From Geneva to Tunis, all aboard the "Internet Tour"

Bridging the Digital Divide while moving from the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society to its second phase in Tunis requires a deeper understanding of multiple cultural contexts. One must to tailor information and communication technologies (ICT) that could meet effectively expectations, The only way to do so and to truly assess the needs of populations is by meeting people in their own environment. Only through direct contacts with large numbers of men and women, of multiple nationalities and age-groups, could the WSIS hope to successfully address the diversity of our world. Through such direct contacts should enable potential web-users to accurately describe the various ICT models that could be of effective use to their own communities in shaping a better tomorrow.

We refer to the Civil Society Declaration that was read at the Geneva phase of the Summit (* Dec. 2003: "…to define information societies focused on human needs…"). The Internet Tour will follow those ethics that would drive us on the road from Geneva to Tunis.

Continuing the « Tour de France » of the Provinces (TFT 2003)

Prime Minister J.P Raffarin and TFT Organizer Denis Marion at the WSIS in Geneva

The 2003 Tour of French Territories (TFT) received very high praise at the national level. The World Tour of the Information Society (WTIS) will continue in its endeavor to publicize existing yet little known uses of the Internet in a comprehensive manner with a solid scientific background.

WTIS will further identify innovative uses not only of the Internet, but of ICT in general (WiFi, PDA, Cellular phones, local TV stations, and others) amongst existing models of cooperation between

end users (either individuals or small communities), territorial assemblies, corporations, associations, and the scientific community.

Goal of the World Tour of the Information Society (WTIS)

The principal difference between the TFT and the WTIS is its objective to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships sponsored by "Partnerships for a New World."

Methodology and Organization

The WTIS will operate through the on-site organization of colloquiums, conferences, workshops and case studies established through collaborations with local actors.

As a beginning step, about forty countries have been targeted to be involved by 2005. These were selected for their comprehensive representation of the immense diversity, both geographical and cultural.

A broad spectrum of themes, addressing local concerns as well as WSIS goals, will include:

- E-learning, new teaching methods
- Cultural heritage and its protection through a virtual museum
- Internet governance
- Discrimination
- Health (e-medecine; on-line diagnosis; …)
- People with disabilities (physical and social),
- Cultural and Scientific practices (knowledge sharing; multimedia access; assistance in promoting art on an individual and collective scale; tourism; and others)
– Empowering citizens through the Internet (e-administration; virtual communities; proximity networks;…)
– E-business, local SME trade, equitable trade

Partners

The World Tour of the Information Society will rely upon:

- Leading expertise of national and international state of the art through the Institut National des Telecommunications. (INT)
- An international multimedia network through the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)
- A specialized organizer of ICT events (TFT Organisation)
- Counseling through reputable scientific committee

Benefits from the World Tour of the Information Society to host countries and cities, as well as sponsors.

- Instant international recognition
- Improve authenticity when soliciting potential partners
- Easier person-to-person access to foreign institution directors and high-level decision-makers (generally very difficult to approach)
- High-level contacts within key local actors (government representatives, heads of local companies, academics, presidents of NGOs in ICT, Ministers and Heads of State)
- An image aura directly associated with the WSIS
- A world-wide showcase for your expertise in ICT (40 countries, 40 stops)

- The support of an expert team of consultants, including scientists and sociologists
- Opportunities for participating directly in conferences
- Unique destinations for presenting your material
- A unique organization leading to a world summit
- High value-added global communication
- a white book "Information Societies and Territories" to be published by INT gathering the best moments of the WTIS

Preparation Committee :
Denis Marion - Organization and Promotion
TFT Organisation (33) 5 45 67 04 69 - (33) 6 76 08 01 41 – denis.marion@wtis.org
Francis Muguet - WSIS process – ENSTA muguet@wtis.org
Didier Oillo - Usages and Territories – AUF didier.oillo@auf.org
Bruno Salgues - New Technologies – INT bruno.salgues@int-evry.fr
Christian Scherer - Institutionnal Relations – ADMINET scherer@cc.emsmp.fr
 http://www.wtis.org