

Report on the Transition Period between phase 1 and 2

Table of contents

General Summary	1
Informal meetings of Civil Society Bureau representatives	2
Introduction	2
Participation	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1st March 2004	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2nd March 2004	3
3rd March 2004	4
Attachments:	7
Document 1:	7
Note on the Informal Meeting for the 2nd Phase of the WSIS	7
Tunis, 2-3 March 2004	7
Document 2:	10
Message sent by Nick Moraitis about the evaluation / lessons learned	10
Document 3:	12

Informal meetings in Tunisia

Overview

The Tunisian Governments invited the Governmental Bureau, the CS Bureau and CCBI. About 100 participants (of whom some 25 from Tunisia) met from 2 to 3 March at the Palace Hotel in Gammarth, North of Tunis, for this informal brainstorming session. Among the participants were members of the various Bureaus: Governmental --which is still in the process of assigning six members from each of five regions for phase 2-- CS, Private Sector, IGOs representatives and members of the Executive Secretariat. In addition, a number of Officials and special guests were invited by Tunisia. They all had the same badges, which designated them just as 'Participants'.

As such, they were welcomed by the Minister of Transport, Communication and Technology of Tunisia, Sadok Rabah, who in his opening address announced the creation of a Trust Fund for the "*meaningful participation*" of Civil Society in the second phase up to the Summit in Tunis. This initiative is a positive response to the request made by ES/CSD (Alain Clerc) to the host country for Phase 2. The Tunisian response indicated a clear commitment to facilitate civil society participation in Phase 2.

The ITU Secretary General, Mr. Utsumi, followed to explain that this meeting served as a kick-off for the second phase and asked participants to brainstorm around three sections: "the implementation of the Geneva action plan", "expected results of the second phase of the WSIS" and "the process of the second phase of WSIS". For this, he distributed a draft Road Map to Tunis, in form of an organizational chart focusing on the information flow / process. While the document was intended to be a helpful tool, it turned out to be puzzling to some participants.

Participants then broke into three (language) groups (French, English and Bilingual) and had during the two days freely flowing discussions on the three discussion points. After each session, they reported back to the Plenary. Rapporteurs from the three Groups consisted of members of Governments, CS and IGOs. The three sessions were dedicated to brainstorming on the following issues:

Session 1: What should be the substance and the issues to be dealt with in Phase II

Session 2: What are the expected results?

Session 3: How should the process be structured?

At the end, a report (no official status) was assembled, consisting of a synthesis of the various notes taken by rapporteurs. This report is available on the ITU and various other websites (see <http://www.smsitunis2005.com/plateforme/index.php?lang=en> and also in attachment 1 of the present document).

Some areas of reflection included:

1. What form will have any document created for the Tunis Summit? Will it be compilation of reports on implementation / deepening of the Geneva Plan of Action / compilation of best practices / a political document of commitments for Heads of States to sign / announcement of Partnership programs etc.?
2. What is the process for phase 2? Suggestions were made for more thematic preparatory process, others insisted on regional preparatory meetings and yet others to combine the two. The latter suggested that regions ought to determine their thematic priorities. The Secretariat would establish some guidelines. CS participants, particular from Africa, insisted to demystify WSIS and the Plan of Action and make it chewable for and owned by grassroots organizations.

The meeting was well organized, had an atmosphere of warmth and hospitality and was remarkable in the total acceptance of CS as a fully accepted partner, providing suggestions at an equal level with all other actors. How long this will last remains to be seen, when we come to an Official PrepCom which will follow the same rules and procedures as in WSIS phase 1.

As of yet, no decision was taken on whether the meeting in the first half of 2004 will be a PrepCom (which means that it would include new accreditations) or an informal meeting. This meeting is to be held any time between the end of April and beginning of July. Also not clear is whether this meeting is to be held in Tunis or Geneva.

CS brainstorming meetings

The representatives of the Bureau present in Tunis met at the end of every day (1st, 2nd and 3rd March 2004). Those meetings were informal and open to all present. They aimed at exchanging information, brainstorming and share visions for the future.

1st March 2004

Alain Clerc provided a brief overview about where we stand three months after the Geneva Summit. An update was provided about ITU, the Executive Secretariat and the Governmental Bureau. Further, there was a brief brainstorming about the different possibilities to envisage for the development of phase 2.

The Tunisian Minister of Transport Communication and Technology, Sadok Rabah, spent an hour in this meeting to welcome civil society participants and share some ideas on how the host country could facilitate civil society participation in Phase 2.

Regarding the institutional functioning of the ES CSD, Alain Clerc indicated that the mandate given by the state of Geneva came to an end with Phase 1. In the transition period, many initiatives and contacts were taken to ensure a follow-up in appropriate conditions. From its part, Tunisia has expressed the wish to have the same team act as facilitators for civil society for Phase 2. For that purpose, Tunisia has also committed to second 1.5 persons as staff to assist the CSD team.

2nd March 2004

In order to provide updated information on the work to be done by the ES, Charles Geiger, Assistant to Mr Utsumi (who is now altogether: (1) ITU Secretary General (2) WSIS Secretary General (3) Executive Director of the WSIS ES), was invited to the meeting.

C. Geiger mentioned that the preparation of phase 2 would happen between Geneva and Tunis. The governmental Bureau was going to have six representatives per region, but the final choice had so far only been made by two (Asia, Latin American & the Caribbean) of the six regions. Accreditation of new CS entities is now being handled by the Executive Secretariat, by means of a print-out form available on the official ITU web site (to be sent in by fax) and no longer through the www.geneva2003.org site. C. Geiger mentioned that for phase 2 of the WSIS, it would be possible for civil society to have representatives work within the Secretariat, like it had been done by Youth in phase 1.

For those three persons who could not attend the meeting of the 1st of March (R. Guerra, V. Krebs and A. El Zaim), information was given on the intervention day before of the Minister of Communications (see attachment one for full list of participants).

The discussion then focused on the challenges of the CSB work in the context of the Phase 2 scenario, which will be different from Phase 1. Several CS representatives expressed the need for clear procedures when calling CS Bureau meetings, transparency and documentation about the working mechanisms of the CS Bureau.

It was suggested that all Bureau meetings needed to be called in writing on the CS Bureau list, that the announcement of the meeting needed to be accompanied of an Agenda, both a Chair and a Secretary needed to be elected and minutes (even informal) to be taken. Several CS representatives –Renata Bloem (NGOs), Robert Guerra (North America & Europe) and Viola Krebs (Volunteers)— stressed the need for these procedures to always be respected.

Viola Krebs further underlined the need for an evaluation of each Bureau Family. This evaluation could be done along the lines of what had been suggested by Nick Moraitis (Youth) some time ago. It would need to be done by all families, in some formal way.

Nnenna Nwakanma then briefly talked about African Civil Society, which is in the process of setting up a formalized structure. The aim is to make sure that it does not remain underrepresented in international meetings.

Robert Guerra also pointed out that the issue of under representation was also of concern for Latin America. He urged that proactive measures should be taken to alleviate this issue.

3rd March 2004

A written agenda was proposed for this meeting, which was not the case for the previous ones. The points of the Agenda included:

The brainstorming agenda included the following points:

1. Evaluation / Lessons learned for CS (Plenary, Bureau, CT Groups) for WSIS phase 1
2. Procedural questions related to the Bureau
 - a. What are the procedural requirements for a bureau meeting (how to call a meeting, what is a quorum)?
 - b. Procedure for designation of alternates
3. Impressions of the Tunisia meeting and how to move forward for phase 2

The meeting was chaired by Renate Bloem, minutes taken by Viola Krebs. It was structured into three parts: 1) Ideas for the evaluation process of the CS Bureau, 2) Non-representation of some regions, 3) Impressions of meeting of the last two days. It was clearly stated that these informal meetings of CS would not be occasions to take any formal decisions.

Ideas for the evaluation process of the CS Bureau

What is also critical is to acknowledge the achievements to date. CS is today a full partner and recognized actor in the WSIS process. As such, CS was invited in to this informal consultation meeting and was able to express its views on an equal foot with governments. This is very positive. The Tunisian government is furthermore very open to including CS.

Continuity and Documentation

It was acknowledged that we are currently in a transition period where it is important to make sure that there is no rupture. Hence, consultations are important event if they happen on the net. To consider whether any families need to be added to the CS Bureau is of the competency of the Plenary. The Bureau in its present form should be able to continue until the first PrepCom of phase 2. The announcement of the creation of a Trust Fund is an important step forward, as it is impossible for CS to be well represented without scholarships and coordination.

It was said that CS is now being fully recognized as an important actor. As such, CS can build legitimacy for phase 2, a step which is important. The structure developed in the WSIS process, can set a precedent for UN Summits (CS Bureau, Plenary, Caucuses). For this reason and for reasons of transparency, it is critical that the process is well documented.

Lessons learned

It is urgent to move forward with the evaluation, think about some kind of a mechanism to confirm representativity of the various representatives. Since each family has its own mechanisms and structure, the evaluation needs to be flexible enough to match those differences, but also ridged enough to actually be able to really evaluate the work done so far, groups reached, etc.

For the "lessons learned", it is most important to consider whether all those who should have been mobilized were included in phase 1. If not, the question is how to include them in the next phase.

It was pointed out that "Lessons learned" should mostly answer the question of whether families were indeed covering the constituency one would expect them to. Further, clear criteria for the evaluation are needed.

Confirmation of Focal points

For phase 2 of the WSIS, it is necessary to have the position of CS Bureau Members reconfirmed (they will need to get legitimacy from whom they represent, e.g. reconfirmation or elections in each family, as it was done at PrepCom 2 of phase 1). The evaluation can help do this. The Bureau is only one of three instances of civil society in the WSIS process, yet it was the only one invited to this meeting, similarly to governments and the private sector. The CT Group should always be represented in the Bureau, but was not in this informal meeting. In the future, this should be adjusted. The Bureau only deals with procedure, not with content.

Regional families

An African coordination for CS has been set up, not only for the WSIS, but for civil society in general. It is working with e-consultation and e-conferences. CS should also consider these possibilities for the WSIS process.

Non-representation of some regions

Nnenna Nwakanma, of the African Civil Society, asked for advice. According to her, the African civil society was underrepresented in the WSIS. Official documents did include some African input, which however mostly came from the African Diaspora and not the continental Africans. This observation, she explained, had started a discussion in Geneva and had led to a mobilization early 2004. Now, a structure is being set up to have regional representatives and national focal points for Africa.

Robert Guerra pointed out that Africa was not the only region with challenges of representation. While the Latin American CS had been very active in phase 1, there are some serious challenges, both linked to the classification of countries such as Argentina and Mexico and the fact language difficulties make participation quite difficult. Indeed, the Tunisia official web site of the WSIS is only in French, English and Arabic, but no Spanish. This language issue needs to be addressed.

Impressions of meeting of the last two days

Civil society was able to speak and its interventions were actually taken up. The question of course is also to see which governments attended the meeting. Many of them were like-minded. There were very few representatives from Asia and Africa. Contacts with governments at this meeting have proven to be useful in that they help understand better what governments think and how civil society can be most efficient in the WSIS process. Civil society should try to interact even more with governments than this may have been the case in phase 1.

It was pointed out that CS has managed to occupy a space and now needs to make sure this space is well used, and interactions handled with a certain maturity. Frustration was expressed about the fact that there had been discussions focusing on the Summit just for the Summit. Indeed, to work for a period of two years to solely focus on three days of Summit is not enough. We should not forget people in the field. Aspects such as the ICT4D Platform are critical in this respect.

It was pointed out that the Tunisian civil society really wishes to have CS well represented in this Summit, and with all its dimensions, including the more militant components. The Summit will be a challenge for Tunisia, as the Summit host, but also an opportunity for both the international community and Tunisia.

In this meeting, CS was able to fully perceive the achievements of Geneva. And we went one more step forward since. It appears that we are moving forward with a thematic approach. Contrary what may have been perceived earlier in the process, there are just as many points to be dealt with in the Tunisia phase as in Geneva one. For Civil society, there is also the challenge of means. A fund has been created, but now needs to be alimented.

The participation of civil society is regarded as a must from all parties. There has been some mention about the after Tunisia. There is now the question about the final list of themes to be

tackled, but also the appreciation that the process has truly evolved. There is the question of roles and responsibilities of each actor. It is encouraging to see to what extent governments embrace this evolution.

It was underlined that CS had come a long way in the process. In phase 2, it is important for CS to wisely occupy the space it has been given, hence to see the process as a step forward, with many opportunities and a need for lessons learned allowing to move forward rather than backwards. The question of the implementation and partnerships was important. Indeed partnerships had been mentioned throughout the two-day meeting. In this innovative process, it is important to enhance cooperation among the various CS families, and with governments and the private sector.

There was a true feeling of a Summit in two phases, with the same basic structures and two key governments, Switzerland and Tunisia. However, it also had become a lot more clear that by no means the challenges and the work to be done in phase 2 will be less than in phase 1. It is key that the CS Bureau can evolve. Financial challenges need to be resolved if we want to move forward.

There is an under-representation of researchers from developing countries. This should be improved in phase 2. ICT4D was an important asset providing visibility to projects, which should be kept for phase 2.

It was noted that the Geneva phase lead to a CS Declaration and also because the second phase promises to be an action phase. Regional representation is needed. Some frustration was expressed about means for improving the participation of African civil society. It is important that the evaluation is done with known and clear criteria.

Civil society can directly speak to governments and offer its expertise. Indeed, CS has expertise that might be extremely helpful for governments, e.g. regarding the responsibility of service providers, open and free software, etc. Foundations have been little present in phase 1. This should change for phase 2, as they are a valuable partner, which also might be able to help with funding issues.

Tunisia had shown great hospitality which needs to be acknowledged. There are many challenges before us, in terms of all the issues to be resolved in phase 2. CS is now definitely in the process and has to make sure it can also deliver.

Sections of this report have been assembled by Renate Bloem, Viola Krebs, Robert Guerra, Louise Lassonde

Attachments:

Participation

The following civil society representatives participated in the two brainstorming meetings:

Quick calculation, in terms of the ratio: Tunisian representation - 4/15 = 26%; others – 11/15 = 76%.

1. Moncef Achour, achourmoncef@yahoo.fr, Tunisian CS Focal point (Tunisia)
2. Kamel Ayadi, cic@coi-tn.org, Sciences & Technology (Tunisia)
3. Renata Bloem, rbloem@ngocongo.org, NGOs
4. Nicolas Cauchy, Cauchy@ictp.trieste.it, Third World Academy of Sciences (Italy)
5. Alain Clerc, alain.clerc@fdd.org (Switzerland)
6. Adel El Zaim, aezaim@idrc.org.eg, Multi-stakeholder Family (Egypt)
7. Robert Guerra, rguerra@privaterra.org, North America & Europe (Canada/Spain)
8. Louise Lassonde, louise.lassonde@fdd.org (Canada)
9. Ann-Kristin Håkansson, akigua@telia.com, Indigenous Peoples (Sweden)
10. Hiroshi Kawamura, hkawa@rehab.go.jp, People with Disabilities (Japan)
11. Viola Krebs, viola@isv2001.org, Volunteers (Switzerland)
12. Tijami Ben Jemaa, Tijami.benjemaa@planet.tn , Youth Family (Tunisia)
13. Mustapha Massmoudi, atucom@planet.tn, African Group, Arab Sub-region (Tunisia)
14. Francis Muguet, muguet@molpi.org, Academia & Education (France)
15. Nnenna Nwakanma, Nne75@yahoo.com, African Civil Society (Côte d'Ivoire)

Document 1:

Note on the Informal Meeting for the 2nd Phase of the WSIS

Tunis, 2-3 March 2004

Source: <http://www.smsitunis2005.com/plateforme/index.php?lang=en>

The meeting which was convened by the Government of Tunisia, in close cooperation with ITU/ES. The objective of the meeting was to have a preliminary discussion on the phase 2 of the WSIS around the following themes divided into working groups:

- Theme 1: Implementation of the Geneva Action Plan
- Theme 2: Expected results of the second phase of the WSIS
- Theme 3: The process of the second phase of the WSIS

The meeting was opened and closed by the Minister of Transport, Communication and Technology of Tunisia while the plenary sessions were chaired by the Secretary of State of Information and Communication Technology of Tunisia.

Government, Civil Society Organizations, the Private Sector, International organizations, the United Nations Regional Commissions and other invited guests took part in the meeting.

At the end of the meeting a summary of the discussions was read by the Minister who emphasized the non official nature of the conclusions, which will be put forward to official organs of the WSIS for debate.

From the discussions, participants considered the need for continuity between the two phases and the full involvement of all stakeholders.

Below please find the main elements for each theme:

Theme 1: Implementation of the Geneva Action Plan

Questions raised at the beginning of the session:

- How to go about the implementation process
- Identify who the main actors are / define their respective roles
- How to ensure real progress & goals are adequately met
- Implementing the Action Plan beyond Tunis (up to 2015): what would be the role of the Summit?

In deliberating on Theme 1 the following points should be considered:

- Implementation as an action of its own
- Documenting the process
- Follow up and coordination
- Evaluating implementation through indicators (to be developed)
- Linking thematic and regional approaches
- Looking into complementarity between the various levels (international, regional and national)
- Mobilizing resources for implementation

Theme II: Expected results of the second phase of the WSIS

As participants considered the Tunis phase as part of one single Summit, discussions centered around the need for a strong political document which would renew commitments of stakeholders on building an inclusive information society from what was agreed upon in Geneva. This would avoid reopening debates on the Geneva Declaration and Action Plan.

The following would be considered as potential deliverables for the Summit:

- A document containing a political message from Heads of States
- A document which may be an Agenda in form of a plan to federate several operations including Regional Action Plans

In deliberating on Theme 2 the following points should be considered:

- Complementarity between thematic and regional dimensions
- Reaffirming the value of Digital Solidarity
- Partnership for Development" as a potential rallying theme for the Tunis phase
- Anchoring the Summit outputs in the UN Development System and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to ensure follow-up and periodic review

Theme 3: The process of the second phase of the WSIS

Participants noted that even though the rules of procedures which were adopted in Geneva will apply to the two phases; it was necessary to improve synergy with the various stakeholders for an inclusive process which should cover both the preparatory phase and the Summit itself.

In deliberating on Theme 3 the following points should be considered:

- Implementing the Geneva Action Plan
 - Documenting the process
 - Follow up and coordination
 - Development of evaluation tools such as indicators
- Planning for the Tunis Summit
 - PrepComs
 - Regional Conferences
 - Thematic Conferences
- Constraints (Time and resources)
- Production of reports requested by the Geneva Phase
- Coordination issues
- Use of planned events to reduce costs of the process
- Use of ICT in the facilitation and planning process

Document 2:

Message sent by Nick Moraitis about the evaluation / lessons learned

- 1) We determine questions for a survey
- 2) We distribute this survey to the 'convenors' (as Bertrand would say) and other stakeholders
 - Civil Society Focal Points
 - Working Groups
 - Random other members of civil society who attended meetings or were involved in 'less involved' ways.

As well as

- Business community contacts
- Executive Secretariat
- Government Bureau

Obviously we could aim for less -- say 1 per family / focal point or more and distribute our survey more widely. Considering the limited enthusiasm on this list, it's probably best to keep it simple.

- 3) We analyze the results.
- 4) We write a report.
- 5) We distribute the report on <http://www.geneva2003.org> and at the next PrepCom.

I certainly can help out. That said, if it is me alone it will not be as good as it 'could be' because I have limited academic training – and even more limited time.

Should we form an evaluation taskforce? If so, who would like to be on it?

We are currently running a survey on TakingITGlobal evaluating our online community & have built a survey tool for this purpose.

<http://surveys.takingitglobal.org/survey.html?SurveyID=1>). We could use that to run the survey.

Areas that we may consider evaluating:

- 1) Goals of civil society groups participating in WSIS
- 2) Experience of the accreditation and registration process
- 3) Ability to have influence in preparatory process
- 4) Networking - how has WSIS fostered collaboration
- 5) Use of technology/web to support information sharing
- 6) Experience of side-events at prepcoms
- 7) Experience of national level activities and connection with government
- 8) Learning and Inspiration - if WSIS has catalysed new projects or programs
- 9) Opinions on the ultimate documents - Declaration & WSIS Action Plan
- 10) Relationship to Civil Society structures
 - A) Did they know there was Civil Society structures such as a Bureau and Working Groups
 - B) Reflections on the support provided by working collectively as part of a Caucus or Family
- 11) Experience of the Summit

A) Highpoints

B) Lowpoints

12) What has been missing from the WSIS process to date, if anything?

13) What has WSIS led to? And Plans to be involved in the next phase?

This are just some key questions that come to mind.

Of course, these might be far too broad, and we may choose to consider more closely the things we discussed last year -- like:

A) Has it overall been effective?

B) Composition of the Bureau and the categories of families.

C) The Secretariat and its support for civil society

D) Fundraising for civil society activities

C) Fellowship fundraising and distribution

D) Civil Society involvement in plenary

E) Meetings with Intergovernmental Bureau

F) Relationship with CS Plenary

G) Communications structures of Civil Society - websites, mailing lists etc.

E) Representation through speeches in plenary etc.

F) Representation in the media

Document 3:

For the purposes of drawing the lessons learned from civil society participation in Phase I (and particularly on the establishment of the CS Bureau) the CS Division of the WSIS Secretariat has referred to the following civil society definition and criteria for grouping civil society entities:

Civil Society as defined in the United Nations system

"A 'Civil Society' is the result of different components of populations and communities, and refers to the sphere in which citizens and social initiatives organise themselves around objectives, constituencies and thematic interests. They act collectively through their organisations known as Civil Society Organisations which include movements, entities, institutions autonomous from the State which in principle, are non-profit-making, act locally, nationally and internationally, in defence and promotion of social, economic and cultural interests and for mutual benefit. They intermediate between their constituencies/members, with the State as well as with United Nations bodies. They do this through lobbying and/or provision of services. Though belonging to the non-State actor category, they are different from the private sector and NGO as they may not be registered, may replace the public sector, are not always structured and often their members are not officially recognized".

Civil Society "Families" as identified in the WSIS process

In the tripartite WSIS context, which seeks to create an exchange platform between the State, the private sector and the civil society, civil society itself is comprised of all entities that are not the State, intergovernmental organisations and the private sector¹. We could consider that several distinct family entities compose the civil society and NGO category. A family may be comprised of several types of relatives, from close to distant members, however, each family will have some common characteristics:

- a. a homogenous institutional culture and the existence of established or informal consultation mechanisms will be found within a family group;
- b. an umbrella organisation of international character will cluster a large number of members under the same reference structure;
- c. communication mechanisms within a family will allow information dissemination and exchanges between members of the same family group.

Based on these considerations, the family groups involved in the WSIS appear to be the following:

1. Academia and education²
2. The science and technology community
3. The media³
4. The creators and active promoters of culture⁴
5. Cities and local authorities
6. Trade Unions
7. Parliamentarians
8. NGOs⁵

¹ Here the private sector includes firms and private sector associations.

² Includes students, teachers, professional schools, researchers, education movements, etc.

³ Includes broadcasters, regulators, press, journalist associations, NGO media, freedom of expression associations, etc.

⁴ Music, literature, etc.

9. Youth
10. Gender
11. Indigenous People
12. Disabled
13. Social movements⁶
14. Multi-stakeholders partnerships
15. Philanthropic institutions & Foundations
16. Think Tanks
17. Africa Region
18. Latin America Region
19. Asian Region
20. North America, Europe and CIS Region
21. Middle East and West Asia Region

⁵ Entities with legal status

⁶ Ad hoc movements without legal status