

# Statement of CSDPTT and the CS Working Group on Financing ICT to the Intergovernmental PrepCom-2 Sub-Committee

about § 18, 19 and 20 of Chapter 2 in the submitted document  
and relative to

## The Indispensable and Urgent Financing for Bridging the Digital Divide

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The official documents submitted to us for dealing with this issue -which is also a profound human scandal- advocate recipes devised by the neoliberal dogma omnipresent in the WSIS process since its beginning as a solution for it. This is the way of promoting the pivotal role of the private sector, as well in devising policies as in providing resources for implementing them.

Yet this dogma has produced the greatest financial scandal of all times –with its economical and social disastrous consequences- in the very ICT domain which is central to our debates. Paradoxically it has never been mentioned in the successive SMSI compounds : total amnesia or inviolable taboo ? Whatever may be, for our ICT doctors the “united tele.com and dot.com bubble” just did never exist.

We therefore remind the honourable audience of some facts and figures which justify our doubts in regard to the presented solutions in the official documents which lead us to suggest other solutions.

When we all are desperately seeking some tens of billion dollars for “bridging the digital divide”, the burst of the stock market bubble transformed into smoke 2000 billion dollars, 800 of which were lost in investments, companies and services. Three examples illustrate the irrationality achieved by the neoliberal dogma in our domain :

- In **Europe**, more than twenty pan-european telecommunication networks were built from 1998 to 2001, sinking more than ten billion dollars. Over a half of them are abandoned and the others are suffering from overcapacity.
- **WorldCom**, real neoliberal image which became the first global operator in terms of stock value and was a great predator for telcos, not only caused the biggest bankruptcy ever in the United States’ history but also the most important financial misappropriation ever registered with more than 11 billion dollars.
- **Africa ONE**, this 2 billion dollars project and pure produce of an AT&T, ITU and willing African operators and countries – a true showcase for this public-private partnership WSIS attempts to impose as to succeed to cooperation- has miserably failed, while sinking millions of dollars. The ITU, so highly praised here for its knowledge of the domain, has lost a part of its credibility in this failure.

“Learn lessons from the past for drawing up solutions for the future” told us the document which established the Task Force on Financing Mechanisms (TFFM) under the auspices of the United Nations. We say “All right”, but yet we are expecting the objective analysis and relevant solutions derived from this formula for putting an end to this absolute scandal

in the ICT domain and in communication between people, namely the so-called digital gap, between the rich and those who even lack the basics.

Long before the TFFM Report we carried out this analysis, not only in the financial domain but also in the economical and social one, and we derived proposals which have been presented to you by CSDPTT since the very beginning of WSIS up to the last Group of Friends of the Chair meeting. However, none of them were considered in the submitted documents.

So the ad hoc Civil Society (CS) Working group devised a “**Ten Points Declaration**” that we attach to this presentation as a written contribution, in order to let you know our assessment and our proposals which we want to be integrated in the final WSIS documents.

These points are :

- A real and acknowledged participation of the CS in the WSIS process.
- CS inclusion in the working groups set-up in the WSIS framework.
- A more important and representative participation of organisations from the South, with respect of their activity in the field and their linguistic diversity.
- The primacy of the role of governments, instead of that of the private sector and of the market, in devising sector intervention priorities.
- An objective and non dogmatic approach in financing of implementation, including mixed public, private and community based solutions.
- Priority to be given to a revamped international cooperation, involving governments and communities.
- Integration of ICT infrastructure development strategies in a multisectoral development concept, in order to contribute more effectively to the achievement of the Millenium goals.
- Considering innovative concepts in financing mechanisms such as Global Public Goods (GPG) as well as community management of access networks. At last, considering the “North-South” financial flow generated by the diasporas especially the African one.
- Quantitative Assessment of resources needed to bridge the “digital divide” and of the share devolved to Official Development Assistance (ODA), as well as definition of the joint role assigned to the digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) and to contributions of other stakeholders, including those from the “South”.
- Bemoaning the fact that the DSF hasn’t been analysed by the TFFM as an innovative mechanism, the CS Working Group asks that its place be studied in relation with Official Development Assistance (ODA), and enjoins governments to respect their (minimal) commitments they subscribed in the framework of the Monterrey consensus.

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