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DOCUMENTS

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Outcome Documents

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FOREWORD

It is my great privilege to present the outcome documents from the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which was held in two phases in Geneva, 10-12 December 2003 and in Tunis, 16-18 November 2005. This Summit represents a milestone, not only for the United Nations and the International Telecommunication Union, which played the leading managerial role in the Summit, but for all stakeholders involved. WSIS is a bold attempt to address the issues raised by information and communication technologies (ICTs) through a structured and inclusive approach.

Our society is changing radically as ICTs become a bigger part of our lives. It is changing in ways unimaginable seven years ago, when the Summit was first proposed by Tunisia at the 1998 ITU Plenipotentiary Conference. During those seven years, the Internet has increased in size ten-fold, while the number of mobile phone users has now grown to over two billion. I am proud to say that we are now in a better position to address these changes as a result of this agenda-setting Summit.

The Summit has achieved a common understanding of the key principles that will determine our ability to harness the potential of ICTs. In Geneva in 2003, world leaders shared the vision of a people-centred, development-oriented and inclusive Information Society, and committed to the *Plan of Action* setting out targets to be achieved from 2003. More than 2500 projects have been launched in the framework of the Summit, and these are recorded in the WSIS Stocktaking database and report, which will continue to be maintained by ITU.

In 2005, governments reaffirmed their dedication to the foundations of the Information Society in the *Tunis Commitment* and outlined the basis for implementation and follow-up in the *Tunis Agenda for the Information Society*. In particular, the *Tunis Agenda* addresses the issues of financing of ICTs for development and Internet governance that could not be resolved in the first phase. On Internet governance, the *Tunis Agenda* foresees the creation of a new Internet Governance Forum, which will carry the work forward.

The Summit has been notable in its adoption of a multi-stakeholder approach, and this is now carried forward in the implementation phase with the direct involvement of civil society and the private sector alongside governments and international organizations. The ITU-led Connect the World initiative is a good example of the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in bridging the digital divide.

It is my hope that the lasting legacy of the World Summit on the Information Society will be the vision of an inclusive Information Society, in which everyone has the means to express their ideas, and be heard. For then, we will know that WSIS has truly succeeded in what it set out to achieve.

Yoshio UTSUMI



Secretary-General of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)
Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

GENEVA

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 has 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 of 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

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. 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

29. 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.

30. 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.

31. 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.

32. 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.

33. To achieve a sustainable development of the Information Society, national capabilities 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.

34. 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, depend 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 cybersecurity 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 cybersecurity, 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 cybersecurity 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 utilization 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 the 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

52. 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.

53. 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 the participation of all stakeholders, including people living in rural, remote and marginal areas.

54. 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 digitization.

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 is 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

56. The Information Society should respect peace and uphold the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, shared responsibility, and respect for nature.

57. 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 to enable it to play its crucial role in society.

58. 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.

59. 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 competencies 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.

Geneva, 12 December 2003

GENEVA

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 the 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 microfinance for Small, Medium-sized and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs)), investment promotion strategies, software export support activities (trade counselling), 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 ICTs.

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 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, multi-purpose 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 ICTs 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 cybercrime 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 organizations 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)* Recognizing 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 organizations 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 elements 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 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 the 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, recognizing 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 ICTs 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 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 the 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 UN's *Global Compact* and building upon the *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, build on and accelerate public-private partnerships, focusing on the use of ICTs 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 coordination, 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 ICTs 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 organizations 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 ICTs 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 track 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; and
- 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.

Geneva, 12 December 2003

TUNIS

COMMITMENT

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 *Geneva 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.
2. **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.
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** paragraphs 4, 5 and 55 of the *Geneva Declaration of Principles*. **We recognize** that freedom of expression and the free flow of information, ideas, and knowledge, are essential for the Information Society and beneficial to development.
5. The Tunis Summit represents a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the benefits that information and communication technologies (ICTs) can bring to humanity and the manner in which they can transform people's activities, interactions and lives and thus, increase confidence in the future.
6. 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 2005 *World Summit on the review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration* are of special relevance.

7. 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 the *Tunis Agenda for the Information Society*.

8. While reaffirming the important roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders as outlined in *paragraph 3* of the *Geneva Plan of Action*, **we acknowledge** the key role and responsibilities of governments in the WSIS process.

9. 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*.

10. We recognize 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. This process can be enhanced by removing barriers to universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to information. **We underline** the importance of removing barriers 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.

11. 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 its 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 respect cultural and linguistic diversity.

12. We emphasize 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 Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (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.

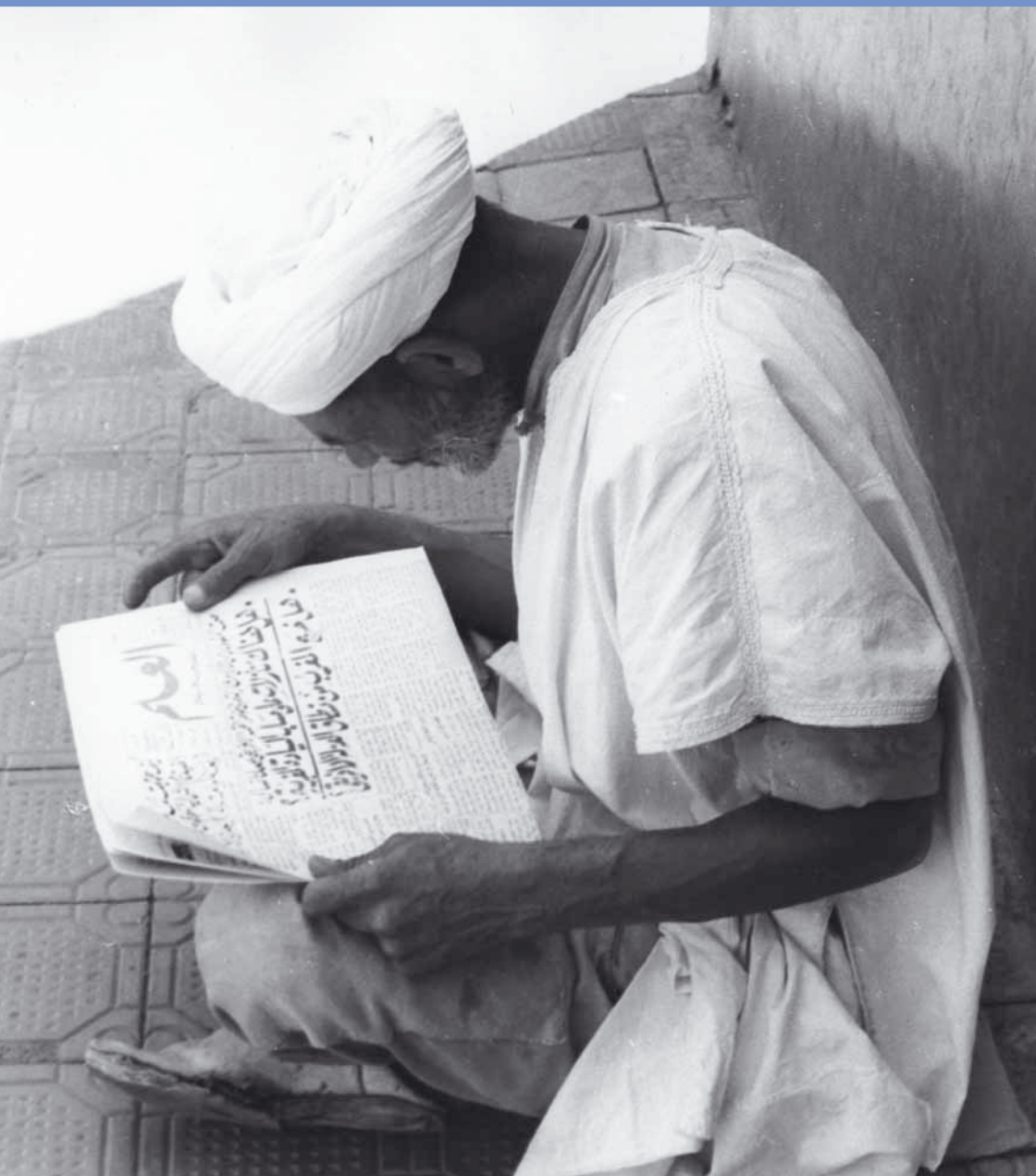
13. We also recognize that the ICT revolution can have a tremendous positive impact as an instrument of sustainable development. In addition, an appropriate enabling environment at national and international levels could prevent increasing social and economic divisions, and the widening of the gap between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

14. 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 building a global Information Society.

15. 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, at national, regional and international levels. 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 effectively confront challenges and threats resulting from the 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 abuse of information resources and technologies for criminal and terrorist purposes, while respecting human rights.

16. 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 and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to assess the effectiveness of investment and international cooperation efforts in building the Information Society.

17. We urge governments, using the potential of ICTs, to create public systems of information on laws and regulations, envisaging a wider development of public access points and supporting the broad availability of this information.



18. 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.

19. The international community should take the necessary measures to ensure that all countries of the world have equitable and affordable access to ICTs, so that their benefits in the fields of socio-economic development and bridging the digital divide are truly inclusive.

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. 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 within 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 international, regional and national levels.

24. We recognize the role of ICTs in the protection of children and in enhancing the development of children. **We will strengthen action** to protect children from abuse and defend their rights in the context of ICTs. In that context, **we emphasize** that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration.

25. We reaffirm our commitment to empowering young people as key contributors to building an inclusive Information Society. **We will actively engage** youth in innovative ICT-based development programmes and widen opportunities for youth to be involved in e-strategy processes.

26. 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.

27. We recognize 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.

28. 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.

29. Our conviction is 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 need 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, interoperative platforms and free and open-source software, in ways that reflect the possibilities of different software models, notably for education, science and digital inclusion programmes.

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

31. We commit ourselves to work together towards the implementation of the Digital Solidarity Agenda, as agreed in *paragraph 27 of the Geneva Plan of Action*. The full and quick implementation of that agenda, observing good governance at all levels, requires in particular a timely, effective, comprehensive and durable solution to the debt problems of developing countries where appropriate, a universal, rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, that can also stimulate development worldwide, benefitting countries at all stages of development, as well as, to seek and effectively implement concrete international approaches and mechanisms to increase international cooperation and assistance to bridge the digital divide.

32. We further commit ourselves to promote the inclusion of all peoples in the Information Society through the development and use of local and/or indigenous languages in ICTs. **We will continue** our efforts to protect and promote cultural diversity, as well as cultural identities, within the Information Society.

33. 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.

34. We recognize the need for, and strive to mobilize resources, both human and financial, in accordance with *Chapter Two* of the *Tunis Agenda for the Information Society*, to enable us to increase the use of ICTs for development and realize the short-, medium- and long-term plans dedicated to building the Information Society as follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of WSIS.

35. We recognize the central role of public policy in setting the framework in which resource mobilization can take place.

36. 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 reconstruction.

37. 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.

38. 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.

39. We reaffirm our strong resolve to develop and implement an effective and sustainable response to the challenges and opportunities of building a truly global Information Society that benefits all our peoples.

40. We strongly believe in the full and timely implementation of the decisions we took in Geneva and Tunis, as outlined in the *Tunis Agenda for the Information Society*.

Tunis, 18 November 2005

TUNIS AGENDA
FOR THE INFORMATION SOCIETY



A. Introduction

- 1. We recognize** that it is now time to move from principles to action, considering the work already being done in implementing the *Geneva Plan of Action* and identifying those areas where progress has been made, is being made, or has not taken place.
- 2. 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 implementation and follow-up of the Geneva and Tunis decisions.

B. Financial Mechanisms for Meeting the Challenges of ICTs for Development

- 3. We thank** the UN Secretary-General for his efforts in creating the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) and we commend the members on their report.
- 4. We recall** that the mandate of the TFFM was to undertake a thorough review of the adequacy of existing financial mechanisms in meeting the challenges of ICTs for development.
- 5.** The TFFM report sets out the complexity of existing mechanisms, both private and public, which provide financing for ICTs in developing countries. It identifies areas where these could be improved and where ICTs could be given higher priority by developing countries and their development partners.
- 6.** Based on the conclusion of the review of the report, **we have considered** the improvements and innovations of financing mechanisms, including the creation of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund, as mentioned in the *Geneva Declaration of Principles*.
- 7. We recognize** the existence of the digital divide and the challenges that this poses for many countries, which are forced to choose between many competing objectives in their development planning and in demands for development funds whilst having limited resources.
- 8. We recognize** the scale of the problem in bridging the digital divide, which will require adequate and sustainable investments in ICT infrastructure and services, and capacity building, and transfer of technology over many years to come.

9. We call upon the international community to promote the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, including ICTs, to adopt policies and programmes with a view to assisting developing countries to take advantage of technology in their pursuit of development through, inter alia, technical cooperation and the building of scientific and technological capacity in our efforts to bridge the digital and development divides.

10. We recognize that the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, are fundamental. The *Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development* is the basis for the pursuit of adequate and appropriate financial mechanisms to promote ICTs for development, in accordance with the Digital Solidarity Agenda of the *Geneva Plan of Action*.

11. We recognize and acknowledge the special and specific funding needs of the developing world, as referred to in *paragraph 16* of the *Geneva Declaration of Principles*, which faces numerous challenges in the ICT sector, and that there is strong need to focus on their special financing needs to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.

12. We agree that the financing of ICTs for development needs to be placed in the context of the growing importance of the role of ICTs, not only as a medium of communication, but also as a development enabler, and as a tool for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.

13. In the past, financing of ICT infrastructure in most developing countries has been based on public investment. Lately, a significant influx of investment has taken place where private sector participation has been encouraged, based on a sound regulatory framework, and where public policies aimed at bridging the digital divide have been implemented.

14. We are greatly encouraged by the fact that advances in communication technology, and high-speed data networks are continuously increasing the possibilities for developing countries, and countries with economies in transition, to participate in the global market for ICT-enabled services on the basis of their comparative advantage. These emerging opportunities provide a powerful commercial basis for ICT infrastructural investment in these countries. Therefore, 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. At the same time, countries should pursue policies and measures that would not discourage, impede or prevent the continued participation of these countries in the global market for ICT-enabled services.

15. We take note that the challenges for expanding the scope of useful accessible information content in the developing world are numerous; in particular, the issue of financing for various forms of content and applications requires new attention, as this area has often been overlooked by the focus on ICT infrastructure.

16. We recognize that attracting investment in ICTs has depended crucially upon an enabling environment, including good governance at all levels, and a supportive, transparent and pro-competitive policy and regulatory framework, reflecting national realities.

17. We endeavour to engage in a proactive dialogue on matters related to corporate social responsibility and good corporate governance of transnational corporations and their contribution to the economic and social development of developing countries in our efforts to bridge the digital divide.

18. We underline that market forces alone cannot guarantee the full participation of developing countries in the global market for ICT-enabled services. Therefore, **we encourage** the strengthening of international cooperation and solidarity aimed at enabling all countries, especially those referred to in *paragraph 16* of the *Geneva Declaration of Principles*, to develop ICT infrastructure and ICT-enabled services that are viable and competitive at national and international levels.

19. We recognize that, in addition to the public sector, financing of ICT infrastructure by the private sector has come to play an important role in many countries and that domestic financing is being augmented by North-South flows and South-South cooperation.

20. We recognize that, as a result of the growing impact of sustainable private sector investment in infrastructure, multilateral and bilateral public donors are redirecting public resources to other development objectives, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and related programmes, policy reforms and mainstreaming of ICTs and capacity development. **We encourage** all governments to give appropriate priority to ICTs, including traditional ICTs such as broadcast radio and television, in their national development strategies. **We also encourage** multilateral institutions as well as bilateral public donors to consider providing more financial support for regional and large-scale national ICT infrastructure projects and related capacity development. They should consider aligning their aid and partnership strategies with the priorities set by developing countries and countries with economies in transition in their national development strategies including their poverty reduction strategies.

21. We recognize that public finance plays a crucial role in providing ICT access and services to rural areas and disadvantaged populations, including those in Small Island Developing States and Landlocked Developing Countries.

22. We note that ICT-related capacity building needs to represent a high priority in all developing countries and the current financing levels have not been adequate to meet the needs, although there are many different funding mechanisms supporting ICTs for development.

23. We recognize that there are a number of areas in need of greater financial resources and where current approaches to ICTs for development financing have devoted insufficient attention to date. These include:

- a)** ICT capacity building programmes, materials, tools, educational funding and specialized training initiatives, especially for regulators and other public sector employees and organizations.
- b)** Communications access and connectivity for ICT services and applications in remote rural areas, Small Island Developing States, Landlocked Developing Countries and other locations presenting unique technological and market challenges.
- c)** Regional backbone infrastructure, regional networks, Network Access Points and related regional projects, to link networks across borders and in economically disadvantaged regions which may require coordinated policies including legal, regulatory and financial frameworks, and seed financing and that would benefit from sharing experiences and best practices.
- d)** Broadband capacity to facilitate the delivery of a broader range of services and applications, promote investment and provide Internet access at affordable prices to both existing and new users.
- e)** Coordinated assistance, as appropriate, for countries referred to in *paragraph 16* of the *Geneva Declaration of Principles*, particularly Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, in order to improve effectiveness and to lower transaction costs associated with the delivery of international donor support.
- f)** ICT applications and content aimed at the integration of ICTs into the implementation of poverty eradication strategies and in sector programmes, particularly in health, education, agriculture and the environment.

In addition, there is a need to consider the following other issues, which are relevant to ICTs for development and which have not received adequate attention:

- g)** Sustainability of Information Society related projects, for example the maintenance of ICT infrastructure.
- h)** Special needs of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), such as funding requirements.
- i)** Local development and manufacturing of ICT applications and technologies by developing countries.

- j)** Activities on ICT-related institutional reform and enhanced capacity on legal and regulatory framework.
 - k)** Improving organizational structures and business process change aimed at optimizing the impact and effectiveness of ICT projects and other projects with significant ICT components.
 - l)** Local government and initiatives based in local communities that deliver ICT services to communities in areas such as education, health and livelihood support.
- 24.** Recognizing that the central responsibility for coordination of public financing programmes and public ICT development initiatives rests with governments, **we recommend** that further cross-sectoral and cross-institutional coordination should be undertaken, both on the part of donors and recipients within the national framework.
- 25.** Multilateral development banks and institutions should consider adapting their existing mechanisms, and where appropriate designing new ones, to provide for national and regional demands on ICT development.
- 26. We acknowledge** the following prerequisites for equitable and universal accessibility to and better utilization of financial mechanisms:
- a)** Creating policy and regulatory incentives aimed at universal access and the attraction of private sector investment.
 - b)** Identification and acknowledgement of the key role of ICTs in national development strategies, and their elaboration, when appropriate, in conjunction with e-strategies.
 - c)** Developing institutional and implementation capacity to support the use of national universal service/access funds, and further study of these mechanisms and those aiming to mobilize domestic resources.
 - d)** Encouraging the development of locally-relevant information, applications and services that will benefit developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
 - e)** Supporting the “scaling-up” of successful ICT-based pilot programmes.
 - f)** Supporting the use of ICTs in government as a priority and a crucial target area for ICT-based development interventions.
 - g)** Building human resource and institutional capacity (knowledge) at every level for achieving Information Society objectives, especially in the public sector.



h) Encouraging business sector entities to help jump start wider demand for ICT services by supporting creative industries, local producers of cultural content and applications as well as small businesses.

j) Strengthening capacities to enhance the potential of securitized funds and utilizing them effectively.

27. We recommend improvements and innovations in existing financing mechanisms, including:

a) Improving financial mechanisms to make financial resources become adequate, more predictable, preferably untied, and sustainable.

b) Enhancing regional cooperation and creating multi-stakeholder partnerships, especially by creating incentives for building regional backbone infrastructure.

c) Providing affordable access to ICTs, by the following measures:

i. reducing international Internet costs charged by backbone providers, supporting, *inter alia*, the creation and development of regional ICT backbones and Internet Exchange Points to reduce interconnection cost and broaden network access;

ii. encouraging ITU to continue the study of the question of International Internet Connectivity (IIC) as an urgent matter to develop appropriate Recommendations.

d) Coordinating programmes among governments and major financial players to mitigate investment risks and transaction costs for operators entering less attractive rural and low-income market segments.

e) Helping to accelerate the development of domestic financial instruments including by supporting local microfinance instruments, ICT business incubators, public credit instruments, reverse auction mechanisms, networking initiatives based on local communities, digital solidarity and other innovations.

f) Improving the ability to access financing facilities with a view to accelerating the pace of financing of ICT infrastructure and services, including the promotion of North-South flows as well as North-South and South-South cooperation.

g) Multilateral, regional and bilateral development organizations should consider the utility of creating a virtual forum for the sharing of information by all stakeholders on potential projects, on sources of financing and on institutional financial mechanisms.

h) Enabling developing countries to be increasingly able to generate funds for ICTs and to develop financial instruments, including trust funds and seed capital adapted to their economies.

i) Urging all countries to make concrete efforts to fulfil their commitments under the *Monterrey Consensus*.

j) Multilateral, regional and bilateral development organizations should consider cooperating to enhance their capacity to provide rapid response with a view to supporting developing countries that request assistance with respect to ICT policies.

k) Encouraging increased voluntary contributions.

l) Making, as appropriate, effective use of debt relief mechanisms as outlined in the *Geneva Plan of Action*, including *inter alia* debt cancellation and debt swapping, that may be used for financing ICT for development projects, including those within the framework of Poverty Reduction Strategies.

28. We welcome the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) established in Geneva as an innovative financial mechanism of a voluntary nature open to interested stakeholders with the objective of transforming the digital divide into digital opportunities for the developing world by focusing mainly on specific and urgent needs at the local level and seeking new voluntary sources of “solidarity” finance. The DSF will complement existing mechanisms for funding the Information Society, which should continue to be fully utilized to fund the growth of new ICT infrastructure and services.

C. Internet Governance

29. We reaffirm the principles enunciated in the Geneva phase of WSIS, in December 2003, that 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.

30. We acknowledge that the Internet, a central element of the infrastructure of the Information Society, has evolved from a research and academic facility into a global facility available to the public.

31. We recognize that Internet governance, carried out according to the Geneva principles, is an essential element for a people-centred, inclusive, development oriented and non-discriminatory Information Society. Furthermore, **we commit ourselves** to the stability and security of the Internet as a global facility and to ensuring the requisite legitimacy of its governance, based on the full participation of all stakeholders, from both developed and developing countries, within their respective roles and responsibilities.

32. We thank the UN Secretary-General for establishing the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG). **We commend** the chairman, members and secretariat for their work and for their report.

33. We take note of the WGIG report that has endeavoured to develop a working definition of Internet Governance. It has helped identify a number of public policy issues that are relevant to Internet governance. The report has also enhanced our understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of governments, intergovernmental and international organizations and other forums as well as the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries.

34. A working definition of Internet Governance is *the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet.*

35. We reaffirm that 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.

36. We recognize the valuable contribution by the academic and technical communities within those stakeholder groups mentioned in *paragraph 35* to the evolution, functioning and development of the Internet.

37. We seek to improve the coordination of the activities of international and intergovernmental organizations and other institutions concerned with Internet governance and the exchange of information among themselves. A multi-stakeholder approach should be adopted, as far as possible, at all levels.

38. We call for the reinforcement of specialized regional Internet resource management institutions to guarantee the national interest and rights of countries in that particular region to manage its own Internet resources, while maintaining global coordination in this area.

39. We seek to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs by strengthening the trust framework. **We reaffirm** the necessity to further promote, develop and implement in cooperation with all stakeholders a global culture of cybersecurity, as outlined in UNGA *Resolution 57/239* and other relevant regional frameworks. This culture requires national action and increased international cooperation to strengthen security while enhancing the protection of personal information, privacy and data. Continued development of the culture of cybersecurity should enhance access and trade and must take into account the level of social and economic development of each country and respect the development-oriented aspects of the Information Society.

40. We underline the importance of the prosecution of cybercrime, including cybercrime committed in one jurisdiction, but having effects in another. **We further underline** the necessity of effective and efficient tools and actions, at national and international levels, to promote international cooperation among, *inter alia*,

law enforcement agencies on cybercrime. **We call upon governments** in cooperation with other stakeholders to develop necessary legislation for the investigation and prosecution of cybercrime, noting existing frameworks, for example, UNGA Resolutions 55/63 and 56/121 on *Combatting the criminal misuse of information technologies* and regional initiatives including, but not limited to, the Council of Europe's *Convention on Cybercrime*.

41. We resolve to deal effectively with the significant and growing problem posed by spam. **We take note** of current multilateral, multi-stakeholder frameworks for regional and international cooperation on spam, for example, the *APEC Anti-Spam Strategy*, the *London Action Plan*, the *Seoul Melbourne Anti-Spam Memorandum of Understanding* and the relevant activities of OECD and ITU. **We call upon** all stakeholders, to adopt a multi-pronged approach to counter spam that includes, *inter alia*, consumer and business education; appropriate legislation, law enforcement authorities and tools; the continued development of technical and self-regulatory measures; best practices; and international cooperation.

42. We reaffirm our commitment to the freedom to seek, receive, impart and use information, in particular, for the creation, accumulation and dissemination of knowledge. **We affirm** that measures undertaken to ensure Internet stability and security, to fight cybercrime and to counter spam, must protect and respect the provisions for privacy and freedom of expression as contained in the relevant parts of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Geneva Declaration of Principles*.

43. We reiterate our commitments to the positive uses of the Internet and other ICTs and to take appropriate actions and preventive measures, as determined by law, against abusive uses of ICTs as mentioned under the *Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society* of the *Geneva Declaration of Principles* and *Plan of Action*.

44. We also underline the importance of countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations on the Internet, while respecting human rights and in compliance with other obligations under international law, as outlined in UNGA A/60/L.1 with reference to *Article 85* of the *2005 World Summit Outcome*.

45. We underline the importance of the security, continuity and stability of the Internet, and the need to protect the Internet and other ICT networks from threats and vulnerabilities. **We affirm** the need for a common understanding of the issues of Internet security, and for further cooperation to facilitate outreach, the collection and dissemination of security-related information and exchange of good practice among all stakeholders on measures to combat security threats, at national and international levels.

46. We call upon all stakeholders to ensure respect for privacy and the protection of personal information and data, whether via adoption of legislation, the implementation of collaborative frameworks, best practices and self-regulatory and technological measures by business and users. **We encourage all stakeholders**, in particular governments, to reaffirm the right of individuals to access information according to *Geneva Declaration of Principles* and other mutually agreed relevant international instruments, and to coordinate internationally as appropriate.

47. We recognize the increasing volume and value of all e-business, both within and across national boundaries. **We call for** the development of national consumer protection laws and practices, and enforcement mechanisms where necessary, to protect the right of consumers who purchase goods and services online, and for enhanced international cooperation to facilitate a further expansion, in a non-discriminatory way, under applicable national laws, of e-business as well as consumer confidence in it.

48. We note with satisfaction the increasing use of ICTs by governments to serve citizens and encourage countries that have not yet done so, to develop national programmes and strategies for e-government.

49. We reaffirm our commitment to turning the digital divide into digital opportunity, and **we commit** to ensuring harmonious and equitable development for all. **We commit** to foster and provide guidance on development areas in the broader Internet governance arrangements, and to include, amongst other issues, international interconnection costs, capacity building and technology/know-how transfer. **We encourage** the realization of multilingualism in the Internet development environment, and **we support** the development of software that renders itself easily to localization, and enables the user to choose appropriate solutions from different software models including open-source, free and proprietary software.

50. We acknowledge that there are concerns, particularly amongst developing countries, that the charges for international Internet connectivity should be better balanced to enhance access. **We therefore call for** the development of strategies for increasing affordable global connectivity, thereby facilitating improved and equitable access for all, by:

- a) Promoting Internet transit and interconnection costs that are commercially-negotiated in a competitive environment and that should be oriented towards objective, transparent and non-discriminatory parameters, taking into account ongoing work on this subject.
- b) Setting up regional high-speed Internet backbone networks and the creation of national, sub-regional and regional Internet Exchange Points (IXPs).

- c) Recommending to donor programmes and developmental financing mechanisms to consider the need to provide funding for initiatives that advance connectivity, IXPs and local content for developing countries.
- d) Encouraging ITU to continue the study of the question of International Internet Connectivity (IIC) as a matter of urgency, and periodically provide output for consideration and possible implementation. **We also encourage** other relevant institutions to address this issue.
- e) Promoting the development and growth of low-cost terminal equipment, such as individual and collective user devices, especially for use in developing countries.
- f) encouraging ISPs and other parties in the commercial negotiations to adopt practices towards attainment of fair and balanced interconnectivity costs.
- g) Encouraging relevant parties to commercially negotiate reduced interconnection costs for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), taking into account the special constraints of LDCs.

51. We encourage governments and other stakeholders, through partnerships where appropriate, to promote ICT education and training in developing countries, by establishing national strategies for ICT integration in education and workforce development and dedicating appropriate resources. Furthermore, international cooperation would be extended, on a voluntary basis, for capacity building in areas relevant to Internet governance. This may include, in particular, building centres of expertise and other institutions to facilitate know-how transfer and exchange of best practices, in order to enhance the participation of developing countries and all stakeholders in Internet governance mechanisms.

52. In order to ensure effective participation in global Internet governance, **we urge** international organizations, including intergovernmental organizations, where relevant, to ensure that all stakeholders, particularly from developing countries, have the opportunity to participate in policy decision-making relating to Internet governance, and to promote and facilitate such participation.

53. We commit to working earnestly towards multilingualization of the Internet, as part of a multilateral, transparent and democratic process, involving governments and all stakeholders, in their respective roles. In this context, **we also support** local content development, translation and adaptation, digital archives, and diverse forms of digital and traditional media, and recognize that these activities can also strengthen local and indigenous communities. **We would therefore underline** the need to:

- a) advance the process for the introduction of multilingualism in a number of areas including domain names, email addresses and keyword look-up;

- b) implement programmes that allow for the presence of multilingual domain names and content on the Internet and the use of various software models in order to fight against the linguistic digital divide and ensure the participation of all in the emerging new society;
- c) strengthen cooperation between relevant bodies for the further development of technical standards and to foster their global deployment.

54. We recognize that an enabling environment, at national and international levels, supportive of foreign direct investment, transfer of technology, and international cooperation, particularly in the areas of finance debt and trade, is essential for the development of the Information Society, including for the development and diffusion of the Internet and its optimal use. In particular, the role of the private sector and civil society as the driver of innovation and private investment in the development of the Internet is critical. Value is added at the edges of the network in both developed and developing countries when the international and domestic policy environment encourages investment and innovation.

55. We recognize that the existing arrangements for Internet governance have worked effectively to make the Internet the highly robust, dynamic and geographically diverse medium that it is today, with the private sector taking the lead in day-to-day operations, and with innovation and value creation at the edges.

56. The Internet remains a highly dynamic medium and therefore any framework and mechanisms designed to deal with Internet governance should be inclusive and responsive to the exponential growth and fast evolution of the Internet as a common platform for the development of multiple applications.

57. The security and stability of the Internet must be maintained.

58. We recognize that Internet governance includes more than Internet naming and addressing. It also includes other significant public policy issues such as, *inter alia*, critical Internet resources, the security and safety of the Internet, and developmental aspects and issues pertaining to the use of the Internet.

59. We recognize that Internet governance includes social, economic and technical issues including affordability, reliability and quality of service.

60. We further recognize that there are many cross-cutting international public policy issues that require attention and are not adequately addressed by the current mechanisms.

61. We are convinced that there is a need to initiate, and reinforce, as appropriate, a transparent, democratic, and multilateral process, with the participation of

governments, private sector, civil society and international organizations, in their respective roles. This process could envisage creation of a suitable framework or mechanisms, where justified, thus spurring the ongoing and active evolution of the current arrangements in order to synergize the efforts in this regard.

62. We emphasize that any Internet governance approach should be inclusive and responsive and should continue to promote an enabling environment for innovation, competition and investment.

63. Countries should not be involved in decisions regarding another country's country-code Top-Level Domain (ccTLD). Their legitimate interests, as expressed and defined by each country, in diverse ways, regarding decisions affecting their ccTLDs, need to be respected, upheld and addressed via a flexible and improved framework and mechanisms.

64. We recognize the need for further development of, and strengthened cooperation among, stakeholders for public policies for generic Top-Level Domain names (gTLDs).

65. We underline the need to maximize the participation of developing countries in decisions regarding Internet governance, which should reflect their interests, as well as in development and capacity building.

66. In view of the continuing internationalization of the Internet and the principle of universality, **we agree** to implement the Geneva Principles regarding Internet governance.

67. We agree, *inter alia*, to invite the UN Secretary-General to convene a new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue.

68. We recognize that all governments should have an equal role and responsibility, for international Internet governance and for ensuring the stability, security and continuity of the Internet. **We also recognize** the need for development of public policy by governments in consultation with all stakeholders.

69. We further recognize the need for enhanced cooperation in the future, to enable governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities, in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, but not in the day-to-day technical and operational matters, that do not impact on international public policy issues.

70. Using relevant international organizations, such cooperation should include the development of globally applicable principles on public policy issues associated with the coordination and management of critical Internet resources. In this regard,

we call upon the organizations responsible for essential tasks associated with the Internet to contribute to creating an environment that facilitates this development of public policy principles.

71. The process towards enhanced cooperation, to be started by the UN Secretary-General, involving all relevant organizations by the end of the first quarter of 2006, will involve all stakeholders in their respective roles, will proceed as quickly as possible consistent with legal process, and will be responsive to innovation. Relevant organizations should commence a process towards enhanced cooperation involving all stakeholders, proceeding as quickly as possible and responsive to innovation. The same relevant organizations shall be requested to provide annual performance reports.

72. We ask the UN Secretary-General, in an open and inclusive process, to convene, by the second quarter of 2006, a meeting of the new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue—called the *Internet Governance Forum* (IGF). The mandate of the Forum is to:

- a)** Discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet.
- b)** Facilitate discourse between bodies dealing with different cross-cutting international public policies regarding the Internet and discuss issues that do not fall within the scope of any existing body.
- c)** Interface with appropriate intergovernmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview.
- d)** Facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, and in this regard make full use of the expertise of the academic, scientific and technical communities.
- e)** Advise all stakeholders in proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world.
- f)** Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries.
- g)** Identify emerging issues, bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the general public, and, where appropriate, make recommendations.
- h)** Contribute to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise.
- i)** Promote and assess, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet governance processes.



- j) Discuss, *inter alia*, issues relating to critical Internet resources.
- k) Help to find solutions to the issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet, of particular concern to everyday users.
- l) Publish its proceedings.

73. The Internet Governance Forum, in its working and function, will be multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic and transparent. To that end, the proposed IGF could:

- a) Build on the existing structures of Internet governance, with special emphasis on the complementarity between all stakeholders involved in this process – governments, business entities, civil society and intergovernmental organizations.
- b) Have a lightweight and decentralized structure that would be subject to periodic review.
- c) Meet periodically, as required. IGF meetings, in principle, may be held in parallel with major relevant UN conferences, *inter alia*, to use logistical support.

74. We encourage the UN Secretary-General to examine a range of options for the convening of the Forum, taking into consideration the proven competencies of all stakeholders in Internet governance and the need to ensure their full involvement.

75. The UN Secretary-General would report to UN Member States periodically on the operation of the Forum.

76. We ask the UN Secretary-General to examine the desirability of the continuation of the Forum, in formal consultation with Forum participants, within five years of its creation, and to make recommendations to the UN Membership in this regard.

77. The IGF would have no oversight function and would not replace existing arrangements, mechanisms, institutions or organizations, but would involve them and take advantage of their expertise. It would be constituted as a neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process. It would have no involvement in day-to-day or technical operations of the Internet.

78. The UN Secretary-General should extend invitations to all stakeholders and relevant parties to participate at the inaugural meeting of the IGF, taking into consideration balanced geographical representation. The UN Secretary-General should also:

- a) draw upon any appropriate resources from all interested stakeholders, including the proven expertise of ITU, as demonstrated during the WSIS process; and
 - b) establish an effective and cost-efficient bureau to support the IGF, ensuring multi-stakeholder participation.
- 79. Diverse matters relating to Internet governance would continue to be addressed in other relevant forums.
- 80. **We encourage** the development of multi-stakeholder processes at the national, regional and international levels to discuss and collaborate on the expansion and diffusion of the Internet as a means to support development efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.
- 81. **We reaffirm our commitment** to the full implementation of the Geneva Principles.
- 82. **We welcome** the generous offer of the Government of Greece to host the first meeting of the IGF in Athens no later than 2006 and **we call upon** the UN Secretary-General to extend invitations to all stakeholders and relevant parties to participate at the inaugural meeting of the IGF.

D. Implementation and Follow-up

83. Building an inclusive development-oriented Information Society will require unremitting multi-stakeholder effort. **We thus commit ourselves** to remain fully engaged—nationally, regionally and internationally—to ensure sustainable implementation and follow-up of the outcomes and commitments reached during the WSIS process and its Geneva and Tunis phases of the Summit. Taking into account the multifaceted nature of building the Information Society, effective cooperation among governments, private sector, civil society and the United Nations and other international organizations, according to their different roles and responsibilities and leveraging on their expertise, is essential.

84. Governments and other stakeholders should identify those areas where further effort and resources are required, and jointly identify, and where appropriate develop, implementation strategies, mechanisms and processes for WSIS outcomes at international, regional, national and local levels, paying particular attention to people and groups that are still marginalized in their access to and utilization of ICTs.

85. Taking into consideration the leading role of governments in partnership with other stakeholders in implementing the WSIS outcomes, including the *Geneva Plan of Action*, at the national level, **we encourage** those governments that have not yet done so to elaborate, as appropriate, comprehensive, forward-looking and sustainable national e-strategies, including ICT strategies and sectoral e-strategies as appropriate¹, as an integral part of national development plans and poverty reduction strategies, as soon as possible and before 2010.

86. **We support** regional and international integration efforts aimed at building a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, and **we reiterate** that strong cooperation within and among regions is indispensable to support knowledge-sharing. Regional cooperation should contribute to national capacity building and to the development of regional implementation strategies.

87. **We affirm** that the exchange of views and sharing of effective practices and resources is essential to implementing the outcomes of WSIS at the regional and international levels. To this end, efforts should be made to provide and share, among all stakeholders, knowledge and know-how, related to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of e-strategies and policies, as appropriate. **We recognize** as fundamental elements to bridging the digital divide in developing countries, in a sustainable way, poverty reduction, enhanced national capacity building and the promotion of national technological development.

¹ Throughout this text, further references to “e-strategies” are interpreted as including also ICT strategies and sectoral e-strategies, as appropriate.

88. We reaffirm that through the international cooperation of governments and the partnership of all stakeholders, it will be possible to succeed in our challenge of harnessing the potential of ICTs as a tool, at the service of development, to promote the use of information and knowledge to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, as well as to address the national and local development priorities, thereby further improving the socio-economic development of all human beings.

89. We are determined to improve international, regional and national connectivity and affordable access to ICTs and information through an enhanced international cooperation of all stakeholders that promotes technology exchange and technology transfer, human resource development and training, thus increasing the capacity of developing countries to innovate and to participate fully in, and contribute to, the Information Society.

90. We reaffirm our commitment to providing equitable access to information and knowledge for all, recognizing the role of ICTs for economic growth and development. **We are committed** to working towards achieving the indicative targets, set out in the *Geneva Plan of Action*, that serve as global references for improving connectivity and universal, ubiquitous, equitable, non-discriminatory and affordable access to, and use of ICTs, considering different national circumstances, to be achieved by 2015, and to using ICTs, as a tool to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, by:

- a) Mainstreaming and aligning national e-strategies, across local, national, and regional action plans, as appropriate and in accordance with local and national development priorities, with in-built time-bound measures.
- b) Developing and implementing enabling policies that reflect national realities and that promote a supportive international environment, foreign direct investment as well as the mobilization of domestic resources, in order to promote and foster entrepreneurship, particularly Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), taking into account the relevant market and cultural contexts. These policies should be reflected in a transparent, equitable regulatory framework to create a competitive environment to support these goals and strengthen economic growth.
- c) Building ICT capacity for all and confidence in the use of ICTs by all—including youth, older persons, women, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and remote and rural communities—through the improvement and delivery of relevant education and training programmes and systems including lifelong and distance learning.
- d) Implementing effective training and education, particularly in ICT science and technology, that motivates and promotes participation and active involvement of girls and women in the decision-making process of building the Information Society.

- e) Paying special attention to the formulation of universal design concepts and the use of assistive technologies that promote access for all persons including those with disabilities.
- f) Promoting public policies aimed at providing affordable access at all levels, including community-level, to hardware as well as software and connectivity through an increasingly converging technological environment, capacity building and local content.
- g) Improving access to the world's health knowledge and telemedicine services, in particular in areas such as global cooperation in emergency response, access to and networking among health professionals to help improve quality of life and environmental conditions.
- h) Building ICT capacities to improve access and use of postal networks and services.
- i) Using ICTs to improve access to agricultural knowledge, combat poverty, and support production of and access to locally-relevant agriculture-related content.
- j) Developing and implementing e-government applications based on open standards in order to enhance the growth and interoperability of e-government systems, at all levels, thereby furthering access to government information and services, and contributing to building ICT networks and developing services that are available anywhere and anytime, to anyone and on any device.
- k) Supporting educational, scientific, and cultural institutions, including libraries, archives and museums, in their role of developing, providing equitable, open and affordable access to, and preserving diverse and varied content, including in digital form, to support informal and formal education, research and innovation; and in particular supporting libraries in their public service role of providing free and equitable access to information and of improving ICT literacy and community connectivity, particularly in underserved communities.
- l) Enhancing the capacity of communities in all regions to develop content in local and/or indigenous languages.
- m) Strengthening the creation of quality e-content, at national, regional and international levels.
- n) Promoting the use of traditional and new media in order to foster universal access to information, culture and knowledge for all people, especially vulnerable populations and populations in developing countries and using, *inter alia*, radio and television as educational and learning tools.
- o) Reaffirming the independence, pluralism and diversity of media, and freedom of information including through, as appropriate, the development

of domestic legislation, **we reiterate** our call for the responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards. **We reaffirm** the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills. These reaffirmations are made with reference to *Geneva Declaration of Principles paragraphs 55 to 59*.

p) Strongly encouraging ICT enterprises and entrepreneurs to develop and use environment-friendly production processes in order to minimize the negative impacts of the use and manufacture of ICTs and disposal of ICT waste on people and the environment. In this context, it is important to give particular attention to the specific needs of the developing countries.

q) Incorporating regulatory, self-regulatory, and other effective policies and frameworks to protect children and young people from abuse and exploitation through ICTs into national plans of action and e-strategies.

r) Promoting the development of advanced research networks, at national, regional and international levels, in order to improve collaboration in science, technology and higher education.

s) Promoting voluntary service, at the community level, to help maximize the developmental impact of ICTs.

t) Promoting the use of ICTs to enhance flexible ways of working, including teleworking, leading to greater productivity and job creation.

91. We recognize the intrinsic relationship between disaster reduction, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and that disasters seriously undermine investment in a very short time and remain a major impediment to sustainable development and poverty eradication. **We are clear** as to the important enabling role of ICTs at the national, regional and international levels, including:

a) Promoting technical cooperation and enhancing the capacity of countries, particularly developing countries, in utilizing ICT tools for disaster early-warning, management and emergency communications, including dissemination of understandable warnings to those at risk.

b) Promoting regional and international cooperation for easy access to and sharing of information for disaster management, and exploring modalities for the easier participation of developing countries.

c) Working expeditiously towards the establishment of standards-based monitoring and worldwide early-warning systems linked to national and regional networks and facilitating emergency disaster response all over the world, particularly in high-risk regions.



92. We encourage countries, including all other interested parties, to make available child helplines, taking into account the need for mobilization of appropriate resources. For this purpose, easy-to-remember numbers, accessible from all phones and free of charge, should be made available.

93. We seek to digitize our historical data and cultural heritage for the benefit of future generations. **We encourage** effective information management policies in the public and private sectors, including the use of standards-based digital archiving and innovative solutions to overcome technological obsolescence, as a means to ensure long-term preservation of, and continued access to, information.

94. We acknowledge that everyone should benefit from the potential that the Information Society offers. Therefore, **we invite** governments to assist, on a voluntary basis, those countries affected by 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.

95. We call upon international and intergovernmental organizations to develop, within approved resources, their policy analysis and capacity building programmes, based on practical and replicable experiences of ICT matters, policies and actions that have led to economic growth and poverty alleviation, including through the improved competitiveness of enterprises.

96. We recall the importance of creating a trustworthy, transparent and non-discriminatory legal, regulatory and policy environment. To that end, **we reiterate** that ITU and other regional organizations should take steps to ensure rational, efficient and economic use of, and equitable access to, the radio-frequency spectrum by all countries, based on relevant international agreements.

97. We acknowledge that multi-stakeholder participation is essential to the successful building of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society and that governments could play an important role in this process. **We underline** that the participation of all stakeholders in implementing WSIS outcomes, and following them up on national, regional and international levels with the overarching goal of helping countries to achieve internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, is key to that success.

98. We encourage strengthened and continuing cooperation between and among stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes: for instance, through the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships including Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), and the promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms, in a joint

effort and dialogue with developing and less developed countries, development partners and actors in the ICT sector. In that respect, **we welcome** partnerships such as the ITU-led *Connect the World* initiative.

99. We agree to ensure the sustainability of progress towards the goals of WSIS after the completion of its Tunis phase and **we decide**, therefore, to establish a mechanism for implementation and follow-up at national, regional and international levels.

100. At the national level, based on the WSIS outcomes, **we encourage** governments, with the participation of all stakeholders and bearing in mind the importance of an enabling environment, to set up a national implementation mechanism, in which:

- a) National e-strategies, where appropriate, should be an integral part of national development plans, including Poverty Reduction Strategies, aiming to contribute to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.
- b) ICTs should be fully mainstreamed into strategies for Official Development Assistance (ODA) through more effective information-sharing and coordination among development partners, and through analysis and sharing of best practices and lessons learned from experience with ICT for development programmes.
- c) Existing bilateral and multilateral technical assistance programmes, including those under the UN Development Assistance Framework, should be used whenever appropriate to assist governments in their implementation efforts at the national level.
- d) Common Country Assessment Reports should contain a component on ICTs for development.

101. At the regional level:

- a) Upon request from governments, regional intergovernmental organizations in collaboration with other stakeholders should carry out WSIS implementation activities, exchanging information and best practices at the regional level, as well as facilitating policy debate on the use of ICTs for development, with a focus on attaining the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.
- b) UN Regional Commissions, based on request of Member States and within approved budgetary resources, may organize regional WSIS follow-up activities in collaboration with regional and sub-regional organizations, with appropriate frequency, as well as assisting member states with technical and relevant information for the development of regional strategies and the implementation of the outcomes of regional conferences.

c) We consider a multi-stakeholder approach and the participation in regional WSIS implementation activities by the private sector, civil society, and the United Nations and other international organizations to be essential.

102. At the international level, bearing in mind the importance of the enabling environment:

a) Implementation and follow-up of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the Summit should take into account the main themes and action lines in the Summit documents.

b) Each UN agency should act according to its mandate and competencies, and pursuant to decisions of their respective governing bodies, and within existing approved resources.

c) Implementation and follow-up should include intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder components.

103. We invite UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, in line with UNGA *Resolution 57/270 B*, to facilitate activities among different stakeholders, including civil society and the business sector, to help national governments in their implementation efforts. **We request** the UN Secretary-General, in consultation with members of the UN system Chief Executives Board for coordination (CEB), to establish within the CEB, a UN group on the Information Society consisting of the relevant UN bodies and organizations with the mandate to facilitate the implementation of WSIS outcomes and to suggest to CEB that, in considering lead agency(ies) of this group, it takes into consideration the experience of and activities in the WSIS process undertaken by ITU, UNESCO and UNDP.

104. We further request the UN Secretary-General to report to the UNGA through ECOSOC by June 2006, on the modalities of the interagency coordination of the implementation of WSIS outcomes including recommendations on the follow-up process.

105. We request that ECOSOC oversees the system-wide follow-up of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes of WSIS. To this end, **we request** that ECOSOC, at its substantive session of 2006, reviews the mandate, agenda and composition of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), including considering the strengthening of the Commission, taking into account the multi-stakeholder approach.

106. WSIS implementation and follow-up should be an integral part of the UN integrated follow-up to major UN conferences and should contribute to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. It should not require the creation of any new operational bodies.

107. 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.

108. We attach great importance to multi-stakeholder implementation at the international level, which should be organized taking into account the themes and action lines in the *Plan of Action*, and moderated or facilitated by UN agencies when appropriate. An Annex to this document offers an indicative and non-exhaustive list of facilitators/moderators for the action lines of the *Geneva Plan of Action*.

109. The experience of, and the activities undertaken by, UN agencies in the WSIS process—notably ITU, UNESCO and UNDP—should continue to be used to their fullest extent. These three agencies should play leading facilitating roles in the implementation of the *Plan of Action* and organize a meeting of moderators/facilitators of action lines, as mentioned in the *Annex*.

110. The coordination of multi-stakeholder implementation activities would help to avoid duplication of activities. This should include, *inter alia*, information exchange, creation of knowledge, sharing of best practices, and assistance in developing multi-stakeholder and public/private partnerships.

111. We request the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to make an overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes in 2015.

112. We call for periodic evaluation, using an agreed methodology, such as described in *paragraphs 113-120*.

113. 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 track global progress in the use of ICTs to achieve internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.

114. The development of ICT indicators is important for measuring the digital divide. **We note** the launch, in June 2004, of the *Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development*, and its efforts:

- a)** to develop a common set of core ICT indicators; to increase the availability of internationally comparable ICT statistics as well as to establish a mutually agreed framework for their elaboration, for further consideration and decision by the UN Statistical Commission;
- b)** to promote capacity building in developing countries for monitoring the Information Society;
- c)** to assess the current and potential impact of ICTs on development, poverty reduction;
- d)** to develop specific gender-disaggregated indicators to measure the digital divide in its various dimensions.

115. We also note the launch of the *ICT Opportunity Index* and the *Digital Opportunity Index*, which will build upon the common set of core ICT indicators as they were defined within the *Partnership on Measuring the ICT for Development*.

116. We stress that all indices and indicators must take into account different levels of development and national circumstances.

117. The further development of these indicators should be undertaken in a collaborative, cost-effective and non-duplicative fashion.

118. We invite the international community to strengthen the statistical capacity of developing countries by giving appropriate support at national and regional levels.

119. We commit ourselves to review and follow up progress in bridging the digital divide, taking into account the different levels of development among nations, so as to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, assessing the effectiveness of investment and international cooperation efforts in building the Information Society, identifying gaps as well as deficits in investment and devising strategies to address them.

120. The sharing of information related to the implementation of WSIS outcomes is an important element of evaluation. **We note with appreciation** the *Report on the Stocktaking of WSIS-related activities*, which will serve as one of the valuable tools for assisting with the follow-up, beyond the conclusion of the Tunis phase of the Summit, as well as the *Golden Book* of initiatives launched during the Tunis phase. **We encourage** all WSIS stakeholders to continue to contribute information on their activities to the public WSIS stocktaking database, maintained by ITU. In this regard, **we invite** all countries to gather information at the national level with the involvement of all stakeholders, to contribute to the stocktaking.

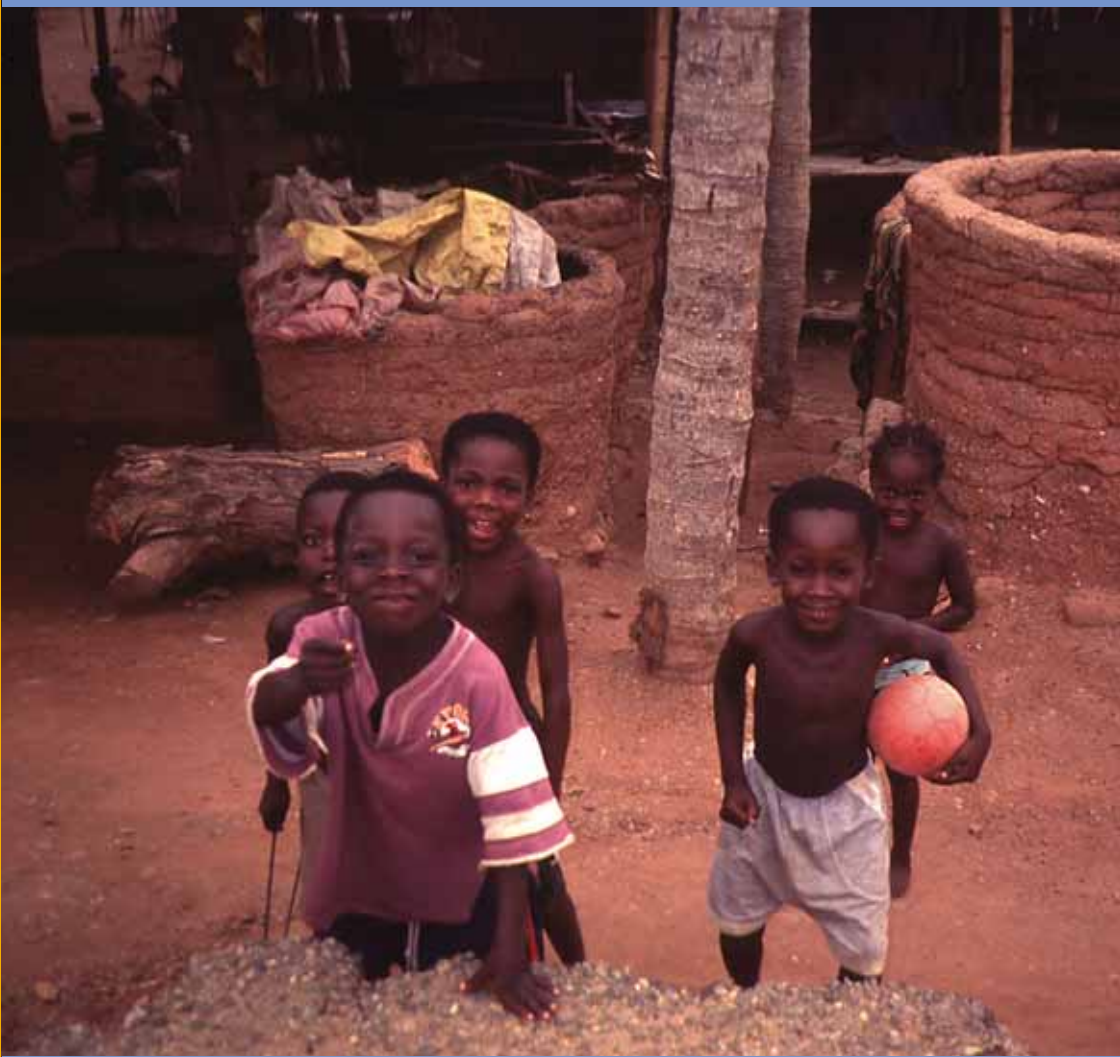
121. There is a need to build more awareness of the Internet in order to make it a global facility which is truly available to the public. **We call upon** the UNGA to declare 17 May as *World Information Society Day* to help to raise awareness, on an annual basis, of the importance of this global facility, on the issues dealt with in the Summit, especially the possibilities that the use of ICTs can bring for societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide.

122. We request the Secretary-General of the Summit to report to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its outcome, as requested in UNGA Resolution 59/220.

Tunis, 18 November 2005

- Annex -

Action Line	Possible moderators/ facilitators
C1. The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development	ECOSOC / UN Regional Commissions / ITU
C2. Information and communication infrastructure	ITU
C3. Access to information and knowledge	ITU / UNESCO
C4. Capacity building	UNDP / UNESCO / ITU / UNCTAD
C5. Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs	ITU
C6. Enabling environment	ITU / UNDP / UN Regional Commissions / UNCTAD
C7. ICT Applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-government • E-business • E-learning • E-health • E-employment • E-environment • E-agriculture • E-science 	UNDP / ITU WTO / UNCTAD / ITU / UPU UNESCO / ITU / UNIDO WHO / ITU ILO / ITU WHO / WMO / UNEP / UN-Habitat / ITU / ICAO FAO / ITU UNESCO / ITU / UNCTAD
C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content	UNESCO
C9. Media	UNESCO
C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society	UNESCO / ECOSOC
C11. International and regional cooperation	UN Regional Commissions / UNDP / ITU / UNESCO / ECOSOC



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