

**Comments on the Operational Part
Human Rights Caucus Contribution
to the Work of the Group of the Friends of the Chair
March 4th, 2005**

[NB. This contribution relates to available version, as of March 4th, 2005, of the Operational Part, that is, version dated February 25th, 2005]

With regards to the Operational Part

While this second phase is aiming at making WSIS a Summit of sustainable solutions, we regret that the operational part lacks concrete targets, goals and indicators to measure implementation at national and international levels.

After the Geneva Summit, the Human Rights Caucus stressed that beyond principles, there is the question of enforcement: without effective implementation, the principles would indeed stay without substance. The Geneva Plan of Action was already devoid of any mechanism to advance the human rights agenda, and we are very concerned that the operational part of this second phase fails to show any tangible progress in this respect.

Human rights are standards for measuring economic and social progress and for holding governments accountable. They should be used as benchmarks to follow national implementation of the political goals of the WSIS Declaration of Principles.

The human rights caucus has the following proposals, to be included in dedicated paragraphs of the Operational Part:

(Chapter One, Paragraph 7)

Precise indicators should be defined, in order to evaluate the realization of an information society protecting and promoting human rights. These should be the **benchmarks by which we measure progress and by which we review state legislation and policies**. As we stated in our comments with regards to the Political Chapeau, the objectives of the Millennium development goals and the realization of human rights are interdependent, and should advance one another. These indicators on human rights realization are thus a required part of overall indicators in order to measure ICT for development.

(Chapter One, Paragraph 10)

An Independent Commission on the Information Society and Human Rights, composed of highly qualified experts with a broad geographical representation, should be established to monitor and assess practices and policies on human rights and the information society. This is particularly urgent, given the tendency in many countries - both North and South - to sacrifice human rights in the name of "security".

The proposal could be integrated into **paragraph 10 of the Operational Part**, in which it is

stated that “a team of stakeholder” on different action lines would be useful to promote follow-up and implementation of the WSIS Declaration of Principles.

A Commission working on monitoring and promoting human rights standards in the Information Society could be a very useful mechanism to serve this end on a **specific action line dedicated to human rights** (see below our proposal regarding Action lines). We recommend that the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights serve as the coordinating body** of the work of such a team, and that its findings and recommendations be included in the annual report of this UN body.

(Chapter One, Paragraph 11)

Among the proposed options for a defined global coordination body, **the Human Rights Caucus favors the proposal of a newly-created UN interagency task force**. None of the existing UN division or agency has, alone, a broad enough focus to deal with the transverse character of topics related to the WSIS Declaration of Principles. Moreover, the diversity of civil society organizations participating in the WSIS process, as well as the number and variety of intergovernmental organizations taking part in this process, make it obvious that a new and transverse (both in thematic and regional terms) body should be created, **so that inclusiveness becomes a reality**. Furthermore, a UN interagency Task force should be preferred over simply a UN ICT-Task force type forum, in that the former **would lead to true commitments, better follow-up on decision implementation, while showing more transparency and accountability**.