

Draft

UNITED NATIONS ICT TASK FORCE
Sixth meeting of the Task Force
New York
25-27 March 2004

SUMMARY
OF CONCLUSIONS AND DECISIONS

CLOSED SESSION
(27 March 2004)

INTRODUCTION

The closed session of the Sixth meeting of the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force was held on 27 March 2004 in New York. The meeting adopted a Business plan for 2004, reviewed the status of Task Force on-going activities, and discussed the Task Force's contribution to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Collaboration with a number of partner organizations including UNITAR and the Wireless Internet Institute, was also addressed.

The closed session was preceded by a Global Forum on Internet Governance on 25 and 26 March (a separate Summary of the Global Forum is available), as well as by meetings, on the afternoon of 26 March, of four Working Groups of the ICT Task Force, and of a working group on ICT Indicators and MDG Mapping.

The following is a summary of the proceedings and of the conclusions and decisions adopted by the Task Force under the various agenda items.

OPENING OF THE SESSION AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Global Forum on Internet governance

The Chairman of the United Nations ICT Task Force, Mr. Jose-Maria Figueres Olsen, opened the meeting by expressing his satisfaction with the Global Forum on Internet Governance that had been very productive. The Forum brought together, in an open and participatory discussion, leading representatives of governments, the Internet community, the private sector, academia, and civil society. The genuine dialogue resulted in a significant advance towards a broadly shared understanding of Internet governance, and thus provided an important contribution towards the process of consultations. There was a broad consensus on some baseline principles that should guide the evaluation of

governance mechanisms and their future evolution. Some public policy issues were also identified that required international cooperation. The Task Force will build on this very productive initial step.

Agenda

The Chairman welcomed two new members of the Task Force; Mr. Khalid Saeed, Secretary of the Ministry of Information Technology in Pakistan and Vice Minister Jean-Claude Villiard, Deputy Minister, Industry Canada. The Chairman then turned the participants' focus to the proposed agenda of the meeting as found in document UNICTTFVI/2004/01.

The meeting adopted the agenda.

The meeting considered the following major items of the agenda: implementation of the Business plan, review of on-going activities, contribution to WSIS, and other matters.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BUSINESS PLAN

The first item discussed was a draft of ICT Task Force Business plan for 2004. The idea of a business plan had been born out of discussions at the Fifth meeting of the Task Force. There was a feeling among members that such a document was needed to focus the work of the Task Force.

The Chairman briefed the members on discussions of the draft of the Business plan that took place at several Bureau meetings, in particular at a meeting the night before. The Bureau decided that the plan needed to be strengthened by providing cost estimates for activities contained in the document.

During the discussion that followed, there were proposals to rename the document and call it an Action plan, as well as to extend its scope to cover 2004 and 2005.

The United States, while expressing support to the Business plan, stated that an indicative structure for voluntary contributions outlined in the end of the document might give the impression that members who did not follow it were "out of compliance". It was also noted that since Task Force members were chosen in their personal capacities, it was inappropriate to have an indicative scale of contributions. Several speakers agreed that it was important that contributions remained voluntary. However, others believed strongly that while the principle of the voluntary character of contributions must be upheld, an indicative structure of such contributions was needed to ensure that the cost of Task Force work, from which all members benefited, was not borne by a very few members, as was the case so far. It was also suggested that the indicative structure should include international organizations.

Members agreed that the structure of the Working Groups of the Task Force needed to be aligned to the Business plan. It was stressed, at the same time, that existing active projects pursued by some Working Groups would need to be transitioned in a way that would not undermine their effectiveness.

In the course of an active discussion of *Track 1* (Monitoring and benchmarking progress on WSIS implementation) of the draft Business plan, members stressed that since the mandate of the Task Force pre-dated the WSIS, it was important to avoid a situation when the Task Force's mandate would be too closely tied to that process. It was suggested that the Regional Commissions should be included among the participants and contributors for Track 1 since they represented organizations on the ground and have the capacity to implement programmes and monitor progress.

Members noted that benchmarking and monitoring was a very suitable task that the Task Force could perform between Geneva and Tunis. The Task Force ought to work out a detailed framework for this and use the regional nodes to collect country reports. Some members thought that, in addition to ongoing work related to Internet governance, the Task Force should pay more attention to the financing aspect of WSIS Plan of Action, in particular in the context of the future task force on financing being established by the Secretary-General.

As regards *Track 2* (Promoting a dialogue on Internet governance and other policy issues) it was proposed that the document should give added strength to this stream of activities by focusing more on the three most prominent things that came out of the Global Forum: awareness, capacity building and participation.

During the discussion of *Track 3* (Enabling environment) members gave examples on their engagement in this area. The issue of capacity building in this area and the potential role of the Task Force in contributing to this important task received a lot of attention. The ePol-Net initiative that originated in the DOT-Force and was currently supported by the ICT Task Force was highlighted as a possible resource in this regard.

Track 5 (Supporting activities) was thought in need of being expanded and strengthened in order to enhance visibility of the Task Force and also to facilitate the flow of information between members. It was also stressed that resourcing and support for Working Groups activities needed to be included in the Business plan since the Task Force would continue to rely on its Working Groups for implementation and that needed to be supported by adequate resources.

Mr. Ma (China) gave the members a briefing on Chinese initiatives and activities aimed at bridging the digital divide. He stated that China would contribute to the work of the Task Force through the Asian Regional Node and that China would work closely with Canada on the issue of benchmarking and monitoring. China as a country was very involved in the discussions on Internet Governance, a discussion that should take place in an inter-governmental body and not within a private entity.

Members' attention was drawn to the need for the Task Force to reestablish its focus on Africa in line with the rest of the United Nations.

The Task Force should encourage members to disseminate country reports through its regional networks to guide policy making and to share experiences among countries on monitoring and benchmarking progress in WSIS implementation. The Task Force could also explore ways to help developing countries access resources from donor agencies to carry out relevant activities. Another important task was formulating a business case for private sector companies to get involved in ICT for development. It was not only about philanthropy and good corporate citizenship but mostly about long term market development.

The Chairman of the Task Force summarized the outcomes of the discussions:

- The draft of the Business plan was generally supported by all members;
- In finalizing the document, the Secretariat would take into account the comments made by members ;
- Mr. Abu-Ghazaleh will help the Secretariat with establishing the cost structure for the implementation of the business plan;
- The Secretariat would re-circulate a document presenting information on income and expenditure of the Task Force, including information on contributions received;
- Review the Working Groups with a view to aligning the structure with the Business plan was a very sound proposal and should be undertaken in consultation with the Convenors;
- The Business plan would be sent to the Regional Nodes so that they could propose modalities of their contribution to its implementation.

The Business plan was **adopted**.

REVIEW OF ON-GOING ACTIVITIES

Training for diplomats; report of the World Federation of Scientists

Amb. Kamal (UNITAR) briefed the participants on the Policy Awareness and Training in Information Technology program, highlighting its success and its multi-stakeholder partnership character and outlining further steps aimed at expanding the programme to a web-based training program with participants from all over the world. He stressed that this expansion was predicated on increased financial support from the budget of the ICT Task Force (to \$97,000 for 500 users in 2005 and \$108,000 for 1000 users for 2006).

Amb. Kamal also presented a report of the World Federation of Scientists entitled "*Towards a Universal Order of Cyberspace: Managing Threats from Cybercrime to*

Cyberwar” stressing that a number of recommendations contained in the report were related directly to Task Force work (please see the Annex for the texts of these recommendations).

Activities of Working Groups and Regional Nodes

Convenors of the Task Force Working Groups and of the Regional Nodes provided brief reports on their latest activities and on the outcome of their meetings held the previous day.

Ms. Dunn, Convenor of the Working Group on *Business Enterprise and Entrepreneurship* highlighted two of the major activities of the Group: Enablis and the Microfinance Alliance, both of which present opportunities for Task Force member involvement. Enablis is rolling out financial and business support to entrepreneurs in South Africa. It is hoped that the model will be replicated in other regions. The Microfinance Alliance launched three pilot programmes in Uganda in January providing front-end and back-end technology to automate microfinance processes, to link entrepreneurs to community banking and to achieve scale. The Convenor stressed that these initiatives are now able to move forward independently of the Working Group and that this an appropriate time to make a transition to a new structure as suggested earlier in the meeting.

Ms. Dufborg, Convenor of the Working Group on *Low Cost Access and Connectivity* reported on its recent activities. As a contribution to the WSIS, the Convenor played a key role in planning one of the main themes of the ICT4D Platform, “Innovating for Equitable Access”. The Working Group had mobilized funds to bring developing country representatives to the exhibition to network with others regarding “first mile” networks. The Working Group will be holding another meeting on “Wide Open Access” in May in Sweden as a follow up to the event on the same topic held in June 2003. The Working Group has initiated work to promote innovative technologies and to examine shortcomings that restrain their development, such as need for funding and entrepreneurship. HP was invited to join the discussion based upon its work in microfinance. At the Working Group meeting on Friday afternoon, the members of the Group expressed interest in activating a web-based discussion on the topics of enabling environment and pricing issues.

Mr. Takahashi, Chair of the *Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Node (LACNET)* briefed participants on the recent initiatives of the Regional Node and on the planned activities for the coming 18 months, including participation in GeSCI and in the NetGrowth initiative. The Regional Node will support in particular the creation of an ICANN Regional At-Large Organization (RALO) in Latin America and the Caribbean under the umbrella of the Task Force. The Chair reiterated the Regional Node’s continued engagement in the lead-up to Tunis.

Ms. Esterhuysen, Convenor of the Working Group on *ICT Policy and Governance* reported on the outcome of its meeting held the previous day. The Group reviewed its performance to date and discussed a number of issues. Members agreed upon the need to work more closely with the other Working Groups and in particular with the Working Group on National and Regional e-Strategies. The Working Group felt that its work on Internet Governance issues was not fully reflected in the preparation of the Global Forum. The Group stressed the need for a long-term, sustainable and locally based capacity building programme on Internet governance issues that would enable developing countries to contribute to agenda setting for international forums and influence their outcomes. It was suggested that the Secretariat should develop a "Capacity Building Action Plan" to be integrated in the Business plan for 2004 aimed at mapping the existing capacity building activities in order to approach them more strategically, paying particular attention to those constituencies that are usually not adequately addressed such as small and regional businesses, community organizations, researchers and innovators.

Ms. Esterhuysen also expressed her belief that the role of Convenor for the Working Group on ICT Policy and Governance should be assumed by an organization that would be in a better position to mobilize resources.

Mr. Tuohy, Convenor of the Working Group on Human Resource Development and Capacity Building, provided an update on the initiatives of the Group. The Group supported the development of a "Portable Knowledge Asset Development System, a tool for Knowledge Sharing". The initiative aims at developing an enterprise solution that allows users to capture and share knowledge that is based upon a system developed by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). An open source version of this tool for use in organizations was launched at WSIS. Another initiative of the Group is the University Volunteer Network under UNITEs that provides cost effective IT services in the field.

Mr. Tuohy also briefed participants on the status of work in developing a *United Nations system ICT strategy*. A report on this matter was submitted to the 58th session of the General Assembly. The Group reported its disappointment at having seen their recommendations sanitized and diluted as the report passed through the organization. Mr. Tuohy stressed the need for the development of a high-level strategic framework to ensure coordination among the different organizations of the UN System, as well as a fund to support change management and the creation of a post for a Chief Information Officer (CIO).

Mr. Simpson (Canada) reported on the outcome of *the meeting on ICT indicators and MDGs* and on the progress of the initiative. The goal of the initiative is to illustrate the socio-economic impact of ICT and demonstrate in tangible terms the way in which the effective application of ICT can advance the overall global development agenda. The exercise aims at "mapping" the role of ICT in helping to achieve the MDGs by identifying a series of ICT-specific targets and suggesting possible key indicators for

measuring progress. The initial results of this work were presented at the World Summit on the Information Society in December 2003 in Geneva. Work is continuing, in particular by trying to ensure coordination of efforts among the different UN organizations working on ICT data collection and dissemination. The objective is to develop a common framework that will be presented at UNCTAD XI and later at the seventh meeting of the Task Force.

Mr. Simpson also reported on the outcome of the meeting of the *Working Group on national and regional e-strategies*. On UNDP's proposal, Canada was elected to serve as Convenor of the Working Group. The Group had taken stock of its activities and initiatives aimed at stimulating and supporting the development of national and regional e-Strategies that facilitate access and use of ICT to enhance development opportunities. The Working Group had agreed to concentrate its efforts in the future to promote capacity building programmes and identify resources and tools to assist developing countries in the implementation of the strategies as opposed to their design.

Suggestions and proposals:

- The Working Groups should enable different initiatives to move forward independently in accordance with the TF role as incubator and catalyst;
- There was a need for more clarity on procedures to join Working Groups and on modalities of participation in their activities;
- The Secretariat was requested to develop an institutional design that would facilitate the support and self-replication of Task Force initiatives, as well as sharing experience gained, beyond the current mandate of 2005;

The meeting **welcomed the progress** made by the Working Groups, **encouraged more cooperation** among them and **took note** of their reports.

Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI)

Mr. Touhy and Ms. Dufborg provided an update on the development of GeSCI. After a successful launch at the WSIS in Geneva in 2003, the initiative has made progress on a number of levels over the last few months. A project team has been set up in Dublin, Ireland to support the first four partner states: India (Andhra Pradesh), Bolivia, Ghana and Namibia. GeSCI's end-to-end approach was strongly endorsed in Namibia when representatives visited in early March. The remaining visits will be completed by May.

Ms. Mafole provided an update on the NEPAD e-schools initiative and stressed the need for coherence of efforts. She called on Task Force members to promote the NEPAD e-schools initiative and consider hosting informative meetings in their countries to raise awareness and interest.

Contribution to UNCTAD XI

Mr. Burley (UNCTAD) presented the programme of the upcoming eleventh Conference of UNCTAD that will take place in Sao Paolo, Brazil, from 13 to 18 June 2004. The topic of ICT will feature prominently at the interactive plenary debates of the Conference. On 17 June, under the topic "Information and knowledge for development", a thematic plenary roundtable on "ICT as an enabler for growth, development and competitiveness: implications for national and international policies and action" will be held. In addition, on 16 June, a side event on "Implementing the WSIS Plan of Action: Issues for Trade and Development" will take place. Both events are organized in close cooperation with the Task Force. Mr. Burley also reported that he plans to apply the Task Force's multi-stakeholder model to address the issues of trade in commodities as an effort to make progress on this difficult issue.

Shanghai forum and the ICT Annual Award

The attention of the participants was drawn to the documents presented by the Chinese delegation that provide additional information on the Shanghai Forum, thus complementing Mr. Ma's earlier presentation.

Collaboration with the Wireless Internet Institute

Mr. Aghion (Wireless Internet Institute – W2i) briefed the participants on the joint W2i/ICT Task Force Programme "Wireless Internet Opportunities for Underserved Areas and Local Communities". The Programme includes conferences, seminars and workshops aimed at helping policy makers, regulators, development experts, field practitioners and service providers explore how best to leverage broadband wireless internet technologies in their countries. These events will be held in several countries around the world during 2004 and 2005. The Programme will comprise four main tracks: national regulators capacity building, global Municipal Government and Local Authorities, Wireless Internet and the Arab World, Wireless Internet and the African Continent. Some Task Force members stressed the need to leverage existing initiatives in the area of wireless connectivity.

E-mail for All

Ms. McCue presented an "E-Mail for All" initiative. The purpose of the initiative would be to expose millions of people in developing countries to information provided by the UN, World Bank, NGOs, and other useful sites through a free e-mail, information, and search portal.

Several TF members expressed general interest for the initiative but stressed the need to strengthen local traffic and to support local and regional exchange points, which this initiative may in fact undermine.

TASK FORCE CONTRIBUTION TO THE WSIS

Follow-up and implementation of the Geneva phase

The Chairman observed that the Task Force had made a substantial contribution to the follow-up of the Geneva phase by organizing the Global Forum on Internet Governance and that the Task Force should continue to help push the process forward.

On Chairman's request, Mr. La Chapelle (WSIS-Online) provided a preliminary overview of the main ideas emerging from the discussions of the Global Forum on Internet Governance held the previous day. He highlighted three main points:

1. The format followed by the Forum proved to be effective to ensure an open and inclusive dialogue;
2. The discussions highlighted that Internet governance issues are complex and not limited to domain names and technical standards;
3. The Forum can be considered a relevant element/contribution to the consultations on Internet governance that the Secretary-General will undertake worldwide in the coming months.

Mr. de La Chapelle suggested the Task Force could contribute to the consultation process on Internet Governance, in particular, by:

- Raising awareness and building capacities of developing countries in ICT;
 - Mapping events on Internet governance, the related organizations and various issues to create a better understanding of how the elements are related and can be integrated, and to foster opportunities for consultations among different stakeholder groups on particular issues at upcoming events;
- Promoting the openness and inclusiveness of the consultation phase before the creation of a working group by the Secretary-General.

Regarding the follow up to the Global Forum, the Chairman stated that a report will be submitted to the Secretary-General and that the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Executive Coordinator will be responsible for follow up. They will consult with Mr. Kummer, appointed by the Secretary-General as the head of the Secretariat of the future working group on Internet governance, in order to establish modalities of collaboration between the secretariats of the Working Group on Internet governance and the Task Force. The Chairman will report to the Task Force on the outcome of these consultations.

Contribution to the substantive preparations for Tunis

On the Chairman's proposal, the meeting agreed to defer to a later stage any decision on the Task Force's contribution to the substantive preparations to Tunis since the preparatory process has not yet taken shape.

OTHER MATTERS

Second Annual report of the Task Force

The Chairman requested the Task Force members to provide their comments on the draft of the second annual report by April 4.

Date and venue of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Task Force will be held in October/November 2004. The venue will be determined in the near future. The Vice Chairman proposed Tunis and Shanghai as possible venues for the meeting. ITU representative offered to host the meeting at its Headquarters in Geneva.

The Chair summarized the relevant opinions expressed by members:

- The next meeting will follow the same format as the last two Task Force meetings: the first part will be held in the format of an open Global Forum;
- Members were requested to submit their suggestions on possible topics to be addressed at the next Global Forum no later than April 10;
- The Chairman will consult with the Governments of Tunisia and China, as well as with the ITU, on possible options for the venue of the next meeting.

Participants honoured the memory of Mr. Keith Yeomans, active and dedicated member of the Task Force.

ANNEX

**Report and Recommendations of the World Federation of Scientists entitled
“Towards a Universal Order of Cyberspace: Managing Threats from Cybercrime to
Cyberwar”**

Passages quoted from the report for consideration to become part of the Task Force deliberations:

“Because of its universal character, the United Nations system should have the leading role in inter-governmental activities for the functioning and protection of cyberspace so that it is not abused or exploited by criminals, terrorists, and states for aggressive purposes. In particular it should: (a) respond to an essential and urgent need for a comprehensive consensus Law of Cyberspace; (b) advance the harmonization of national cybercrime laws through model prescription; and (c) establish procedures for international cooperation and mutual assistance.”

“Within the UN framework, we recommend that a special forum undertake the synthesizing of work on cyberspace undertaken within the UN system.”

“Nationally and trans-nationally, an educational framework for promoting the awareness of the risks looming in cyberspace should be developed for the public. Specifically, schools and educational institutions should incorporate codes of conduct for ICT activities into their curricula. Civil society, including the private sector, should be involved in this educational process.”