INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR ALL

submitted by the President of the WSIS Preparatory Committee

Explanatory Note

The purpose of this note is to explain briefly, for the benefit of participants in PrepCom-2, the origin and purpose of the attached document entitled Information and Communication for All.

With the support and guidance of the WSIS Bureau, and with the very able assistance of the Swiss and Executive Secretariats, the President of the Preparatory Committee convened a meeting of a Group of Experts in December. This group helped the President draft an informal document intended to assist PrepCom-2 in its initial discussions of a draft Declaration and Action Plan.

The members of the Group of Experts were all chosen and invited to the meeting by the President of the PrepCom. They were chosen on the basis of their know-how in the field of the information society, and in a balanced geographical manner. They attended the meeting in their personal capacity, and not as representatives of their country, region or employer.

The attached document represents the outcome of the Group of Experts meeting. This document was prepared under the authority and guidance of the President, on the basis of the results of the September Informal Meeting of the Sub-committee 2, and the contributions sent to the Executive Secretariat. It is a "work in progress paper" which has been enriched before PrepCom-2 by the results of all the WSIS Regional Conferences. It is presented to PrepCom-2 as a non-paper, without any formal status, to facilitate the discussions in PrepCom-2 pertaining to a draft Declaration and Action Plan.

Adama Samassékou
President, WSIS Preparatory Committee

Proposal of an Orientation Document for PrepCom-2
**(A non-paper intended to facilitate and assist PrepCom-2 in its initial discussions
of a draft Declaration and Action Plan
submitted by the President of the Preparatory Committee)**

Information and Communication for All

An inclusive global information society is one where all persons, without distinction, are empowered freely to create, receive, share and utilize information and knowledge for their economic, social, cultural and political development.

The World Summit on the Information Society offers an historic opportunity to realize this vision.

By harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies, in all areas of human life, we can now provide new and better responses to vital and longstanding issues, such as in poverty reduction and wealth creation, as well as equity and social justice.

Knowledge has always been at the core of human progress and endeavour. Yet now, as never before, knowledge and information constitute the fundamental sources of well-being and progress. Our individual and collective ability to create and share knowledge has become the driving force in shaping all our futures.

Today, the dramatic increase in the volume, speed and ubiquity of information flows that has been made possible through new information and communications technologies has already brought about profound changes in the demands and expectations upon government, business, civil society and the individual.

Meanwhile the information and communication revolution is still in its infancy. *The untapped potential of ICT to improve productivity and quality of life is a serious issue for many developing countries, which risk being left behind.*

Faced with complex and ever-evolving challenges, all stakeholders have critical choices to make. New forms of solidarity and cooperation, new modes of social and economic organization and new ways of thinking are called for.

In order to translate the rhetoric of the information and communication revolution into equitable growth and sustainable development on a global scale, and to realize the potential of ICTs to empower people, all stakeholders need to embrace fully new roles and responsibilities.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) should be regarded as a tool and not as an end in themselves.

In all parts of the world remarkable success has been witnessed in using information and knowledge for individual and collective development. The Summit provides a platform to allow the dissemination and replication of such success stories and best practices. In so doing it will contribute to reducing disparities, including those of the "digital divide".

To take advantage of the unprecedented win-win situation that an information society can yield, concrete action and global commitment are now required.

Key principles

1.

Enormous benefits can be derived from ICTs as a tool for development. This will require the mainstreaming of information and knowledge concerns within the broad range of societal goals, with focus on development policy, as well as sectoral and cross-sectoral policies. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), approved by the United Nations Millennium Assembly, provide a powerful methodological and political framework for using ICTs to achieve this.

The Summit should promote adoption of the following principles at all levels (global, regional, national, local/individual), and mobilize support from all relevant stakeholders to attain consensus and solidarity in an open and inclusive global information society.

1. Access to information and free flow of information are fundamental human rights.

2. Information and communication technologies are central to the creation of the global information society and play an important role in fighting poverty and inequality at the global level; to effectively bridge the digital divide possibilities must be identified and pursued to make digital opportunities available to all and to promote universal access at an affordable cost.

3. Reaping the full benefits of the information society requires an enabling and transparent environment, including policy, legal and regulatory frameworks, which would favour, among others, investment and fair competition.

4. In the rapidly changing environment, which characterizes the information society, human resources development is a continuous and fundamental requirement; education and training, the fostering of science, technology and innovation deserves adequate support.

5. Cultural and linguistic diversity are hallmarks of a successful information society; creativity in the creation, processing, dissemination and conservation of local content, can best be stimulated and supported through an adequate balance between intellectual property rights and the needs of the users of information. Creation of local contents and wide spread of usage would contribute to a better flow of information among countries and regions.

6. Civil Society, enterprises and entrepreneurship have key roles to play in applying the power of information and knowledge to sustainable economic, social and cultural development. Governments have a crucial role in leading this process by establishing an appropriate environment, improving delivery of public services and fostering partnerships with other stakeholders.

7. The information society should contribute to a better life for all citizens. One way of doing this is through the use of ICTs in the promotion of democracy, transparency, accountability and good governance.

8. Multi-stakeholder participation in national, regional and global partnerships is a key ingredient in achieving the goals of the information society.

9. Empowerment and inclusion are fundamental characteristics and objectives of the information society. Young people and women in particular should be recognized and empowered as driving forces in building such a society. Special focus should also be devoted to disadvantaged, marginalized or otherwise vulnerable groups. Connectivity is a critical enabling agent in building a global information society in which all citizens can participate on an equal footing.

10. Confidence and security are essential to the full functioning of the information society. Guarantees must be provided to users of communication and information networks and the media including protection of privacy and confidentiality.

11. Strategies should be promoted to assess and deal with environmental impact of ICTs. Furthermore, ICT potential should be harnessed to contribute to the protection of environment.

12. Promotion of ICT development should take into account the particular features of all regions and countries, whether geographical, demographic or cultural. Particular attention should be paid to LDCs, small islands, and landlocked countries.

Action Lines

These principles can be translated into concrete actions by promoting usage of ICT based products, networks, services and applications in order to create measurable impact on societal development, notably in the achievement of the MDGs. This requires the establishment of an enabling environment to allow the participation of all stakeholders in triggering creativity and attracting investment at all levels of the information society.

1.   Mainstreaming information and communication technology into development: the MDGs can be achieved more quickly by harnessing the full potential of information and communication technologies**.** The principal action areas include:

- ICT enhanced learning (including e-learning);
- E-Health;
- E-Government;
- E-business;
- ICTs for disaster recovery;
- Developing ICT production capacities;
- Other sectors (agriculture, population, natural environment, weather etc.).

2.   Promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, local content and media development: cultural diversity is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Local content in a variety of languages disseminated through the media is indispensable in achieving sustainable development.

- Promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in the use of ICTs throughout the world.
- Encouraging, promoting and maintaining cultural and linguistic diversity over communications networks, in particular the Internet and through the promotion of broadband networks..
- Ensuring the creation, diffusion and preservation of substantive material in various languages presently in use.
- Preserving cultural heritage.
- Developing capacity for creative quality content.
- Ensuring the development of substantive content in communication networks relevant to local needs and user requirements.
- Ensuring the preservation and use of traditional and indigenous knowledge.
- Promoting exchange of local content for better understanding.
- Promoting innovative integration of different media for delivery of information services, including interactive mode.
- Working with the media in order to popularise the use of ICT.

3.   Building human capacity: it is important to develop comprehensive and forward-looking capacity building strategies, which would enable people to acquire the skills necessary to benefit from the potential of the information society.

- Strengthening human, institutional and organizational capacity through human resources management and development.
- Enabling more people to benefit from ICTs, through education, training and institutional capacity building.
- Promoting both formal and non-formal ICTs skills development programmes.
- Building capacity for training of specialists in ICTs.
- Basic and advanced education in ICT in order to create a critical mass of skilled work force.
- Creating local ICT training centres in cooperation with all stakeholders.
- Developing capacity for research and development of ICTs including products and services.
- Creating and strengthening electronic networks to enable scientists to share knowledge more widely.
- Launching wide popularization campaigns on the benefits of ICTs for sustainable development.
- Organizing leader awareness programmes.

4.   Fostering digital opportunities by extending access, connectivity and developing infrastructure: advances in ICTs provide unique opportunities to use the multiplier effect to enhance access and participation of all communities and social groups for improving their quality of life.

- Serving all communities and social groups.
- A global program with the objective of providing sustainable connectivity to every village and community and to extend access to ICTs, with particular emphasis on the least developed countries and small island developing states.
- Creating community information and communication centres, particularly in rural, remote and isolated geographical areas.

- Ensuring equitable access to information and communication services for all, especially women and young people.
- Addressing the special needs of the disabled, the elderly, indigenous people and migrants by promoting the development of technologies, applications, and content suited to their needs.
- Affordable and accessible terminal equipment for end-users is an essential part of building the information society.
- Enabling small and medium-sized enterprises and local business to use ICTs.
- Providing access to ICTs for all (universal service/access).
- Promoting the availability, affordability and accessibility of ICTs, especially among underserved communities.
- Reducing the average cost of access to information and communication services—especially in developing countries, countries with economies in transition, small islands developing states and least developed countries—so that they become more affordable.
- Developing next-generation ICT networks.
- Developing programs to describe and quantify the extent of the digital divide and keep it under regular assessment, including community connectivity indicators.
- Researching and publishing a "World ICT Development Report".
- Managing the radioelectric spectrum in the public and general interest and in accordance with relevant national laws and regulations and international agreements governing the management of frequencies.

5. **Enabling environment:** there is a need to create a transparent, competitive and trustworthy environment in order to maximize the economic and social benefits of the information and communication technology.

- Formulating and implementing effective strategies for the expansion and development of ICTs at the national and international levels.
- Adopting policies and strategies for attracting investment in infrastructure and extending service to all at affordable cost, in particular in underserved areas.
- Adopting policies and strategies for promoting fair and effective competition in the provision of ICT products and services.
- Promoting effective participation by developing countries in international ICT decision-making forums and create opportunities for the exchange of experience.
- Broadening participation of all stakeholders in the governance of information society, including Internet.
- Developing, at the international and regional level, a predictable, stable and transparent legal and regulatory framework for the development of the information society.
- Developing policies and strategies that promote and facilitate open and competitive markets for e-commerce.
- Enhancing human resource capabilities and capacity of regulatory agencies, especially in developing and least developed countries, with respect to domestic regulation and international market access commitments
- Promoting initiatives meant to ensure a balance between Intellectual Property Rights and the needs of the users of information.
- Working towards open and flexible international and interoperable standards is an important issue for all countries so as to ensure that all can utilize the technology and associated content and services to their maximum potential.
- Development and deployment of open-source software should be encouraged, as appropriate, as should open standards for ICT networking.

- Conducting a review of relevant legislation, where appropriate, with the aim of identifying and removing factors that prevent enterprises from using ICT, particularly in e-business, and in such areas as authentication (data protection, taxation, custom duties, security, intellectual property rights, privacy, liability of Internet service providers, illegal and harmful content, electronic payment systems, consumer protection, jurisdiction, applicable law and dispute resolution mechanism).

6.   Building partnership and mobilizing resources for the information society: Establishing new and innovative multi-stakeholder public-private partnerships, prioritizing and mainstreaming information and communication technologies (ICTs) in Official Development Assistance (ODA), National and Regional Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans (PRSP), and enhancing coordination of multilateral and bilateral initiatives.

- Bringing together relevant actors from government, civil society and private sector to build partnerships in planning and implementing ICT related projects and activities.
- Encouraging and supporting the research and academic communities to develop innovative tools and methods for ICTs and development.
- Creating new forms of partnerships enable all stakeholders to actively and responsibly contribute in decision-making processes in planning and implementation of ICT related activities, based on the assumption of specific responsibilities in relation to the deployment and use of ICT.
- Converting the current economic difficulties facing the ICT sector into opportunities through forward-looking cooperative initiatives in social uses.
- Creating a benchmarking framework for information society initiatives and progress.
- Pioneering role in selected ICT areas.

7.   Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs. There is a need to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs if they are to be more widely used and with greater reliability.

- Protecting data privacy and consumer interests.
- Creating trust in cyberspace transactions and building confidence in e-commerce.
- Developing appropriate global and regional technical standards to foster the deployment and use of ICTs.
- Improving the quality and maintaining the interconnectivity and interoperability of global and regional networks.
- Tackling the issues arising from the convergence between ICT and broadcasting.
- Reinforcing international cooperation to fight against cyber-crime.
- Setting up appropriate mechanisms aimed at raising awareness of the importance of information and communication network security and of the resources available to the international community on this subject.
- Consideration of existing and potential threats in the sphere of information and communication network security, including the presence of computer pirates and viruses on the Internet, as well as methods and means of repelling them.
- Improving the exchange of technical information and international cooperation in information and communication network security.
- Reinforcing efforts aimed at:

a) assessing information security, including harmful interference with, or misuse of, information and telecommunication systems and information resources;

b) establishing methods and organizations of emergency security incident response, sharing information and technologies on incident response;

c) considering the elaboration in the long term, of an international convention on information and communication network security.

8.   Protecting fundamental freedoms: the unprecedented development of the ICTs requires further action to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in particular the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

- Implementing legal provision for access to information and uphold public right to access to information.
- Developing at the national level legal framework on freedom of expression.
- Applying information communication rights in cyberspace;
- Extending international declarations concerning freedom of expression to the Internet.
- Promoting independent and pluralistic media.

Examples of possible concrete and comprehensive actions

1.   The following could serve as **benchmarks** for actions to be taken:

- all villages of the planet to be equipped with a telecenter by 2010;
- all villages to be connected by 2010, with a community access points by 2015;
- all universities be connected by 2005 and all secondary schools by 2010 and all primary schools by 2015;
- all hospitals to be connected by 2005 and health centres by 2010;
- 90% of the world's population to be within wireless coverage by 2010 and 100% by 2015;
- all central governments departments to have a website and email address by 2005 and all local governments departments by 2010.

2.   Developing national **e-strategies** for all countries within three years, including the necessary human capacity building.

3.   Launching of a "**Global Digital Compact**" as a new pattern for partnership and interaction between governments and non-governmental actors, based on division of labour and specialized responsibilities, as well as on identified specific and common interests, will work together to achieve IT development goals (e.g. governments create stimulating regulatory environment and fiscal incentives, business bring in technology and made available simple applications, non-governmental organizations undertake awareness campaigns and work at community level etc.) (a *model that will start from the institutional relationships already existing in ITU, with ITU as coordinator*).

4.   Launching and gradually developing an aggregate **ICT Development (Digital Opportunity) Index** and publish it annually or every two years in a **ICT Development Report**, where ranking of countries will be accompanied by analytical work on policies and their implementation. (*ITU is to catalyse and combine in a coherent structure the existing experiences in various organizations, universities, think-tanks etc.*)

5.   Elaborating and launching during the Geneva phase of the Summit a "**Handbook on good practices and success stories**", as a compilation of contributions from all stakeholders, in a concise and convincing format, which is to be re-issued periodically and turned into a permanent experience-sharing exercise.

6.   **Equipping and training content workers in the LDCs**, such as archivists, librarians, scientists, teachers and journalists in making use of the expertise and operational capacity of the relevant international professional organizations.

7.   Revising the **curricula** of the primary and secondary schools in all countries, within three years, in order to meet the challenges of the information society.

8.   Create the necessary technical (software and hardware) conditions, which would permit all **languages** in the world to be present and used on the Internet.

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