
Document WSIS-II/PC-3/DT12(Rev.2)-E
30 September 2005
Original: English

Chair of Sub-Committee B

POLITICAL CHAPEAU

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1. **We, the representatives of the peoples of the world,** have gathered in Tunis from 16-18 November 2005 for this second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to reiterate our unequivocal support for the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in December 2003. We reaffirm our desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and multilateralism, and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, so that people everywhere can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, to achieve their full potential and to attain the internationally-agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. (*Agreed*)

[2. 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.]

[3. In keeping with the spirit of the Declaration of Principles, we rededicate ourselves to upholding the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.]

[4. Recognizing that the ability to generate and the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, knowledge and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, is increasingly the key to development and to pluralistic, prosperous and socially stable societies, at the national as well as the global level, we commit ourselves to promoting and protecting the freedom of expression and editorially independent media in the information society.]

[5. We reaffirm article 19, paragraph 3, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which provides that the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression carries with it special duties and responsibilities, and it may therefore be subject to certain restrictions provided by law for respect of the rights or reputations of others and for the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals.]

6. The Tunis Summit represents a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the benefits that ICTs can bring to humanity and the manner in which they can transform people's activities, interaction and lives and thus, increase confidence in the future. (*Agreed*)

7. This Summit is an important stepping-stone in the world's efforts to eradicate poverty and to attain the internationally-agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. By the Geneva decisions, we established a coherent long-term link between the WSIS process, and other relevant major United Nations conferences and summits. We call upon governments, private sector, civil society and international organizations to join together to implement the commitments set forth in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. In this context, the outcomes of the recently concluded Summit meeting of the General Assembly on the review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration are of special relevance. *(Agreed)*

8. We reaffirm the commitments made in Geneva and build on them in Tunis by focusing on Financial Mechanisms for bridging the digital divide, on Internet Governance and related issues, as well as on follow-up and implementation of the Geneva and Tunis decisions, as referenced in chapters two, three and four of [the operational part of this document/the operational document: Tunis agenda for action]. *(Agreed)*

9. We acknowledge the leading role of governments, in partnership with other stakeholders, in implementing the WSIS outcomes at the national, regional and international levels.]

10. We reaffirm our resolution in the quest to ensure that everyone can benefit from the opportunities that ICTs can offer, by recalling that governments, as well as private sector, civil society and the United Nations and other international organizations, 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 confirm that these are the key principles for building an inclusive Information society, the elaboration of which is found in the Geneva Declaration of Principles. *(Agreed)*

[11 We reaffirm that the sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development can be enhanced by removing obstacles 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, in this context we underline that media play an important role.]

[12. We recognise that access to information and sharing and creation of knowledge contributes significantly to strengthening economic, social and cultural development, thus helping all countries to reach the internationally-agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.]

13. Furthermore, ICTs are making it possible for a vastly larger population than at any time in the past to join in sharing and expanding the base of human knowledge, and contributing to its further growth in all spheres of human endeavour as well as application to education, health and science. ICTs have enormous potential to expand access to quality education, to boost literacy and universal primary education, and to facilitate the learning process itself, thus laying the groundwork for the establishment of a fully-inclusive and development-oriented Information Society and knowledge economy which respects cultural and linguistic diversity. *(Agreed)*

14. We recognise that equitable and sustainable access to information requires the implementation of strategies for the long-term preservation of the digital information that is being created. (*Agreed*)

[15. We emphasise that the adoption of ICTs by enterprises plays a fundamental role in economic growth. The growth and productivity enhancing effects of well implemented investments in ICTs can lead to increased trade and to more and better employment. For this reason, both enterprise development and labour market policies play a fundamental role in the adoption of ICTs. We invite governments and the private sector to enhance the capacity of SMMEs since they furnish the greatest number of jobs in most economies. We shall work together, with all stakeholders, to put in place the necessary policy, legal and regulatory frameworks that foster entrepreneurship, particularly for SMMEs.]

16. We also recognize that the ICT revolution can have a tremendous positive impact as an instrument of sustainable development. , In addition, an appropriate enabling environment at national and international levels could prevent increasing social and economic divisions, and widening the gap between rich and poor countries, regions, and individuals—including between men and women. (*Agreed*)

17. We also recognize that in addition to building ICT infrastructure, there should be adequate emphasis on developing human capacity and creating ICT applications and digital content in local language, where appropriate, so as to ensure a comprehensive approach to build a global information society. (*Agreed*)

[18. Recognizing the principles of universal and non-discriminatory access to ICTs for all nations, the need to take into account the level of social and economic development of each country, and respecting the development-oriented aspects of the Information Society, we underscore that ICTs are effective tools to promote peace, security and stability, to enhance democracy, social cohesion, good governance and the rule of law. ICTs can be used to promote economic growth and enterprise development. Infrastructure development, human capacity building, information security and network security are critical to achieve these goals. We further recognize the need to confront effectively challenges and threats resulting from use of ICTs for purposes that are inconsistent with 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.]

[19. We reaffirm our commitment to removing all obstacles to bridging the digital divide, particularly those that hinder the full achievement of the economic, social and cultural development of countries and the welfare of their people, in particular, in developing countries.]

[Alt. 19. We urge states and other stakeholders to take steps to assist in overcoming obstacles to bridging the digital divide, particularly those that impede the full achievement of economic, social and cultural development of people of the affected countries.]

20. 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. (*Agreed*)

21. Our conviction that Governments, the private sector, civil society, the scientific and academic community, and users can utilize various technologies and licensing models, including those developed under proprietary schemes and those developed under open-source and free modalities, in accordance with their interests and with the needs to have reliable services and implement effective programmes for their people. Taking into account the importance of proprietary software in the markets of the countries, we reiterate the need to encourage and foster collaborative development, inter-operative platforms and free and open source software, in ways that reflect the possibilities of different software models, notably for education, science and digital inclusion programs. *(Agreed)*

[22. We urge governments to support the broad availability of legal information to the public using ICTs, including to vulnerable groups.]

23. **We shall strive** unremittingly, therefore, to promote universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to ICTs, including universal design and assistive technologies, for all people, especially those with disabilities, everywhere, to ensure that the benefits are more evenly distributed between and within societies, and to bridge the digital divide in order to create digital opportunities for all and benefit from the potential offered by ICTs for development. *(Agreed)*

24. We recognize that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divide in society and we reaffirm our commitment to women's empowerment and to a gender equality perspective, so that we can overcome this divide. We further acknowledge that the full participation of women in the information society is necessary to ensure the inclusiveness and respect for human rights with in the information society. We encourage all stakeholders to support women's participation in decision-making processes and to contribute to shaping all spheres of the information society at global, regional and national levels. *(Agreed)*

25. We recognize the role of ICTs in furthering the protection of children and in empowering children and youth. In that context, we emphasize that the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration. *(Agreed)*

26. To that end 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, older persons and persons with disabilities. *(Agreed)*

27. 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. *(Agreed)*

[28. **We** reaffirm our commitment to empowering young people as key partners in building an inclusive Information Society. We will mobilize resources for sustainable implementation of innovative ICT-based development programs with active engagement of youth and widen opportunities for them to be fully involved in global and national e-strategy decision-making processes. We will strengthen action to protect and defend the rights of children from abuse in the context of ICTs]

29. To that end we shall 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, and countries recovering from conflict or natural disasters. *(Agreed)*

30. We recognize the importance of creative content and applications to overcome the digital divide and to contribute to the achievement of the internationally-agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. *(Agreed)*

31. Recognizing that disaster mitigation can significantly support efforts to bring about sustainable development and help in poverty reduction, we reaffirm our commitment in leveraging ICT capabilities and potential through fostering and strengthening cooperation at the national, regional, and international levels. *(Agreed)*

[32. We hereby undertake further commitments towards the implementation of a comprehensive financial strategy that covers debt sustainability, A universal, rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading and the urgent need to act quickly to fully operationalize an agreed common agenda to increase international cooperation and assistance to bridge the digital divide.]

[33. 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, which measures would release more resources that may be used for financing ICT for development projects. A universal, rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, as well as meaningful trade liberalization, can also substantially stimulate development worldwide, benefiting countries at all stages of development. In that regard, we reaffirm our commitment to trade liberalization and to ensure that trade plays its full part in promoting economic growth, employment and development for all.]

[34. We hereby undertake further commitments to promote the inclusiveness of all peoples in the information society by promoting development and the use of local languages in ICTs to enhance the promotion and protection of cultural diversity and identity.]

[35 We undertake to promote, affirm, and preserve diverse cultural identities and languages through the development and use of local languages in ICTS, which enhances the involvement of all peoples in the information society.]

36. We acknowledge that, while technical cooperation can help, capacity building at all levels is needed to ensure that the required institutional and individual expertise is available. *(Agreed)*

[37. We commit ourselves to mobilizing resources, both human and financial to enable us to increase the use of ICTs for development and realize the short, medium and long-term plans dedicated to the building of the Information Society as follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of WSIS .]

[38. We recognize the central role of public policy as the main framework in which resource mobilization can take place. While also recognizing the role that private investment can play in meeting the goals of International Cooperation Development, we are cognisant of the limits of the market in contributing to reaching these goals.]

39. We recognize the central role of public policy as the main framework in which resource mobilization can take place. Governments should intervene, as appropriate, to correct market failures, to maintain fair competition, to attract investment, to enhance development of the ICT infrastructure and applications to maximize economic and social benefits, and to serve national priorities. [*Agreed*]

40. We reaffirm our desire to build ICT networks and develop applications, in partnership with the private sector, based on open or interoperable standards that are affordable and accessible to all, available anywhere and anytime, to anyone and on any device, leading to a ubiquitous network . (*Agreed*)

41. We value the potential of ICTs to promote peace and to prevent conflict which, *inter alia*, negatively affects achieving development goals. ICTs can be used for identifying conflict situations through early warning systems preventing conflicts, promoting their peaceful resolution, supporting humanitarian action, including protection of civilians in armed conflicts facilitating peacekeeping missions, and assisting post conflict peace-building and construction. (Agreed)

42. **We are convinced** that our goals can be accomplished through the involvement, cooperation and partnership of governments and other stakeholders, i.e. the private sector, civil society and international organizations and that international cooperation and solidarity at all levels are indispensable if the fruits of the Information Society are to benefit all . (*Agreed*)

[43. The international community has to ensure that all countries of the world have access to ICT in all its aspects:, so that its benefits in the fields of socio-economic development and bridging the digital divide be truly inclusive.]

44. **Our efforts** should not stop with the conclusion of the Summit. The emergence of the global Information Society to which we all contribute provides increasing opportunities for all our peoples and for an inclusive global community that were unimaginable only a few years ago. We must harness these opportunities today and support their further development and progress. (*Agreed*)

[45. **We strongly believe** that the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for the full and timely implementation of decisions we took in Geneva and in Tunis, the establishment of appropriate multi-stakeholder follow-up mechanisms thereto, [and closely integrating this process in the overall strategy embodied in the Millennium Declaration—through openness, inclusiveness and transparency; promotion of co-operation among stakeholders; and flexibility—is the way to achieve this goal. We therefore reaffirm our strong resolve to develop and implement an effective and sustainable response to challenges and opportunities of building a truly global Information Society that benefits all our peoples.] [and ensuring that this process is open, inclusive, transparent, flexible and promotes co-operation among stakeholders is the way to achieve the goals and overall strategy embodied in the Millennium Declaration. We therefore reaffirm our strong resolve to develop and implement an effective and sustainable response to challenges and opportunities of building a truly global Information Society that benefits all our peoples.]]

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