

# Techno-Hype or Info-Hope?

## Southern African Civil Society Tackles the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)



Author: Chris Armstrong  
Date: July 2004



**Netherlands institute for Southern Africa**

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A report for the Media Programme of the Netherlands institute for Southern Africa (NiZA)

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“For the poorest people in the world, ‘e’ does not stand for ‘electronic.’ For those who do not have access to electrification, it stands for ‘elite.’”

Steve Buckley, President, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), 12 December 2003, WSIS Geneva.

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## **Colophon**

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### **Cover photo:** Chris Kirchhoff

Slondiwe's phone shop, KwaZulu-Natal

Slondiwe Mafuleka outside her phone shop in northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, near the Swaziland border. The phones are cell phones powered by a car battery which Slondiwe takes into nearby Ingwavuma on alternate days to be charged - as she has no electricity. Clients walk up to an hour from the other side of the border in Swaziland and from surrounding villages to make calls.

Kirchhoff is a freelance photographer, based in Johannesburg. In 2003 he travelled through Southern Africa to interview people about their real-life experiences with 'the information society'. Their portraits and stories were part of the African Media Village during WSIS Geneva 2003. See also Chapter 6.5 The 'African Media Village.'

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## **1 About this report**

The Netherlands institute for Southern Africa (NiZA) is a non-profit organisation established in 1997 as a result of a merger between three Dutch anti-apartheid organisations. NiZA has been supporting liberation movements and various other groups in southern Africa for over forty years.

NiZA is committed to structurally fighting poverty, injustice and inequality in southern Africa. To attain this objective, NiZA primarily collaborates with organisations in the SADC region that promote freedom of expression, media freedom, human rights, peace building and economic justice. Together with and on behalf of these organisations, NiZA works towards strengthening capacity and influencing the policy making process in the South as well as in the North. Furthermore, NiZA helps raise the Dutch public's awareness of the region by collecting and disseminating documentation and information and by informing the press on issues concerning the region.

In 2000, NiZA and partners of its Media Programme from twelve SADC countries began work on an ambitious project aimed at improving media diversity, access to media, freedom of expression, the quality of journalism and media sustainability through capacity building support to media outlets, media training institutions and media advocacy groups.

This report was commissioned by NiZA to record some of the valuable lobbying activities performed and experiences gathered by its partners in the run-up to and during the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The goal of this report is also to provide some insight into the impact these activities have had on the WSIS to date. The efforts made resulted in moments of satisfaction as well as in disappointments. Nevertheless, we hope that the record of these efforts will inspire and inform future lobbying efforts aimed at keeping social justice issues - especially the need for freedom of expression - high on the international community's agenda.

We thank PSO for making funds available for the writing and publication of this report.

## **2 Foreword**

The World Summit on the Information Society was convened to discuss a hotly debated topic – the information society – and its chief underlying consequence – the “digital divide.” Although initiated by the United Nations agency specialising in the technical aspects of information and communication technology, it soon became clear that the debate required broader complementary expertise to address what is actually a social, cultural and economic divide.

The WSIS process built on the Millennium Development Goals that clearly call for multi-stakeholder dialogue for global governance and development negotiations. However, many governments are not accustomed to, or desirous of, partnership with civil society - the driving force for social justice advocacy. Despite this, during the course of the Geneva Phase of WSIS, civil society participation became accepted. Some national delegations expressed relief that civil society was not constrained or intimidated by international diplomacy when it comes to finding solutions to unresolved issues such as Internet governance.

Historically, governments, corporations and professions have jealously guarded their exclusive rights to certain knowledge, and their right to dispense such information to enhance their privileged positions. New technologies were heralded in as challengers to the reality that ‘information is power.’ However, governments are reluctant to relinquish sovereignty, even though they are constrained by multilateral bodies, trans-national corporations and international treaties.

In comparison to the environment, peace, and gender issues, media issues - media democratisation as a positive value in and of itself, and fostering a role for media in the democratisation of societies - have limited resonance among social activists. For most of the first phase of the WSIS a block of governments sought to exclude the media as an important actor in the conception of an information society. Only in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour was Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights accepted as the basis for freedom of expression in the information society, and this only after considerable and intense lobbying by civil society.

That a United Nations generated process can come so close, due to efforts of a minority of governments, to undermining an agreement as valuable to humanity as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is profoundly disturbing. Civil society must be increasingly vigilant, putting at least as much effort into preventing the regression of human rights agreements as it puts into progress towards a more just world, with ICT as the medium for communication rights to be unleashed.

According to the latest United Nations Human Development Report, industrialised countries with only 15 per cent of the world's population are home to 88 per cent of all Internet users.

The situation is worse in Africa. There are only 14 million phone lines for 739 million people. That is fewer than the number of phone lines in Manhattan or Tokyo. Eighty per cent of those lines can be found in a group of only six African countries. There are only one million Internet users on the entire African continent, compared to 10.5 million in the UK.

Even if telecommunications systems were in place, most of the world's poor - the majority of the population - would still be excluded from the information revolution because of illiteracy, a lack of basic computer skills, and even a lack of access to basic infrastructure such as electricity. Four-fifths of websites are in English, a language understood by only one in 10 people on the planet. There are about 6000 working languages in the world and one estimate suggests that by the end of this century only 600 of them will still be in use. There are 2,300 spoken in Africa and traces of only 23 on the net.

WSIS is not over. The second phase is being hosted by the Tunisian government, who proposed the development of a “final document comprising a concise political part and an operational part” to be negotiated in preparation for WSIS II in Tunis. The document will show how all the preparatory legwork would be converted into concrete action. So far in the Tunis Phase, freedom of expression as an area of disagreement has proved central to the very process. PrepCom 1 of this phase was dominated by the

dramatic reaction by the Tunisians to criticisms of the human rights environment and freedom of expression issues in their country.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Ambeyi Ligabo, said of the documents that emerged from Phase 1, that the mere reiteration of a few well-established principles and commitments to human rights is not sufficient; human rights concepts should be integrated meaningfully in the Draft Declaration. He also observed that the Draft Plan of Action lacks any coherent human rights strategy and that the absence of an in-depth analysis of a number of crucial matters like media concentration, safeguards for press freedom on the Internet and obstacles to accessing it, may seriously hamper the good work done so far on these key documents by international institutions and non-governmental organisations. He called on human rights organisations working towards freedom of opinion and expression to be fully active and involve themselves in the second phase of the process.

Tracey Naughton

Chair, WSIS Media Caucus

Cabinet Member, African Civil Society for Information Society (ACSIS)

### **3 Introduction**

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS, known as “wuh-siss”) is a two-part summit, the first part having been held in Geneva in December 2003, and the second part scheduled to be held in Tunis in November 2005. The summit was convened by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) – one of the oldest and least transparent UN bodies.

This report describes the activities of Netherlands institute for Southern Africa (NiZA) Media Programme partners and their civil society colleagues in SADC (Southern African Development Community) in the run-up to and during the WSIS First Phase in Geneva.

#### **3.1 The Journey to WSIS Geneva 2003**

The journey by SADC civil society towards WSIS Geneva began more than a decade ago, back in 1991 in the Namibian capital, when media freedom advocates adopted the Windhoek Declaration on the Promotion of Free & Pluralistic African Press. This Declaration came just one year after Namibia’s independence and Nelson Mandela’s release from prison. It was felt that the time had come for the Southern African – and wider African – press to be free. Ten years later, in 2001, the “Windhoek +10” meeting called for freedom and pluralism on the African airwaves, adopting the *Windhoek African Charter on Broadcasting*. This Charter serves as a blueprint for policies and laws defining the future of broadcasting on the continent. It contains specific references to the importance of public service broadcasting and community media. It also calls for appropriate inclusion of media, communication and development at WSIS.

The 1991 Windhoek Declaration and the 2001 *African Charter on Broadcasting* were the continuation of a tradition begun several decades earlier, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. This declaration included Article 19, the article that says that “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; 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” (UN, 1948). The inclusion of the words “expression” and “media” in Article 19 has made this clause a key rallying point – or sticking point – for activists and governments ever since.

The manner in which events unfolded in 2002-03 during preparations for WSIS First Phase in Geneva revealed that the principles behind Article 19 and the *African Charter on Broadcasting* – free media and plural media – are still highly contested.

The WSIS process, as its name suggests, is supposed to be about the new “information society,” about all the wonderful and dangerous things that are being made possible by new information and communications technologies (ICTs) such as satellites, internet and cellular phones. However, WSIS has so far been bogged down in debates surrounding censorship and dominance of information flow by undemocratic governments.

Right until the 11th hour, late at night on 6 December, 2003 – just four days before the opening of the official Geneva Phase – government delegations were battling over the specific wording of clauses related to media freedom and Article 19. Civil society delegates, including representatives of NiZA’s Media Programme partners, were struggling right to the end to influence the proceedings, to try to hang on to rights proclaimed decades earlier in the Universal Declaration of 1948.

#### **3.2 The Compromises of Geneva 2003**

In the end, as with most processes of this nature, the WSIS Geneva Phase yielded both satisfaction and disappointment for NiZA’s partners.

There was relief when strong language in support of Article 19 did finally find its way into the official WSIS Geneva Declaration of Principles (DoP), approved by governments on 12 December. But there was



disappointment when clauses in support of community media were left out. Media freedom had largely been reaffirmed; media pluralism had not.

Meanwhile, a lot of the “newer” information society issues – Internet governance, on-line privacy/security, open source software, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) – were left largely up in the air. In order to get all countries to reaffirm something the international community had already agreed on more than 50 years ago in 1948 – free expression and media freedom – the issues of today had to be sidestepped.

### **3.3 NiZA’s Media Programme Partners & WSIS**

This report traces some of the key steps taken by SADC civil society organisations – and in particular NiZA’s Media Programme partners – in relation to the Geneva Phase of the WSIS process. This report tries to gauge the impact that these organisations have had on the process.

It will become clear in this report that the WSIS process - while not one that has garnered a lot of international attention outside of specialised circles - is an important lobbying arena for NiZA’s Media Programme partners. By participating in WSIS processes, NiZA’s partners have had to sharpen their advocacy messages, to forge connections with like-minded civil society organisations from other parts of the world, and to adapt to a high-level international lobbying environment dominated by powerful private sector and governmental players. Such experience is indispensable as a capacity-builder for NiZA-partner media organisations, and for individuals from these organisations.

There are six NiZA Media Programme partner organisations that have been involved in one way or another with the WSIS process so far:

- The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Regional Office, Windhoek
- The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), African Regional Office, Johannesburg
- Southern Africa Communications for Development (SACOD), Regional Office, Johannesburg
- The Highway Africa project, based in South Africa
- The National Community Radio Forum (NCRF), South Africa
- The Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), South Africa

In late 2001, MISA, AMARC and SACOD joined forces with the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and Article 19 to promote and officially launch the *African Charter on Broadcasting*, which had been drafted earlier that year at the “Windhoek + 10” conference – a meeting held to mark the 10th anniversary of the original 1991 Windhoek Declaration on media freedom. This alliance of five organisations then formed itself into the **WSIS Southern African Partnership** in 2002, as the PrepComs (Preparatory Committee meetings) for WSIS Geneva were beginning. The Partnership engaged in lobbying at the PrepComs, and other awareness-raising and capacity-building activities.

The other three NiZA Media Programme partners that have been engaged in WSIS – Highway Africa, the NCRF and FXI – have at times connected with the Partnership, but have also engaged in independent WSIS-related work.

## **4 This Thing Called the ‘Information Society’**

### **4.1 The UN vision**

In his official “Message” to the Geneva Phase of WSIS in December 2003, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan wrote that the summit offered “a forum to develop a shared vision of an information society that empowers and benefits all people” (Annan, 2003).

The Secretary-General’s Message went on to say that WSIS was born of the need to make a link between the UN Millennium Development Goals for poverty reduction and the information and communication technologies (ICTs) that are so powerful in the world today.

By ICTs, he meant all the different means through which information flows, or is collected or stored these days: radio, TV, telephone lines, computers, cell phones, fax, Internet, CD-ROM, DVD, satellite systems.

As Annan pointed out, these technologies “are a tremendous force for creating opportunities, and for integrating people and nations into the global economy.” But, he added, “too many of the world’s people remain untouched by the information revolution” (Annan, 2003).

So, the underlying idea here is that all human beings need to inhabit an “information society” – an expression that can mean a lot of different things, depending on one’s perspective and circumstances. Perhaps for you it means the “information overload” you experience – all the news media, web sites and Listservs you keep track of while still feeling uninformed. Or perhaps it’s all the “spam” filling your e-mail inbox: information that is useless to you, or information designed to rip you off. Or maybe you’re sitting in a rural African village and the “information society” seems to be passing you by, like the aeroplanes that roar overhead.

### **4.2 What is WSIS for?**

If “information is power,” then WSIS is about how best to distribute this power – the power exercised by the media and telecommunications companies, the regulators, the governments, the donors, the civil society formations, the hackers, the spam-senders, the data-miners.

The ideal of WSIS is, of course, to harness the power of ICTs and the information they carry for everyone’s benefit. But the reality, so far, has primarily been a number of governments cynically manoeuvring to protect their own commercial and “security” interests.

One of the many difficulties with the WSIS process is that it was conceived during the “dot-com” boom of the late 1990s, when the money was flowing thick and fast and there was a sense that anything was possible (perhaps even the alleviation of poverty?) with ICTs. But then, in 2000, there was the dot-com bust, with all sorts of firms collapsing and the realisation that a lot of the ICT hype had been built on faulty economic models.

So, the ICT world at the time of WSIS Phase One in 2003 in Geneva was much different from the ICT world of 1998 when the idea of WSIS was first mooted at a meeting of the UN’s International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Minneapolis. Gone are the multilateral utopian visions of ICTs saving the world – instead, countries are jockeying to maximise the advantages of ICTs for narrow domestic gain.

It should thus come as no surprise that WSIS has so far yielded more frustration than satisfaction for SADC civil society.

The “techno-hype” has come and gone. But is there still some reason for “info-hope,” some reason for optimism about a possible expansion of the “information society”?

At least one way forward lies in the possibility of expansion of low-power, low-tech, low-bandwidth, high-access applications, such as community phone installations and community broadcasting – particularly community radio. And that means that SADC civil society – as key advocates of media pluralism and community media based on the two Windhoek documents of 1991 and 2001 - are at the forefront of much that is positive about the current “information society” debates. Thus, SADC civil society groupings must continue to be central players in WSIS.

Modern summits are mainly about the preparations. All the key discussions have taken place and decisions been made by the time the heads of state arrive. This underlines the importance of the PrepComs at which the documents are agreed.

## 5 The Road to Geneva: PrepComs etc.

### 5.1 The WSIS African Regional Meeting – Bamako, Mali, May 2002

The long, continuing, confusing path towards WSIS formally began for SADC civil society in May of 2002, with African governments and civil society organisations gathering in the Malian capital, Bamako, for the WSIS African Regional Meeting.

Representatives from MISA, SACOD, AMARC and the NCRF were in Bamako, and the main focus of their activities was to get the *2001 African Charter on Broadcasting* firmly on the WSIS agenda. The results of their efforts were mixed.

In the UNESCO-hosted NGO meetings before the official African intergovernmental summit, there was a split between Anglophone and Francophone African delegates. Anglophone representatives (dominated by the SADC people) were pushing the *African Charter on Broadcasting*, while the Francophone delegates – and the chairperson of the consultation, a Francophone civil society representative from Cameroon – questioned the need to make specific reference to the document. A compromise was proposed by the representative from SANGONeT in South Africa: the *African Charter on Broadcasting* could be referenced, along with other important foundation documents, in a footnote to the Preamble of the Bamako NGO Declaration. A vote was taken, and the “footnote solution” was agreed. But in the final draft released the following day, the footnote had disappeared. When questioned, the chairperson from Cameroon said she had removed the footnote because she didn’t think any particular document should get unnecessary attention. The NCRF representative circulated a petition calling for reinstatement of the footnoted reference to the African Charter. The chairperson relented, and assurances were made by a Malian UNESCO representative that the footnote would return.

The footnote never did return. The *African Charter on Broadcasting* had not found its way into the Bamako NGO Declaration. This pattern was to repeat itself later in the WSIS process, with hard-won gains falling by the wayside in the final drafting processes.

Things worked out much more favourably at the official, intergovernmental level in Bamako, with MISA getting the *African Charter on Broadcasting* on the agenda of the intergovernmental plenary on the final day of the meeting. At that final plenary, MISA’s Tracey Naughton and AMARC’s George Christensen from Radio One in The Gambia outlined the African Charter for all the government delegates, and the Charter was referred to in the final official intergovernmental Bamako Declaration. The Bamako Declaration called on African states to “adopt the ‘African charter’ on radio broadcasting as a framework for the development of policies and legislations regarding information technologies and broadcasting in Africa.” Even though the *African Charter on Broadcasting* had been erroneously referred to as a “radio” document (implicitly leaving TV out) – partly a matter of translation – the mention of the African Charter in the official Bamako Declaration was still a clear victory for SADC civil society.

### 5.2 Civil Society Gains Momentum (July 2002 - February 2003)

#### WSIS PrepCom-1 – Geneva, July 2002

At WSIS PrepCom-1 in Geneva in July 2002, global civil society began to get itself organised with the formation of a **Civil Society Plenary**. The Plenary had a series of caucuses, two of which were the **African Caucus** and the **Media Caucus**, and later, even a **Community Media Working Group**. These are the three groupings where NiZA’s partners were most active during the 18 months leading up to Summit Phase One in Geneva in December 2003, particularly focussing on the latter two: **Media** and **Community Media**.

#### **Drafting and Decision-making WSIS Geneva Phase**

The drafting and decision-making process is complex. The final aim is the creation of a Declaration of Principles and a Plan of Action to be adopted by the **Intergovernmental Plenary** at Geneva in December 2003. The **Civil Society caucuses**, including African, Media, Gender, etc. give their inputs to a **Civil Society Content & Themes Working Group** and also to a series of **Intergovernmental Working**

**Groups**, which look at Media, Human Rights etc. All these **Working Groups** give their inputs to the **Intergovernmental Subcommittee 2** which is drafting the official Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. (Separately the **Civil Society Contents & Themes Working Group** also drafted the *Civil Society Alternative Declaration* which was adopted by the **Civil Society Plenary** just before the Geneva summit began.)

At PrepCom-1, MISA's Tracey Naughton and Kenyan activist Emmanuel Njenga of the APC were emerging as key players in both the **Civil Society Plenary** and the **Africa Caucus** processes. Both Naughton and Njenga had also been active at the Bamako African Regional Meeting in May. This early rise to prominence by Naughton would later pay dividends for the **WSIS Southern African Partnership** (MISA, AMARC, SACOD, Article 19, APC), with Naughton eventually being elected Chair of the important **Media Caucus**.

### **WSIS PrepCom-2 – Again in Geneva, 17-28 February 2003**

At this PrepCom, the **WSIS Southern African Partnership** circulated a booklet entitled *Our Side of the Divide: African Perspectives on Information and Communication Technologies*, which was the first stage in the "Speaking for Ourselves" campaign.<sup>1</sup> The booklet featured compelling accounts of the use of ICTs (e.g., community radio, cell phones, Internet) to monitor elections; to empower women and children and other marginalised groups; and to assist rural development. The booklet also featured accounts of the barriers to African use of ICTs (MISA, 2003).

PrepCom-2 marked the beginning of serious work on the two official WSIS documents, the intergovernmental Declaration of Principles (DoP) and Plan of Action (PoA). A key intergovernmental committee, **Intergovernmental Subcommittee 2** – "the Content & Themes Committee" – was established to oversee the gradual drafting of the DoP and PoA, which would have to be ready in time for rubber-stamping by governments at the official WSIS First Phase: Geneva in December 2003.

There was an apparent victory for civil society at PrepCom-2, with the agreement by governments that inputs from "observers" (civil society and the private sector) would be directly considered by the government delegates in the Content & Themes Committee. Civil society and business representatives would be allowed to attend intergovernmental Content & Themes meetings, and would be able to address those meetings. This was a first for a summit of this kind. Civil society was, of course, pleased with this development, but cautious not to get too excited. It was nice to be invited closer to the table, but would civil society's inputs really be listened to? Was this just a friendlier, politer method of marginalisation, or was this the real thing: civil society participation?

### **Strife in the Civil Society Media Caucus**

From its very beginnings, the **Civil Society Media Caucus** was plagued by division. Unlike the other civil society groupings, the Media Caucus included representatives from the private sector. Representatives of large Latin American private broadcasting firms – particularly from Brazil and Mexico – were active in the caucus, lobbying against community media and against limits on media ownership concentration. Other opposition to community media in the caucus came from groups such as the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC), represented by Ronald Koven, who was elected the first Chairperson of the Media Caucus at PrepCom-2. Koven and others were concerned that government-supported community media had the potential to become tools of state propaganda. Meanwhile, representatives of AMARC, MISA, Article 19 and other groups active in the caucus were speaking out strongly in favour of the need for enabling legislation and government funding support for community radio and other community ICT initiatives. After PrepCom-2, there were discussions in the run-up to another meeting in Paris in July. The **Civil Society Plenary** developed the Civil Society Priorities Document, which included strong support for community media. This prompted Koven of the WPFC to go on-line with concerns about state-supported community media, sending a strongly worded e-mail on 14 July to the Civil Society Plenary's Listserv. In the e-mail, Koven rejected the call for publicly funded community media saying that to do an independent job they must be financially independent.

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<sup>1</sup> MISA (2003) *Our Side of the Divide: African Perspectives on Information & Communication Technologies*, MISA with Sibambene, Johannesburg, <http://www.misa.org/oldsite/broadcasting/index.htm>

Koven's e-mail also criticised the push by MISA, Article 19, AMARC and others in civil society for wording in favour of a "better-balanced flow of information" as part of the "right to communicate" implied in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Koven and others feel that Article 19 should not be interpreted to imply a need for "balance" in communication flows. They fear that "balance" is a code word for government censorship. "Balanced Information' is almost by definition censored information," Koven wrote in his July 14 e-mail. "Extreme situations like war and conflict, massacres and atrocities, famine, etc., are by nature 'unbalanced' realities that authoritarian governments want to have reported only in their own 'balanced' terms..." (Koven, 2003).

Thus, there were clear schisms within the **Media Caucus**. The scepticism about state-supported community media that was being voiced by the WPFC and others – when combined with the outright opposition to community media from Latin American private broadcasters – made the Caucus an uncomfortable setting for AMARC and other community media groupings. Community media advocates, led by AMARC President Steve Buckley of the Community Media Association (CMA) in the UK, broke away to form a separate **Community Media Working Group** within the **Civil Society Plenary**.

### **5.3 Summer in Paris WSIS PrepCom 'Intersessional', July 15-18, 2003**

Spring in Paris is said to be perfect; the perfect time and place for a honeymoon. But not much is said about summer in Paris. Summer in Paris is, presumably, when the honeymoon is over, when temperatures rise, and tempers flare.

The idea of the July Paris Intersessional was to get governments to agree on as many things as possible in the two key documents – the Declaration of Principles (DoP) and Plan of Action (PoA) – before heading into the final PrepCom (PrepCom-3) two months later in Geneva. That way PrepCom-3 in September could concern itself with only the main points of divergence, and could develop the final texts for formal adoption by governments at the official WSIS First Phase in Geneva in December.

On the first day of the Paris Intersessional, 15 July, AMARC President Steve Buckley spoke on behalf of all of civil society, presenting the Civil Society Priorities Document to the intergovernmental plenary. Buckley's presentation included the following:

"An information and communication society that has people and human needs at its centre requires human rights standards as the core set of principles guiding its development. We therefore particularly support the primacy given to human rights in the Draft Declaration. Communication is a fundamental participative and interactive process and is the foundation of all societal organisation. In order to ensure freedom of expression and the right to information, the WSIS Declaration should therefore not only reaffirm Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), but also commit to its active enforcement. In addition, the principles of a better-balanced flow of information, free circulation of ideas, press freedom, participation in the communication process, and knowledge require consistent articulation of human rights. We therefore also endorse the specific references in the Draft Declaration to communication rights and the free flow of information" (WSIS Civil Society, 2003a).

A reference to a "better-balanced flow of information" was still present in the document, as were references to community media – the issues at the heart of the conflict in the **Media Caucus**. And thus, for the three days of the Intersessional, all was not well in the **Media Caucus**, and the divisions even started to spill over into civil society presentations to government delegates. This was a worrying situation for SADC's media advocates, who had worked so hard at the Bamako African Regional Meeting and the first two PrepComs to keep the *African Charter on Broadcasting*, with its clear support for community media and communication rights, at the top of the agenda. This split in the **Media Caucus** was also worrying on a broader **Civil Society Plenary** level, as nobody wanted to see civil society collapse due to in-fighting.

### **African Civil Society Speaks Out**

The other civil society concern at the Paris Intersessional was that although civil society was getting unprecedented access to the intergovernmental meetings, with regular speaking slots, the government delegations didn't really seem to be listening. African civil society organisations in particular felt that the government delegates were not really taking the Southern, developmental perspectives and needs seriously. There was a feeling that the discussions were too technocratic and technology-focussed, with an insufficiently developmental orientation. So African civil society decided to change its approach. Tracey Naughton of the **WSIS Southern African Partnership** prepared a special text to be presented on the final day of the Paris meeting. The text drew on some of the grassroots stories generated by the Partnership's "Speaking for Ourselves" project. The statement was read to government delegates on 18 July by Natasha Primo of Johannesburg-based Women'sNet, a SADC affiliate of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC):

"I speak on behalf of six southern African communications advocacy NGOs and the 57 institutional members of the WSIS Civil Society African Caucus. More importantly, I speak on behalf of the hundreds of African people whose stories we have recorded in an effort to build a platform for people whose daily burden of survival is far removed from the deliberations of WSIS. We appreciate that there is a clear intention here to create a better world for all, but we cannot see how a continent with limited capital, in monetary and capacity terms, will attain equal opportunity for participation in an information society without a major shift in global economic imperatives and values."

The statement went on to provide a series of anecdotes: about an Angolan fisherman who journeys eight hours by donkey-cart to the nearest phone, about a man in Namibia's Caprivi Strip who provides four nights of TV viewing per month to his community using a solar-powered generator, about a woman in Mozambique who walks many kilometres each day to work at the local community radio station, and this anecdote from Zambia:

"Nine months ago, in the south of Zambia, a small community radio station celebrated the establishment of what can only be described as a tenuous connection via radio link, to an ISP [Internet Service Provider]. The station can now send and receive news - about two sentences every evening. Station Manager Perfect Mbazima made it very clear - no fancy formatting or pictures in e-mails in or out, the connection cannot handle it. But the listeners' horizons have broadened considerably because they now hear, and can discuss, useful information that is selected by a volunteer based in the capital Lusaka."

The statement finished with the following words:

"Creating an environment for these communication initiatives to flourish leads to information exchange that gives people the dignity of contributing to their own development. Such an environment will not be created in a globalising world, without a real commitment to change and a visionary and realistic plan of action underpinned by a re-commitment to human rights. It is not often that an opportunity to impact on the global agenda arises, and we urge you to consider the realities of the people we have introduced here in your deliberations during WSIS. The African Caucus asserts that you can have information without development, but you cannot have development without information and the ability to communicate" (WSIS African Caucus, 2003).

By all accounts, the statement made a strong impression on the government delegates in attendance on that fourth day of the Paris Intersessional. The delegates all stood up in a show of appreciation.

But then, the triumphal mood was shattered. After the closing of the Paris Intersessional, the committee overseeing the drafting of the official texts performed a severe edit on the Draft Declaration of Principles (DoP). The DoP released on 18 July 2003, the day the Intersessional ended, was missing a lot of the

language civil society had strongly supported in the first two PrepComs and at the Intersessional. A pro-gender paragraph had disappeared from the Declaration. And – the greatest blow to media freedom advocates – a phrase had been inserted saying that free and independent media would have to be “in accordance with the legal system of each country.” This phrase seemed clearly designed to create a huge loophole for undemocratic regimes that suppress media and expression.

Paris in summer had turned nasty.

The global CRIS Campaign (Communication Rights in the Information Society) issued a statement showing its disappointment with the outcome of the Intersessional:

“The absence [in the Declaration] of issues such as communication rights, the media (which has been severely marginalised), traditional forms of communication (often secondary or even absent) and gender lead us to think that the WSIS in its vision for a ‘new kind of Information Society’ will solely focus on the digital divide and the market liberalisation for new ICTs. This, we strongly believe, will not be instrumental to the welfare of people and communities” (CRIS Campaign, 2003).

#### **5.4 Some Hope for Community Media?**

However, much to the surprise of AMARC and other community media advocates, there was suddenly some good news at the end of August 2003, between the Paris Intersessional and PrepCom-3. A new official draft Plan of Action (PoA) was released on 22 August, and in it was significant recognition of the importance of community media.

In the “Introduction,” there was recognition that “Public service broadcasting and community media have specific and crucial roles to play in ensuring the participation of all in the information society.” In the third section, called “Action Lines,” there was a clause calling on nations to “Give recognition and 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 and as a privileged means to reach rural and isolated communities.” Later in the same section was a call to “Encourage investment in regional and community-based media content” (WSIS PoA, 2003a).

After the release of this new draft PoA, AMARC President Steve Buckley wrote with guarded enthusiasm to the Community Media e-mail Listserv, saying that “We seem to have made some progress” and that “We will need to defend and seek to strengthen these gains at Prepcom-3” (Buckley, 2003a). Defending these gains will be a key issue at PrepCom-3 in September. In addition, community media still needed to find its way back into the other, more important official document, the Declaration of Principles (DoP), and to push through the other things on its wish list: legislated community broadcasting sectors, community media frequency spectrum allocations, and a global Community Media Fund.

#### **5.5 Highway Africa Conference – Grahamstown, Sept. 8-10, 2003**

The generally disappointing conclusion to the July Paris Intersessional was perhaps a boon for the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Highway Africa conference in Grahamstown, South Africa, which had WSIS as its focus. The undermining of media freedom in the Intersessional’s WSIS Draft Declaration gave Highway Africa delegates something to speak out on when crafting their Highway Africa Declaration on the Media and the Information Society. As well as the Declaration, the Highway Africa conference delegates, from 22 African countries, issued a statement “specifically designed to support the WSIS Civil Society Media Caucus wording about media, Article 19 and the information society” (Highway Africa, 2003).

The statement called for the insertion of language that had first been proposed by civil society at PrepCom-2 – language regarding the “centrality of the media,” the importance of Article 19 as “the guiding principle underpinning freedom of expression and media freedom in the information society,” and support for “traditional media” such as radio and television as “the most effective way to deliver quality information to under-developed contexts in which the majority of the world’s people live.” The Highway Africa statement also called for the deletion of the wording in Paragraph 51 of the Draft



Declaration that said free and independent media would have to be “in accordance with the legal system of each country.” The statement said that the “text referring to national legal frameworks has inherent dangers that are worrying to many Africans who do, or who potentially, live under the anti-human rights stances of oppressive regimes” (Highway Africa, 2003).

The 2003 Highway Africa News Agency (HANA) also took shape at the conference. The week before the formal Highway Africa gathering, a group of journalists from around Africa was given several days of training on ICT issues, in preparation for HANA coverage of the WSIS process. HANA, started in 2002, brings together African journalists to cover major news events and produce a feed of multimedia items for use by media around the continent. The recruits for HANA coverage of WSIS were drawn from Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya and South Africa, from Highway Africa project management, and from among the Journalism Department staff and students of Rhodes University. Steven Lang of the SABC’s on-line news site acted as Senior Editor.

### **5.6 PrepCom-3 – Geneva, Sept 15-26, 2003**

September 2003 brought with it a number of bad omens for the “information society.” The Indian government blocked access to certain Yahoo groups; the BBC’s journalistic credibility wavered in the aftermath of the Lord Hutton Inquiry; Microsoft had to close chat rooms to ward off paedophiles; and media analysts cringed as Rupert Murdoch announced he was handing over control of the B2B Sky service to his young son, aged 30 (IHT, 2003a; IHT, 2003b; AFP, 2003).

On the media freedom front, September 2003 saw the Zimbabwean government shut down the *Daily News*. And so it was against this ominous backdrop – with the *Daily News* lawyers trying in vain to beat Zimbabwe’s Kafkaesque media laws – that SADC civil society organisations gathered in Geneva for PrepCom-3 (Sunday Independent, 2003).

The aim of PrepCom-3 was for government delegates to finalise the wording of both the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, thus paving the way for a smooth-running WSIS First Phase in Geneva in December. That means PrepCom-3 was, in some respects, the actual Summit, the real decision-making place. Until it all fell apart.

Things started off deceptively well at PrepCom-3 for SADC civil society, with the **Civil Society Media Caucus** electing Tracey Naughton as its new Chair. It was a sign that the tide was turning in the **Media Caucus**, moving towards support for community media. The World Press Freedom Committee and others were now willing to conditionally support calls for an enabling environment for community media. The only remaining outright anti-community-media sentiment in the **Media Caucus** was now coming from the Latin American commercial broadcasters, primarily from Brazil and Mexico, who were concerned about losing advertising revenue to a strong community broadcasting sector.

So, to settle the community media issue once and for all in the Media Caucus, a vote was taken on the issue early in PrepCom-3. The Latin American commercial anti-community-media lobby lost the vote. The Media Caucus was now officially in support of media diversity, including community media, and was able to issue a statement early in PrepCom-3 calling for a series of paragraphs to be added to the official Declaration, including the following passage:

“Legislation to ensure the participation of all in the information society should: a) promote and defend the existence and development of free and independent media; b) encourage pluralism and diversity of media ownership and avoid excessive media concentration; c) recognise the specific and crucial role of public service broadcasting and community media; and d) transform state-controlled media into editorially independent organisations” (WSIS Media Caucus, 2003a).

Having lost the battle in the **Media Caucus**, the disgruntled Latin American commercial broadcasters now had to re-focus their energies on lobbying the government delegations from their region. (They ended up being very successful in this lobbying, with the Mexican and El Salvadorian government

delegates eventually blocking community media out of the final Declaration and Plan of Action adopted in Geneva in December.)

But while sections of civil society were starting to reach consensus and work effectively at PrepCom-3, the government talks were stalling. Certain governments, aware that PrepCom-3 was supposed to deliver the final wording for the official Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action, both to be adopted at the formal Summit First Phase in December, were digging in their heels about specific language. Delegates from China, India, a Middle East bloc led by Egypt, and a Latin American bloc led by El Salvador, Mexico Argentina and Cuba were trying to hold on to Paragraph 51 in the Draft Declaration – the paragraph saying that the independence of media would have to be “in accordance with the legal system of each country.” These nations were also opposing any strong language in support of an activist approach to the Article 19 “right to communicate.” And the Mexican and El Salvador delegates, having been lobbied hard by the Latin American commercial broadcasters, were trying to block language that called for public service broadcasting (public and community) or limits on media ownership concentration.

Opposing these nations, and pushing for strong language in support of free expression and media pluralism, were Botswana, the United States, Colombia, the EU and Western European governments such as Norway, the UK and Switzerland. The main battleground for these discussions was the intergovernmental Media Working Group, as revealed by the following informal minutes from the 16 September sitting of this Working Group, taken by German media activist Arne Hintz:

**Egypt delegate:** observer [civil society] comments should be given at the beginning but observers should not participate fully.

**Chair** [Alain Madoux, consultant to Swiss delegation]: text to be produced will be government text, but in the spirit of this summit we should try to achieve a consensus between all stakeholders, so observers should be able to fully participate.

**Argentina:** Art. 51 [on media freedom being subject to the laws of each country] was already discussed and agreed in Paris [Intersessional]; not re-open debate, stick to present text.

**India:** supports Argentina, refine and shorten text but not complete re-opening.

**Switzerland:** text was never properly discussed, so it should indeed be discussed here.

**US:** supports Switzerland, paragraph should be re-defined.

**El Salvador:** does not accept limits on concentration of ownership.

**Chair:** recommends that media should be discussed, refers particularly to new media and community media.

**Mexico:** What is the role of the media? It is no different from ICTs. Media should not be discussed as separate item.

**Media Caucus representative** [Civil Society]: reads statement by Media Caucus (focus on Article 19, media freedom, media pluralism, etc., reference to public service media and community media).

**El Salvador:** happy to see Art. 19 included but it won't be accepted by all in the plenary.

**UNESCO:** reinstate reference to Art. 19 in Declaration Art. 51; delete "in accordance with the legal system of each country"; delete "and other international and regional instruments dealing with human rights."

**Norway:** very important to discuss media; thanks to [civil society] Media Caucus for its valuable input; supports concerns by UNESCO.

**US:** support Art. 19; proposal: "access ... should be encouraged" (instead of "ensured").

**Colombia:** supports Media Caucus statement in essence (although not all points).

**China:** no agreement yet on media, therefore important to discuss.

**Chair:** there seems to be widespread acceptance of the ideas of the Media Caucus.

Netherlands (for EU): support the ideas of the Media Caucus, particularly Art. 19.

**Botswana:** support Media Caucus statement, Art. 19, reference to traditional media.

Mexico: difficulties with points c) and d) - "recognise community media" and "transformation of state-controlled media into independent organisations."

India: problem with "editorial independence"; doubts about widespread acceptance of Art. 19; wants to leave some room for compromising on media freedom; sceptical about c) and d).

**Cuba:** some concerns with Media Caucus statement; should be no selective quotation of articles (Art. 19); some limitations on press freedom should be allowed.

**El Salvador:** cannot accept limits to concentration of media ownership.

**Egypt:** not refer specifically to Art. 19. (Hintz, 2003)

These Working Group minutes show a clear deadlock regarding media freedom and media pluralism on just the second day of PrepCom-3 – a deadlock that still had not been broken 10 days later when PrepCom-3 ended on Sept. 26. As a result, the Civil Society Plenary became progressively more frustrated. Civil society was galled that governments were getting bogged down by basic free speech issues – issues agreed to in 1948, at the time of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and in subsequent declarations. WSIS was supposed to be about the future, but it was getting stuck in the debates of the past.

### **Civil Society Frustration**

Adding to civil society frustration was a decision by governments midway through PrepCom-3 that “observer” (civil society and business) participation in intergovernmental PrepCom meetings would be limited to the first five minutes and final five minutes of each session. This meant that civil society caucuses could only make brief statements at the beginning of intergovernmental sessions and then had to leave, waiting until late in the day to be part of the final five minutes. Thus, government talks were increasingly held behind closed doors, with SADC civil society only receiving news of events via second-hand reports from those delegations – such as the Swiss and German delegations – that included civil society representatives.

As PrepCom-3 wrapped on 26 September, it was clear that little progress had been made at the intergovernmental level in the two weeks of talks. Instead of the anticipated finalised text of a Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, ready to be adopted by governments at the Summit First Phase in Geneva in December, the documents were still a mess, filled with the square brackets that, in UN-speak, mean the wording isn’t yet finalised. There was now talk of the need for another PrepCom – a “PrepCom-4” – or a continuation of PrepCom-3, sometime before the formal Summit First Phase opened on Dec.10. Both the **Civil Society Community Media Working Group** and **Civil Society Media Caucus** were now at wits’ end. Article 19 was in jeopardy, with the controversial phrase in the Declaration’s Paragraph 51, calling for “accordance with the legal system of each country,” still in the draft text. And community media recognition was now nowhere to be found, in either the Draft Declaration of Principles or Plan of Action. The advocates for media independence had made no progress at PrepCom-3, and the push for community media had actually *lost* ground.

“At the beginning of the first of two weeks of work here, there was an Action Plan that described community media as a vital way of providing access to all in the information society,” AMARC President Steve Buckley said of PrepCom-3. “By the middle of the [first] week, community media also appeared in the Declaration. By the end of the week, it had been suppressed from the Declaration. By the beginning of the following week, it had also been removed from the Action Plan” (Buckley, 2003b). The governments of Mexico and El Salvador had succeeded in banishing community media from both official texts. According to sources close to the talks, it was the Swiss, who were convening the intergovernmental Media Working Group at PrepCom-3, who had managed to get the clause in support of community media into the Declaration in the first week. But later, it appeared Germany had brokered a deal with Mexico and El Salvador whereby community media would fall out of the Declaration but still stay in the Plan of Action. But then, somehow, “it disappeared from the Plan of Action,” said Buckley.

The **Media Caucus**, now united both in its ideas and in its frustration with the process, wrote an open letter on 26 September, the final day of PrepCom-3, to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, to express “concern that fundamental, agreed principles on independent, pluralistic media are at risk.” The open letter stated:

“The Media Caucus affirms that agreed principles already accepted by the international community must be preserved in the WSIS process. We are deeply concerned that the government delegations at PrepCom-3 have been unable to agree on re-committing themselves to the universally accepted principles of freedom of expression and to the place of media as a major stakeholder in the Information Society” (WSIS Media Caucus, 2003b).

The letter concluded by saying that “the Media Caucus respectfully calls upon you, Mr. Secretary-General, as the patron of the WSIS, firstly to remind the states of their existing commitments to fundamental values enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, secondly, to engage the broader spectrum of United Nations agencies in the debate on the role of the UN system in the Information Society” (WSIS Media Caucus, 2003b).

### **5.7 PrepCom-3a & the ‘Non-Paper’, October – November 2003**

It was perhaps appropriate that a summit on the “information society” should exploit every kind of bizarre modern usage of language, including use of the unique device known as a “non-paper.” A “non-paper” is, apparently, a kind of “unofficial-official” text.

Sensing that the deadlock at the end of PrepCom-3 was severe, the President of the PrepCom, former Malian Education Minister Adama Samassekou, pulled together a small team of government officials including representatives of the host countries of Summit First Phase (Switzerland) and Second Phase (Tunisia). Samassekou and his team conducted high-level talks with various other country representatives, and, based on these consultations, Samassekou drafted a “non-paper.” A draft of the non-paper, the “Draft Non-Paper,” was publicly distributed for comment on 24 October, and discussed further at the end of October.

Civil society was pleased with some elements of the PrepCom President’s non-paper, but expressed concern that it was still too market-oriented and technology-focussed – that it did not place enough emphasis on “people-centred,” community-based approaches, or on the need for a funding mechanism to correct global imbalances not solved by market mechanisms (e.g., a mechanism such as the Digital Solidarity Fund proposed by Senegal at PrepCom-3). Nevertheless, the non-paper did begin to chart some of the compromises that governments would eventually agree to on the eve of the official Summit First Phase in Geneva in December.

As well as drafting the non-paper in October, the PrepCom President mandated a resumption of PrepCom-3 in November, on Nov. 10-14 – a session officially called “PrepCom-3 – Resumed Session,” but more popularly and succinctly known as “PrepCom-3a.” The convening of PrepCom-3a posed logistical problems for civil society organisations, particularly those from the developing world that did not have sufficient time to mobilise resources to finance another expensive trip to Europe. As a result, PrepCom-3a was sparsely attended by civil society.

PrepCom-3a featured continuing divisions at the intergovernmental level. The disagreements between governments at PrepCom-3 in September surrounding media freedom, media diversity and free expression were not going away. As Highway Africa News Agency (HANA) Senior Editor Steven Lang reported from Geneva on Nov. 13:

“Preparatory meetings in Geneva this week have been bogged down every time the role of the media and freedom of expression have been raised. China argues that since the WSIS meeting is about the Information Society, it is purely a technical meeting, and as such, the media certainly has no special role to play....Chinese delegates methodically bring proceedings to a halt every time any aspect of press freedom is raised” (Lang, 2003).

China was continuing to play the role of spoiler, with plenty of help from El Salvador and a Middle East block.

The **Media Caucus**, clearly fed up, issued a statement saying that an “information society” summit that wasn’t going to sign off on free expression and press freedom was “like planning a conference on agriculture without farmers” (WSIS Media Caucus, 2003c).

So, a beleaguered PrepCom President Adama Samassekou once again “suspended” (but did not completely close off) PrepCom-3, calling for another “resumed session” – a “PrepCom-3b” – to be held in early December, just a few days before the opening of the big WSIS Summit First Phase.

## 6 WSIS First Phase: Geneva – December 2003

### 6.1 Civil Society Finally Loses Patience

It was late at night on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, a cold winter evening in Geneva, with just four days to go until the opening of the WSIS Geneva Phase. And yet the key documents – the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action – were still being discussed and argued over by governments. The documents were supposed to have been agreed on and finalised back at PrepCom-3 in September, or at PrepCom-3a in November. But here they were, at PrepCom-3b: high-level government negotiators from countries all around the world, still negotiating at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, at the UN's Palais des Nations. Article 19, agreed to by the UN General Assembly more than half a century earlier in 1948, was still being used like a bargaining chip by several countries.

The day before, on Dec. 5, the **Civil Society Plenary** had finally decided enough was enough. Civil society would no longer provide specific inputs to the government talks. In its December 5 statement, civil society identified “two main problem areas” in the talks. The first was the problem of “how to correct imbalances in riches, imbalances in rights, imbalances of power, or imbalances of access.” Civil society said it felt the lack of commitment to a funding mechanism, such as the Digital Solidarity Fund idea proposed by Senegal at PrepCom-3, showed a lack of seriousness by governments about addressing “the so-called Digital Divide” (WSIS Civil Society, 2003c).

The second major problem, according to the civil society statement, was “the struggle over human rights” and in particular “freedom of expression.” The statement then said that the **Civil Society Plenary** was going to draw up its own, Alternative Declaration for presentation at the formal summit in the days ahead. The Dec. 5 statement ended with the following:

“Irrespective of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, civil society will continue what we have been doing all along: Doing our work, implementing and renewing our vision, working together in local and global bottom-up processes – and thereby shaping a shared and inclusive knowledge society” (WSIS Civil Society, 2003c).

Three days later, on 8 December, with more of the civil society delegates now in Geneva for the official summit, the **Civil Society Plenary** met and unanimously approved its Alternative Declaration entitled *Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs* (WSIS Civil Society, 2003d). Civil Society officially released this declaration on 11 December, the second day of the official summit, with the exhausted leader of the **Civil Society Content & Themes Working Group**, Sally Burch, saying that the Civil Society Declaration was “a work in progress,” and that “we expect that in the Second Phase, this will be a starting point rather than a finishing point” (Burch, 2003).

### 6.2 Intergovernmental Breakthrough or Cop-Out?

Finally, close to midnight on Dec. 6, in the second last sitting of PrepCom-3b, some of the deadlocks between the governments broke open – or perhaps it is more correct to say they were papered-over, or watered down. Sometime on the night of Dec.6, a strong statement in support of Article 19 found its way back into the official intergovernmental Declaration of Principles. And the controversial phrase in Paragraph 51 that called for media independence to be “in accordance with the legal system of each country,” finally fell away.

But the insertion of stronger Article 19 language and the deletion of the “in accordance with the legal system” phrase had not come without a price. According to sources close to the last-minute talks, these concessions had only come about as part of a process of “watering down” both the Declaration and Plan of Action by the government delegations. In order to reach a consensus, all points of view, regardless of their contradictions, had been catered for, and certain “opt-out” phrases had been included.

For example, Paragraph 39 of the final Declaration called for policies and regulation to reflect “national realities” and specified that “Governments should intervene...to serve national priorities.” These phrases seemed clearly designed to allow the free-speech opponents – China, a Latin American bloc and a Middle Eastern bloc - room to manoeuvre and to dodge Article 19 and the other international human rights recognised in the WSIS Declaration (WSIS DoP, 2003b). It was also widely felt that some “horse-trading” had gone on with, for instance, China allowing strong Article 19 language to creep into the Declaration in return for an agreement that global Internet governance issues would be left vague. Indeed, the final Geneva Declaration and Plan of Action are inconclusive on Internet governance, leaving the issue open for further study in the run-up to Tunis 2005.

### **6.3 Community Media Marginalised, Yet Also Recognised**

Another of the big intergovernmental sticking points – media diversity/community media – had also gone right down the wire on December 6, with Swiss civil society delegates (who were part of the Swiss government delegation and thus privy to the details of the talks) reporting on that day that certain Latin American delegates were still fighting hard against community media and against curbing media concentration. As a result, the language of the final Geneva DoP and PoA is timid on these matters – and the words “community media” are non-existent in both documents. The only hint of community media in either of the final official documents is a vague reference to “media based in local communities” slipped into an obscure part of the Plan of Action (WSIS PoA, 2003b).

This was a major loss for civil society in general – which had put community media in its November 2003 Essential Benchmarks document – and for community media activists in particular (WSIS Civil Society, 2003b).

“The ‘access for all’ slogan rings hollow for community and alternative media groups at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS),” read a statement released on 9 December by the **Civil Society Community Media Working Group**. “New forms of community and alternative media are springing up in all continents of the world. Their real life stories will be present throughout the exhibitions, seminars and other events of the WSIS. Yet, despite the official rhetoric of ‘access for all,’ community media are not to be found in the official WSIS texts. This is why the Community Media Working Group, together with other civil society groups at WSIS, will not endorse the official governmental Declaration and Action Plan” (WSIS Community Media Working Group, 2003).

But in terms of awareness raising and agenda-setting, one could not really regard the WSIS Geneva Phase as an outright failure for community media. Several nations, in their official statements to the Summit, pledged support for community media. And many of the exhibitions in the ICT4D hall, particularly the “African Media Village,” called attention to the power and necessity of community media. On 12 December, the final day of the summit, a “Community Media Forum” event was staged at the ICT4D Exhibition. It featured presentations on community radio and other community media projects from Africa, Latin America and Asia. The first speaker at the Forum was AMARC President Steve Buckley, who had worked tirelessly in the WSIS process for a year and a half, through the **Civil Society Plenary** and the **Community Media Working Group**. Buckley opened his address in a wry tone, saying, “I’m delighted to be here amongst friends from the community media movement. We’ve not always been amongst friends in some of the meetings in the WSIS process” (Buckley, 2003b).

In his speech, Buckley told the gathering that perhaps the community media movement had underestimated the power of the private-sector media lobby. In the past, the battle had always been against governments, but “in recent years,” he said, “we’ve experienced a different sort of problem, which has been the competition from the commercial broadcasters, who, as the airwaves have opened up to new forms of private broadcasting, have increasingly formed concentrations of ownership, which don’t want to see competition with their interests and their audiences” from community and public media.

Buckley called WSIS “a strange process,” with so much talk of “wiring up the world to the Internet.” He said this idea was absurd given that one-third of the world’s people are without electricity, while another third have only unreliable power, and the rate of population growth is greater than the rate of electrification. “The issue here is not about the digital divide,” Buckley said, “It’s about a ‘communications divide,’ a communications divide between people who have access to the fastest, most

up-to-the-minute communications and, on the other hand, people who have difficulty communicating even from one village to the next, because there's no means of doing so."

Buckley criticised the "technocratic focus" that had emerged since the Group of Eight (G8) industrialised nations meeting in Okinawa in 2000, with its emphasis "on building Internet infrastructures for e-commerce, not necessarily in the interests of the poor people of the world." Buckley continued by saying "for the poorest people in the world, 'e' does not stand for 'electronic.' For those who do not have access to electrification, it stands for 'elite.'" He said it was clear that community media, with their use of cheap, low-power applications (including solar-powered transmitters and wind-up radio receivers) are a means "for bridging this communications divide."

Buckley did not hide his disappointment at the absence of language in support of community media in the final official Declaration and Plan of Action, but said, "I think there is much that we should be pleased about, and that we can congratulate ourselves on, in civil society here at WSIS. Governments have moved a long way.... through the WSIS process, we've put community media very firmly on the agenda." He pointed to the announcement at WSIS of a project funded by the Swiss to roll out US\$3 million worth of UNESCO multimedia centres (combining community radios with Internet access) in Mali, Senegal and Mozambique. He also spoke of the successful lobbying by the **Community Media Working Group** of certain Latin American government delegations – Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina – to support community media, and of the roughly 50 governments who were now sympathetic to community media, with several governments speaking out openly in favour of it, including South Africa, Botswana, Mali, Senegal, Germany, Switzerland and the UK: "This is a success for us.... We are beginning to find the message about community media beginning to be understood in the mainstream environment. We may not be in the text, but we are certainly not going away" (Buckley, 2003b).

**Arne Hintz, German community media activist:**

"There were people like [AMARC President] Steve Buckley who are very experienced in lobbying, and we [in the Community Media Working Group] did quite a lot of targeted lobbying, making lists of friendly governments and not-so-friendly governments, and talking with all kinds of people, and networking amongst each other. The Media Caucus, being a little bit broader, was able to – for example in PrepCom-3 – was able to have quite an impact on internal negotiations, by preparing statements that were then taken on as a basis for negotiation. So it had a lot of impact there."

"Tracey [Naughton], she played a major part in both groups [Media Caucus and Community Media Working Group], and in PrepCom-3 she was elected Chairperson of the Media Caucus because of her intense involvement. She was very instrumental in keeping it [the Media Caucus] all together, because between the private-sector media and the community media and the public-service media there are really big differences and interests, and she was always working towards keeping it all altogether, and at some points it looked like it would all fall apart – all the time actually, every day, at these meetings – and she always wanted to keep things together so that was quite an achievement."

"And there were other people, like John Barker from Article 19, who was very deeply involved in the Media Caucus, and who was also administering the mailing list [Media Caucus Listserv] and George [Christensen of AMARC Africa] was a central part of the Community Media Working Group. Probably George and Steve Buckley were the ones who did the most in terms of lobbying for community media, and also who were quite involved in the Media Caucus when people like myself, for example, were not really so happy with how things went in the Media Caucus, because community media issues were very marginalised. They were still really trying to keep things going and put community media issues in there."

AMARC Vice-President and FEMNET representative Lynne Muthoni Wanyeki of Kenya, who was active in both the gender and community media lobbying processes of WSIS, agreed with Buckley that much had been achieved: "If we look around here and we see all the side events that are about media and community media, we've seen that the profile of specifically community media has risen quite a lot during the summit." Wanyeki pointed out that the **Community Media Working Group** had drafted a statement about why community media is important, and had given it to some governments to sign "to

reflect the debates that have happened.” Already, by the second day of the summit, there were several government signatures on the declaration. “Some governments have blocked it,” said Wanyeki, “but a lot of governments have supported community media issues, and this has to be made public...this has to be said.”

**Karen Banks, UK-based Coordinator, APC Women’s Network & Support Programme:**

“I think that the Community Media Working Group had an impact not only on the [intergovernmental] Media Working Group, but also I think they were very successful in reaching out to other spaces that took on board the importance of community media. So, for example, the NGO Gender Strategies Working Group prioritised community media as the communication tool that most women in the world have access to. They [Community Media Working Group] were also very successful in taking that message to the other regions, through the regional caucuses, in the sense that they weren’t focussing specifically within their own issue area, but were going out to other regional spaces, out to other thematic working groups, and making sure that they were taking on board the importance of that issue. And that was reflected very significantly in the civil society Essential Benchmarks document that we developed for PrepCom-3a [in November 2003], in which we articulated 10 top priorities, against which we would be measuring the success of the official process. Community media was one of the top priorities. I think that’s definitely a reflection of the good, hard work they did, and I think the Partnership in Southern Africa was really at the forefront of this.”

In another significant awareness-raising moment for community media, Wanyeki was awarded the first civil society speaking slot at the formal government plenary on Day 1 of the Geneva Summit (Dec. 10). She delivered a statement on behalf of both the gender and community media movements. It was a late-night speaking slot, with the plenary hall nearly empty, “but it means it’s on the record,” said Wanyeki.

#### **6.4 NCRF and ‘Local Voices’ at WSIS Geneva**

Meanwhile, the NCRF was at WSIS Geneva to participate in the “Local Voices” programme convened by the UN ICT Task Force. Programming Officer Danny Moalosi represented the NCRF, joining other Local Voices delegates from around the world in a series of networking and awareness-raising events. Early in the week of WSIS, the delegates participated in a “CyberFestival of Local Content” at the Ethnography Museum of Geneva. The work of NCRF-member community radio stations was one of the case studies presented at the festival, which was attended by representatives of the ITU and UNESCO.

Later in the week, in the ICT4D pavilion at the summit venue, the Local Voices team, including Moalosi, was on hand for the launch of the Open Knowledge Network (OKN) which has the aim of “promoting cultural diversity in the global village.” The OKN is part of a high-profile coalition of partners including the UN ICT Task Force, OneWorld International, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP).

According to Moalosi, the WSIS Geneva networking was useful for the NCRF, but in general he felt the summit “was too high-class, focussing too much on issues of the private sector, not enough on the social aspects.” In terms of the advocacy process around the Declaration and Plan of Action, Moalosi said he felt grassroots NGOs had not been fully consulted in SADC. Given that community media didn’t find its way into the official Geneva Declaration or Plan of Action, Moalosi said that the advocacy strategy “needs to be restructured.”

“We didn’t win, so we need to restructure the way we negotiate,” Moalosi said. He feels Southern African civil society groups need to interact more directly with the governments and private sector bodies in their countries. “We need to sell our ideas to the private sector and government at the national and continental level,” he said, adding that he would like to see the SANGONeT-based Community Information Network of Southern Africa (CINSA) take a lead in pulling together SADC civil society perspectives for WSIS Phase Two in Tunis in 2005.



## **6.5 The 'African Media Village'**

One of the highlights of the WSIS ICT4D exhibition – the highlight, according to many delegates – was the **WSIS Southern African Partnership's** "African Media Village" installation. The Village drew wide praise for its creativity and relevance.

At one side of the installation, in a makeshift container-like structure, the Village featured a set of refurbished computers (provided by Computer Aid International), running on open-source software and connected to the Internet. Outside this Internet cafe were two television flat screens (provided by the SABC) showing SACOD video documentaries and SABC programming. On the other side of the exhibition space was a live community radio studio, housed inside a hut-like room with an open front and thatched roof. The radio, staffed by AMARC members from Europe and Africa, played music and produced live interview programming throughout the summit. The programming could be heard on speakers at the Village, on the Internet via a live audio stream, and on two Swiss community radios broadcasting in the cities of Zurich and Berne.

In the "Village Square," in between the Internet cafe and the radio studio, stood a collection of 20 life-size, standing posterboard cut-out photographs of people from Southern Africa. Each cut-out person had a storyboard explaining who she or he was, and a set of headphones connected to an audio recording of the person discussing her or his experiences. The figures were "Speaking for Ourselves," in keeping with the theme of the Village, and talking about their real-life experiences of interacting with – or struggling to access – the "information society."

Among the people featured in the cut-outs were:

- Zane Ibrahim of Cape Town community station Bush Radio;
- Mary Ndlovu, a retired Access to Information worker in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
- Patricia Madikane, a community health nurse and "telemedicine" worker in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province who uses a solar-powered wireless link to send live video images of patients to a hospital 35 kilometres away – in order to get diagnostic support from hospital doctors;
- A worker for Zambia's Chikuni community radio, who rides his bike from village to village to collect news and announcements for broadcast;
- Rafael Munsaka, a middle-aged father of nine, living in Danbwa Township, outside the town of Livingstone, Zambia, who works as a driver for tourism companies, earning the equivalent of US\$100 a month in wages, and who used to have a phone but can't afford one now;
- A South African woman, Silondiwe Mafueka, who runs a wireless cellular phone installation on a remote hillside in the north of South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal Province, walking several kilometres each day to set up her stall and sell air-time on the phone, which runs off a car battery;
- A young man in Namibia's Caprivi Strip who provides television access to his community via solar power, but only for four nights a month, because of the time it takes to recharge using his solar panel; and
- Another woman, in Mozambique, who walks a great distance each day to and from her job at a community radio.

On hand at the Village to tell visitors about the display and about the real communication issues on the ground in SADC were three more information workers, also part of the "Speaking for Ourselves" initiative: Clara Masinga of South Africa, Margaret Mpolokoso from Zambia, and Ntombi Nare of Zimbabwe.

**Clara Masinga, Manager, Kgautswane Community Development Centre, South Africa:**

"Myself, I was motivated by the two PrepComs and the Summit, because even if I am a community leader, I need more information."

**Margaret Mpolokoso, Radio Ichengelo, Zambia:** "I am happy to be here, and I feel honoured to be selected, and to be among other women here at Geneva. And I feel that we have become connected, and that we are really becoming a village. Something that I never dreamt of is happening here... I am able to get addresses, so that we could be able to access information that is needed for our radio station... we need workshops, we need training... but it wouldn't have happened so fast if I hadn't been here."

- Masinga is Manager of the Kgautswane Community Development Centre in South Africa's Limpopo Province, a centre that runs income-generating projects, a computer centre connected to the Internet, a women's village bank, a library and a cultural village.
- Mpolokoso works for Radio Ichengelo, a Christian community radio station in Zambia's Copperbelt region that specialises in programmes for education, youth empowerment, HIV-AIDS prevention and local cultural sharing.
- Nare works on a community publishing project that develops small-print-run books and reading spaces for the forcibly relocated Tonga people of Zimbabwe's north-western Zambezi area, and the persecuted Matabele people of the southwest (where the Matabeleland massacres were carried out by Zimbabwean soldiers in the early 1980s).

Masinga, Mpolokoso and Nare had also attended PrepComs 2 and 3, with the support of the **WSIS Southern African Partnership**, in an attempt to get grassroots African issues heard at the high-level European meetings. "Serving in this Village, I have met many people, especially the international training agencies and the donors," said Masinga, "and when I go back home, I must just sit down and keep in touch with those people, communicating with them by the e-mail or writing... and send them more information, so that they can support our ICTs, especially the rural areas."

"I think it's a brilliant idea," said Nare of the Village. "It gets people talking about Africa, and it's very different from all the other displays that we see here. It's not about selling; it's about what life is about when you talk about information and access to information. The other stands I see are about marketing and selling the information gadgets. So I think it's making a difference. I think it's a very special thing."

The 20 cardboard cut-outs and audio recordings at the African Media Village were the work of freelance Johannesburg photographer Chris Kirchhoff, who drove nearly 12,000 kilometres throughout the SADC in early 2003 – in South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Swaziland and Mozambique – meeting people, taking pictures and making the recordings. "What I looked for was both people who are using IT to leap the digital divide, and also to show examples where people are just falling farther and farther behind," said Kirchhoff, who was in Geneva to help set up the Village installation. "Every single person in this stand has got a fascinating story to tell about information or communication."

The photographs on display at the Village were formal portraits, and almost exactly life-size. "I was quite careful to note their height," said Kirchhoff, "so one can look at the person, almost eye-to-eye, and it's not a conversation, but at least one hears their voice [on the headphones], telling you their life and how information impacts on their life."

The Village was also decorated with plants, feather dusters, paper chickens, a homemade soccer ball, wire masks made from telephone wire, and several large hanging photographs of African "traditional places of communication." One photograph showed a circle of bright orange aloe trees used as place of prayer; another was of a watering hole where herders share information while their cattle drink; another showed a baobab tree providing shade for people to gather and talk.

The Village – conceived, planned and coordinated by Tracey Naughton of the **WSIS Southern African Partnership** – was a great hit at the WSIS ICT4D pavilion. Visitors applauded it as a colourful, welcoming oasis amidst the bland, high-tech stalls that dominated the huge hall. "I think it is a great idea and it is very innovative," said one visitor to the Village, Esther Gonda of the Nigerian Ministry of Communication. "I listened to Patricia the community nurse [on the headphones], and Patricia's story is quite good, and she's doing a lot."

The Village received praise during the release of the Civil Society Alternative Declaration on 11 December, was mentioned in some of the official plenary statements by government representatives, and drew several high-level government visitors, including the Vice-President of The Gambia, who, after being brought to the Village by AMARC Africa's George Christensen, promptly sat down to be interviewed live by the on-site radio team. "I think it's had a high level of impact," said Naughton, sitting on one of the chairs at the village on the last day of the summit, "not the least of which is that 20 people [the cardboard cut-outs] have been able to tell their own stories in their own voices... something that would not have been possible."

“It is really hard for European people to acknowledge what life is like in a village where there is one cell phone that people share, or where people ride a donkey cart eight hours to the next telephone,” said Naughton. “Most people in the developed world won’t walk 15 minutes to a telephone. So it’s still very hard to make that conceptual leap and understanding, but I think we have grounded this in reality.”

“The stand has attracted a lot of attention,” said the SABC’s Ntombi Mhangwani, who helped set up the installation and helped coordinate the shipping of the displays from Johannesburg to Geneva (a cost that was picked up by the SABC). “What is wonderful about it is being able to express ourselves in the way that we actually are at home.... This is the African story told by the Africans.”

“The beauty of the project,” said Tambu Madzimume, SACOD’s Acting Director and Chairperson, “is that it’s not about selling ourselves as organisations, but letting the people speak for themselves, letting the projects be the ones to speak for themselves. And I think out of that we have managed to get a lot of people interested in who it is that is working behind these stories, who is assisting people to get their stories to the rest of the world.”

## **6.6 AMARC Radio, Live at the African Media Village**

The simplicity and immediacy of community radio were also clearly illustrated at the African Media Village, with the presence of the AMARC radio studio, coordinated by Bianca Miglioretto, a volunteer broadcaster and board member from Radio Lora in the Swiss city of Zurich. Miglioretto, a former AMARC International Board Member and AMARC Europe Women’s Network Coordinator, had come to Geneva from Zurich, with a mobile studio, for the week of the WSIS Summit. All of the programming was streamed live onto the Internet, and some of it was aired on Radio Lora in Zurich and another community radio in the Swiss capital Berne.

The only problem was with the Internet stream, Miglioretto said, because it would cut off in mid-morning each day, when the data coming out of the summit site saturated the bandwidth.

“When the stream didn’t work, we switched to the telephone hybrid” to get the feed to Radio Lora in Zurich, said Miglioretto, smiling at the irony of going low-tech at such a high-tech gathering. “The telephone hybrid is older technology, and much more reliable than new ICTs.” And that was ultimately the message of the AMARC radio installation at the Village – the message that old-tech platforms such as radio (which has been around for 100 years) are often more appropriate and accessible than newer-tech applications. “Every now and then, government delegations would pass by and would ask ‘what is going on here?’ and I think that was good,” said Miglioretto. “To give an impression of what community radio can be, how simply it can be established, how simply it can be made, and how fast you are in getting it out into the air.”

Another coordinator of the AMARC radio installation at the WSIS African Media Village was Togolese broadcaster Gilles Eric Foadey, who is Editor-in-Chief of the Johannesburg-based AMARC Africa Simbani News Agency. “This African Village has had a real visibility,” said Foadey. “It has attracted many people to come here. I think the voice of not just governments and NGOs, but also the voice of the voiceless, is what is heard here. We have had many, many interesting meetings, with people coming into the studio, people talking about how to use ICT for local content.”

## **6.7 Highway Africa News Agency (HANA) at WSIS Geneva**

On the level above the African Media Village, in the official WSIS Media Centre was the Highway Africa News Agency (HANA) team. HANA battled throughout the summit week, against various technical and bureaucratic problems, to cover events and send out print, audio and video to its African subscribers.

Contrary to earlier promises, summit organisers did not grant HANA its own room within the Media Centre, meaning that each day for six days the HANA team had to cart all of its computers and other equipment between their hotel and the summit site. Adding to HANA’s frustration, the Media Centre, though vast, was really just a collection of network points, with very few PCs. The centre was clearly catering to First World journalists with their own laptops – in contrast to other recent world summits, at which large numbers of PCs were made available for shared use by journalists. In the end, HANA

managed to sort out most of the technical issues. They found a technical support person and managed to produce dozens of items for distribution to allafrica.com, MISANET and individual subscribers around Africa. The 15-member HANA team consisted of:

- Ugandan journalists Wakabi Wairagala and Angella Nabwowe
- Kenyan journalist Rebecca Wanjiku
- Ethiopian journalist Emrakeb Assefa
- South African journalists Steven Lang, Thrishnee Subramoney and Tumaole Mohlaoli
- Rhodes Journalism students Haru Mutasa (Zimbabwe), Roseleen Nzioka (Kenya) Natarah Nadesan (South Africa) and Cathy O'Shea (South Africa)
- Rhodes Journalism Department's Megan Knight
- Highway Africa Project staff Chris Kabwato, Rui Correia, and Oluseyi Folayan

Guy Berger and Anthea Garman, the Head and Deputy Head of Rhodes Journalism, also attended the summit. Berger said the objective of HANA's work at WSIS was to "increase the information flow" on ICT/Information Society issues. "It's not an obvious story," said Berger. "There is no international 'name and shame' of China and Cuba for not supporting freedom of expression. It's not as if there are clear good guys and bad guys." By providing African journalists and news organisations with stories from an event like WSIS, HANA aimed ultimately to influence policy development on the continent.

**Steven Lang, HANA Senior Editor:**

"We consciously, in all our editorial meetings, made an effort to give the African perspective. It doesn't mean that we only had African stories. We had one on the Caribbean, one or two about China, one about Cuba, but virtually all the others were Afro-centric. I did an interview with an Indian minister, and though it was about India, I asked him about his relationship with Africa. And although that might seem parochial, I think it's very valid, because all the other news agencies in the world are Eurocentric or US-centric or whatever... We found, in an anecdotal survey of who uses our agency, we found it's the least-developed countries that are actually using our copy. I'm from South Africa, and there hasn't been much response from South Africa. But I've found that it [HANA] has been getting quite good response from other countries, and obviously there is a need for it in those countries. I'm getting good feedback from Kenya, from Uganda.

The HANA distribution list for WSIS stories had 220 individuals on it, as well as several Listservs.

"We're developing a cadre of people who understand the issues, and a corps of people that we can work with in the future on a substantive level, through to Tunisia," Berger said. "But we still have to grow... We need to broaden and deepen it, so people can report not just at the press conference level, but also at the news analysis level, at a greater level of abstraction, and also all the way down to the project level."

**Tumaole Mohlaoli, HANA student journalist, from Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa:**

"I think it's mind-blowing, basically, the things we're reporting on...the ICTs and how they can help in development, and to see that in action is quite amazing. To be honest with you, before I went on the Highway Africa training course [in September 2003], before I was selected, I had no idea, if you had asked me back then 'what is an ICT?' I would not have been able to tell you, and now, I'm actually involved in a process...I can see what an ICT can do...because here I am, I'm doing stories here in Geneva about world leaders, the World Summit, and at the same time that this thing is happening, before my eyes, my stories are going on-line, and back home somewhere in Africa, someone's going to go on-line, and someone's going to see the stories I reported on, immediately, and that has such a big impact on me, because it's so immediate, and I'm actually seeing the possibilities that ICTs can have."

HANA journalist Emrakeb Assefa, from *The Reporter* newspaper in Addis Ababa, said she felt that she and her HANA colleagues had managed to provide an alternative perspective on WSIS: "I was watching the BBC report yesterday, and they were looking at it as a summit on Internet," said Assefa. "If I was an African watching BBC, I would not have had a complete picture. I believe our agency gave that complete story." Kenyan HANA writer Rebecca Wanjiku said her newspaper, *The People Daily* in Nairobi, had printed at least three of her HANA stories during the summit. And Assefa's paper in Ethiopia, a weekly in English and Amharic, was going to print her WSIS summary in both languages. But both Wanjiku and Assefa agreed that it had been difficult to do strong, analytical stories at the summit.

Difficulties aside, the HANA participants seemed unanimous in feeling that the experience had been worthwhile. “This has contributed to me greatly as a journalist,” said Assefa. “The issue of ICTs, about giving coverage to it, would have been the last thing on my mind...I always thought there were more important things. But now I realise it’s not just about equipment; it is about ways to speed up growth and development. Now I feel passionate about it, because not many people are covering these issues.”

## 7 Towards WSIS Second Phase: Tunis 2005

Such is the nature of advocacy: one lobbying moment ends and immediately the next begins. With the first informal meeting for the Tunis Phase and the first PrepCom already having taken place, SADC civil society must now gear up for another long haul, towards Summit Phase Two in Tunis.

**Luckson Chipare, MISA Director:**

“We’ve met some people here throughout the whole process whom we think we can call on when we go back home to our region. We have also made some very important contacts with government delegations, some of whom we would not have been able to be in touch with. They’ve seen us here, throughout the process of PrepComs and the Summit. That we hope we will be able to carry through when we do our advocacy work in our various countries. I’ve been able to meet the Mozambican delegation, the Botswana delegation, South Africa, Namibia and Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, and we hope this will help us to go on with our national work in the region.”

The Highway Africa project is trying to keep its momentum through a number of initiatives:

- ICT advocacy training in several African countries (with the APC, as part of the CATIA (Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa) project)
- Researching ICT coverage in the African media (another CATIA initiative)
- Fundraising for the establishment of a permanent Highway Africa News Agency (HANA)
- The Highway Africa conferences in 2004 and 2005

The Highway Africa 2004 conference, scheduled for 16-18 September in Grahamstown, aims to “reflect on Africa’s place in the Global Information Society, given the World Summit on the Information Society, NEPAD and other developments.”

The NCRF, for its part, is hoping to use the 2004 Highway Africa conference to inform and engage its member stations in the WSIS process. According to the NCRF’s Danny Moalosi, it is hoped that NCRF members can use Highway Africa 2004 to craft a declaration on community radio for Tunis 2005, as well as contribute to overall conference declarations. The NCRF’s ultimate aim is to have some of its members do live broadcasting from the Tunis Summit, with the feeds shared by stations in South Africa.

The FXI is in the process implementing its Media and ICT Advocacy Programme, and it hopes to be able to engage with both the form and content of the Tunis 2005 Summit. The FXI is becoming increasingly active in lobbying against repression of social movements, and UN world summits provide important test cases for the rights of social groups, a place to make their voices heard.

The future direction of the WSIS Southern African Partnership – MISA, AMARC, SACOD, Article 19 and APC – is not yet clear, but given that Tunis 2005 is “the African phase” of WSIS, and given Tunisia’s poor record on free expression, there would appear to be ample reason to engage, as individual organisations or as a collective. The Tunisian government says it is committed to a “multistakeholder” (i.e., including civil society) approach, and SADC civil society must ensure that this commitment is honoured, as well as pressing the Tunisian authorities on allegations of journalists being imprisoned in that country.

The Tunis Summit is also an opportunity for the developing world, particularly African nations, to highlight the true barriers that poor countries face in trying to harness ICTs for development – barriers beyond technology that include literacy, electricity, income levels, high costs of services and lack of appropriate content. In much of the developing world, as AMARC’s Steve Buckley pointed out in his speech to the Community Media Forum event at WSIS Geneva, the divide is not “digital,” but rather a broader divide in “communication.” The Tunis Summit could prove to be an important showcase and lobbying forum for low-cost, low-power, analogue, accessible community media. Community media projects, and community radios in particular, have proven to be some of the most cost-efficient and accessible communications initiatives in the developing world. If the Tunis Phase of WSIS is to be a success for SADC civil society, community media must be strongly recognised in its final documents.

Perhaps the lack of an endorsement for community media in the official Geneva Declaration and Plan of Action can – like the choice of Tunis as the Second Phase venue – be turned into an advantage by civil society. It is always useful to have focal points for protest and advocacy. Tunisia's poor media-freedom record and the marginalisation of community media in official Geneva WSIS documents provide two ready-made advocacy targets for SADC civil society as Tunis 2005 approaches.

SADC civil society will need to strike a balance between showing solidarity with Tunisia as a developing African nation, while simultaneously pressing the Tunisian government to be more tolerant of dissent and independent media.

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- Danny Moalosi, NCRF
- David Barnard & Eric Muragana, SANGONeT
- Lynne Muthoni Wanyeki, FEMNET & AMARC
- AMARC: Michelle Ntab, Steve Buckley, George Christensen, Elizabeth Robinson, Frieda Wierden, Bintou Kamara, Frikkie Kellerman & Lettie Longwe
- Clara Masinga, Kgautswane Community Development Centre, South Africa
- Margaret Mpolokoso, Radio Ichengelo, Zambia
- Ntombi Nare, "Speaking for Ourselves" Project
- Gilles Eric Foadey, AMARC Africa Simbani News Agency
- Tambu Madzimore, SACOD
- Console Tleane & Jane Duncan, FXI
- Ntombi Mhangwani, SABC
- Chris Kirchhoff, "Speaking for Ourselves" project
- Highway Africa: Chris Kabwato, Rui Correia, Megan Knight, Oluseyi Folayan, Steven Lang, Angella Nabwowe, Rebecca Wanjiku, Emrakeb Assefa, Tumaole Mohlaoli, Haru Mutasa, Roseleen Nzioka, Natarah Nadesan & Cathy O'Shea
- Anriette Esterhuysen & Karen Banks, APC
- Guy Berger & Anthea Garman, Rhodes University School of Journalism
- Sally Burch, WSIS Civil Society Plenary
- Aida Opoku-Mensah, UNECA
- Myriam Horngren & Hugh Campher, OneWorld International
- Peter Benjamin, APC & Open Knowledge Network (OKN)
- Gabriele Hadl, Media Research Project, Ritsumeikan University, Japan
- Arne Hintz, Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Germany
- Bianca Miglioretto, Radio Lora, Zurich
- Diana Mercorios, ABANTU for Development, London
- John Dada, Fantsuam Foundation, Nigeria

## 10 Featured Organisations/Projects

**MISA** – Media Institute of Southern Africa, a media freedom/pluralism NGO

**AMARC** – World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (including NCRF in SADC)

**SACOD** – Southern Africa Communications for Development, a film and video coalition

**APC** – Association for Progressive Communications, a global ICT rights/empowerment NGO coalition (including Women’sNet and SANGONeT in SADC)

**Article 19** – global freedom of expression NGO

**Southern African WSIS Partnership** – composed of MISA, SACOD, AMARC, APC and Article 19

**NCRF** – National Community Radio Forum, South Africa’s main community radio association

**FXI** – Freedom of Expression Institute, South Africa

**Highway Africa** – media-ICT project based at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, which convenes an annual conference hosted by Rhodes and the SABC, and which brings African journalists together to cover key events relevant to African media-ICT development

**Highway Africa News Agency (HANA)** – team of African journalists who reported from WSIS PrepCom-3 (Sept. 2003) and WSIS Geneva Phase (Dec. 2003)

**SABC** – South African Broadcasting Corporation, South Africa’s public radio/TV broadcaster

**Computer Aid International** – non-profit supplier of refurbished computers

**‘Speaking for Ourselves’** – a project, coordinated by the Southern African WSIS Partnership, to collect stories and images from people in SADC with compelling perspectives on communications; to feature these stories in the “African Media Village” installation at WSIS Geneva Phase in December 2003; and to facilitate participation in WSIS by grassroots community communications workers from SADC

**‘African Media Village’** – an installation, as part of the “Speaking for Ourselves” project, by the Southern African WSIS Partnership, with the SABC and Computer Aid International, at the ICT4D Exhibition, WSIS Geneva Phase, December 2003

**Women’sNet** – a SADC member of the APC

**SANGONeT** – a SADC member of the APC

## 11 Timeline

- **1948**, 9 December: Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by UN General Assembly, including Article 19, which protects free expression and media freedom
- **1980**: MacBride Commission Report to UNESCO, entitled *Many Voices, One World*, advocates development of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)
- **1991**: Windhoek Declaration on the Promotion of Free & Pluralistic African Press
- **1998**: Tunisian proposal, at UN International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference, Minneapolis, to convene a World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)
- **2001**: UN General Assembly approves ITU hosting of WSIS in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005)
- **2001, May**: *African Charter on Broadcasting* agreed at “Windhoek + 10” meeting
- **2002, May**: UNESCO WSIS Civil Society Consultation, Bamako, Mali
- **2002, May**: WSIS African Regional Meeting, Bamako, Mali
- **2002, July**: WSIS PrepCom-1, Geneva
- **2002, August**: Highway Africa Charter on the Digital Divide, at World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg
- **2002, November**: APC-UNECA Civil Society ICT Advocacy Workshop, Addis Ababa
- **2003, January**: Publication of ‘*Our Side of the Divide*’ – African Perspectives on Information and Communication Technologies, prepared for PrepCom 2 with input from African Civil Society Caucus
- **2003, February**: WSIS PrepCom-2, Geneva
- **2003, March**: APC-CTO Civil Society ICT Advocacy Workshop, Johannesburg
- **2003, April**: WSIS Mauritius Conference to follow up Bamako Declaration, Mauritius
- **2003, July**: WSIS PrepCom “Intersessional,” Paris
- **2003, 8-10 September**: Highway Africa Conference issues Highway Africa Declaration on the Media and the Information Society, Grahamstown, South Africa
- **2003, 15-26 September**: WSIS PrepCom-3, Geneva
- **2003, 9-10 October**: Ministerial Round table at UNESCO preparing for WSIS communiqué asserts Article 19 and freedom of the media as essential, Paris
- **2003, 10-14 November**: WSIS PrepCom-3a, Geneva
- **2003, 12 November**: Civil Society Bureau letter to Kofi Annan urging support for civil society
- **2003, 5-6 December**: WSIS PrepCom-3b, Geneva
- **2003, 10-12 December**: WSIS First Phase: Geneva
- **2004, March**: Informal meeting on WSIS Phase 2
- **2004, April 13-15**: African Civil Society Meeting forms African Civil Society for the Information Society (ACSIS)
- **2004, May**: Africa Telecom Conference, Cairo Egypt
- **2004, June 24-26**: PrepCom-1 Hammamet, Tunis
- **2005, February 2-4**: Africa Regional Conference, Accra, Ghana
- **2005, February 17-26**: PrepCom-2, Geneva
- **2005, September**: PrepCom-3
- **2005, November**: WSIS Second Phase: Tunis

## 12 WSIS Advocacy and Lobbying Chronology

Highlights of participation by WSIS Civil Society Plenary, Media Caucus & African Caucus		
Date	Event / location	Advocacy outcome/s
1998	UN International Telecommunications Union Plenipotentiary Conference, MINNEAPOLIS, USA	Accepted Tunisian delegation proposal to convene a World Summit on the Information Society. Resolution 73.
February 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2001	United Nations General Assembly, New York	Resolution 55/96 adopted on Promoting and Consolidating Democracy – calls upon states to promote and consolidate democracy by (among others): Freedom of thought, conscience, religion, belief, peaceful assembly and association, freedom of expression, freedom of opinion, and free, independent and pluralistic media.
May 2001	WINDHOEK, Namibia	<i>African Charter on Broadcasting</i> agreed at WINDHOEK + 10 meeting. WSIS named in the Charter as an implementation and strengthening process.
May 26 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2001	UNESCO WSIS Civil Society Consultation BAMAOKO, Mali. (preceded Bamako Regional WSIS meeting).	<i>African Charter on Broadcasting</i> presented to UNESCO Civil Society consultation and not received well. Agreed to mention as a footnote / never done. Content on four themes developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Info-structures in developing countries</li> <li>· Cultural diversity, public domain and fair use</li> <li>· Freedom of expression in the Information Society</li> <li>· Education in and for the Information Society</li> </ul>
August 2001	SADC Meeting, BLANTYRE, Malawi	SADC meeting produced a 'Declaration on Information and Communications Technology (ICT)' to drive ICT policy in the Southern African development Community region.
December 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2001	United Nations General Assembly, New York	UN approves the ITU hosting of WSIS in Geneva (2003) and Tunisia (2005) UN Resolution 56.183, December 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2001
May 28 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> 2002	African WSIS Regional Preparatory Meeting, BAMAOKO, Mali	<i>African Charter on Broadcasting</i> presentation to Government Plenary led to it being endorsed by African governments and named in the Declaration of BAMAOKO, 2002
July, 2002	PrepCom 1, GENEVA, Switzerland	Civil Society initially not organised for structured dialogue / many Governments expressed concern that civil society involvement in WSIS would produce trouble, turmoil, and inefficiency.  Formation of Civil Society Content and Themes Group to co-ordinate content and work in parallel with Government Delegations Sub-Committee 2 (Content and Themes).
August 2002	GRAHAMSTOWN, South Africa, HIGHWAY AFRICA Conference	Charter on the Digital Divide produced in the event scheduled as part of the WSSD (World Summit on Sustainable Development) Johannesburg, South Africa
October 2002	Internet	CRIS Campaign raises the need for a new set of Rights to enable the Right to Communicate within the Information Society. Article 19 and partners counter this arguing these rights already exist within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
November 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2002	ICT Policy and Civil Society Workshop, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia	Workshop on ICT policy advocacy held for African civil society representatives from 25 countries. Run by ARTICLE 19, APC and the ECA. Statement 'Building an Inclusive Information Society in Africa' released to feed into WSIS process and inspire national, regional and international activity in ICT fora for Africa.

January 2003	UNESCO	UNESCO convenes on-line discussion on WSIS related issues
January 2003	WINDHOEK, Namibia	Publication 'Our Side of the Divide' – African perspectives on Information and Communication Technologies, prepared for PrepCom 2 with input from African Civil Society Caucus. Project managed by MISA, joint project of MISA, AMARC, APC, SACOD, and AMARC. Documented use of ICT's in Africa, key African charters and conventions and raised debate on the Right to Communicate. Produced in French & English. 3000 copies distributed at PrepCom 2.
February 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	Public Meeting to consult on Uganda's national position on WSIS, KAMPALA, Uganda	Production of a national position on the WSIS Draft Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action to be submitted and used in plenary input during PrepCom 2.
February 17 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	PrepCom 2	<p>Civil Society Plenary input to Action Plan of Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Consensus document compiled from all caucus inputs.</p> <p>Civil Society releases a document called 'Seven Musts – Priority Principles Proposed by Civil Society'.</p> <p>On going resistance in Govt. Plenary to inclusion of media in official documents.</p> <p>Media Caucus releases text asserting Article 19 and the key role of media in any conception of an 'information society'.</p> <p>Right to Communicate Debate held in the form of a panel about new communication rights vs. the elaboration of existing ones. Input from CRIS, ARTICLE 19 and the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC). Result was recognition of existing rights and fundamental agreement between parties to the debate. Scheduled for further discussion. Remaining disagreement on the term 'communication rights', by WPFC.</p> <p>Southern African NGO 'partnership' team expanded to include four rural women from the southern African region (South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe). Women orientated to and participated in PrepCom. Surprise element for numerous delegates that actual people from the 'other' side of the digital divide are in attendance. Successful awareness raising strategy. Women did a number of media interviews.</p> <p>Southern African government delegations lobbied by 'partnership team' particularly, the teams' women. Policy input provided for official delegations use.</p> <p>Civil Society Plenary endorses existence and terms of Civil Society Bureau (CSB) and Civil Society Content and Themes Working Group. CSB composed of 21 'families' to enable all civil society entities to find a 'home'.</p> <p>Civil Society domain created: <a href="http://www.wsis-cs.org">www.wsis-cs.org</a></p>
March 2003	Civil Society and ICT Advocacy Workshop, Johannesburg, South Africa	Civil society organisations with an active role or growing engagement in ICT are trained in advocacy skills and policy areas to equip people to take an informed & active role in ICT advocacy. Action plans developed as part of the course. Participants from across Africa.
April –	Namibia, Lesotho,	SADC partnership 'Our Side of the Divide' project launched.

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September 2003	Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia	Photographer / Sound recordist dispatched to SADC regional travel to collect stories for project – advocacy material used thereafter in numerous WSIS forums.
April – June 2003	Internet / email spaces	African Civil Society Caucus Information Society Issues paper produced and discussed in electronic list.
April 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	WSIS Mauritius Conference, MAURITIUS	African meeting called to follow up on BAMAKO Declaration. Development of a Declaration and Action Plan for submission to WSIS process. ‘Access to ICT’s for All’.
May	OUR MEDIA 11, BARRANQUILLA, Colombia	International network of civil society media activists and theorists receives presentation on the southern African partnership WSIS intervention and discusses the possibility of more dynamic interventions in UN processes.
May 10 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	CODI (Committee on Development Information) 111, UN Economic Commission for Africa, ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia	African Civil Society meeting held as a side event to CODI 111, to respond to Draft WSIS Declaration and Plan of Action and develop African content. Input used to develop African issues paper for PrepCom 3.
June 14 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	CAIRO, Egypt Young Women Leaders in ICT Pan-Arab Regional Conference on WSIS	Statement of policy and actions needed in the Arab region. Call for inclusion of women, especially young women, in WSIS processes.
July 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	Internet lists / sites	Circulation of Civil Society Priorities Document – result of discussion by email list following PrepCom 2.
July 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	Internet / e-lists	Civil Society Content and Themes report on activity between PrepCom 2 and Intersessional released including responses to March 21 <sup>st</sup> version of Draft Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action.
July 15 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> 2003	WSIS Intersessional Meeting, PARIS	<p>Civil Society speaking slot allowed, each morning in Plenary.</p> <p>Africa caucus spoke on Day 1 and Day 4 (receiving a standing ovation on day 4 for input on real people from the ‘Our Side of the Divide’ Project.</p> <p>Acknowledgment from Governments that civil society expertise is of value to the debates.</p> <p>Civil society frustration that a daily speaking slot has to address all the issues of the day and the input is forgotten by the time paragraphs / subjects are debated in Govt. Plenary and treated by the drafting committee.</p> <p>Proposal for structured negotiation (realisation of multi-stakeholder process) and input to PrepCom 3 made by CSB to Inter-Governmental Bureau. Proposal 1 that Sub-Committee 2 be suspended (so as not to cause the rules and procedures to be re-negotiated) at the start of each new topic to receive CS input. Called the ‘Stop and Go’ proposal. Proposal 2 that voluntary daily one-hour ‘informal negotiations’ between Governments and CS be conducted at Pcom 3. CS granted Govt. Plenary speaking time on each paragraph.</p>
July – September, 2003	Expert Mission, Partnership Management Southern African NGO advocacy Intervention WSIS	NiZA Expert Mission begun to manage partnership intervention in WSIS. Mission became voluntary after September when no additional funds were found.
July 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	Intersessional Meeting	New version of Draft Declaration of Principles produced with three options for mention of Freedom of Expression / ARTICLE

		19. On going resistance in Govt. Plenary to the use of Article 19 and the principles inherent in it.
July 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	Internet	Research project proposed on the perceptions of community media in WSIS, by Media Caucus member – now a PhD process at the University of Hamburg.
July 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	THETHA on WSIS, Johannesburg, South Africa	National Meeting called in South Africa to hear about WSIS to date and mobilise greater participation. Meeting addresses by the Chair of the WSIS Sub Committee 2 on Content and Themes. (A south African national).
July 2003	Summit participation negotiations. JOHANNESBURG, South Africa	Successful negotiations between Highway Africa, SADC NGO Advocacy Partnership and South African Broadcast Corporation to co-operate on African Media Village and report to Africa media from Summit Phase 1.
September 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	Highway Africa Conference, GRAHAMSTOWN, South Africa	Statement released to be conveyed to PrepCom 3, endorsing the Media caucus text developed at PrepCom 2 and asserting the fundamental principles of Article 19 as the basis for the information society and the role of the media – traditional and new.
September 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	Civil Society Orientation Meeting	Three southern African women who participated in PrepCom 2 attend orientation session for PrepCom 3 and get more involved in Gender and Media Caucus's.
September 15-26, 2003	PrepCom 3, GENEVA, Switzerland	<p>3 southern African rural women participate for the second time in WSIS, increasingly asserting the reality of people who do not have access to the world of electronic communication.</p> <p>Government negotiations stalled on key issues – the proposed Digital Solidarity Fund, Private vs. public governance of the Internet, proprietary vs. open source software, freedom of expression, intellectual property rights. Strong resistance by a minority of national delegations to the acknowledgement of Article 19 or freedom of expression and media freedom.</p> <p>South African Chair of Sub Committee 2 (content &amp; themes) relieved of Chair and widely viewed as being partisan and aligning with anti freedom of expression Govts.</p> <p>Draft Declaration of Principles (Sept 26<sup>th</sup>) released with references to Article 19 and freedom of expression in square brackets – i.e. not agreed to.</p> <p>Civil Society plenary responds to Draft Declaration with strong concerns on the lack of commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ARTICLE 19 and the Millennium Development Goals and takes decision to develop a separate declaration.</p> <p>Media caucus develops text for inclusion in the Draft Declaration and Plan of Action and widely circulates a text arguing that Article 19 must be an over riding principle on freedom of expression.</p> <p>Split in Media Caucus over the inclusion of community media in text asserting pluralism and diversity in media. Strong resistance from private broadcasters in Latin America who argue community media is not required in Latin America as they fulfil this function. Argument over-ruled by Chair as a regional issue to be tackled at that level resulted in departure of Latin American group from Media Caucus. Strong lobbying program undertaken by Latin</p>



		<p>American private broadcasters to government delegations.</p> <p>New caucus on community media formed by interested parties within the Media Caucus to lobby for community media references in official documents. Strong but unsuccessful lobbying ensued to have community media included in Declaration of Principles. Successful awareness raising strategy. Desegregating types of media perceived as too detailed by Govt. drafting group.</p> <p>Inter-Government Working Group on Media formed to try and break the impasse on references to freedom of expression and media. (Media Caucus allowed 5 minutes input at the start and finish of daily debates and no observer status. This was a regressive move in terms of civil society participation.) Media Caucus Chair addresses Working Group twice to present and motivate for caucus agreed text, and to protest at being excluded from full participation in the Working Group.</p> <p>Swiss Delegation to Inter-Government Working Group on Media adopted the Media caucus text as its own to bring the text into the realm of an 'official' government position. Still no agreement reached on Article 19.</p> <p>Draft Declaration of Principles released, with minimal reference to media.</p> <p>Media caucus writes to UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan calling for UN agencies other than the ITU, to participate more fully in WSIS and provide complimentary expertise to protect existing human rights.</p> <p>UN Under Secretary General for Communications and Public Information replies to Media Caucus indicating issues raised will be taken up.</p>
September 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	Amsterdam, The Netherlands NiZA Living Year Book	Southern African partnership intervention in WSIS described to participants. Audience feedback indicated a new appreciation of the reasons for participating in UN Summits.
October 9 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	UNESCO Headquarters PARIS, France	Ministerial Round Table preparing for WSIS. Common position communiqué asserts Article 19 and freedom of the media as essential to an information society.
October 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2003	Draft Non-Paper of the President of the WSIS PrepCom releases Non-paper.	Non-Paper compiled from open-ended informal consultations convened by President of WSIS, with governments to build consensus on issues where agreement has not been reached and where there are significant differences of opinion. Paper 'Building the Information Society: a global challenge in the new Millennium.'
October 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2003	Address to UN Second Committee on Freedom of Expression and the WSIS	UN Under Secretary General for Communications and Public Information uses Media caucus arguments in an address to the UN Second Committee under an item on Science and Technology for Development and the WSIS.
October 2003	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights	Background Note on the Information Society and Human Rights released citing Article 19 as having special significance and clarifying that Article 29 may not jeopardise the right of freedom of expression itself.
November 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	UN Communications Group weekly meeting NEW YORK, USA	Discussion notes that a set back to press freedom would be a 'public relations disaster for the UN', that the campaign to reaffirm existing UN language must be stepped up but that issues

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		of press freedom should not draw media attention away from the other important achievements of the WSIS.
November 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	Non-Paper re-draft	The non-paper being used as a basis for negotiations at PrepCom 3A (put out by the President of WSIS) did not include specific mention of Articles 19 or 29, pluralism of media ownership or profession based regulation of ethical standards.
November 10 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	PrepCom 3a, GENEVA, Switzerland	<p>Media Caucus releases Press Statement stating that excluding the media from the information society is like agriculture without farmers. Numerous journalists called Caucus Chair for interviews and promoted the Media Caucus position in global media.</p> <p>In the plenary debate on para. 52 of the non-paper (on media) the Finnish delegation proposed a new wording. The plenary decided that no new text would be considered - only already agreed texts passed by the UN General Assembly – not the UNESCO General Council. Under Secretary General for Communications and Public Information at the UN in New York deployed to identify the appropriate document to be used as the starting point on the text on media. The Chair of WSIS Sub-Committee 2, then proposed that interested parties speak to him directly.</p> <p>Media Caucus Chair lobbies Sub Com. 2 Chair on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the importance of not making a regression in freedom of expression agreements at WSIS</li> <li>- the interaction the Media Caucus has had with Kofi Annan and the resulting articles and speeches that have affirmed existing agreements, standards and declarations.</li> <li>- the importance of recalling the development context behind the scenes.</li> </ul>
November 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	Letter to UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan	Civil Society Bureau writes to Kofi Annan urging support for civil society to continue its participation in WSIS beyond the Geneva summit as an active realisation of the multi-stakeholder approach espoused in the Millennium Development Goals.
November 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2003	UNESCO Briefing on WSIS PARIS, France	Director General of UNESCO states in WSIS briefing to Permanent Delegates of Member States, in reference to on-going negotiations over the inclusion of Article 19, that the Summit will not be deemed a success unless the Declaration contains an ‘unambiguous assurance that freedom of expression is recognised as a the fundamental principle underlying and informing the development of an information society’. He called on member states to ensure WSIS Delegations argue for this.
November 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	NEPAD MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE ON WSIS DAKAR, Senegal	DAKAR DECLARATION ON THE DIGITAL SOLIDARITY prepared to assert the need for and describe the organisational aspects of the fund as proposed by President Wade of Senegal.
December 5 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	PrepCom 3b, GENEVA, Switzerland	On going lobbying by Media Caucus to ensure inclusion of Article 19 in Declaration of Principles.
December 2003	WSIS Summit Phase 1, GENEVA, Switzerland	<p>African Media Village demonstrated use of technology in Africa through a tele-centre using open sources software, a broadcasting radio station and visual and recorded representations of people from southern Africa telling their own stories.</p> <p>Declaration of Principles includes Article 19.</p> <p>Civil Society produced it’s own Declaration called ‘Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs’, a consensus document with input from all CS ‘families and caucus’s, placing human</p>

		rights at it's centre and proposing solutions to the issues that the Government plenary was not able to reach agreement on.
March 2004	Informal Meeting on Phase 2 of WSIS	Informal multi-stakeholder brainstorming session discussed three themes to prepare for Phase 2: Implementation of the Geneva plan of Action, expected results of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase & process of phase 2. Agreed that a more political document committing Heads of state should develop, that civil society is a 'naturalised' part of the process.  On going lack of African participation at all levels (government, private and civil society) noted. No resolution of how to support greater participation. Greater emphasis placed on evaluation and monitoring of action resulting from WSIS.
April 2004	PRETORIA, South Africa	NEPAD E-Africa Commission opened to promote and implement e-strategies in Africa.
April 13 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2004	African Civil Society Meeting, HAMMAMET, Tunisia	Formation of African Civil Society for the Information Society (ACSIS) to co-ordinate civil society activity and act as official liaison body for Phase 2 of WSIS and beyond. Plans made to link national focal points to regional co-ordinators.
May 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2004	AFRICA Telecom Conference 2004 CAIRO, Egypt	Noting that 30 of 53 African countries now have e-strategies, ECA re-asserts that NEPAD be the home for the Digital Solidarity Fund proposed by Senegal in WSIS (despite the funds lack of popularity among developed nations).
May 2004	HAMMERMET, Tunisia-e-Gender Forum	Declaration to be presented at PrepCom1 / Phase 2, produced placing families and women at the heart of an information society and raising issues of discrimination from the perspective of Arab women.
June 24 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2004	PrepCom 1 HAMMAMET, Tunisia	Meeting interrupted by disruptive interventions in the Civil Society Plenary, by large delegation of Tunisians who did not agree with the selection of a Tunisian human rights activist as a speaker. Government meeting postponed while civil society negotiations occurred.  Civil Society concerns about the difficulty of working in such an environment. Press Freedom bodies re state concerns over the repression and incarceration of journalists in Tunisia.
November 22 <sup>nd</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2004	Role and Place of MEDIA in the Information Society in Africa and Arab States, MARRAKECH, Morocco	Planned conference to be hosted by the government of Morocco and Orbicom.
February 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	African Regional Conference, ACCRA, Ghana	Official WSIS Regional meeting for Africa.
February 17 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	PrepCom 2, GENEVA, Switzerland	
September 2005	PrepCom 3	
November 16 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	WSIS Summit Phase 2 TUNISIA	

## **13 List of Abbreviations**

**ACSIS** – African Civil Society for the Information Society  
**AMARC** – World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters  
**APC** – Association for Progressive Communications  
**Article 19** – global freedom of expression NGO, Article of the UDHR regarding media rights and freedom.  
**CATIA** – Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa  
**CINSA** – Community Information Network of Southern Africa  
**CMA** – Community Media Association  
**CRIS** – Communication Rights in the Information Society  
**DoP** – Declaration of Principles  
**FXI** – Freedom of Expression Institute, South Africa  
**GKP** – Global Knowledge Partnership  
**HANA** - Highway Africa News Agency  
**ICT** – Information and Communication Technology  
**IPR** – Intellectual Property Rights  
**ISP** – Internet Service Provider  
**ITU** – Information and Communication Unit  
**MISA** – Media Institute of Southern Africa  
**NCRF** – National Community Radio Forum  
**NGO** – Non-governmental organisation  
**NiZA** – Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa  
**NWICO** – New World Information and Communication Order  
**OKN** – Open Knowledge Network  
**PoA** – Plan of Action  
**PrepCom** – Preparatory Committee meeting  
**PSO** – Capacity Strengthening Organisation/Financing institution.  
**SABC** – South African Broadcasting Corporation  
**SACOD** – Southern Africa Communications for Development  
**SADC** – Southern African Development Community  
**SANGONeT** – Southern African Non-Governmental Organisation Network  
**SDC** – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation  
**UDHR** – Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
**UNECA** – United Nations Economic Commission for Africa  
**UNESCO** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation  
**WPFC** – World Press Freedom Committee  
**WSIS** – World Summit on the Information Society  
**WSSD** – World Summit on Sustainable Development

## Annex 1: WSIS Declaration of Principles (December 2003)<sup>2</sup>

### Building the Information Society: a global challenge in the new Millennium

#### *A. Our Common Vision of the Information Society*

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.

1. **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.

2. **We reaffirm** the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, as enshrined in the Vienna Declaration. We also reaffirm that democracy, sustainable development, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as good governance at all levels are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. We further resolve to strengthen respect for the rule of law in international as in national affairs.

3. **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.

4. **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.

5. In keeping with the spirit of this declaration, **we rededicate ourselves** to upholding the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.

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<sup>2</sup> The WSIS Declaration (WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/0004) and Plan of Action (WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/0005) can electronically be retrieved at <http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents>

6. **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.
7. **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.
8. **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.
9. **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.
10. **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.
11. **We affirm** that development of ICTs provides enormous opportunities for women, who should be an integral part of, and key actors, in the Information Society. We are committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis on equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. To this end, we should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end.
12. 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.
13. **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.
14. 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.
15. **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.
16. **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.
17. 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***

18. **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**

19. 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**

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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**

23. The ability for all to access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge is essential in an inclusive Information Society.

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. 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.

27. 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**

28. 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.

29. 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.

30. 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.

31. 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.

32. To achieve a sustainable development of the Information Society, national capability in ICT research and development should be enhanced. Furthermore, partnerships, in particular between and among developed and developing countries, including countries with economies in transition, in research and development, technology transfer, manufacturing and utilization of ICT products and services are crucial for promoting capacity building and global participation in the Information Society. The manufacture of ICTs presents a significant opportunity for creation of wealth.

33. The attainment of our shared aspirations, in particular for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to become fully-fledged members of the Information Society, and their positive integration into the knowledge economy, depends largely on increased capacity building in the areas of education, technology know-how and access to information, which are major factors in determining development and competitiveness.

#### **5) Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs**

34. Strengthening the trust framework, including information security and network security, authentication, privacy and consumer protection, is a prerequisite for the development of the Information Society and for building confidence among users of ICTs. A global culture of cyber-security needs to be promoted, developed and implemented in cooperation with all stakeholders and international expert bodies. These efforts should be supported by increased international cooperation. Within this global culture of cyber-security, it is important to enhance security and to ensure the protection of data and privacy, while enhancing access and trade. In addition, it must take into account the level of social and economic development of each country and respect the development-oriented aspects of the Information Society.

35. 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.

36. Spam is a significant and growing problem for users, networks and the Internet as a whole. Spam and cyber-security should be dealt with at appropriate national and international levels.



**6) Enabling environment**

37. 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.

38. 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.

39. 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.

40. 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.

41. 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.

42. 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.

43. 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.

44. 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.

45. 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.

46. Recognizing that ICTs are progressively changing our working practices, the creation of a secure, safe and healthy working environment, appropriate to the utilisation of ICTs, respecting all relevant international norms, is fundamental.

47. 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.

48. The management of the Internet encompasses both technical and public policy issues and should involve all stakeholders and relevant intergovernmental and international organizations. In this respect it is recognized that:

- a) Policy authority for Internet-related public policy issues is the sovereign right of States. They have rights and responsibilities for international Internet-related public policy issues;
- b) The private sector has had and should continue to have an important role in the development of the Internet, both in the technical and economic fields;
- c) Civil society has also played an important role on Internet matters, especially at community level, and should continue to play such a role;
- d) Intergovernmental organizations have had and should continue to have a facilitating role in the coordination of Internet-related public policy issues;
- e) International organizations have also had and should continue to have an important role in the development of Internet-related technical standards and relevant policies.

50. International Internet governance issues should be addressed in a coordinated manner. We ask the Secretary-General of the United Nations to set up a working group on Internet governance, in an open and inclusive process that ensures a mechanism for the full and active participation of governments, the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries, involving relevant intergovernmental and international organizations and forums, to investigate and make proposals for action, as appropriate, on the governance of Internet by 2005.

#### **7) ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life**

51. The usage and deployment of ICTs should seek to create benefits in all aspects of our daily life. ICT applications are potentially important in government operations and services, health care and health information, education and training, employment, job creation, business, agriculture, transport, protection of environment and management of natural resources, disaster prevention, and culture, and to promote eradication of poverty and other agreed development goals. ICTs should also contribute to sustainable production and consumption patterns and reduce traditional barriers, providing an opportunity for all to access local and global markets in a more equitable manner. Applications should be user-friendly, accessible to all, affordable, adapted to local needs in languages and cultures, and support sustainable development. To this effect, local authorities should play a major role in the provision of ICT services for the benefit of their populations.

#### **8) Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content**

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 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 digitisation.

**9) Media**

55. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of media, which are essential to the Information Society. Freedom to seek, receive, impart and use information for the creation, accumulation and dissemination of knowledge are important to the Information Society. We call for the responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards. Traditional media in all their forms have an important role in the Information Society and ICTs should play a supportive role in this regard. Diversity of media ownership should be encouraged, in conformity with national law, and taking into account relevant international conventions. We reaffirm the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills.

**10) Ethical dimensions of the Information Society**

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 and 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 competences of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in the fields of ICTs—assistance in bridging the digital divide, international and regional cooperation, radio spectrum

management, standards development and the dissemination of information—are of crucial importance for building the Information Society.

***C. Towards an Information Society for All Based on Shared Knowledge***

65. **We commit ourselves** to strengthening cooperation to seek common responses to the challenges and to the implementation of the Plan of Action, which will realize the vision of an inclusive Information Society based on the Key Principles incorporated in this Declaration.

66. **We further commit ourselves** to evaluate and follow-up progress in bridging the digital divide, taking into account different levels of development, so as to reach internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and to assess the effectiveness of investment and international cooperation efforts in building the Information Society.

67. **We are firmly convinced** that we are collectively entering a new era of enormous potential, that of the Information Society and expanded human communication. In this emerging society, information and knowledge can be produced, exchanged, shared and communicated through all the networks of the world. All individuals can soon, if we take the necessary actions, together build a new Information Society based on shared knowledge and founded on global solidarity and a better mutual understanding between peoples and nations. We trust that these measures will open the way to the future development of a true knowledge society.

## **Annex 2: Civil Society Declaration to WSIS**

### **Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs**

Unanimously Adopted by the WSIS Civil Society Plenary on 8 December 2003

*We, women and men from different continents, cultural backgrounds, perspectives, experience and expertise, acting as members of different constituencies of an emerging global civil society, considering civil society participation as fundamental to the first ever held UN Summit on Information and Communication issues, the World Summit on the Information Society, have been working for two years inside the process, devoting our efforts to shaping people-centred, inclusive and equitable concept of information and communication societies.*

*Working together both on-line and off-line as civil society entities, practising an inclusive and participatory use of information and communication technologies, has allowed us to share views and shape common positions, and to collectively develop a vision of information and communication societies.*

*At this step of the process, the first phase of the Summit, Geneva, December 2003, our voices and the general interest we collectively expressed are not adequately reflected in the Summit documents. We propose this document as part of the official outcomes of the Summit. Convinced that this vision can become reality through the actions and lives of women and men, communities and people, we hereby present our own vision to all, as an invitation to participate in this ongoing dialogue and to join forces in shaping our common future.*

#### **1. A VISIONARY SOCIETY**

At the heart of our vision of information and communications societies is the human being. The dignity and rights of all peoples and each person must be promoted, respected, protected and affirmed. Redressing the inexcusable gulf between levels of development and between opulence and extreme poverty must therefore be our prime concern.

We are committed to building information and communication societies that are people-centred, inclusive and equitable. Societies in which everyone can freely create, access, utilise, share and disseminate information and knowledge, so that individuals, communities and peoples are empowered to improve their quality of life and to achieve their full potential. Societies founded on the principles of social, political, and economic justice, and peoples' full participation and empowerment, and thus societies that truly address the key development challenges facing the world today. Societies that pursue the objectives of sustainable development, democracy, and gender equality, for the attainment of a more peaceful, just, egalitarian and thus sustainable world, premised on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We aspire to build information and communication societies where development is framed by fundamental human rights and oriented to achieving a more equitable distribution of resources, leading to the elimination of poverty in a way that is non-exploitative and environmentally sustainable. To this end we believe technologies can be engaged as fundamental means, rather than becoming ends in themselves, thus recognising that bridging the Digital Divide is only one step on the road to achieving development for all. We recognise the tremendous potential of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in overcoming the devastation of famine, natural catastrophes, new pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, as well as the proliferation of arms.

We reaffirm that communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and a foundation of all social organisations. Everyone, everywhere, at any time should have the opportunity to participate in communication processes and no one should be excluded from their benefits. This implies that every person must have access to the means of communication and must be able to exercise their right to freedom of opinion and expression, which includes the right to hold opinions and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. Similarly, the right to privacy, the right to access public information and the public domain of knowledge, and many other universal human rights of specific relevance to information and communication processes, must also be upheld. Together with access, all these communication rights and freedoms must be actively guaranteed for all in clearly written national laws and enforced with adequate technical requirements.

Building such societies implies involving individuals in their capacity as citizens, as well as their organisations and communities, as participants and decision-makers in shaping frameworks, policies and governing mechanisms. This means creating an enabling environment for the engagement and commitment of all generations, both women and men, and ensuring the involvement of diverse social and linguistic groups, cultures and peoples, rural and urban populations without exclusion. In addition, governments should maintain and promote public services where required by citizens and establish accountability to citizens as a pillar of public policy, in order to ensure that models of information and communication societies are open to continuing correction and improvement.

We recognise that no technology is neutral with respect to its social impacts and, therefore, the possibility of having so-called "technology-neutral" decision-making processes is a fallacy. It is critical to make careful social and technical choices concerning the introduction of new technologies from the inception of their design through to their deployment and operational phases. Negative social and technical impacts of information and communications systems that are discovered late in the design process are usually extremely difficult to correct and, therefore, can cause lasting harm. We envision an information and communication society in which technologies are designed in a participatory manner with and by their end-users so as to prevent or minimise their negative impacts.

We envision societies where human knowledge, creativity, co-operation and solidarity are considered core elements; where not only individual creativity, but also collective innovation, based on co-operative work are promoted. Societies where knowledge, information and communication resources are recognised and protected as the common heritage of humankind; societies that guarantee and foster cultural and linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue, in environments that are free from discrimination, violence and hatred. We are conscious that information, knowledge and the means of communication are available on a magnitude that humankind has never dreamt of in the past; but we are also aware that exclusion from access to the means of communication, from information and from the skills that are needed to participate in the public sphere, is still a major constraint, especially in developing countries. At the same time information and knowledge are increasingly being transformed into private resources which can be controlled, sold and bought, as if they were simple commodities and not the founding elements of social organisation and development. Thus, as one of the main challenges of information and communication societies, we recognise the urgency of seeking solutions to these contradictions.

We are convinced that with the sufficient political will to mobilise this wealth of human knowledge and the appropriate resources, humanity could certainly achieve the goals of the Millennium Declaration, and even surpass them. As civil society organisations, we accept our part of responsibility in making this goal and our vision a reality.

## **2. CORE PRINCIPLES AND CHALLENGES**

In accordance with this vision, it is essential that the development of information and communication societies be grounded in core principles that reflect a full awareness of the challenges to be met and the responsibility of different stakeholders. This includes the full recognition of the need to address gender concerns and to make a fundamental commitment to gender equality, non-discrimination and women's empowerment, and recognise these as non-negotiable and essential prerequisites to an equitable and people-centred development within information and communication societies. Such a commitment means consciously redressing the effects of the intersection of unequal power relations in the social, economic and political spheres, which manifests in differential access, choice, opportunity, participation, status and control over resources between women and men as well as communities in terms of class, ethnicity, age, religion, race, geographical location and development status.

We have identified the following as key areas of concern. We recognise and uphold the following principles; and we have identified certain priority areas for action by the international community.

### **2.1 Social Justice and People-Centred Sustainable Development**

Within a social justice framework, human development implies cultural, social, economic, political and environmental living conditions that fulfill and empower individuals and communities. Despite the enormous advancements in knowledge and technology achieved by humanity, a majority of people continue to live in appalling conditions.

Social justice in the information and communication societies can only be pursued by taking into account geopolitical and historical injustices along economic, social, political and cultural lines. Current global dynamics are characterised by tensions resulting from the inter-linkages of global economic liberalisation, cultural globalisation, increased militarism, rising fundamentalisms, racism and the suspension and violation of basic human rights.

The unequal distribution of ICTs and the lack of information access for a large majority of the world's population, often referred to as the digital divide, is in fact a mapping of new asymmetries onto the existing grid of social divides. These include the divide between the North and South, rich and poor, men and women, urban and rural populations, those with access to information and those without. Such disparities are found not only between different cultures, but also within national borders. The international community must exercise its collective power to ensure action on the part of individual states in order to bridge domestic digital divides.

Redressing all forms of discrimination, exclusion and isolation that different marginalised and vulnerable groups and communities experience will require more than the deployment of technology alone. Their full participation in information and communication societies requires us to reject at a fundamental level, the solely profit-motivated and market-propelled promotion of ICTs for development. Conscientious and purposeful actions need to be taken in order to ensure that new ICTs are not deployed to further perpetuate existing negative trends of economic globalisation and market monopolisation. Instead, ICT development and applications should be oriented to advance the social, economic and cultural progress of the world's peoples and contribute to transforming the development paradigm.

Technological decisions should be taken with the goal of meeting the life-critical needs of people, not with goal of enriching companies or enabling undemocratic control by governments. Therefore, fundamental decisions concerning the design and use of technologies must be made in co-operation with Civil Society, including individual end-users, engineers, and scientists. In particular, where community-based technologies are concerned the study and practice of community informatics must be applied in order to respond adequately to the particular characteristics and needs of communities in design processes.

### ***2.1.1 Poverty Eradication***

Poverty Eradication must be a key priority on the WSIS agenda. Without challenging existing inequalities, no sustainable development embracing the new ICTs can be achieved. People living in extreme poverty must be enabled to contribute their experiences and knowledge in a dialogue involving all parties. Challenging poverty requires more than setting 'development agendas'. It requires a fundamental commitment to examine the current frameworks, to improve local access to information that is of relevance for the specific context, to improve training in ICT-related skills, and to allocate significant financial and other resources. Also, because volunteers are working at the grassroots level, they play an important role in social inclusion.

Financial resources, linked with social and digital solidarity, need to be channelled through existing and new financial mechanisms that are managed transparently and inclusively by all sectors of society. Among the frameworks that need to be examined in terms of their potentially adverse effects on equitable development are the current arrangements for recognition and governance of monopolised knowledge and information, including the work of WIPO and the functioning of the TRIPS agreement.

### ***2.1.2 Global Citizenship***

Information and communication societies have the potential to catalyse and help release the enormous financial, technical, human and moral resources required for sustainable development. These resources will only be freed up as the peoples of the world develop a profound sense of responsibility for the fate of the planet and the well-being of the entire human family. In this regard, there is a need for the development in the individual and in communities, as well as governments, of a global consciousness, and a sense of world citizenship. Since the body of humankind is one and indivisible, each member of the human race is born into the world as a trust of the whole and is best served by ensuring the equal importance of each member through the proactive exercise and application of international human rights standards.

### ***2.1.3 Gender Justice***

Equitable, open and inclusive information and communication societies must be based on gender justice and be particularly guided by the interpretation of principles of gender equality, non-discrimination and women's empowerment as contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Fifth World Conference on Women) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Actions must demonstrate not only a strong commitment but also a high level of consciousness to an intersectional approach to redressing discrimination resulting from unequal power relations at all levels of society. Proactive policies and programmes across all sectors must be developed for women as active and primary agents of change in owning, designing, using and adapting ICT. To empower girls and women throughout their life cycle, as shapers and leaders of society, gender responsive educational programs and appropriate learning environments need to be promoted. Gender analysis and the development of both quantitative and qualitative indicators in measuring gender equality through an extensive and integrated national system of monitoring and evaluation are "musts."

#### ***2.1.4 Importance of Youth***

We recognise also 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 information and communication societies. In particular, we must seek to assist and empower youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, especially young people in developing countries. Equality of opportunity for girls and young women must be integral to our efforts, and we must create a greater awareness of their specific needs and potential in the field of ICT. Issues facing young workers in ICT industries, such as low pay, poor working conditions, and a lack of job stability and collective representation, must also be addressed. As main users of ICTs, young people are most affected and vulnerable to the health risks exposed by their use. Therefore we commit to develop and use only those ICTs that ensure the well-being, protection, and harmonious development of all children.

#### ***2.1.5 Access to Information and the Means of Communication***

Access to information and the means of communication as a public and global commons should be participatory, universal, inclusive and democratic. Inequalities in access must be addressed in terms of the North/South divide as well as in terms of enduring inequalities within developed and less developed nations. Barriers that need to be overcome are of an economic, educational, technical, political, social, ethnic, and age nature, and inequitable gender relations are embedded into all of these and need to be specifically addressed.

Universal access to information that is essential for human development must be ensured. Infrastructure and the most appropriate forms of information and communication technologies must be accessible for all in their different social context, and the social appropriation of these technologies must be encouraged. This implies addressing diverse realities experienced by distinct social groups such as indigenous peoples, diasporas and migrants, and privileging local or targeted solutions. Traditional media and community-based information and communication initiatives have a vital role to play in these respects, and so does the effective use of the new ICTs. The regulatory and legal framework in all information and communication societies must be strengthened to support broad-based sharing of technologies, information, and knowledge, and to foster community control, respectful of human rights and freedoms.

Specific needs and requirements of all stakeholders, including those with disabilities, must be considered in ICT development. Accessibility and inclusiveness of ICTs is best done at an early stage of design, development and production, so that the information and communication society becomes the society for all, at minimum cost.

The need to access, send and receive information represents a particularly vital challenge to vulnerable people such as refugees, those displaced by war, and asylum seekers who often do not know their rights, which are frequently violated. Access to means of communication for these groups is necessary for the defence and promotion of their rights, in order to make legitimate claims in conformity with international law.

#### ***2.1.6 Access to Health Information***

The delivery of life-critical mental and physical health information can be facilitated and improved through ICT-based solutions. Lack of access to information and communication has been identified as a critical factor in the public mental and physical health crises around the world. Experts have suggested that providing citizens of developing countries with community level points of access to mental and physical health information would be a critical starting point for addressing the mental and physical health care crises. However, such access points should support more than one-way flows of information (for example, from expert to community or patient). Communities must be allowed to participate in the selection and creation of communication flows that they find useful and necessary to address the prevention, treatment, and promotion



of mental and physical health care for all people. Open access to medical information is absolutely essential so that all known data are available to medical doctors and practitioners.

#### ***2.1.7 Basic Literacy***

Literacy and free universal access to education is a key principle. Knowledge societies require an informed and educated citizenry. Capacity-building needs to include skills to use ICTs, media and information literacy, and the skills needed for active citizenship including the ability to find, appraise, use and create information and technology. Approaches that are local, horizontal, gender-responsive and socially driven and mediated should be prioritised. A combination of traditional and new media as well as open access to knowledge and information should be encouraged. Libraries – both real and virtual – have an important role to play to ensure access to knowledge and information available to everyone. At the international and multilateral level, the public domain of knowledge and culture needs to be protected. People-centred information technologies can foster eradication of illnesses and epidemics, can help give everyone food, shelter, freedom and peace.

Literacy, education and research are fundamental components of information, communication and knowledge societies. Knowledge creation and acquisition should be nurtured as a participatory and collective process and not considered a one-way flow or confined to one section of capacity building. Education (formal, informal, and lifelong) builds democracy both by creating a literate citizenry and a skilled workforce. But only an informed and educated citizenry with access to the means and outputs of pluralistic research can fully participate in and effectively contribute to knowledge societies.

Urgent attention should be paid to the potential positive and negative impacts of ICTs on the issues of illiteracy in regional, national and international languages of the great majority of the world's peoples. Literacy, education, and research efforts in the information and communication societies must include a focus on the needs of people who have physical impairments and all means of transcending those impairments (for example, voice recognition, e-learning, and open university training) must be promoted.

#### ***2.1.8 Development of Sustainable and Community-based ICT Solutions***

In order that communities and individuals may fully enjoy the benefits of the information and communication society, ICTs must be designed and manufactured according to environmentally sustainable principles. Technological solutions must also be sustainable in the sense that communities are able to support their use and evolution.

Equipment recycling must meet environmental standards. The production of technologies must not consume an unsustainable amount of energy or natural resources.

It is essential to develop concrete proposals and policies to improve resource efficiency and develop renewable energy resources. This involves 'dematerialising' (for example, using less paper) and reducing ICT-related waste; increasing the useful life of hardware; improving recycling conditions; ensuring safe disposal of discarded ICT hardware and parts; and encouraging the development of alternatives to toxic ICT components. This also implies giving the highest priority to creating and using renewable energy resources to address the basic needs of populations living in developing countries. Renewable energy resources should be used for ICT-based dissemination of information and communications, including radio and television. Africa can particularly benefit from solar power due to its high level of exposure to direct solar radiation. By mobilising regional synergies, complemented by the necessary technical and financial co-operation, Africa could play a leading role in this strategic domain in the next decade.

Communities must have the ability to participate directly in the development and maintenance of ICT-based solutions to their own problems. In order that communities may create and sustain their own solutions using ICTs, they must be empowered to develop their own productive forces and control the means of production within information societies. This must include the right to participate fully in the development and sustenance of ICT-based projects through democratic processes, including decision making with respect to economic, cultural, environmental, and other issues. ICTs should be used as an instrument for the creation of genuine and sustainable sources of work, thus providing new labour opportunities.

In order that communities and individuals may create economically and technically sustainable solutions, they must have the right to use Free Software. This makes software more affordable, and, allows people to participate in its development and maintenance. ICT-based innovation should adhere to the use of international technical standards for hardware, software, and processes, which are open, freely implementable,

publicly documented, interoperable, non-discriminatory and demand-driven.

It is important to support community-based communications using both traditional and new media and communication technologies. There is a need for the development and nurturing of the discipline of community informatics, which focuses on the particular characteristics and needs of communities, in relation to design, development, deployment, and operation of ICTs, as well as local content production.

#### ***2.1.9 - Conflict Situations***

We recognise that the use of media can be both positive and negative in conflict situations, including post-conflict peace building. We therefore insist that the rights of journalists and of all people to gather and communicate information, using any media, be especially respected during conflicts. These rights should be inviolate at all times but are crucial during war, violent conflict, and non-violent protest.

We are particularly concerned about the deployment of "information warfare" technologies and techniques, including the purposeful jamming, blocking, or destruction of civilian communication systems during conflict situations; the use of 'embedded' journalists coupled with the targeting of non-embedded journalists; the use of media and communication systems to promote hatred and genocide; by military, police, or other security forces, be they governmental, privately owned, or non-state actors, during conflict situations both international and domestic.

Information intervention in conflict situations should be bound by international law, and the WSIS should encourage work on a future convention against information warfare to address these concerns. At the same time, the WSIS should not only limit information warfare and the control of media in conflict situations, but also actively promote media and communications for peace. To that end, we encourage governments to decrease public subsidy for military communications technology, and instead spend money directly on developing peaceful communications tools and applications.

### **2.2 Centrality of Human Rights**

An information and communication society should be based on human rights and human dignity. With the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as its foundation, it must embody the universality, indivisibility, interrelation and interdependence of all human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural – including the right to development and linguistic rights. This implies the full integration, concrete application and enforcement of all rights and the recognition of their centrality to democracy and sustainable development. Information and communication societies must be inclusive, so that all people, without distinction of any kind, can achieve their full potential. The principles of non-discrimination and diversity must be mainstreamed in all ICT regulation, policies, and programmes.

#### ***2.2.1 Freedom of Expression***

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is of fundamental and specific importance, since it forms an essential condition for human rights-based information and communication societies. Article 19 requires that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, through any media and regardless of frontiers. This implies free circulation of ideas, pluralism of the sources of information and the media, press freedom, and availability of the tools to access information and share knowledge. Freedom of expression on the Internet must be protected by the rule of law rather than through self-regulation and codes of conduct. There must be no prior censorship, arbitrary control of, or constraints on, participants in the communication process or on the content, transmission and dissemination of information. Pluralism of the sources of information and the media must be safeguarded and promoted.

#### ***2.2.2 Right to Privacy***

The right to privacy, enshrined in Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is essential for self-determined human development in regard to civic, political, social, economic and cultural activities. The right to privacy faces new challenges in information and communication societies, and must be protected in public spaces, online, offline, at home and in the workplace. Every person must have the right to decide freely whether and in what manner he or she wants to receive information and communicate with others. The possibility of communicating anonymously must be ensured for everyone. The power of the private sector and of governments over personal data increases the risk of abuse, including monitoring and surveillance. Such activities must be kept to a legally legitimised minimum in a democratic society, and must remain accountable. The collection, retention, processing, use and disclosure of personal data, no matter by whom,

should remain under the control of and determined by the individual concerned.

### ***2.2.3 Right to Participate in Public Affairs***

Good government administration and justice in a democratic society implies openness, transparency, accountability, participation and compliance with the rule of law. Respect for these principles is needed to enforce the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs. Public access to information produced or maintained by governments should be enforced, ensuring that the information is timely, complete and accessible in a format and language the public can understand. This further applies to access to documents of corporations relating to their activities affecting the public interest, especially in situations where the government has not made such information public.

### ***2.2.4 Workers' Rights***

ICTs are progressively changing our way of working. The creation of fair, secure, safe and healthy working conditions, in the manufacture of equipment and software, and in the utilisation of ICTs in the workplace in general, which respect international labour standards, for instance through tripartite social dialogue, is fundamental. ICTs should be used to promote awareness of, respect for and enforcement of human rights standards and international labour standards. Human rights, such as privacy, freedom of expression, linguistic rights, the right for on-line workers to form and join trade unions and the right of trade unions to function freely, including communicating with employees, must be respected in the workplace.

### ***2.2.5 Rights of Indigenous Peoples***

The evolution of information and communication societies must be founded on the respect and promotion of the recognition of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and their distinctiveness as outlined in international conventions. Indigenous Peoples have fundamental rights to protect, preserve and strengthen their own language, culture and identity. ICT's should be used to support and promote diversity and the rights and means of Indigenous Peoples to benefit fully and with priority from their cultural, intellectual and so-called natural resources.

### ***2.2.6 Women's Rights***

In order to realise women's rights in the information and communication societies, as spelled out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Fifth World Conference on Women), it is crucial to acknowledge and address the differences, disparities and disadvantages that women experience. This means taking into account the ways in which women are different from men, and how these differences translate into differential levels of access, opportunity, participation and use of ICTs. It must be ensured that policy or legal interventions and programmes consciously address these differences. To ensure effective equality of women, and thereby enabling women's full ability to claim and exercise their human rights, it is necessary to adopt a substantive equality approach in the analysis, which informs the content of ICT policy and programmes. This approach implies that actions to promote women's rights must transform the unequal power relation between women and men. Women need not only equality of opportunity, but also equality of access to opportunities and the ability to fully participate in availing such opportunities.

### ***2.2.7 Rights of the Child***

Information and communication societies must respect and promote the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Every child is entitled to a happy childhood and to enjoy the rights and freedoms available to all persons under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All persons, civil society, private sector and governments should commit to uphold the Rights of the Child in information and communication societies.

### ***2.2.8 Rights of Persons with Disabilities***

In inclusive information and communication societies, the rights of persons with disabilities to have full and equal access to information and communications including ICTs, regardless of types and degree of disabilities, must be ensured by public policies, laws and regulations at all levels. In order to achieve this goal, a Universal Design principle and the use of assistive technologies must be seriously promoted and supported throughout the whole process of building and nurturing information and communication societies in which persons with disabilities and their organisations must be allowed to participate fully and on equal terms with non-disabled people.

### ***2.2.9 Regulation and the Rule of Law***

National regulation should be in full compliance with international human rights standards, adhering to the rule of law. Information and communication societies must not result in any discrimination or deprivation of human rights resulting from the acts or omission of governments or of non-state actors under their jurisdictions. Any restriction on the use of ICTs must pursue a legitimate aim under international law, be prescribed by law, be strictly proportionate to such an aim, and be necessary in a democratic society.

### **2.3 Culture, Knowledge and the Public Domain**

Information and communication societies are enriched by their diversity of cultures and languages, retained and passed on through oral tradition or recorded and transmitted through a variety of media, and together contributing to the sum of human knowledge. Human knowledge is the heritage of all humankind and the reservoir from which all new knowledge is created. The preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity, the freedom of the media and the defence and extension of the public domain of global knowledge are as essential, for information and communication societies, as the diversity of our natural environment.

#### **2.3.1 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity**

Cultural and linguistic diversity is an essential dimension of people-centred information and communication societies. Every culture has dignity and value that must be respected and preserved. Cultural and linguistic diversity is based, among other things, on the freedom of information and expression and the right of everyone to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, at local, national and international levels. This participation includes activities both as users and producers of cultural content. ICTs including traditional communications media have a particularly important role to play in sustaining and developing the world's cultures and languages.

##### **2.3.1.1 Capacity Building and Education**

Cultural and linguistic diversity should not only be preserved; it needs to be fostered. This implies capacity to express oneself, in one's own language, at any time, by any means, including traditional media and new ICTs. In order to become a contributor and a creator in the information and communication societies, not only technical skills are needed, but critical and creative competence. Media education in the sense of the UNESCO Grunwald Declaration must be given specific attention in education and training programs. Cultural and linguistic diversity also implies equal access to the means of expression and of dissemination of cultural goods and services. Priority should be given to community-driven initiatives.

##### **2.3.1.2 Language**

Plurality of languages is at the core of vibrant information and communication societies. ICTs can be applied to bridge cultural and linguistic divides, given the right priorities. In the past, ICT development has too often reinforced inequalities, such as dominance of roman letter based languages (especially English) and marginalisation of local, regional and minority languages. Priority should be given in ICT research and development to overcoming barriers and addressing inequalities between languages and cultures.

##### **2.3.1.3 International Law and Regulation**

International law and regulation should strengthen cultural, linguistic and media diversity, in accordance with existing international declarations and covenants, in particular Article 19 and Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Articles 19 and 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Articles 13 and 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and Articles 5 and 6 of the Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity adopted by UNESCO in 2001. International trade agreements should treat culture, including audio-visual content and services, not simply as a commodity, but should take account of the need for cultural, linguistic and media diversity. The establishment of an International Convention on Cultural Diversity should be accelerated, with a view to achieving an effective and binding international agreement. Existing international copyright regulation instruments including TRIPS and WIPO should be reviewed to ensure that they promote cultural, linguistic and media diversity and contribute to the development of human knowledge.

### **2.3.2 Media**

#### **2.3.2.1 The Role of the Media**

Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media are central to any conception of information and communication societies. The media is an integral enabling mechanism for a global communications vision. Its role in producing, gathering and distributing diverse content in which all citizens are included and can actively participate, is vital. Especially for the developing countries, broadcast radio and television will

continue to be the most effective ways to deliver high-quality information. All forms of media can make crucial contributions to social cohesion and development in the digital era. Article 19 is the foundation for five regional declarations on media freedom and plurality that must continue to frame the role of the media in all its means of delivery. These texts have been unanimously endorsed by the member states of UNESCO. Security and other considerations should not be allowed to compromise freedom of expression and media freedom. Media pluralism and diversity should be guaranteed through appropriate laws to avoid excessive media concentration. Editorial independence of media professionals and creators must be protected and the formulation of professional and ethical standards in journalism and other media production must be the responsibility of media workers themselves. Online authors, journalists and editors should have the same contractual rights and social protections as other media workers. Public service broadcasting has a specific and crucial role to play in ensuring the participation of all in the information and communication societies. State-controlled media should be transformed into editorially independent public service organisations.

#### ***2.3.2.2 Community Media***

Community media, that is media which are independent, community-driven and civil society-based, have a particular role to play in enabling access to and participation for all in information and communication societies, especially the poorest and most marginalized communities. Community media can be vital enablers of information, voice and capacities for dialogue. Legal and regulatory frameworks that protect and enhance community media are especially critical for ensuring vulnerable groups access to information and communication.

Governments should ensure that legal frameworks for community media are non-discriminatory and provide for equitable allocation of frequencies through transparent and accountable mechanisms. Targets should be established for the opening up of broadcast licenses to allow for the operation of community broadcasting where this is not currently permitted. Spectrum planning and regulation should ensure sufficient spectrum and channel capacity, and appropriate technical standards, for community media to develop in both the analogue and the digital environment.

A Community Media Fund should be established through a donor civil society partnership to invest in and support community-driven media, information and communication initiatives using traditional media and new ICTs including projects that make provision for the poorest communities, for cultural and linguistic diversity and for the equal participation of women and girls. Community-based media and communication centres should be encouraged and assisted to combine traditional media technologies, including radio and television, with access to new ICTs.

#### ***2.3.3 The Public Domain of Global Knowledge***

A rich public domain of knowledge available to all is essential to sustainable information societies, to bridge the digital divide and to provide the grounds for a positive development of intellectual creativity, technological innovation and effective use of that technology. In information societies, new digital forms of storing information mean that this can be copied and transmitted in innovative ways that challenge existing customs and laws. The increasing privatisation of knowledge production threatens to restrict the availability of research results. Attempts have been made to commercially exploit traditional indigenous knowledge without consulting the communities, who are the owners of that knowledge.

##### ***2.3.3.1 Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge***

Indigenous peoples are the guardians of their traditional knowledge and have the right to protect and control that knowledge. Existing intellectual property regimes are insufficient for the protection of indigenous people's cultural and intellectual property rights.

Traditional knowledge should be protected from any attempt at patenting. Indigenous peoples should freely decide whether their heritage should become part of the public domain or not. They should decide whether or not it should be exploited commercially and in what way.

We should give particular attention to measures to maintain knowledge diversity and to protect the cultural, intellectual and so-called natural resources of indigenous peoples, especially botanical and agricultural knowledge, from commercial exploitation and appropriation.

We urge the United Nations to establish specific legal frameworks, in accordance with Article 26.4 of the

Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit, to recognise indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination and ancestral territories, as a necessary prerequisite to ensure the protection, preservation and development of their traditional knowledge in information and communication societies.

#### **2.3.3.2 Copyright, Patents and Trademarks**

Limited intellectual monopolies, also known as intellectual property rights, are granted only for the benefit of society, most notably to encourage creativity and innovation. The benchmark against which they must be reviewed and adjusted regularly is how well they fulfill this purpose. Today, the vast majority of humankind has no access to the public domain of global knowledge, a situation that is contributing to the growth of inequality and exploitation of the poorest peoples and communities. Yet instead of extending and strengthening the global domain, recent developments are restricting information more and more to private hands. Patents are being extended to software (and even to ideas), with the consequent effect of limiting innovation and reinforcing monopolies. Drugs that could save millions of lives are denied to disease sufferers because pharmaceutical companies that hold the patents resist making them available to those countries that can not pay high prices. Copyright periods have been extended again and again, making them practically indefinite and defeating their original purpose.

#### **2.3.3.3 Software**

Software provides the medium and regulatory framework for digital information, and access to software determines who may participate. Equal access to software is fundamental for inclusive and empowering digital information and communication societies, and a diversity of platforms is essential to this.

We must recognise the political and regulatory impact of software on digital societies and build, through public policy and specific programs, awareness of the effects and benefits of different software models. In particular, Free Software, with its freedoms of use for any purpose, study, modification and redistribution should be promoted for its unique social, educational, scientific, political and economic benefits and opportunities. Its special advantages for developing countries, such as low cost, empowerment and the stimulation of sustainable local and regional economies, easier adaptation to local cultures and creation of local language versions, greater security, capacity building, etc, need to be recognised, publicised and taken advantage of. Governments should promote the use of Free Software in schools and higher education and in public administration.

The UN should carry out a fundamental review of the impact on poverty and human rights of current arrangements for recognition and governance of monopolised knowledge and information, including the work of WIPO and the functioning of the TRIPS agreement. Efforts should be made to ensure that limited intellectual monopolies stimulate innovation and reward initiative, rather than keeping knowledge in private hands until it is of little use to society.

#### **2.3.3.4 Research**

Increasing private sector participation in scientific research is leading to patents and scientific knowledge being held in private hands instead of being available in the public domain, and increasing competition among scientists and scientific teams sometimes results in poor scientific practices, secrecy and the patenting of discoveries that would previously have been available to all. Research should continue to be based on co-operation, openness and transparency.

Public bodies such as libraries, scientific research centres, universities, should be able to contribute to enrich the common good of culture and knowledge, by putting into the public domain the results of their publicly funded activities. The public domain of global knowledge should be defended and extended through public policy, awareness-building and investments in programmes. These should ensure that any work funded by public or philanthropic bodies enters the public domain and should increase accessibility of information in online and offline media by means of Free Documentation, public libraries and other initiatives to disseminate information, such as Open Access journals and Open Archives giving access to scientific and other public domain information. All scientific data, such as genomes of living beings, should be freely accessible to all in Open Access databases.

### **2.4 Enabling Environment**

#### **2.4.1 Ethical Dimensions**

Information and communication societies are about how our societies create, share and utilise the information, cultural production and knowledge, which in turn shape the evolution of those societies. The value-base of

the information society must be founded on the principles contained in the ensemble of internationally agreed-upon conventions, declarations, and charters.

More specifically, equal, fair and open access to knowledge and information resources, – whatever the technical means used to store and transmit them – must be established as fundamental principles of such societies. Technological, financial and regulatory considerations must conform to these principles. Transparent and accountable governance, ethical business and accounting practices in communications sector firms and ethical media practice are of particular relevance in this context. Codes of ethics and standards should be adopted in these cases and mechanisms should be established to monitor their application as well as appropriate sanctions for their violation. Formulation of ethics and standards in journalism and other media production should be the responsibility of media workers themselves.

Respect for diversity must be a central criterion in establishing the principles and mechanisms for resolving conflicts that arise in information societies. Such societies, if they are built on values such as co-operation, equity, honesty, integrity, respect and solidarity, can have a significant impact on the quality of interaction between cultures and the promotion of meaningful dialogue among civilisations, and thus contribute to bringing about world peace.

#### ***2.4.2 Democratic and Accountable Governance***

National and international regulations for information and communication societies should be in full compliance with international human rights standards. Openness, transparency, accountability and the rule of law should be the guiding principles for the democratic governance of societies at all levels, from the local to the national and international. Inclusive, participatory and peaceful information and communication societies rest on the responsiveness of governing bodies as well as on the commitment of all actors involved in governance, both of governmental and non governmental nature, to progressively implement greater political, social and economic equity.

A democratic perspective on information and communication societies, in which information is crucial for citizens, is necessary in order to make choices grounded on the awareness of alternatives and opportunities. Information and communication are the foundation for transparency, debate and decision-making. They can contribute to a culture and a practice of co-operation, basis for a renewal of democracy. Information and communication technologies offer potential benefits to the world's communities that will only be exploited if there is a political will to do so.

In this spirit, the aim of WSIS “to develop a common vision and understanding of the Information Society”, and the methods to achieve such a vision, requires shared communication values and mechanisms including the right to communicate, respect for freedom of opinion and expression in all of its dimensions, and a commitment to transparency, accountability, and democracy.

#### ***2.4.3 Infrastructure and Access***

The dramatic lack of a reliable infrastructure is the main physical obstacle for ICT-based services to be offered to populations living in Africa. Here, the fragmented and incomplete structure and the unreliability of the existing infrastructure and access networks constitute the underlying structure of the so-called Digital Divide.

(Tele) communications infrastructure is essential for disseminating ICT-based services and is central in achieving the goal of universal, sustainable, ubiquitous and affordable access to and usage of these technologies and services by all. Furthermore, energy is a prerequisite for infrastructure and access.

Most voice, data and Internet traffic between African countries is currently routed outside of the continent because of the lack of an efficient African backbone network, increasing the cost of this traffic. Increased cost always limits access. Existing efforts to build an African network infrastructure must be supported and expanded (e.g. Internet exchange points).

The implementation and roll-out of (tele)communications infrastructure and access in DCs will require financial investments consistent with the huge needs in this area. In order to reduce the amount of financial resources needed, investments should be optimised by consolidating projects nationally or (sub) regionally, and by technological (re-) designing and updating. Furthermore, synergy between different sectors should be systematically exploited from the project phase, particular attention being paid to the energy and transport sectors that show very close links. Finally, the particularly strong synergy and technological similarity

between ICT and Radio-TV networks should lead governments and planning authorities to deploy and use a common infrastructure for both their services to be transported and disseminated.

Community telecentres (public access centres) have become spaces for the effective access and strategic use of information and communication technologies with emphasis on the democratisation of communications. Governments should guarantee policies for the development of telecentres, among others, to provide equitable and affordable access to infrastructure and ICTs; to encourage digital inclusion policies for the population, independently of gender, ethnic aspects, language, culture and geographical situation. This would promote the discussion and active participation of communities in public policy processes related to the implementation and role of telecentres for local development.

Orbital satellite paths should be recognised as a public resource and should be allocated to benefit the public interest through transparent and accountable frameworks. Moreover, spectrum planning and regulation should ensure equitable access among a plurality of media including sufficient satellite capacity reserved for community media. A fixed percentage of orbital resources, satellite capacity and radio frequency spectrum should be reserved for educational, humanitarian, community and other non-commercial use.

The expansion of the global information infrastructure should be based on principles of equality and partnership and guided by rules of fair competition and regulation at both national and international levels.

The integration of access, infrastructure and training of the citizenry and the generation of local content, in a framework of social networks and clear public or private policies, is a key basis for the development of egalitarian and inclusive information societies.

#### ***2.4.4 Financing and Infrastructure***

Existing and new financing measures should be envisaged and appraised. The “Digital Solidarity Fund” has been proposed by Africa. Such a fund could be a real hope for African peoples if it clearly states its goals, is transparently managed, and aims to foster primarily public services, especially for populations living in underserved and isolated areas. In addition, we stress the significant role that diaspora populations from all the world’s regions can play in financing ICT programmes and projects.

In order to optimise scarce financial resources, appropriate cost-effective technological options should be used, while avoiding duplication of infrastructure. Additionally, synergies between different sectors and networks can be exploited to this end, with particular attention to the energy and transport sectors, given their close links with the telecommunications sector.

A Community Media Fund should be established through a donor civil society partnership to invest in and support community-driven and community-based media, and information and communication initiatives using both traditional media and new ITC’s. Effort should be made to eliminate the duplication of infrastructures and to consolidate projects in a national or regional frame to encourage investment funding. Where possible, ICT and radio/TV networks should use common infrastructure for dissemination.

#### ***2.4.5 Human Development — Education and Training***

Literacy, education and research are fundamental and interrelated components of the information exchanges necessary to build knowledge societies. Knowledge creation and acquisition should be nurtured as a participatory and collective process; it should not be considered a one-way flow or confined to one section of capacity building. Education, in its different components - formal, informal, and lifelong - is fundamental to building democratic societies both by creating a literate citizenry and a skilled workforce.

To utilise the full potential of e-learning and long-distance education, they must be complemented by traditional educational resources and methods, in a local context of media pluralism and linguistic diversity.

Only informed and educated citizens with access to empowering education, a plurality of means of information, and the outputs of research efforts can fully participate in and effectively contribute to knowledge societies. Therefore it is also essential to recognise the right to education as stated both in the Declaration on the Right to Development and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Capacity building initiatives designed to empower individuals and communities in the information society



must include, in addition to basic literacy and ICT skills, media and information literacy, the ability to find, appraise, use and create information and technology. In particular, educators, students and researchers must be able to use and develop Free Software, which allows the unfettered ability to study, change, copy, distribute, and run software. Finally, capacity building initiatives should be designed to stimulate the desire for general learning and respond to specific as well as special needs: those of young and elderly people, of women, of people with impairments, of indigenous peoples, of migrant communities, of refugees and returnees in post-conflict situations, in a life-long perspective. Volunteers can help transmit knowledge and enhance capacity, in particular of marginalized groups not reached by government training institutions.

Capacity building in the information and communication societies requires people who are competent in teaching media and communication literacy. Therefore training of trainers and training of educators in every level is equal important in order to reach out to people at the limits of the information society.

Libraries are an important tool to fight digital divide and to ensure continuous, out-of-market-ruled access to information, by freeing the results of research funded by public support, by sharing content and educational materials to promote literacy, build capacities and bring autonomy to learners of all kinds, world wide. This also entails convincing content producers to be active participants in the open access paradigm of knowledge.

Global barriers to knowledge and education must be transparently evaluated by looking beyond technological obstacles at legal and institutional gridlocks (like Intellectual Property Laws and International standards) and promoting a new balance of intellectual properties as a common ground for creators to protect their works and for civil society to benefit from their contributions.

Civil society sees the need for alternative models for the production and exchange of knowledge and information. To secure and finance the global knowledge commons, civil society actors support new open and self-organised publishing models in science and software production and community-based communications, with in-built maintenance programs and upgrading capacities.

#### ***2.4.6 Information Generation and Knowledge Development***

Research must be promoted in all fields related to the information and communication societies, and its development must be sensitive to the social uses of ICTs. In particular, research on community informatics must be supported. This would include the development of a research agenda among practitioners, scholars, and communities; the cataloguing of community informatics projects and identification of both factors for failure and success; and support for research projects and systems trials. Fundamental research should be strengthened by expanding open access to primary scientific data and publications. Public bodies such as libraries, scientific research centres, universities should foster independent investigation, build a pluralistic body of knowledge and promote the results of activities which have been funded by public money. This body of knowledge should be made available in all public spaces, or spaces with public access (community centres, universities, schools, museums, libraries, media centres, and other dedicated entities), through appropriate and plural modes of access, avoiding the risk of high dependency on digital technology alone.

#### ***2.4.7 Global Governance of ICT and Communications***

International "rules of the game" play an increasingly central role in the global information economy. In recent years, governments have liberalised traditional international regulatory regimes for telecommunications, radio frequency spectrum, and satellite services, and have created new multilateral arrangements for international trade in services, intellectual property, "information security," and electronic commerce. At the same time, business groups have established a variety of "self-regulatory" arrangements concerning Internet identifiers (names and numbers), infrastructure, and content.

It is not acceptable for these and related global governance frameworks to be designed by and for small groups of powerful governments and companies and then exported to the world as *faits accomplis*. Instead, they must reflect the diverse views and interests of the international community as a whole. This overarching principle has both procedural and substantive dimensions.

Procedurally, decision-making processes must be based on such values as inclusive participation, transparency, and democratic accountability. In particular, institutional reforms are needed to facilitate the full and effective participation of marginalized stakeholders like developing and transitional countries, global civil society organisations, small and medium-sized enterprises, and individual users.

Substantively, global governance frameworks must promote a more equitable distribution of benefits across nations and social groups. To do so, they must strike a better balance between commercial considerations and other legitimate social objectives. For example, existing international arrangements should be reformed to promote: efficient management of network interconnections and traffic revenue distribution, subject to the mutual agreement of corresponding operators; equitable allocations of radio frequency spectrum and satellite orbital slots that fully support developmental and non-commercial applications; fair trade in electronic goods and services, taking into account the developing countries' need for special and differential treatment; an open public domain of information resources and ideas; and the protection of human rights, consumer safety, and personal privacy. In parallel, new diverse international arrangements are needed to promote: financial support for sustainable e-development, especially but not only in less affluent nations; linguistic, cultural, and informational diversity; and the curtailment of concentrated market power in ICT and mass media industries. In light of the relevant controversies in the WSIS process, special attention must be given to improving the global co-ordination of the Internet's underlying resources. It must be remembered that the Internet is not a singular communications "platform" akin to a public telephone network; it is instead a highly distributed set of protocols, processes, and voluntarily self-associating networks. Accordingly, the Internet cannot be governed effectively by any one organisation or set of interests. An exclusionary intergovernmental model would be especially ill suited to its unique characteristics; only a truly open, multistakeholder, and flexible approach can ensure the Internet's continued growth and transition into a multilingual medium. In parallel, when the conditions for system stability and sound management can be guaranteed, authority over inherently global resources like the root servers should be transferred to a global, multistakeholder entity.

The international community must have full and easy access to knowledge and information about ICT global governance decision making. This is a baseline prerequisite for implementation of the principles mentioned above, and indeed for the success of the WSIS process itself. We need public-interest oriented monitoring and analysis of the relevant activities of both intergovernmental and "self-governance" bodies including, inter alia, the International Telecommunication Union, the World Trade Organisation, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, the United Nations Conference on International Trade Law, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Hague Conference on International Private Law, the of Europe, the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation, the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, and Wassenaar Arrangement.

As a viable first step in this direction, we recommend the establishment of an independent and truly multistakeholder observatory committee to: (1) map and track the most pressing current developments in ICT global governance decision-making; (2) assess and solicit stakeholder input on the conformity of such decision-making with the stated objectives of the WSIS agenda; and (3) report to all stakeholders in the WSIS process on a periodic basis until 2005, at which time a decision could be made on whether to continue or terminate the activity.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

It is people who primarily form and shape societies, and information and communication societies are no exception. Civil society actors have been key innovators and shapers of the technology, culture and content of information and communication societies, and will continue to be in the future.

Human rights stand at the centre of our vision of the information and communication society. From this standpoint, action plans, implementation, financing mechanisms and governance must all be shaped by and evaluated on the basis of their ability to meet life-critical human needs.

Host countries and institutions contributing to and participating in the post-Geneva WSIS process should fully respect the principles enunciated in the Declaration adopted at the Geneva Summit, including those relating to human rights that are fundamental to the information and communications society. These include, but are not limited to the freedoms of expression, association and information.

Toward this end, and in preparation for the second phase of WSIS, an independent commission should be established to review national and international ICT regulations and practices and their compliance with international human rights standards. This commission should also address the potential applications of ICTs to the realisation of human rights, such as the right to development, the right to education and the right to a standard of living adequate for the mental and physical health and well-being of the individual and his or her family, including food, housing and medical care.

The full realisation of a just information society requires the full participation of civil society in its conception, implementation, and operation. To this end, we call on all governments involved in the preparatory processes of WSIS to work in good faith with non-governmental and civil society organisations and fully honour the recommendations of Resolution 56/183 of the United Nations General Assembly. In particular, participating governments must honour civil society's right to participate fully in the remaining intergovernmental preparatory processes leading to the second phase of WSIS.

We commit ourselves – independent of the modalities of participation granted to us by governments – to pursuing by all just and honourable means necessary the realisation of the vision of the information society presented herein. To this end, civil society organisations will continue to co-operate with one another to develop a Plan of Action for the second phase of WSIS. We call upon the world's leaders to urgently assume the heavy responsibilities they face, in partnership with civil society, to make this vision a reality.

## Annex 3: Highway Africa Declaration on the Media and the Information Society

### Background and introduction

Highway Africa is an annual conference hosted in South Africa, bringing together journalists and new media practitioners from across the African continent. The conference aims to put African media into the centre of debates about ICTs and the Global Information Society. The 2003 conference, in Grahamstown 8-10 September 2003 produced a declaration on the Information Society, having taken cognisance of the following declarations and charters:

1. The Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press (3 May 1991).
2. The 1997 Dakar Declaration on the Internet and African media;
3. The 2001 Yaoundé Declaration
4. *African Charter on Broadcasting* (2001)
5. Highway Africa Charter on African Media & the Digital Divide (2002)
6. Bamako Declaration (2002).
7. Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa (2002)

### Highway Africa declaration on the media and the information society

*Recognising* that the idea of an "Information Society" is an important international concept whose interpretation should be interrogated through critical public debate and discussion on a global scale, and

*Believing* that this debate, which deals with the dissemination of information, knowledge and understanding, is central to journalism, and

*Anticipating* that the World Summit on the Information Society three-year process creates an agenda and opportunity that challenges us to deepen the contribution of media to democracy and development in Africa:

We the participants of the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Highway Africa Conference representing Africa's print, online and electronic media, journalism trainers, media researchers, media-focused NGOs and academics meeting in Grahamstown (South Africa) on 8 – 10 September 2003:

*Propose* that the concept of the "Information Society" should be wider than the role of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and incorporate:

- issues related to the mass media such as freedom of expression, access to information and the role of journalism;
- the knowledge, experiences and cultures of all African peoples.

*Acknowledge* that access to the Internet and other forms of new media can empower African media to play a more meaningful role in promoting democracy and development,

*Note* that freedom of expression is a two-way process that includes communication rights and access to information and means of communication,

*Regret* that economic, political and legislative constraints still hinder media and the productive use of ICTs in Africa, and

Accordingly recommend that:

African governments and regulators should, through an open and participatory process, develop and adopt Information Society policies that promote:

- respect for freedom of expression, including of the media as enshrined in Article 19 of the universal declaration on human rights;
- the free flow of information and ideas;
- pluralism of ownership and diversity of content;
- universal service;
- media sustainability;
- the use of technologies, including open source software, that increase availability of, accessibility and affordability of ICTs;
- participatory community media.

African media should:

- recognise their social responsibility to accurately inform their audiences of local, regional and continental democratic and development issues, including the potential of media and ICTs therein;
- popularise, publicise and promote public debate on the concept of "Information Society" and the development of national information and communications policies;
- be creative in applying ICTs to showcase journalistic excellence and innovation, thereby promoting the knowledge capital of Africa's media workers;
- exploit the potential of ICTs as advocacy tools for freedom of expression and other human rights;
- promote the capture and dissemination of African content in a wide range of African languages exploiting the widest range of technologies to achieve this;
- give space to a wide range of voices, especially the marginalized.

And call on the WSIS to reflect in its deliberations and documents the need to cherish the important role of African media and journalists in developing a people-centred interpretation of the global Information Society.

## Annex 4: African Charter on Broadcasting 2001

There have been significant gains in media freedom in Africa since the adoption of the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press in 1991. However, the declaration focused primarily on the promotion of the print media and was silent on issues such as broadcasting liberalisation and the globalisation of the communications industry. These issues have far reaching social and economic implications for media freedom and threaten to jeopardise the production of media that reflects Africa's rich cultural diversity.

A representative group of African media practitioners sought to address these concerns at a UNESCO conference called to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original Windhoek Declaration. The result was the *African Charter on Broadcasting*, which serves as a modern blueprint for policies and laws determining the future of broadcasting and information technology in Africa.

*Acknowledging* the enduring relevance and importance of the Windhoek Declaration to the protection and promotion of freedom of expression and of the media;

*Noting* that freedom of expression includes the right to communicate and access to means of communication;

*Mindful* of the fact that the Windhoek Declaration focuses on the print media and recalling Paragraph 17 of the Windhoek Declaration, which recommended that a similar seminar be convened to address the need for independence and pluralism in radio and television broadcasting;

*Recognising* that the political, economic and technological environment in which the Windhoek Declaration was adopted has changed significantly and that there is a need to complement and expand upon the original Declaration;

*Aware* of the existence of serious barriers to free, independent and pluralistic broadcasting and to the right to communicate through broadcasting in Africa;

*Cognisant of the fact* that for the vast majority of the peoples of Africa, the broadcast media remains the main source of public communication and information;

*Recalling* the fact that the frequency spectrum is a public resource which must be managed in the public interest;

We the Participants of Windhoek + 10 Declare that:

### **PART I: GENERAL REGULATORY ISSUES**

1. The legal framework for broadcasting should include a clear statement of the principles underpinning broadcast regulation, including promoting respect for freedom of expression, diversity, and the free flow of information and ideas, as well as a three-tier system for broadcasting: public service, commercial and community.
2. All formal powers in the areas of broadcast and telecommunications regulation should be exercised by public authorities which are protected against interference, particularly of a political or economic nature, by, among other things, an appointments process for members which is open, transparent, involves the participation of civil society, and is not controlled by any particular political party.
3. Decision-making processes about the overall allocation of the frequency spectrum should be open and participatory, and ensure that a fair proportion of the spectrum is allocated to broadcasting uses.
4. The frequencies allocated to broadcasting should be shared equitably among the three tiers of broadcasting.

5. Licensing processes for the allocation of specific frequencies to individual broadcasters should be fair and transparent, and based on clear criteria which include promoting media diversity in ownership and content.
6. Broadcasters should be required to promote and develop local content, which should be defined to include African content, including through the introduction of minimum quotas.
7. States should promote an economic environment that facilitates the development of independent production and diversity in broadcasting.
8. The development of appropriate technology for the reception of broadcasting signals should be promoted.

## **PART II: PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING**

1. All State and government controlled broadcasters should be transformed into public service broadcasters, that are accountable to all strata of the people as represented by an independent board, and that serve the overall public interest, avoiding one-sided reporting and programming in regard to religion, political belief, culture, race and gender.
2. Public service broadcasters should, like broadcasting and telecommunications regulators, be governed by bodies which are protected against interference.
3. The public service mandate of public service broadcasters should clearly defined.
4. The editorial independence of public service broadcasters should be guaranteed.
5. Public service broadcasters should be adequately funded in a manner that protects them from arbitrary interference with their budgets.
6. Without detracting from editorial control over news and current affairs content and in order to promote the development of independent productions and to enhance diversity in programming, public service broadcasters should be required to broadcast minimum quotas of material by independent producers.
7. The transmission infrastructure used by public service broadcasters should be made accessible to all broadcasters under reasonable and non-discriminatory terms.

## **PART III: COMMUNITY BROADCASTING**

1. Community broadcasting is broadcasting which is for, by and about the community, whose ownership and management is representative of the community, which pursues a social development agenda, and which is non-profit.
2. There should be a clear recognition, including by the international community, of the difference between decentralised public broadcasting and community broadcasting.
3. The right of community broadcasters to have access to the Internet, for the benefit of their respective communities, should be promoted.

## **PART IV: TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND CONVERGENCE**

1. The right to communicate includes access to telephones, email, Internet and other telecommunications systems, including through the promotion of community-controlled information communication technology centres.
2. Telecommunications law and policy should promote the goal of universal service and access, including through access clauses in privatisation and liberalisation processes, and proactive measures by the State.

3. The international community and African governments should mobilise resources for funding research to keep abreast of the rapidly changing media and technology landscape in Africa.
4. African governments should promote the development of online media and African content, including through the formulation of non-restrictive policies on new information and communications technologies.
5. Training of media practitioners in electronic communication, research and publishing skills needs to be supported and expanded, in order to promote access to, and dissemination of, global information.

#### **PART V: IMPLEMENTATION**

1. UNESCO should distribute the *African Charter on Broadcasting* 2001 as broadly as possible, including to stakeholders and the general public, both in Africa and worldwide.
2. Media organisations and civil society in Africa are encouraged to use the Charter as a lobbying tool and as their starting point in the development of national and regional broadcasting policies. To this end media organisations and civil society are encouraged to initiate public awareness campaigns, to form coalitions on broadcasting reform, to formulate broadcasting policies, to develop specific models for regulatory bodies and public service broadcasting, and to lobby relevant official actors.
3. All debates about broadcasting should take into account the needs of the commercial broadcasting sector.
4. UNESCO should undertake an audit of the Charter every five years, given the pace of development in the broadcasting field.
5. UNESCO should raise with member governments the importance of broadcast productions being given special status and recognised as cultural goods under the World Trade Organisation rules.
6. UNESCO should take measures to promote the inclusion of the theme of media, communications and development in an appropriate manner during the UN Summit on the Information Society in 2003.



## **Annex 5: Bamako Declaration May 2002**

### **Africa Regional Conference for WSIS (Bamako)**

The Africa Regional Meeting Preparatory to the World Summit on the Information Society was held at the Palais des Congrès in Bamako, Republic of Mali from 28 to 30 May 2002. Participating in the Conference were representatives of 51 African countries, delegates from many other countries and people representing African and global organisations, the private sector and civil society.

Opening statements were made by His Excellency Mr Alpha Oumar Konare, President of the Republic of Mali and by His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal and current Chairman of ECOWAS.

A welcome statement from Mr Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations was read on his behalf by Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane of ECA.

Opening statements were also made by

- Mr. Yoshio Utsumi, Secretary General of ITU
- Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary General of the Agence internationale de la francophonie
- Mr. A W Khan, Deputy Director General of UNESCO
- Mr. Carlos Trojan, Ambassador of the European Commission in Geneva
- Mr. Gerard Dega, CEO of Alcatel France
- Mr. Noah Samara, CEO of WorldSpace and
- Mr. Amadou Top, CEO of OSIRIS Anais Network, representing civil society organisations

Closing statements were also made by:

Mr. Walter Fust, Director, Swiss Cooperation and Representative of GKP

Mr. G.O. Segond, Special Ambassador of the World Summit

Mr. Ahmed Mahjoub, State Secretary, Special Representative of Tunisia

The Conference elected Mali as Chair, together with a bureau composed of five government officials representing five African states (Senegal, Tunisia, Cameroon, South Africa and Rwanda), three representatives of civil society, two representatives of the private sector and a General Rapporteur (ECA).

Following the opening ceremony, Head of delegations from African countries and regional institutions, including the African Development Bank (ADB) made official statements.

The following 14 preconference workshops and other activities were organised on 25, 26 and 27 May 2002:

- Local initiatives
- NICI strategies,
- African languages and internet
- Media and ICT forum
- Gender and ICTs
- Cultural diversity and knowledge ownership
- African NGO consultation
- Review and appraisal of ICT impact: Scan-ICT Project
- Private sector forum
- Free software: the stakes for Africa
- Law and the Web
- Local communities and ICTs
- Training of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for their participation in WSIS activities
- The National strategy of Mali

**The Africa Regional Conference** organised 4 workshops and a round table, namely:

- What the Information Society brings to Africa;
- What Africa brings to the Information Society;
- What Africa wants to preserve in the Information Society;
- How Africa can benefit from the Information Society: Round Table on the digital divide;
- Round Table on Africa's image in the media.

The reports of these preconference activities, the four workshops and Round Table are attached and complement the present **Declaration**.

On the basis of the outcome of the workshops and plenary discussions, **the Africa Regional Conference** adopts the following Declaration:

We, participants in the Africa Regional Conference, representing African Governments, the private sector and civil society organisations meeting in Bamako, Republic of Mali from 28 to 30 May 2002 in the presence of many invited government representatives and observers from international, governmental and non governmental organisations, do solemnly affirm that:

- The Global Information Society should address the interests of all nations, most particularly, the interests of the developing countries;
- The creation of local content should be accorded high priority;
- Communication, forming as it does the basis of individual and societal existence, should be managed in a manner that secures the fair, balanced and harmonious development of all the people of the world with particular attention to the needs and aspirations of the most disadvantaged in society and those of African people in particular;
- All partners, public, private sector and civil society organisations, more specifically small and medium size enterprises, have a stake in the development of communications and should be fully involved in decision making at the local, national, regional and international levels;
- As a matter of vital necessity, global and regional available resources should be pooled in order to extend the benefits of ICTs to all inhabitants of the world.

In this connection, the representatives of African governments, civil society and the private sector, having noted the potential of ICTs to be harnessed for African development, maintain that the following principles should guide all the thinking, which goes into articulating a common vision of the information society. These principles are of particular importance to the developing countries, especially the African countries.

1. All citizens should be provided with the means of using ICT networks as a public service;
2. Every citizen should be guaranteed freedom of expression and protected access to information in the worldwide public domain as part of their inalienable right to freely accessing the information constituting the heritage of man kind which is disseminated in all media including new multimedia systems;
3. Technology supply should be diversified through:
  - The removal of regulatory, political and financial obstacles to the development of communication facilities and tools so as to meet the specific needs of citizens in all circumstances;
  - The implementation of an operational plan of action geared to the cultural and linguistic specificities of all countries, in particular those in Africa;
  - The development of data bases on experiences concerning the introduction of new technologies that address the needs of rural areas and their capacity to pay;
  - The promotion of open source software packages that extend the life of investment and user training. Because they are provided free of charge, implementation of open source software programmes is done with minimum cost;
  - The use of voice and touch screen applications that enable a greater number of people to participate in the information society.
4. Investment and funding strategies should be pursued through assistance with content creation and democratisation of access with particular emphasis to women and the youth;
5. Multilingualism should be promoted and cultural diversity maintained as the driving force for the process of developing content for local and international use;

6. The full participation of the civil society and the private sector should be elicited at all levels of local, national, regional and international decision making related to the information society. These should be pursued by:
  - Forging new forms of partnership based on complementarities among the various categories of public, private sector and civil society stakeholders;
  - Establishing and/or strengthening at the local, national, regional and international levels, institutions that will create greater coherence and achieve better synergy in developing the information society.
7. Cooperation and collaboration should be enhanced through:
  - Networking on best practices and experiences as a way of building the type of knowledge needed for the harmonious development of new technologies;
  - The development of applications and content suited to local needs;
  - The development of training plans that familiarise people with new technologies, their use and the legal framework of the information society;
  - The strengthening of decentralised cooperation as one way of leveraging the reduction of the digital divide;
  - The strengthening of networks that can increase individual participation in local, national, regional and international democracy.
8. Institutional, human and administrative capacity should be strengthened at the local, national, regional and international levels in order to achieve greater complementarities among all initiatives being taken to build the information society.
9. Democratic debate should be instituted on the new institutional and regulatory arrangements being made to define the social, cultural, economic, technical and ethical challenges posed by the new information and communication technologies.
10. All these principles and plans of action should be pursued within competent institutions so that the building of information society can be managed with the full participation of all the relevant stakeholders.

In this context, the **Africa Regional Conference** reiterates its full support for those global initiatives that have been adopted at the global as well as regional and continental levels.

It particularly requests the international community to give its full support to the African Information Society Initiative (AIS), the recommendations of the African Development Forum (ADF'99) and the ICT component of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In this connection, the ICT programme of NEPAD should federate all the ICT initiatives of the continent and mobilize resources for funding of the major African projects.

It further requests that the various networks and foundations working to promote the use of new information and communication technologies and to narrow the digital divide, especially the Global Knowledge Partnership and the ANAIS network be given the support and resources they need.

**In view of the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society, the Africa Regional Conference of Bamako has considered:**

**A. What the information society could bring to Africa:**

**In that context, the Africa Regional Conference requests that:**

- Africa should benefit, in the framework of NEPAD from the immediate, massive and coordinated mobilisation of all the development partners to provide such financing as would guarantee public service, universal access and content creation that address the essential needs of the people of Africa;
- The establishment before the second Prepcom meeting of the Geneva Summit of:
  - a) a training fund that would familiarise participants with all the issues concerning the development of the information society;
  - b) a "high level scientific committee" that will make recommendations to the second Prepcom meeting about the challenges facing the information society particularly when it comes to developing countries, especially those in Africa;
  - c) an information and advisory structure that would facilitate the participation of African civil society organisations and SMEs in the preparation of the World Summit;

- d) a solidarity fund to secure the full and effective participation of African civil society organisations and SMEs in the preparatory process.

The study and promotion of relevant solutions adapted to the environment for ICTs, especially in the rural areas;

- The development of solutions and the promotion of ICT initiatives to sustain local African creativity;
- Establishment of public access points and the creation of an African backbone using innovative communication infrastructure;
- A set of concrete proposals for ICT use in education and training in Africa should be developed for submission to the second Prepcom meeting;
- The full and effective involvement of civil society and local stakeholders in developing new ICT applications should be secured;
- Pilot studies should be promoted for replication at the local, national and regional levels with the view to securing access to new ICTs at affordable cost, particularly in the rural areas.

#### **B. What Africa can contribute to the information society:**

In this connection, the Africa Regional Conference particularly requests that :

- The rich cultural diversity of Africa should be showcased and widely disseminated in cyberspace;
- Support should be provided to the ICT activities of the African Language Academy;
- A special fund should be set up for digitizing African archives and libraries which form the cultural heritage of the continent and can be part of Africa's contribution to the information society;
- Among other things, African fora and seminars should be organised with the objective of collecting and showcasing local experiences for the benefit of all stakeholders;
- Systematically, the specific features of Africa should be taken into account in international decision making.

#### **C. Narrowing the digital divide:**

In this area, the Africa Regional Conference :

- Is of the opinion that narrowing the digital divide must go with the development of telecommunication infrastructure suited to the need of African people and citizens;
- Welcomes the regional and global initiatives being taken to narrow the digital divide particularly from ECA, ATU, ITU, the G8, the UN ICT Task Force, UNDP, UNCTAD, the Francophony Agency, OECD, the World Bank, the Commonwealth Telecommunication Organisation, bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies, NGOs and civil society organisations;
- Invites the traditional partners of Africa to heighten the priority to narrowing the digital divide in their development policy, particularly with the European Union under the Cotonou Agreement;
- Invites partners to study how best to optimize the cost of access to ICTs with the view to identifying the rules for organising the international connectivity market and the sharing of markets at the national level.

#### **The Conference further requests that:**

- a) **African States should:**
- Contribute fully to the preparations for both phases of WSIS, namely Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005;
  - adopt policies to stimulate the building of ICT infrastructure and providing universal access particularly in rural and remote areas through innovative and Africa-friendly solutions;
  - fully involve African civil society organisations in the formulation of the operational strategy and implementation of the ICT component of NEPAD;
  - remove duties levied on ICT hardware and software until the second phase of WSIS takes place in Tunis in 2005;
  - formulate coherent national and regional policies and strategies for ICTs development (taking into account the multimedia convergence) which are likely to attract private national and international investments;

- adopt the “African charter” on radio broadcasting as a framework for the development of policies and legislations regarding information technologies and broadcasting in Africa;
  - set up national committees bringing together the three components of the information society, namely the public sector, the private sector and civil society;
  - actively involve the youth in national and regional ICT activities;
  - ensure better gender balance in ICT use while instituting specific programmes that address the need of women particularly those aimed at rural and disenfranchised areas;
  - recreate the “African news exchange”;
  - establish a multilateral African television network;
  - invest in African media content as well as new technologies;
  - develop independent production.
- b) The World Summits in Geneva and Tunis should, respectively:**
- adopt in Geneva, in December 2003 a plan of action for developing infrastructure suited to the needs of people and citizens of developing countries, with particular attention to African and other least developed countries (LDCs);
  - adopt in Tunis, in 2005 any other additional plan of action for narrowing the digital gap that would address the needs of developing countries, particularly those in Africa;
- c) Bilateral and multilateral funding agencies should:**
- pay particular attention to financing infrastructure facilities and content suited to the needs of the people and citizens;
  - pay particular attention to the involvement of the representatives of the civil society in all decisions relating to ICT development.
- d) Development partners:**
- pay particular attention to human resources training and development, particularly teachers and students so as to promote content and infrastructure development with the view to facilitate the emergence of an African service industry based on ICTs;
  - contribute to the forging of innovative and constructive partnerships among donors, public authorities, the private sector and civil society in order to develop ICTs and content and build the infrastructure.
- e) Intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations should:**
- actively and effectively promote and implement concrete projects in their respective areas of competence so that African people and citizens can fully benefit from ICTs; in particular:
    - ECA should continue to pursue the implementation of AISI in terms of the formulation and implementation of National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) policies and strategies and the related sectoral plans;
    - ITU should pay particular attention to Africa in the implementation of Istanbul declaration and plan of action on the digital divide by taking into account those priority areas set out in the Yaounde Declaration;
    - UNESCO should mobilize all its national committees with the view to secure the participation of all stakeholders, especially civil society organisations, in the WSIS preparatory process by requesting them to submit proposals that will help the preparatory process along;
    - UNITAR should mobilize its teams and partners to propose training plans in consult with local stakeholders (within the context of the international centre for training local stakeholders), associations, international organisations and academic institutions in the member countries concerned;
    - The Executive Secretariat of WSIS should:
      - take special care to secure the participation of African civil society in the preparation of the Summit by:
        - keeping all African NGOs permanently informed in their working languages of progress made in the preparation of WSIS;

securing the participation of civil society representative in all the national, regional or global events leading up to World Summit.

- make sure that the bureau of the Africa Regional Conference is able to monitor all the preparations leading to the Prepcom and the World Summit in close collaboration with the bureau of the PrepCom.

#### **D. Instituting new forms of cooperation**

As a way of narrowing the digital divide, participants in the Africa Regional Conference request that the local initiatives and experiences of local authorities in the more advanced countries should be shared with the local authorities of African countries. For that to happen, the Africa Regional Conference requests the competent bodies of local authority, particularly the World Federation of Local Authorities and the International Union of Local Authorities to commit all their members to developing decentralised forms of cooperation that will narrow the digital divide.

In this regard, the Africa Regional Conference welcomes the initiatives taken by the cities of Lyon, Geneva, Bamako and Tunis to promote e-governance locally and commends the Lyon initiative to organise the World Summit of Local Authorities on the Information Society to be held before the Geneva Summit in 2003. The Conference urges all bilateral and multilateral funding agencies and private corporations to give this initiative their full support.

Noting the personal commitment of H.E. Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare, in promoting the harnessing of ICTs for development, the Africa Regional Conference requests President Konare to be so kind as to accept to preside over, as Africa's candidate, under the aegis of NEPAD, the preparatory activities leading to the Geneva Summit of 10-12 December 2003 and the Tunis Summit of the year 2005.

The Africa Regional Conference expresses its appreciation for the support extended by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and The Fondation du Devenir to make this Regional Conference a success. It would like to single out the Swiss authorities and the European Union Commission for their financial contribution which proved crucial for the organisation of this first Regional Conference in the WSIS preparatory process. Its appreciation goes to the Telecommunication Development Bureau of ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNITAR, the Agence internationale de la francophonie, the World Bank, the GKP, USAID, France, Sweden and the Republic and Canton of Geneva for their contribution.

Last but not least, the participants would like to express their appreciation to the Malian Authorities for convening this Regional Conference and the Secretariat of Bamako 2002 for organizing this event which has enabled all African States, civil society organisations and businesses to plug fully into the WSIS preparatory process (Geneva 2003, Tunis 2005).

Bamako, 30 May 2002