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Note to the Deputy Secretary-General on the outcome of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, Tunis, 16-18 November 2005

The second phase of World Summit on the Information Society will adopt on Friday an outcome (Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society). The outcome is fairly short (about 24 pages). Surprisingly, delegations that had opposing views only a few days ago (e.g. the US vs. Iran and Saudi Arabia), are "equally happy", rather than "equally unhappy". The key conclusions pertaining to the Secretary-General are the following:

1. Internet governance

The Secretary-General is asked to convene, in an open and inclusive process, an **Internet Governance Forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue**, by the second quarter of 2006. Its **mandate** includes discuss policy issues, exchange of information and best practices, advising stakeholders, interface with appropriate institutions, identify emerging issues, contribute to capacity-building and publish its proceedings. It will **not have oversight** functions. It is "neutral, non-duplicate and **non-binding**".

The Secretary-General is asked to extend invitations to all stakeholders and draw upon all stakeholders, including the "proven expertise of ITU" and establish an effective, cost-effective and multi-stakeholder **bureau**. Greece offered to host the first meeting "no later than 2006".

In a last minute, awkward compromise between a top-down, directed approach (favored by Iran and Saudi Arabia) and a bottom-up, voluntary approach (favored by the US), the outcome also notes that a "**process towards enhanced cooperation, to be started by the UN Secretary-General, involving all relevant organizations by the end of the first quarter of 2006, will involve all stakeholders.**" Because of the timing, this process can not be launched through the Forum. Another way to start it would be through a letter from the Secretary-General, bringing the outcome of WSIS to the attention of all stakeholders and encourage them to enhance cooperation. Relevant organizations should commence a process towards enhanced cooperation and as quickly as possible and "provide annual performance reports" (to the Secretary-General, according to some delegations).

The outcome also recognized that **all governments should have an equal role** and responsibility for international Internet governance and that countries should not be involved in decisions regarding another country's country-code domain name.

2. Follow-up and implementation

The Secretary-General is requested, in consultation with the CEB, to establish **within CEB a UN Group on the Information Society** to facilitate implementation. The outcome adds that in considering lead agency(ies) it takes into account consideration the experience of **ITU, UNESCO and UNDP**. Although, a few paras. later it states that "[t]hese three agencies should play leading facilitating roles in the implementation ... and organize a meeting of moderators/facilitators of action lines as mentioned in the Annex." The Annex was maintained (to the delight of Russia), but added the words "indicative" (in the text) and "possible" (in the Annex) to moderators/facilitators. (Some still fear that the current text would be used to make ITU a development agency.) **The Secretary-General is also requested to report to the GA through ECOSOC by June 2006 on the modalities of interagency coordination** for implementation.

ECOSOC will oversee system-wide follow-up to WSIS. And "to this end" it requests ECOSOC in July 2006 to review the mandate, agenda and composition of the **Commission on Science and Technology for Development**, including considering strengthening the Commission, taking into account the multi-stakeholder approach.


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17 November 2005