

CIVIL SOCIETY

REPORT OF

WSIS ASIA PASECFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE

IRAN.JUN 2005

APRC CIVIL SOCIETY
And [Iran ICT NGO FOR YOUTH](#)

Part of civil society is considered one of 3 main parts of universal meeting of information community and one of influential parts on contents of Geneva principles communiqué, and

This part has always had its impact in communiqué of principles and relative documents incorporates with preliminary meetings and WSIS work groups through holding panels and regular sessions.

In regard to the above Tehran conference brought about an opportunity for organizations and non-governmental institutions of Asia and Oceania region so that once again these non- governmental organizations get together and contribute their viewpoints regarding statement of principles and Geneva documents which is one of important and basic documents of of 3rd millennium.

Tehran conference can be deemed as a turning point in area of information community at Asia and Oceania and West Asia in particular. Since this region unfortunately didn't show a particular reaction to Geneva documents.

Measures of conference secretariat for information provision before holding conference:

*Information provision of NGOs colleague with UNDP through office of non governmental. Organizations of United Nations

*Information provision of NGOs colleague with home office through centre of enabling non-governmental organizations of Iran.

*Information provision through news list of non-governmental organizations in which about 700 NGOs are members.

*Information provision through list of NGOs at secretariat of civil community of WSIS.

*Information provision through all news groups active in context of WSIS in the world.



As a result of these activities different people from following organizations declared their readiness to participate in the meeting. The most important organizations of region and Iran are as follows:

- 1- Association of information technology of country's youths.
- 2- Members of working group of national WSIS commission.
- 3- Non-governmental Karduk organization.
- 4- Friendship Education Society from Bangladesh.
- 5- Organization of IT for change from India
- 6- Institute for hyper network society from Japan
- 7- Coordinator of APC ICT POLICY MONITOR NETWORK project I
- 8- Network of non-governmental organizations media of youth national organizations.

9. 9-Network of information technology of non-governmental organizations of youth national organization.
10. 10-Non-governmental organization of Moslem women II-Centre for enabling women.
11. 12-Verta non-governmental organization.
12. 13-Community of new attitude
13. 14-Centre of non-governmental organizations in Hamadan
14. 15-Radin non-governmental Institute
15. 16-Groups of WEB-LOG writers and newspaper men of information technology area and informative community.
16. 17-Islamic Women,s Institute of Iran

Considering the time limitation and etc, secretariate of civil society implemented necessary planning for creation of suitable working connection and optimum usage out of current position during 3 days of holding the meeting.



The first day

On first day of meeting which was assigned to opening ceremonies and reports of envoys of varied countries from regional and sub-regional therefore ,different discussions and exchange of views at common working sessions and also getting aware of attitudes and activities on the other participants were the main point.

The next axis of discussions was about assessment of attitudes and common concerns of domestic and foreign people of civil society. In the evening of the first day to share thought among differnt groups and for making thoughts clear for suitable planning toward management the assigned chance of lecture to civil society a working session was formed at 3 rd salon and planning and necessary understandings for structure of communiqués and lectures were implemented.

Also for coincident presence of envoys of civil society at programs of main salon and peripheral programs which were provided in terms of workshops division of duties and necessary planning were conducted.

With approach of attitudes, materials for lectures on 2nd day were compiled and program of civil society through Iranian coordinator of civil society were placed at disposal of meeting chairman.

Agreed axes for provision to meeting on part of civil society included: '

1-Filtering

2- Rehabilitation of non-governmental organizations

3-Gendre differential in informative society

4-Cooperation towards reduction of impacts of natural calamities

5-Information technology and environment

6-Controlling increasing trend of brain drain in era of information.

7-Request from States for granting more effective role to civil society at informative society

THE SECOND DAY

The second day of congress for civil society was a busy day. The activities of some non-governmental organizations in terms of several lectures and statements had been prepared and should have been implemented within 20 minutes which had been indicated by chairman of meeting.

Civil society despite this time limitation could provide present States with its speeches and attitudes. On this day Mr. Haji. Li from Iran as coordinator of these Lectures after introduction of lecturers invited them respectively for provision of their materials.

Mr .Khosravi the first speaker of civil society from IRAN ICT NGO FOR YOUTH attended to provision of attitudes and comments of civil society against object of filtering in two national and international dimensions. One of the

highlights of said statement was allocated to embargoes conducted on the part of American servers for Iranian sites like ISNA. Another lecturer of civil society was Mr .Part Saker from activists of civil society In India. He during his lecture emphasized on making non-governmental organization more active and taking them more serious at preliminary gatherings and he assigned key role for non-governmental organizations at sphere of informative society.

Third lecture was provided by Ms.Farideh Mashini. She brought up attitudes of and comments of civil society regarding gender differential and dilemma stemming from gender abuses from women at internet and gender inequality in usage of information technology tools.

The next lecture was conducted by Mr. Abtahi from non-governmental Karduk

organization, he by mentioning measures taken by Karduk non-governmental organization referred to mentioning attitudes of civil society in connection with supporting rehabilitation of non-governmental organizations for enhancing the better goals of informative society.

The last lecture was conducted by Mr.F around Hasani on second day from work of youth group of WSIS national commission which was allocated to provision of statement of civil society about conducted activities for usage of of information technology in reduction of impacts of natural calamities. Statement of civil society about conducted activities for usage of of information technology in reduction of Impacted of natural calamities.

Statements and comments contributed by civil society had a significant feedback among audience and were welcome by present States.

In the afternoon of this day the members of civil society while were present at peripheral workshops of congress, held a short session for assessment of results of provided lectures and it was decided that necessary attempts be made by secretariat of civil society for reserving time for lecture on the third day.

The third day

The third of congress began at a time when the working group of final document Was intensively making attempts to make documents ready by noon of that day and put at disposal of audience for reading. For this very reason in the morning of third day a suitable chance was provided for civil society to have a short time around 15 minutes for lecture at its disposal.

On this day a statement was issued by civil society regarding direct impact of information technology on increasing trend of brain drain in Asia. This statement which attracted the attention of States to caring the more the better to object of brain drain was provided by Mr.FarnoudHassani from work of group of youths of WSIS national commission.

Also Mrs. Tabrizi attended to provision of viewpoints of civil society regarding positive impacts of information technology development on environment and life.

In the end of this day and after provision of final document and its adoption by present States, civil society also issued its final statement by its Japanese representative Mr .Izumi. In this statement while criticizing the slight role which had been given to non-governmental organizations in preparation of final document, the support of civil society from adopted document was proclaimed.

It is worth mentioning that the full texts of communiqués and lectures mentioned will be enclosed to this report.

Other Statement was provided by Ms.Farideh Mashin representing non-governmental organizations active in women's affairs. Her statement in three overall axes included:

1-States provide for possibility and access and control on information technology and communications at regions which are less available to ladies and girls and planning for long run training of ladies be conducted and make employment of educated women possible through information technology.

2-Ladies be members of of high councils of information and communications technology of their own countries so that they can incorporate sensitive attitudes as to gender in plantings.

3-States pass preventive laws for prevention of ladies and children abuse in internet.

Next Statement was offered by Mr.Farnoud Hassani from work group of Iranian youths.
Mr. Chairman

Ladies and gentlemen

Asian continent from viewpoint of natural calamities is located at one of the most dangerous regions of the world; flood and earthquake are considered as great concerns of developed and undeveloped countries of Asia. Every year many of our continent mates are destroyed as a result of natural calamities and these events in particular at cities and small villages of continent have more catastrophic impacts.

Bam earthquake and Tesunami of Indonesia will be two dark and unforgettable points at memory of humanity. Non-governmental organizations as the most active and most advanced organs at times of unpleasant natural events always play an effective role in presence and giving assistance to victims.

We as representatives of non-governmental organizations of Iran who are busy at informative society area of Iran and result of bur co-thinking at work of group of youths of WSIS national commission has materialized with fostering of a great network of non-governmental organizations consisting of 15000 NGOs, which proclaim their preparedness for cooperation with other non-governmental organizations of Asian countries; with the aim of reduction of impacts 'of natural calamities. Also we support the suggestion of Iranian government for establishment of an international base of information technology axis for coping with natural calamities.

Next Statement was provided by Mr.Farnoid Hassani from work of group of Iranian youths

Mr. Chairman

Ladies and gentlemen

The ancient Asian continent has been at the top of richest and oldest civilizations of humanity. But, unfortunately our continent has failed to adapt itself with the developments

Of transitional changes from agricultural era to industrial age and from industrial age To-age of information and the result of these two transitions have brought economic and informative poverty for our continent, despite this and given abundant difficulties of Continent people for access to base literacy and technological one, today Asian continent faces with two great dilemma of brain drain and genes drain.

A dilemma that has emerged as a result of unlimited sovereignty of advanced and developed countries in information technology.

Ladies and gentlemen

You witness that every year a great number of your countries elite are attracted by American and European companies and universities and this means losing abundant material and spiritual capitals whose repercussions will affect us now and in future.

We believe that this trend will lead to evacuation of continent from elite genes and its Results will emerge in future generations, a trend that with development of information technology has become more intense and will lead to the more dominance of advanced

We, envoys of civil society persistently request States to provide suitable programs and approaches for controlling increasing trend of brains and genes drain to developed countries. We support approaches of Asian States for formation of an inter-States attention at the continent level.

Communiqué no.7 was offered by Ms. Tabrizi as representative of non-governmental scientific organizations of Iran. Mr. Chairman

Ladies and gentlemen

Being located in global village as per interpretation of Mc Luhan has made us citizen of earth globe and bound to protect the whole areas and contexts of earth globe environment. Responsibility of today human at information age is incomparable with industrial era and before that. Well, information technology just like glue has connected life of all things and all people to each other everywhere and timelessness and placelessness are among features of information age and informative community. Environment and issues connected with it have enjoyed the most advantage from

Information technology and still is enjoying. Man by production of digital products and optimum and effective usage of raw materials by applying tools of information Technology while economizing has brought about reduction in cutting of trees too.

Each one ton of paper is obtained by cutting 7 trees and this means gradual death of earth globe lungs. But information technology and communications has come to help man and has fixed its position with these achievements as friend and lover of environment.

We emphasize applicable usage of these tools and expect citizens of earth globe use information technology rationally, without hurting environment, so that have access to development goals as per goals of development of participation millennium in sustainable development in provision 8.

As a definite suggestion we believe that protection of environment at top of plantings as a necessary Pass port is seen at programs of State men.

What can be called as the achievements of Tehran conference at Asia and Oceania Region?

Is in fact content and making section of civil society sensitive to trend of documents which will be ultimately announced in Tunisia and can provide for presence Asia and Oceania in preparation of global documents.

Civil society which doesn't have a wide scope in Asia and Oceania by holding such congresses can provide context for making region

Active and making popular institutions sensitive in development.

Statement by the Civil Society of Asia-Pacific Countries on Access Restriction to Public Information (Iran ICT NGO FOR YOUTH)

Iran civil society, as well as the civil society of some other Asia-pacific countries, is facing server restriction access to public information on the web. Namely, web filtering is one of the most common forms of access restriction to public information. Access to sensible content, produced either inside of outside a country, which goes against the regulation and values and the local constitution of a given country is being filtered by the government. Here are tow facts concerning the case of the Islamic republic of Iran. Inside the country. Active civil society actors try to express their views and ideas trough online publications using blogs. But, unfortunately most of these blogs and online publications are filtered and no one can access them inside the country.

Out side the country, the USA has explicitly decides to restrict access to one most active news agencies in Iran namely; ISNA, the Iran student's News agency. Iran's civil society is convinced, that these restrictive policies. Either inside of outside a given country is deeply against the expansion of a people centered, inclusive and development oriented information society. The civil society believes that one of the prerequisites for the constriction of global knowledge society, at country level, is to provide citizens with open and non restrictive access to information and content all over the world. Therefore, the civil societies of Asia- pacific member countries would like to invite their respective governments to establish a constructive dialog with them in order to collaborate and fined a consensus of the issue of access restriction to public information on the web.

Statement of IT for change NGO from India

Statement on behalf of some civil society organizations – Association for Progressive Communication, IT for Change, India and GLOCOM, Japan

I'd like to start my statement by saying that the Civil Society in Asia Pacific has not been given a legitimate role to the WSIS regional processes - of which this WSIS Asia Pacific Tehran conference, and the earlier sub-regional meetings prior to this conference, is a part.

The process implemented for these High Level Asia Pacific conferences lacks the necessary means to support the Civil Society participation in a meaningful and effective manner. At this conference, we have only a very few Civil society members, with just 3 or 4 from outside the host country, in contrast to 116 civil society participants for Tokyo AP Regional Conference in 2003.

One reason is the lack of any fellowship support this time. There were about 38 fellowships offered to civil society members from outside of Japan, at the Japan Regional AP Conference.

Another is, poor dissemination of information, which was often too late and too little. In fact some of our colleagues decided not to participate because of these problems. Other friends were not invited nor informed of the process.

The third reason is the lack of any effort to reach out the civil society entities. Civil society was not at all involved at the preparatory stages of this meeting, nor was their comments invited for the drafts of the conference documents.

We would like to call on all government officials, delegations and host organizations, to seriously re-consider the process at the conference. The organization of the meeting, speaking slots and participation in the working group of the civil society needs to be re-considered. CS representatives should be allowed to sit through the meeting and to make observations by the permission of the Chair.

The Tokyo Declaration, which is frequently quoted in the conference documents, is the product of much more inclusive and open process of engaging all the stakeholders, including the civil society, starting from an "informal drafting committee" to an open Meeting for more than five hours, before passing the informal draft to the formal inter-governmental negotiations.

If we are here to discuss about an open and inclusive information society, about access for all, and on closing the digital divide for the people-centered information society, please do not exclude the civil society, which is an important stakeholder in the whole process.

The civil society are likely to bring in some important issues of the Information Society, such as upholding the human rights, gender equality, addressing the issues of persons

with disabilities, community development, open source, content development, and balancing the IPR with public interest, all of these are addressed clearly in Tokyo Declaration and Geneva WSIS Declaration of Principles.

The principles described in the Draft Tehran Declaration are mostly acceptable, except that groups that need special attention, especially women, are not mentioned at all. We request to add such references, in consistency with the WSIS Geneva document. We also call for more specific reference to the United Nations Charter and the Declaration of the Human Rights. We also want more clear language on the specificities of our region. However, overall, the draft declaration is fine and we can subscribe to it.

However, we are unable to endorse the draft Regional Action Plan. There are two reasons. One is the process. The lack of participation from the civil society in the processes of developing the draft makes it impossible for us to endorse it in its present shape.

Another reason is the content itself.

The lack of a participatory approach around this event has resulted in a draft Regional Action Plan that does not at all address the development needs of the people of the Asia Pacific. We have prepared a document giving a civil society response to this draft RAP, which is being circulated to the participants. We want the organizers to include this document among the official documents at the conference and it should be considered by the working group before finalizing draft RAP.

The Draft RAP is inconsistent with the Geneva documents, and the emerging Tunis documents, its language is immature in many areas and lacking a development perspective. It also does not reflect many values that the Geneva documents clearly demonstrate - for example, the multi-stakeholder partnership to build people-centered information society. The multi-stakeholder principle finds good references in the Geneva documents, as also in the draft Tehran Declaration circulated yesterday, but we do not see them that much in the draft RAP. Are we to take that as we move from statements of principles to more actionable issues, civil society is to be disregarded.

In the RAP, ESCAP is suggested to be the lead agency, but we are concerned by the lack of multi-stakeholder involvement in the regional WSIS processes conducted by ESCAP till now. We want ESCAP to commit more strongly to the principle of multi-stakeholderism in its activities. In this context, we also want to point out to the fact that the WSIS implementation and follow up mechanism will be discussed at the PrepCom3 and decided at the Tunis Summit'. The RAP should not take any position which anticipates the outcome of Tunis Summit.

Finally we suggest that 70-page Action Plan document is too long and detailed to go line-by-line in just two days. The lead time given has been too short. And civil society and other stakeholders have not been consulted in advance at all.

We would have very much liked to give our comments on the draft RAP much earlier so that there would have been a good chance of including those in the final RAP. But the unfortunate fact is that the organizers of the conference gave us no opportunity to do so.

Finally, we will also like to recommend the participatory approach used by UNDP-APDIP for developing its IG report. As a result the IG report is much more inclusive of the concerns of all people of the Asia Pacific. We would like the regional WSIS processes to follow the model of 'Open Regional Dialogue on Internet Governance'.

Therefore, it will be very wise to defer the adoption of the RAP to until September when the PrepCom3 will be held. We need to streamline the document first, make it more specific and inclusive of the realities of our region, and also invite comments from all stakeholders in an inclusive manner. After that government delegates can negotiate the final language. In this conference we can focus on finalizing the general principles that should inform the unfolding on a people centered and development-oriented Information Society in the Asia Pacific. These general principles can constitute the Tehran Declaration.

Last, but not the least, we thank the host country people who have been so gracious in making various arrangement for us. We appreciate it very much. We wish the same goes for inclusion of Civil Society participation to the substantive part of the process as well. We reiterate civil society's complete support for and involvement in the activities of the government and other international and regional agencies in for developing an appropriate roadmap for Information Society in the Asia Pacific.

The following sentences are Kardok, Research & Scientific Center Comments

We believe without real participating of NGOs ICT developing will be slowed and WSIS principles and action plan will not realize. Therefore we have 3 suggestions:

1. NGOs must be considered in all ICT development documents & plans as a main stakeholder and number of partnership projects with NGOs must be addressed under indicators for evaluating progress.
2. All international & regional organizations and all governments must define a clear role for NGOs in ICT development strategies ad plans. Also they must support NGOs activities to realize WSIS principles.
3. For supporting active NGOs in WSIS fields, we suggest a fund be established and with aid of this fund capacity building and empowerment workshops in national & international level can be held. Also with aim of this fund NGOs activities and programs can be supported.

Statement by some members on the civil society on the issue of adoption of the Tehran Declaration and the Regional Action Plan

I speak on the behalf of a few civil society organizations present here, my own organization, IT for Change, Association for Progressive Communications, and Glocum of Japan. and some other organizations not present here but who have endorsed these views.

We had earlier put our comments on the Draft Regional Plan of Action (RAP) on the table. We are of the view that these were not taken seriously. The option of deferring the adoption of the plan, it appears, was never proposed as an option and discussed. Under the circumstances, we are unable to subscribe to the process and outcomes of this conference. As already said yesterday, we disassociate ourselves from the adoption of the RAP.

We are generally in agreement with the language that the Tehran Declaration adopts, which is much more progressive than the proposed RAP, However, since the real operative parts of the Tehran Declaration are about adopting and carrying forward the RAP, we have to disassociate from both, the Tehran Declaration and the RAP.

We are of the view that the adoption of the present RAP may be taken as an inadequate response of the public authorities to intervene in a substantive manner on the behalf of the majority of the people of the Asia Pacific for unfolding of a people-centered, inclusive and development- oriented IS, which is the vision of the WSIS. We consider that the ICT opportunity is really a great and unprecedented opportunity for development of the people of the Asia Pacific and this opportunity can only be harnessed if we set up strong regional and national policy frameworks. Going half cock on policy frameworks will mean that the development of Information Society in Asia Pacific will take the default route. Such a route, as we all know well from our experiences, will only mean that the IS developments further benefit those who are already entrenched in positions of relative power, and exclude the majority of the people of the Asia Pacific.

As for the process issues raised earlier by us, in regard to CS participation in this conference, these are not only process issues, but are real content issues for WSIS documents at global and the regional level. The multistakeholder principle gets regularly emphasized in these documents, and the non-translation of these commitments into practice, as we see in this conference, raises the all-important issue of how serious are various actors in implementing other substantive commitments in the WSIS documents.

We once again insist that the civil society have only requested for such processes of inclusion, which are already practiced at the global WSIS process. So the argument that this is basically an inter-governmental conference is not acceptable. Unless the point made by the organizers is that this conference is in any way more intergovernmental than global WSIS processes. This is a point that the secretariat may want to clarify.

And if the issue here at this regional conference is lack of capacity vis a vis global processes, for more inclusive processes, which can mean more elaborate processes, we will like to point out that similar regional WSIS processes conducted, or being conducted, at Africa and LA regional levels, by the respective regional UN commissions, have a far

greater CS involvement. CS rep were involved in the process of drafting and taking comments on the conference documents, and the main event itself they were given much more space than the CS finds here in this conference.

However, we are very hopeful with the assurances given to us by the secretariat, and the chair, and the civil society looks forward to more inclusive processes in the future in the regional WSIS related activity in the Asia Pacific. In this respect, we pledge our complete support to all the organizations involved with the WSIS follow-up and implementation process.

In the end I will like to thank the organizers for the excellent arrangements they made for our participation and stay here. In fact, our unhappiness with the outcomes of the conference has been partially offset by the joy of being in this beautiful city of Tehran and the warm hospitality of its people.



Statement of Islamic Women Institute of Iran
INFORMATION AGE

The rapid development and use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs), particularly in the North and in the urban centers of the South, have changed the understanding of many regarding information gathering and dissemination, and knowledge generation. In addition, the globalization of media enterprises has reinforced the one-way flow of a largely Northern, male-dominated worldview. Access and participation in various mediums of communication technologies do not change the reality of who actually controls these mediums. Indeed, the new information and communication technologies (ICTs) are changing the face of the 21st century, altering the landscape of opportunity as well as challenges for women in ways never before imagined. What we have to do then?

1.our aims : (i) develop a common vision and understanding of information society; (ii) promote a better appreciation of its scope and dimensions, and (iii) formulate a strategic plan of action for adapting to a “new” knowledge society.

Information Age and to gain a better grasp of its meaning and implications on the global community. It was initiated in recognition of the widening gap between information “haves” and “have-nots,” as well as the increasingly important role of telecommunications in the political, economic, social and cultural sphere. Also, the United Nations (UN) saw the need for cooperation among the various national and international initiatives fostering ICTs for development.

2. Building the infrastructure – This includes the role of telecommunications, investment and technology in creating the Information Society infrastructure and bridging the Digital Divide; Internet connectivity; wireless technologies; rural communications; and bridges between digital media: radio, television, press and Internet.

3. Opening the gates – This includes sub-topics such as understanding the information society; achieving universal and equitable access to the Information Society; meeting the needs of the developing world; information as a common public good, with due consideration to intellectual property rights; access to information/knowledge; freedom of expression and of the media; cultural and linguistic diversity; and specific needs of the least developed countries.

4. Services and applications – This includes the implications of the Information Society for economic, social and cultural development; the implications of the Information Society for science and medicine; traditional knowledge; ICT for government, decentralization, empowerment and democracy; Cross-border E-commerce; E-government; and E-health.

5. The needs of users – This includes the sub-topics consumer protection and privacy; standardization on network security; critical infrastructure protection; affordability; human resources development; user training; worker protection and workplace privacy; gender perspective; and needs of young people

6. Developing a framework – The roles of government, the private sector and civil society in shaping the Information Society; Intellectual property rights; facilitating trade in ICT goods and services; establishing appropriate policy, regulatory and market structures; data protection, privacy, and network security; and confidence-building measures for online transactions.

7. ICTs and Education – The sub-topics under this are: ICTs as a lever for educational change; creating a learning environment: ICTs, teachers, learners and content; and the needs of currently employed workers. The role of ICTs in good governance was also proposed as one of the main topics in the Summit between the “haves” and the “have-nots”.* ICT infrastructure and cost* access in a digital global economy* services and applications, and their implications on economic and socio-cultural development* knowledge transfer
should be somehow to not let this 1 percent impact the whole.

In regard to genders the women,s picture in the Hardware of ICTs like TV, Internet, redio is shown in the worst possible way which uses them like a good for advertisement and a bad sample for the youth girls, but this should be changed,and should show such a perspectives of so many females like: researchers, inventors scientist which those can be the sample of the girls and the goal of women to reach.