27 September 2004.
Jean-Louis Fullsack
CSDPTT


Hello everyone

Sorry for the length of this mail.
First of all : many thanks to Rainer for his daily update of "Finance Digest". This is becoming a very useful tool for all CS members volunteering to participate actively in the CS Working Group on ICT Financing, especially in DCs. That is to say that we need to close the debate on whether or not a second list is useful in our action. My last comment on this issue is that a second list may be useful for homing inputs from, and discussions between, french speaking people (this is the case i.e. in a large part of Africa). Djilali and others (Francis, ...) can perhaps forward the most contributive documents or their summarized content to the WSIS-CS list ("our list" in the following text).
In addition I strongly support Rainer's suggestion for Djilali being a co-moderator in our list : he is well qualified for that task because of both his commitment in the WSIS process and his fluent english and french language practice (what's more : he has some skills in informatics). I'd further suggest that all organizational and personal matters be submitted for approval to the CS Plenary as soon as it will meet, i.e. during the next PrepCom. So far so good for issues concerning our list. The next issues are numbered in accordance with the topics of Rainer's Finance Digest dated September 26th.


1. Content related information
   First it will be necessary to compile the most interesting (content) CS documents issued during the fist phase of WSIS. Perhaps some of them need to be updated and some consolidation may be useful. To this purpose and as far as I'm concerned I'll send to our list the documents I elaborated and/or presented up to now in the framework of WSIS. They are generally in french and in english, but some important documents about financing issues in DCs can be found on CSDPTT website (www.csdptt.org), although they are in french. I'd just highlight a very useful and comprehensive document entitled "Financement des Infrastructures en Afrique en vue de la réduction de la Fracture numérique, objectif essentiel du SMSI » (in english : « Financing infrastructures in Africa for narrowing the digital gap, a WSIS key objective ») which can be found at www.csdptt.org/article236.html.


2. Role of UNDP in WSIS' second phase
   We need some complementary information about the actual role of UNDP in the Financing Task Force, as well as the position of this Task Force itself within the financing dedicated body/organization in the framework of WSIS.
   Once more I agree Rainer's opinion : it is the CS as such wich has to be involved in the process and not a person, whatever could be his qualifications and relations.
   And once again I'd stress that the issue n°1 in ICT4D financing is the communications infrastructure and access, because the amount of investment is huge and the urgency is highest especially for the whole African continent. In this domain I'd accept a coordinating role for a sub-group in charge of assessing the needs and

proposing investment optimisation methods and appropriate financing mechanisms. The main ideas on this topic are mentioned in the above indicated CSDPTT document.

3. UNICT TF in Berlin

   I will do my best for attending this meeting if I'm convinced that my presence there will be useful (futhermore this has to be agreed upon by my organization). It should be a good opportunity for CS working group on Financing to meet and set up its organization, to distribute the roles and assigning an agenda for its members for the next PrepCom.

4. Organization of CS Working group on Financing

   I'd stress once more the urgent need to involve very actively our CS friends from Asia, Latin America and Africa. Therefore we should set-up an organizational structure where these Regions (following the UN terminology) are duly represented and exercise effective responsibilities. We know that one barrier for this aim to be reached is ... financing DC's CS participation in the WSIS process. I propose for this purpose to sollicit the assistance of the European institutions, since there are privileged and well operating relations between Europe and a large number of DC's under the umbrella of the EU-ACP Agreement. This remembers me that we also do need a real and independant "Caucus Europe" within the CS organization. However, as far as I know , this Caucus is still a Lochness Monster ...

A fifth item to be discussed is the need to define our strategy regarding our partners in the WSIS process. Regarding Sean O'Siochru's letter attached to the "Digest", I agree with his opinion that the second phase of WSIS will be focused mainly -if not exclusively- to ACTION. And essential financing to fuel it ! However I diverge with his opinion about points of power. PrepComs still should be the privileged discussion frame with our partners because of the permanent relation and interworking between the CS Plenary one one hand, the CS C&T Group and the two special WGs such as Internet Gouvernance Group and ICT Financing Group where CS is involved on the other hand. This fruitful and democratic exchange within the CS isn't possible if the privileged location for points of power is the only Financing Task Forcel as proposed by Sean.

What's more, I'm strongly convinced that CS has to privilege regional organizations rather than gouvernments (this doesn't exclude them from discussions and relations) because there is a growing number of effective policies decided and implemented on subregional and regional levels, e.g. NEPAD for Africa, but also in the same Region ECOWAS, SADC, CEAC, ... The same applies for LAC Region, South East Asia and Pacific. Such a privileged relationship also means more effectiveness and less time wasting for the "short-handed" CS.

Apologies for the length of my message and best regards

Jean-Louis Fullsack
CSDPTT

30 September 2004

A quick response to Jean-Louis regarding the final part of his note which
refers to a comment I had made.
>Regarding Sean O Siochru letter attached to the Digest  I agree with
>his opinion that the second phase of WSIS will be focused mainly -if not
>exclusively- to ACTION. And essential financing to fuel it ! However I
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>Financing Group where CS is involved on the other hand. This fruitful and
>democratic exchange within the CS isn=92t possible if the privileged
>location for points of power is the only Financing Task Forcel as proposed
>by Sean.

Let me refine the point a bit further.  We are all committed to ensuring that there are
meaningful, transparent and democratic links between the civil society involvement in the
Task Force on Financing, the C&T Group and the CS Plenary, and would like to see open
effective debate at PrepComs and between them on such lists as this.  There is an important
issue of legitimacy here too.

But in practice, there are additional means to influence that might prove decisive.  These
'points of influence' arise from the nature of this second phase.  We can directly influence the
Task Force by coming up with good concrete proposals that are within their remit (they
desperately need such ideas); and similarly, many governments of the South are openly
seeking ideas that they can support, that will give some substance to the outcome.  (I am not
so optimistic about the role of regional organisations in the foreseeable future.) This can be
done by individual civil society actors, or any groups or configurations of them.

Ideas, of course, can be of two types.  We can have the BIG ideas of reforming the
international institutions like the ITU as proposed by CSDPTT and others (including
myself).  It would be great to see such ideas appearing even on the horizon of international
agendas.  Then we have the small ideas that might make a difference, and indeed that might
be the beginnings of a new ICT paradigm on the ground.  These are ideas such as
cooperatively owned local infrastructure and service providers; special financing
arrangements for same; technology-neutral licensing; exploiting the potential of WiFI, VOiP
for small scale network deployment etc. etc.  There are ideas that can be developed in
practice, and that are emerging.  And indeed some of them might point to what the BIG ideas
could support, if the latter ever come about.

So I did not intend to argue that PrepComs etc. should not be 'privileged discussion' frames.
They should be. But that there are other opportunities to significantly influence the outcomes
outside the direct loop of the official process, that we should be taking advantage of.

Apologies for not translating into French and thanks to diligence of others in this regard.

bye
Sean