



Tunis Phase: PrepCom3
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Civil Society internal informal working document.

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This current document is just a draft and shall not be construed as being endorsed by WSIS Civil Society bodies.

PROPOSED RULES of PROCEDURES for the
PARTICIPATION of CIVIL SOCIETY
in DRAFTING GROUPS

Texts in italic are informal comments that may be removed or rewritten in the final document.

Preliminary Considerations (to avoid misunderstandings).

In order to clarify a legal point, Civil Society is not entitled to, and it does not request it, a full and equal participation as governments in the sense that Civil Society representatives do not seek the right to formally and directly propose new language to the approval of the governments, to formally express support or opposition to a language being proposed by a government, to the effect that a language is directly adopted, rejected or put in brackets. Civil Society is entitled to have the position of observers, in the best advisory capacity as possible. Civil Society is allowed and encouraged to provide new language suggestions in a constructive fashion, with a short rationale explaining each suggestion.

To allow for flexibility, an extensive power of appreciation and decision is given to the chair of each drafting group. The present rules of procedures have been elaborated in consideration of an extensive set of precedents, both during the first phase of the Summit and the Second phase of the Summit.

Many governments are welcoming Civil Society observers within their own delegation, effectively giving many Civil Society representatives the status of silent observers that are able to report to the whole Civil Society. Giving all Civil Society representatives the status of silent observers is just the formalization of such best practices. During Phase I and Phase II, a significant number of Civil Society were able to stay as silent observers after their initial speech, at the initiative of the Chair who formally asked if any government would object, in the presence of representatives of the few Governments that seem to welcome with caution the participation of observers. The Group of the Friend of the Chair (GFC) held, at the initiative of the chair, in consensus with all Governments, open sessions that were open to all stakeholders, and where interaction was remarkably free and constructive.

Article 1. The number of Civil Society representatives that are allowed to stay seated in the room is determined by the chair, depending on the size of the room, and provided that all attending government representatives can be seated first. The chair may determine that no standing observers are allowed. The chair determination may vary during the drafting session.

Article 2. The chair may expel at any time, any noisy observer, on a personal basis, either at the request of a government or following his/her own appreciation.

Article 3. Because the chair may wish to make an introductory presentation first, or let some delegations to make introductory statements, during the first thirty minutes of the session, the chair shall determine when the Civil Society representatives may speak. Two Civil Society representatives shall be able to speak, and shall be allowed to distribute a written account of their language suggestions with possibly explanatory annexes. Distribution to governments of written language suggestions by other Civil Society representatives that were not able to speak shall be allowed. The chair determine on a case by case basis, the duration of the two Civil Society contributions that shall not be less than four minutes respectively.

Article 4. The style of the speeches and written contributions from Civil Society representatives must be courteous and must follow the rules of international diplomatic courtesy and must address all attendees in a proper diplomatic fashion. The chair may interrupt at any time, a civil society speaker to give some advice in that direction, and in extreme case to shorten any speech that would not follow those rules of style or courtesy.

Article 5. After the two Civil Society observers have finished their speeches, they shall be able to stay as silent observers. Depending on the size of the room, the chair may allow to stay all civil society representatives as silent observers or in priority the most concerned observers who have given written language suggestions. By default, and without an express statement by the chair, all civil society representatives are allowed to stay as silent observers.

Article 6. At any moment during the session, and after approval by government representatives present at that time in the room, the chair may decide, to conduct informal interactive consultations when Civil Society observers may be able to speak at the invitation of the chair.

(Note : following the same procedures that have been followed during the open sessions of the GFC that constitutes an inclusive precedent in this matter)

Article 7. If a session has lasted for a large duration, or after a recess, or if the topic of the session has evolved in a substantial manner, the chair may decide that two Civil Society observers be allowed to speak, and written suggestions be distributed within the same conditions as article 3.
