

World Summit on the Information Society

A Proposed Draft Declaration of Principles

Presented by the Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors for WSIS (CCBI)

Note from CCBI:

The purpose of this CCBI input is to draw upon the previous detailed comments on the draft Declaration for WSIS provided by CCBI and to provide suggested text for the Declaration. This input is intended to assist in focusing the Declaration and making it more concise. CCBI members fully recognize the intergovernmental nature of this process, and the need for certain political issues to be included.

Section 1

CCBI suggests deleting paragraph 5 as the substance of it is covered in the other paragraphs in this section.

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

1. We the representatives of the peoples of the world, assembled at Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003 for the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, declare our common desire and commitment to facilitate, foster and accelerate the world's evolution toward an advanced Information Society, premised on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Millennium Declaration, and one in which tools for communications and information dissemination become more ubiquitously available than they have been heretofore, so as to facilitate a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.
2. We recognize that knowledge, information and communication are at the core of human progress, endeavour and wellbeing.

3. We recall our common resolve as reflected in the Millennium Declaration to promote democracy, accountable and transparent governance, the rule of law and respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to uphold the sovereign equality of all States. We reiterate our commitment to the attainment of the Millennium Development Declaration and sustainable development, and recognize the challenges posed by the 'digital divide'.
4. We are convinced that the information and communication revolution continues to grow, and it is critical that the potential of ICTs be an effective tool for economic and social growth be made accessible to all peoples, from developed and developing countries, economies in transition and at all stages of development.
5. Delete
6. Faced with great opportunities and complex and ever-evolving challenges, governments, the private sector, international and intergovernmental organizations and civil society must continue to form partnerships and cooperate to maximize their contributions. They must assume their responsibilities in actualizing our common vision of the information society and cooperate to implement the Action Plan for making the principles in this declaration a reality.
7. NEW PARAGRAPH SUGGESTED BY CCBI:
To truly promote an information society accessible to all peoples, the special interests of particular sectors of society need to be recognized and addressed as appropriate. The information society must be equally available to men and women, and the empowerment, education and training of men, women, unemployed, disabled, underprivileged people, migrants and refugees, elderly, indigenous peoples and minorities, and those living in rural and remote areas should be promoted.
Young people constitute a significant proportion of the world's population, and they are the workforce of the future. They must be educated, trained, and given opportunities to innovate and create.

B. Our Common Vision of the Information Society

CCBI suggests that paragraphs New 7C, 7-8, 14, 16, 9, 11 and New 11C can be deleted as the substance of these paragraphs is covered in other sections and paragraphs and the suggested CCBI New paragraph 7 for section A.

New 7C. Delete, redundant

7.-8.Delete

14. Delete

16. Delete – see suggested text for a NEW paragraph 7 in section A.

9. Delete – redundant

10. The fundamental requirements for the development of an information society for all include the following:

- International cooperation and respect for international law.
- Commitments by governments to develop and implement national ICT strategies with measurable criteria to allow for assessments and integration of experiences.
- National and international environments that are conducive to foreign direct and local investment in ICTs and in the necessary infrastructure.
- Commitments to create the necessary conditions to foster entrepreneurship, and to promote competition, private sector investment and innovation.
- Partnership among all stakeholders.
- Transparent policy development processes, good governance and rule of law.

11. Delete

New 11.C: Delete

C. An information society for all: key principles

CCBI suggests that paragraphs 14, 15, 16 can be deleted as they are redundant.

CCBI strongly urges that paragraph New 17A should stay deleted.

New 20B can be deleted as it is covered in other sections.

CCBI suggests that the new paragraph 7 proposed by CCBI could be moved to this section.

12. The Information Society must serve the interests of all nations and all the people of the world, paying special attention to developing countries. Particular attention should be paid to the following:

- People living in rural and remote areas;
- LDCs, highly indebted poor countries, economies in transition and post-conflict countries;
- Small Island Developing States (SIDS), landlocked countries, countries with extremely difficult topography and those with unique geographic features.

14., 15., 16. Delete

1) Information and communication infrastructure

17. Connectivity, is a central enabling factor in building the Information Society. Private sector investment will be a primary source in advancing connectivity with governments and international organizations, as appropriate, establishing the necessary policy framework for such investment.
18. Transparent and predictable legal and regulatory environments are essential and should promote competition and private sector investment in ICT infrastructure and applications. Obstacles and impediments to the flourishing of local entrepreneurship and investment must be removed.

New 17A should stay deleted.

19. Governments, in consultation with all stakeholders, should institute policies that promote equitable access in a manner that balances all interests.
20. Indicators that allow for appropriate performance measurement and benchmarks should be an integral part of the Action Plan for this Summit in order to ensure comprehensive assessments of the effectiveness of national, regional and international cooperation and implementation of ICT initiatives.

New 20B should be deleted.

2) Access to information and knowledge

Business suggests that all of the issues in this section should be addressed in the first section of this Declaration, and that the majority of the issues raised in this section are covered in the text of section 1.

Business suggests that paragraph 23, 24 A can be deleted as they are redundant with other sections. Paragraph 25 should remain deleted.

21.-22. The freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas should be pursued for all peoples.

Open and competitive procurement policies avoid market distorting effects and result in greater competition that will benefit all. Thus, it is recognized that policies must remain neutral in respect of different technologies and modes of technology development.

23. Delete

24A. Delete

25. Paragraph 25 should remain deleted.

3) The role of governments, the business sector, civil society, and international organizations, including UN agencies, in the promotion of ICTs for development

27. All stakeholders – governments, the business sector, civil society and international organizations, including UN agencies – have important roles in the development of the Information Society, and should be fully involved and engaged in decision-making and policy-making processes at local, national, regional and international levels, recognizing that each has a leadership role within its sphere of influence.

4) Capacity building

CCBI suggests that paragraphs 31, 33A, 33B, and New 33C are redundant and can be deleted. The high-level principles and commitments which will lead to the necessary actions to achieve the objectives outlined in these paragraphs are covered in other sections of the Declaration.

30. Governments hereby commit to developing and promoting national ICT and Information Society strategies with measurable targets to assess progress towards their implementation, in the context of open policy-making processes with the equal contributions of all stakeholders.

31. Public/private partnerships can play an important role in advancing capacity building.

33A. Delete

33B. Delete

New 33C. Delete

New 33D.

ICTs create new possibilities not only for traditional jobs but also for self-employment, circumventing traditional obstacles like distance and time. However, it is necessary to develop special measures, including retraining, to provide workers with the skills necessary to engage in new job opportunities presented by technological innovation are required.

5) Building confidence, trust and security in the use of ICTs

34. CCBI New paragraph: A culture of security should be promoted through cooperation and coordination by governments, business, civil society and IGOs. Security and cybercrime are separate and distinct issues, and must be treated as such.

Effective privacy protection of personal data and measures to promote consumer confidence are also important elements in enhancing the development of the information society. Measures to achieve such protection and confidence should not create barriers to information flows or trade.

6) Enabling environment

CCBI suggests that paragraphs 38, 40, 39, and 41 should be deleted.

38A.

To promote investment in ICTs, the following key commitments by governments are made:

- a stable political system;
- an independent regulator;
- a comprehensive, transparent, and non-discriminatory legal framework and judicial system;
- the removal of unreasonable and extensive conditions on foreign investment;
- the removal of barriers to competition, including in the underlying infrastructure consistent with the WTO reference paper of pro-competitive regulatory principles for basic telecommunications;
- the undertaking of meaningful trade liberalization of IT goods and services, and products that can be delivered via e-commerce. Countries that are not WTO members should undertake such liberalization unilaterally;
- the effective protection of intellectual property in a manner that balances the interests of all stakeholders, including rightsholders, network operators, service providers and users;
- the removal of obstacles to e-commerce;
- a transparent policy development process in all government actions that affect business decisions;
- the establishment of effective institutions to uphold the law;
- the provision of education necessary to ensure sustainable benefit from ICTs;
- government as model users and early adopters of e-commerce;
- an environment that fosters entrepreneurship and innovation;
- the removal of administrative obstacles to entrepreneurship; and
- the removal of barriers and the creation of incentives to promote innovation.

38. Delete

40. Delete

39. Delete

NEW 40C.

Intellectual property is essential to the Information Society. Existing intellectual property regimes and international agreements should continuously provide this protection, thus promoting the necessary balance between owners and users of intellectual property.

41. Delete

41D. Delete

Alternative 41D.

Liberalization of trade in ICT and related goods and services, together with domestic regulatory reform, promotes investment and innovation and makes technology more readily available for use in the economy by governments, organizations and individual users. All countries should participate in the international trade policy system developed to implement and facilitate liberalization and regulatory reform, as ICT is both an important component of trade and a means by which trade in other goods and services can be expanded or facilitated. Improving the preconditions for successful entry into international trade fosters e-business and economic growth both internationally and domestically. Consequently, governments should promote an open trade regime in the ICT sector and strive towards improving market access. ICTs play a key role in trade facilitation, with automation, e-customs and e-government tools reducing the costs and time associated with moving goods across borders, and enhancing the efficiency and integrity of customs operations.

CCBI suggests that paragraph Alternative 41D. could be merged with the trade orientated language in paragraph 38A.

42. Standardization is one of the essential building blocks of the Information Society. The development and use of open, interoperable, non-discriminatory and market-driven standards is a basic element in the development of ICTs, and in more affordable access to them, particularly in developing countries. Standards should be market driven, voluntary, international, consensus-based and industry led. Governments should play a facilitating role in interoperability, recognizing existing standards-setting institutions.

New CCBI paragraph:

Government policies should be consistent with the principle of technological neutrality.

43. Governments should ensure efficient and effective frequency allocation and management procedures, ensuring consistency within states and working to improve international harmonization.

44. The technical coordination of the Internet names and number system should be international, democratic, multi-stakeholder, transparent and led by the private sector, recognizing the important contribution and role of governments in relevant and appropriate public policy matters.

44A. Delete

44B.

CCBI strongly urges deleting all of paragraph 44B as it is extremely detailed for a high-level Declaration, and is better suited to being addressed in some way, if necessary, in the Action Plan

45. Delete

7) ICT Applications

46. The creation and innovative use of ICT applications should be promoted in particular with respect to key social growth issues such as education and health.

New 47C. Delete, too detailed for a high-level Declaration.

New 47D. Delete, too specific for a high-level Declaration.

8) Cultural identity and linguistic diversity, local content and media development

CCBI suggests deleting paragraphs 49 and 50, as the principles are covered in the first section of the Declaration and other sections, and they are too detailed for a high-level Declaration.

48. The Information Society is founded on respect for, and enjoyment of, cultural expression. ICTs may stimulate cultural diversity and multilingualism and governments should promote policies to that end. Cultural and linguistic diversity, multilingualism and local languages are driving forces for the process of developing content for both local and international use. It is important that the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity and local content does not create unreasonable barriers to trade.

49. Delete

50. Delete

8a) Media

The existence of free and independent communication media, in accordance with the legal system of each country, is an essential requirement for freedom of expression and a guarantee of the plurality of information.

9) Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

CCBI urges that this section be deleted as the key principles are covered in Section 1 of the Declaration.

10) International and regional cooperation

53. The Information Society is intrinsically global in nature. Therefore, its conception should fundamentally consider political dialogue among all nations that allows the establishment of solid bases and effective international cooperation mechanisms necessary to assist in eliminating obstacles that impede developing countries' access to ICT. The governments of developing countries are the ones who most need to advance in the knowledge and understanding of the possibilities of the digital revolution and its implications for public policy, the risks and opportunities for development. To this end, we shall use the cooperation programmes offered by the international financial institutions and shall assume the commitments derived from international fora such as, the UN International Conference on Financing for Development.

We, the governments support and encourage:

- technical and financial assistance, directed towards national and regional capacity building;
- the sharing of experiences; and
- the sharing of knowledge.

Commission

54. We commit ourselves to strengthening cooperation in order to seek common responses to the challenges of the Information Society and to the implementation of the Action Plan, which will realize the vision and the key principles incorporated in this Declaration.

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