

**Contribution on the Chapter one of the document of the Friends of the Chair  
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On behalf of the civil society caucus on implementation and follow-up**

Mister Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this audience. My name is Bertrand de La Chapelle, Director of wsis-online, but I take the floor today on behalf of the Civil Society Working Group on implementation and follow-up.

Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Three preliminary points on process :

1) The Geneva Plan of Action is very ambitious. Civil society and many other actors have repetitively underlined that it cannot be implemented by governments alone; but if the active engagement of civil society and the private sector is necessary, it will only be possible if these actors are fully associated from the onset in the very definition of the implementation and follow up mechanisms to be put in place in Tunis.

2) The Summit itself is not only the moment where governments will formally adopt implementation and follow-up mechanisms. It also is an opportunity to facilitate their setting up. Its format, in particular the summit events and the exhibit space should therefore be conceived taking into account the objectives of the period beyond Tunis and be as coherent as possible with the mechanisms we want to establish.

3) This is why the period between now and PrepCom3 should be fully leveraged to conduct the open and inclusive consultations the importance of the issue requires. This opportunity should not be missed. As early as July 2003 and repetitively since then, civil society has expressed its willingness to participate in the conception of optimal follow-up and implementation mechanisms. It is my honor today to reiterate this commitment

On substance.

Mr Chairman, distinguished fellow accredited delegates, this intervention takes place before any comments from governments on the proposed formulations. We do not even know if the present formulations will be adopted as a basis. We nonetheless believe they are a good starting point to identify the broad questions at stake.

I will therefore identify five key questions and suggest concrete formulations, should the present document be used as such. These comments are preliminary and we will naturally have the opportunity to come back to it later.

- 1) **On Action Lines.** A thematic and issue-based approach is certainly appropriate and we support it. In this context, the Action Lines identified in the Plan of Action present the benefit of forming an existing list. But as the two broad themes of Internet Governance and Financing mechanisms have shown, there can be other ways to structure the Thematic implementation domains. We therefore recommend that efficiency, coherence and concision should guide the definition of the Thematic Domains for the implementation phase.
- 2) **On multi-stakeholder teams.** The concept of thematic multi-stakeholder teams to facilitate implementation is certainly worth exploring. It recalls the suggestions made by Canada before prepCom1 in Hammamet and civil society can only support this approach. But in any multi-stakeholder effort, the conditions of formation, duration and mandate of such groups are essential to get the proper balance between legitimacy and efficiency. We therefore suggest the following formulation : “For each action line, a multi-stakeholder team will be established under the responsibility of the UN Secretary General to facilitate and foster implementation”; questions of duration and mandate, although essential, can be addressed at a later stage, and this involves the reporting function;
- 3) **On the role of international organizations.** The Action Lines in the Plan of Action often aggregate very different issues (see for instance C7) or even when focused, concern several entities that we need to engage if we want concrete results. In order to avoid any territorial competition and improve coherence between the activities of international institutions, we therefore suggest the following formulation : “all international organizations, including UN bodies and agencies, should be requested to support the efforts of the multi-stakeholder thematic teams, according to their respective fields of competence”;
- 4) **On a coordination body.** A coordination / facilitation mechanism is certainly useful and it should definitively be multi-stakeholder. Its exact roles and functions have to be discussed but facilitation is clearly one of them. In any case, the formation process and working methods of such a multi-stakeholder coordination body should heavily draw on the lessons of those adopted for the Working Group on internet Governance. We therefore suggest at this stage that as a minimum, the formulation “WGIG-like structure” be added as a fifth bullet point in paragraph 11 to broaden the scope of future discussions;
- 5) **National level.** We consider the establishment of national multistakeholder dialogues in all countries as recommended in para C1 8b) of the Plan of Action as a key component of any implementation and follow-up mechanism. We therefore suggest the following formulation : “to facilitate implementation at the national level, all countries that have not yet done so should, in accordance with para C1 8b) of the Geneva Plan of Action, establish national information society fora involving all relevant stakeholders, in particular for the devising of comprehensive, forward looking and sustainable national e-strategies, as an integral part of national

development plans, including poverty reduction strategies.” This paragraph would replace the corresponding text of paragraph 2.

Mr Chairman, as a conclusion, let me recapitulate the main points we intended to raise today :

- 1) all stakeholders should be fully associated not only in the WSIS implementation and follow-up mechanisms but more importantly in the very definition of these mechanisms;
- 2) the format of the summit, in particular the events and exhibits should be conceived in order to facilitate the establishment of such implementation and follow-up mechanisms
- 3) this important issue should therefore not be postponed to September and the period between now and PrepCom3 should be used to address it in a fully multi-stakeholder framework;
- 4) WSIS implementation and follow-up should be structured along thematic Action Lines, those of the Plan of Action being one possibility among others;
- 5) multi-stakeholder teams to foster implementation in each domain should be formed through an open and inclusive process, under the responsibility of the UN Secretary General;
- 6) all international organizations, including UN bodies and agencies, should be requested to support the efforts of the multi-stakeholder thematic teams, according to their respective fields of competence;
- 7) the formation process and working methods of the multi-stakeholder coordination body should heavily draw on the lessons of those adopted for the Working Group on internet Governance
- 8) national multi-stakeholder dialogues as recommended in para C1 8b) of the Plan of Action should be established in all countries to facilitate implementation at national levels

Mr Chairman, we sincerely hope this “laundry list” will help structure the discussion and move it forward and we reiterate our proposal – or should I say our strong request - for the rapid establishment, at your initiative, of a structured dialogue with other stakeholders on this issue.