



His Excellency Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
The United Nations
2 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017-3515

October 23, 2007

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

We are greatly concerned by the financial challenges associated with the forthcoming **Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**. Indeed, the location of Rio de Janeiro imposes travel costs that may limit the participation of representatives from developing nations, particularly those in Africa and Asia.

With less than a month to the opening of the IGF, few if any assistance programs have been established to ensure their participation, in the spirit of UN fora. All the while, last minute bookings for travel and accommodations are increasing disproportionately in price, not to mention the delays associated with requesting and issuing proper travel documents. Without any urgent action on your part, a large number of Civil Society representatives from many of these nations will be excluded.

Such a restricted participation would be a direct contradiction to the goals of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which places socio-economic development as a transversal axis for discussions on Internet Governance. It would be a complete transgression of these WSIS objectives if such discussions were to be held without the proper representation of all participants. Indeed, the WSIS clearly established the goal of establishing direct interaction between all stakeholders, in order to gauge the global impact of problems and the efficiency of best strategies to solve them. Furthermore, language barriers and limited infrastructure are hindering remote participation.

The African civil society, always very vigilant, regrouped on a continental scale within ACSIS, had already expressed in 2006 its strong concerns in an open letter addressed to the IGF secretary and more recently in a letter addressed to the two co-chairmen of the advisory group (*copies in annexes*). This present letter is an ultimate attempt at ensuring the broadest expression of global interests in the IGF and it marks a world-wide enlargement of the concerns previously expressed by the ACSIS.

The situation is all the more surprising that funds have been earmarked for the specific purpose of facilitating a proper representation of Civil Society from developing nations. Nonetheless, the amount of these funds has not been published by the IGF secretariat, in contrast to the best practices during the WSIS preparatory process. In these conditions, urgent action is required, and is possible, that should ensure the due participation of Civil Society from developing nations, to the IGF in the Rio..

We are most grateful for your having issued instructions (PI/1791 20/08/2007) to enhance the transparency of the preparatory process for this second edition of the Internet Governance Forum, by ensuring a continuous flow of information between the members of the advisory group and the various interested group. However, it cannot be avoided to notice implementation has been very relative, notably regarding the transparency of the IGF preparatory process, implementation of its mandate, and its organization, despite detailed descriptions in Articles 72 to 78 of the Tunis Agenda.

Mr. Secretary General, your swift intervention is required if the Rio meeting is to be hailed as a truly inclusive success.

Louis Pouzin

Louis POUZIN, Chairman, WSIS Civil Society Working Group on Information Networks Governance, <www.wsis-gov.org>

Ms. Delphine NANA MEKOUNTE, President, African Civil Society for the Information Society (AC SIS), <www.acsis-africa.org>



Ms. Chantal LEBRUMENT, President, European Languages Internet Conference (EUROLINC), <www.eurolinc.eu>
Jean-Louis FULLSACK, Chairman, Cooperation-Solidarity-Development (CSDPTT), <www.csdptt.org>
Khemakhem JAMEL, Tunisian Association of Child Rights
Jean-François MORFIN, Chairman, INTLNET, <intlnet.org>
Dr. Francis MUGUET, Chairman, WSIS Civil Society Working Group on Scientific Information
<wsis-si.org>

Annexes :

letter ACSIS to secretariat IGF
letter secretariat IGF to ACSIS
letter ACSIS to co-chairs of advisory group