

# Report

## 1st Meeting of the Group of the Friends of the Chair (GFC I) Geneva, 20 October 2004

### Discussion on Annex 1 – Group of Friends of Chair

1. The GFC was established by PrepCom1. Its aim is to facilitate the drafting process for the final documents of WSIS II. It is not an official “negotiating body” but it can be expected that the GFC drafts will constitute the basis for the forthcoming WSIS II negotiations.
2. Although the GFC is not an “official body”, its composition and rules follow more or less the traditional WSIS procedures. It is composed by 36 members (3 Eastern Europe, 6 Asia, 6 Western Europe and other States , 6 Latin America, 6 Africa, 5 regional coordinators, 2 Host Countries plus as ex officio members the Secretary General of ITU and the UN). Other governments and non-governmental stakeholders are invited to participate as “observers”.
3. GFC I discussed the schedule and the methods of work of the GFC as well as the outline for the planned final WSIS II documents.
4. Concerning the methods of work the GFC I followed the proposal of the Chair. According to his proposal, members and observers will be invited to send proposals in electronic form to the Chair. On the basis of the proposals the chair will generate a draft, which will constitute the platform for the negotiations during PrepCom2 (Geneva, February 2005).

### Discussion on Annex 2 – Chair’s note to the members of the GFC

5. Three issues became the subject of a controversial debate: a. who can send in proposals, b. whether the proposals should be published or closed, and c. whether Internet Governance should be addressed by the GFC.
  - a. The question was whether proposals can be submitted by GFC members, or by GFC members and governmental observers, or by all stakeholders, including civil society and private sector. In his final remarks the Chair made clear, that “everybody” is invited to send “proposals” to the Chair.
  - b. Pakistan, supported by Iran and Egypt, raised the issue of “limited circulation” of documents (governments only), but the Chair proposed a flexible system, which allows the presentation both of open and closed proposals. Spain, France, Canada and the Netherlands supported the circulation of all documents. The Chair proposed that each proposal should indicate whether the proposal is “open” or “closed”. It will depend to a high degree upon the flexibility of the Chair how to handle this issue, which has a potential for conflict. If a government wants to publish its proposal on the GFC Website, it can indicate this wish to the Chair. If a government wants to send in a closed proposal, it also has to indicate this to the Chair. Civil Society and Private Sector can also send in proposals.
  - c. Pakistan mentioned that Internet Governance, as one of the core issues, would be appropriate to be addressed in the GFC’s drafting process. The Chair and other delegations were less inclined to do so. It was decided that issues of Internet Governance and Finances has been excluded so far and will not be part of the GFC meetings, since there is a special working group and a task force dealing with those issues. But a few governments expressed their interest to discuss incoming reports by the two groups also in the forthcoming GFC meetings.

### Discussion on Annex 3 – Chair’s non-paper

6. Concerning the structure of the planned Tunis Documents, the GFC agreed on the following principles:
  - a. WSIS II should be linked as close as possible to the development goals under the Millennium Declaration (six weeks before the Tunis Summit, the MDG+5 Heads of State Summit will take place in New York);
  - b. Geneva and Tunis should be seen as one process, that means the Tunis documents are complementary to the Geneva documents and the consensus, which was reached in Geneva, should not be reopened for new negotiations.
  - c. The following points were mentioned to be taken into consideration: freedom of expression, cultural diversity, from the information society to the knowledge society, practical implementation of programs, ICT and the environment, the digital divide.
7. The planned document should consist of two parts: i) a short but precise "Political Chapeau" and ii) an "Operational Part".  
The "Operational Part" should have four chapters:
  - a. From Word to Actions: A Summit of Sustainable Solutions (Stocktaking / with a focus on implementation)
  - b. Financial Mechanisms
  - c. Internet Governance
  - d. The way ahead
8. The debate circled around the questions whether there should be one or two documents, what the title of the document could be ("Tunis Charter" or something like this) and whether this should be a governmental document or a document, endorsed by all stakeholders.
- 9.

### **Next Steps**

10. All proposals for GFC II have to be sent in an electronic form until 2 November 2004 to the Latvian Mission and with a CC to the WSIS Executive Secretariat, and also indicating whether the proposal is open or closed. The Chair will send a first draft and synthesis of the proposals by 10 or 11 November 2004. On the morning of 15 November the GFC will examine and reflect the draft in the morning; in the afternoon all stakeholders will be invited to join the group. On morning of 16 November there will be a joint meeting and an interactive dialogue between the GFC and the TFFM; in the afternoon the drafting among the GFC and observer delegations will continue.
11. GFC will have three more meetings until PrepCom2. There will be closed and open meetings. Next meetings are scheduled for November 15-16, December 16-17 and January 10-11.

### **General Observations**

12. GFC gave both governments and non-governmental observers the right to speak. There was no real differentiation among the representatives in the room. Everybody could speak. There were four interventions by Civil Society and two interventions by the Private Sector. . Speakers from Civil Society raised indirectly the question of "negotiations rights". They pointed out hat if civil society in a multi-stakeholder process is expected to join the planned "Tunis Consensus", they have to have a visible impact in the negotiation process. Otherwise the "Geneva Model" – i.e. a complementary CS document - would reappear.
13. A few governmental delegations explicitly welcomed the participation of the civil society and the private sector and expressed their appreciated for their contributions, these were Netherlands / EU, Canada and Switzerland.
- 14.
15. The whole GFC I meeting was held on a cooperative and constructive atmosphere. ITU Secretary General Utsumi opened the meeting with a short welcome speech.<

The meeting was attended by about 150 representatives, mainly from the governmental missions in Geneva and intergovernmental organisations like UNESCO, ITU, ILO and the Council of Europe. There were about five participants from Civil Society and two from the private sector. No official list of participants has been circulated.

### **CS Next Steps**

16. For Civil Society, it is important to move forward in the following two steps:
  - a. Generate “proposals” within the caucuses and working groups and to channel these proposals via C&T and the CS Plenary to the GFC Chair by 2 November 2004.
  - b. Develop a mid-term strategy, which has to include options for a separate CS Tunis Document. It would also be required to think about an evaluation of the CS Geneva Declaration.
17. It is recommended to use the forthcoming UNICTTF Meeting in Berlin in November and the ICANN Meeting in Cape Town in December to discuss strategies and next steps.

Notes written by Ramin Kaweh, Wolfgang Kleinwächter, Viola Krebs (in agreement with Renata Bloem) – 25 October 2004.