

**Consultation Meeting of WSIS Action Lines Moderators/Facilitators
ITU/UNESCO/UNDP, 24 February 2006**

Introductory remarks

Yoshio Utsumi, ITU Secretary General, dedicated his first words to the multi-stakeholder nature of the implementation process, leading to concrete actions in line with WSIS goals and principles. At the international level, international organisations would facilitate activities among stakeholders (§ 108 of Tunis Agenda), and the purpose of this meeting was to coordinate among action line teams. The action line implementation activities must be multi-stakeholder in nature (inclusive and bottom up), a collective process and result oriented. Each action team should be a light mechanism. He stressed that this needed coordination of action lines implementation was a process separated from the interagency coordination between UN agencies secretariats within the UN Group on the Information Society (to be part of the UN CEB, § 103).

Koïchiro Matsuura, UNESCO Director General, added that WSIS contributed to give ICT a social dimension (knowledge and education) in addition to its technological one. He insisted on the multi-stakeholder nature, the consideration of Geneva action lines, and the moderating role of UN agencies when appropriate. He presented the two draft papers presented by the organisers of the meeting.

- The Draft terms of reference for moderators/facilitators referred to the role of each action line facilitator.
- The Draft terms of reference for lead agencies was an answer to the needed coordination among moderators.

He said the work of the interagency coordination mechanism of the UN Group on the Information Society would be better clarified further to the UN CEB High Level Committee on Programmes to take place the following week.

Ms. Odile Sorgho-Moulinier, UNDP Geneva, also insisted on how to strengthen the role of each action multi-stakeholder team in the identification of priorities and of their work, both in virtual discussion and physical meetings. On the coordination between the Action lines facilitators, she stressed the need for coherence among them and with other existing mechanisms, such as the UNGIS. WSIS implementation should also reach out to other development processes including the MDGs.

Several participants, including UNDP, made some comments regarding the date of this meeting and the difficulty for many stakeholders to participate in consultations when dates are not well coordinated. In the future, meeting scheduling should avoid conflicts with other international ICT gatherings.

It must be noted that even though Member States were represented in the room by national delegations, most of the Group acted quite passive during the meeting. This was even more obvious during the afternoon session.

1. Moderators/Facilitators of Action Lines

Identification of Action Lines Facilitators

Willie Currie (APC) proposed to cluster the existing action teams in 3 groups, each to be coordinated by one of the leading facilitating agencies. Grouping action lines together that way would be a good idea.

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annexed list of action line facilitators. **Charles Geiger (WSIS ED)** proposed not to cast in stone who would moderate, but to remain flexible and open for the long-term perspective of WSIS implementation.

Egypt stressed that each international organisation should continue to work within its mandate and the decision of its governing body. The experience of international agencies working in the field of development should be used for the benefit of economic development.

Bertrand de la Chapelle (wsis-online.net) recalled the wording of the Tunis Agenda, which referred to the themes and action lines of the Geneva Plan of Action. In this perspective, WSIS implementation could be articulated around up to 70 sub-themes. He emphasised the need for a more thematic and non exclusive approach taking into account relevant themes in which specialised actors were involved.

Participation of all stakeholders in WSIS implementation

ECPAT expressed its interest to participate in the implementation of children protection in the use of ICT, but would like to see a more specific distinction of this theme among the existing action lines. **WHO** emphasised its interest to participate in the e-health action line. On a sub-theme on IS for Peace, proposed by **Ana Leurinda (CS Peace Caucus)**, UNESCO answered that a concept note had been compiled by UNESCO so that action in this field was actually envisaged. **Divina Frau-Meigs (IAMCR)** later on supported that in many themes, civil society and private sector should be recognised as co-moderators together with international organisations. **Ayesha Hassan (CCBI)** called for a constructive dialogue on how to better involve all stakeholders in the implementation process.

The three leading facilitators should also do their utmost to reach out all civil society and private sector entities (**EU**). The multi-stakeholder nature of the implementation process implied that States and International Organisations should not impose anything to other stakeholders, who should remain free to carry out implementation activities (**Canada**).

Honduras stressed the need to ensure participation of stakeholders from each region, including from developing countries. **Egypt** insisted on the economic development priorities of developing countries, and also highlighted the practical difficulties to involve stakeholders from developing countries, so that more funding would be needed.

Stressing the actual difficulties for all stakeholders to follow all events, **Francis Muguet (ENSTA)** proposed the holding of a World Forum on Digital Solidarity, to be held in 2006 between the IGF meeting and the ITU Plenipotentiary meeting.

Bertrand de la Chapelle underlined the need to make use of on-line tools for better self-organisation of participants. In addition, for each themes and action line implementation team, a rolling list of involved actors should remain open.

2. Nature of coordination process

This item was intended to explore the coordination process to be established between the Moderators/Facilitators of each action line.

Jean-Louis Fullsack (CSDPTT) stressed that the cross-sectorial aspect of issues has to be considered, so that the coordination process should also address other related issues to ITC, such as energy and transportation. Synergies between aspects should be explored and clustered as they closely intertwine. **Adalbert Nougá (Village Suisse ONG)** said the implementation should focus on reducing the digital divide and tackle poverty on a daily basis through multi-stakeholder answers.

On the process, **WHO** proposed that moderator agencies should provide some ideas for the future, such as an initial plan and initial results, to help potential stakeholders know where they could fit and what would be the objectives of the process. **Mr. Utsumi** gave some details about the ITU meeting in Doha scheduled to kick-start implementation of Action Line C-2, with the scope to reach an agreement to categorize activities for infrastructure building. The modus operandi would be to first ask stakeholders what their plans and activities are, for more detailed and organized stocktaking in line with the objectives of the infrastructure building. One further step forward would be to ask what is required by/to stakeholders. He referred to the three existing levels of participation for international organizations, i.e. leading facilitating role, action line moderator and participation in the implementation of an action line. Moderation activities should not represent a heavy burden for the relevant organization and is on a voluntary basis, even though some resources would need to be involved. ITU recalled for voluntary contributions. He later added that the approach on ICT security would require a more targeted approach. **UNIDO** gave its vision of the nature of the coordination process under a multi-stakeholder inclusive approach. It should include on-line discussion between moderators all stakeholders on individual action lines; stock taking activities should include action lines related initiatives, with an on-line warning system and reliable update system for the database. **FAO** stressed the need for reporting template for each moderator to crosscut the various areas of WSIS implementation.

Siemens noted that the implementation mechanisms should be open to the modus operandi of each category of stakeholders: complete reporting activities would therefore be difficult due to the importance of competition and of the decentralized organization of Private Sector entities. In order to facilitate moderators' work, all stakeholders would need to engage, given their differences in their respective lines of work. Private-public partnerships should also be reviewed as "who's paying" has remained unclear in this kind of association.

Based on the Draft terms of reference for the work of Leading Facilitating Agencies circulated by ITU, UNESCO and UNDP, **Bertrand de la Chapelle** commended the 3 agencies for a flexible framework and proposed new wording for § 4 of this document, towards a stronger reference to a multi-stakeholder process taking into account both action lines and themes and the mention of open interoperable protocol for multi-stakeholder platforms. In addition, **Francis Muguet** stressed that technical platforms needed to be interoperable (CMS) and free software to be introduced, ensuring compatibility with various systems.

Pape Diouf (ACSIS) flagged the risk for African civil society to be excluded from the WSIS implementation process. Therefore a more decentralized approach at the national and sub-regional level should allow African actors to better participate in a bottom up process. External financing should also be developed.

3. Output of Coordination process

Bertrand de la Chapelle, noting that participants in this meeting spoke about coordination and reporting rather than moderation/facilitation, stressed that the role of moderator is to help actors implement WSIS commitments and be at their service. **Charles Geiger** supported this vision of facilitation activities from the international organisations to the various actors. The reporting process should rather take place at the interagency level within the UN-GIS and the question is how to make those two processes better interact. **Francis Muguet** clarified the distinction between the interagency implementation process – which should be itemized in its approach by the governing bodies of each relevant international organisation – and the facilitation role of international organisations – to be directed towards other actors for the promotion of WSIS recommendations.

4. Work Modalities and Logistics

Divina Frau-Meigs (IAMCR) strongly questioned the capacity of the implementation process to be really multi-stakeholder. The dates and places of the meetings would be a basic decisive factor, and the organisation of such

a meeting in Doha would certainly not allow a strong participation of various stakeholders for practical reasons. She proposed to organise a yearly gathering of all post WSIS interested stakeholders, such as an Information Society Week, in order to keep the momentum, with the possibility to organise side events, and present reports and discussions convened by Action Lines facilitators. She also stressed that stocktaking activities should include both quantitative and qualitative criteria for a more credible feedback. Further to her question about accreditation process and the role of new comers, Mr. Utsumi answered that in his understanding, the WSIS implementation would be open to all interested actors, without any accreditation process and with no other condition than being active in the implementation schemes. On the proposed IS Week, **Charles Geiger** later on added it would be necessary to hold such a yearly event to keep the WSIS process alive. It should be asked to UNCTAD to provide a space for parallel events during the next meetings of the CSTD (15-19 May 2006). **Francis Muguet (ENSTA)** emphasized that a yearly event should be able to take place elsewhere than in Geneva, to better take into account the global vision of the Summit outcomes and include all potential stakeholders. He supported the format of a World Forum on Digital Solidarities to be organised back-to-back with the IGF meetings.

Bertrand de la Chapelle reiterated the need to have a virtual framework for the articulation of the implementation efforts of the various groups interested. To that end, international organisations should make a strong effort to better integrate how agencies could work in a virtual manner. Development of on-line tools and platform should be as multi-stakeholder as possible.

William Currie (APC), noting the expression of interest of civil society entities and international organisations during this meeting to participate in the moderation activities on action lines implementation, stressed that we should now have a better understanding of how the facilitators would be determined and how civil society and private sector could be part of it. He suggested that for each action line an interim moderator should be identified with a contact person, in order to kick-start the process and to know who should be approached by interested entities. After some delegations expressed they were uncomfortable with the idea of designating action line facilitators whereas the annex should be read as indicative and non-exhaustive (France, Austria) and interventions in favour of action line focal points (Dominican Republic), **Yoshio Utsumi** proposed to pave the ground for a concrete kick-start of action line implementation, while keeping the indicative nature of the list annexed to the Tunis Agenda. He suggested circulating a *provisional list of provisional focal points* for each action line, so that all interested actors interested in participating could contact the identified provisional focal point with the view to launch the implementation processes (provisional list to be posted on-line soon).

Conclusions

In a first summary of the meeting, Abdul Waheed Khan (UNESCO) highlighted the following points:

1. Flexibility in the reading of the annex (indicative and non exhaustive). NGOs proposed to act as co-facilitators.
2. While the value of the stocktaking activities was recognised, qualitative considerations were also required.
3. The implementation process should be bottom up and inclusive. Facilitators should assist actors.
4. A revised version of the draft terms of reference would be circulated.
5. Relevant working methods should be developed. Reporting templates should be harmonized with stocktaking.
6. On-line tools should be better used. Existing websites would be made interoperable and multi-stakeholder.
7. An Information Society Week would be envisaged.

During this meeting, Tim Kelly also introduced the WSIS Golden Book (more info at www.itu.int/wsis/goldenbook). Reports on CSTD and IGF consultations were also presented.