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**Document WSIS-II/PC-3/CONTR/64-E**  
**1 September 2005**  
**Original: English**

**Association for Progressive Communications (APC) on behalf of**  
  
the Informal Coalition on Financing ICTD

**Submission to the Group of Friends of the Chair  
on Paragraphs 10, 11 and 29 of the Operational Part of the  
Tunis Document by the  
Informal Coalition on Financing ICTD**

Key Points:

The Informal Coalition on Financing ICTD strongly objects to the replacement of the original text of paragraphs 10, 11 and 29 regarding a well defined implementation and follow-up structure with vague and weaker proposals. We propose:

- The creation of multi-stakeholder teams around each action line in the Geneva and Tunis plan of Action, with a well defined overall co-ordination body
- That the WSIS implementation and follow-up mechanisms include a body such as the Global Alliance/Network of key actors from a wide variety of stakeholders, e.g. along the lines proposed by the UN ICT Task Force;
- That the proposal for a multi-stakeholder 'forum' for internet governance should be included as an integral element of the broader WSIS implementation;
- That provision should be made for 5 and 10 year reviews of progress towards implementing the WSIS Plan of Action.

The Heads of State and Governments who will gather for the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly from 13-16 September 2005 will consider an outcomes document, which has the following commitment to building an information society and to the use of information and communications technologies for enabling development:

Section 38. Build a people-centred and inclusive information society so as to bridge the digital divide and put the potential of ICTs at the service of development and address new challenges of information society by implementing the outcomes of the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and by ensuring the success of the second phase of the WSIS to be held in Tunis in November 2005.

The indicative targets of the Geneva WSIS Plan of Action, based on internationally agreed development goals, are

- a) to connect villages with ICTs and establish community access points;
- b) to connect universities, colleges, secondary schools and primary schools with ICTs;
- c) to connect scientific and research centres with ICTs;
- d) to connect public libraries, cultural centres, museums, post offices and archives with ICTs;
- e) to connect health centres and hospitals with ICTs;
- f) to connect all local and central government departments and establish websites and email addresses;
- g) to adapt all primary and secondary school curricula to meet the challenges of the Information Society, taking into account national circumstances;
- h) to ensure that all of the world's population have access to television and radio services;
- i) to encourage the development of content and to put in place technical conditions in order to facilitate the presence and use of all world languages on the Internet;
- j) to ensure that more than half the world's inhabitants have access to ICTs within their reach.

Governments agreed to work towards achieving these, and other targets, within a broader framework - "to advance the achievement of the internationally-agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation" - in the Geneva phase of WSIS in 2003. And this is what the General Assembly's President is committing the world's governments to do in the draft outcomes document.

The following table illustrates the scale of achieving a part of just one of the tasks agreed during WSIS Phase one (and potentially at the High-Level Meeting in September). The purpose of pointing out the scale of some of the tasks agreed on during WSIS phase one is to **highlight the inadequacy of the changes to the Operational Part of the Tunis document on implementation of the outcomes of WSIS after the Tunis Summit.**

According to indicators of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the world's 6 billion inhabitants have access to ICTs in the following proportions:

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- 11.5% have access to the internet, i.e. about 704 million people.
- 18.4% have access to fixed line telephones, i.e. about 1.3 billion people.
- 22.7% have access to a mobile phone, i.e. about 1.1 billion people.

The developed world's 1 billion inhabitants have access to ICTs in the following proportions:

- 46.3% have access to the internet, i.e. 547 million people.
- 55.2% have access to fixed line telephones, i.e. 652 million people.
- 69.7% have access to a mobile phone, i.e. 823 million people.

The developing world's 5 billion inhabitants have access to ICTs in the following proportions:

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- 5.3% have access to the internet, i.e. about 262 million people.
- 14.3% have access to a mobile phone, i.e. 707 million people
- 11.9% have access to a fixed line telephone, i.e. about 588 million people.

The developed world has more than half its population connected to a fixed line telephone and a mobile phone and is 3.7% short of having half its population connected to the internet.

Therefore, the WSIS target of half the world's inhabitants having access to ICTs by 2015 is primarily one of getting half of the developing world connected to ICTs by 2015, since to all intents and purposes, the developed world has reached the WSIS target.

The changes to paragraphs 10, 11 and 29 have completely removed the specific implementation structures consisting of multi-stakeholder teams around various action lines, with overall co-ordination by a 'well-defined co-ordination body' as suggested in the initial text.

Connecting two billion people to the internet in the developing world by 2015 brings together the key WSIS issues of internet governance

and financing ICTD/bridging the digital divide that have pre-occupied the Tunis phase of WSIS.

The Informal Coalition on Financing ICTD strongly objects to the removal of the initial text and its replacement with the current vague proposals for the following reasons:

1. The scale of the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action is illustrated by the example of the goal of ensuring that half the world's inhabitants are to have ICTs within their reach by 2015. If this goal is to be achieved, it needs to be defined at national level and linked to specific measurable targets. Monitoring and implementation will require some form of 'well-defined co-ordination body'.
2. The changes to the operational text are such as to prevent any meaningful implementation mechanism emerging from the Tunis Summit capable of addressing what we regard as one of the most important goals of WSIS Plan of Action.
3. In particular, the removal of any reference to a 'well-defined co-ordination body' severely limits the possibility of implementation after the Tunis Summit. The suggestion of leaving UN agencies to decide if they will co-ordinate any follow-up, within the limits of their governance and funding, places the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action at the discretion of the UN Agencies rather than providing them with a specific mandate.
4. There are no clear references to five and ten year reviews of WSIS progress as has been the case with other UN Summits. This is extremely worrying in view of the scale of tasks arising from WSIS implementation.

**Accordingly the Informal Coalition on Financing ICTD makes the following recommendations regarding the follow-up and implementation of the WSIS:**

- Creation of multi-stakeholder teams around each action line in the Geneva and Tunis plan of Action, with a well defined overall co-ordination body with a specific mandate and clearly defined role regarding the follow-up and implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action. Paragraph 11 should reflect this.
- That the WSIS implementation and follow-up mechanisms include a body such as the Global Alliance/Network of key actors

from a wide variety of stakeholders, e.g. along the lines proposed by the UN ICT Task Force

- The proposal for a multi-stakeholder 'forum' for internet governance arising from the report of the Working Group on Internet Governance should be included as part of the WSIS implementation process because such a forum will advance the policy engagement among a broad range of stakeholders that is critical for there to be successful internet governance across such a wide range of public policy issues and institutions.
- Provision should be made for 5 and 10 year reviews of progress towards implementing the WSIS Plan of Action.

### **About the Informal Coalition on Financing.**

The informal coalition on financing was created in February 2005. Its members are AMARC, Association for Progressive Communications (APC), CRIS (Communication Rights in the Information Society), Digital Divide data, IT for Change, Bread for All and the Third World Institute (iTem).

Its aims are to:

- address the intersection of the debates on financial mechanisms for ICTD with the issue of a new paradigm for Information and Communications for Development that is appropriate for the post-WSIS follow-up process
- to identify and support initiatives, especially community-driven initiatives, which can contribute towards building people-centred and development-oriented information societies
- to explore the issue of access to ICTs as a public good at global, regional and national levels