

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme

Eleventh Meeting of the Bureau

UNESCO House, Paris, Fontenoy Building, Room VI, 21-22 September 2006

WSIS FOLLOW-UP

Item 7 b) of the provisional agenda

1. UNESCO's role in the follow-up to the World Summit of the Information Society (Geneva, 2003; Tunis, 2005) is three-fold: (i) UNESCO implements concrete activities included in the WSIS Action Plan within the framework of its own programmes; (ii) UNESCO facilitates the coherent implementation of the Action Lines falling in its areas of competence; and (iii) UNESCO, together with ITU and UNDP, is engaged in the overall multi-stakeholder coordination of the Facilitators of all 11 Action Lines.

A. Implementation of Action Lines

2. In accordance with the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society and the consultation of possible Action Line Moderators/Facilitators of 24 February 2006 in Geneva, which assigned UNESCO a role as an interim focal point for six Action Lines. The following initial meetings on the implementation of these six Action Lines have been/will be organized by UNESCO:

- i) Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content (C8) 12 May 2006, Geneva, Switzerland;
- ii) Access to information and knowledge (C3), 16 October 2006, UNESCO, Paris, France;
- iii) Ethical dimensions of the Information Society (C10), 17 October 2006, UNESCO, Paris,
- iv) E-learning (C7), 18 October 2006, UNESCO, Paris, France;
- v) Media (C9), 19 October 2006, UNESCO, Paris, France;
- vi) E-science (C7) 22 October 2006, Beijing International Convention Center, Beijing, China;

3. The meetings aim at:

- i) Facilitate the initial contacts and sharing of information among multistakeholders on their priorities and expertise in the implementation of the Action Line;
- ii) Consolidate a team of stakeholders for the Action Line;
- iii) Designate facilitator(s)/moderator(s) for the multistakeholder team;

- iv) Agree on the working methods of the multistakeholder team including its activities and expected outcome.

B. Participating in other parts of the international post-WSIS coordination machinery

a) United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS)

4. Implementation of the WSIS outcomes gathered momentum with the launch of the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS). High level representatives of twenty-two UN agencies met on Friday, 14 July 2006 at ITU Headquarters in Geneva under the chairmanship of ITU Secretary-General Yoshio Utsumi to facilitate the process.

5. UNGIS that was established by the United Nations Secretary-General at the request of the Summit and in consultation with members of the UN system Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), will serve as an interagency coordinating mechanism within the UN system to implement the outcomes of WSIS. The Group will enable synergies aimed at resolving substantive and policy issues, avoiding redundancies and enhancing effectiveness of the system while raising public awareness about the goals and objectives of the global Information Society. UNGIS will also work to highlight the importance of ICTs in meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

6. To maximize its efficiency, the Group agreed on a work plan in which it would concentrate its collective efforts each year on one or two cross-cutting themes and on a few selected countries. In the coming period, UNGIS will focus on bringing the efforts of the UN system to bear on expanding access to communications, for instance through multimedia community centres, teleshops, etc. Drawing on the respective competencies of the different members of the Group, UNGIS will also focus on applications related to e-health and e-tourism. At the same time, the Group will examine the e-readiness strategies and policies of one or two countries, to be proposed by UNDP, to develop a comprehensive toolkit for bringing the benefits of the Information society to developing countries.

7. During the first year, UNGIS will be chaired by ITU, with UNESCO, UNDP and WHO acting as vice-chairs. UNESCO will be the chair from July 2007 onwards.

b) Internet Governance Forum

8. Internet Governance will remain a core issue for UNESCO. Therefore, UNESCO will participate in the work of the Internet Governance Forum and will continue to advocate an open, transparent and inclusive approach to Internet Governance echoing its consistent advocacy of the principle of Openness, which encompasses the free flow of information, freedom of expression and technical interoperability. Main areas of relevance to UNESCO that appear in the Tunis texts are the concern for ethical dimensions, the realization of multilingualism in the Internet development environment and capacity building.

c) Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development

9. UNESCO will continue to participate in the work of the “Partnership for the Measuring ICT for Development” ensuring for example that the set of core ICT indicators that are presently being developed include those related to the application of ICT and their impact, in particular in the areas of education, science and culture.

d) Stocktaking exercise

10. UNESCO is committed to participate in an online based, participatory stocktaking of WSIS related activities, based on its own UNESCO WSIS Action Directory.

Background

4th session of the Council (20 to 22 March 2006)

The Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme,

Having examined document IFAP-2006/COUNCIL.IV/3;_

Taking note of the “Tunis Commitment” and the “Tunis Agenda for the Information Society”, in particular paragraph 102, alinea a) stating that in implementing the Tunis decisions, “each UN agency should act according to its mandate and competencies, and pursuant to decisions of their respective governing bodies, and within existing approved resources”;

Recalling the decision of the World Summit in Tunis that UNESCO may facilitate, alone or together with partner organizations, the implementation of the Action Lines included in the Geneva Plan of Action falling under UNESCO’s mandate and competence;

1. Congratulates the Director-General on the positive results of his action in the WSIS process which have considerably increased the Organization’s visibility as a significant actor in the area of ICTs in the service of development and other information society related issues;
2. Recognizes the great responsibility that UNESCO has for assuming the role that it has been assigned in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes;
3. Requests the Director-General to:
 - a) Focus on concrete actions through the implementation of activities included in the WSIS outcomes within the framework of 33 C/5, in all Major Programmes, taking into account the recommendations in the World Report “Towards Knowledge Societies”;
 - b) Collaborate with the IFAP Council, its Bureau, IFAP National Committees, Member States and regional information networks in linking IFAP with specific WSIS implementation activities;
 - c) Encourage IFAP National Committees to mobilize specific WSIS implementation activities within their countries and local communities;
 - d) Ensure that UNESCO assumes a prominent role in the international framework of implementation through participation in appropriate mechanisms, including in the work of the UN Group on the Information Society;
 - e) In the spirit of WSIS, maintain the momentum of building partnerships with civil society and the private sector, in the areas covered by WSIS and to strengthen or establish new ties to facilitate the implementation of the WSIS outcomes;.

- f) Continue to involve UNESCO in the international post-WSIS coordination machinery, in particular in the areas of Internet Governance, financing mechanisms and in measuring ICT for development;
- g) Report to the Council, at its 5th session, on the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and UNESCO's action in that area.

10th meeting of the Bureau (23 March 2006)

WSIS follow-up

Bureau members recognized that IFAP has a role to play in the implementation of Action Lines on Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content (C8), in particular its paragraphs concerning digitization and preservation of cultural heritage, and Ethical dimensions of the Information Society (C10).

The Secretariat was requested to involve Bureau Members in its consultation meetings organized on the implementation of actions lines that are under its purview.¹

The Chair agreed to provide a WSIS brief to those members of the Executive Board whose countries are also represented in the IFAP Council in order to express the need to associate and involve IFAP in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes.

¹ http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1543&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html