Panos Institute West Africa on behalf of the African Civil Society Caucus

Proposed amendment to the new proposed draft of the Friends of the Chair on the Operational Part

Proposal of the Africa Civil Society Caucus/WSIS

The African Civil Society Caucus, having examined the proposed modified draft of the Group of the Friends of the Chair on chapter 1 on the follow-up mechanisms of Geneva and Tunis summits, makes the following comments:

We wish to express our thanks to the President of the GFC for this new document which gives very useful precisions to paragraphs 10 and 11 of Chapter 1 and paragraph 29 of chapter 4 of the "Operational Part" document. All the same, we strongly regret the fact that in comparison to the earlier text, this new one does not foresee the establishment of a implementation mechanism of the Geneva and Tunis Action Plans on one hand, and the establishment of an ad hoc coordination structure for the follow-up of the Geneva and Tunis Action Plans on the other in a strong and compelling manner. For developing countries, **it is indispensable to guarantee the existence of a follow-up mechanism along with a coordinated, efficient and productive multistakeholder implementation, especially at the international level.** Specifically, we notice the following:

a) In the earlier version of paragraph 10 of chapter 1, there was a clear proposal for the establishment of a follow-up mechanism. In the latest draft of paragraph 10 proposed by the GFC President, (including the new paragraphs 11, 12, 13, and 14) the issue of a formal establishment of **an implementation** mechanism has been replaced with that of a "process of **follow-up"** which may include an implementation mechanism.

b) The eventual process which is being spoken about in paragraphs 10 and 14 is under the United Nations through its existing structures, without an effective coordination mechanism foreseen. We do recall though that in the document ***"Food for thought for the informal consultations on WSIS implementation and follow-up***" sent by the GFC president, if such coordination does not exist, there are high risks of duplication of activities by the United Nations institutions. A new coordination structure, we recall, was even foreseen for the earlier draft of paragraph 11 of chapter 1.

c) Provisions were also made in the paragraph 29 of chapter 4 for the secretariat costs of the coordination structure to be borne by the United Nations. The proposed chapter 14 of the present draft no longer makes mention neither of this secretariat, nor of its support but simply indicates that the implementation at the United Nations' level will be assured by the United Nations institutions, according to their traditions.

d) Considering the unique character of this new summit, which is consecrated to a new paradigm (the information society), and considering the proposal for the creation of a "Forum" for the follow-up of Internet Governance by the Working Group on Internet Governance, there is need to pay particular attention to the implementation and follow-up of the WSIS

e) We therefore propose the following re-wording, without the exclusion of other contributions which may follow our line of reasoning to enhance the other paragraphs (changes are in bold)

*New para.12 **(inserting a new item line b) and adjusting the subsequent item lines)***

12.   At the <u>national level,</u> based on the WSIS outcomes, we encourage governments to set up a national *implementation* framework with full and effective participation of civil society and business entities;
a)   National e-strategies, where appropriate, should be made an integral part of national development plans, including Poverty Reduction Strategies, aiming to contribute to the achievement of the goals contained in the UN Millennium Declaration;
b)   **Governments in developing countries should take every necessary step in order to improve their national regulatory framework with a view to fostering economic models of access to, and use of, bandwidth, which would reduce connection costs for the end user;**
c)   ICTs should be fully mainstreamed into strategies for Official Development Assistance (ODA) through more effective donor information-sharing and co-ordination, and through analysis and sharing of best practices and lessons learned from experience with ICT for development programmes;
d)   Existing bilateral and multilateral technical assistance programmes, including those under the UN Development Assistance Framework, should be used whenever appropriate to assist governments in their implementation efforts at the national level;
e)   Common Country Assessment reports should contain a component on ICT for development.

*New para.13 **(inserting a new item line b)***

13.   At the <u>regional level</u>:

a)   Upon request from governments, **civil society organizations and/or other organized stakeholders**, regional inter-governmental organizations **will** carry out WSIS implementation activities, exchanging information and best practices at the regional level, as well as organizing policy debate on the use of ICT for development, with a focus on attaining internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the UN Millennium Declaration;
b)   **Governments and regional intergovernmental organizations should convene regular consultations with the relevant ICT technical communities and practitioners to discuss best practices and implement relevant solutions with regard to building up and rationalizing the Internet traffic exchange infrastructures, by supporting collaboration and peering among the various operators, including the incumbent national telecom operator;**

c) UN regional economic commissions, based on request of Member States and within approved budgetary resources, may organize **or support** regional WSIS follow-up conferences with appropriate frequency;

d) We consider a multi-stakeholder approach and the full and effective participation in regional **WSIS implementation** activities by civil society and business entities to be essential.

New para.14, b) & e)

14. At the <u>international level</u>:

a) ……..;

b) Each UN agency, according to its mandate and competencies, and based on decisions of their respective governing bodies, **should** facilitate activities among different stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to help national governments in their implementation efforts. The facilitation **will include, but not limited to,** information exchange, sharing of best practices, and assistance in developing public/private and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Facilitation should be carried out within the approved budgets of the respective agencies;

c) ………;

d) ………;

e) The modalities of coordination of implementation activities among the UN agencies should be defined by the UN Secretary General **taking into account the innovative practices brought out by the WSIS process, as well as the need of a "Forum" by WGIG. These modalities should include a specific mainstream and multi-stakeholder coordination instance to which effective secretariat support should be provided. Such a coordination instance will periodically hold public consultations and/or open its processes to public comments, and submit reports to be made publicly available**. The experience of, and the activities undertaken by, UN agencies in the WSIS process—notably ITU, UNESCO and UNDP—should continue to be used to their fullest extent.

New para.30

30. **A global ICT policy analysis as well as** a realistic international performance *evaluation* and benchmarking (both qualitative and quantitative), through comparable statistical indicators and research results, including by using a methodology for a composite ICT development index (digital opportunity index), should be developed to follow up the implementation of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes, taking into account different national circumstances.

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