

CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONSE TO NEGOTIATIONS ON RULES OF PROCEDURE AND MODALITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

3rd JULY 2002

The civil society organizations participating in WSIS PrepCom1 realize the importance of procedures to the outcome of the WSIS process. Therefore, the daily civil society Plenary has established a working committee on rules and procedures. The meeting has charged the committee with communicating to the governments our concerns about the adequacy of what we understand to be the proposals under consideration for civil society participation in the WSIS process.

UN Resolution A/RES/56/183 General Assembly, December 21, 2001 “encourages...non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector to contribute to and actively participate in the inter-governmental preparatory process of the Summit and the Summit itself.” It recommends that practices of previous Summits and United Nations World Conferences are taken as a baseline: there must be no erosion of established rights and practices, and we must move forward to implement the vision of an information society for all. The participation of NGOs in the UN system dates to the origins of the Un itself in Article 71 of the Charter. Translated into operational criteria in 1963 (GA Resolution 1296), these practices have, over the years, become more elaborate and extensive. The United Nations reviewed and updated arrangements for formal NGO participation in 1996 (Resolution 1996/31).

The WSIS must therefore build on 1996 Resolution 31 of ECOSOC and further inclusive good practices in a number of subsequent summits. While welcoming general declarations for support for broad participation, the committee on behalf of the Civil Society Plenary is not yet assured that the procedural proposals being discussed by governments will meet these minimum standards.

We recognize that several documents and proposals are being considered in the process. We welcome in general the move towards the more innovative elements adopted in Johannesburg. We would welcome the reaffirmation of established practices to speak in formal and informal meetings, to circulate and receive documentation and so forth.

We support proposals for additional, side and other events for all stakeholders. Thematic Roundtables can be an effective means of consensus building among stakeholders in the decision making process. There must be a guarantee that the outputs of all these events will be considered as inputs to the formal process.

Formal negotiations are reserved for governments alone. However, we believe that current proposals do not go far enough and that there exist opportunities for further innovation that will benefit the overall process. These could be in terms of mechanisms for all stakeholders to address all formal and informal sessions, globally and locally, directly and remotely. Means and mechanisms by which the legitimate interests of all stakeholders can be represented in an effective and balanced manner in the overall negotiating process must be developed. This indeed is called for in the results of the NGO consultation submitted by UNESCO to this PrepCom. We are currently drafting a civil society position on all these issues.

Moreover, the civil society must be fully involved in the definition of the WSIS agenda and themes.

At the conclusion of this session we hope to be able to welcome the outcome of PrepCom1, and to move forward together with a common vision and agenda.

RESPONSE ENDORSED BY:

- ABANTU for Development
- ALAI
- ALER - Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación Radiofónica
- AMARC Africa
- AMARC Europe

- ANAIS AC
- APC – Association for Progressive Communications
- Asociación Indígena
- Association Tunisienne de la Communication (ATUCOM)
- ATD Quart Monde
- ATUSUT (Association Tunisienne des Services Universels des Télécommunications)
- BHN Association
- Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University
- Carrefour Mondial de l'Internet Citoyen
- CEU – Center for Human Evolution Studies – Italy
- Chaîne de Recherche du Canada MCD
- Collectif d'Appui et d'Assistance Technique Approchée (CAATR)
- Community Media Network
- CPSR - Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility
- Computer Association of Nepal
- Conseil Mondial de la Radio-Television
- Consumer federation of America
- CREIS – Centre de coordination pour la Recherche et l'Enseignement en Informatique et Société
- CRIS Campaign
- CSDPTT – France
- ETIC Nord-Sud
- European Broadcasting Union
- FAWCO – Federation of American Women's Club Overseas
- FAWCO – Federation of American Women's Club Overseas – Youth Delegate
- FUNREDES
- Global CN Partnership
- Global Community Networking Partnership (GCNP)
- GLOCOM
- IDRC
- IFRI
- Instituto del Tercer Mundo (ITEM)
- International Association for Media and Communication Research
- International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)
- International Council for Caring Communities
- International Possibilities Unlimited
- International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC)
- IPU
- IRIS – Imaginons un Réseau Internet Solidaire – France
- ISIS International – Manila
- ISOC-Mali
- Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
- NEXUS Research Cooperative
- OneWorld
- Pacific Telecommunications Council
- Pacific Telecommunications Council (PTC)
- Pain pour le prochain – Bread for all
- RITIMO
- Taking IT Global
- Telecommunities Canada
- Transparency International
- World Association for Christian Communication
- Worldview International Foundation/Mandate the Future
- Youth Caucus