President of the PrepCom of the Tunis Phase

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE GROUP OF FRIENDS OF THE CHAIR
DURING THE INTER-SESSIONAL PERIOD

1.   The Group of Friends of the Chair (GFC) was created in accordance with the decision of PrepCom-1 (Hammamet) to prepare a document to serve as a basis for negotiations during PrepCom-2. By the Decision of PrepCom-2, the GFC was invited to continue working during the inter-sessional period to draft proposals for chapters one (Implementation Mechanisms) and four (The Way Ahead) of the Operational Part of the Tunis Final Document(s).

2.   The membership of the Group comprised representatives from six governments from each region, plus five regional coordinators and the two host countries. The Secretary-General of ITU and a representative of the Secretary-General of the UN participated as *ex-officio* members of the group. Non-member governments participated in the meeting as observers.

3.   The Group met three further times between 27 June and 7 September 2005, with one half-day meeting on 6 September being open to all stakeholders as a "special session". In addition, informal consultations on the implementation mechanism, open to all stakeholders, were held on 13 June 2005.

4.   The Group developed drafts on the basis of contributions from all stakeholders and discussion of rolling texts. The compilation of comments received since PrepCom-2 is available in document WSIS-II/PC-3/DT-6 (Rev. 2). Contributions to the work of the Group and drafts of the rolling texts are available on the Group's website at www.itu.int/wsis/gfc.

5.   The two annexes to this document present the current versions propose changes and additions to the Operational Part contained in WSIS-II/PC-3/DOC/8.
- Existing para 10 (including proposals in DT/2 (Rev. 3) and DT/6 (Rev. 2)) would be replaced by new paras 10-13;
- Existing para 11 (including proposals in DT/2 (Rev. 3) and DT/6 (Rev. 2)) would be replaced by new paras 14;
- Existing para 29 (including proposals in DT/2 (Rev. 3) and DT/6 (Rev. 2)) would be replaced by new paras 29-35;
- The "new" proposals could be added to the existing text of WSIS-II/PC-3/DOC/8.

6.	These documents are presented for the consideration of PrepCom-3 as a possible basis for negotiations. It is proposed that, if approved by PrepCom-3, this new text would be subject to a first reading, during which further proposals on the text could be made. Thereafter, the new consolidated text of chapter one and four will be issued for further negotiations.

Annexes:	Proposed text to replace paras 10, 11 and 29 of the Operational Part.
	"New" proposals for inclusion in the text of the Operational Part

Annex 1

**Proposals to replace paras 10, 11 and 29 of the
Operational Part of the Tunis Final Document(s)**
(Note: The whole text is in square brackets)

[**Chapter One: From principles to action: A summit of sustainable solutions**
Para 1-9, see document WSIS-II/PC-3/DOC/8.

10.   **We acknowledge** that multi-stakeholder participation in the building of the inclusive and development-oriented information society is essential. **We underline** that the participation of all stakeholders in implementing WSIS decisions on national, regional and international levels with the overarching goal of helping countries to achieve internationally agreed development goals is a key to its success.

11.   In order to assure the sustainability of progress towards the outcomes of WSIS after the completion of its Tunis phase, **we agree** to establish a process of follow-up to the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of WSIS, at national, regional and international levels. It may include, at each level, the following elements:

  a) implementation;
  b) evaluation;
  c) policy debate and review.

12.   At the <u>national level,</u> based on the WSIS outcomes, **we encourage** governments to set up a national *implementation* framework with 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) 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;
  c) 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;
  d) Common Country Assessment reports should contain a component on ICT for development.

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

  a) Upon request from governments, regional inter-governmental organizations could carry out WSIS implementation activities, exchanging information and best practices at the regional level, as well as facilitating 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) UN regional economic commissions, based on request of Member States and within approved budgetary resources, may organize regional WSIS follow-up conferences with appropriate frequency;
  c) **We consider** a multi-stakeholder approach and the participation in regional WSIS implementation activities by civil society and business entities to be essential.

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

a)   *Implementation* of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the Summit in the UN system should take account of the main themes and action lines in the Summit documents;

b)   Each UN agency, according to its mandate and competencies, and based on decisions of their respective governing bodies, and in line with UNGA Resolution 57/270 B, could facilitate activities among different stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to help national governments in their implementation efforts. The facilitation could include, amongst others, 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)   The modalities of coordination of implementation activities among the UN agencies should be defined by the UN Secretary General on the basis of existing practices within the UN system and within the WSIS. 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;

d)   Coordination of multi-stakeholder implementation activities would allow information exchange and avoidance of duplication of activities;

e)   The establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as the ITU-led initiative "Connect the World", which are aimed at bridging the digital divide, should be supported and encouraged;

Chapter Four: The way ahead
Para 26-28, see document WSIS-II/PC-3/DOC/8

29.   *Evaluation and policy formulation,* at the national level, would remain the prerogative of governments. **We consider** the participation in the *policy debate* by the national civil society and business entities to be essential.

30.   A realistic international performance *evaluation* and benchmarking (both qualitative and quantitative), should continue to be developed to follow up the implementation of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes through an internationally-comparable and agreed upon framework for statistical indicators, including by using a methodology for a composite ICT development index (digital opportunity index), taking into account different national circumstances.

31.   The work of the *global Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development*, which aims to increase the availability of internationally comparable ICT statistics would provide valuable inputs by setting international standards, defining indicators and promoting capacity building in countries to introduce systematic timely national monitoring of the Information Society.

32.   The *stocktaking* of activities related to the implementation of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes could be a valuable source of information in the evaluation process.

33.   **We request** the Secretary General of the United Nations to submit a report on implementation activities of the WSIS decisions within the UN family as part of the annual report to the ECOSOC and/or UNGA.

34.   *Review and policy debate* should be organized in the framework of the follow-up to the outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits in the Economic and Social fields, as provided for in UNGA Resolution 57/270 B. It should be an integral part of the review process of the implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration.

35.   Participation of all stakeholders in the policy discussion after the Tunis Summit is essential and the modalities of such participation should be established.

Annex 2

"New" proposals to be added to the text of the Operational Part

New Para 2A.   **We call upon** parliaments to establish the enabling environments for national e-strategies by adopting the necessary legal framework, by approving the budgets required to finance national e-strategies and by effectively overseeing the implementation by government of such strategies.

New Para 6b3.   Encouraging good information management policies in public and private sectors to ensure on-going reliability and accessibility of public information; encouraging creation of technical solutions for technological obsolescence to ensure the survival and transmission of informational contents;

New Para 6b4.   Digitizing our cultural treasures for the benefit of future generations;

New Para 6k3 v.   Establishing mechanisms that help local SMEs to customize products and applications to their particular market and cultural context, and providing support through capacity-building;

New Para 6o.   Ensuring ICT enterprises commit to environment-friendly production processes and to product recycling and proper disposal of ICT waste products, to minimise negative impacts of the use and manufacture of ICTs on people and the environment;

New Para 6p.   Building ICT networks and developing services that are available anytime, anywhere, by anything and anyone;

New Para 6q.   Establishing programmes for academia, communities, industry, and governments for ongoing learning of good practices in the design and implementation of ICTs;

New Para 6r.   Providing increased attention and support to human resource development and education for the information society with emphasis on the youth and women in order to increase contribution to the broader knowledge economy;

New Para 6s.   Incorporating policies and self-regulatory, co-regulatory or other effective frameworks to protect children and young people from abuse and exploitation through ICTs into national plans of action and e-strategies.

New Para 7B.   **We also applaud** research initiatives that contribute to the accomplishment of the WSIS goals. Research institutions should be promoted and supported at all levels, and recognized as a relevant stakeholder.

New Para 30.   **We propose** to establish a World Internet Day. This Day could help to raise awareness, on an annual basis, of the importance of this global facility, and more broadly on the issues dealt with in the Summit, especially the possibilities that the use of ICT can bring for societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide.

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