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WSIS ROUND TABLES

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1. Schedule

Four round tables will be held in parallel with the plenary meetings as follows:

1. 10 Dec. 1700-1900 Creating Digital Opportunities
2. 11 Dec. 1100-1300 Diversity in Cyberspace
3. 11 Dec. 1500-1700 ICT as a Tool to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals
4. 12 Dec. 1030-1230 Empowering All Citizens

2. Guidelines for participants

These guidelines provide information for chairmen, moderators and participants. The guidelines complement the general information on round tables contained in Annex 2 of the document on the proposed format of the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, which was approved by PrepCom 3.

1. The round tables are organized around one overarching theme: “An Information Society for All: Opportunities and Challenges”. Three of the round tables will cover a cluster of related topics and the fourth round table will be more generic in nature.

2. The title and theme of each round table is meant to provide guidance to participants, thereby ensuring focus and coherence in each session.

3. The Round tables are intended to stimulate an interactive discussion in raising, under the overarching theme, broad policy issues relating to the information society.

4. Presentations should preferably conclude with relevant policy suggestions so that the outcome of the discussions translates into suggestions/proposals for Summit follow-up, thus paving the way toward its second phase in Tunis.

5. A Head of State or Government, invited by the President of the Summit, will chair each round table. The role of the chairman is to lead the session and ensure effective time management.

6. Each round table will be moderated by an eminent personality who will help keeping discussions well focused and interactive. Moderators will be nominated by the Secretary-General of the Summit. The role of the moderator is to animate the round table sessions by summing up the key points stemming from presentations by Heads of State or Government, and by addressing questions and issues to the participants.

8. After introductory remarks by the chairman, the moderator will invite Heads of State or Government to make brief initial comments if they so wish. The moderator will sum up the key points and invite participants to start exchanging views, bearing in mind that time is not available for formal presentations or prepared statements.

9. Participants are requested to plan their interventions in keeping with the following time schedule:

❖ Introductory remarks by the chairman	3 minutes
❖ Introductory remarks by the moderator	3 minutes
❖ Initial comments by Heads of State or Government	3 minutes each
❖ Dialogue among participants	60 minutes
❖ Moderator’s summary and concluding remarks	3 minutes
❖ Chairman’s concluding remarks and thanks	1 minute

10. Interpretation shall be provided in the official languages of the Summit: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. A participant may use any other language if he/she provides the relevant interpretation. In such cases, the WSIS Executive Secretariat needs to be informed by 30 November at the latest.

11. The proceedings of the round tables will be broadcast to an overflow room that will be open to the media. These sessions will also be broadcast through the Internet and television.

12. Each Head of State or Government—or in their absence, Head of Delegation--participating in a round table may be accompanied by two advisers. Other participants may be accompanied by one advisor each. There will be no seating available for a general audience in the round table room. The audience is invited to follow the proceedings in the overflow room located in Hall 2 of PALEXPO.

3. Round tables Topics

The round tables are organized around the overarching theme: “An Information Society for All: Opportunities and Challenges”. The following is an indicative list of topics, which the chairpersons and moderators will use to help guide discussions. .

Round table 1: Creating Digital Opportunities

The establishment of a modern, reliable and efficient communication system is seen as fundamental in creating Digital Opportunities. This session will focus attention on issues such as access, funding and building partnerships:

◆Connectivity: An information society for all is built on modern and widely available information and communication infrastructures. What should be done to attract investment and expand networks and services? What are the respective roles of governments, the private sector and civil society?

◆Digital solidarity: Any agenda for development must address financing and funding issues. What are the appropriate mechanisms that concretely support the development of networks, services and applications in underserved areas? Several financing options have been suggested, including the creation of innovative digital solidarity funds, a more effective utilization of existing mechanisms, and/or a greater involvement of the private sector in addressing the needs of these populations. Which solution (s) will best succeed in bridging the Digital Divide?

◆Universal Access: Access to communications and the Internet is a cornerstone of the information society. Digital inclusion cannot be achieved without providing all citizens access to the information highway. What is universal access all about? How best can access be ensured for the benefit of all citizens? What are the guiding principles that should be included in a universal access strategy to level the playing field?

Round table 2: Opportunities and challenges: Diversity in cyberspace

This session will address the challenge of reconciling free flow of information and the need to preserve the common heritage in a digital world:

◆Cultural and linguistic diversity: This diversity is a reflection of human knowledge, cultures and traditions. It is the common heritage of mankind. While cyberspace offers tremendous opportunities for interaction among people, some suggest that cultural and linguistic diversity may also be threatened by information and communications technologies? How is it possible to ensure that cultural and linguistic diversity are respected in the information society? What needs to be done to promote the development of local content?

◆Freedom of expression and media ownership: The media plays an important role in the information society. With globalization and the convergence of technologies, infrastructure and content are increasingly made available through a few dominant sources. In this context, what principles could best ensure media independence, pluralism and freedom of expression?

◆Law and ethics on the Internet: Is the digital world a lawless world? Is there a need for a cyber-governance? To which extent are ethics and values threatened by the use of ICTs? How can one strike a balance between creativity and freedom and the need to take into account ethics, values and local practices?

Round table 3: ICT as a tool to achieve the Millennium Development Goals

Technology is an enabling tool that is reshaping business and the global marketplace as well as a broader range of societal activities. The session will address issues relating to the role of ICT in meeting the Millennium Development Goals:

- ◆Capacity building: Education and knowledge are critical factors for development and competitiveness in the global marketplace. What is the potential for ICTs to expand access to education and training? What strategies are foreseen to lower the barriers to access and use of scientific knowledge and to close the knowledge gap? How can we best strike a balance between Intellectual Property Rights and the need to expand access to knowledge?
- ◆ICT for sustainable development: ICT has the potential to make a major contribution towards sustainable development and environment protection. How can ICTs be used to encourage commercial or industrial activities that reduce the trend of environmental degradation?
- ◆ICTs as a catalyst for innovative social service delivery: What is the potential of ICTs to improve the delivery of health, education and other social services in under-served regions? Which e-service delivery strategies are proving to be most effective? Does the investment in e-service delivery infrastructure justify the cost?
- ◆Eradicating poverty and hunger: Alleviating poverty and hunger cannot be achieved without sustained economic growth. In this respect, ICTs can play a significant role. How can ICTs best be used to help promote economic growth and eradicate poverty and hunger?
- ◆National E strategies and international cooperation: Many nations are already formulating and implementing national e-strategies as a powerful tool to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Is there a role for regional and global organizations in harnessing international cooperation that fits the needs of countries in the information society?

Round table 4: Empowering All Citizens

This session will consider to which extent ICT can empower citizens and communities to better control their daily lives and fully exercise their rights:

- ◆New governance: Just as information and communication technologies are reshaping business, they enable governments to develop new ways of delivering services and providing information to their citizens. Democracy demands an effective involvement of informed citizens. How can the use of ICTs best support effective participation in the decision-making processes? What are some potential public strategies to build the governance of the 21st century?
- ◆Balancing network security with personal privacy protection: What are the limits beyond which privacy is infringed by measures aiming at protecting information and communication networks against the risk of attacks and mischief? How best can governments strike a balance between network security and privacy?
- ◆Social inclusion: ICTs can be perceived as a barrier to social inclusion because of inadequate access. Persistent inequalities build barriers that limit the development of an inclusive information society. How best can ICT be used to help break down these barriers? How can ICT help users from disadvantaged groups and improve education and employment prospects?

4. Organization of Round tables (As approved by Prep Com 3)

1. Round tables will be organized to provide Heads of State or Government –or in their absence, Heads of Delegation--the opportunity to share their vision of the Information Society along with leaders from intergovernmental organizations, civil society (including NGOs) and business sector entities (including ITU sector members).
- 2 Each round table will run for two hours. The number and the schedule of the round tables will be determined by the Secretary-General of the Summit. The maximum number of round tables will be four.
3. The round tables will be organized around one overarching theme: “An Information Society for All: Opportunities and Challenges”. Three of the round tables will cover a cluster of related topics and the fourth round table will be more generic in nature.
4. To allow enhanced interactivity among participants, each round table will comprise up to 30 participants: 15 Heads of State or Government and 15 leaders from intergovernmental organizations, civil society (including NGOs) and business sector entities (including ITU sector members). If the number of participating Heads of State or Government in a round table is less than 15, Heads of Delegation will be invited by the Secretary-General of the Summit to participate.
5. The round tables will be chaired by Heads of State or Government, who will be invited by the President of the Summit. The Chairmen of the round tables will come from the African Group, the Asian Group, the Eastern European Group and the Latin American Group.
6. Each round table will be moderated by an eminent personality who will assist participants with keeping discussions on track and interactive. Moderators will be nominated by the Secretary-General of the Summit, in consultation with participating States.
7. Each Head of State or Government—or in their absence Head of Delegation--participating in a round table may be accompanied by two advisers. Other participants may be accompanied by one advisor each.
8. The proceedings of the round tables will be broadcast to an overflow room that will be open to the media. They will also be broadcast through the Internet and television.
9. States will be invited by the Executive Secretariat to register their Heads of State or Government to participate in one of the round tables by 15 November. Heads of Delegation interested in participating in the round tables will be invited by the Executive Secretariat to inform the Secretariat by the end of November.
10. Palestine, in its capacity as observer, may participate in one of the round tables.
11. Intergovernmental organizations that are members of the High Level Summit Organizing Committee (HLSOC) will also be invited by the Executive Secretariat to register their Executive Heads to participate in one of the round tables by 15 November. The final decision rests with the Secretary-General of the Summit.
- 12 Participants from civil society (including NGOs) and from business sector entities (including ITU sector members) will be identified through their self-organizing mechanisms, in coordination with the Secretary-General of the Summit.
13. The reports of the round tables will be annexed to the final report of the Summit in accordance with past UN Summit practice.
14. The following documents will be provided by the Executive Secretariat to participants following their registration.

(a) Guidelines for participants: This document will provide participants with information on the conduct and time management of the round tables.

(b) Round table topics: The theme which has been identified for the round tables is broad and comprehensive. The Executive Secretariat will therefore describe, in this document, the scope of topics encompassed within the theme.