

**Declaration Regarding the  
United Nations World Summit on the Information Society**

---

**World Summit on the Information Society  
Background and Viewpoints**



**Global Information Infrastructure Commission**

November 15, 2005



# **Declaration Regarding the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society**

**Tunis, Tunisia**

**November 15, 2005**

The Global Information Infrastructure Commission,<sup>1</sup> whose principals have participated individually in the proceedings of the World Summit on the Information Society<sup>2</sup>, as well as via involvement in the WSIS Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors,<sup>3</sup> commends the national delegates to the Summit for their collective and steadfast dedication to fostering economic growth – and, thereby, enhanced social conditions – in the world’s least developed countries by expediting the deployment of and investment in capabilities based on information and communications technologies (“ICTs”).

Never before in the annals of international summitry have heads of state and senior officials of as many countries as will have convened during the Summit formally recognized the inextricable links between the levels and quality of access to modern day communications and computing capabilities that individual citizens possess and the extent to which such citizens are empowered to wrest themselves free of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, civil strife, and hopelessness.

Access to information and communications technology tools, thanks to the formal actions of the Summit, shall, for the foreseeable future, be more widely regarded than before as an integral part of international development paradigms. No longer will such access be seen as part of “either-or” international development equations, juxtaposed in a subordinate or less-important way against initiatives to foster such

---

<sup>1</sup> The Global Information Infrastructure Commission is a confederation of chief executives and other officers of business firms engaged in the development, manufacture, deployment, operation, modernization, financing, and use of services and products based upon information and communications technologies. These executives head enterprises headquartered throughout the world and, as GIIC commissioners, are convinced that ICT-based capabilities have given rise to a rapidly evolving new era, denoted most frequently as an “information society,” and widely regarded as one that transcends borders and is an increasingly powerful force in all societies. As such, they acknowledge and are dedicated, through the instrumentality of the GIIC, to fulfilling the essential role that must be played by the private sector (by virtue of its technological, human, and financial resources) to foster development of an information society that is sustainable, equitable, and enhances the economic and social well-being of people everywhere. Toward these ends, the GIIC mission is to: (1) advocate the promulgation, adoption, and enforcement of responsive public policies; (2) convene forums within which to address public policy challenges and different approaches thereto; (3) collaborate with other sectors of society; (4) conduct formal studies; and (4) publish and in other ways share and disseminate the conclusions of its deliberations and research.

<sup>2</sup> The World Summit on the Information Society (“WSIS” or “Summit”) is an international, intergovernmental meeting that is being conducted under the high patronage of the United Nations Secretary-General. The Summit consists of two phases. The first phase concluded with a meeting in Geneva December 10-12, 2003, and the second phase will conclude with a November 16-18, 2005, session in. Prior to and between Summit sessions a number of preparatory, regional, thematic, and intersession meetings have been conducted by the WSIS executive secretariat. The genesis of the Summit was a resolution adopted at the 1998 Plenipotentiary Meeting of the International Telecommunication Union. Subsequent resolutions of the U.N. General Assembly endorsed the proposal for a Summit and assigned responsibility for its planning and conduct to the International Telecommunication Union.

<sup>3</sup> The Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (“CCBI”) was established by the International Chamber of Commerce at the request of the executive secretariat of the WSIS prior to the convening of the first WSIS Preparatory Committee meeting in July of 2002.

ends as clean water, health, and education. Access to ICT tools will now be seen as part and parcel of all international development propositions.

Enhancing awareness and convictions about the vital roles that ICT capabilities can play in fostering economic growth and social well being is, while essential, but an interim step toward speeding the diffusion of such capabilities, particularly toward and for the benefit of individuals in emerging market, least developed, and otherwise “unconnected” nations.

The dream of an “information society” will, indeed, have been formally envisioned and articulated by virtue of the formal actions and outcomes of the Summit. Movement toward and realization of an “information society,” regrettably, requires more than the embrace of a vision by world leaders. It requires a focusing and prioritization by individual governments on a proper sequence of actions.

The GIIC is of the belief that government leaders, especially those in localities, nations, and regions suffering from relatively low levels of access to ICT capabilities, should adopt, implement, and, as necessary, adapt public policies that will, sequentially – in order of importance – bring about the following enabling factors.

1. Infrastructure. The sine qua non of membership in the “information society” of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century is reliable access and connectivity to public communications networks. Regrettably, most of the inhabitants of the world do not enjoy such access. They can neither place voice telephone calls, send and receive facsimile messages, nor “surf” the Internet with the same degrees of ease and affordability that others, elsewhere in the world, take for granted as part of normal, everyday life. Consequentially, those people, communities, and societies without reliable access to public communications infrastructure have inferior access to information and, from an economic standpoint, suffer major comparative disadvantages.
2. Investment. Deployment of the tangled mass of wires, optical fiber cable, radio antennas, switching machines, routers, transmission links, and other gear that go into the making of reliable public communications networks, coupled with the ongoing modernization thereof, is an awesomely expensive process in terms of the financial, human, and technological resources required. Few national governments, if any, possess the wherewithal to underwrite such investments. Indeed, so great – arguably inestimable – are these required investments that official development assistance, “foreign aid,” or private philanthropy is unlikely ever in the near-term future to contribute in meaningful ways to underwriting the expense of building and modernizing public communications networks. Accordingly, private investment and private investors must be recognized as playing paramount, critically vital roles in facilitating the deployment of reliable public communications infrastructure facilities.
3. Transparency. A threshold measure of the viability of any investment climate entails an examination of the extent to which it is governed fairly and in an open-for-all-to-see way by laws and the enforcement and adjudication thereof. In the absence of transparent, fair, and predictable governance and dispute-settlement mechanisms, there can be little or no expectation of meaningful private investment in information and communications technology infrastructure facilities.
4. Competition. National leaders should make no mistake; there is no one-size-fits-all approach that will assure effective diffusion everywhere of services, products, tools, and other capabilities based on information and communications technologies. Enough empirical evidence has been accumulated since the emergence of digital electronics over the past half century, however, to compellingly demonstrate that, ultimately, those societies in which markets for ICT capabilities are governed primarily by the forces of free market competition enjoy higher, more effective, and more affordable levels of access to such capabilities than they do in societies less prone to reliance on market forces. While competition in the provisioning of ICT capabilities is an end toward which different jurisdictions of the world must, of necessity, take different routes, it, competition, is an end toward which all should aim.

5. Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Essential to the development and growth of competition in the provisioning of ICT capabilities is the nurturing of environments and public attitudes that are accepting and supportive of innovation and entrepreneurship. Such environments and attitudes can be fostered by the elimination of unneeded administrative burdens, the commendation and highlighting of risk taking, and recognition of innovators for the risks they assume – regardless of the successes such individuals encounter. In the end, it is innovation entrepreneurship that, as much as any other factor, spurs competitive delivery of ICT capabilities, and thereby maximizes consumer choices and enhances affordability.
6. Education. An imaginary, albeit desirable, national environment in which communications infrastructure facilities and information appliances are ubiquitously and affordably available for all will, of course, be for naught in the absence of a citizenry that, as a threshold matter, is literate, possesses sufficient skills with which to use and benefit from ICT capabilities, and can perform the advanced engineering tasks necessary to generate local information content and produce applications of ICTs geared specifically to meet local needs. Essential to reaping the benefits of ICT capabilities, therefore, is the universal access of citizens to education.
7. Streamlined Regulation. Experiences in markets throughout the world have convinced the GIIC that investments in ICT capabilities flow toward those nations in which: (a) government oversight rules have been minimized; (b) regulatory bodies have been established that operate independently from incumbent national communications enterprises; (c) governments have begun to relinquish their ownership of the means by which communications services and conduits are provided; (d) other providers of communications services and facilities have been allowed – indeed, encouraged – to compete with incumbent national enterprises; and (e) investment restrictions have been lifted. Importantly, the different conditions and commercial environments in different places of the world have sensitized business to the need for national governments to carefully pace and sequence their transitions to competitive ICT markets.
8. Technology Neutrality. Technological neutrality must be a hallmark of national public policies to ensure that users of ICT capabilities can make choices that best meet individual needs. Governments are ill-positioned to prescribe what technology solutions are best for every user. Accordingly, public policies should strive to maximize the extent to which market forces, coupled with open and competitive public procurement rules, are allowed to drive decisions underlying the acquisition of ICT capabilities. Absent an adherence to technology neutral policies, governments run the risk of giving some vendors of ICT capabilities unfair advantages and, worse, saddling citizens with solutions that are inferior, needlessly costly, and that, as a consequence, retard investment, capital spending, technological advancement, and competitive advantage.
9. Trade Liberalization. Cross-border flows of trade, investment, technology, and people are critical to enabling nations to integrate themselves into – and share the benefits of – the global economy. National trade-liberalizing policies and proclivities drive the diffusion of the fruits of scientific research, technical innovation, individual entrepreneurship, and private risk taking.
10. Consumer Confidence. On the leading edge of the “information society” evolutionary continuum is the Internet, the ever-widening use of which promises to revolutionize not only the ways in which the people of the world receive, send, and digest information, but, as well, how they, their communities and nations, and the organizations of which they are a part transact business and conduct other of their daily activities. Essential to such continued – and effective – reliance on the Internet is assurance that its users enjoy high levels of protection against such wrongs as illegal and inappropriate invasions of their privacy, theft, and other breaches of security. Absent such protections, consumer confidence will wane, and fulfillment of the potential of the Internet and Internet-based transactions will be slowed. To protect against such an eventuality, governments must recognize the inherently borderless nature of the Internet, avoid the sometimes irresistible temptation to impose sweeping proscriptions and prescriptions on Internet transactions, notwithstanding the inherent difficulty (if not downright impossibility) of effectively implementing and enforcing such mandates, and, instead, work with the private sector and other

elements of civil society to develop technological and self-governance mechanisms that stand the greatest likelihood of preventing abuses and sustaining consumer confidence.

As stated at the outset, the Global Information Infrastructure Commission applauds the leaders of the world's nations for their formal recognition of the critical role to be played in international development endeavors by capabilities based on information and communications technologies. It stands ready, furthermore, to work with national governments and others following the conclusion of the final phase of the Summit in Tunis in the creation and implementation of national plans of action so as to move toward a fulfillment of all that has been envisioned by the Summit.

# # # # #



Global Information Infrastructure Commission

**World Summit on the Information Society**

**Background and Viewpoints**

**November 2005**

	Contents	Page
	<u>Background</u>	
1.	What is the World Summit on the Information Society?	8
2.	How is the Global Information Infrastructure Commission involved in the Summit?	8
3.	Why have the GIIC and other members of the worldwide business community been involved in the work of the Summit?	9
4.	How can business leaders contribute to the work of the Summit?	9
	<u>Viewpoints</u>	
5.	What key messages has the GIIC been advancing in the Summit?	10
6.	How does the GIIC feel about Summit procedures and processes?	11
7.	What results has the GIIC expected from the Summit?	12
8.	Have the expectations of the GIIC for the Summit been met?	12
9.	How does the GIIC feel about the WSIS addressing “Internet governance”?	13
10.	How does the GIIC feel about the “Digital Solidarity Fund” that has been prescribed by the WSIS as a means of financing ICTs for development?	14
11.	Does the GIIC feel there will be needs for new mechanisms and processes to follow or carry on the work of the WSIS?	14

# **World Summit on the Information Society**

## **Background**

### **1. What is the World Summit on the Information Society?**

- a. The World Summit on the Information Society – or WSIS – is an international, intergovernmental meeting being held under the high patronage of the United Nations Secretary-General.
- b. The Summit consists of two phases. The first phase concluded with a December 10-12, 2003, session in Geneva at which a Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action were adopted. The second and final session will culminate with a November 16-18, 2005, meeting in Tunis. Prior to and between Summit sessions a number of preparatory, regional, thematic, and intersession meetings have been conducted by the WSIS executive secretariat.<sup>i</sup>
- c. The genesis of the Summit was a resolution adopted at the 1998 Plenipotentiary Meeting of the International Telecommunication Union. This resolution cited the increasing importance of telecommunications sector growth to worldwide economic, social, and cultural development. It acknowledged a need to better understand the emerging concept of an “information society” in which telecommunications technologies play a central role. A subsequent resolution of the UN General Assembly endorsed the call for a Summit. It assigned responsibility for planning and conducting the Summit to the ITU.<sup>ii</sup>
- d. Importantly, the UN resolution called for private sector participation in the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Summit and in the Summit itself.<sup>iii</sup>

### **2. How is the Global Information Infrastructure Commission involved in the Summit?**

- a. The GIIC is a WSIS-accredited business sector entity, and thereby qualifies to take part in the Summit and the processes leading to it.
- b. The GIIC is also a founding member of the Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors, which was established by the WSIS executive secretariat to coordinate the involvement of the worldwide business community in the processes leading to and culminating in the Summit. The CCBI and its activities are coordinated and managed by the International Chamber of Commerce.
- c. The GIIC has participated in the WSIS through the involvement of its commissioners and executive director as speakers, discussants, and interveners in WSIS preparatory committee meetings, WSIS regional meetings, and meetings of other organizations regarding the WSIS. The GIIC has also participated by its conduct of a survey of business executive opinions about the WSIS and presentation of the results

thereof to a meeting of WSIS delegates. Further, the GIIC has organized meetings, news media briefings, and informal industry receptions for presidents of the WSIS Phase 1 and Phase 2 Preparatory Committees. A delegation of GIIC representatives took part in the Phase 1 meeting of the Summit in Geneva in December of 2003, and will do likewise at the Phase 2 meeting in Tunis.

**3. Why have the GIIC and other members of the worldwide business community been involved in the work of the Summit?**

- a. Business has been involved in the work of the Summit because it makes good “business” sense to be involved.
- b. Business regards successful realization of the vision of the Summit as a “win-win” proposition for all sectors of society. It recognizes that realization of the vision will enhance not only private sector interests, but – and in a commensurately positive and beneficial way – those of society at large.
- c. The international business community recognizes that a successful Summit will set the stage throughout the world for enhanced deployment of products and capabilities based on information and communications technologies, which already account for upwards of 12-percent of annual economic activity in high-income nations and between 2- and 4-percent of economic activity in low- and middle-income nations. Undoubtedly, this will be of direct benefit to the producers and purveyors of such goods and services. More importantly, it will enhance overall business interests by unleashing new forms of wealth creation and fostering national economic growth. This, in turn, will stabilize markets and expand opportunities for international commerce.
- d. Successful realization of the vision underlying the Summit will foster greater use of information and communications technologies throughout the world and thereby enhance commerce at local, national, regional, and international levels. This is the promise that has prompted the business community to be involved in the work of the Summit.

**4. How can business leaders contribute to the work of the Summit?**

- a. The most important thing business leaders can do to contribute to the Summit is familiarize national government officials who serve as Summit delegates with the realities, requirements, and constraints that confront business firms when they consider whether to expend financial, human, and technological resources in the development, deployment, operation, and modernization of ICT capabilities.
- b. Similarly, business leaders can advocate the adoption of particular positions on issues being deliberated by the Summit with government officials in nations where they conduct business operations.

## **World Summit on the Information Society**

### **GIIC Viewpoints**

#### **5. What key messages has the GIIC been advancing in the Summit?**

- a. Investment in ICT capabilities constitutes an essential force in modern day economic-development. Indeed, it is a “missing link” in modern day wealth creation. This is no less so in emerging economy nations than in high-income nations. In recent years, certain nations have demonstrated an ability to enjoy heretofore unimaginable rates of sustained economic growth. The GIIC is convinced this is attributable to something other than a tweaking of capital and labor inputs, and that the “missing link” unquestionably relates to innovation in and deployment of ICT capabilities.
- b. Information and communications technologies serve as essential tools for social development and poverty alleviation. The GIIC readily concedes that expanding the numbers of telephone outlets, personal computers, Internet connections, or bit-rate speeds should not be regarded by public policy makers as ends unto themselves. Business recognizes, nonetheless – and urges others to do likewise – the great extent to which measures of national well-being correlate with connectivity and access to advanced information and communications capabilities. Investment in ICT capabilities is incontrovertibly linked to both economic growth and sustainable improvement of factors relating to social well-being. Accordingly, business feels it is essential for Summit delegates to acknowledge this reality and reflect it in their collective commitments. If they do not, then enhancing access to ICT capabilities likely will remain part of an either-or international development prescription and, every time, will lose to the seemingly more acute needs for clean water, sanitation, schooling, health, and so many other direct measures of social development.
- c. Markets for ICT capabilities are governed more effectively by the forces of competition than by rigid regulations and other government-set policies. The GIIC is steadfast in its conviction that markets for ICT capabilities characterized by a minimum amount of government oversight and a maximum amount of competition experience speedy diffusion of technology, broadened markets, heightened numbers of new market entrants and investment, expanded consumer choice, reduced prices, and spurred innovation.
- d. The pillars of competition in ICT business sectors are deregulation, privatization, and liberalization. Experiences in markets throughout the world have convinced GIIC commissioners that ICT investments flow toward those nations in which: (i) government oversight rules have been minimized; (ii) regulatory bodies have been established that operate independently from incumbent national communications enterprises; (iii) governments have begun to relinquish their ownership of the means by which communications services and conduits are provided; (iv) other

providers of communications services and facilities have been allowed – indeed, encouraged – to compete with incumbent national enterprises; and (v) investment restrictions have been lifted. Importantly, the different conditions and commercial environments in different places of the world have sensitized business to the need for national governments to carefully pace and sequence their transitions to competitive ICT markets.

- e. “Information society” strategies are essential. The GIIC feels well-conceived and articulated visions for harnessing advanced ICT capabilities are essential precursors to the evolution of individual nations toward levels of participation in the “information society” comparable to those of other nations. The GIIC encourages the establishment of national, regional and local strategies that complement one another and square with global developments. Summit delegates, the GIIC feels, should dedicate their respective nations and regions to creating and refining such strategies within prescribed time limits.

## **6. How does the GIIC feel about Summit procedures and processes?**

- a. Dialog and debate are important. A prerequisite to effective public policy making is widespread agreement by and among all affected stakeholder interests. An essential prerequisite to such agreement, in turn, is vigorous, open, and widespread dialog and debate.
- b. Consensus building is essential. While the Summit will provide a forum for dialog and debate, its delegates must be sufficiently disciplined and dedicated to not be all-consumed by such deliberation. They must advance toward and achieve consensus positions on the substantive issues underlying the purposes of the Summit.
- c. Flexibility is key. The speed and unpredictability with which the technologies and other factors underlying the “Information Society” are evolving require that Summit procedures and processes be flexible. A resistance by Summit delegates to rigid and bureaucratic processes will increase the likelihood of Summit declarations and commitments being relevant, compelling, and productive.
- d. One size does not fit all. To maximize the relevance and value of their declarations and commitments, Summit delegates must respect that different conditions underlie evolution toward an “information society” in different places. Thus, they should avoid the imposition – or appearance thereof – of one-size-fits-all prescriptions, or identical policy frameworks, or identical timeframes on all nations.
- e. Repetition of effort must be avoided. The GIIC and many other international groups, in addition to government representatives, have contributed to the WSIS discussions and in doing so have made numerous serious and useful recommendations. By building upon these discussions and incorporating these recommendations Summit delegates should be able to create a meaningful framework with which to assure progress toward a sustainable and truly global information society.

## **7. What results has the GIIC expected from the Summit?**

- a. Expanded awareness by political leaders of the value of ICT investment. This may be evidenced by commitments to pursue national “information society” strategies within prescribed time periods.
- b. Commitments by political leaders to favor competition as a preferred means of governing the delivery of ICT services and capabilities. This may be evidenced by pledges to adopt policies to: (i) eliminate or reduce investment restrictions; (ii) privatize government-owned and government-run communications service providers; (iii) establish independent telecoms regulatory authorities; (iv) streamline and reduce telecoms regulatory regimes; and (v) foster and expedite the deployment so-called e-commerce, e-government, telemedicine, distance education, and other productivity enhancing and socially useful ICT applications.
- c. Definition of “information society.” This will enable national policy makers to deal most effectively and in a properly coordinated way with the inherently global dynamics that underlie the increasingly important role of ICTs in all aspects of modern day life. The GIIC feels the “information society” must not be regarded as a destination, but rather as an evolutionary process.
- d. The attachment of timetables and other measurement tools to Summit proclamations. These will provide on-going means of assessing progress, pinpointing accountability, and maintaining a sense of urgency. Importantly, the GIIC feels such tools must extend beyond traditional teledensity measures and must increasingly focus on the rates – as expressed by bits-per-second numbers, for instance – at which citizens of different nations can access and transmit information.

## **8. Have the expectations of the GIIC for the Summit been met?**

- a. In the view of the GIIC, the Summit has not fulfilled the high expectations that many had for it.
- b. The GIIC appreciates and commends the United Nations for committing the resources it has to the conduct of the Summit, and believes this effort has, indeed, bolstered awareness of the links between the diffusion of information and communications technologies and economic and social development.
- c. The GIIC laments that more progress has not been made by the WSIS actions to foster economic and social development in impoverished parts of the world through the diffusion of capabilities based on information and communications technologies.
- d. Regrettably in the view of the GIIC, the Summit, instead of aggressively pursuing such development-oriented ends by reaching agreement on meaningfully responsive and measurable action steps, has allowed its processes to focus too narrowly on certain Internet-related administrative issues. Lost in the process have been the interests and welfare of the multitudes in the world that reside on the trailing edge of information

and communications technological developments and remain in need of gaining reliable access to public communications networks and infrastructure.

- e. A signal characteristic of the WSIS was supposed to be its inclusiveness of all sectors of society, including representatives of the private sector. In the final days of what was supposed to be the final Phase 2 Preparatory Committee meeting, representatives of private sector and other civil society interests were not allowed to take part in document-drafting exercises, and in some instances denied opportunities to so much as observe ongoing proceedings. Clearly, the inclusiveness of all elements of society that was to characterize the Summit did not, in the end, materialize.

**9. How does the GIIC feel about the WSIS addressing “Internet governance”?**

- a. The GIIC does not think the Summit should address “Internet governance” in a vacuum – i.e., in ways unrelated to the economic- and social-developmental aspects of information and communications technology diffusion.
- b. The GIIC readily recognizes the realities that as the Internet, its underlying technologies, and its other manifestations continue to evolve and expand that needs will almost certainly arise to alter – in many or most instances with incremental improvements and in others, possibly, with radically changed or new formulations – the means by which the Internet is administered and overseen.
- c. The GIIC notes with general favor many aspects of the WSIS Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) report, including its definition of Internet Governance as a broad concept and dynamic that is in need of inputs from and involvement by all sectors of society, including governments, the private sector, civil society, research bodies, and academic institutions. Of concern to the GIIC is the extent to which the WGIG report seems to mix how the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) addresses its work with the broader discussion of Internet governance. The GIIC feels that ICANN is successfully managing the Internet Protocol address and domain name system and that, therefore, Summit delegates should seriously weigh the risks to the security and stability of the Internet that could be triggered by a changing of how the work of the ICANN is carried out. The GIIC likewise feels that ICANN should be responsive to concerns raised in the Summit and ensure its credibility and effectiveness by forging strong and close partnerships with governments through its Government Advisory Council.
- d. The GIIC is thoroughly unconvinced that a sufficiently compelling case has been made to dictate the creation of new Internet oversight institutions or “governance” mechanisms. Proponents of such new processes, the GIIC feels, must shoulder the burden – which they clearly have not yet done – of showing evidence of gaps or other inherent shortcomings in the jurisdictions, spheres of expertise, or reasons for being of existing institutions involved in the running of the Internet. The GIIC fears that to introduce new structures now could only slow the evolution and expansion of the Internet and Internet-based capabilities.

They could do so via: excessive bureaucracy; needless duplication of effort; and diminished inclusiveness of existing “Internet governance” bodies and mechanisms. All of this, the GIIC feels, could lead to an erosion of the security, stability, and robustness of the Internet. Concerning ongoing discussions on Internet matters, the GIIC foresees involvement of the United Nations and its agencies, but certainly not to the exclusion of others. The GIIC prefers such discussions to be equally open to all organizations and interested groups.

**10. How does the GIIC feel about the “Digital Solidarity Fund” that has been prescribed by the WSIS as a means of financing ICTs for development?**

- a. While creation of the “Digital Solidarity Fund” stands as stark testimony to the desperate need for financial resources with which to upgrade telecommunications network facilities and disperse network-connecting information appliances in ICT-underserved parts of the world, the GIIC feels that creation of the Fund erroneously signals that such resources can be adequately developed through the tools of taxation, philanthropy, and official development aid.
- b. What is required to finance needed information and communications technologies in ICT-underserved parts of the world, the GIIC maintains, is private investment. In whatever mechanisms or processes that may be prescribed to supervise the Summit, the GIIC hopes there will be a return to a focus on those factors, elements, and dynamics that serve to make nations and localities as inviting as possible of needed private investment in telecommunications infrastructure and other information and communications technologies.

**11. Does the GIIC feel there will be needs for new mechanisms and processes to follow or carry on the work of the WSIS?**

- a. With regard to going-forward mechanisms and processes that will succeed the WSIS process, the GIIC is convinced of the need for a back-to-basics emphasis on the development of worldwide consensus positions on measurable actions to assure diffusion of communications infrastructure and attendant capabilities in parts of the world that are underserved by information and communications technologies.
- b. The GIIC notes with seriousness the WGIG proposal to establish a forum within which to discuss Internet governance-related issues. That being said, the GIIC is of a mind that sufficiently convincing arguments have not yet been propounded to warrant the GIIC favoring the creation of such a forum. Particularly worrisome to the GIIC is that proposals have been insufficiently clear regarding the scope and responsibilities of such a forum.
- c. The GIIC recommends that Summit delegates and others regard with extreme caution proposals to replace ICANN with an international governmental body. Such proposals, as GIIC sees them, would, in addition to assuming current ICANN functions, address multidimensional Internet-related public policy issues. To separate the technical issues for which ICANN is responsible and add policy issues under such a new model would, in the view of the GIIC, be extraordinarily difficult. Such proposals seem to the GIIC to give too

much of a role to governments and too little to the private sector that is actively engaged in ICANN technical management. The GIIC hopes to continue discussions with groups that are open to various stakeholders rather than through new models of the kind being proposed.

- d. The GIIC notes with favor government proposals that direct the WSIS process in positive ways. Such proposals call for the internationalization of the Internet governance system through the evolution of existing mechanisms, institutions, and forums so as to strengthen the participation of developing countries and assure the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in debates over multidimensional Internet-related public policy issues.
- e. As in the past, the GIIC hopes to continue its participation in existing or future forums to discuss issues relating to the development of a global information infrastructure, which include issues affecting the “information society” and Internet governance.
- f. The GIIC recommends that whatever mechanisms or processes are prescribed by national leaders to follow, complement, or continue the WSIS should incorporate modern day means of exchanging views and achieving consensus positions. Through well-conceived use of interactive Internet-based applications, the GIIC feels, the international community can effectively, quickly, and affordably address and resolve issues that stand between the world as it exists now and one in which nearly everyone everywhere is empowered with information technology appliances and public network connections to interact with others and share in the bounty of the increasingly integrated global economy.
- g. Also important to the GIIC is a need for Summit delegates to adopt a sense of proportionality in addressing traditional and emerging “information society” challenges. By this the GIIC refers to the need to keep in mind the reality that the “information society” is an evolutionary phenomenon. If Summit follow-up measures are to serve beneficial ends they must concentrate on that part of the “information society” evolutionary continuum that is in greatest need of being addressed and is closest to those who, at present, are unconnected to the increasingly global economy because of their lack of access to communications conduits and network-connecting information appliances.

[End]

---

#### About the GIIC

The Global Information Infrastructure Commission is a confederation of chief executives and other officers of business firms engaged in the development, manufacture, deployment, operation, modernization, financing, and use of services and products based upon information and communications technologies. These executives head enterprises headquartered throughout the world and, as GIIC commissioners, are convinced that ICT-based capabilities have given rise to a rapidly evolving new era, denoted most frequently as an “information society,” and widely regarded as one that transcends borders and is an increasingly powerful force in all societies. As such, they acknowledge and are dedicated, through the instrumentality of the GIIC, to fulfilling the essential role that must be played by the private sector (by virtue of its technological, human, and financial resources) to foster development of an information society that is sustainable, equitable, and enhances the economic and social well-being of people

everywhere. Toward these ends, the GIIC mission is to: (1) advocate the promulgation, adoption, and enforcement of responsive public policies; (2) convene forums within which to address public policy challenges and different approaches thereto; (3) collaborate with other sectors of society; (4) conduct formal studies; and (4) publish and in other ways share and disseminate the conclusions of its deliberations and research. For further information, contact: Robert G. Rogers, +1 202-465-4698, [rrogers@giic.org](mailto:rrogers@giic.org).

---

<sup>i</sup> The UN General Assembly [Resolution 56/183](#) endorsed the framework for the Summit adopted by the ITU Council. The Resolution also endorsed the leading role of ITU in the Summit and its preparation, in cooperation with other interested organizations and partners. The UN General Assembly [Resolution 56/183](#) further recommended that preparations for the Summit take place through an open-ended intergovernmental Preparatory Committee that would define the agenda of the Summit, decide on the modalities of the participation of other stakeholders in the Summit, and finalize both the draft Declaration of Principles and the draft Plan of Action. It invited the ITU to assume the leading managerial role in the Executive Secretariat of the Summit and invited Governments to participate actively in the preparatory process of the Summit and to be represented in the Summit at the highest possible level.

<sup>ii</sup> [Resolution 73](#) (Minneapolis, 1998) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) resolved to instruct the ITU Secretary-General to place the question of the holding of a World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) on the agenda of the United Nations Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC, now the United Nations System Chief Executive Board - CEB) and to report to the ITU governing body, the Council, on the results of that consultation. In his report to the 1999 session of the Council on that consultation, the Secretary-General indicated that the ACC had reacted positively and that a majority of other organizations and agencies had expressed interest in being associated with the preparation and holding of the Summit. It was decided that the Summit would be held under the high patronage of the UN Secretary-General, with ITU taking the lead role in preparations.

<sup>iii</sup> In [Resolution 56/183](#) the General Assembly also encouraged contributions from all relevant UN bodies and other intergovernmental organizations, including international and regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector to actively participate in the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Summit and the Summit itself.