

4th Meeting Group Friends of the Chair GFC
10 January 2005
Report

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The PrepCom 2 of WSIS, Tunis phase started with the 4th meeting of the Group Friends of the Chair (GFC), held on **10 and 11 January 2005** at Room XVIII, Palais des Nations. The meeting on Mon 10 Jan 2005 was open to all WSIS stakeholders: government delegations, international organizations, observers, private sector and the civil society. On Tue 11 Jan 2005, the GFC held a closed meeting, open only to GFC nominated members, as well as to governmental observers. The 4th GFC Meeting was chaired by H.E. Ambassador Janis Karklins, President of the Preparatory Committee, by Yoshio Utsumi, ITU SG and by Charles Geiger, WSIS ES Executive Director.

The working documents (as following) for the meetings were submitted to comments and contributions by all stakeholders:

Political Chapeau /Tunis Commitment

Operational part of the final document / Tunis Agenda for Action / Tunis Plan of Implementation (with the Report of the TFFM – 125 pages.pdf English version only - submitted **ONLY** on Jan 4, which made screening and contributions difficult for some delegations complaining about the tight deadlines and asking for more time to evaluate the report and further contribute to the text)

Participants in the meeting agreed to work on the TFFM (summary available within the Chapter 2 of the Operational part of the final document) report and on the Political Chapeau in the afternoon.

The morning meeting covered the **Operational part of the final document (Chapter 1 and 4**, as Chapter 3 on IG will be resumed following release of the final report of the WGIG).

The following stakeholders have made contributions/comments/suggestions to the present text (all participants were requested to submit their contributions to the Secretariat in order to be included in the new text, so all changes made should be available ASAP): **Brazil, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Canada, El Salvador, USA, Iran, Algeria, Tunisia, Ghana, UNCTAD, UNECE, CONGO, CSDPTT, CCBI.**

The following summarizes the discussions focusing on the most important issues raised:

Introducing of “in-build time-bound measures (of e.g. yearly progress reports) as benchmarks; 2008 (subject to change) in the text is a provisional target date marking just some ES ambitions (CONGO) (pls refer to full CONGO intervention here below)

Accent on implementation and development strategies (“South-South should be enhanced in order to foster knowledge sharing” - Brazil) (to be left to regions to decide on modalities) (UNECE, El Salvador)

Education and social dimension emphasized (Algeria, El Salvador, Luxembourg) while “promoting public policies aimed at providing accessible hardware & software to populations leaving in rural areas” (Brazil)

Chapter 10 and 11 (and its alternate) on “an implementation mechanism for the Geneva Plan of Action” raised many discussions as to where to have a single Body (Task Force) (to be created/ to be defined by the UNSG) and a single report on the WSIS process or joining “in synergy” the existing UN agencies and bodies follow-up within the process

The Geneva Plan of Action identifies international performance evaluation and benchmarking “taking into account different national circumstances” (submitted by the US, supported by Iran “taking into account different level of development”)

Linkages between telecommunications and energy (ITU and UNEP) should be emphasized in the text considering the present int’l crisis and natural disasters (CSDPTT)

New wording and bracketing were proposed on punctual issues (to be considered when new text available)

All UN agencies and the EU are free to include WSIS meetings’ outcomes in their reports

The afternoon discussions focused on the **TFFM and the Political Chapeau**.

Here below Summary issues on the **TFFM report** submitted by the following stakeholders: **Canada, Brazil, USA, Luxembourg, India, Iran, El Salvador, Russia, CCBI, ENSTA, CSDPTT:**

Impossibility to conclude discussions on this Chapter (2) as many delegations request postponement of deadline due to lack of time to prepare submissions (in contradiction with rules of procedure which requires submission of contributions 4 weeks PRIOR to the PC2 (mandatory!!!)). Proposal by the Chair: to revisit the FM after meeting in Accra and before PC2, leaving delegations more time of reflection on possible suggestions, comments, contributions. Results to be submitted to the Chair (in the week beginning Feb 7, with the understanding that any major development should be brought before PC2)

DSF, the Digital Solidarity Fund to be readdressed within further consultations, though no specific requests by the Task Force were mentioned

Urge for more action/market-oriented text (Canada)

“Create policies and regulatory incentives to operate software to provide wide-spread Internet access at affordable prices” (Brazil)

Support Brazilian and Canadian suggestions and call for emphasizing the important role of responsibility from all stakeholders (Iran)

Request for presenting exact cost for “bridging the digital divide” (even provisional one), but some figure needed, as NO actual cost mentioned
Pls refer to full CONGO intervention here below

For the **Political Chapeau** the following stakeholders have expressed their suggestions: **Luxembourg, Algeria, Russia, Egypt, Brazil, Canada, El Salvador, WHO, CONGO, ENSTA, CCBI**. Here below few of the most important ones:

Replace in Chapter New 1 bis “the Tunis Summit represents a unique moment in the history of mankind” by “opportunity for us to...” as unique moment in history mankind should be left to moments really... unique (supported by most speakers)

Better topic (logical) in Chapter 1 (Luxembourg)

Inclusion of physical and mental health (CONGO) (pls refer to full CONGO intervention here below)

Request by Tunisia to restate previous para 11 & 12 from the December text (removed in the present text) even if only for backgrounders

Request by Egypt to restate previous para 17 from the December text (removed in the present text)

Promote open (“universal and ubiquitous”) access to science and education available to everyone (Algeria, Canada, US)

More openness, inclusiveness and transparency in order to comply with the MDGs (CCBI)

General remarks by ITU SG Yoshio Utsumi:

The Draft on the Final Document of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, though balanced, does not include the “disaster dimension” (even if the upcoming Kobe Summit will address the issue). In the SG’s views the document is far from touching the actual reality of the world, “it does NOT attract world leaders to commit”, focusing only on procedural framework (except for FM). Yoshio Utsumi committed to send his proposals to the Chair and the WSIS ES asap.

Very solid and engaged contributions to both Political Chapeau and to operational Part of the Final Document of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society were submitted by Francis Muguet (ENSTA) and by Jean-Louis Fullsack (CSDPTT) (their comments to be sent individually).

Please find here below the CONGO intervention during the 4th meeting of the Group Friends of the Chair (GFC), held on 10 January 2005, at Room XVIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

<http://www.itu.int/wsis/gfc/docs/4/statements/CONGO.pdf>