European Union

Cover letter

to the

EU CONTRIBUTION TO THE
DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

and on the

THE EU VIEWS ON THE ACTION PLAN IN A SUMMARY

The EU contribution to the March 21st documents should be seen as an effort to be constructive and not pre-emptive whilst aiming at a consensus Declaration and Action Plan. The intersessional mechanism allows us to take the views of all players on board and provides a process rich in contributions.

The EU position has stayed within the narrow confines agreed by PrepCom2. With our attempts to refine the text of the Draft Declaration of Principles, we have had in mind its long term wider potential use. We have also striven for emphatic expressions largely in line with language used in the Millennium Declaration, while at the same time strictly adhering to the structure, format and substance of the original 21st of March draft.

A number of paragraphs of the Draft Declaration of Principles contain elements which, in substance, belong to the Action Plan rather that to the Draft Declaration. The EU therefore proposes to consider these paragraphs within the framework of the Action Plan, a list of which is annexed to this "contribution".

Our contribution reflects our basic views that we want a short and politically significant document that will capture the imagination of the peoples of the world and that can be read and understood by everyone.

The EU intends to submit its substantive contribution to the Draft Action Plan by the end of June 2003. Please note that the Acceding Countries to the EU have aligned themselves to the EU's contribution and views.

THE EU VIEWS ON THE ACTION PLAN IN A SUMMARY

The EU believes that the Action Plan should be along the following general lines:

-In conformity with the principles and aspirations of the Declaration, the Action Plan and the Declaration should share a common perspective, have a clear structure and they should be consistent with each other.

- The recommendations of the Action Plan together with the Declaration should capture the imagination of people around the world and enhance awareness and understanding of the issues at a political level and in the media.

 - The Action Plan should be subject to the joint commitment of all stakeholders, whose roles are crucial to its implementation.

- It should reflect a clear global consensus on priorities, strategies and goals. The prerequisites of the Information Society should be integrated into policy and programme formulation at both the national and international level. The international community should outline how these priorities, strategies and goals can be achieved in the face of ever-changing circumstances and technologies. The views of all States and a growing number of other actors in the international community must be adequately reflected.

- It should identify concrete and tangible goals supporting the achievement of the principles of the Political Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, inter alia, allowing the potential of rapidly developing technologies to be harnessed for sustainable economic and social development, improved standards of living and quality of life, alleviating poverty and hunger and protecting the environment.

- Specific problems should be addressed and agreements reached on issues which go beyond borders and the capacity of the individual players to solve and which need a concerted international effort in a new spirit of global cooperation and purpose.

- A clear indication is needed on how commitments will be followed up, as a base for evaluation of the implementation of the results of both phases of the Summit, i.e. Geneva and Tunis.

- To make the Action Plan a reality we will need to harness all the mechanisms and experience available at governmental, inter-governmental level, regional and global level and ensure the universal participation and strong commitment by all stakeholders.

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<h1 align="center">EU CONTRIBUTION TO THE
DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES</h1>

A. *Building the Information Society: a new global challenge in the new Millennium*

We the representatives of the peoples of the world, assembled at 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 new kind of society, the Information Society, premised on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this society new technologies, in particular information and communications technologies (ICTs) become an essential tool, accessible to all, for the attainment of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world based upon our common humanity in all its diversity.

We recognize that knowledge, information and communication are at the core of human progress, endeavour, and well-being and that, although the dramatic increase in the volume, speed and ubiquity of information flows, which has been made possible through new information and communication technologies, has already brought about profound changes in peoples lives, and are creating enormous new opportunities, they have yet to benefit the vast majority of the peoples of the world. We also recognize that writing and printing has already left similar impact on growth of knowledge in the history of mankind.

We recall our common resolve, as reflected in the Millennium Declaration, to promote democracy and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development as an integral part of human rights. We are fully aware that certain basic human right needs and internationally agreed principles such as education and basic health care for all remain to be addressed within the information society. We re-iterate our commitment to Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development and recognise the development challenges posed by the digital divide.

We are committed to a more open and equitable global economy and truly shared global Information Society, to the benefit of all, especially people in less favoured parts of the world. To this end we will promote relentlessly the dialogue among civilisations and contribute to strengthening global governance and expanding the reach of international law.

We are convinced that the information and communication revolution is still in its infancy, and the untapped potential of ICTs to improve standards of living, quality of life and productivity are serious challenges for all of us, particularly for the majority of the peoples of the world who live in developing countries and countries with economies in transition who risk being left behind and further marginalized.

We are fully aware that our individual and collective ability to create and share knowledge is a driving force in shaping our future, and declare that concrete action and global commitment are now required to ensure that these rapidly developing technologies accelerate the attainment of the MDGs.

Faced with complex and ever-evolving challenges, all of us; governments, the private sector and civil society, have objectives that require new forms of solidarity and cooperation to assume our responsibilities in particular by issuing our common vision on the information society and in adopting a plan of action to bring to reality the principles established.

B. *Our Common Vision of the Information Society:*

The Information Society that we seek to build is one which is inclusive, where all persons, without distinction of any kind, have the right to create, seek, receive, share and utilize information, ideas and knowledge, in any media and regardless of frontiers, and where privacy is respected.

The Information Society should be people-centered, with citizens and communities at its core, and be at the service of all humans. It should be a society where information and knowledge are

disseminated and utilized by all people to achieve their full potential. It should work to promote sustainable economic and social development, improve quality of life, alleviate poverty and hunger and protect the environment

An equitable Information Society should:
- Respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers in accordance with article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to unhindered access by individuals to communication media and information sources,
- Commit to democracy and good governance as well as the existence, of independent, pluralistic and free mass and other communication media in their various forms as an important means of fostering public information, societal development and social cohesion.
- Promote cultural and linguistic diversity and create favourable conditions for the production, dissemination and protection of local content.

C. An information Society for all: key principles

11. The Information Society must serve the interests of all nations, in a manner that secures a fair, balanced and harmonious development of all the people of the world. It must be oriented towards eliminating existing socio-economic differences in our societies, averting the emergence of new forms of exclusion, while taking fully into account, for example the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), as well as the countries, regions and groups with special needs, and mainstreaming a gender perspective at all levels of actions.

1) Information and communication infrastructure and services - an essential foundation for the Information Society

12. Connectivity is a central enabling agent in building the information society. Universal, ubiquitous and affordable access to ICTs infrastructure and services constitutes one of the primary challenges of the information society and must be an objective of all stakeholders involved in building the Information Society. A well-developed, adapted to local conditions, and easily-accessed and affordable information and communication network infrastructure is essential for the social and economic progress of countries, and the well-being of all citizens and communities. Building of universally accessible ICT infrastructure should be a central element in any national strategy to develop the information society.

2) Access to information and knowledge - equal opportunities

13. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas. The sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development can be enhanced by removing barriers to equitable access to information for educational, scientific, economic, social, political and cultural activities and by easing access to public domain information and promoting the use of open standards and open source software.

3) The role of governments, the business sector and civil society in the promotion of ICTs for development - a challenge for all stakeholders

14. All stakeholders — public, private sector and civil society organizations—have an important role in the development of the Information Society and should be fully involved in decision making at the local, national, regional and international levels on its development. Building a people centred Information Society is a joint effort of all stakeholders and requires cooperation and partnership

between all parties. Governments should work in close coordination with private sector and civil society to create a favourable environment for investment and for the development of new network services.

4) Enabling environment - conducive frameworks for the Information Society

15. To maximise the economic and social benefits of the Information Society, governments need to create a trustworthy, predictable, transparent, inclusive and non-discriminatory legal, regulatory and policy environment, capable of promoting technological innovation and competition, thus favouring investment in the deployment of infrastructures, transfer of technology, research and development and development of new services.

16. Information is the basis of a well-functioning and transparent decision-making process for both global society and local communities and supports participatory democracy, transparency and accountability. ICTs should be used as an important and effective tool not only for good governance but also for more accessible government.

17. The Information Society can best advance economic and social development when ICT related efforts and programmes are fully integrated in national and regional development strategies.

18. The international management of the Internet should be democratic, multilateral and transparent. It should secure a fair distribution of resources, facilitate access for all and ensure a stable and secure functioning of the Internet. It should respect geographical diversity and ensure representativeness through the participation of all interested States[1], of civil society and the private sector, with due respect to their legitimate interests.

5) Capacity building - empowering citizens of the Information Society

19. All people must be enabled to acquire the necessary skills in order to participate actively in, and understand, the Information Society and knowledge economy thus benefiting fully from the possibilities they offer. In doing that such education principles as information literacy and life-long learning should be considered. The Governments should develop comprehensive and forward looking strategies to respond to the new human capacity needs and to utilise the immense opportunities that ICTs offer in human resource development. Special attention must be paid to building institutional capacities to collect, organize, store and share information and knowledge.

6) Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs - building a culture of cybersecurity

20. The benefits of the Information Society can only be fully harnessed if there is confidence that the new information and communication technology is reliable and secure. An adequately developed infrastructure is a precondition for secure and reliable access to and communication of information by all stakeholders, and for the upgrading of relevant services. Ultimately, a global culture of cybersecurity needs to be developed in cooperation with all the stakeholders and these efforts should be supported by increased international cooperation. Therefore governments should work in close coordination with private enterprise, civil society and with international expert bodies in the field of network and information security. Within this global culture of cybersecurity it is important to strike a balance between, on the one hand, measures to enhance security and, on the other hand, the need to ensure the protection of data and privacy, as well as to avoid the creation of new barriers to trade.

7) ICT-Applications - benefits in all aspect to life

The usage and deployment of ICTs should seek to create benefits in all aspects of our daily life including government, health care, education, employment, management of natural resources, business and culture. ICTs should also contribute to sustainable consumption and production patterns, through improved efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production

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[1] Including public authorities with competence in this field

processes.

Applications and content should be user friendly, accessible to all, affordable, suited to local needs and culture and support socio-economic development of the local community.

8) Cultural and linguistic diversity, local content and media development - promoting richness

The Information Society is founded on respect for, and enjoyment of, cultural expression. ICTs should stimulate cultural diversity and multilingualism and governments should develop active policies to that end.

Cultural and linguistic diversity, multilingualism and local languages are driving forces for the process of developing content for local and international use (UNESCO, Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001).

Creativity and the creation, processing, dissemination and preservation of local content should be encouraged through an adequate balance between intellectual property rights and public interest. Traditional media such as broadcasting and print will continue to have an important role in providing content and disseminating information to the Information Society.

9) Ethical dimensions of the Information Society - respect for human values

The Information Society must be subject to universally held ethical values such as truth, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human dignity, shared responsibility, transparency and accountability. All actors in the Information Society must seek to promote the common good and to prevent abusive uses of ICTs. The protection of minors is a particularly important task. The freedom of the use of ICTs should not undermine the human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of others.

10) International and regional co-operation - global responses to global challenges

The Information Society is intrinsically global in nature. Thus, international cooperation and policy dialogue based on global trends in the Information Society should be promoted at global, regional and sub-regional levels in order to facilitate:

- The provision of technical assistance aimed at national and regional capacity-building for the maintenance and reinforcement of regional and international cooperation;

- Technology transfer;

- The sharing of experiences;

- The sharing of knowledge; and

- The development of compatible regulations and standards that respect national characteristics and concern, including spectrum management

We commit ourselves to strengthen cooperation to seek common responses to the challenges of the Information Society and to the implementation of the Plan of Action which will realise the vision and the key principles incorporated in this Declaration.

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I. **Annex 1 - Paragraphs to be moved from the Declaration to the Action Plan**
(no drafting suggestions yet)

1) Information and communication infrastructure

19. **Community access points**: Public access from community centres such as post offices, libraries, and schools, provides an effective means for promoting universal access in particular in rural and remote areas and poor urban areas.

20. **Measuring and mapping the Information Society:** Indicators are essential to measure the evolution of the Information Society, more particularly the needs and performance of developing countries and their particular conditions. Targets should also be set to benchmark the penetration of ICTs services within communities at urban and rural levels.

2) Access to information and knowledge

23. **Access to public domain information**: A vibrant and rich public domain is an essential element for the growth of the Information Society. Information in the public domain must be easily accessible.

24. **Open standards and open source**: Open standards and open source software are basic elements in the development of a more affordable access to ICTs.

3) The role of governments, the business sector and civil society in the promotion of ICTs for development

28. **ICTs manufacturing capabilities**: It is essential for governments to encourage technology transfer and investment, including venture capital, in the creation of national and regional ICT production facilities, research and development (R&D), incubation schemes and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Most developing countries are lagging behind in this respect.

29. **Demand-driven applications**: Growth in the demand for applications (such as e-government, e-learning, e-health and e-business) will create a favourable environment for the private sector to invest in the development of new services.

4) Capacity building
31. **ICTs for education**: The use of ICTs for education and human resource development, including ICT literacy, should be promoted, with special reference to the requirements of people with disabilities.
32. **Capacity building to enable people to benefit from the opportunities provided by ICTs:** Individuals should be engaged in defining their own needs and in the development of programmes to meet those needs. Technological change requires life-long learning and continuous training by all. Public policy should take into account inequalities in access to quality education and training, particularly in the case of vulnerable groups and underserved or remote areas.
33. **Training ICT specialists**: The increasing demand for a wide range of ICTs specialists at all levels must be addressed.

5) Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

35. Secure and reliable infrastructure: To realise the full benefits of ICTs, networks and information systems must be sufficiently robust to prevent, detect and to respond appropriately to security incidents. However, effective security of information systems is not merely a matter of government and law enforcement practices, nor of technology. A global culture of cyber-security needs to be developed (UNGA Resolution 57/295, of 20 December 2002).

36. Role of stakeholders: Governments must promote awareness in their societies of cyber security risks and seek to strengthen co-operation with the private sector and civil society to prevent the use of information resources or technologies for criminal or terrorist purposes, so as to build confidence and trust in the use of ICTs and the Information Society. The community and the family also have a special role to play in this regard.

37. International cooperation: International, regional and national efforts to improve ICT security, in both civil and military fields, must be coordinated, taking into consideration the importance of secure infrastructure and data flow, in concordance with international standards and guidelines.

6) Enabling environment

42. Standardization: Standardization is one of the essential building blocks of the Information Society. International policy dialogue at global, regional and sub-regional levels should promote the identification and application of interoperable standards, the transfer of know-how and the provision of technical assistance. The development and use of open standards are particularly important for developing countries. In this regard the increased use of open-source software can contribute greatly to increasing access and to adding to the diversity of choice of software for consumers.

43. Spectrum management: The radio frequency spectrum must be managed in the public and general interest and in accordance with the basic principle of legality, with full observance of national laws and regulation and international agreements governing the management of frequencies.

44. Management of Internet names and addresses: Internet governance must be multilateral, democratic and transparent, taking into account the needs of the public and private sectors as well as those of the civil society, and respecting multilingualism. The coordination responsibility for root servers, domain names, and Internet Protocol (IP) address assignment should rest with a suitable international, inter-governmental organization. The policy authority for country code top-level domain names (ccTLDs) should be the sovereign right of countries.

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