sites. And the diverse list of countries with as many, or almost as many, web sites produced by daily newspapers as there are newspapers published includes most Nordic and Baltic states, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Croatia, East Timor, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, and Uruguay.

Needless to say, newspaper web sites are amongst the most visited in their respective countries. Printed newspapers are, of course, not the only traditional news media to duplicate themselves in cyberspace. Major news agencies and broadcasters do so, too.

And a new retrofitting trend may be in the offing – outlets originally created as news web sites are now creating traditional media. In Ukraine, for example, Ukrayinska Pravda, the news web site founded by murdered journalist Georgi Gongadze – which continued as one of the only independent media outlets under the old regime – is now seriously considering capitalizing on its popularity in the lead-up to the Orange Revolution by producing a daily newspaper in print.

From the outset of the WSIS preparatory process, press freedom groups involved held that news media using the new information and communication technologies, such as Internet and direct satellite broadcasting, should enjoy the same press freedoms as those using traditional print and broadcasting means.

In a Declaration of Vienna, adopted on November 20, 2002, the Coordinating Committee of Press Freedom Organizations said:

> We call on delegates and others involved in the Summit process to:
>
> a. Reject any proposal aimed at restricting news content or media operations;
>
> b. Support inclusion of a clear statement of unqualified support for press freedom on the Internet; and
>
> c. Include with action on any other subject that could be used restrictively a clear statement that the particular provision involved is not intended to involve any restriction on press freedom.

The Coordinating Committee groups: the Committee to Protect Journalists (New York), Commonwealth Press Union (London), Inter-American Press Association (Miami), International Association of Broadcasting (Montevideo, Uruguay), International Federation of the Periodical Press (London), International Press Institute (Vienna), North American Broadcasters Association (Toronto), World Association of Newspapers (Paris), and the World Press Freedom Committee (Washington, DC). Together, those groups represent most of the print press and a very large part of the broadcast press operating in the world's established and emerging democracies.

The Coordinating Committee called for the universal "implementation" of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), dating back to 1948. Press freedom groups feared that, instead of using the communication summit as an opportunity to reaffirm and broaden press freedom, governments would exploit anxieties about the new forms of media to enact international restrictions on all forms of press that had eluded them in the divisive debates over a "New World Information and Communication Order" (NWICO).

Those wanting to revisit proposals that were scratched during the NWICO debates argued that those approaches had reflected Cold War divisions and that they could now be safely reconsidered since the Cold War is over. Such assertions were directly undermined when countries like Cuba explicitly threatened in February 2005, during a Preparatory Conference

for the second phase of the WSIS, to reintroduce the NWICO and other related controversies if others persisted in calls to reaffirm the free speech/press freedom principles of Article 19 of the UDHR.

The restrictionists are hardly confined to those nostalgic for the Cold War. Almost any government, in the right circumstances, can be counted upon to seek restrictions on press freedom. The war on terrorism has brought out such tendencies amongst some of the most established democracies. Those who have used that excuse to justify limiting freedoms in traditional democracies have apparently not stopped to think how the measures they sought would be used by rulers with authoritarian bents. In Russia, the government of Vladimir Putin has not hesitated to invoke restrictions by the Bush Administration to justify various aspects of its clampdown on the Russian press.

Not only in the WSIS process, but also in a forum like the Council of Europe, whose very reason for being is the spread of democracy, the old code words keep cropping up in various proposals. These include:

- The need for the press to be "responsible". (Nobody advocates irresponsibility, but the question is "responsible" to whom when the call for "responsibility" comes from governments or intergovernmental bodies.)

- The requirement that the press be "accurate" or "truthful". (Again, who is to determine what that means in practice?)

- Imposition of national codes of ethics on the press. (This often turns out to be a cover for the press to administer self-censorship on behalf of authorities.)

- Regulation, self-regulation or co-regulation of the news media. (The rage to regulate apparent in a number of otherwise respectable international organizations is now often softened by calls for the press to do the will of governments for them through such self-regulatory bodies as national press councils. "Co-regulation" is a new fashion introduced from Australia, involving creation of joint regulatory bodies of industry and government over the media. This recalls the way Fascist Italy organized itself as a "Corporate State" with special chambers formed with companies to regulate the national economy industry by industry.)

- The "Right to Communicate". (This ambiguous concept, lifted straight from the NWICO debate, holds that recognition of freedom of expression and press freedom as individual human rights, as enunciated by the UDHR's Article 19, is insufficient since there must also be collective freedoms for groups and entities.

> This approach has often been invoked to justify a right of various entities to claim space or time in media operated by others.)

Such pressures tend to force press freedom groups into a defensive posture of approaching international meetings as occasions to exercise damage control. It is relatively rare that those who convoke such meetings see them as opportunities to broaden the scope of freedoms or to put them into greater practice. The result is a need for press freedom defenders to apply a worst case analysis to any proposed text. Experience shows that if a clause can be used to justify restrictions, there are authorities who will inevitably do just that.

The damage control worked more or less in the first phase of the Summit in Geneva in December 2003. Press freedom groups did not manage to get the call they wanted for the implementation of Article 19. But, after much sparring, they did get its reaffirmation as a promise and an ideal. Preventing regression constituted a small but significant victory. Now, the task is to protect that holding of the line for the second phase of the Summit in December 2005. The negotiations over Internet governance must not be allowed to become a new way of introducing opportunities for censorship.

The advent of the Internet holds the promise of just the kind of interactive, multi-directional world news scene that the best-intentioned advocates of NWICO said they sought. This can now actually come into being simply by looking upon the Internet both as a new way to spread news and information and as a complement to the established ways. Radio and television did not eliminate print press. They forced print press to play to its own strengths such as its ability to provide more context, background and analysis than broadcasters normally can do or to the ability of print to develop special niches.

There are often anxieties expressed over the possibilities that Internet provides to spread messages not subject to professional information-gathering criteria. Already, however, we see that Internet newsgatherers are learning to establish their reputations online, as is done offline. As users learn to differentiate amongst the news services on offer, online sensationalists and rumor-mongers, are getting the same short shrift as they do offline. Policy makers must learn to exercise more tolerance of the inevitable initial instability that comes with the introduction of new technologies.

What is really needed is a healthy dose of patience from media users, journalists themselves and officials, to allow the news media using the new means of communication to develop and to fit themselves into the expanding information environment alongside the previously existing media forms. For this to happen, there must be press freedom in cyberspace.

WSIS, Media and the Right to Freedom of Expression

Alain Modoux
President, International Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication (ORBICOM)

Relations between media and governments and intergovernmental organizations have always been complex and strained. Tensions reached their paroxysm in the eighties, when the so-called "New World Information and Communication Order" (NWICO) became the universal panacea for the "unbalanced" flow of information between North and South, West and East. More prosaically said, NWICO was in fact a covert way used by totalitarian and authoritarian regimes to control information flows and contents not only between countries, but also and above all within countries. It became one of the hottest issues of the East/West confrontation, all the more so since communication was at the heart of the cold war. It cost UNESCO a heavy price in terms of universality and credibility. The United Sates and the United Kingdom left the Organization in mid-eighties for more than 15 years because, among other reasons, the Organization had failed to fulfill its constitutional duty to "promote the free flow of ideas by words and images".

NWICO has vanished de facto into the ruins of the Berlin Wall, but it does not mean that the remaining totalitarian and authoritarian regimes have softened their propensity for controlling the press and limiting the free opinion and expression of their peoples. On the contrary, they have drawn the lessons from the purportedly "disastrous" consequences of the Soviet Glasnost experience and have continued imposing – in some cases reinforcing – limitations on freedom of expression and press freedom. Therefore, one should not be surprised if media professional organizations have reacted with great suspicion to the International Telecommunications Union's initiative to organize a World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Their fear that WSIS would reopen old wounds and provide totalitarian and authoritarian regimes a fresh opportunity to legitimize limitations on freedom of expression and press freedom was not unfounded.

Both freedom of expression and media have been indeed among the most disputed issues during the preparatory phase of the Geneva Summit. For months, the government delegations were unable to agree on re-committing themselves to the universally accepted principles of freedom of expression (Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and to the place of media as a major stakeholder in the Information Society. Media organizations and freedom of expression advocacy groups were also worried about attempts by several authoritarian governments to introduce into the WSIS Declaration a wording legitimizing restrictions and limitations of freedom of expression in both traditional and new media. A sentence inserted in the draft Declaration was particularly harmful: "The existence of free and independent media should be in accordance with the legal system of every country". For its part, UNESCO, which gained since the end of the cold war worldwide recognition for its unwavering commitment to freedom of expression and press freedom, expressed publicly its serious concern about the consequences of omitting an explicit reference by name or by quotation to the internationally accepted standard of freedom of expression in the draft Declaration, that is Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

At the end of Prepcom 3, in September 2003, the Media Caucus[1] wrote an open letter to the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan to express its concern that fundamental, agreed principles on independent, pluralistic media were at risk. The Media Caucus stated that "agreed principles already accepted by the international community must be preserved in the WSIS process" and drew attention to the text of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, also supported by regional declarations on the media. "These texts, developed under the aegis of UNESCO and the United Nations, are seen by the Media Caucus as the basis to formulate the vision of the place of the media – in both traditional and new forms – in the Information Society. Written by journalists from the five regions, these declarations[2] were unanimously endorsed by the member states of UNESCO – virtually the same body of States that participate in WSIS... These documents seen as a whole are remarkable for their consistency in terms of the fundamental principles of freedom, independence and pluralism of the media and for their reflection of regional nuances and diversity". Finally, the Media Caucus called upon the Secretary-General, as the patron of the

[1] The Media Caucus includes leading world and regional media freedom and other journalistic and media organisations representing all forms of media, also including their labour and management, who have taken part in the WSIS preparatory meetings.

[2] The Windhoek Declaration on the Promotion of Free and Pluralistic African Press, 1991

- The Declaration of Alma Ata on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Asian Media, 1992
- The Declaration of Santiago de Chile on Media Development and Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1994
- The Declaration of Sana'a on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media, 1996
- The Sofia Declaration on Promoting European Pluralistic and Independent Media, 1997

These declarations were adopted by the UNESCO General Conferences in 1995 and 1997.

WSIS, "firstly to remind the States of their existing commitments to fundamental values enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, secondly, to engage the broader spectrum of United Nations agencies in the debate on the role of the UN system in the Information Society".

The Media Caucus's appeal to the United Nations Secretary-General echoed a letter by UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura to Yoshio Utsumi, Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union which is organizer of WSIS. Matsuura called upon his compatriot to work against "regression" on freedom of expression and press freedom. He asked that the ITU Secretary General see to it that Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights be cited in the final WSIS texts.

The dispute about the media and freedom of expression issues remained unsettled until the very last moment, a few days before the inauguration of the Geneva Summit. After weeks of futile discussions, the host country negotiators, in an ultimate mediation, succeeded in convincing the hard-liners to withdraw some of their proposals and to accept a Swiss version. The text finally adopted by the Heads of State reads as follows [Declaration of Principles, paragraph 55]: "We reaffirm our commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of media, which are essential to the Information Society. Freedom to seek, receive, impart and use information for the creation, accumulation and dissemination of knowledge are important to the Information Society. We call for the responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards. Traditional media in all their forms have an important role in the Information Society and ICTs should play a supportive role in this regard. Diversity of media ownership should be encouraged, in conformity with national law, and taking into account relevant international conventions. We reaffirm the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills."

Professional media organizations applauded the document's wording, but said it should have gone further. As World Press Freedom Committee Chairman James H. Ottaway put it: "We are pleased that Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was affirmed in the final documents of the Summit. It would have been even better if the Summit had called for the implementation of Article 19 in all the countries of the world."

A very positive development relating to the broadcasting industry occurred at the World Electronic Media Forum (WEMF) organized in Geneva within the WSIS framework. On this occasion, the broadcasting unions for the various regions of the world, on the initiative

of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), presented a "Broadcasters' Declaration" to the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and, through him, to the heads of state and government attending the World Summit on the Information Society. In the "Broadcasters' Declaration", the World Broadcasting Unions (WBUs)[3], supported by the Association of Commercial Television (ACT), recalled the key role of public and private broadcasting, in particular digital broadcasting and advanced services to be launched in the next few years, in creating an information society which involves all citizens. They underlined the broadcasters' responsibility and contribution to promoting the fundamental values of freedom of expression, access to information, media pluralism, and cultural diversity, and considered that the Information Society should be founded on the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in particular Article 19, on the right to freedom of expression.

The WBUs' statement includes five principles and objectives:

1. Communications technology is not an end in itself; it is a vehicle for the provision of information and content.

2. Freedom of expression, freedom and pluralism of the media, and cultural diversity should be respected and promoted.

3. The electronic media have a vital role to play in the Information Society.

4. Television and radio are crucial for ensuring social cohesion and development in the digital world.

5. Information should remain accessible and affordable to everyone.

The "Broadcasters' Declaration" marked a historic milestone because, after several months of negotiations, the public service and private broadcasters throughout the world agreed jointly on this position presented under the banner of the World Broadcasting Unions.

The 2nd phase of the WSIS, new fears and suspicions

In spite of its reassuring outcome, the Geneva Summit did not reduce the media's suspicion that authoritarian governments would attempt to take advantage of the 2nd phase of the WSIS to reintroduce concepts and wording intended to weaken the internationally accepted

[3] The WBUs comprise ABU (Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union), IAB (International Association of Broadcasting), ASBU (Arab States Broadcasting Union), CBU (Caribbean Broadcasting Union), EBU (European Broadcasting union), NABA (North American Broadcasters Association), OTI (Organización de la Televisión Iberoamericana) and URTNA (Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa).

standard of freedom of expression. Although governments have decided at Prepcom 1, in Hammamet, in June 2004, not to reopen the agreements reached in Geneva, media organisations and human rights advocacy groups suspect some governmental delegations of using the debate on Internet governance to position themselves with a view to legitimizing limitations on freedom of expression and press freedom. In this regard, the members of the Media Caucus participating in Prepcom 2 (Geneva, February 2005) expressed their concern that the term "governance" not be allowed "to become a code word for government regulation of Internet content. The system must not be reorganized to permit this internationally nor to encourage it nationally. Any changes to the Internet governance system should not involve controls over content, nor modifications of the Internet's technical 'architecture' that facilitate or permit censorship of news or opinion. Nor should 'self-regulation' be allowed to become a surrogate for governmental regulation of content on the Internet". In addition, the Media Caucus statement stressed that "Security concerns must not serve as pretexts to limit freedom of expression in cyberspace. Nor should considerations of "ethics" be allowed to become a veiled way to justify censorship. The creation of ethical norms is the sole responsibility of media workers themselves".

To back its position, the Media Caucus referred, to a great extent, to the conclusions and recommendations of the media conference on "The Role and Place of the Media in the Information Society in Africa and the Arab Region", which took place in Marrakech in November 2004, as a follow-up meeting to the Geneva WSIS. It was jointly organized by the Communication Ministry of the Kingdom of Morocco and ORBICOM, the International Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication. Registered as a thematic meeting by the WSIS Executive Secretariat, the Conference brought together more than 300 people representing the major regional and international media organizations with consultative status with UNESCO and the United Nations. The Marrakech conference participants reached a certain number of conclusions outlined in the "Marrakech Declaration"[4]. They unanimously agreed that Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an essential foundation of the Information Society adding that: "The time has come to move from the promise of Article 19 to its universal implementation". With regard to Internet and other new media forms, the participants reaffirmed that "they should be afforded the same freedom of expression protections as traditional media."

Referring to the debate on the Internet governance, the participants in the Marrakech Conference took the position that "Internet Governance should allow better cooperation on

[4] The full texts of the Marrakech Declaration and Action Plan are available on the following web sites:
www.itu.int/wsis/preparatory2/thematic.html
www.mincom.gov.ma/mediaconference/en/declaration.htm
www.orbicom.uqam.ca/index_en.html

Internet management. It should not be a pretext to regulate Internet content of news or opinion. In particular, security considerations and the demands of the battle against crime including terrorism should not imperil freedom of expression and press freedom. Internet Service Providers should not be held liable for the content of the messages they carry." Also, on Internet governance, they stressed that "Representatives of the media must be involved as full partners in any future Internet governance system." Finally, the conference made a number of recommendations on what is called "The Marrakech Action Plan".

The document incorporates six themes:

- Media freedom, independence and pluralism faced with the challenge of cybersecurity.
- The place of traditional and new media in the Information Society in Africa and in the Arab countries.
- Reducing the digital divide in the media.
- Women media professionals in Africa and in the Arab countries.
- Culture, multilingualism, and the media in the Information Society.
- Media and the Internet governance.

It is important to stress the exemplary partnership developed by the Kingdom of Morocco and the international non-governmental organisation ORBICOM for the Marrakech conference. The two partners not only cooperated closely in the material organisation of the meeting, but worked hand in hand to make certain that the conference would take place, from the beginning to the end, in full respect of democratic principles. All participants were able to express themselves freely, without restriction or discrimination. Although the Marrakech Declaration was initially drafted by a committee composed exclusively of media professionals, it was approved by all, including high-ranking African and Arab government officials who attended the conference. This meeting received extensive media coverage by the Moroccan press, which, in its diversity, offered true and pluralistic accounts of the conference's deliberations.

In Marrakech as well as in Hammamet and Geneva, at Prepcom 1 and 2, media representatives expressed their deep and continuing concerns about plans to hold the 2nd phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, in November 2005. Several media organizations have adopted resolutions calling for plans to hold this Summit in

Tunisia to be abandoned unless that country demonstrates its respect for human rights, notably freedom of expression and press freedom. Some 30 media organizations and freedom of expression advocacy groups met in June 2004 in Baku (Azerbaijan) at the initiative of the International Freedom of Expression eXchange, better known as IFEX, a worldwide electronic alert network reporting on freedom of expression abuses.

The participants in the Baku meeting "urged the United Nations and Member States to change the venue of the WSIS unless the government of Tunisia makes substantial progress on respect for human rights and freedom of expression". They listed a few basic and essential benchmarks for progress before holding the Summit in Tunisia: "the recognition of and respect for the unfettered right of human rights and other civil society groups, including freedom of expression organisations, to operate freely in Tunisia; the dropping of charges against and the release of individuals jailed for exercising their right to freedom of expression, consistent with international human rights law; reform of the media and communications environment, including the right to establish independent media outlets and uncensored access to the Internet". In addition, they required clear guarantees concerning the Summit itself: "that all local and international human rights and other civil society organisations are free to distribute and to receive material at and from the conference site without threat or practice of any form of censorship; that local and international media will be able to report freely and without interference from the Summit, including directly from the conference site".

On the occasion of Prepcom 2, the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX) Tunisia Monitoring Group released a report entitled "Tunisia: Freedom of Expression under Siege". The report is based on a fact-finding mission to Tunisia undertaken in January 2005 by members of the Monitoring Group and additional background research and Internet testing. Describing the conditions for participation in the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Tunis, the report expresses grave concern about the state of freedom of expression in Tunisia and recommends steps the Tunisian government should take to bring the country in line with international human rights standards. The IFEX report was presented to the participants in the Prepcom 2 in Geneva during a private session, outside the regular WSIS framework. Tunisian opponents and representatives of Tunisian civil society sympathetic to the Tunisian authorities exchanged contradictory views on the situation in Tunisia, but accepted the procedural rule imposed by the Chair that everybody should be free to express his/her views and should respect each other's opinion. For the first time since the beginning of the 2nd phase of the WSIS, Tunisian opponents and pro-government representatives could meet in the same room without clashing with each other. Some optimistic observers have interpreted this change as a very first sign that things may move in the right direction, a few months before the Tunis Summit opens.

Media Pluralism and Cultural Diversity

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The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) "Declaration of Principles: Building the Information Society: a global challenge in the new Millennium" begins with a "Common Vision of the Information Society", that is, a "common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".[1] It associates information and communication technologies (ICTs) with promoting the development goals of the Millennium Declaration,[2] and reaffirms "that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression". It states that "communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and the foundation of all social organization. … Everyone, everywhere should have the opportunity to participate and no one should be excluded from the benefits the Information Society offers".

In the WSIS Plan of Action, consideration is given to the need for international and regional cooperation. It is argued that this "needs to be strengthened with a view to promoting universal access and bridging the digital divide, *inter alia*, by provision of means of implementation". Governments of developing countries are invited to raise the relative priority of ICT projects in requests for international cooperation and assistance and to build on and accelerate public-private partnerships, focusing on the use of ICT in development.

[1] World Summit on the Information Society (2003), 'Declaration of Principles - Building the Information Society: a global challenge in the new Millennium', 12 December, http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsis/doc/S03-WSIS-DOC-0004!!PDF-E.pdf;
[2] See http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

When it comes to the vital and important issues of cultural diversity and media pluralism, there are few signs, however, that important lessons of past decades have been learnt. First, considerable emphasis is given in the WSIS context to "the Information Society", a singular rather than plural construct. It is the Information Society that we are asked to consider, not a system of diverse interlinked information societies with distinct histories and futures. Second, much of the discussion is about ICTs; it mainly is about access to technologies. This is very strongly emphasized in the WSIS Plan of Action,[3] where paragraph 6, for example, provides indicative targets … for improving connectivity and access in the use of ICTs … to be achieved by 2015.[4] Yet we know that if cultural diversity and media pluralism are to be fostered and encouraged, the emphasis must be placed on communication processes and on the diverse ways in which information and media content are produced and consumed.

On the theme of cultural diversity, paragraph 19 of the Declaration calls on stakeholders to "foster and respect cultural diversity", but is silent on media pluralism, calling upon stakeholders only to "recognise the role of the media". Later in paragraph 52, cultural diversity is linked to identity, linguistic diversity and to the production and accessibility of local content of all kinds. The Declaration turns to the United Nations' and UNESCO's work on a cultural diversity convention which is currently underway to achieve some of its goals.

With respect to the media, paragraph 55 refers to a "commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of media … Diversity of media ownership should be encouraged, in conformity with national law, and taking into account relevant international conventions. We reaffirm the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills".

In the WSIS Plan of Action, there are fifteen actions under the cultural diversity theme aimed at delivering on the broad goals of the Declaration and seven actions dealing with media pluralism. Most of the statements are worthy, but there is little sign that issues of the balance between market-led and government or civil society-led initiatives and its influence on the future have been fully understood. To understand the importance of this observation, this short paper provides a view from both the past and the present.

[3] World Summit on the Information Society (2003), "Plan of Action", 12 December 2003 available at http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsis/doc/S03-WSIS-DOC-0005!!PDF-E.pdf

[4] All but one of the targets refer to ICT connection or access, i) is the exception, "to encourage the development of content and to put in place technical conditions in order to facilitate the presence and use of all world languages on the Internet".

A View from the Past

Twenty-five years ago, UNESCO published "Many Voices, One World", a groundbreaking report that addressed many of the core issues around media pluralism and cultural diversity that remain relevant today.[5] In the intervening years there have been many changes in technology, the globalisation debate has subsumed discussions of transnationalisation, and many more stakeholders are being explicitly acknowledged. Nevertheless, Sean MacBride's comment that "full use of communication in all its varied strands is vital to assure that humanity has more than a history … that our children are assured a future", is as pertinent today as it was in 1980.

The MacBride Commission put substantial emphasis on the communication process, rather than on technology. It called for societies in which there would be:

> …a) the diffusion of power through broader access to and participation in the communication process; (b) the benefits of communication used as an educational and socializing force; (c) the reduction of inequalities through democratisation; (d) the abolition of the vestiges of domination as full national liberation becomes a reality.

The authors of Many Voices, One World, argued that "…the basic decisions in order to forge a better future for men and women in communities everywhere, in developing as well as in developed nations, do not lie principally in the field of technological development: *they lie essentially in the answers each society gives to the conceptual and political foundations of development*" (emphasis added). They acknowledged that "the subjects of imbalance and domination were among the most contentious in the early rounds of the world-wide debate on communications" in the 1970s, but they drew clear attention to the problems created by imbalance and the ways in which this was being articulated at the time in the cultural industries.

The report called for policies to achieve the necessary "…allocation of public resources, decisions about general structure for communication activities, elimination of internal and external imbalances, and definition of priorities, which naturally vary from one country to another". It called for measures to "promote endogenous capacities in all countries for devising, producing and using new communication technologies, as well as programmes and their content...." It also called for the development of critical forms of education, a reduction

[5] International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (1980/2004) *Many Voices, One World – Towards a New, More Just, and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order- The MacBride Commission*, first published by UNESCO, Lanham NJ: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

of a fascination with technology, and the fostering of people's ability to choose more discriminatingly between the different products of the communication process.

The New World Information and Communication Order was envisaged as "…an open-ended conceptual framework", characterised by greater equity and a new balance of interests between stakeholders. In principle, this would offer "…the possibility of localized, inexpensive, flexible and decentralized communication structures which facilitate broader public access and participation". But it was acknowledged that this potential would transform into practice only under circumstances where technology becomes a servant – not the driver of change; where the social order and its financial and political control systems become less hierarchical and where inequalities (both intranational and international) are reduced substantially.

It was understood that the problems of the day could be tackled only as a result of a "huge effort". In addition to finance, the report acknowledged the need to integrate communication into development strategies, to strengthen cultural identity, and to reduce the commercialisation of communication, that is, the cultural industries. Considerable attention was given to the need to foster professional integrity and standards in the media and among journalists and to emphasize the need for the democratisation of communication by removing obstacles, promoting diversity and choice, and through integrating all people and enabling their participation in society.

In the intervening years some of the rhetoric has changed and various ICTs including the Internet have become pervasive in the lives of those who have sufficient resources to afford them. Over twenty-five years what has not changed, however, is the dialectic process that continues to foster poverty, scarcity and exclusion, a dialectic that has major implications for media pluralism and cultural diversity.

A View from the Present

Parallel to WSIS activities, UNESCO has been working on the text for a convention on the protection of the diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions to back up its 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.[6] The dialectic that fosters poverty, scarcity and exclusion and which works against media pluralism and cultural diversity is one that will continue to be permitted to operate if the lessons of research over recent decades are

[6] UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted unanimously by the 185 Member States represented at the 31st session of the General Conference in 2001 in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001, http://www.unesco.org/confgen/press_rel/021101_clt_diversity.shtml

ignored. Research on media and ICT history, from a political economy perspective[7] and from perspectives focusing on social processes and practices[8] has shown that market forces alone do not generate cultural diversity and that the market and commercial forces on their own, do not give priority to the protection of the local expression of cultural identities in many cases.[9]

The global cultural industries continue to give rise to dominant positions that foster inequalities. While there is the appearance of variety that sometimes passes for diversity, this is not a warrant of plurality. This is so despite the potential of the Internet and other forms of new media to foster inclusiveness. Research also shows that state monopolies can contribute to local scarcity of media and other cultural materials and this can be damaging to identity expression. Monopolies or market dominance can stifle the expression of cultural diversity.[10] In addition, the cultural industries have benefited from public funding for their development in regulated environments. This has often been required in order to foster public as well as market-based production and consumption of media and other cultural materials.

Research indicates that there is a need for balance between the openness of the market and cultural policies if diversity and pluralism are to be achieved. There is a need to promote a balance between the promotion of creativity and the protection of intellectual property rights.[11] There is also a need to achieve a balance between what industrialised countries offer to the market and what developing countries may produce, offering fair access to the same historical public funding opportunities, mechanisms and processes as industrialised countries have benefited from in the past. There is a need to foster non-proprietary and non-commercial forms of cultural exchange as in the form of a public domain information, public media services, and the application of concepts of fair use of content. Fostering cultural diversity means being inclusive and acknowledging and supporting a plurality of channels and genres, from media and ICTs to wider cultural practices. This is essential to allow spaces for freedom of expression and creativity. Achieving the necessary balance

[7] See N. Garnham and F. Inglis (1990) *Capitalism and Communication: Global Culture and the Economics of Information*, London: Sage; N. Garnham (2000) *Emancipation, the Media, and Modernity: Arguments about the Media and Social Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 and R. Mansell (2004) 'Political Economy, Power and New Media', *New Media & Society*, 6(1): 96 – 105.

[8] See for example, A. Sreberny (2002) 'Globalization and Me' in J. Man Chan and B. MacIntyre (eds) *In Search of Boundaries: Communication, Nation-States and Cultural Identities*, Norwood NJ: Ablex Publishing; and D. Frau-Meigs (2002) "Cultural exception", national policies and globalisation: Imperatives in democratisation and promotion of contemporary culture', *Quaderns del CAC*, No. 14, Sept-Dec., http://www.audiovisualcat.net/publicationsing/Q14france.pdf

[9] This discussion draws upon IAMCR's contribution to discussions of the draft text of the Convention in February 2005.

[10] R. Mansell (1999) "New media competition and access: The scarcity-abundance dialectic", *New Media & Society*, 1(2): 155-82.

[11] See R Mansell and W E Steinmueller (2000) *Mobilising the Information Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 7.

means attention to the regulation of cultural industry ownership, to content production and consumption issues, and to financial support mechanisms.

Towards the Future

At the end of the first phase of WSIS in December 2003 the last of these issues – financial support mechanisms – had not been dealt with. The WSIS Plan of Action sets out a "digital solidarity agenda" aimed at "mobilizing human, financial and technological resources for inclusion of all men and women in the emerging Information Society". A task force was established to examine existing financing mechanisms and the feasibility of the creation of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund. Such a fund has in fact been established.[12] In its report at the end of 2004, however, the Task Force observed that funding "should be seen in the context of available financing for the broader set of development agendas and goals…"[13] It called for improved cross-sectoral and cross-institutional coordination, more multi-stakeholder partnerships, stronger emphasis on domestic finance, private sector support for locally relevant applications and content, strengthening capacities to secure funds and to use them effectively, and encouragement of increased voluntary, consumer-based contributions.

As for the new Digital Solidarity Fund, however, the "Task Force felt that it was not in a position to assess its role among the various ICT financial mechanisms". The opportunity to undertake a "huge effort" as recommended by the Many Voices, One World report will be missed if this issue cannot be resolved in a more imaginative way. Without resources the ambitions of the texts of the WSIS that do call for measures to foster cultural diversity and media pluralism are unlikely to be met. Where policy measures and investment are needed to alter the balance of activity in the media and cultural industries, this entails costs to create or strengthen capacities in ways that are tailored to local contexts and circumstances.

If no new financial measures are supported, the cost of the responsibility for fostering cultural diversity and media pluralism will default to poor countries and to the development community with its many competing priorities. Financing arrangements will continue to work against the interests of fostering inclusive communication in poor countries and against media pluralism and cultural diversity.

[12] See http://www.dsf-fsn.org/en/15c-en.htm
[13] The Report of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms for ICT for Development (2004), *Financing ICTD*, Executive Summary, http://www.itu.int/wsis/tffm/final-report-executive-summary.doc.

Community Media and the Communication Divide

Steve Buckley
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This paper tells a story of struggle. It is a story of people and communities striving to speak out and to be heard. It is a story about information and society. Against the odds, it is a story in which the tools of communication can be a means of empowerment and self-reliance.

This is about the right to freedom of expression, a right that is universally recognised but far from universally respected. A right that is widely understood to underpin other human rights, democracy and sustainable development, but one that all too frequently seems available to wealthy and political elites while excluding people from poor and marginalised communities.

People living in poverty face barriers to the freedom of expression that are directly associated with the conditions in which they live.[1] Economic obstacles include the costs of production and reception. Social obstacles include discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, caste and class. Educational obstacles include literacy and language. Logistical obstacles include transport, physical access and inadequate supplies of electricity. Political obstacles include repression and lack of will of states to allow democratic expression and voice for the most marginalised groups, as well as censorship by government, commercial and social interests.

To understand the barriers that exclude poor people from modern information-based societies, we have to talk not of the *digital divide* but of the *communications divide*. It is a divide that can be seen to emerge from the earliest written forms of communication and from the use of elite languages that exclude the uneducated and the illiterate. It is a divide reinforced by the first information technology, the printing press, but one that can be overcome today

[1] Bellagio Symposium on Media, Poverty and Freedom of Expression, September 2003.

by new information and communication technologies that offer means for the participation of all.

I am not talking of the Internet. For the poorest people, the Internet will remain an elite medium for many years to come, at least until there is universal access to education, basic literacy for all, universal access to electricity and enough hours remaining in the day after working in the fields, collecting firewood, filling water jugs and other essential chores of survival.

This is why, if the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) is serious in fulfilling its development mandate, it must pay greater attention to the role and the potential of the traditional media in bridging the communications divide. Traditional media, particularly radio, can reach out to those people who are most at risk of exclusion from an information-based economy, the same people whose livelihoods must be improved if the international community is to achieve the development goals it has agreed and to which the WSIS has declared its intent to make a contribution.

The End of Dictatorship

This is a story of a rural community in Indonesia. Just outside Yogyakarta, in the village of Timbulharjo, there is a community owned and volunteer-run radio station called Radio Angkringan. It is named after the informal pavement food stalls where people sit to eat, drink and talk – a kind of popular meeting space. Broadcasts are in the evenings because in daylight hours people are too busy working their living from the land. The station has just one computer with an audio bank of Indonesian music, together with microphones, a small mixing unit and an antenna. This, together with the voices of volunteers, local listeners and guests, provides the broadcast service. The volunteers at Radio Angkringan gather news from the Internet but connectivity is unreliable and expensive. Their immediate priority is to acquire a motorcycle so they can take their reporting kit to the neighbouring local villages.

Today there are thousands of community radio stations around the world like Radio Angkringan, giving voice and access to information for poor and marginalised communities. Operating often with a precarious economic base and sometimes in uncertain legal conditions, community media have nevertheless built a niche for themselves as a voice for civil society. Radio Angkringan, founded in 2000, was a product of the end of dictatorship.

In Indonesia, as in many other countries, the emergence of community broadcasting was associated with political reform and democratisation. Until the fall of the Suharto dictatorship in 1998, the Ministry of Information exercised strict media control, journalists were censored, publications banned, reporters and writers jailed. A few brave alternative

publications used the Internet but mainstream media avoided all criticism of the regime and dared not speak out on issues that crossed the "red line" such as disappearances, land seizures and corruption.

One of the first actions of the new Indonesian government was to abolish the Ministry of Information, to annul the press laws of the dictatorship and to introduce a new press law guaranteeing freedom of the press. The media environment opened up and hundreds of private broadcasters, newspapers and community radios were established. Community radio and television have been among the provisions of more recent Indonesian media reform.

Unfortunately there are still too many governments that remain resistant to media reform. Despite widespread access to satellite channels and the Internet, the urge of governments to control what their populations can see, hear and read is preventing the establishment of civil society media that give voice to people and communities and help bridge the communications divide. In this respect community media can be a measure of a commitment to democracy.

A Benchmark for Civil Society

"Governments should implement a legal and supportive framework favouring the right to free expression and the emergence of free and pluralistic information systems, including the recognition of the specific and crucial role of community media in providing access to communication for isolated and marginalized groups."[2]

These words were adopted, in September 2004, as part of the final Declaration of the United Nations Round Table on Communications for Development, hosted in Rome by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). To these leading specialists working in the field of communications for development, the statement is not controversial. Indeed statements in recognition of the role of community media can be found in reports of several United Nations specialist agencies including The World Bank[3], United Nations Development

[2] Ninth United Nations Round Table on Communications for Development, Rome, September 2004
[3] The World Bank has said: "Community radio stations can be critical enablers of information, voice and capacities for dialogue", in Social accountability and public voice through community radio programming, Social Development Notes No 76, The World Bank April 2003

Programme (UNDP)[4], United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)[5] and FAO[6].

In the months running up to the WSIS Summit in Geneva in 2003, a similar statement appeared in a key document produced by civil society stakeholders. It was one of a list of benchmarks against which the government negotiations at the WSIS would be judged. It stated:

> Community media, that is media which are independent, community-driven and civil-society based, have a specific and crucial role to play in enabling access and participation for all to the Information Society, especially the poorest and most marginalised communities. Community media should be supported and promoted. Governments should assure that legal frameworks for community media are non-discriminatory and provide for equitable allocation of frequencies through transparent and accountable mechanisms.[7]

If the World Summit on the Information Society had the courage to recognize the role of community media and to adopt this simple proposition it would have achieved a significant step towards its United Nations mandate to put ICT "at the service of development for all".[8]

In Geneva 2003 it failed to do so, retaining only the weaker proposition to "give support to media based in local communities"[9] and rejecting inclusion of the words "community media". This was not an accidental omission. Proposals to include community media were submitted by civil society and government delegations and achieved substantial support but not sufficient consensus to find their way into the final Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action.

There were two obstacles. From an early stage in negotiations, it was clear the treatment of media and freedom of expression would be a highly sensitive issue. China led the way, among authoritarian governments, in resisting inclusion of the right to freedom of expression and seeking to keep to a minimum any new commitments to media freedom. But

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[4] UNDP has said: "Legal and regulatory frameworks that protect and enhance community media are especially critical for ensuring vulnerable groups freedom of expression and access to information", in Access to Information: Practice Note, UNDP October 2003

[5] UNESCO has said: "Community radio is one of the most effective and least costly means of communication for development, especially in rural communities" in Communication for Development, Report to the 58th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, May 2003

[6] FAO has said: "Community radio activities can help in bridging the rural digital divide facilitating the link with new information and communication technologies" in A Brief about FAO Communication for Development, FAO Communication for Development Group, 2004

[7] WSIS Civil Society Benchmarks Document, Final Version, 11 December 2003

[8] United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 56/183, 31 January 2002

[9] World Summit on the Information Society, Plan of Action, 12 December 2003

more explicit opposition came from a different source, from right wing Latin American governments, notably El Salvador, closely associated with the lobby of commercial broadcast proprietors.

Community media was squeezed out of the Geneva Declaration by an alignment of interests, from state control and market domination, against new commitments to media pluralism and diversity. Just as the existence or otherwise of community media can be a measure of democratic participation, so in Geneva it was also a benchmark for civil society demands.

Beyond Market Domination

This is a story of indigenous people in Mexico. It is the story of a day of celebration when, on 6 December 2004, Radio Jën Poj in Santa Maria Tlahuitoltepec, Oaxaca and Radio Uandarhi de Uruapan, Michoacán became the first indigenous groups in Mexico to be granted broadcast licences to operate their own community radio stations. The move by the Mexican government followed three years of negotiations and lobbying by community media activists, human rights organisations and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights.[10]

The struggle for recognition of community broadcasting in Mexico has not been easy nor is the process yet complete. When President Vicente Fox's Partido Acción Nacional won the Mexican election of 2000 one of the essential demands of citizen's groups was reform of the Radio and Television Act, guarantees of the right to freedom of expression and the need for limits on private media concentration in the hands of corporations such as Televisa.

At first it seemed there were good reasons to be optimistic. A multi-stakeholder discussion forum was established in 2001, including legislators, representatives of political parties, academics, media owners and citizen's groups. The demand for community radio recognition was presented, along with other proposals for reform and democratisation of the media. The government appeared to accept the case for reform and there was a short-lived moratorium on the closure of existing community radio stations that had started-up without a licence.

The process came abruptly to a halt. Behind the scenes lobbying of the federal government by commercial broadcast proprietors produced a new radio and television decree weighted strongly in their favour together with renewed persecution of the community radio stations. Community broadcasters, including Radio Jën Poj, reported military raids and violently implemented closures. To counter growing public disquiet at these interventions,

[10] Aleida Calleja, The Odyssey of Community Radio in Mexico, InteRadio vol 12 no 1, April 2005

commercial broadcasters launched a campaign seeking, unsuccessfully, to discredit community radio.

In 2003 both the United Nations Human Rights Commission and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights intervened with recommendations to the Mexican government to cease the persecution of community radio and to provide proper licences to operate. While Mexican diplomats in Geneva were continuing to support the efforts of El Salvador to keep community media out of the WSIS, officials in Mexico City were quietly negotiating to find a solution to the demands of indigenous people to have their own voice on the airwaves.

In March 2004, at a hearing of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, the Mexican government accepted that community radio is a human rights issue and gave undertakings to establish a process for legal recognition of not-for-profit community radio stations serving indigenous people and farming communities. Despite last-ditch efforts by commercial broadcasters to persuade President Vicente Fox to abandon the licensing plans, the first two licences were awarded in December 2004 and more have been awarded since. The newly licensed community radios have said they will emphasize indigenous languages and culture and will seek to address the social and economic problems of the communities they serve.

Empowering Communities

Twenty years ago there was almost no broadcast community media outside the Americas, a few Western European countries and Australia. State monopolies were the norm across Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Today that situation has changed dramatically. In the last ten years community broadcasting has gained a presence across the African continent, in most European Union countries and in many countries of Asia and the Pacific.

Throughout the world governments are reforming their media laws to recognize community media. In the last year alone, countries as diverse as the UK, Argentina, Bolivia, India, Indonesia and South Korea have adopted reforms that support community media. At the same time there has been growing recognition in the international human rights system of the importance of community media, including explicit calls for support issued by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission of

Human Rights[11], the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights[12] and the Council of Europe.[13]

When measured against media trends, commitments to the right to freedom of expression and the views of experts and multilateral agencies working in the field of communications for development, the failure of the first phase of the WSIS to give explicit support for community media in the final Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action appears all the more perverse

Yet, for community media activists the first phase of the WSIS has, paradoxically, been a success. The resistance of a few governments to the words "community media" has ensured it to be a subject of extensive debate and provided opportunities to set out precisely why community media is important. It has also brought new alliances with governments prepared to speak out and make the case for community media in the face of this resistance.

As long as there are dictatorships in the world or excessively powerful private interest groups then there will be governments ready to put obstacles in the way of community media and the right of everyone to the freedom of expression. As long as obstacles remain then the struggle for recognition of community media will be a core issue for civil society groups seeking a just and equitable world based on human rights principles and sustainable development priorities.

In the second phase of the WSIS governments will look more closely at how they can harness the power of information and communication technologies to implement their commitments to human rights and international development goals. Those governments who are serious about the vision and principles of the Geneva Declaration will know that implementation depends on empowering communities and that community media have a vital role to play.

[11] The Special Rappporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights stated in his Annual Report 2002: "Given the potential importance of these community channels for freedom of expression, the establishment of discriminatory legal frameworks that hinder the allocation of frequencies to community radio stations is unacceptable."

[12] The Africa Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has stated: "Community broadcasting shall be promoted given its potential to broaden access by poor and rural communities to the airwaves" Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, Principle V, Adopted at 32nd Session of the Africa Commission on Human and People's Rights, 17-23 October 2002.

[13] A report adopted by the Council of Europe Steering Committee on the Mass Media stated: "Member States should encourage the development of the contribution of Community Media in a pluralistic media landscape." Transnational Media Concentrations in Europe, Council of Europe 2004

Security and Privacy in Cyberspace

Rikke Frank Joergensen
Co-Chair, WSIS Civil Society Human Rights Caucus

> *Never have we seen such political pressure to expand surveillance. Never has the public been so fearful. Democratic Institutions all over the world are being tested now. Will they pass the test? If not, we will wake up to a different kind of society*[1]

Despite the fact the privacy is a core human right and crucial to the economic, social and technological developments, which we call the "Information Society", it has proven very difficult to get it acknowledged and protected within the WSIS process. This contribution will provide a brief analysis on privacy as a human right, why privacy protection is crucial in the Information Society, privacy and WSIS, and the challenges ahead.

Privacy as a human right

Privacy is a core human right; enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 12[2], and in Article 17 of the International Covenant of Political and Civil Rights, which is legally binding upon United Nations Member States. Its importance as a basis for the development of a democratic society is stressed time and again by the United Nations Human Rights Committee and by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It has also been emphasized by regional instruments such as the European Court of Human Rights. Privacy protects the essence of human rights: human dignity. Knowing everything about someone reduces that person to a set of known facts, traceable and controllable. As long as a zone of autonomy exists around the individual, the opportunities for abuse and oppression are lessened.

[1] Marc Rotenberg, Director of Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC), at the Privacy Commissioners annual meeting in Wroclaw, Poland, 14-16 September 2004.
[2] "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks." Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 12.

Privacy is closely linked to other human rights such as freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, since the protection of the individual against arbitrary state interference is a precondition for exercising political rights in a democratic society. The right to freedom of expression includes not only the right to speak freely or to print, but the right to distribute, the right to receive, the right to read and inquire, the freedom of thought, and the freedom to teach. Also, the freedom to associate and privacy in one's associations are intertwined. Protection of privacy enables us to interact politically without fear, to speak our mind without retribution, and to meet without membership. Privacy enables societal participation and political engagement, and is thus a fundamental component to freedom.

The right to privacy includes both the protection of physical integrity, family life, territories such as the home or the public space, and personal information and correspondence. In relation to the Information Society, it is especially the protection of personal information and correspondence that is at stake.

Why privacy protection is crucial in the Information Society

When a large amount of our interactions take place online, this fundamentally changes the conditions for privacy protection, since the mere nature of digital communication puts privacy in the defensive. Whereas monitoring the individuals' behavior and communication in the physical space requires physical tracking and wiretapping, the point of departure in cyberspace is different. When we do our whereabouts online, our footsteps remain visible unless we take active precautions to hide them. As every footstep leave tracks behind, this gives access to surveillance, which by far exceeds the means and scope for surveillance in the physical world. Thus it is relatively simple for a state, an employer or a commercial party to follow these tracks, to record them, store them, compile them, and combine them. The many ways of surveillance on the Internet allows for widespread and intensive mapping of the life and habits of individuals as more and more services become on-line. What are our buying patterns? Which newspapers are we reading? Which newsgroups and communities do we visit? What are our political or religious beliefs? In a context, where almost all attributes of an individual can be known, all interactions mapped, and all intentions assumed based on records, the need for protection of privacy is crucial to retain a sense of freedom. This calls for active measures to ensure that privacy is still protected and promoted. Measures to ensure that the essence and the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights continues to be guiding norms for our societies.

Privacy and WSIS

Despite the crucial importance of privacy standards guiding the means to retain, access and use personal information, the WSIS Declaration of Principles contains only a minor

reference to privacy in the section which deals with confidence and security in the use of ICTs: "Strengthening the trust framework, including information security and network security, authentication, privacy and consumer protection, is a prerequisite for the development of the Information Society and for building confidence among users of ICTs. A global culture of cyber-security needs to be promoted, developed and implemented in cooperation with all stakeholders and international expert bodies. These efforts should be supported by increased international cooperation. Within this global culture of cyber-security, it is important to enhance security and to ensure the protection of data and privacy, while enhancing access and trade.(…)."[3]

The following paragraph stresses the support for United Nations activities "to prevent the potential use of ICTs for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security, and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure within States, to the detriment of their security. It is necessary to prevent the use of information resources and technologies for criminal and terrorist purposes, while respecting human rights".[4]

During the WSIS process, civil society groups have time and again expressed their concern with the strong focus on national and international security and criminal use of ICTs vis-à-vis a state commitment to civil liberties such as privacy and freedom of expression[5]. "Security" is a flexible and vague political term, which can – and has been – used to circumvent civil liberties. The discussions and language around security would be enhanced by a clear definition relating it to network security and by emphasizing that security can only be achieved through measures that are compliant with human right standards, particularly the right to privacy. There remains a tendency to speak of privacy as something that has to be balanced against security, rather than something which is a fundamental premise for security. The rhetoric of "balance" is dangerous, since it addresses human rights as something that can be adjusted according to other state interests. The protection of privacy is fundamental for, rather than contradictory to, the state obligation to protect people within its jurisdiction. In line with this, incursions are only allowed in specific circumstances. In the United States this involves due process, warrants, and situations involving reasonable expectations of privacy. Under the European Convention on Human Rights, incursions must be lawful, and represent the least invasive measure to serve the legitimate aim.

[3] WSIS Declaration of Principles, para. 35, 12 December 2003, Geneva
[4] Ibid, para. 36
[5] The potential use of ICTs by criminals, and as a threat to international stability, have been emphasized all through the WSIS process, not least through the US and European delegations, who have promoted the Council of Europe Cybercrime Convention as a model for future global cooperation and agreement in this field.

In order to give privacy independent priority at a time when means for misuse of personal information are greater than ever, the Privacy and Security Working Group have called for a specific paragraph on privacy[6]. The paragraph or other language to that effect, was never included in the Declaration of Principles. Also, the Plan of Action pays little notice to privacy initiatives, which are limited to two identical initiatives in sections C5 and C6, whereby "c) Governments, and other stakeholders, should actively promote user education and awareness about online privacy and the means of protecting privacy", plus some reaffirmation stating that "initiatives to promote security or exchange health data must respect the rights to privacy"[7].

With regard to the controversy between the national political agenda and the international obligations, this can be found in the WSIS Declaration of Principles paragraph 39 (in section 6 on "enabling environment"") in which it is stated that the regulatory framework is expected to reflect national realities[8]. The civil society Human Rights Caucus have time and again expressed concern that the rule of law and the regulatory framework are expected to "reflect national realities" instead of being consistent with the legally binding obligations of States according to the human rights treaties they have ratified.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Geneva Summit itself had a number of privacy violations, such as RFID tagging of participants without prior notice, and without any information or privacy policy on the retention, use, disclosure, and deletion of the personnel information being collected[9].

What are the challenges ahead?

There are a number of challenges ahead in order to secure just a minimum level of privacy protection within the WSIS context.

The above-mentioned deficits in the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action (WSIS I) should be remedied in the appropriate sections of the Political Chapeau and the Operational Part (WSIS II), which is currently under negotiation. There still remains a big challenge in

[6] "The right to privacy is a human right and is essential for self-determined human development in regard to civic, political, social, economic, and cultural activities. It must be protected online, offline, in public spaces, at home and in the workplace. Every person must have the right to decide freely whether and in what manner he or she wants to receive information and communicate with others. The possibility of communication anonymously must be ensured for everyone. The collection, retention, use and disclosure of personal data, no matter by whom, should remain under the control of the individual concerned". Privacy and Security Working Group, 22 September 03.
[7] WSIS Plan of Action, 12. December 2003, Geneva. Privacy is mentioned in Section C5, C6, C7 and C10.
[8] "39. The rule of law, accompanied by a supportive, transparent, pro-competitive, technologically neutral and predictable policy and regulatory framework reflecting national realities, is essential for building a people-centred Information Society.(...) WSIS Declaration of Principles, adopted 12 December 2003, Geneva
[9] A list of problems related to the Geneva WSIS Summit can be found in "How was the Summit ?", Compiled by Rik Panganiban and Ralf Bendrath, 16 December 2003, on http://www.worldsummit2003.org

getting governments to acknowledge that a human rights-based information society is not accomplished by reaffirming existing human rights treaties. It requires political will and priority to effectively protect and promote human rights at national level.

To serve this aim, precise indicators should be defined, in order to evaluate the realization of an information society protecting and promoting human rights. These should be the benchmarks by which we measure progress and by which we review state legislation and policies. One suggestion by civil society have been to establish an Independent Commission on the Information Society and Human Rights, composed of highly qualified experts with a broad geographical representation, to monitor and assess practices and policies on human rights in this context. This is particularly urgent, given the tendency in many countries – both North and South – to sacrifice human rights in the name of security.

With regard to the ongoing controversies on Internet governance, this has important impact on human rights, not least issues of privacy and freedom of expression. Any decision resulting from WSIS must ensure that future Internet governance bodies and mechanisms comply with human rights both through their composition and governing structures and through the substance of their decisions. Internet governance must not result in a lawless zone escaping human rights protection[10].

Human rights learning, and specifically capacity-building on the specific privacy challenges should be included explicitly in the WSIS implementation. Human Rights learning is crucial for people to actually understand and claim their rights, just as it is crucial for state representatives to know the substance of the rights, they are obliged to protect and to promote those rights also with regard to private parties.

Last but not least, it must be ensured that security measures taken during the Tunis Summit follow international privacy principles, including rule of law, transparency, prior notice, least invasive measure, and fair information practices.

[10] In some of the thematic papers issued by the Working Group on Internet Governance, there is a tendency to address privacy as something that is rather peripheral to Internet Governance. This is e.g. the case in the paper on Consumer Protection, as pointed out in the response from the Privacy and Security Working Group,

The Software Challenge

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Software is codified power in the digital domain. In other words, to quote Stanford Professor Lawrence Lessig, "Code is a regulator that governs cyberspace in ways similar to Law governing the real world".

In the Northern world, most people are already depending upon software for very basic tasks of communication, education and work. The grade of dependency is generally lower in the Southern world today. But if the digital literacy and inclusion projects show the intended effect, the dependency will be as high, potentially even higher, as many areas aim to skip the intermediate steps of analog infrastructure and directly enter the digital world.

Much of this interaction with and dependency upon software remains unreflected and in fact unnoticed – fulfilling a prediction that Professor Weizenbaum of MIT made many years ago. Unless sitting in front of a physical machine explicitly marked as "Computer", the majority of users will often remain unaware of using software. A common example is mobile phones. With the trend towards ambient computing, this effect is likely to increase.

While access to software determines our ability to participate in a digital society and governs our ability for communication, education and work, software itself represents a reservoir of codified skill.

Software allows humankind to collectively refine and exercise sets of codified skills that most of the individuals do not possess.

An example are graphical applications, which in the scope of complex image editing make complex mathematical transformations like Fast Fourier Transformation (FFT) available to everyone capable of understanding the applications' menu symbols.

While the issues of software are centrally connected to many of the issues discussed during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the lack of awareness on all sides for software as the cultural technique of the digital age often complicated the situation.

Clash of the software models

While most governments often see software from a purely economic perspective, some large industrial players have begun understanding the amount of political power embedded in it. By propertizing the software, they gain almost absolute control over the users – be they private people, other companies or governments – and the rules they have to obey.

Proprietary software always remains under control of the licensor of the software, not the user. And in a networked world, that control can even be remotely exercised – independent of whether the user of the software is an individual or a government. That dependency on proprietary software is infectious.

Protocols are kept secret, standards are being broken. These protocols are not secret because they are valuable, they draw their value from being secret. The company Microsoft poses a very good example for both cases, as the European Commission antitrust case[1] and the modification of the Kerberos standard[2] have shown.

The countermodel to proprietary software is based on breaking that dependency and putting an equal amount of power into the hands of all people. It is defined by four fundamental freedoms: the freedom of unlimited use for any purpose, the freedom to study, the freedom to modify and the freedom to distribute the software both in original and modified form.

The original name for this model is Free Software.[3] It is sometimes also referred to as "Open Source", a marketing synonym proposed in 1998 to attract venture capital that is frequently abused these days to sell proprietary software under the guise of Free Software.

Other synonyms frequently encountered are "FOSS" – for "Free and Open Source Software" – and "FLOSS" – for "Free, Libre and Open Source Software" – which, besides being redundant terms, seek to spread the ideology that software should not be seen as a political issue.

As all these are synonyms, this paper is using the original term, Free Software.

[1] http://fsfeurope.org/projects/ms-vs-eu/
[2] http://www.nwfusion.com/news/2000/0511kerberos.html
[3] http://fsfeurope.org/documents/freesoftware.en.html

Free Software at WSIS

The Free Software groups became truly involved in the WSIS during the Intersessional Meeting in Paris in July 2003.[4] At this point, the proprietary software advocates had almost succeeded in eliminating the political issues around software from the documents by portraying them as a purely technical choice of software development.

Within civil society, software issues were part of the Patents, Copyrights and Trademarks (PCT) Working Group[5], which centrally dealt with all issues around intellectual poverty as well as equal and inclusive access to software, the digital cultural technique.[6]

In a concerted effort between the PCT working group and a handful of governments, most notably Brazil, it was possible to put an end to further erosion of software issues from the documents and revert the trend.

This positive trend continued in the following Preparatory Committee Conferences, during which Free Software and Patents, Copyrights and Trademarks (PCT) were among the most controversial issues.

While there was still a dialog going on within civil society to explain the connection of Free Software to other fundamental issues of civil society during the WSIS,[7] in a motion coordinated by the PCT working group, global civil society took a strong position for the WSIS to take a clear position on the software issue in general and Free Software in particular:

> Software is the medium of and structuring entity for the digital domain. The information age will rest upon it. Having been denounced as a technical development model, Free Software is much more than that. It is a paradigm that secures equal chances and freedom for governments, economy and civil society alike. It provides a truly sustainable model for all areas of society, bringing back competition and furthering innovation for a prosperous and inclusive information and knowledge society for all....[8]

Global civil society later chose Free Software as one of its essential benchmarks:

[4] http://fsfeurope.org/projects/debriefing-paris.en.html
[5] http://www.wsis-pct.org
[6] http://fsfeurope.org/projects/wsis/issues.en.html
[7] http://fsfeurope.org/projects/wsis/fs.en.html
[8] http://fsfeurope.org/projects/wsis/ps-20030923.en.html

> Software is the cultural technique of the digital age and access to it determines who may participate in a digital world. Free Software with its freedoms of use for any purpose, studying, modification and redistribution is an essential building block for an empowering, sustainable and inclusive information society. No software model should be forbidden or negatively regulated, but Free Software should be promoted for its unique social, educational, scientific, political and economic benefits and opportunities.[9]

Despite the massive presence of proprietary software support from both industry and several governments, in particular the United States and several European Union states such as the UK, this made it impossible to deny the political consequences and impact of software.

In the finally adopted version, both the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action have adopted the denomination of "software model" and the Plan of Action asks all governments to "Encourage research and promote awareness among all stakeholders of the possibilities offered by different software models, [...]"[10]

After WSIS

Free Software gained much political visibility during WSIS, but while civil society has adopted it widely as a principle, many organisations still use proprietary software themselves. The effect of this practice on developing countries has never been subject of deep research, but several consequences are to be expected.

The psychological damage of organisations telling others to follow policies that they ignore themselves can be considerable. Especially in Southern countries, this can easily create the impression of a policy trying to satisfy people with breadcrumbs while keeping the more valuable things to themselves. That would be tragic, as the opposite is indeed true.

More severely, by showing to use proprietary software themselves or even advocating use of proprietary software in Southern countries, organisations can involuntarily destroy the effect of their work.

While trying to rid Southern countries from dependency on the North and strengthening democracy, they do the opposite. To gain a seeming short-term improvement of the situation, they create strong mid-term dependencies for participation in the Information Society.

[9] http://fsfeurope.org/projects/wsis/cs-benchmarks-03-11-14.en.html
[10] http://fsfeurope.org/projects/debriefing-geneva.en.html

That is why Sergio Amadeu da Silveira, president of the National Information Technology Institute (ITI) in Brasil likened the proprietary software model to that of drug dealers – the first shot is gratis.

So while much progress has been made, there is still need for further development on all sides: Governments, industry and civil society. As is already inherent in the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action, all sides will need to develop a practice of evaluating the political, social and economic side of software along with its technological capabilities.

To uphold their political independence and democratic basis, Governments will need to make deliberate efforts to further economic and social empowerment based on commercial and non-commercial Free Software. To protect their commercial interests, industry based on and active in Free Software will need to provide a counterweight to proprietary software voices. And to maintain its credibility, civil society will need to consistently use Free Software as well as advocate it.

Teaching the Information Society

Divina Frau-Meigs
Vice-President, International Association for Media and Communication Research

A general consensus has formed around education and research in WSIS, but it is deceptive: it hides the current acute crisis in every country and the lack of global vision for snapping out of current constraints and leaping forward into a direction that motivates our youth beyond mere capacity-building.

Research shows that change in education always takes place when at least three criteria are met. The new global vision must be:

1. sustained by a master narrative;

2. grounded on a breakthrough in the understanding of human nature; and

3. supported by a new media technology.

When these are present, then the political and economical will of an enlarged constituency, driven by democratic values, can enforce change.

The end goal is utopian, perhaps, but the direction and progress of the project are measurable to a certainty. Today, the conditions for measuring progress towards an enlightened utopia, with all attendant hesitations, mis-steps and corrections, are present in the WSIS process. WSIS itself reflects a state of uncertainty and instability of the world, on the brink of awakening to a global political theory unimaginable in any previous age:

1. The global vision of the 21st century is the "Information Society" master narrative, which civil society is trying to change into the "Knowledge Societies" master narratives, to account for the need of bio- and cultural diversity and to extend education beyond data-mining and retrieving.

2. Based on research in cultural biology, the new breakthrough in human nature, "open cognition", has provided a paradigm for human understanding that posits the co-evolution of our brains and mental framework with the natural and cultural environment. Computer sciences, in connection with advances in cognition, offer the means, through the Internet and other media, of extending human brain-power and communications and to remove any limits on the expansion of this continuous exchange.

3. The supporting technology is the computer and its attendant ICTs, with the Internet as media of choice conveyance. The Internet conveys information, resources for action, employment and education, in real and virtual space. As all new media have in the past, it enlarges the information citizenship of the world while forging an identity for that group that makes it into a politically active constituency.

Civil society documents, and some parts of the state documents as well, reflect a cognitive revolution at work that announces this new view of human nature and a departure from the pessimistic 17th and 18th century view. Then, self-interest placed humankind in a war of all against all in a zero sum world. Only a coercive state, or the limits of a competitive market, would keep an individual's ambitions in check. The innovators of 18th century representative governments linked the narrow self-interest of the powerful to the collective interest of the nation defined narrowly as survival. The limited human productions – of mind, mass media (the press) and mass education – required state protected freedom of expression and free access to information. Certain basic human rights were thus guaranteed and by the 19th century a skilled and literate industrial labour force was created. Now, some centuries later, our knowledge of human nature and our global environment has changed this picture. Collaborative humans, working for mutual benefits, strive for an open-ended process of expanding exchanges of intelligence. Responsiveness, connectedness, communication, participation, co-regulation, such are the new keywords attached to this open cognition paradigm.

The open cognition paradigm extends beyond the reach of information, education and freedom of expression into the realm of social capital and situated knowledge societies. It offers an alternative to the view that humans are determinedly individualistic and driven by selfish instincts requiring legal restraints. It recognizes networks of actors, consumption junctions and communities of place as the basis for a complex civil society. It encourages their participation in the co-regulation of media and education, as synergistic means for renewed common purpose. Solutions imposed through either government or corporate ownership often exacerbate problems rather than solve them. The heavy hand of the state or

the invisible hand of the market may produce more constraints than they solve if not focused on the proper local human scale for civic involvement. Yet, as the link between civil society and governance cannot be guaranteed by cooperation for mutual benefit alone, the role of education to provide a shared mediating culture in economic and political designs needs to be fully elaborated.

The open cognition paradigm posits that education and research can build life-long autonomy and collaborative exchanges. They are part of a continuum of knowledge that integrates old and new technologies into a common platform (the Internet) with multiple media functions and plural educational processes. It promotes the open access to a variety of models of education, research and publication by the production of open code, non-proprietary software and the maintenance of public archives, libraries and repositories of content. It consistently connects education to capacity-building, long-distance training, community-based solutions, public domain commons, linguistic diversity and pluralistic approaches to information and knowledge as an alternative to government or corporate control. It also offers an alternative model for scientific inquiry, open "R&C" (Research and Collaboration), as against "R&D" (Research and Development), for the sustainable spread of prosperity beyond the invention of new material goods, their reproduction and distribution. Such education can foster a new citizenship where individuals learn how to devise properly adapted rules of cooperation as they participate in the design of the institutions that affect their environment. The open cognition agenda thus calls for financing mechanisms based on public funding or private-public partnerships, when non-proprietary conditions are met and modifiable designs are guaranteed. This agenda also calls for an Internet governance that preserves the inter-operability and open-endedness of the cognitive networks.

So, two models are at work in the current process, in relation to education and ICTs. On the one hand, an explicit information-provider model relates ICTs to a commercial common carrier model, likening them to a raw resource, to be exploited for economic development. Thus the self-interest of corporate capitalism directs the Information Society master narrative. In this story, economies of scale still principally guide the design of social arrangements. On the other hand, there is the open cognition model that relates ICTs to an emerging public forum model, with self-supporting systems, in-built maintenance programs and upgrading capacities. Thus the mutual benefit of situated cultures, open commons and global public goods directs the Knowledge Societies master narratives. This approach is based on public domain preservation and enhancement, to be achieved by convincing content producers to be active participants in the open cognition paradigm, along the lines delineated in a variety of documents and initiatives (Budapest Open Access Initiative, Berlin Declaration, Creative Commons, Open Courseware Initiative, etc.). Trying to promote

participation and transmission, it is the only approach predicated on a cognitive view of human nature as collaborative, responsive and involved in a distributed, sustainable exchange of intelligence. It does so while keeping the advances from the previous era, especially in matters of freedom of expression, mass education and universal human rights.

These two models in co-presence suggest the possibility of a bifurcation of cultures within the Internet environment, to accommodate their diverging trends: on the one hand, a protraction of the commercial proprietary market culture, on the other hand a protraction of the open commons culture. They are not mutually exclusive, and they will contribute to the differentiation of Knowledge Societies instead of one single Information Society. Some hybridization process is already at work, between traditional, industrial and national forms of knowledge production, not yet obsolete and still quite efficient, and new forms that appear as viable international alternatives for the exchange of knowledge. Governments may find themselves as arbitrators between the two, trying to keep a balance between the need for public connectedness and the drive for private business, to avoid some of the 20th century's dehumanizing consequences of ICTs. Educators and researchers have the social responsibility of making these changes and exchanges happen.

WSIS and Gender

Heike Jensen
Chair, WSIS Gender Caucus

The WSIS process has been a unique catalyst for the generation of knowledge about the gendered dimensions of media, ICTs, the digital divide and the Information Society. This knowledge has been produced both inside and outside of the United Nations system. Various stakeholders and entities have fed it into the WSIS deliberations in the shape of political recommendations designed to promote gender equality, non-discrimination and women's empowerment. Thus, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) held in 2002 a Virtual Seminar Series on Gender and ICTs; the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) held Expert Group Meetings in the same year; the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality prepared fact-sheets on information and communication technology and gender covering the expertise of many different United Nations organizations; and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) addressed media and ICT issues in its 2003 session. Two WSIS-related entities devoted to gender equality were active during the entire first phase of the summit preparations. One is the WSIS Gender Caucus, which is a multi-stakeholder group, and the other is the NGO Gender Strategies Working Group as a civil society entity. By now, both have merged in the WSIS Gender Caucus.

While all the gender knowledge produced and all the gender-equality recommendations communicated have failed to substantially impact the political WSIS agenda, which has similarly not availed itself of the gender mainstreaming approach, at least one strong commitment to women found its way into the Geneva Declaration of Principles. Paragraph 12 states:

> We affirm that development of ICTs provides enormous opportunities for women, who should be an integral part of, and key actors, in the Information Society. We

> are committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis on [sic.] equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. To this end, we should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end.

So how can these goals be brought about? The Geneva Plan of Action unfortunately cannot be considered a comprehensive road map. Drawing on the gender knowledge amassed so far, it is evident that deep structural changes are required to open the door to the Information Society to women and men, girls and boys alike and to initiate truly gender-equitable, sustainable development. Broadly speaking, women need to gain access to ICTs and need to turn from mere users to developers of software and hardware, networks and content. They also need to become decisive shapers of the political, economic and social spheres in which media and ICTs are embedded, and they need to create synergies between old and new media and ICTs. Men need to accept women as full and equal partners and as autonomous in all endeavors, and consequently need to cede power to women. To enable these far-reaching developments, many strategies and points of entry are required that all start from a gender analysis and that simultaneously take into account the multiple forms of social stratification that intersect with gender, such as race and class, and that lead to different groups of men and women positioned in a complex web of privilege and discrimination.

One important starting point with respect to media and ICTs is to ensure that infrastructure development be guided by gender equality considerations: universal access and universal service obligations in ICT and media policy, regulatory frameworks and licensing guidelines are called for and need to lead to affordable access and useful service for all. In particular, it must be ensured that geographical areas in which poor women predominate will not continue to be marginalized in terms of infrastructure development and services.

A corresponding access point planning is required in these areas that provide facilities, technologies, staff and opening hours that accommodate the requirements and schedules of girls and women. While it is likely that the initial interaction with media and ICTs will be guided by day-to-day needs and preferences, comprehensive education has to make sure that girls and women identify the potential of media and ICTs to help them take more control of their lives and increase their options in life, to move from basic gender needs to strategic gender interests. Strategic gender interests related to media and ICTs encompass those of overcoming women's isolation, facilitating women's networks and their role as political actors, fostering the articulation of women's human rights and concerns, providing effective means and mechanisms to hold governments and other social actors responsible for their conduct, and employing all available technologies to combat the feminization of poverty and

to generate a livelihood-sustaining income. So far, it has been found that there is no correlation between access to technologies and women's empowerment, which drives the point home forcefully that access to technologies alone does not automatically enable women to pursue strategic gender interests.

A decisive skill that is needed for an effective use of ICTs is media literacy, the ability to judge which media best to employ for specific information and communication requirements and which sources are most reliable, accurate and relevant. The specific stake that girls and women have in media literacy arises from the fact that much of the technological developments and applications, networks and content is created from male standpoints and hence might not reflect female concerns adequately.

On another level, women need to be enabled to develop and implement hardware and software, to create networks, content and services that best suit them and their strategic interests. Also, they need to be able to guide policy formulation, implementation and monitoring regarding ICTs on the same footing with men. This requires comprehensive education and training options for girls and women, from primary education all the way through to top-level capacity building. Men, meanwhile, need to learn to accept these developments and to pool their competences with those of women for the benefit of all.

Older and traditional technologies of information and communication also need to be strengthened from a gender equality perspective. While the WSIS process has been ICT-focused, gender and community advocates have consistently pointed to the importance, cost-effectiveness, user-friendliness and broad acceptance of older and traditional technologies. For women, community radios and women's communication centers have proved to be empowering, and the challenge now is to ensure that these gains are not endangered by ICTs which so far may bypass and marginalize the very groups of women empowered by older technologies.

Strengthening these older technologies from a gender equality perspective in this context could mean using them as an interface between groups of women and the new ICTs. For instance, community radio programs could convey information made available in the context of e-Democracy or e-Health projects to their listeners, and they could gather their listeners' questions or concerns and pass them on digitally to the appropriate authorities. In this manner, constituencies could profit indirectly from democratic or educational possibilities opened by ICTs, relying on older and traditional technologies yet not being bypassed by digital opportunities.

All technologies and information and communication need to be cleared of the male biases and the distorted representations of girls and women, their concerns and realities that

frequently result from these biases. In fact, gender-sensitive education and training need to go as far as redefining what counts as information and knowledge, because politically and socially marginalized perspectives have so far largely been excluded from the canon. Bringing these perspectives in for the construction of information and knowledge necessitates a strong commitment to cultural and linguistic diversity and to non-discrimination, not only between women and men but also within each gender group. In other words, all arbitrary and discriminatory social hierarchies need to be fought simultaneously. In this process, the stereotypes that effectively limit the choices in life of particular groups of people need to be done away with.

In order to be able to assess whether the developments are actually leading in the direction of gender equality, non-discrimination and sustainable development, a continuous monitoring and evaluation process is required. Both qualitative and quantitative data is needed, which needs to be disaggregated by gender and all other relevant factors, such as income level, age, education and location.

In sum, fundamental transformations are called for as well as a deep commitment by all to bring them about. For the Information Society to materialize in a gender-equitable manner, we are no longer lacking the information about which roads to take and which strategies to adopt. We are equipped with new and old, exciting tools of information and communication, and we can hence actively engage in the social processes of negotiating power, norms, values and realities which in fact consist of communication and information exchange. Let's put the knowledge and tools we possess to this use.

Section 8

Internet Governance

Agree to Disagree: The Birth of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG)

Markus Kummer
Executive Coordinator, Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) Secretariat

The first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva saw a clash of visions in the debate on Internet governance. There were two clearly distinct perspectives.

The first school of thought argued that the present system worked well and if there were any perceived problems it would first be necessary to define them before trying to find solutions. Delegations holding this view insisted on the primacy of the private sector. They argued that the current, private sector-driven governance mechanisms were well-adapted to the particular character of the Internet. In particular, they highly valued the multi-stakeholder character of present arrangements. They emphasized that the Internet functioned well, and their message was "if it ain't broke, don't fix it".

The second school of thought, however, questioned the legitimacy of the present arrangements. Its proponents held a more traditional view as far as Government involvement is concerned. In general, they wanted to give Governments more say and wanted the international governance mechanisms to be more in line with traditional forms of intergovernmental cooperation. While at a national level Governments played a role and had a platform for dialogue with the various stakeholders, they regretted that at an international level there was no such forum for interaction. Consequently, they stressed the need for establishing a multilateral mechanism, preferably with the legitimacy of the United Nations system, which would not replace any current arrangement, nor infringe on the work of any existing organization, but would be complementary and deal with policy issues. Ultimately, these delegations felt that Internet governance related to national sovereignty.

The debate was very polarized and, to a large extent, also very abstract. There were misunderstandings on both sides. The debate focused on "public policy issues" and the extent to which governments had a role to play with regard to determining public policy. However, nobody was able – or willing – to spell out what was meant by "public policy". In short, there was no real debate on issues, but a confrontation of two schools of thought, and in Geneva, it proved impossible to bridge the gap between these two camps. The negotiations were tough, and the two sides were firmly entrenched in their positions and not ready to compromise. One salient feature of the negotiations was that the Governments remained among themselves, and the Internet professionals in charge of running and managing the Internet were locked out. It was not surprising, therefore, that the summit failed to produce what might be termed "a solution". Before providing a solution, there would have to be a common understanding that there was a problem out there that needed to be resolved. On the face of it, therefore, it would have been overly optimistic to hope that the final documents would go much further than being an agreement to disagree on these fundamental positions.

In the end, negotiators did agree to continue the dialogue beyond the first phase of the WSIS and to prepare the ground for the second phase in Tunis. Negotiations focused on process rather than substance. They reflected the two basic visions: private sector leadership versus intergovernmental cooperation. Those who insisted on the importance of private sector leadership wanted to prevent a repetition of the final phase of the WSIS I negotiations during which the Internet professionals were locked out. Their main aim was to make sure that the private sector and all the other stakeholders would be part of the process. The issue of stakeholder participation was one of the reasons why an original proposal – that is to set up a working group as part of the WSIS process – was not accepted. It was felt by a significant number of key players that the WSIS process had not proved satisfactory with regard to the inclusion of private sector and civil society.

Those who wanted more intergovernmental cooperation insisted on some form of United Nations involvement. The compromise that was finally reached consisted of requesting the Secretary-General of the United Nations to set up a Working Group "to investigate and make proposals for action, as appropriate, on the governance of Internet". It was hoped that the formula finally agreed on would give the flexibility required to be inclusive. All stakeholders and all relevant international organizations would be given equal access to the work of the group.

The final documents leave the two basic positions unchanged, but an analysis of the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action reveals that the result goes beyond what might have been expected. Both sides implicitly admitted that there was some merit in the

other's position and recognized that Governments indeed do have a role to play: but that Internet governance should also involve private sector and civil society. Furthermore, by recognizing some important principles, the Geneva Declaration laid the conceptual groundwork for any future form of Internet governance and set some valid benchmarks for any future discussion. These are based on some traditional principles of international cooperation, such as transparency and democracy. They also introduce some Internet-specific aspects, such as the recognition that the Internet is, by now, a global facility. Last but not least, they recognize the multi-stakeholder character of the Internet.

The wording of the final documents addresses the needs of both groups: it takes care of those governments trying to find their role in this new policy environment, and it respects the views of those who emphasize the importance of private sector and civil society. The Working Group on Internet Governance (or "the WGIG" as it has since become known by its acronym) was given the task of preparing a report "on the results of this activity to be presented for consideration and appropriate action for the second phase of WSS in Tunis in 2005". The WGIG therefore is not a negotiating body, but a working group, which has been given the task of paving the way for future negotiations.

This background determined the modalities of the WGIG process. It explains the rationale underpinning the WGIG's process-related priorities, the most important among them being the open, transparent and inclusive character of the group. These qualifiers, "open, transparent and inclusive" have several aspects. They include participation of all stakeholders, also using enabling technologies such as webcasting and an interactive website to allow interested parties to follow and participate in the process from wherever they are. In particular, the full and meaningful participation of developing countries is a concern that needs to be taken seriously. This is not just a question of travelling costs, but also of capacity-building, to allow them to defend their interests effectively.

Like any negotiated text, the Geneva documents are open to interpretation. Much has already been interpreted into the meaning of "open and inclusive" or "multilateral, transparent and democratic". These terms are not always that clear and need to be examined in the context of every specific situation. An intergovernmental organization by definition is "multilateral", but not necessarily "open" in the same way as an Internet or civil society organization and vice versa. These terms should also be seen for what they are: ideals to be striven for, and not prescriptive remedies to rectify failings of present arrangements, as some have since claimed. Whatever the interpretation, however, the agreed texts point towards an open concept which does not prejudge any outcome. The wording ("develop a common understanding") gives the WGIG a role of consensus building in the United Nations tradition.

The WGIG's task is first and foremost a fact-finding mission. It is about looking into how the Internet works, taking stock of who does what and looking into ways of improving the coordination among and between the different actors. It makes sense to gather the facts first and then assess the adequacy of existing governance mechanisms before proposing any possible decision on the future of the Internet. By carrying out its task conscientiously the WGIG should be able to create a space for an issue-oriented policy dialogue on Internet governance in a climate of trust and confidence among all parties concerned. This will be the main benchmark to assess whether the WGIG has accomplished its mission.

The first phase of the WSIS placed a new issue on the agenda of multilateral cooperation. The result was a compromise and compromises by their very nature rarely go beyond the lowest common denominator. In this case all parties to the negotiations seemed to have found what they were looking for: a role for the United Nations on the one hand, and the confirmation of a multi-stakeholder approach on the other.

The creation of the WGIG also needs to be seen in the context of discussions on global governance. While in other areas Governments have been confronted with other stakeholders requesting to be allowed to participate in global decision-making arrangements, the debate on Internet governance is following a different pattern. Here, Governments wanted to obtain a say in the running of the Internet, which has developed outside a classical intergovernmental framework. By asking the United Nations Secretary-General to set up the WGIG, the Summit agreed on no less than the need to adapt traditional models of governance to the needs of the 21st century and find new forms of cooperation which allow for the full and active participation of all stakeholders. The WGIG has taken up this challenge and tries to be innovative in this regard. It has developed a process that allows all stakeholders to participate on an equal footing in open consultations it holds in conjunction with its meetings. This works because Governments recognized that the other stakeholders involved in the discussions on Internet governance have a valid contribution to make in this process; they have gained legitimacy through their competence. This may well be one of the WGIG's main legacies, insofar as it has proved a successful experiment in multi-stakeholder cooperation.

ICANN and "Internet Governance"

Vinton G. Cerf
Chairman, ICANN

The volume you are holding (or reading online!) contains a broad range of views on the subject of information technology, networks and systems on the world stage. In particular, it explores the question of how a relatively new system of global communication is to be treated. Is it to be a regulated service with substantial national controls? Is it a commercial system that is largely up to the private sector to operate and manage? Are there public policy issues that need to be addressed on domestic and international fronts? How will its resources be allocated and to whom? These and many other questions can be found in this volume along with a variety of responses. While I do not agree with some of the positions taken in these essays, it is important that answers to such questions are found.

As the WSIS discussion has unfolded, the Internet has become a kind of poster child for the more ethereal sounding "Information Society," although it is fair to say that mankind has always lived in an information society. The information has varied in content and quantity and access to it has not been uniform, but it is arguable that the global society in which we live has followed a path of increasing knowledge, much of it propagated by new technologies (inventions of writing, paper, movable type printing, libraries, telegraph, telephone, radio, television, satellite communication, computers, networks and most recently, the Internet.) Where computers and computer-based systems go, networking is not far behind. This is especially so as wireless technologies make it less and less expensive to provide connectivity for voice communications (mobiles) and for data communication ("hot spots" using wireless local area networks).

As a technologist, and a person who has spent the last 35 years deeply involved in various aspects of the Internet's evolution, I feel compelled to express concern that the debates surrounding many of the questions about the Internet are not often well-informed about the nature of the technology, its flexibility and its limitations, nor of the actual way in which its

mechanisms are designed, standardized, and operated. Frequently missing is an awareness of the vital role of collaboration and distributed way in which responsibility is taken for all the details of day-to-day operation of the Internet. The same made be said for policy development and the role of the private sector.

It is entirely understandable that representatives of the governments of the world appreciate the growing influence of the Internet on global and national socio-economics. However, a common reaction to this realization is an urge to "get control over this phenomenon." The power of the Internet comes in large measure from its openness and accessibility. The "end-to-end principle" which has driven the Internet's layered architecture has been a key source of open innovation through which a seemingly endless array of new applications have been designed, implemented and put to use. This global phenomenon has caught the attention of industry, government and citizens around the world, so it is no surprise that a proposal for a World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) evolved and led to a two-summit plan (2003 and 2005) to involve the governments of the world and many other non-governmental organizations and civil society. The basic idea of this summit was to explore what steps could be taken on a global basis to create a world in which everyone has access to all the knowledge accumulated by our collective societies and to the extent that it is online, to assure that all citizens everywhere have assurances that they will have fair access to all of it through the network.

While traditional telephony, broadcast radio, and television and cable television, as well as satellite communication have tended to evolve in a regulated setting, the Internet has been a "grass-roots" phenomenon, operating essentially above the traditional regulated environment. Internet runs on top of the telephone network, or its underlying dedicated circuitry. It works on broadcast and point-to-point radio, point-to-point satellite, optical transmission links and virtually any other communications medium. It was designed to work that way. As a consequence, it has had the advantage of rapid innovation by users at the "edge" of the network, largely without much or any regulatory interference. Indeed, because much of the flexibility of the Internet is a consequence of its dependence on software running in devices at the edge of the network, rather than in systems embedded in the net, virtually anyone is free to invent new applications and to put them up for use. The World Wide Web, which entered the Internet picture around 1992, though it was invented a few years earlier, provided a gigantic opportunity for virtually anyone to share information with everyone else on the Internet.

These aspects of the Internet have stimulated considerable attention, especially in the government sector in recent years. Moreover, as the Internet becomes increasingly accessible around the world, its applications and uses begin to reflect the interests of the general

population. In its earlier years, the Internet was simply a tool for the research and education community to explore new ways of sharing computing power, software, and information by way of electronic mail (which became a popular application around 1971 on one of the Internet's predecessors, the ARPANET). The approximately one billion users of the Internet today have the same range of interests as the general population in most countries. The side-effect of this wide spread use is that abuses have arisen that are not unlike the kinds of abuses one finds in other societal settings. Fraud, misinformation, harassment, illegal transactions, theft of resources, breaking and entering (hacking into computers), copyright infringement, and many other exact or approximate electronic analogs of improper behavior can be found on the Internet. Such problems plainly raise public policy concerns among governments and stimulated much interest during the many talks associated with the WSIS.

The term "Internet governance" became an area of particular attention in part as a consequence of widespread recognition that the Internet represents an important area of national interest for all countries seeking to participate in the benefits of global electronic commerce, distance learning, and access to the encyclopedic wealth of information on the Internet, and in the social dimension that the Internet is creating. From the perspective of governments, the Internet is simultaneously a technology that promises high economic value for parties making use of it and a challenge in that it is unlike all other telecommunications media previously invented.

Delegates to the first WSIS in December 2003 found themselves wrestling with the definition of "Internet governance" and ultimately concluded that this was so hard to define that they asked United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan to create a working group charged with developing a definition of Internet governance, identifying the associated public policy issues, and developing a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of governments, inter-governmental organizations and other forums, the private sector, and civil society as they relate to the operation of the Internet.

In my opinion, one of the most striking aspects of the WSIS discussions is the clear indication that developing countries are concerned that they are becoming dependent on the Internet for world commerce, for example, but that many felt they have not had a seat at the policy table in a substantive way. ICANN has benefited greatly from the participation of the ICANN Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) in the development of ICANN policies and this seems a good venue in which all governments have been invited to participate.

The Internet itself, though essentially a highly distributed system without central control, is able to function in part because of the technical standards to which its components adhere. The principal body charged with developing these technical standards is the Internet

Engineering Task Force (IETF) that operates under the auspices of the Internet Society. IETF was created around 1986, and the Internet Society, founded in 1992, became its institutional home shortly thereafter. There are several key, hierarchical mechanisms that are critical to the operation of the Internet, namely the Domain Name System, the allocation and assignment of Internet Protocol (IP) Addresses, and the maintenance of other unique parameters associated with the Internet protocols. The task of managing these key mechanisms had been the responsibility of one of the Internet's pioneers, Jonathan Postel.

He had undertaken this stewardship in the context of the Internet's predecessor, ARPANET, in 1969 and continued to serve the community as the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) until his death in 1998. In the mid-1990s it became increasingly apparent to Jon and others serving the Internet community that institutionalization of these stewardship functions was an important objective and, after a considerable degree of debate and time, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) was established, in October 1998, to carry out the oversight and information management functions needed to assure unique allocation of domain names, IP addresses and other protocol identifiers.

In a sense, ICANN became the only visible body charged with any kind of oversight for the Internet. The scope of this oversight was deliberately and intentionally limited. But as the Internet continued to grow, as domain names became increasingly visible in the context of the World Wide Web, and as the so-called "dot.com" bubble expanded between 1998 and early 2000 and then burst, many people with concerns or complaints about problems associated with the Internet or its use (and abuse) turned to ICANN expecting it to address many of these issues. Not surprisingly, ICANN's intentionally limited mandate and limited resources did not outfit it with the ability to deal with such complaints as spam (unsolicited commercial electronic mail), fraud, theft, pornography, and the long list of other abuses that creative human beings have invented for the Internet. Though the intense discussions about Internet policy (or "governance") frequently referenced ICANN, it became apparent that the topic of governance was far more expansive than the limited role that ICANN plays in the operation of the Internet.

ICANN was formed to undertake the development of policy for the operation of the Domain Name System (DNS), and for the allocation and assignment of Internet address space. In its role as the operator of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority, ICANN is responsible, *inter alia*, for accurate recording of tables of unique parameters needed for the successful operation of the wide range of protocols that make up the TCP/IP suite. There are hundreds of such protocols and many of them have defined parameters whose values must be known to implementers of the protocols if their implementations are to interwork

successfully. ICANN is responsible for overseeing the domain name system, dealing with the assignment of operational responsibility for top level domain names (TLDs) such as .com, .net, .aero, .coop, .org, and the so-called "country code" domain names such as .fr (France), .de (Germany), .br (Brazil), .cn (China), and so on. It also maintains the database, called the "root zone file" that identifies the Internet addresses of each top level domain name server system.

ICANN allocates IP address space to the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) who further allocate IP addresses to Internet service providers (ISPs) and other qualifying organizations. Together with the RIRs individually and the Number Resource Organization (NRO) made up of all the RIRs, ICANN's Board is responsible for the adoption of global address allocation policies, developed through bottom-up mechanisms undertaken by the RIRs and consolidated by the NRO into recommendations to ICANN.

The responsibilities of ICANN are often carried out through the cooperative efforts of other groups such as the system of voluntary root servers and the work of the Regional Internet address Registries, and domain name registries and registrars around the world. While these functions appear on the surface to be quite straightforward, they have policy ramifications that make them more complex. Who should be assigned the responsibility for operating a top level domain name service? Which addresses should be placed in the root zone file? Who should be allowed to register any particular domain name in a top level domain? Are there any restrictions on registrations? How can character sets other than simple Latin characters be introduced into domain names? Where should the root servers be located? What should be the policy for allocation and assignment of Internet address space?

To facilitate the use of the Internet for global electronic commerce, it would be beneficial to develop international procedures for the use of digital signatures, mechanisms to resolve disputes associated with international electronic transactions, treatment of various transaction taxes in an international setting and the protection of intellectual property held in digital formats and distributed globally through the Internet medium. These are not new problems; rather, they are old problems emerging in a new medium.

It is because these questions are not simple that ICANN has adopted a rich system of supporting organizations and forums in which to air such policy issues and seek to develop consensus around them. However, in the course of the WSIS discussions, the full breadth of the term "Internet governance" was sometimes confused with the narrower scope of ICANN responsibility. During the next phase of WSIS, culminating in late 2005 in Tunisia, it is vital that a full range of Internet governance questions are addressed encompassing a broader system of practices, agreements and policies than solely those that fall under

ICANN's charter. Dealing with the many public policy interests arising from the rapid growth of the Internet requires that many of the issues lying outside ICANN's responsibility find venues in which they can be addressed. Intellectual property protection concerns might be addressed in the World Intellectual Property Organization and perhaps the World Trade Organization. Concerns for criminal use of the Internet may be taken up in organizations such as Interpol, among others. Many of the concerns may be addressed domestically but because of the Internet's global nature and relative insensitivity to national boundaries, these issues may require selective cooperation among governments or international non-governmental organizations for their solution.

Many observers and participants in the ICANN process have raised important criticisms for which responses and solutions are needed. The participants in the ICANN process would be among the first to agree that there are improvements still to be made to ICANN. But at the same time, the very broadly based ICANN community spent 18 months revising the ICANN bylaws and operational procedures to make improvements based on several years of operational experience. In my opinion, if we were to begin again to re-create a body to carry out the ICANN functions, we would find the same participants making pretty much the same arguments and ending up with pretty much the same structure as we have today.

Some critics complain about the slow pace of introduction of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNS) into the domain name system. The technical documents of the Internet Engineering Task Force show how difficult it is to introduce these character sets into regular DNS use. No one disputes the intense and understandable desire among many Internet users to interact with the Internet in their native languages, alphabets or ideographic systems, but getting all of the appropriate parts of Internet software to work in an intuitive and reliable fashion is not so easy.

Much of the debate about ICANN may stem from misunderstanding of its origin and modus operandi. While it is correct to say that ICANN is a non-profit entity with a charter to operate for public benefit, and that it is incorporated in the State of California, and that it operates under the auspices of the US Department of Commerce, it would be incorrect to conclude that these facts somehow inhibit ICANN's operation or impair its ability to function with a global perspective.

The Directors of and Liaisons to the Board of ICANN have been drawn from around the world from twenty-two countries so far (Chile, China, Senegal, Brazil, Germany, Japan, Bulgaria, Mexico, Kenya, New Zealand, Australia, Switzerland, Malaysia, France, Spain, The Netherlands, Canada, United Kingdom, South Korea, Ghana, Portugal and the United States). Over the period of its operation since 1998, ICANN has had 42 directors. It has 15

current directors and seven current liaisons. An even wider range of national participation is found in the Governmental Advisory Committee which has on the order of 100 countries represented. Within ICANN, there are support and consultative organizations and liaisons drawn from the technical community (e.g. IETF, IAB, ITU), the domain name operators, the root server operators, registry and registrar operators, the Internet service providers, the intellectual property protection professionals, non-profit and for-profit business sector and from the at-large general public. As of mid-2005, ICANN has staff from about a dozen countries split between the US west coast and Brussels.

No matter how the WSIS discussions turn out, it seems inescapable that the evolving Internet and related information and communication technologies will continue to challenge global policy development for their use and will continue to rely on the cooperation, collaboration and coordination of a great many distinct organizations to achieve the ultimate goal: a real worldwide Information Society in which everyone can participate and from which everyone can benefit.

Co-Regulation for Internet Governance?

Marc Holitscher
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Internet governance is an open-ended process. It does not describe a current state of affairs, nor does it refer to any specific institutional arrangement or group of actors. The Internet and its underlying technology will continue to develop further, enabling new applications and services that cannot be anticipated today. In order to make this happen, it is not only imperative to avoid the mistakes of the past but also to challenge established norms and principles.

In recent years, it has been customary to call for private sector self-regulation in the governance of the global Internet. Forming an unholy alliance, profit-oriented firms and governments of technology-dependent countries were keen to garner the fruits of an unregulated information society, while the techies just wanted to be left alone. Confronted with the collapse of the E-economy, the failure of ICANN v1.0 and various corporate scandals of Enron, MCI WorldCom and the like, the *zeitgeist* has recently changed. It is no longer political suicide to advocate some level of governmental involvement in the global coordination of the Internet. Yet the critical question persists: In the new institutional arrangement, what is the best mixture of governmental influences, private actors and representatives of civil society? This is a purely political question, however, and it runs the risk of introducing an unhealthy bias into the current debate if not handled properly. Let me explain why.

Recent deliberations within the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) [MSOffice1]have made it clear that the Group favors a broad understanding of the issues that belong in the field of Internet governance. Such an approach can be helpful as it leaves enough room for issue-linkages and other tactical maneuvers in the WSIS[MSOffice2]-negotiations. This might make the task of finding a political compromise a lot easier. On the

other hand, a broad definition of Internet governance unleashes a very dangerous cycle of what I call "the dynamic of institutional Darwinism".

For a moment, think of Internet governance as a global market in which a large number of so-called "governance providers" compete for the supply of their specific regulatory services (or coordination services, if you will[MSOffice3]). Regarding the management of the Internet's core resources, for instance, these governance providers encompass several organizations and institutions, both governmental and non-governmental in nature: ICANN, the Regional Internet Registries, the ccTLDs, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). Because the individual governance providers act in their self-interest – which seeks the maximization of political influence or plain survival – they have every incentive to stretch their mandates as the field of Internet governance itself is being enlarged.

The ambitions to take responsibility for IPv6-numbers and ICANN's plan to look into issues of infrastructure development provide empirical evidence for this broadening of perspective. It indicates that it is getting harder to endure in the global market for regulatory services if you remain focused and stick only to your core business.

As a consequence of the contextual opening of Internet governance, the competition among[MSOffice4] various governance providers intensifies. Increasing institutional competition, on the other hand, makes the providers of regulatory services more easily accessible for concerted lobbying efforts by special interests: If you want to survive in the global market for regulatory services, you have to align with influential and well-organized interest groups. Consistently, some observers criticize WIPO for interpreting the Uniform Dispute Resolution Policy in ways that favor trademark holders over other Internet users. A similar mechanism allowed a small group of concentrated interests to dominate the institution- building process of ICANN at the expense of large groups with diffused interests and high organizational costs, such as civil society.

If not mediated by some kind of supervising authority, such instances of regulatory capture might well lead to an excessive concentration[MSOffice5] of decision-making power into the hands of a few. This in turn would be diametrically opposed to the decentralized nature of the Internet and its inherent end-to-end principle.

In addition, we can currently witness various developing countries engaging in what I call "regime shifting": they support regulatory institutions or international organizations that are friendly to their interests and with whom they expect to negotiate on a level playing field with the Western countries. This in itself is nothing new, particularly if you look at what happens in other fields of international politics: the United States and the European Union

practice some sort of a "novel bilateralism," thus collaborating to globalize the regulatory frameworks that they consider as being most useful to their respective interests. From their point of view, institutions such as the World Trade Organization, the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement or ICANN serve this purpose.

On the other hand, new alliances are formed such as the G-20+ that has members like Brazil, South Africa, India and China. These countries refuse to negotiate essential policy issues in established fora such as ICANN, because they consider them to be dominated by the West. Therefore, these states try to shift decision-making power to institutions where they have more of a say based on the principle of "one nation, one vote". The recent initiative to transfer authority over some parts of the numerical addresses-space to the ITU fits neatly into this category. A similar development is apparent in the G-20+ campaign against the TRIPS agreement with regard to the issue of intellectual property rights, various aspects of which they consider inequitable.

The bottom line is that the guerilla strategy of regime shifting aggravates the process of institutional competition, as various coalitions of actors with conflicting interests support their favored arrangements. Coordinating bodies, on the other hand, have a strong incentive to frame their strategy and policy proposals in a way that appeases their most important constituencies – be they states or non-governmental actors.

The problem with this kind of institutional Darwinism is that you do not know the true reasons why a particular regulatory institution or a particular governance provider ultimately wins or increases in importance. Was it because a powerful state supported the organization? Was it because the institution aligned itself with the most influential interest group? Whatever the explanation, the process and result can be expected to be far from transparent. An unhindered dynamic of institutional Darwinism will lead to strategic results that benefit a small group of interests instead of society at large.

The problem grows even more complicated if we consider the effects that are added by the phenomenon of technological convergence, which actually shrinks the market in which the different governance providers can compete. (This is not to say that there will be fewer regulatory problems.)

What happens with technological convergence is that different governance providers from formerly separated policy fields are suddenly competing for a limited supply of expert knowledge and regulatory services within the same sphere. The ITU, for example, is confronted with this dynamic as the organization continually loses element of its traditional field of expertise due to the convergence of telecommunications and computing. It is thus

forced to enlarge its mandate into other policy fields that might also be claimed by other actors (ICANN, IETF). It is getting crowded in the Internet universe.

As the global market for regulatory services becomes smaller, competition among various governance providers increases and the dynamic of institutional Darwinism grows even tougher.

Against this backdrop, the challenge consists in the development of an overarching institutional framework that is flexible enough to absorb the sheer heterogeneity of issues and actors in the Internet's global governance tapestry. We are in need of a mechanism that minimizes opportunistic behavior on the part of the governance providers (supply side) but simultaneously disciplines the actors on the demand side, i.e., governments, the private sector and end-users.

At the top of the envisaged system must be an intergovernmental agreement fulfilling a so-called "meta-governance function"; that is, it must define the scope within which the private sector and civil society are allowed to self-regulate. In keeping with the spirit of a lightweight and flexible institutional arrangement, I argue for the establishment of a framework convention that would be open to every interested government. The convention would contain no legislation; rather, it would only specify which organizations – governmental and non-governmental – would be collaboratively responsible for various aspects of the Internet and what their respective competencies would be.

Even in the best of all possible worlds, self-governance has to leave room for political oversight and dispute resolution.

The formulation of specific rules and procedures as well as their implementation and enforcement would be completely delegated to designated non-state actors. What these embedded self-regulatory arrangements would look like is open to further consideration. Intergovernmental organizations could act as facilitators and assist the private actors in overcoming problems of collective action.

Hence, governmental actors would serve as moderators and enablers of private self-regulation while providing non-governmental actors with the necessary authority to make legitimate decisions. In such a system, ICANN would be just one organization among many, the decisive difference being that its responsibilities and duties would be defined in the constitutional convention and not bi- or tri-annually renewed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Commerce.

All other tasks and responsibilities could be delegated to existing and well-performing entities: the development of protocols and standards to the IETF, the management of ccTLDs to country-specific registries, and so forth.

It would be naïve to think that governments would refrain from regulating the Internet if they consider it necessary[MSOffice6].

Of course, the negotiation of a framework convention will be a very difficult and highly politicized task. Compared to the non-transparent results of unhindered institutional competition, however, this looks much more promising.

Seen from this perspective, the current WGIG process is undoubtedly a step in the right direction. Stakeholders of diverse commercial and professional backgrounds are sitting at the same table and are learning to discuss very sensitive issues in a constructive way. This novel process is not self-evident, particularly when you recall the days of the International Forum on the White Paper (IFWP), which also had a constitutional mission: it soon disintegrated into various competing factions with each struggling to acquire the best behind-the-door deal first.

Co-regulation in the multilateral sense outlined above – and not in the minilateral sense currently performed – can reduce the potential for conflict inherent in issues of global public policy. A subsidiary approach would also be in tune with the architectural design of the Internet itself, which emphasizes principles such as delegation and decentralization, not centralization and hierarchy.

As long as multilateral co-regulation does not happen, governments will continue to politicize the issues of Internet governance. This will preclude the establishment of a functioning institutional arrangement in the foreseeable future.

Internet Governance: Legitimacy, Efficiency and Digital Divide

Philipp Grabensee
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When I reflect on the personal impressions I have gained to date in the very dynamic World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) process, I feel two souls in my chest. On the one hand, there is my role as a lawyer who studied law with the aim of protecting the rights of the individual against an often all-powerful state. On the other hand, there is my role as Chairman of Afilias Limited, the domain name registry which manages more than seven million virtual addresses and which thus, as a stakeholder from the private sector, also and not least has a vital economic interest in the results of this Summit.

The lawyer who has the protection of civil rights at heart should react with suspicion when there are calls to regulate apparently new circumstances in life through new legislation. Such a phenomenon is precisely evident at the World Summit. Concepts such as spam, intellectual property and competition (IPC) rights and cybercrime are debated under the definition of Internet governance, a term which the WGIG has deliberately defined very broadly. There are allegedly, some people claim, new problems which are crying out for regulation through new laws. Is spam, for example, really such a new phenomenon – at least from a regulatory point of view? Or is it not perhaps just a digital manifestation of advertising mailings sent to recipients by the traditional postal route without their consent? Fraud and pornography also existed before the advent of the Internet. True, the Internet makes a quite different level of distribution and penetration with unwanted advertising mailings possible than by traditional postal methods – be it for cost reasons alone. Furthermore, the Internet offers cyber-criminals quite new opportunities to pursue their criminal activities across state frontiers. But in a globalised world traditional manifestations such as people or drug trafficking cannot be restricted to the level of the individual state any longer either.

I hope these examples show that skepticism is in order when allegedly new situations produce calls for new laws. If such a critical perspective is lost, the danger exists that we fail to notice when subjects of international law abuse new manifestations of behaviour in breach of the rules connected with the Internet to legitimize the further restriction of civil rights.

As a representative of the private sector, I also see the danger that the criticism of the Internet Cooperation of Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in its undertake of the development of policy for the operation of the Domain Name System, and for the allocation and assignment of Internet address space is unrelated to the actual matter and often serves to promote completely different national interests.

Even if the control of the root zone files through the National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA) of the US Department of Commerce reminds us more of a myth than an actual position of power through its purely procedural and non-political character, it is easy to understand that such mere formal control is not acceptable to many states in this form. But instead of addressing this problem directly, the magic words spam, cybercrime and violation of IPC rights are used in this context to document the alleged failure of ICANN and to look for new, supranational regulation through the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for example. What is overlooked here is the high level of efficiency and practicability of the names and number administration through ICANN, at least in comparison to other United Nations institutions. Instead, ICANN is assigned tasks which, by its own understanding of its role, it never wanted to or could take on.

That is not to say, of course, that everything is perfect. Without wishing to anticipate the results of the WGIG, private and public mechanisms are no doubt required to meet the actual new regulatory challenges which the Internet provides. But the legitimate search for such mechanisms should not obscure our view of the true objectives of the WSIS. As defined in the Declaration of Principles the aim of the WSIS is to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Therefore the primary objective must be to provide access for people, particularly in the third world, to the information and communications resources created by the Internet and not to regulate them. If, however, the regulators retain the upper hand, there is a risk that the second major revolution of mankind after the industrial revolution, the shift from an

industrial society in an information society will pass people especially in the third world by and the opportunity is missed to overcome the digital divide between the countries of the first and the third world.

Evolving Internet Governance – A Key Requirement for Bridging the Digital Divide

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The Internet has become a global facility and an essential element of the Information Society. Its use impacts on all aspects of daily life, including on commerce, learning, health and social life.

Increasing access to the Internet for people in developing countries would significantly contribute toward bridging the digital divide. Internet governance mechanisms need to evolve in a manner that would facilitate participation of developing countries in decision-making on Internet-related issues, so that bridging the digital divide remains a priority on the global Internet governance agenda.

World leaders at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva recognized the importance of bridging the digital divide and the central role which access to the Internet plays in this regard. The WSIS also defined the principles for international management of the Internet, and recognized the roles of the various stakeholders in Internet governance.

During the preparatory meetings for the first phase of the WSIS, several developing countries made clear two key points:

1. Reduction of the digital divide will require effective cooperation between the countries of the North and South to establish appropriate financing mechanisms.

2. The majority of the programs to be implemented by 2015 will, to a large extent, depend on more intensive use of the Internet. This in turn requires a review of the

> processes and mechanisms of Internet governance, in a manner that would give governments an appropriate role that would guarantee protection of their investments, continuity of services and protection of the interests of users.

To address these issues, it was agreed at the Summit to direct the Secretary-General of the United Nations to create two working groups, one to study the issue of funding and the other to study the issue of international governance of the Internet. The two working groups were since created, and the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms has already completed its work. The Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) is expected to complete its report by early July.

The need to review Internet governance mechanisms

Governance of the Internet's logical infrastructure today is carried out through a decentralised structure consisting mainly of private sector and non-governmental institutions, with oversight by the United States Department of Commerce.

The distributed, private sector-driven governance structure is geared to making the technical and operational decisions necessary for efficient structural and logical Internet development. However, it is by its very nature not ideally positioned to address overarching public policy concerns.

While the existing Internet governance arrangement allows governments to provide advice on Internet resource management issues, governments are not participating in public policy decision-making or in establishment of regulations for Internet governance; including in making price decisions on the sale of Internet addresses and domain names, structuring of the institutions involved in Internet governance and contracting or licensing companies to undertake specific functions such as managing Top Level Domains (TLDs) and so on. The role of governments in this regard is currently limited to providing advice.

Given the critical role of the Internet, it is appropriate at this time to review the Internet governance structure, with a view to determining whether this structure is adequate for addressing the many international public policy issues that arise, including those that relate to bridging the digital divide.

The scope of Internet governance

Aside from the question of managing the logical infrastructure and the scarce resources of the Internet such as the root server system, the Domain Name System and IP addresses, in

its broader sense, Internet governance involves addressing a whole multitude of other issues, mostly relating to the "use" of the internet such as:

- User privacy
- Data protection and security
- Security and survivability of network
- Right of access
- Content regulation and unlawful use
- Spam
- Law enforcement harmonization
- Intellectual property protection, etc.

These issues have arisen with ubiquity of the Internet and with the increasing sophistication of its users, including those who would use it in a harmful manner or even threaten its stability. These issues are currently being addressed by a variety of national and international institutions. Coordination of all the various aspects of Internet governance is another challenge that is difficult to deal with through a decentralised structure.

There are also several issues of key concern to developing countries which, if pushed forward, will help them in their efforts to provide access to the Internet for all.

Among the key issues to achieve are:

- Development of actionable capacity-building policies and plans
- Multilingualism
- Reducing the cost of access, and
- Equitable resource allocation practices.

Internet governance and the digital divide

Internet governance mechanisms and bridging the digital divide are closely interwoven. Public policy direction is required to address issues of concern to developing countries. In order for developing countries to participate in policy-making, there must be a forum to allow them to do so.

The institutional and geographical diversity of the existing international governance structures add to the difficulties that developing countries encounter in participating. Centralizing policy discussions in global and regional forums with full involvement of all stakeholders, in line with the roles defined by the WSIS, would help to overcome some of the barriers developing countries are facing. It would also facilitate exchange of information and technology transfer between the countries involved.

Furthermore, the capability of the private sector and civil society in these countries needs to be developed to the point where they can contribute and push their own agendas. Until this happens, the role of defining the interests of many of the developing countries will fall on their governments. These governments will need to consult their constituencies while developing their positions on policy issues, as well as to muster available resources from the stakeholders to represent the countries' interests in the international arena.

Another obstacle that developing countries face is the underdeveloped Internet infrastructure. As has been pointed out through the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's discussion list, "the un-preparedness of most African countries as far as Internet governance is concerned is mainly due to lack of access to the Internet itself…"

The opportunity to participate in decision-making on international Internet governance will in itself increase awareness of ways to tackle the issues and derive the benefits of the Internet, and stimulate action within the countries concerned to develop capability and policies to increase access.

Another key element in bridging the digital divide is multilingualism. This has an impact in two ways. One is the capacity of developing countries to participate in Internet governance where the institutions do not use the United Nations languages in their communications. The other is the need to make the Internet more accessible to those who are not familiar with English. The existing domain name system presents a significant barrier to non-English speaking people for accessing and benefiting from the internet.

The current Internet governance mechanisms are not able to deal efficiently with the international policy-making and coordination needed for international programming and

implementation of multilingual domain naming systems. Governments are generally the custodians of their countries' cultural and linguistic heritage. Development of global policies for a multilingual system and agreement on a top-level global design and deployment plan (with the support of the private sector such as PC software vendors), must, therefore, involve the commitment of governments.

The way forward

Some fundamental steps must be taken in evolving Internet governance to break the current impasse in bridging the digital divide. The following are some views on how Internet governance should evolve to meet the WSIS principles and definition of roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, and to lay the groundwork for bridging the digital divide.

In the interests of maintaining the stability and security of the Internet, the existing institutions involved in management of technical and operational aspects should continue, subject to acquiring international legitimacy and to implementation of evolutionary reforms consistent with the WSIS principles.

The Internet management structure should remain relatively decentralised and the different stakeholders should have lead roles as appropriate for the different functions and levels, with full opportunity for inputs from other stakeholders.

There is a need to create a new body, preferably under the United Nations framework, which will enable governments, with input from the private sector and civil society, to exercise their responsibility to approve international public policies and to provide legitimacy, accountability and oversight to existing and future institutions where required. This body should have the objective of bridging the digital divide as one of its central mandates.

The involvement of governments in the overall governance process through such a body should make it easier to bring national decision-making in line with international Internet governance arrangements. This should also facilitate overcoming many of the obstacles faced by development programs in developing countries, and will help with pushing forward the infrastructure building, capacity-building and multilingualism agendas.

Apart from decision-making on issues impacting public policy, there is a need for a forum to ensure coordination between all involved institutions of all the complex and interrelated issues which are part of Internet governance. A new multi-stakeholder coordination body could also be created to undertake these functions.

In such a multi-stakeholder environment, the question of who represents the stakeholders arises. For example, should all private sector players be allowed to participate? How would civil society representatives be selected? In such an arrangement, developing countries could be at a disadvantage, especially those whose ICT private sector is not sufficiently developed. The greater representation from developed countries would overwhelm that of the developing countries. A voting mechanism for decision-making will need to be devised that would give equal weight to all countries involved.

In summary:

- Evolving the overall mechanism of Internet governance is a necessity and will facilitate bridging of the digital divide.

- Governance changes must be based on the principles of the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action.

- Governments from both developed and developing countries must assume a leadership role in the future arrangements for international public policy-making relating to Internet governance, while ensuring the full involvement of all other stakeholders. Areas where international public policy is needed to help bridge the digital divide include: capacity building, multilingualism, reduced cost of access and equitable resource allocation practices.

- Establishment of global and regional policymaking and coordination forums would facilitate participation of developing countries and foster knowledge transfer and implementation of Internet development policies locally.

Conclusion

Bridging the digital divide is a major challenge facing the global community. To meet this challenge, the future evolution of Internet governance mechanisms must be designed to take into account the need to increase participation of developing countries in the international policy-making and coordination of Internet development. The creation of a policymaking forum with involvement of stakeholders, in line with the roles defined by the WSIS, will increase awareness and enable developing countries to push forward their agendas. It will also facilitate the coordination of local development policies with the international direction.

Multilingualism and IDNs in the Internet Age

Qiheng Hu
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In order to build "a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge…", as stated in the WSIS Declaration of Principles, the issue of multilingualism on the Internet is becoming more and more important, since the Internet has evolved into the most widespread global infrastructure for the modern human society and its users have the background of unprecedented and growing diversity of languages and cultures.

Multilingual Communication

According to a September 2004 size-up (Almanac 2004), the number of the world's population now online is approaching one billion. In 2003, it was estimated that roughly two-thirds of all Internet users were non-native speakers of English (CyberAtlas, 2003). The native speakers of English no longer dominate the Internet, as they have had for many years. English is the official or dominant language in only four (the U.S., the U.K., Canada and Australia) out of fifteen top countries which accounted for 70% of Internet users in 2004.[1] Among the non-English-speaking countries, only China, Korea and Japan together accounted for nearly a fifth of the total number of individuals online. Anyhow, although the Internet is created mainly in the U.S. and is planned originally for the ASCII characters, hundreds of millions of people access and communicate over the Internet in languages other than English – or in some acceptable or even badly distorted English – because they did not learn it as a first language. Such a big benefit for non-English-speaking people is gained mainly because of the development and advancement of the Unicode, which is developed and maintained by the Unicode Consortium (http://www.unicode.org/).

[1] Brenda Danet (Yale University) and Susan C. Herring (Hebrew University of Jerusalem / Indiana University, Bloomington), "Multilingualism on the Internet"

This encoding standard provides the basis for processing, storage and interchange of text data in any language in all modern software and information technology protocols. In the foreseeable future, as Unicode continues to make progress, more and more individuals online in the world will be able to access the Internet using their own languages.

Multilingual Access to Namespace

The multilingual problems remain open in the domain name systems, mainly because the successful global deployment involves not only technical difficulties but also widespread and complicated issues of policy nature which requires extensive international coordination.

The issue of multilingual domain names has not been considered a problem at the early stage of Internet spread even in non-English-speaking countries, when the dominant users are mainly limited to the circles of so-called elites in the society – the university professors, well-educated officials, scientists etc. They are not very much concerned that the language used on the Internet is mainly English. This became a problem when great amount of people with lower levels of education come online. People realize that having a name in their native language is much more comfortable and easier to communicate online.

Perhaps this is why, while the web content is already available in different languages, the multilingualization of the DNS and email addresses has just begun. For the widest throng of people who are not prepared to study ASCII characters, the inequality in language is strengthening the inequality in the information and knowledge sharing which widens the digital divide. I think that the word "inequality" is used here without any political sense, it is merely a fact that the technology development underlying the communication capabilities cannot accomplish in an action.

To create a user-friendly environment for the address space, the topic of multilingual domain names has attracted great efforts particularly in non-English-speaking countries and regions. There are generally two main approaches to enable the use of multilingual names for DNS and email addresses. One aims to extend the protocol to handle multilingual requests by introducing in packet identifiers, while the other concerns mainly the application or the client end to convert all multilingual characters into ASCII compatible strings before releasing them to the servers. In any case, the use of multilingual names affects not only the DNS or email servers themselves but also other applications and transportation that depend on them or carry these addresses within their databases.[2]

[2] Edmon Chung, David Leung, Jim Lam, Wilson Chow and Ken Lee. "Multilingual Domain Names & Email Addresses", Neteka Inc., March 2001

The currently available methods to realize multilingual access to Internet namespace include: Internationalized Domain Name, Keyword lookup, Keyword search, and Directory services. The APRICOT (Asia Pacific Regional Internet Conference on Operational Technologies) thoroughly addresses the issues related to those methods.[3]

The solution for IDN is based on the distribution of client software. IDN has been commercialized in China, Japan, Korea and others. Due to the joint efforts of engineers from many countries the global technical standard on IDN has been established.[4] On April 14, 2004, a proposed standard that was jointly drafted by CNNIC, JPRS, KRNIC and TWNIC was finally approved and published by IETF as RFC 3743 with the title of "Joint Engineering Team (JET) Guidelines for Internationalized Domain Names (IDN) Registration and Administration for Chinese, Japanese, and Korean". The basic approach of the RFC 3743 for Internationalized Domain Names, known as "IDNA", focuses on access to domain names in a range of scripts that is broader in scope than the original ASCII. The development process made it clear that the use of characters with similar appearances and/or interpretations created potential risk for confusion, as well as difficulties in deployment and transition. The solution is that, while those issues were important, they could best be addressed administratively rather than through restrictions embedded in the protocols. The RFC 3743 defines a set of guidelines for applying restrictions of that type for Chinese, Japanese and Korean (CJK) scripts and the zones that use them and, perhaps, provides a tentative framework for thinking about other zones, languages, and scripts.

Although the IDN service started ambitiously, yet the current market response has not been adequate as expected. One of the reasons might be the lack of a built-in IDN client software in the most popular browsers. However, the major browser companies which could contribute and assist to the deployment of IDN service would update their products to meet the IDN requests only when the expected market is big enough.

The migration towards a namespace common to multilingual access is a prospective task. The impact will be critical for widening the channel of access. It needs the awareness and collaboration among all administrators and managers around the world to handle multilingual requests.

Multilingual Access to the e-Content

An extraordinary spread of English language to the non-English-speaking areas can be observed simultaneously with the pace of Internet extension from the U.S. to the whole

[3] http://www.iak.ne.kr/nativename/2005/kyoto3.htm
[4] WGIG working paper, "Multilingualization of Internet Naming System", prepared by Cheon, Beji, Seadat, Sakamaki, Al-Darrab, Hassan, MacLean, Hu, Bertola, Shaban, Pisanty; February 2005

globe. It is natural trend as far as valuable resources have been dominantly created and stored in English web-pages. There was a time when 82% of the web-pages and 90% of emails were typed in English. According to a joint study by Funredes and Union Latine, even though English is still dominant, between 1998 and 2001 English on the web decreased from 75% to 52%. The volume emptied out is mainly filled with other European languages.[5] It can yet be regarded as an effective and easy solution if everyone speaks English. But for most people it is unlikely that they can master English as well as their mother tongue in understanding and expression of the subtle things. Besides, to protect the cultural diversity is also very important for mankind. UNESCO is concerned with the protection of cultural and linguistic diversity and the promotion of language diversity on the Internet, too. UNESCO has set the goals: "to achieve worldwide access to e-contents in all languages, improve the linguistic capabilities of users and create and develop tools for multilingual access to the Internet."

Hence, the ultimate request of multilingualism over the Internet would be the cross language access of the e-content. The speed of data flow and the scale of information volume on the Internet do not allow human interpreters to play decisive role to help people in cross language access of e-content. Only computer-aided translation may probably one day bring us closer to the target when people can read in his or her native language web pages that are published, say, in English. And the real-time or semi-real-time communication can take place between people using different languages. Research on computer-aided translation has made considerable progress over the past 50 years. There are systems in application, mostly used in Japan, Canada and Europe. The machine interpreters are usually limited to bilingual and need to be heavily specialized if they are to produce translations good enough to be understood by human editors.[6]

The investigation and research in the field of multilingualism for the Internet, including computer-aided translation, is really a big challenge to science and technology. If we all work hard, and collaborate, and be creative, a multilingual Internet, easy to access, share and utilize for people speaking different languages will eventually become a reality.

[5] Funredes and Union Latine, August 22, 2001
[6] Special Report: "Multilingualism on the Internet"; by Bruno Oudet; 2001.

PART III

LOOKING AHEAD

WSIS: The First Summit of the Internet Age?

Bertrand de La Chapelle
Director, WSIS-Online.net

The Internet has impacted and transformed most human activities in the last 10 years. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) shows that diplomatic processes will not be immune to this revolution. A transformation of working methods and a stronger influence and participation of non-governmental actors are already visible evolutions. In retrospect, more than a Summit about the Internet, the WSIS may well be viewed as the first Summit of the Internet Age.

Real revolutions often start quietly. Did Vinton Cerf and Bob Kahn anticipate the few machines they connected through their new Internet Protocol would evolve into a network connecting hundreds of millions of computers? Did Tim Berners-Lee anticipate the HTML language he designed would support applications used by a billion people around the planet? Few people probably realize today that the timid innovations tested in the laboratory of the World Summit on the Information Society can have a bigger impact on the international architecture than most discussions on the reform of the United Nations and the number of seats in the Security Council.

From the onset, WSIS was supposed to be an innovative summit, because of the very nature of the issues it addressed, because of the intention to fully associate civil society and private sector actors and because it was going to be held in two phases. Disappointment by many actors on how little progress was in fact achieved in the official process has been widely chronicled and there is no need to repeat it here. But less attention has been paid to apparently small innovations on the fringes, related to the use of electronic tools that may well bear powerful transformation capacity for the future.

Civil society (CS) actors were the main actors in these experiments and this brief paper is an attempt to chronicle them and to "guesstimate" the impact they might have for the future of

diplomatic negotiations and international governance. Seven aspects – of various importance – are reviewed below.

Civil society mailing lists and web sites

Governments mainly relied upon Geneva-based diplomats to follow the WSIS process. Physical meetings were essential, with relatively few interactions between prepcom sessions in the first phase. Civil society participants on the contrary were scattered around the world and, out of necessity, made extensive use of mailing lists to stay in touch and coordinate. First on existing mailing lists they were subscribed to, then, progressively with the creation of thematic caucuses[1], and various other structures, a wide range of dedicated mailing lists were created for exchanging information, coordinating actions or drafting positions.

Although membership was restricted in theory to civil society participants, several other individuals (including from governments) either discretely subscribed without posting, or followed discussions through the (generally) public archives. In rare cases, well-drafted reports from meetings posted by civil society actors have even been used by some governments with limited human resources to report to their capitals.

Several websites[2] (or sub-sites) dedicated to the WSIS process were also created around specific campaigns (for instance the CRIS Campaign[3]) or themes, or for general-purpose monitoring[4].

Used intensively between and during Prepcoms, mailing lists and CS web sites were vital tools: no effective participation of civil society actors would have been possible without the Internet. Inversely, the very existence of the Internet now removes one of the practical objections to the involvement of non-governmental actors into such United Nations processes, as the need for permanent representatives in a single location is less acute.

In the future, the more intensive use of such tools within governments could trigger a different balance of responsibilities between local embassies and experts in the capital.

Wi-Fi connections in meetings rooms

This may seem a mundane innovation. It actually so transformed the working environment for laptop-equipped civil society actors that the absence of Internet connection in some

[1] See full list of Civil Society Caucuses at this address: http://www.wsis-cs.org/caucuses.html
[2] See in particular: http://www.wsis-cs.org/, http://www.worldsummit2005.org/ (list of sites at : http://www.worldsummit2003.de/en/web/73.htm)
[3] Cris Campaign web site: http://www.crisinfo.org/
[4] See Association for Progressive Communications: http://www.apc.org/

meetings greatly impaired their capacity to work. Access to the internet allowed real-time access to documentation and information (reducing the amount of paper that had to be carried). But more importantly, it led to innovative uses such as:

- Real-time blogging[5] and reporting during meetings to inform actors who could not make the trip to Geneva;
- Instant communication / coordination between participants in different meetings or even within the same meeting room; and
- Use of mailing lists to send drafts of interventions and solicit comments from remote participants.

Civil society actors went through a painful learning process to establish internal rules, avoid information overload and establish priorities. But altogether, participation in non-Wi-Fi-enabled meetings was considered mostly a waste of time. Public Internet access points in hallways, although useful (for instance for printing) are no substitute for such permanent connection.

On-Screen drafting[6]

This technique, too seldom used during the process, was employed at the Tokyo Regional conference in January 2003 and in a few other instances. These experiences demonstrated:

- a dramatic increase in efficiency as compared to the traditional process of gathering comments in public meetings and having a secretariat produce a new version for the next day; and
- the possibility to conduct a really inclusive drafting process involving all actors

The natural belief is that such a method is only appropriate to refine an already elaborate preliminary draft. But there is evidence of its benefits at all stages, including to produce early, rough document structures in a fluid, interactive and participatory manner.

Still, this method changes the role of people present in the room. In particular, it does not provide diplomats the same capacity for reporting to capitals to get feedback on proposed

[5] Blogging: the posting of short notes directly on the web, in a form of personal diary
[6] On-screen drafting: technique where a draft text is projected on a wide screen above the Chair and editing is done in real-time, according to comments from the floor

changes – unless, of course, they were to adopt the real-time feedback process allowed by the Wi-Fi connection (see above).

This interactive drafting process could further be expanded by allowing an evolving document to be accessible live through the Internet and by letting present and remote participants directly attach comments on the draft.

Online consultation and commenting on draft documents

In a few cases, online consultations through open forums were organized to gather preliminary input. This was in particular successfully done through the WSIS-Online platform to prepare the Open Forum on Internet Governance organized by the United Nations ICT Task Force in March 2004. This helped identify the key issues and actors before the setting up of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG).

Other less successful examples show that participation in such forums trigger significant participation only if :

- there is a critical mass of actors already aware of the process;
- the actors concerned believe their comments will really be taken into account; and
- consultations are launched early enough and articulated with the drafting process.

A more frequent method was the posting of documents and of comments received. This was used on the Executive Secretariat website for official documents but also extensively by the innovative Working Group on Internet Governance, through its dedicated site, in preparation for the open consultations held before each of its meetings. This allows a wide participation and interaction. But it also requires a considerable amount of time to sort through the mass of information posted. Improved methods for outlining key choices and displaying inputs must therefore be designed. The simple posting of documents is a necessary first step, but certainly not sufficient to guarantee efficient engagement of all concerned actors.

Designation of civil society representatives in the WGIG

The Working Group on Internet Governance needed to establish[7] a truly multi-stakeholder format for discussing a wide range of issues related to the notion of Internet governance. Without reducing the responsibility of the United Nation Secretary-General in the

[7] See paragraph 13 in the Plan of Action at : http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/poa.html

designation of its members, a mechanism was needed to allow civil society to identify and suggest acceptable candidates to represent itself within the group.

At the initiative of the Civil Society Internet Governance Caucus, and in a very limited time frame, requests for nominations were sent to the different caucus lists and a "Nomination Committee" (or NomCom[8]) of four people[9] reviewed the proposed names, establishing a limited list with the following criteria in mind:

- Regional and gender balance;
- High level of competence and recognized experience in the field;
- Balance between technical and policy-oriented people; and
- Capacity to facilitate and moderate debate rather than advocates of a single position (however legitimate).

Subsequent interactions with the Executive Coordinator, Markus Kummer, led to the decision of the United Nations Secretary-General to integrate all suggested people as members of the WGIG. This gave more legitimacy to the designated members and, as a result, to the Working Group itself (where they actually, in the following months, assumed a large part of the workload).

Time allowing, more iterative consultations within civil society lists could have further improved the designation process. But even as such, this approach was a major improvement over traditional methods where "civil society representatives" are usually chosen unilaterally by entities in charge of the creation of the group. Two major lessons already emerge:

- This is a first step towards a key principle: civil society members of multi-stakeholder processes or working groups should (and can) be designated by civil society itself
- Only the internet allows a transparent and inclusive selection process for civil society actors that cannot use the simple region-based elections of government.

[8] The concept of this NomCom and its methods drew heavily from the experience of many IG Caucus members who participated in similar mechanisms in IETF or ICANN

[9] NomCom members pledged not to be members of the WGIG in order to guarantee independence

The successful formation of this Working Group is a stepping stone for a replication of this process in other cases.

Testing tools within the WGIG

Formed outside of the strict rules of procedures of the Summit, under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General, the WGIG was able to explore innovative working methods, drawing from the current practices in the Internet Community fora.

In particular, real-time on-screen minutes[10] were introduced during the third open consultation in April 2005. This proved highly useful to facilitate understanding of interventions by all participants. It also greatly enhanced transparency and accountability as minutes were immediately posted online.

Some additional experiments, using more or less recent technologies, included:

- Webcasting of meetings (although this was also used in parts of the official process of ITU meetings)
- Video-conferencing (in particular in connection with a distant regional meeting)
- Collaboratory platforms (in particular with the support of the Internet Governance Project at Syracuse University)[11]
- Use of the Plone platform for posting documents
- Wikis

Although limited in scope, these tests (largely facilitated by civil society experts within the group) played an important capacity building function for governments not familiar with recent evolutions in social software.

WSIS-Online: leveraging the Summit events and helping actors connect

The first phase of WSIS in Geneva was held in an original format, using a single venue for three categories of activities: a plenary conference (interventions by heads of States or Governments), a series of more than 200 conferences and an exhibit hall (ICT4D) presenting more than 300 projects.

[10] Real-time stenographic notes of all interventions are projected on a wide screen above the Chairperson
[11] See more information on Policy Collaboratories and the work of Derrick Cogburn at Syracuse University: http://cotelco.syr.edu

At the initiative and with the support of the Swiss authorities, host of the first phase, a highly interactive online platform (www.wsis-online.net) was set up to present all these activities and organizations and help participants connect around their issues of interest. Indexing actors, events, organizations and projects along the themes of the Plan of Action, it provided a virtual extension of the actual event.

To maintain and develop this platform during the period between Geneva and Tunis, a Swiss-based association was set up with the support of the French government, the Fondation Charles Leopold Mayer and other stakeholders, under the Presidency of Ambassador Daniel Stauffacher.

Used in 2004 to host online consultations on Internet Governance as well as on Financing Mechanisms, it has progressively evolved into a community platform for all actors involved in the implementation of the WSIS Action Plan. Allowing them to register the events they organize or the projects they manage, and to find other actors interested in the same issues, its main purpose is to foster interaction, help the formation of thematic networks and prepare the key phase of implementation after the Tunis Summit. It is a needed complement to the reporting mechanism undertaken by the Executive Secretariat.

Building on the experience of the Geneva phase, wsis-online.net will also provide participants in the Tunis conferences and exhibition (ICT4all) with high-level functionalities to help them connect and showcase their activities. With the support of additional stakeholders and some existing thematic networks (for instance in the scientific community), the objective is to make WSIS "the most interactive United Nations Summit ever".

This rapid review of the various uses of the Internet and digital tools during the WSIS process does not imply that they will replace all physical meetings and traditional processes nor that they have no drawbacks. Information overload on mailing lists, the difficulty to implement multilingualism, the limits to participation in countries where Internet access is rare, among other issues, are not to be overlooked.

But altogether, the Internet already had a deep impact on how this Summit was conducted, its Agenda, and the role civil society was able to play in it. The Internet will certainly have an even bigger role in the upcoming phase: governments cannot implement the Plan of Action alone and the active and coordinated engagement of thousands of actors around the world is needed.

WSIS is a laboratory, a test bed for new multi-stakeholder mechanisms. Any follow-up mechanism should draw lessons from the above experiments to set the right combination of physical meetings and online tools, as well as new rules of participation and interaction

between all actors. In particular, the creation of the innovative WGIG and the setting-up of a community platform (wsis-online.net) to help actors connect are stepping stones to a new format for international processes.

WSIS may still look to many as a summit like others. In reality, it brings the germ of a paradigm shift. While addressing Internet governance, it may be laying the foundations for a "Governance for the Internet Age", that will allow full participation of all actors, a new level of Democracy.

Why Internet Governance Should Be Everyone's Concern

Nitin Desai
Chairman of the WGIG and Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on WSIS

Internet governance is on the agenda of the World Summit on an Information Society (WSIS), and a multi-stakeholder Working Group set up at the request of the Summit has submitted a report on the subject. The content of this report is widely available and will not be described here. The purpose of this short note is simply to say why Internet governance is an issue that the world community needs to address.

Information technology is going to shape the societies and polities of the 21st century. There are other new technologies that will have as profound an impact on the production process. But information technology, in its broadest sense, will also have as deep an impact on societal and political relations.

We can see this already in the way in which our economy functions. The distance between buyer and seller, producer and consumer has been reduced. IT is more and more directly integrated in products and processes. It has led to massive changes in sectors like banking and other services. Internet-enabled services are booming in world trade.

In politics, the relationship between government and citizens is being transformed by the easier access to public services and official data bases. It can lead to substantial improvement in the transparency of official transactions and the accountability of public authorities.

Information technologies are also providing citizens with new ways of connecting with one another for political or social action. NGO networks have used this technology to great effect, for instance, in the movement against landmines or in the mobilisation of opinion on developing country debt problems.

It is this impact which has led people to talk about a new type of society. Some speak of a cyber-society, a term preferred by scientists and technologists who see the future as one where many control functions, exercised today by humans will be performed by computers. Some, who come mainly from the world of information science and communications, refer to it as an information society. Those whose focus is mainly on the use of this technology for widening the access to knowledge refer to it as a knowledge society, because they believe that it is really differences in access to information that will shape social structure. There are some who refer to it as a network society because they believe that its greatest impact will be in allowing people to connect more easily with one another for economic, political and social purposes.

All of these terms have an element of truth. But as of now we have not yet found a portmanteau word that will capture all of these aspects of IT impact. But whatever be the term of choice, all four types of impact depend on one particular information technology – the Internet. That is why Internet governance is a key dimension of global governance for the 21st century.

The Internet itself developed bit by bit, from experimental beginnings in the USA. It is a product of an extraordinary process of distributed and bottom-up development. Its underlying culture is libertarian, almost anarchic. Therefore to talk of Internet governance seems almost treasonable to some. But governed it is, and the challenge is to ensure that these processes of decentralised management take into account the concerns of all Internet users.

A growing number of these users are in developing countries. In these countries Internet expansion is being driven to a significant extent by public service applications and by telecom administrations. That is why the demand for a greater engagement of governments in Internet governance.

The Internet is a rapidly evolving medium. The uses to which it is put change as new technologies become available. A recent example of this is the fast growth in music distribution through the net, which has almost rendered records and prerecorded CDs semi-obsolete in some countries. We do not know how this medium will evolve, the way in which it will transform options for other media and other sectors. That is why flexibility and adaptability must be built into governance arrangements.

Until now Internet governance and management has been largely in the hands of information science and technology professionals. They have served us well. But the Internet is changing and becoming a part of everyday life for at least a billion people. These billion,

mostly satisfied users, must take a more direct interest in the governance of the Internet. Our hope is that the WSIS and related processes will help us towards this end.

Road to WSIS II

Janis Karklins
President, Preparatory Committee for WSIS II, Latvia

This paper was written in the spring of 2005, in the middle of the preparatory process for the Tunis Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), providing a perspective on where we have been as well as our goals moving forward.

As President of the Preparatory Committee for Phase II of the WSIS, I have taken a very pragmatic approach to facilitating the process, concentrating on the key issues which were not resolved in the first phase as well as focusing on implementation and follow-up to WSIS after the Tunis summit concludes. As we prepare the Phase II Summit, one goal is certainly to have a successful outcome in Tunis. However, we also need to ensure that the work of WSIS continues afterwards by integrating these issues into the international agenda on an ongoing basis. Much progress has been made throughout the WSIS process in terms of identifying important challenges and opportunities provided by ICTs and building political agreement on these issues. While there is no need for institutionalization of WSIS itself, the issues addressed during the process should be integrated into other activities and bodies working on related issues to maximize the impact of the important work conducted by WSIS.

I have also been committed to facilitating the process and discussions in an open and transparent way with representatives of governments and other stakeholders. We will succeed only by working together – representatives of governments, international organizations, civil society and private sector. In that vein, the preparatory process of the WSIS has been almost as important as the Summit itself, providing a variety of venues and vehicles for all stakeholders to fully participate at the global, regional and local levels. The involvement of stakeholders in the WSIS discussions has been unprecedented in the United Nations system, particularly in the consultative process on Internet governance issues.

At this stage in the process, I am satisfied with the pace of preparations for the Tunis Summit. In the second preparatory committee meeting, during the examination of the report of the United Nations Secretary-General's Task Force on Financial Mechanisms, the Preparatory Committee agreed on an outstanding political issue from the Geneva Summit, the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF). It was agreed that the DSF should be a fund of a voluntary nature, which would complement existing financial mechanisms and develop innovative approaches in terms of identifying sources of its own funding. After the official launch in Geneva of the voluntary DSF in March of 2005, the main challenge for the fund is to prove its efficiency in carrying out projects that can make a real difference on the ground. We expect to hear announcements about some of these new projects during the Tunis Summit. Work is progressing well in the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG), another expert group created by the United Nations Secretary-General. These issues will be addressed in the third Preparatory meeting in September 2005. We have also approved the summit format, and discussions on the organization of side events are well advanced.

While tremendous progress has been made, much remains to be done, and I look forward to continuing to work with all stakeholders in this process as we address the important issues of the Information Society, which will impact not only current, but future generations.

The unique nature of WSIS, structured in two phases, provides an opportunity for enhanced dialogue and partnership, enabling the international community to address questions about the Information Society in a comprehensive and inclusive manner. From the other side, it requires innovative approaches to the process. Phase I of WSIS culminated with a successful Summit in Geneva in December of 2003, during which a Declaration of Principles and a comprehensive Plan of Action were adopted. The second phase needs to build on that work and move towards implementation.

Moving from Principles to Actions

This is the motto of the Tunis phase of WSIS. The Tunis Summit should translate the decisions made in Geneva into concrete actions and policy decisions. The Tunis Summit should foster existing, and create new, partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society.

Throughout both phases of WSIS, a series of regional and thematic meetings have taken place, providing platforms for discussion on implementation, best practice and exchange of information. These meetings have broadened the inclusion of stakeholders, provided input from the regional and local levels and built a base of support for implementation. The regional meetings have provided platforms for discussing challenges and opportunities facing specific areas of the world. Thematic meetings have provided intellectual laboratories

on specific topics in which new and practical measures have been discussed and innovative solutions developed. As during the preparations for the Geneva phase, the regional and thematic meetings have played a key role in assessing the issues from a local perspective as well as provided critical input into the preparations for the Tunis phase. These meetings also have helped in generating interest and commitment at the local level and ensuring that more voices and perspectives are incorporated into the WSIS process.

The key challenge following the Tunis Summit will be to keep WSIS on the international agenda and to make sure that the work and recommendations of WSIS are implemented. Finding appropriate implementation mechanisms is not easy. No single United Nations agency addresses WSIS issues. These issues are cross-cutting and covered by many different United Nations agencies and other international bodies. Civil society and the private sector must be included as well. Therefore the creation of an efficient implementation mechanism, including all stakeholders and providing an efficient cooperation framework, was a big challenge for the Preparatory Committee.

To that end, we have been striving to link WSIS with the Millennium Declaration review process and the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDG). There are a number of references to the MDGs in the WSIS documents, and we are working on integrating WSIS issues into the review process. The report of the United Nations Secretary-General addresses the role ICTs and emphasizes the important role ICTs play as enablers of development. Our goal is to make sure that WSIS, and more specifically, the issues related to the work of WSIS, are mentioned in the documents adopted in September 2005 by the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly as they review progress on the MDGs.

Conclusion

The information society has provided both opportunities and challenges for society. The WSIS process has provided a valuable assessment of these issues and provided an important basis of work for future action.

There is no disagreement about the existence of a digital divide. And there is a consensus that, if urgent steps are not taken, the divide will widen. More than lip service is needed. It will require a concerted effort by governments, international organizations, companies and civil society, working together to provide an improved environment for the Information Society in both developing and developed countries around the world as well as within and between populations of people.

It has been a privilege for me to serve as the President of the Phase II Preparatory Process. I wish to thank all of the people who have contributed to the WSIS process and would urge everyone to continue to push on these issues and commit to the implementation of the ideas and recommendations of WSIS long after the Tunis Summit has ended. The decisions taken through the WSIS process should not remain only on paper, but be translated into actions for the benefit of all stakeholders.

For an Information Society Accessible to All

Welcome Address by Montasser Ouaili, Minister of Communication Technologies, Republic of Tunisia, to the participants of the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, 16-18 November 2005)

Following the holding, in Geneva, of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, Tunisia will have the honor of hosting, on 16-18 November 2005, the second phase of this Summit. This global event, the first of its kind in this millennium, constitutes an historic opportunity to move ahead on the path of building a global, balanced and equitable information society.

Quite appreciative of the results achieved and the documents adopted during the Geneva phase of the Summit, and in view of the uniqueness, complementarity, interaction and convergence of the two phases, Tunisia remains deeply convinced that the success of the World Summit on the Information Society as a whole depends essentially on the active involvement and constructive participation of all stakeholders of the international community.

Tunisia thus relies on the full contribution of all the concerned parties to the various stages of the Summit, in order to offer it the success expected at the level of objectives and mechanisms, and to make sure it comes up with tangible results that meet the requirements of this century and establish the information and communication technologies as a strategic catalyst for the action of economic, political, social and cultural development; the aim being to meet the expectations of the international community and contribute to materializing the Millennium development objectives.

Today, we appreciate the mobilization and the growing interest of all components of the international community in enriching reflection and deepening the debate launched during the Geneva phase, in order to take best advantage of the information and communication technologies, and develop a common approach for the purpose of narrowing the digital

divide and establishing a balanced information society accessible to all. In his Declaration during the Geneva Summit, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali described this society as "one that offers all countries equal opportunities to benefit from the advantages of technologies, one that encompasses all countries and allows all persons and peoples, with no discrimination or exclusion, to have access to networks and to sources of knowledge and information".

Tunisia reiterates its commitment and determination to provide all conditions of success to the second phase of the Summit which, we hope, will be the phase of solutions and will constitute a landmark date for all humanity in the process of building a society of knowledge and intelligence, based on solidarity and accessible to all.

Initiator of the Summit and host to its second phase, Tunisia, the land of hospitality and tolerance, will be delighted to welcome, during the second phase of the Summit on November 16-18, 2005, all representatives of Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector. It cherishes the hope that the Tunis phase will constitute the crowning step for the Summit, through the achievement of results reflecting the expectations and aspirations of the international community.

ANNEXES

WSIS Declaration of Principles

Building the Information Society: a global challenge in the new Millennium

A. Our Common Vision of the Information Society

1. **We, the representatives of the peoples of the world, assembled in Geneva from 10-12 December 2003 for the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society,** declare our common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. **Our challenge** is to harness the potential of information and communication technology to promote the development goals of the Millennium Declaration, namely the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achievement of universal primary education; promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women; reduction of child mortality; improvement of maternal health; to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and development of global partnerships for development for the attainment of a more peaceful, just and prosperous world. We also reiterate our commitment to the achievement of sustainable development and agreed development goals, as contained in the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation and the Monterrey Consensus, and other outcomes of relevant United Nations Summits.

3. **We reaffirm** the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, as enshrined in the Vienna Declaration. We also reaffirm that democracy, sustainable development, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as good governance at all levels are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. We further resolve to strengthen respect for the rule of law in international as in national affairs.

4. **We reaffirm,** as an essential foundation of the Information Society, and as outlined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; that this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. Communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and the foundation of all social organization. It is central to the Information

Society. Everyone, everywhere should have the opportunity to participate and no one should be excluded from the benefits the Information Society offers.

5. **We further reaffirm** our commitment to the provisions of Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of their personality is possible, and that, in the exercise of their rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In this way, we shall promote an Information Society where human dignity is respected.

6. In keeping with the spirit of this declaration, **we rededicate ourselves** to upholding the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.

7. **We recognize** that science ha**s** a central role in the development of the Information Society. Many of the building blocks of the Information Society are the result of scientific and technical advances made possible by the sharing of research results.

8. **We recognize** that education, knowledge, information and communication are at the core of human progress, endeavour and well-being. Further, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have an immense impact on virtually all aspects of our lives. The rapid progress of these technologies opens completely new opportunities to attain higher levels of development. The capacity of these technologies to reduce many traditional obstacles, especially those of time and distance, for the first time in history makes it possible to use the potential of these technologies for the benefit of millions of people in all corners of the world.

9. **We are aware** that ICTs should be regarded as tools and not as an end in themselves. Under favourable conditions, these technologies can be a powerful instrument, increasing productivity, generating economic growth, job creation and employability and improving the quality of life of all. They can also promote dialogue among people, nations and civilizations.

10. **We are also fully aware** that the benefits of the information technology revolution are today unevenly distributed between the developed and developing countries and within societies. We are fully committed to turning this digital divide into a digital opportunity for all, particularly for those who risk being left behind and being further marginalized.

11. **We are committed** to realizing our common vision of the Information Society for ourselves and for future generations**.** We recognize that young people are the future workforce and leading creators and earliest adopters of ICTs. They must therefore be empowered as learners, developers, contributors, entrepreneurs and decision-makers. We must focus especially on young people who have not yet been able to benefit fully from the opportunities provided by ICTs. We are also committed to ensuring that the development of ICT applications and operation of services respects the rights of children as well as their protection and well-being.

12. **We affirm** that development of ICTs provides enormous opportunities for women, who should be an integral part of, and key actors, in the Information Society. We are committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis on equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. To this end, we should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end.

13. In building the Information Society, **we shall pay particular attention** to the special needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups of society, including migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees, unemployed and underprivileged people, minorities and nomadic people. We shall also recognize the special needs of older persons and persons with disabilities.

14. **We are resolute** to empower the poor, particularly those living in remote, rural and marginalized urban areas, to access information and to use ICTs as a tool to support their efforts to lift themselves out of poverty.

15. In the evolution of the Information Society, particular attention must be given to the special situation of indigenous peoples, as well as to the preservation of their heritage and their cultural legacy.

16. **We continue to pay** special attention to the particular needs of people of developing countries, countries with economies in transition, Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States, Landlocked Developing Countries, Highly Indebted Poor Countries, countries and territories under occupation, countries recovering from conflict and countries and regions with special needs as well as to conditions that pose severe threats to development, such as natural disasters.

17. **We recognize** that building an inclusive Information Society requires new forms of solidarity, partnership and cooperation among governments and other stakeholders, i.e. the private sector, civil society and international organizations. Realizing that the ambitious goal

of this Declaration—bridging the digital divide and ensuring harmonious, fair and equitable development for all—will require strong commitment by all stakeholders, we call for digital solidarity, both at national and international levels.

18. Nothing in this Declaration shall be construed as impairing, contradicting, restricting or derogating from the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, any other international instrument or national laws adopted in furtherance of these instruments.

B. An Information Society for All: Key Principles

19. **We are resolute** in our quest to ensure that everyone can benefit from the opportunities that ICTs can offer. We agree that to meet these challenges, all stakeholders should work together to: improve access to information and communication infrastructure and technologies as well as to information and knowledge; build capacity; increase confidence and security in the use of ICTs; create an enabling environment at all levels; develop and widen ICT applications; foster and respect cultural diversity; recognize the role of the media; address the ethical dimensions of the Information Society; and encourage international and regional cooperation. We agree that these are the key principles for building an inclusive Information Society.

1) The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

20. Governments, as well as private sector, civil society and the United Nations and other international organizations have an important role and responsibility in the development of the Information Society and, as appropriate, in decision-making processes. Building a people-centred Information Society is a joint effort which requires cooperation and partnership among all stakeholders.

2) Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for an inclusive information society

24. Connectivity is a central enabling agent in building the Information Society. Universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to ICT infrastructure and services, constitutes one of the challenges of the Information Society and should be an objective of all stakeholders involved in building it. Connectivity also involves access to energy and postal services, which should be assured in conformity with the domestic legislation of each country.

25. A well-developed information and communication network infrastructure and applications, adapted to regional, national and local conditions, easily-accessible and affordable, and making greater use of broadband and other innovative technologies where possible, can accelerate the social and economic progress of countries, and the well-being of all individuals, communities and peoples.

26. Policies that create a favourable climate for stability, predictability and fair competition at all levels should be developed and implemented in a manner that not only attracts more private investment for ICT infrastructure development but also enables universal service obligations to be met in areas where traditional market conditions fail to work. In disadvantaged areas, the establishment of ICT public access points in places such as post offices, schools, libraries and archives, can provide effective means for ensuring universal access to the infrastructure and services of the Information Society.

3) Access to information and knowledge

24. The ability for all to access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge is essential in an inclusive Information Society.

25. The sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development can be enhanced by removing barriers to equitable access to information for economic, social, political, health, cultural, educational, and scientific activities and by facilitating access to public domain information, including by universal design and the use of assistive technologies.

26. A rich public domain is an essential element for the growth of the Information Society, creating multiple benefits such as an educated public, new jobs, innovation, business opportunities, and the advancement of sciences. Information in the public domain should be easily accessible to support the Information Society, and protected from misappropriation. Public institutions such as libraries and archives, museums, cultural collections and other community-based access points should be strengthened so as to promote the preservation of documentary records and free and equitable access to information.

27. Access to information and knowledge can be promoted by increasing awareness among all stakeholders of the possibilities offered by different software models, including proprietary, open-source and free software, in order to increase competition, access by users, diversity of choice, and to enable all users to develop solutions which best meet their requirements. Affordable access to software should be considered as an important component of a truly inclusive Information Society.

28. We strive to promote universal access with equal opportunities for all to scientific knowledge and the creation and dissemination of scientific and technical information, including open access initiatives for scientific publishing.

4) Capacity building

35. Each person should have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in order to understand, participate actively in, and benefit fully from, the Information Society and the knowledge economy. Literacy and universal primary education are key factors for building a fully inclusive information society, paying particular attention to the special needs of girls and women. Given the wide range of ICT and information specialists required at all levels, building institutional capacity deserves special attention.

36. The use of ICTs in all stages of education, training and human resource development should be promoted, taking into account the special needs of persons with disabilities and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

37. Continuous and adult education, re-training, life-long learning, distance-learning and other special services, such as telemedicine, can make an essential contribution to employability and help people benefit from the new opportunities offered by ICTs for traditional jobs, self-employment and new professions. Awareness and literacy in ICTs are an essential foundation in this regard.

38. Content creators, publishers, and producers, as well as teachers, trainers, archivists, librarians and learners, should play an active role in promoting the Information Society, particularly in the Least Developed Countries.

39. To achieve a sustainable development of the Information Society, national capability in ICT research and development should be enhanced. Furthermore, partnerships, in particular between and among developed and developing countries, including countries with economies in transition, in research and development, technology transfer, manufacturing and utilization of ICT products and services are crucial for promoting capacity building and global participation in the Information Society. The manufacture of ICTs presents a significant opportunity for creation of wealth.

40. The attainment of our shared aspirations, in particular for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to become fully-fledged members of the Information Society, and their positive integration into the knowledge economy, depends largely on increased capacity building in the areas of education, technology know-how and access to information, which are major factors in determining development and competitiveness.

5) Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

35. Strengthening the trust framework, including information security and network security, authentication, privacy and consumer protection, is a prerequisite for the development of the Information Society and for building confidence among users of ICTs. A global culture of cyber-security needs to be promoted, developed and implemented in cooperation with all stakeholders and international expert bodies. These efforts should be supported by increased international cooperation. Within this global culture of cyber-security, it is important to enhance security and to ensure the protection of data and privacy, while enhancing access and trade. In addition, it must take into account the level of social and economic development of each country and respect the development-oriented aspects of the Information Society.

36. While recognizing the principles of universal and non-discriminatory access to ICTs for all nations, we support the activities of the United Nations to prevent the potential use of ICTs for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security, and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure within States, to the detriment of their security. It is necessary to prevent the use of information resources and technologies for criminal and terrorist purposes, while respecting human rights.

37. Spam is a significant and growing problem for users, networks and the Internet as a whole. Spam and cyber-security should be dealt with at appropriate national and international levels.

6) Enabling environment

38. An enabling environment at national and international levels is essential for the Information Society. ICTs should be used as an important tool for good governance.

39. The rule of law, accompanied by a supportive, transparent, pro-competitive, technologically neutral and predictable policy and regulatory framework reflecting national realities, is essential for building a people-centred Information Society. Governments should intervene, as appropriate, to correct market failures, to maintain fair competition, to attract investment, to enhance the development of the ICT infrastructure and applications, to maximize economic and social benefits, and to serve national priorities.

40. A dynamic and enabling international environment, supportive of foreign direct investment, transfer of technology, and international cooperation, particularly in the areas of finance, debt and trade, as well as full and effective participation of developing countries

in global decision-making, are vital complements to national development efforts related to ICTs. Improving global affordable connectivity would contribute significantly to the effectiveness of these development efforts.

41. ICTs are an important enabler of growth through efficiency gains and increased productivity, in particular by small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). In this regard, the development of the Information Society is important for broadly-based economic growth in both developed and developing economies. ICT-supported productivity gains and applied innovations across economic sectors should be fostered. Equitable distribution of the benefits contributes to poverty eradication and social development. Policies that foster productive investment and enable firms, notably SMEs, to make the changes needed to seize the benefits from ICTs, are likely to be the most beneficial.

42. Intellectual Property protection is important to encourage innovation and creativity in the Information Society; similarly, the wide dissemination, diffusion, and sharing of knowledge is important to encourage innovation and creativity. Facilitating meaningful participation by all in intellectual property issues and knowledge sharing through full awareness and capacity building is a fundamental part of an inclusive Information Society.

43. Sustainable development can best be advanced in the Information Society when ICT-related efforts and programmes are fully integrated in national and regional development strategies. We welcome the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and encourage the international community to support the ICT-related measures of this initiative as well as those belonging to similar efforts in other regions. Distribution of the benefits of ICT-driven growth contributes to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

44. Standardization is one of the essential building blocks of the Information Society. There should be particular emphasis on the development and adoption of international standards. The development and use of open, interoperable, non-discriminatory and demand-driven standards that take into account needs of users and consumers is a basic element for the development and greater diffusion of ICTs and more affordable access to them, particularly in developing countries. International standards aim to create an environment where consumers can access services worldwide regardless of underlying technology.

45. The radio frequency spectrum should be managed in the public interest and in accordance with principle of legality, with full observance of national laws and regulation as well as relevant international agreements.

46. In building the Information Society, States are strongly urged to take steps with a view to the avoidance of, and refrain from, any unilateral measure not in accordance with

international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries, and that hinders the well-being of their population.

47. Recognizing that ICTs are progressively changing our working practices, the creation of a secure, safe and healthy working environment, appropriate to the utilisation of ICTs, respecting all relevant international norms, is fundamental.

48. The Internet has evolved into a global facility available to the public and its governance should constitute a core issue of the Information Society agenda. The international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations. It should ensure an equitable distribution of resources, facilitate access for all and ensure a stable and secure functioning of the Internet, taking into account multilingualism.

49. The management of the Internet encompasses both technical and public policy issues and should involve all stakeholders and relevant intergovernmental and international organizations. In this respect it is recognized that:

a) Policy authority for Internet-related public policy issues is the sovereign right of States. They have rights and responsibilities for international Internet-related public policy issues;

b) The private sector has had and should continue to have an important role in the development of the Internet, both in the technical and economic fields;

c) Civil society has also played an important role on Internet matters, especially at community level, and should continue to play such a role;

d) Intergovernmental organizations have had and should continue to have a facilitating role in the coordination of Internet-related public policy issues;

e) International organizations have also had and should continue to have an important role in the development of Internet-related technical standards and relevant policies.

50. International Internet governance issues should be addressed in a coordinated manner. We ask the Secretary-General of the United Nations to set up a working group on Internet governance, in an open and inclusive process that ensures a mechanism for the full and active participation of governments, the private sector and civil society from both

developing and developed countries, involving relevant intergovernmental and international organizations and forums, to investigate and make proposals for action, as appropriate, on the governance of Internet by 2005.

7) ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life

51. The usage and deployment of ICTs should seek to create benefits in all aspects of our daily life. ICT applications are potentially important in government operations and services, health care and health information, education and training, employment, job creation, business, agriculture, transport, protection of environment and management of natural resources, disaster prevention, and culture, and to promote eradication of poverty and other agreed development goals. ICTs should also contribute to sustainable production and consumption patterns and reduce traditional barriers, providing an opportunity for all to access local and global markets in a more equitable manner. Applications should be user-friendly, accessible to all, affordable, adapted to local needs in languages and cultures, and support sustainable development. To this effect, local authorities should play a major role in the provision of ICT services for the benefit of their populations.

8) Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

55. Cultural diversity is the common heritage of humankind. The Information Society should be founded on and stimulate respect for cultural identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, traditions and religions, and foster dialogue among cultures and civilizations. The promotion, affirmation and preservation of diverse cultural identities and languages as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents including UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, will further enrich the Information Society.

56. The creation, dissemination and preservation of content in diverse languages and formats must be accorded high priority in building an inclusive Information Society, paying particular attention to the diversity of supply of creative work and due recognition of the rights of authors and artists. It is essential to promote the production of and accessibility to all content—educational, scientific, cultural or recreational—in diverse languages and formats. The development of local content suited to domestic or regional needs will encourage social and economic development and will stimulate participation of all stakeholders, including people living in rural, remote and marginal areas.

57. The preservation of cultural heritage is a crucial component of identity and self–understanding of individuals that links a community to its past. The Information Society should harness and preserve cultural heritage for the future by all appropriate methods, including digitisation.

9) Media

55. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of media, which are essential to the Information Society. Freedom to seek, receive, impart and use information for the creation, accumulation and dissemination of knowledge are important to the Information Society. We call for the responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards. Traditional media in all their forms have an important role in the Information Society and ICTs should play a supportive role in this regard. Diversity of media ownership should be encouraged, in conformity with national law, and taking into account relevant international conventions. We reaffirm the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills.

10) Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

60. The Information Society should respect peace and uphold the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, shared responsibility, and respect for nature.

61. We acknowledge the importance of ethics for the Information Society, which should foster justice, and the dignity and worth of the human person. The widest possible protection should be accorded to the family and to enable it to play its crucial role in society.

62. The use of ICTs and content creation should respect human rights and fundamental freedoms of others, including personal privacy, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion in conformity with relevant international instruments.

63. All actors in the Information Society should take appropriate actions and preventive measures, as determined by law, against abusive uses of ICTs, such as illegal and other acts motivated by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, hatred, violence, all forms of child abuse, including paedophilia and child pornography, and trafficking in, and exploitation of, human beings.

11) International and regional cooperation

60. We aim at making full use of the opportunities offered by ICTs in our efforts to reach the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and to uphold the key principles set forth in this Declaration. The Information Society is intrinsically global in nature and national efforts need to be supported by effective

international and regional cooperation among governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, including the international financial institutions.

61. In order to build an inclusive global Information Society, we will seek and effectively implement concrete international approaches and mechanisms, including financial and technical assistance. Therefore, while appreciating ongoing ICT cooperation through various mechanisms, we invite all stakeholders to commit to the "Digital Solidarity Agenda" set forth in the Plan of Action. We are convinced that the worldwide agreed objective is to contribute to bridge the digital divide, promote access to ICTs, create digital opportunities, and benefit from the potential offered by ICTs for development. We recognize the will expressed by some to create an international voluntary "Digital Solidarity Fund", and by others to undertake studies concerning existing mechanisms and the efficiency and feasibility of such a Fund.

62. Regional integration contributes to the development of the global Information Society and makes strong cooperation within and among regions indispensable. Regional dialogue should contribute to national capacity building and to the alignment of national strategies with the goals of this Declaration of Principles in a compatible way, while respecting national and regional particularities. In this context, we welcome and encourage the international community to support the ICT-related measures of such initiatives.

63. We resolve to assist developing countries, LDCs and countries with economies in transition through the mobilization from all sources of financing, the provision of financial and technical assistance and by creating an environment conducive to technology transfer, consistent with the purposes of this Declaration and the Plan of Action.

64. The core competences of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in the fields of ICTs – assistance in bridging the digital divide, international and regional cooperation, radio spectrum management, standards development and the dissemination of information – are of crucial importance for building the Information Society.

C. Towards an Information Society for All Based on Shared Knowledge

65. **We commit ourselves** to strengthening cooperation to seek common responses to the challenges and to the implementation of the Plan of Action, which will realize the vision of an inclusive Information Society based on the Key Principles incorporated in this Declaration.

66. **We further commit ourselves** to evaluate and follow-up progress in bridging the digital divide, taking into account different levels of development, so as to reach

internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and to assess the effectiveness of investment and international cooperation efforts in building the Information Society.

67. **We are firmly convinced** that we are collectively entering a new era of enormous potential, that of the Information Society and expanded human communication. In this emerging society, information and knowledge can be produced, exchanged, shared and communicated through all the networks of the world. All individuals can soon, if we take the necessary actions, together build a new Information Society based on shared knowledge and founded on global solidarity and a better mutual understanding between peoples and nations. We trust that these measures will open the way to the future development of a true knowledge society.

WSIS Plan of Action

A. Introduction

1. The common vision and guiding principles of the Declaration are translated in this Plan of Action into concrete action lines to advance the achievement of the internationally-agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation, by promoting the use of ICT-based products, networks, services and applications, and to help countries overcome the digital divide. The Information Society envisaged in the Declaration of Principles will be realized in cooperation and solidarity by governments and all other stakeholders.

2. The Information Society is an evolving concept that has reached different levels across the world, reflecting the different stages of development. Technological and other change is rapidly transforming the environment in which the Information Society is developed. The Plan of Action is thus an evolving platform to promote the Information Society at the national, regional and international levels. The unique two-phase structure of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) provides an opportunity to take this evolution into account.

3. All stakeholders have an important role to play in the Information Society, especially through partnerships:

a) Governments have a leading role in developing and implementing comprehensive, forward looking and sustainable national e-strategies. The private sector and civil society, in dialogue with governments, have an important consultative role to play in devising national e-strategies.

b) The commitment of the private sector is important in developing and diffusing information and communication technologies (ICTs), for infrastructure, content and applications. The private sector is not only a market player but also plays a role in a wider sustainable development context.

c) The commitment and involvement of civil society is equally important in creating an equitable Information Society, and in implementing ICT-related initiatives for development.

d) International and regional institutions, including international financial institutions, have a key role in integrating the use of ICTs in the development process and making

available necessary resources for building the Information Society and for the evaluation of the progress made.

B. Objectives, goals and targets

4. The objectives of the Plan of Action are to build an inclusive Information Society; to put the potential of knowledge and ICTs at the service of development; to promote the use of information and knowledge for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration; and to address new challenges of the Information Society, at the national, regional and international levels. Opportunity shall be taken in phase two of the WSIS to evaluate and assess progress made towards bridging the digital divide.

5. Specific targets for the Information Society will be established as appropriate, at the national level in the framework of national e-strategies and in accordance with national development policies, taking into account the different national circumstances. Such targets can serve as useful benchmarks for actions and for the evaluation of the progress made towards the attainment of the overall objectives of the Information Society.

6. Based on internationally agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration, which are premised on international cooperation, indicative targets may serve as global references for improving connectivity and access in the use of ICTs in promoting the objectives of the Plan of Action, to be achieved by 2015. These targets may be taken into account in the establishment of the national targets, considering the different national circumstances:

a) to connect villages with ICTs and establish community access points;

b) to connect universities, colleges, secondary schools and primary schools with ICTs;

c) to connect scientific and research centres with ICTs;

d) to connect public libraries, cultural centres, museums, post offices and archives with ICTs;

e) to connect health centres and hospitals with ICTs;

f) to connect all local and central government departments and establish websites and email addresses;

g) to adapt all primary and secondary school curricula to meet the challenges of the Information Society, taking into account national circumstances;

h) to ensure that all of the world's population have access to television and radio services;

i) to encourage the development of content and to put in place technical conditions in order to facilitate the presence and use of all world languages on the Internet;

j) to ensure that more than half the world's inhabitants have access to ICTs within their reach.

7. In giving effect to these objectives, goals and targets, special attention will be paid to the needs of developing countries, and in particular to countries, peoples and groups cited in paragraphs 11-16 of the Declaration of Principles.

C. Action Lines

C1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

8. The effective participation of governments and all stakeholders is vital in developing the Information Society requiring cooperation and partnerships among all of them.

a) Development of national e-strategies, including the necessary human capacity building, should be encouraged by all countries by 2005, taking into account different national circumstances.

b) Initiate at the national level a structured dialogue involving all relevant stakeholders, including through public/private partnerships, in devising e-strategies for the Information Society and for the exchange of best practices.

c) In developing and implementing national e-strategies, stakeholders should take into consideration local, regional and national needs and concerns. To maximize the benefits of initiatives undertaken, these should include the concept of sustainability. The private sector should be engaged in concrete projects to develop the Information Society at local, regional and national levels.

d) Each country is encouraged to establish at least one functioning Public/Private Partnership (PPP) or Multi-Sector Partnership (MSP), by 2005 as a showcase for future action.

e) Identify mechanisms, at the national, regional and international levels, for the initiation and promotion of partnerships among stakeholders of the Information Society.

f) Explore the viability of establishing multi-stakeholder portals for indigenous peoples at the national level.

g) By 2005, relevant international organizations and financial institutions should develop their own strategies for the use of ICTs for sustainable development, including sustainable production and consumption patterns and as an effective instrument to help achieve the goals expressed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

h) International organizations should publish, in their areas of competence, including on their website, reliable information submitted by relevant stakeholders on successful experiences of mainstreaming ICTs.

i) Encourage a series of related measures, including, among other things: incubator schemes, venture capital investments (national and international), government investment funds (including micro-finance for Small, Medium-sized and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), investment promotion strategies, software export support activities (trade counseling), support of research and development networks and software parks.

C2. Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for the Information Society

9. Infrastructure is central in achieving the goal of digital inclusion, enabling universal, sustainable, ubiquitous and affordable access to ICTs by all, taking into account relevant solutions already in place in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to provide sustainable connectivity and access to remote and marginalized areas at national and regional levels.

a) Governments should take action, in the framework of national development policies, in order to support an enabling and competitive environment for the necessary investment in ICT infrastructure and for the development of new services.

b) In the context of national e-strategies, devise appropriate universal access policies and strategies, and their means of implementation, in line with the indicative targets, and develop ICT connectivity indicators.

c) In the context of national e-strategies, provide and improve ICT connectivity for all schools, universities, health institutions, libraries, post offices, community centres, museums and other institutions accessible to the public, in line with the indicative targets.

d) Develop and strengthen national, regional and international broadband network infrastructure, including delivery by satellite and other systems, to help in providing the capacity to match the needs of countries and their citizens and for the delivery of new ICT-based services. Support technical, regulatory and operational studies by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and, as appropriate, other relevant international organizations in order to:

i. broaden access to orbital resources, global frequency harmonization and global systems standardization;

ii. encourage public/private partnership;

iii. promote the provision of global high-speed satellite services for underserved areas such as remote and sparsely populated areas;

iv. explore other systems that can provide high-speed connectivity.

e) In the context of national e-strategies, address the special requirements of older people, persons with disabilities, children, especially marginalized children and other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including by appropriate educational administrative and legislative measures to ensure their full inclusion in the Information Society.

f) Encourage the design and production of ICT equipment and services so that everyone, has easy and affordable access to them including older people, persons with disabilities, children, especially marginalized children, and other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and promote the development of technologies, applications, and content suited to their needs, guided by the Universal Design Principle and further enhanced by the use of assistive technologies.

g) In order to alleviate the challenges of illiteracy, develop affordable technologies and non-text based computer interfaces to facilitate people's access to ICT,

h) Undertake international research and development efforts aimed at making available adequate and affordable ICT equipment for end users.

i) Encourage the use of unused wireless capacity, including satellite, in developed countries and in particular in developing countries, to provide access in remote areas, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and to improve low-cost connectivity in developing countries. Special concern should be given to the Least Developed Countries in their efforts in establishing telecommunication infrastructure.

j) Optimize connectivity among major information networks by encouraging the creation and development of regional ICT backbones and Internet exchange points, to reduce interconnection costs and broaden network access.

k) Develop strategies for increasing affordable global connectivity, thereby facilitating improved access. Commercially negotiated Internet transit and interconnection costs should be oriented towards objective, transparent and non-discriminatory parameters, taking into account ongoing work on this subject.

l) Encourage and promote joint use of traditional media and new technologies.

C3. Access to information and knowledge

10. ICTs allow people, anywhere in the world, to access information and knowledge almost instantaneously. Individuals, organizations and communities should benefit from access to knowledge and information.

a) Develop policy guidelines for the development and promotion of public domain information as an important international instrument promoting public access to information.

b) Governments are encouraged to provide adequate access through various communication resources, notably the Internet, to public official information. Establishing legislation on access to information and the preservation of public data, notably in the area of the new technologies, is encouraged.

c) Promote research and development to facilitate accessibility of ICTs for all, including disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable groups.

d) Governments, and other stakeholders, should establish sustainable multi-purpose community public access points, providing affordable or free-of-charge access for their citizens to the various communication resources, notably the Internet. These access points should, to the extent possible, have sufficient capacity to provide assistance to users, in libraries, educational institutions, public administrations, post offices or other public places, with special emphasis on rural and underserved areas, while respecting intellectual property rights (IPRs) and encouraging the use of information and sharing of knowledge.

e) Encourage research and promote awareness among all stakeholders of the possibilities offered by different software models, and the means of their creation, including proprietary, open-source and free software, in order to increase competition, freedom of choice and affordability, and to enable all stakeholders to evaluate which solution best meets their requirements.

f) Governments should actively promote the use of ICTs as a fundamental working tool by their citizens and local authorities. In this respect, the international community and other stakeholders should support capacity building for local authorities in the widespread use of ICTs as a means of improving local governance.

g) Encourage research on the Information Society, including on innovative forms of networking, adaptation of ICT infrastructure, tools and applications that facilitate accessibility of ICTs for all, and disadvantaged groups in particular.

h) Support the creation and development of a digital public library and archive services, adapted to the Information Society, including reviewing national library strategies and legislation, developing a global understanding of the need for "hybrid libraries", and fostering worldwide cooperation between libraries.

i) Encourage initiatives to facilitate access, including free and affordable access to open access journals and books, and open archives for scientific information.

j) Support research and development of the design of useful instruments for all stakeholders to foster increased awareness, assessment, and evaluation of different software models and licences, so as to ensure an optimal choice of appropriate software that will best contribute to achieving development goals within local conditions.

C4. Capacity building

11. Everyone should have the necessary skills to benefit fully from the Information Society. Therefore capacity building and ICT literacy are essential. ICTs can contribute to achieving universal education worldwide, through delivery of education and training of teachers, and offering improved conditions for lifelong learning, encompassing people that are outside the formal education process, and improving professional skills.

a) Develop domestic policies to ensure that ICTs are fully integrated in education and training at all levels, including in curriculum development, teacher training, institutional administration and management, and in support of the concept of lifelong learning.

b) Develop and promote programmes to eradicate illiteracy using ICTs at national, regional and international levels.

c) Promote e-literacy skills for all, for example by designing and offering courses for public administration, taking advantage of existing facilities such as libraries, multipurpose community centres, public access points and by establishing local ICT training centres with the cooperation of all stakeholders. Special attention should be paid to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

d) In the context of national educational policies, and taking into account the need to eradicate adult illiteracy, ensure that young people are equipped with knowledge and skills to use ICTs, including the capacity to analyse and treat information in creative and innovative ways, share their expertise and participate fully in the Information Society.

e) Governments, in cooperation with other stakeholders, should create programmes for capacity building with an emphasis on creating a critical mass of qualified and skilled ICT professionals and experts.

f) Develop pilot projects to demonstrate the impact of ICT-based alternative educational delivery systems, notably for achieving Education for All targets, including basic literacy targets.

g) Work on removing the gender barriers to ICT education and training and promoting equal training opportunities in ICT-related fields for women and girls. Early intervention programmes in science and technology should target young girls with the aim of increasing the number of women in ICT careers. Promote the exchange of best practices on the integration of gender perspectives in ICT education.

h) Empower local communities, especially those in rural and underserved areas, in ICT use and promote the production of useful and socially meaningful content for the benefit of all.

i) Launch education and training programmes, where possible using information networks of traditional nomadic and indigenous peoples, which provide opportunities to fully participate in the Information Society.

j) Design and implement regional and international cooperation activities to enhance the capacity, notably, of leaders and operational staff in developing countries and LDCs, to apply ICTs effectively in the whole range of educational activities. This should include delivery of education outside the educational structure, such as the workplace and at home.

k) Design specific training programmes in the use of ICTs in order to meet the educational needs of information professionals, such as archivists, librarians, museum professionals, scientists, teachers, journalists, postal workers and other relevant professional groups. Training of information professionals should focus not only on new methods and techniques for the development and provision of information and communication services, but also on relevant management skills to ensure the best use of technologies. Training of teachers should focus on the technical aspects of ICTs, on development of content, and on the potential possibilities and challenges of ICTs.

l) Develop distance learning, training and other forms of education and training as part of capacity building programmes. Give special attention to developing countries and especially LDCs in different levels of human resources development.

m) Promote international and regional cooperation in the field of capacity building, including country programmes developed by the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies

n) Launch pilot projects to design new forms of ICT-based networking, linking education, training and research institutions between and among developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

o) Volunteering, if conducted in harmony with national policies and local cultures, can be a valuable asset for raising human capacity to make productive use of ICT tools and build a more inclusive Information Society. Activate volunteer programmes to provide capacity building on ICT for development, particularly in developing countries.

p) Design programmes to train users to develop self-learning and self-development capacities.

C5. Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

12. Confidence and security are among the main pillars of the Information Society.

a) Promote cooperation among the governments at the United Nations and with all stakeholders at other appropriate fora to enhance user confidence, build trust, and protect both data and network integrity; consider existing and potential threats to ICTs; and address other information security and network security issues.

b) Governments, in cooperation with the private sector, should prevent, detect and respond to cyber-crime and misuse of ICTs by: developing guidelines that take into account ongoing efforts in these areas; considering legislation that allows for effective investigation and prosecution of misuse; promoting effective mutual assistance efforts; strengthening institutional support at the international level for preventing, detecting and recovering from such incidents; and encouraging education and raising awareness.

c) Governments, and other stakeholders, should actively promote user education and awareness about online privacy and the means of protecting privacy.

d) Take appropriate action on spam at national and international levels.

e) Encourage the domestic assessment of national law with a view to overcoming any obstacles to the effective use of electronic documents and transactions including electronic means of authentication.

f) Further strengthen the trust and security framework with complementary and mutually reinforcing initiatives in the fields of security in the use of ICTs, with initiatives or guidelines with respect to rights to privacy, data and consumer protection.

g) Share good practices in the field of information security and network security and encourage their use by all parties concerned.

h) Invite interested countries to set up focal points for real-time incident handling and response, and develop a cooperative network between these focal points for sharing information and technologies on incident response.

i) Encourage further development of secure and reliable applications to facilitate online transactions.

j) Encourage interested countries to contribute actively to the ongoing United Nations activities to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs.

C6. Enabling environment

13. To maximize the social, economic and environmental benefits of the Information Society, governments need to create a trustworthy, transparent and non-discriminatory legal, regulatory and policy environment. Actions include:

a) Governments should foster a supportive, transparent, pro-competitive and predictable policy, legal and regulatory framework, which provides the appropriate incentives to investment and community development in the Information Society.

b) We ask the Secretary General of the United Nations to set up a working group on Internet governance, in an open and inclusive process that ensures a mechanism for the full and active participation of governments, the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries, involving relevant intergovernmental and international organizations and forums, to investigate and make proposals for action, as appropriate, on the governance of Internet by 2005. The group should, *inter alia*:

i. develop a working definition of Internet governance;

ii. identify the public policy issues that are relevant to Internet governance;

iii. develop a common understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of governments, existing intergovernmental and international organisations and other forums as well as the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries;

iv. prepare a report on the results of this activity to be presented for consideration and appropriate action for the second phase of WSIS in Tunis in 2005.

c) Governments are invited to:

i. facilitate the establishment of national and regional Internet Exchange Centres;

ii. manage or supervise, as appropriate, their respective country code top-level domain name (ccTLD);

iii. promote awareness of the Internet.

d) In cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, promote regional root servers and the use of internationalized domain names in order to overcome barriers to access.

e) Governments should continue to update their domestic consumer protection laws to respond to the new requirements of the Information Society.

f) Promote effective participation by developing countries and countries with economies in transition in international ICT forums and create opportunities for exchange of experience.

g) Governments need to formulate national strategies, which include e-government strategies, to make public administration more transparent, efficient and democratic.

h) Develop a framework for the secure storage and archival of documents and other electronic records of information.

i) Governments and stakeholders should actively promote user education and awareness about online privacy and the means of protecting privacy.

j) Invite stakeholders to ensure that practices designed to facilitate electronic commerce also permit consumers to have a choice as to whether or not to use electronic communication.

k) Encourage the ongoing work in the area of effective dispute settlement systems, notably alternative dispute resolution (ADR), which can promote settlement of disputes.

l) Governments, in collaboration with stakeholders, are encouraged to formulate conducive ICT policies that foster entrepreneurship, innovation and investment, and with particular reference to the promotion of participation by women.

m) Recognising the economic potential of ICTs for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), they should be assisted in increasing their competitiveness by streamlining administrative procedures, facilitating their access to capital and enhancing their capacity to participate in ICT-related projects.

n) Governments should act as model users and early adopters of e-commerce in accordance with their level of socio-economic development.

o) Governments, in cooperation with other stakeholders, should raise awareness of the importance of international interoperability standards for global e-commerce.

p) Governments, in cooperation with other stakeholders, should promote the development and use of open, interoperable, non-discriminatory and demand-driven standards.

q) ITU, pursuant to its treaty capacity, coordinates and allocates frequencies with the goal of facilitating ubiquitous and affordable access.

r) Additional steps should be taken in ITU and other regional organisations to ensure rational, efficient and economical use of, and equitable access to, the radio-frequency spectrum by all countries, based on relevant international agreements.

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life

14. ICT applications can support sustainable development, in the fields of public administration, business, education and training, health, employment, environment, agriculture and science within the framework of national e-strategies. This would include actions within the following sectors:

15. E-government

a) Implement e-government strategies focusing on applications aimed at innovating and promoting transparency in public administrations and democratic processes, improving efficiency and strengthening relations with citizens.

b) Develop national e-government initiatives and services, at all levels, adapted to the needs of citizens and business, to achieve a more efficient allocation of resources and public goods.

c) Support international cooperation initiatives in the field of e-government, in order to enhance transparency, accountability and efficiency at all levels of government.

16. E-business

a) Governments, international organizations and the private sector, are encouraged to promote the benefits of international trade and the use of e-business, and promote the

use of e-business models in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

b) Through the adoption of an enabling environment, and based on widely available Internet access, governments should seek to stimulate private sector investment, foster new applications, content development and public/private partnerships.

c) Government policies should favour assistance to, and growth of SMMEs, in the ICT industry, as well as their entry into e-business, to stimulate economic growth and job creation as an element of a strategy for poverty reduction through wealth creation.

17. E-learning (see section C4)

18. E-health

a) Promote collaborative efforts of governments, planners, health professionals, and other agencies along with the participation of international organizations for creating a reliable, timely, high quality and affordable health care and health information systems and for promoting continuous medical training, education, and research through the use of ICTs, while respecting and protecting citizens' right to privacy.

b) Facilitate access to the world's medical knowledge and locally-relevant content resources for strengthening public health research and prevention programmes and promoting women's and men's health, such as content on sexual and reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections, and for diseases that attract full attention of the world including HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

c) Alert, monitor and control the spread of communicable diseases, through the improvement of common information systems.

d) Promote the development of international standards for the exchange of health data, taking due account of privacy concerns.

e) Encourage the adoption of ICTs to improve and extend health care and health information systems to remote and underserved areas and vulnerable populations, recognising women's roles as health providers in their families and communities.

f) Strengthen and expand ICT-based initiatives for providing medical and humanitarian assistance in disasters and emergencies.

19. E-employment

a) Encourage the development of best practices for e-workers and e-employers built, at the national level, on principles of fairness and gender equality, respecting all relevant international norms.

b) Promote new ways of organizing work and business with the aim of raising productivity, growth and well-being through investment in ICTs and human resources.

c) Promote teleworking to allow citizens, particularly in the developing countries, LDCs, and small economies, to live in their societies and work anywhere, and to increase employment opportunities for women, and for those with disabilities. In promoting teleworking, special attention should be given to strategies promoting job creation and the retention of the skilled working force.

d) Promote early intervention programmes in science and technology that should target young girls to increase the number of women in ICT carriers.

20. E-environment

a) Governments, in cooperation with other stakeholders are encouraged to use and promote ICTs as an instrument for environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources.

b) Government, civil society and the private sector are encouraged to initiate actions and implement projects and programmes for sustainable production and consumption and the environmentally safe disposal and recycling of discarded hardware and components used in ICTs.

c) Establish monitoring systems, using ICTs, to forecast and monitor the impact of natural and man-made disasters, particularly in developing countries, LDCs and small economies.

21. E-agriculture

a) Ensure the systematic dissemination of information using ICTs on agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, forestry and food, in order to provide ready access to comprehensive, up-to-date and detailed knowledge and information, particularly in rural areas.

b) Public-private partnerships should seek to maximize the use of ICTs as an instrument to improve production (quantity and quality).

22. E-science

a) Promote affordable and reliable high-speed Internet connection for all universities and research institutions to support their critical role in information and knowledge production, education and training, and to support the establishment of partnerships, cooperation and networking between these institutions.

b) Promote electronic publishing, differential pricing and open access initiatives to make scientific information affordable and accessible in all countries on an equitable basis.

c) Promote the use of peer-to-peer technology to share scientific knowledge and pre-prints and reprints written by scientific authors who have waived their right to payment.

d) Promote the long-term systematic and efficient collection, dissemination and preservation of essential scientific digital data, for example, population and meteorological data in all countries.

e) Promote principles and metadata standards to facilitate cooperation and effective use of collected scientific information and data as appropriate to conduct scientific research.

C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

23. Cultural and linguistic diversity, while stimulating respect for cultural identity, traditions and religions, is essential to the development of an Information Society based on the dialogue among cultures and regional and international cooperation. It is an important factor for sustainable development.

a) Create policies that support the respect, preservation, promotion and enhancement of cultural and linguistic diversity and cultural heritage within the Information Society, as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents, including UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. This includes encouraging governments to design cultural policies to promote the production of cultural, educational and scientific content and the development of local cultural industries suited to the linguistic and cultural context of the users.

b) Develop national policies and laws to ensure that libraries, archives, museums and other cultural institutions can play their full role of content—including traditional knowledge—providers in the Information Society, more particularly by providing continued access to recorded information.

c) Support efforts to develop and use ICTs for the preservation of natural and, cultural heritage, keeping it accessible as a living part of today's culture. This includes developing systems for ensuring continued access to archived digital information and multimedia content in digital repositories, and support archives, cultural collections and libraries as the memory of humankind.

d) Develop and implement policies that preserve, affirm, respect and promote diversity of cultural expression and indigenous knowledge and traditions through the creation of varied information content and the use of different methods, including the digitization of the educational, scientific and cultural heritage.

e) Support local content development, translation and adaptation, digital archives, and diverse forms of digital and traditional media by local authorities. These activities can also strengthen local and indigenous communities.

f) Provide content that is relevant to the cultures and languages of individuals in the Information Society, through access to traditional and digital media services.

g) Through public/private partnerships, foster the creation of varied local and national content, including that available in the language of users, and give recognition and support to ICT-based work in all artistic fields.

h) Strengthen programmes focused on gender-sensitive curricula in formal and non-formal education for all and enhancing communication and media literacy for women with a view to building the capacity of girls and women to understand and to develop ICT content.

i) Nurture the local capacity for the creation and distribution of software in local languages, as well as content that is relevant to different segments of population, including non-literate, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

j) Give support to media based in local communities and support projects combining the use of traditional media and new technologies for their role in facilitating the use of local languages, for documenting and preserving local heritage, including landscape and

biological diversity, and as a means to reach rural and isolated and nomadic communities.

k) Enhance the capacity of indigenous peoples to develop content in their own languages.

l) Cooperate with indigenous peoples and traditional communities to enable them to more effectively use and benefit from the use of their traditional knowledge in the Information Society.

m) Exchange knowledge, experiences and best practices on policies and tools designed to promote cultural and linguistic diversity at regional and sub-regional levels. This can be achieved by establishing regional, and sub-regional working groups on specific issues of this Plan of Action to foster integration efforts.

n) Assess at the regional level the contribution of ICT to cultural exchange and interaction, and based on the outcome of this assessment, design relevant programmes.

o) Governments, through public/private partnerships, should promote technologies and R&D programmes in such areas as translation, iconographies, voice-assisted services and the development of necessary hardware and a variety of software models, including proprietary, open source software and free software, such as standard character sets, language codes, electronic dictionaries, terminology and thesauri, multilingual search engines, machine translation tools, internationalized domain names, content referencing as well as general and application software.

C9. Media

24. The media—in their various forms and with a diversity of ownership—as an actor, have an essential role in the development of the Information Society and are recognized as an important contributor to freedom of expression and plurality of information.

a) Encourage the media—print and broadcast as well as new media—to continue to play an important role in the Information Society.

b) Encourage the development of domestic legislation that guarantees the independence and plurality of the media.

c) Take appropriate measures—consistent with freedom of expression—to combat illegal and harmful content in media content.

d) Encourage media professionals in developed countries to establish partnerships and networks with the media in developing ones, especially in the field of training.

e) Promote balanced and diverse portrayals of women and men by the media.

f) Reduce international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills, taking full advantage of ICT tools in this regard.

g) Encourage traditional media to bridge the knowledge divide and to facilitate the flow of cultural content, particularly in rural areas.

C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

25. The Information Society should be subject to universally held values and promote the common good and to prevent abusive uses of ICTs.

a) Take steps to promote respect for peace and to uphold the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, shared responsibility, and respect for nature.

b) All stakeholders should increase their awareness of the ethical dimension of their use of ICTs.

c) All actors in the Information Society should promote the common good, protect privacy and personal data and take appropriate actions and preventive measures, as determined by law, against abusive uses of ICTs such as illegal and other acts motivated by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, hatred, violence, all forms of child abuse, including paedophilia and child pornography, and trafficking in, and exploitation of, human beings.

d) Invite relevant stakeholders, especially the academia, to continue research on ethical dimensions of ICTs.

C11. International and regional cooperation

26. International cooperation among all stakeholders is vital in implementation of this plan of action and needs to be strengthened with a view to promoting universal access and bridging the digital divide, *inter alia*, by provision of means of implementation.

a) Governments of developing countries should raise the relative priority of ICT projects in requests for international cooperation and assistance on infrastructure

development projects from developed countries and international financial organizations.

b) Within the context of the United Nations Global Compact and building upon the United Nations Millennium Declaration, build on and accelerate public-private partnerships, focusing on the use of ICT in development.

c) Invite international and regional organizations to mainstream ICTs in their work programmes and to assist all levels of developing countries, to be involved in the preparation and implementation of national action plans to support the fulfilment of the goals indicated in the declaration of principles and in this Plan of Action, taking into account the importance of regional initiatives.

D. Digital Solidarity Agenda

27. The Digital Solidarity Agenda aims at putting in place the conditions for mobilizing human, financial and technological resources for inclusion of all men and women in the emerging Information Society. Close national, regional and international cooperation among all stakeholders in the implementation of this Agenda is vital. To overcome the digital divide, we need to use more efficiently existing approaches and mechanisms and fully explore new ones, in order to provide financing for the development of infrastructure, equipment, capacity building and content, which are essential for participation in the Information Society.

D1. Priorities and strategies

a) National e-strategies should be made an integral part of national development plans, including Poverty Reduction Strategies.

b) ICTs should be fully mainstreamed into strategies for Official Development Assistance (ODA) through more effective donor information-sharing and co-ordination, and through analysis and sharing of best practices and lessons learned from experience with ICT-for-development programmes.

D2. Mobilizing resources

a) All countries and international organizations should act to create conditions conducive to increasing the availability and effective mobilization of resources for financing development as elaborated in the Monterrey Consensus.

b) Developed countries should make concrete efforts to fulfil their international commitments to financing development including the Monterrey Consensus, in which developed countries that have not done so are urged to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) as ODA to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNP of developed countries to least developed countries.

c) For those developing countries facing unsustainable debt burdens, we welcome initiatives that have been undertaken to reduce outstanding indebtedness and invite further national and international measures in that regard, including, as appropriate, debt cancellation and other arrangements. Particular attention should be given to enhancing the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative. These initiatives would release more resources that may be used for financing ICT for development projects.

d) Recognizing the potential of ICT for development we furthermore advocate:

i. developing countries to increase their efforts to attract major private national and foreign investments for ICTs through the creation of a transparent, stable and predictable enabling investment environment;

ii. developed countries and international financial organisations to be responsive to the strategies and priorities of ICTs for development, mainstream ICTs in their work programmes, and assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition to prepare and implement their national e-strategies. Based on the priorities of national development plans and implementation of the above commitments, developed countries should increase their efforts to provide more financial resources to developing countries in harnessing ICTs for development;

iii. the private sector to contribute to the implementation of this Digital Solidarity Agenda.

e) In our efforts to bridge the digital divide, we should promote, within our development cooperation, technical and financial assistance directed towards national and regional capacity building, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, cooperation in R&D programmes and exchange of know-how.

f) While all existing financial mechanisms should be fully exploited, a thorough review of their adequacy in meeting the challenges of ICT for development should be completed by the end of December 2004. This review shall be conducted by a Task Force under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and submitted

for consideration to the second phase of this summit. Based on the conclusion of the review, improvements and innovations of financing mechanisms will be considered including the effectiveness, the feasibility and the creation of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund, as mentioned in the Declaration of Principles.

g) Countries should consider establishing national mechanisms to achieve universal access in both underserved rural and urban areas, in order to bridge the digital divide.

E. Follow-up and evaluation

28. A realistic international performance evaluation and benchmarking (both qualitative and quantitative), through comparable statistical indicators and research results, should be developed to follow up the implementation of the objectives, goals and targets in the Plan of Action, taking into account different national circumstances.

a) In cooperation with each country concerned, develop and launch a composite ICT Development (Digital Opportunity) Index. It could be published annually, or every two years, in an ICT Development Report. The index could show the statistics while the report would present analytical work on policies and their implementation, depending on national circumstances, including gender analysis.

b) Appropriate indicators and benchmarking, including community connectivity indicators, should clarify the magnitude of the digital divide, in both its domestic and international dimensions, and keep it under regular assessment, and tracking global progress in the use of ICTs to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including those of the Millennium Declaration.

c) International and regional organizations should assess and report regularly on universal accessibility of nations to ICTs, with the aim of creating equitable opportunities for the growth of ICT sectors of developing countries.

d) Gender-specific indicators on ICT use and needs should be developed, and measurable performance indicators should be identified to assess the impact of funded ICT projects on the lives of women and girls.

e) Develop and launch a website on best practices and success stories, based on a compilation of contributions from all stakeholders, in a concise, accessible and compelling format, following the internationally-recognized web accessibility standards. The website could be periodically updated and turned into a permanent experience-sharing exercise.

f) All countries and regions should develop tools so as to provide statistical information on the Information Society, with basic indicators and analysis of its key dimensions. Priority should be given to setting up coherent and internationally comparable indicator systems, taking into account different levels of development.

F. Towards WSIS phase 2 (Tunis)

29. Recalling General Assembly Resolution 56/183 and taking into account the outcome of the Geneva phase of the WSIS, a preparatory meeting will be held in the first half of 2004 to review those issues of the Information Society which should form the focus of the Tunis phase of the WSIS and to agree on the structure of the preparatory process for the second phase. In line with the decision of this Summit concerning its Tunis phase, the second phase of the WSIS should consider, *inter alia*:

a) Elaboration of final appropriate documents based on the outcome of the Geneva phase of the WSIS with a view to consolidating the process of building a global Information Society, and reducing the Digital Divide and transforming it into digital opportunities.

b) Follow-up and implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action at national, regional and international levels, including the United Nations system, as part of an integrated and coordinated approach, calling upon the participation of all relevant stakeholders. This should take place, *inter alia*, through partnerships among stakeholders.

Timetable

May 1991	Windhoek Declaration ends NWICO Debate in UNESCO
September 1992	Establishment of the "Internet Society" (ISOC)
September 1993	US National Information Infrastructure Initiative (NII)
March 1993	US Vice President proposes Global Information Infrastructure Initiative (GII) at ITU Conference in Buenos Aires
June 1994	ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Kyoto adopts resolution on "World Telecommunication Policy Forum" (WTPF)
February 1995	G-7 Global Information Society Conference Brussels
May 1997	IAHC Memorandum of Understanding on Internet Governance signed in Geneva
September 1997	EU Commissioner Bangemann proposes "Global Communication Charter" at ITU Conference in Geneva
October 1998	ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis adopts resolution on "World Summit on the Information Society" (WSIS)
November 1998	Establishment of the "Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers" (ICANN)
January 1999	Establishment of the "Global Business Dialogue on eCommerce" (GBDe) in New York
July 2000	Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Ministerial Conference on Information Technologies in New York
July 2000	G-8 Charter on the Global Information Society in Okinawa
September 2000	55th United Nations General Assembly adopts Millennium Declaration
June 2001	Endorsement of WSIS in a two-phase framework and welcome of invitations by Switzerland and Tunisia by the ITU Council, upon proposal of the ITU Secretary-General Yoshio Utsumi
November 2001	Establishment of the "United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force" (UNICTTF)
December 2001	Coppet Workshop identifying potential themes and content organisation for the Summit
December 2001	56th United Nations General Assembly adopts Resolution 56/183 on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)
January-April 2002	UNESCO-WSIS Consultations with NGOs
May 2002	African Regional WSIS Ministerial Conference in Bamako
June 2002	Prepcom 1 in Geneva
August 2002	United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg
September 2002	3rd Meeting of the UNICTTF in New York
October 2002	ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Marrakesh adopts Resolution 7 on WSIS

November 2002	European Regional WSIS Ministerial Conference in Bucharest
December 2002	57th United Nations General Assembly adopts Resolution 57/238 on WSIS
January 2003	Asian Regional WSIS Ministerial Conference in Tokyo
January 2003	Latin American and Carribean WSIS Ministerial Conference in Bavaro
February 2003	Western Asia Regional WSIS Ministerial Conference in Beirut
February 2003	4th Meeting of the UNICTTF in Geneva
February 2003	Prepcom 2 in Geneva
July 2003	WSIS Intersessional in Paris
September 2003	5th Meeting of the UNICTTF in Geneva
September 2003	Prepcom 3 in Geneva
November 2003	Prepcom3bis in Geneva
December 2003	1st World Cities Summit on the Information Society in Lyon
December 2003	Prepcom3bis+ in Geneva
December 2003	1st phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS I) in Geneva
December 2003	Adoption of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action
February 2004	ITU Internet Governance Workshop in Geneva
March 2004	ICANN WSIS Forum in Roma
March 2004	United Nations Global Forum on Internet Governance in New York
March 2004	6th Meeting of the UNICTTF in New York
June 2004	Prepcom 1 in Hammamet
July 2004	WSIS Thematic Meeting on Spam in Geneva
July 2004	ICANN WSIS Workshop in Kuala Lumpur
August 2004	Establishment of the Task Force for Financial Mechanisms (TFFM)
September 2004	Internet Governance Consultation in Geneva
November 2004	Establishment of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG)
November 2004	7th Meeting of the UNICTTF in Berlin
November 2004	1st WGIG Meeting in Geneva
November 2004	West Asia Regional WSIS Meeting in Damascus
November 2004	WSIS Thematic Meeting on Regional ICT Cooperation in Biskek
November 2004	WSIS Thematic Meeting on Media in Marrakesh
December 2004	ICANN WSIS Workshop in Capetown
December 2004	Final Report of the TFFM
December 2004	59th United Nations General Assembly adopts Resolution 59/220 on WSIS

January 2005	WSIS Thematic Meeting on Social and Economic Implications of ICT in Guatemala
January 2005	African Regional WSIS Conference in Accra
February 2005	2nd WGIG Meeting in Geneva
February 2005	WSIS Thematic Meeting on Freedom of Expression in Cyberspace in Paris
February 2005	WSIS Thematic Meeting on Multi-Stakeholder Diplomacy in Malta
February 2005	Prepcom 2 in Geneva
February 2005	WSIS Thematic Meeting on Measuring the Information Society
March 2005	WSIS Thematic Meeting on Indigenous People in the Information Society in Ottawa
April 2005	ICANN WSIS Workshop in Mar del Plata
April 2005	8th Meeting of the UNICTTF in Dublin
April 2005	3rd WGIG Meeting in Geneva
May 2005	Arab Regional WSIS Conference in Cairo
May 2005	WSIS Thematic Meeting on Cultural Diversity in St. Petersburg
May 2005	Asian Regional WSIS Conference in Tokyo
June 2005	Asian Pacific Regional WSIS Conference in Teheran
June 2005	Latin American Regional WSIS Meeting in Rio de Janeiro
June 2005	4th WGIG Meeting in Geneva
June 2005	WSIS Thematic Meeting on Cybersecurity in Geneva
July 2005	ICANN WSIS Workshop in Luxembourg
July 2005	Final Report of the WGIG
September 2005	Prepcom 3 in Geneva
September 2005	2005 World Summit in New York
October 2005	9th Meeting of the United Nations ICT Task Force
November 2005	2nd World Cities Summit on the Information Society in Bilbao
November 2005	2nd Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS II) in Tunis

About the Contributors

Kofi Annan of Ghana is the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations. The first Secretary-General to be elected from the ranks of United Nations staff, he began his first term on 1 January 1997. On 29 June 2001, acting on a recommendation by the Security Council, the General Assembly appointed him by acclamation to a second term of office, beginning on 1 January 2002 and ending on 31 December 2006. As Secretary-General, Mr. Annan's first major initiative was his plan for reform, "Renewing the United Nations", which was presented to the Member States in July 1997 and has been pursued ever since with an emphasis on improving coherence and coordination. Mr. Annan has also sought to improve the status of women in the Secretariat and to build closer partnerships with civil society, the private sector and other non-State actors whose strengths complement those of the United Nations. On 10 December 2001, the Secretary-General and the United Nations received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Karen Banks is a networking pioneer who has worked with ICTs and their application as a tool for social change since 1990. She coordinates the Association for Progressive Communications's (APC) participation in the WSIS process, has been active in facilitation of the Civil Society content and themes group, and has been an active member of the Human Rights, Information Security, Gender and European caucuses and working groups. Ms. Banks leads APC's work in the Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS) campaign and has recently taken up position as Networking and Advocacy Coordinator for APC, after coordinating APC's Women's Networking Support Programme for 8 years and coordinating APC's internet rights work globally and in Europe from 1998-2001. She is a Director of GreenNet (the APC Member in the UK), trustee of Privacy International, an international privacy rights and civil liberties watchdog based in the UK, member of the civil society working group on the Commonwealth Action Programme for the Digital Divide, member of the WSIS Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG), and was recently awarded the Anita Borg Social Impact Award with the APCWNSP.

Renate Bloem is President of Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organisations. She has been involved in numerous United Nations meetings and summits, including the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Born in Germany, she completed studies in medicine, languages and literature at the Universities of Bonn, Munich and New York (Columbia University) and has taught at international schools and cultural institutions.

Steve Buckley is President of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), a member of the Executive Secretariat of the Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS) campaign and a member of the International Council of IFEX,

the International Freedom of Expression Exchange. He is a communications activist and an international expert on community media. He works in the UK and internationally as a communications policy advisor.

Maria Livanos Cattaui is the Secretary-General of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). She serves on the boards of the International Youth Foundation, International Crisis Group, International Centre for Research on Women, Council of Women World Leaders, Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University and several other organizations. She has worked with the World Economic Forum in Geneva as a Managing Director before joining the ICC. Additionally, Ms. Cattaui supervised preparations for the Geneva Business Dialogue in 1998, designed to build cooperation between business and governments in meeting the challenges of globalization. Ms. Cattaui graduated from Harvard University.

Vinton G. Cerf is Senior Vice President of Technology Strategy and was previously Senior Vice President of Architecture and Technology for MCI. Widely known as one of the "Fathers of the Internet," Mr. Cerf holds a Bachelors of Science degree in Mathematics from Stanford University and Masters of Science and PhD degrees in Computer Science from UCLA. Mr. Cerf is the co-designer of the TCP/IP protocols and the architecture of the Internet. Prior to rejoining MCI in 1994, he was Vice President of the Corporation for National Research Initiatives (CNRI). As Vice President of MCI Digital Information Services from 1982-1986, he led the engineering of the first commercial email service to be connected to the Internet. During his tenure from 1976-1982 with the United States Department of Defense's Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Mr. Cerf played a key role leading the development of Internet and Internet-related data packet and security technologies. Mr. Cerf serves as Chairman of the Board of ICANN, is Honorary Chairman of the IPv6 Forum, and serves on several national, state and industry committees focused on cyber-security. He has served as founding President of the Internet Society from 1992-1995, and in 1999 he served a term as Chairman of the Board. In addition, Mr. Cerf sits on the Board of Directors and is a fellow for several corporations and institutions.

Alain Clerc is the Executive Secretary of the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF), President of the "Fondation du Devenir", and Advisor of the Mayor of Geneva. Mr. Clerc was Swiss Government high official with the Federal Office for the Environment and the Federal Office for Economic Affairs. He represented the Swiss Confederation at IMO, UNEP, FAO and at the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) during negotiations of the final Declaration of the Second World Conference on Climate Change (1990). Previously, he was President of the Technical and Legal Committee for the negotiation of the Convention on Transboundary Movements of Dangerous Waste, Vice-President of the Environment

Committee of OECD and Vice-President of the Committee for Chemical products of OCDE. Other international high-level positions include: Director of the United Nations Centre for environmental emergency support (PNUE/UNCUEA); Director of the Climate Change Information Bureau (IUCC/OMM/PNUE); Senior Advisor to the Executive Director of UNEP and President of the Mt. Blanc-Léman Observatory for sustainable development. Born in Geneva, Mr. Clerc studied Law and Social Sciences at the University of Geneva, and further trained as a teacher in British Columbia in Canada.

Kenneth Neil Cukier is a writer for The Economist specializing in technology and public policy issues. From 2002 to 2004, he was a Research Fellow at the National Center for Digital Government at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, where he worked on a book about the history of Internet governance. Mr. Cukier has also held posts as the Technology Editor of the Asian Wall Street Journal in Hong Kong, commentator for CNBC Asia and European Editor in London of Red Herring magazine. From 1992 to 1996 he worked at the International Herald Tribune in Paris. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Financial Times, among others. He has served as a commentator on technology matters for CBS, CNN, NPR and the BBC.

Abdullah Al Darrab is Deputy Governor for Technical Affairs at the Communications and Information Technology Commission of Saudi Arabia. He has held various positions in the ICT sector such as Director of the Mobile Telephony Department, Director General of Cable Networks and Vice President for Engineering Affairs at the Saudi Telecom Company (STC). Mr. Al Darrab participated in the Geneva phase of the WSIS and in most of the prepcom meetings for the summit. He is the Chairman of Saudi Arabia's national committee for summit preparation. Mr. Al Darrab has a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from California State University in Sacramento, USA.

Nitin Desai is Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the World Summit on the Information Society. He has served as Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs at the United Nations and Deputy-Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Mr. Desai is an Honorary Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science and convenor of one of the tracks in the Helsinki Process on Globalisation and Democracy.

William J. Drake is President of Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility and a Senior Associate at the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development in Geneva. Previously, he has been, *inter alia*, a Senior Associate and the founding Director of the Project on the Information Revolution and World Politics at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; the founding Associate Director of the Communication, Culture and

Technology Program, Georgetown University; and an Assistant Professor of Communication at the University of California in San Diego. Mr. Drake received his PhD in Political Science from Columbia University.

Divina Frau-Meigs is Vice-President of the International Association for Media and Communication Research and Professor of Media Sociology at the University of Paris, the Sorbonne. She is an expert and consultant for the European Union, the European Council and UNESCO on issues of media and ICT regulation, self-regulation and media education. She is also coordinator of the education, academia and research taskforce in the WSIS process and, as such, a member of the board of the Civil Society bureau. She graduated from Stanford University and the Annenberg School for Communication.

Marc Furrer is Secretary of State for the WSIS, Switzerland. He worked as Chief editor of consumer affairs section and Parliamentary correspondent for DRS. He was personal political secretary to Federal Counsellor Adolf Ogi, former Head of the Federal Department of Environment, Transport, Communications and Energy and Director General of the Swiss Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM). In 2003 he was responsible for content and organisational preparations for the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society, Phase I. Since 2005 he is President of the Federal Communications Commission (ComCom) and is also involved in many commissions and associations. Mr. Furrer studied law at the University of Berne.

Walter Fust is Director-General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). After graduating from St. Gallen University with a Masters of Political Science, Mr. Fust entered the diplomatic service and was assigned to Berne, Geneva, Baghdad and Tokyo. In September 1983, he was appointed Deputy Head of the Integration Office, dealing with the Swiss government's relation with the European Community and the EFTA countries. From 1984 to 1986 he was appointed as personal adviser to Federal Councillor Mr. Kurt Furgler, Minister of Public Economy. In 1986, he was elected as Managing Director of the Swiss Office for Trade Promotion. From 1990 to August 1993 he served as Secretary General of the Ministry of the Interior. Since September 1993 Mr. Fust is Chairman of the Board of the "Global Knowledge Partnership GKP", a network dealing with information and communication technologies within the scope for cooperation, and a member of the Panel of Advisors of the United Nations ICT Task Force. Furthermore he is member of the Steering Committee of the "Global Governance Initiative" of the World Economic Forum (WEF) and of the Policy Committee of the Global Coalition for Africa.

Cees J. Hamelink is Professor of International Communication at the University of Amsterdam. He studied Moral Philosophy and Law and has published 21 books on world

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Marc Holitscher is a lecturer and Head Assistant at the Institute of Political Science, International Relations Department, University of Zürich. He was a Senior Fellow at the Center for Digital Government at the Kennedy School of Government of Harvard University and co-founded the Unit for Internet Studies. He also worked as a member of the Editorial Committee of the Swiss Political Science Review and published a number of articles on several Internet-related topics. He still publishes articles in several newspapers and magazines on Internet-related topics.

Philipp Grabensee is Chairman of the Board of Directors of Afilias Ltd. He represented the ICANN Registrar Constituency on the Names Council of the DNSO in 2002. He also participated as a member of the WHOIS Task Force and testified in front of the US Federal Trade Commission as an expert of WHOIS policy. He is actively involved in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process. He is a partner at the law firm of SHSG and focuses on all legal questions concerning the Internet. Mr. Grabensee is registered as a lawyer with the District Court in Duesseldorf. He represented the first German ICANN accredited registrar - EPAG AG. He also served as a member of the policy task force during the initial founding of Afilias. He studied Law and Philosophy at the Free University of Berlin and the Rheinischen-Friedrich-Wilhelms-University in Bonn. He also lectured in multimedia law at the Akademie für Werbung und Kommunikation in Cologne.

Georg Greve is President of the Free Software Foundation Europe since March 2001. He actively participates in the WSIS as Chair of the European Civil Society Caucus, Co-Coordinator of the Patents, Copyrights and Trademark Working Group and as Delegate of the German Civil Society WSIS Coordination Circle in the German governmental delegation. Since January 2004 Georg Greve is an interim board member of X.Org Foundation. He studied Physics at the University of Hamburg.

David A. Gross is Ambassador and Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs at the United States Department of State. He has led United States delegations to several major international telecommunications conferences and headed the United States Government's participation

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Rainer Händel is Director of the Standards Coordination Services of Siemens Communications. In 1978 Mr. Händel joined Siemens where he was engaged in software development for switching systems, in concepts and standardization of broadband networks, and in the analysis of the liberalization and deregulation of telecommunication markets. From 1994 to 1995, he was a member of the Planning Board of the German Foreign Office in Bonn with a focus on the societal impact of new information and communication technologies. Mr. Händel has been an active member of several international standardization organizations such as ITU and ETSI. He is the author several technical articles and a book on broadband networking. Mr. Händel is an elected member of the ICANN Nomination Committee. He holds a Doctorate in Physics from the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg.

Ayesha Hassan is the Senior Policy Manager for E-Business, IT and Telecoms at the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). After completing her undergraduate studies at the University of Chicago, Ms. Hassan obtained a Law degree from the University of San Diego, and a Masters in International Policy Studies from Stanford University. Ms. Hassan is an experienced lawyer and has a background in dispute resolution, international policy, and e-commerce issues. She is former head of online dispute resolution services at Square Trade.

Qiheng Hu is the Vice President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. She is a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and the National Committee of the 8th and 9th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Ms. Hu is among the earliest Chinese scientists in the field of mode identification and artificial intelligence and founded the first national key laboratory for mode identification in China. She also contributed to the establishment of a Knowledge and Intelligence Science Laboratory. In addition, Ms. Hu has acted as President of China Automation Society, President of China Computer Society, and Chairman of China National Committee for International Data Center. She has received an honour certification from national 863 Program, and has served as Director General of the Institute of Automation.

Kamil Idris is Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and Secretary-General of the International Union for the Protection of Plant Varieties. He was Attorney-at-Law, Advocate and Commissioner for Oaths, Professor of International Law, Ambassador at the Sudanese Foreign Service, Legal Adviser at the Permanent Mission of Sudan to the United Nations Office and Coordinator and Spokesman of the African Group and the Group of 77. Mr. Idris was Member of the United Nations International Law

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Carlos M. Jarque is Manager of the Sustainable Development Department of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Prior to joining the IBD, Mr. Jarque served as Minister of Social Development in Mexico and as President of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Public Finance Information. Furthermore, he has been the President of the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) of Mexico and Director of the International Statistical Institute (ISI), based in Holland. He was also elected Chairman of the United Nations Statistical Commission, and President of the United Nations Cartographic Conference. Mr. Jarque graduated with a degree in Actuarial Science from Anahuac University in 1976 and has also studied at the London School of Economics, the University of Oslo, the Australian National University and at Harvard University. In addition, Mr. Jarque has been a Professor at the Australian National University, and a visiting Professor at Harvard University.

Heike Jensen is Chair of the WSIS Gender Caucus. In the WSIS process, she has worked with the German Civil Society Coordinating Committee for WSIS, the WSIS Gender Caucus and the NGO Gender Strategies Working Group. She also served as a civil society member of the German governmental delegation to the Geneva Summit. Her research, publication and teaching focus is on gender theories and media theories, women's movements and women's organizations, and globalization and global governance. Her volunteer work is dedicated to promoting women's rights. Ms. Jensen is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the Department of Gender Studies of Humboldt University in Berlin. She is also a member of the NRO-Frauenforum, Terre des Femmes, and the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). She received her education at Free University in Berlin, the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, USA), Brown University (Providence, USA), the International Women's University 2000 in Hamburg and Humboldt University, where she obtained her doctorate.

Rikke Frank Jorgensen is Co-Chair of the WSIS Civil Society Human Rights Caucus and adviser to the Danish governmental delegation to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). She has previously worked as a special adviser in the Danish Ministry of Research and Information Technology. She co-founded the Danish non-governmental organisation Digital Rights, and is on the board of European Digital Rights (EDRI). Ms. Jorgensen has also been a member of several governmental committees, and has authored a

number of presentation and articles on the interface between human rights and technology. She holds a Masters in Information Science and a European Masters in Human Rights and Democratization.

Janis Karklins is the current president of the WSIS II preparatory committee and the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations Office at Geneva. In 2002, Janis Karklins was vice-chair of the Working Group of Constitutional Reform of WIPO. From 2002 to 2003, he was vice president of the Preparatory Committee of the WSIS I and Chairman of the Council of the International Organisation for Migration. Mr. Karklins studied Radio Engineering at the Riga Technical University, after which he served as Under Secretary of State and Counselor at the Embassies of Latvia in France and Finland.

Abdul Waheed Khan is Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). He is also responsible for coordinating UNESCO's contribution to the United Nations ICT Task Force and the World Summit on the Information Society. Prior to joining UNESCO, Mr. Khan served as Vice-Chancellor at the Indira Gandhi National Open University and was also Chairman of the Distance Education Council. In addition, Mr. Khan has provided consultancy services to a number of international agencies such as the Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok and the World Bank. He is the author of a number of books and articles published in various academic journals, especially on development communication, distance education and multi-media technology applications.

Sarbuland Khan is Executive Coordinator of the United Nations ICT Task Force and Director for the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. He has a Masters degree in economics, a post-graduate diploma in International Economic Relations from the institute for Social Studies, The Hague. Mr. Khan directed the preparation of the Ministerial meeting of the Economic and Social Council on ICT for development and has been responsible for its follow-up and the establishment of the ICT Task Force. Among his twenty-four years of professional experience within the United Nations, he has held positions as the Branch Chief for the Policy Coordination and Interagency Affairs, Chief for the Office of the Under-Secretary-General of the Department for International Economic and Social Affairs, and Special Assistant to Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Decolonization. From 1979 to 1981, he served as delegate of Pakistan to the General Assembly of ECOSOC. Prior to joining the United Nations, Mr. Khan was the Director for the Economic Coordination in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, and served in embassies in Morocco, Brussels

and The Hague. From 1967 to 1969, Mr. Khan was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics in Punjab University of Lahore and staff Economist at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics in 1966-67. He has authored a number of publications and various articles in economics for books, journals, newspapers and magazines.

Wolfgang Kleinwächter is Professor for International Communication Policy and Regulation at the Department for Media and Information Sciences of the University of Aarhus. Mr. Kleinwächter obtained his Bachelors, Masters and PhD degrees in Communication, International Law and International Relations at the University of Leipzig. As co-founder of the WSIS Civil Society Internet Governance Caucus, he was also a member of the WSIS Civil Society Bureau since 2002. From 1994 to 1998 Mr. Kleinwächter was the Chairman of the Management Board of the Inter-Regional Information Society Initiative of the European Commission in Brussels and coordinated the regional "Saxonian Information Initiative" (SII) of the government of the Free State of Saxony in Germany. Since 1997 he was involved in numerous activities on Internet governance, starting with the IAHC and ICANN and is the author of more than 100 international publications.

Ronald Koven is the European Representative of the World Press Freedom Committee, a position he has held since 1981. A journalist by profession, Mr. Koven worked as the "De Gaulle watcher" at The Herald Tribune in Paris in the 1960s after which he joined The Washington Post as Diplomatic Editor, Canada correspondent, and Foreign Editor. Mr. Koven was also correspondent for Latin Europe and the Maghreb and reported extensively in the Middle East and Iran, from the start of the Islamic revolution. From 1981 to 1991, he was also Paris correspondent of The Boston Globe. For WPFC, Mr. Koven covers UNESCO, United Nations Human Rights Commission, Council of Europe, European Union and OSCE. He is a past president and current treasurer of the Anglo-American Press Association of Paris and was the first chairperson of Civil Society's WSIS Media Caucus.

Viola Krebs is the founder and director of ICVolunteers, an international non-governmental organization that connects volunteers and non-profit projects, working with a network of organizations and volunteers from about 60 countries. Ms. Krebs has a professional and academic background is in communications and sociolinguistics. She holds a Masters in Communications and a Bachelor in Linguistics, Spanish and English and is currently working on a PhD on "Volunteering, Volunteerism and Civil Society". As a member of the World Summit on the Information Society civil society bureau, Ms Krebs has actively participated in the WSIS since its beginning in Bamako in 2002.

Markus Kummer is a career diplomat who has been appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to head the Secretariat of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG). As a member of the Swiss delegation, he chaired several negotiating groups at the first phase of the WSIS, including the group on Internet governance. Since 2002 he held the position as eEnvoy of the Swiss Foreign Ministry in Bern. From 1998 to 2002 he served as Head of Unit in the Secretariat of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). In 1998 he had a special assignment with the Swiss Mission in Geneva as co-coordinator for the organization of the Second Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference. During a previous posting at the same Mission, between 1993 and 1996, he was in charge of matters related to UNCTAD and the International Trade Center (UNCTAD/WTO). Mr. Kummer has been working for the Swiss Foreign Ministry since 1979.

Bertrand de La Chapelle is a specialist of multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms and presently the Director of WSIS-Online.net, the community platform for the World Summit on the Information Society. A French diplomat by training (as Head of the Mission for New Information Technologies of the French Foreign Ministry from 1998 to 2001, he was a member of the G-8 DOT Force), he also enjoys more than nine years of private sector experience, particularly as Founder and former President of Virtools, the world leading development environment for 3D interactive content. Previous assignments included Advisor to the French Minister for European Affairs (1987-1988). Bertrand de La Chapelle also conducted a personal research in 2002 on Global Governance in his position as special Advisor of the Director of Institut Français des Relations Internationales, the leading French think-tank on international relations.

Radhika Lal is a policy advisor on ICT for poverty reduction and the MDGs in the Poverty Group of the UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy in New York. She is a development economist with a focus in technology, trade and macroeconomic policies and issues. She has advised developing country governments and other partners on issues relating to the role of ICT as an enabler for development and has been active in global level fora and partnerships such as the WSIS-Geneva, the G-8 DOT Force, the United Nations ICT Task Force and most recently in supporting the Secretary-General's Task Force on Financial Mechanisms for ICT4D that was facilitated by UNDP in the follow-up to the Geneva-phase of WSIS.

Louise Lassonde is Senior Policy Advisor at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). She has a degree in Anthropology and Sociology along with a PhD in demography. Her professional responsibilities have included university teaching in Development and Demography in Montreal, development assistance work in Burundi, and eastern Zaire as regional director for a Canadian non-governmental organization, and consultancy activities for UNICEF and UNFPA. Ms. Lassonde has also served with the

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Erkki Liikanen is the former EU commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society. After obtaining a Masters degree in Political Science from the University of Helsinki, Mr. Liikanen started his career in 1972 as a Member of Parliament in the Cultural Affairs Committee Agriculture and Forestry Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee. He was Member of the Supervisory Board of Televa Oy, Elector of the President of the Republic, Member then Chairman of Supervisory Board of Outokumpu, Secretary-General of the Social Democratic Party, Parliamentary Trustee to the Bank of Finland (Vice-Chairman), Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Head of Finnish Mission to the European Union and Minister of Finance before he joined the European Commission in 1995.

Robin Mansell joined the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2001 and holds the Dixons Chair in New Media and the Internet. Her research and teaching are concerned with the social, economic and policy issues associated with information and communication technologies. Her research examines the integration of new technologies into society, interactions between engineering design and the structure of markets, and sources of regulatory effectiveness and failure. She directs the MSc in New Media, Information and Society and supervises PhD students. Ms. Mansell has a BA (Hons) Psychology from University of Manitoba 1974; MSc Social Psychology, LSE 1976; MA Communication 1980, PhD Communication 1984, Simon Fraser University). She has authored several publications including: Trust and Crime in Information Societies (with Brian S. Collins, eds); Networking Knowledge for Information and Societies: Institutions and Intervention (with Rohan Samarajiva and Amy Mahan, eds.), Delft University Press, 2002; Inside the Communication Revolution: Evolving Patterns of Social and Technical Interaction (ed), Oxford University Press, 2002; and Mobilizing the Information Society: Strategies for Growth and Opportunity, Oxford University Press, 2000 (with W E Steinmueller).

Alain Modoux is President of International Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication (ORBICOM). He studied at the Institute for Political and Social Sciences, University of Lausanne, and at the Institute for International Studies in Geneva. With a Bachelor degree in political science, he joined the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1965 as a delegate and was later appointed member of the managing board of ICRC. In 1989, Mr. Modoux left Geneva to join UNESCO in Paris as Assistant Director General for Communication and Information of the Office for Public Information. Three years later, he was appointed director of the Communications Division by the Director-

General of UNESCO and was assigned the management of the Unit for freedom of expression and democracy in 1997.

Shoji Nishimoto is Co-Chairman of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) and Assistant Administrator and Director at the Bureau for Development Policy of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He specializes in strategic planning and management, development policy formulation and evaluation, investment analysis, and project management and was the Director-General of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Strategy and Policy Department prior to joining UNDP. In addition, Mr. Nishimoto has also served as an Associate Economic Affairs Officer at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok, and as an Economist at the Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome. Mr. Nishimoto holds a postgraduate degree in Economics from the University of Hawaii and a Bachelor's degree in Economics from Osaka University.

Kaarle Nordenstreng is Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Tampere, and former President of the IAMCR Professional Education Section. In addition to being a member of a variety of affiliations, such as the Global Network for Professional Education, he has also been a visiting Professor of several universities such as the University of California, the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Minnesota. He is currently working on normative theories of the media, media content in relation to media structures, and media in the Russian transition.

Asko Numminen is Ambassador from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland. He joined the ministry in 1975. He has worked in Finland's Permanent Mission in Geneva and the Embassy in London, and served as Consul General in Hong Kong and as ambassador to Brazil. At the Ministry he has been, *inter alia*, Secretary General for the Advisory Board for Economic Development Cooperation, Director of International Environmental Affairs, and, at present, the officer responsible for the United Nations Information Society Summit at the Department for Global Affairs.

Montasser Ouaili is the Minister of Communication Technologies in Tunisia. He was Secretary of State in Charge of Information Technology and Internet from September 2002 to November 2004, Secretary of State for Higher Education from April 2001 to September 2002 and Secretary of State for Information Technology from November 1996 to January 2001. Mr. Ouaili has a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from University of California, in Los Angeles.

Claudia Padovani is a researcher of Political Science and International Relations at the Department of Historical and Political Studies at the University of Padua. She teaches

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Supachai Panitchpakdi is Director-General of the World Trade Organization. On 28 February 2005, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan nominated Mr. Panitchpakdi as Secretary-General of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for a term of four years beginning 1 September 2005. Mr. Supachai began his professional career at the Bank of Thailand and was later elected a member of the Thai Parliament and was appointed Deputy Minister of Finance. He was appointed Director and Advisor in 1988, and subsequently President, of the Thai Military Bank. In 1992, Mr. Supachai was appointed Senator and that same year he became Deputy Prime Minister where he had oversight of the country's economic and trade policy making. Mr. Supachai was also active in shaping regional agreements including the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM). In 2001, Mr. Supachai was appointed Visiting Professor of the International Institute for Management Development in Lausanne and also served as President of UNCTAD X. He completed his doctoral dissertation on Human Resource Planning and Development at the Netherlands School of Economics in Rotterdam.

Marc Raboy is Professor and Beaverbrook Chair in Ethics, Media and Communications in the Department of Art History and Communication Studies at University of Montreal. A former journalist, Mr. Raboy is the author or editor of thirteen books and more than one hundred journal articles or book chapters, as well as reports for such organizations as UNESCO and the European Broadcasting Union. He is also a senior research associate in the Programme on Comparative Media Law and Policy at the University of Oxford and a member of the international council of the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). From 2001 to 2003 he served as expert advisor to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for its study of Canadian broadcasting. He is also a founding member of an international advocacy campaign for Communication Rights in the Information Society.

Adama Samassékou was the President of WSIS I Preparatory Committee for Geneva Phase and is the President of the African Academy of Languages. Playing an active role in community life, Mr. Samassékou was the founding President, for Mali and Africa as a whole,

of the Peoples' Movement for Human Rights Education. He was the founding chairman of ADEMA-France and has also been Minister of Education in Mali and former spokesperson for the Government of Mali

Juan Somavia is the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation. An attorney by profession, Mr. Somavia began his career as an academic and is Professor of International Economic and Social Affairs at the Catholic University of Chile. Throughout his career, he has written and lectured widely on trade issues and labor and human rights and holds citations and awards for his work in the areas of peace, human rights and social development. Mr. Somavia has also been involved in business, financial and civil society organizations for many years and is the founder and former president of the Latin American Institute of Transnational Studies (ILET) In addition, he has served as Chairman of the United Nations Committee of Parliamentarians for Global Action and has been on the Advisory Committee of Development Dialogue for more than 25 years.

Daniel Stauffacher is currently Ambassador at the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland, and, among other duties, advisor to the United Nations and the Tunisian Government for the second phase of the WSIS (November 2005), Vice-Chairman of the Bureau of the WSIS PrepCom, member of the United Nations ICT Task Force and of the Strategy Group on Information Society of the Swiss Government and Chairman of the ICT4Peace process. Ambassador Stauffacher holds a PhD from Zürich University and a MA in International Economics from Columbia University in New York. Mr. Stauffacher worked in the past for UNDP in Asia, was Division Chief of the Swiss Federal Office for Foreign Economic Affairs, Counsellor of the Swiss Mission for the EU and Ambassador and Delegate of the Swiss Federal Council in Geneva for the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD)/Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Geneva June 2000. He was the convenor of the first Global Compact Meeting in Switzerland and Ambassador and Delegate of the Swiss Federal Council in Geneva for the WSIS (WSIS I). He was also a member of the United Nations Task Force on Financial Mechanisms for ICTD.

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Wang Xudong is the Chinese minister of Information Industry and a member of the CPC Central Committee. Mr. Xudong graduated from the Tianjin Institute of Science and Technology for Further Studies in 1982, with a major in engineering. He is a former secretary of the Chinese Communist Youth League Committee and has worked as deputy secretary of the CPC Committee of the Research Institute of the Chinese People's Liberation Army and as a director of the Research Institute of the Ministry of Electronics Industry.