

Summary Report of the Action Line Facilitation Meeting on Action Line 9

Background

1. In accordance with the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society and the Consultation Meeting of Possible Action Line Moderator/Facilitators (Geneva, 24 February 2006), which designated UNESCO as provisional focal point of the Action Line C9 on “Media”, the first joint meeting on Action Line C9 was convened by UNESCO on 19 October 2006 in its Headquarters, Paris, France.
2. The invitation was addressed in July 2006 to all the WSIS Stakeholders including governments, private sector, civil society and international organizations, including professional media organizations. About 80 participants attended the meeting (list of participants attached). A number of organizations,, which could not attend the meeting, expressed their interest to be a part of the consultation process.
3. The meeting was opened, chaired and moderated by Mr. Abdul Waheed Khan, the Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO, and then by Mr. Mogens Schmidt, Deputy Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, Director of the Division of Freedom of Expression, Democracy and Peace and Mr. Wijayananda Jayaweera, Director, Communication Development Division.
4. The main objectives of the meeting were : to facilitate the initial contacts and exchange information among all relevant stakeholders on the priorities and expertise in the implementation of the Action Line 9 “Media”; to consolidate a network of stakeholders; to designate the facilitator for the multi-stakeholder team and to discuss the terms of reference and the working methods of the team, in particular the use of the online tools.
5. Accordingly, the following documents were prepared and made available for discussion:

- Provisional Agenda of the Meeting;
- Draft Terms of reference of Multi-stakeholders of Action Line C9;
- Preliminary Proposal – Working Methods of the Multi-stakeholder Team on Action Line C9 (proposing constitution of sub-groups and a possible way of clustering per “function”);

Opening

6. In his opening address Mr. Khan said that UNESCO had convened this meeting and chaired it in its capacity of being the “provisional focal point” of Action Line C9. He expressed UNESCO’s readiness to assume the role of facilitator in the implementation of the Action line “Media” if the meeting deemed that appropriate. He reminded that UNESCO was involved in the implementation of six out of eleven, Geneva Action lines: Access to information and knowledge, E-learning, E-science, Cultural diversity and identity, Linguistic diversity and local content, Media, and Ethical dimensions of the Information Society.

Mr. Khan pointed out that UNESCO is the only intergovernmental organization with a clear mandate in the field of media and freedom of expression (“to ensure the free flow of ideas by word and image”). Building on its organizational, financial and human resources, UNESCO has successfully played its role as a major facilitator of international cooperation and has been working together with other stakeholders, particularly with the media, its professional organizations and civil society, both in promoting freedom of expression and media development, through its regular programme and the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). He then highlighted some of UNESCO’s actions in the field of communication and information (promotion of freedom of expression in Cyberspace; developing media structures and building capacity in the developing world through IPDC; promotion of the concept of and practical setting up Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs); and promotion of Public Service Broadcasting.

Mr. Khan proposed to establish two sub-groups: one – **“to promote the freedom of expression, press freedom and legislation that guarantees the independence and plurality of the media”** and, the second one – **“contribute to media development and capacity building”**

Reports

7. Mr. Charles Geiger, the Executive Director of the Secretariat of the Summit, made a presentation titled “WSIS, a call for implementation” on the general outcomes of the Tunis Phase namely “Tunis Commitment” that endorses multi-stakeholder approach to implementation and “Tunis Agenda for Information Society” approving the 11 Action Lines of Geneva Plan of Action and designating focal points within UN-System for each Action Line. Mr. Geiger reminded that the main purpose of the consultation meetings was to “facilitate” the implementation, while it was up to the individual stakeholders to “implement” the Action Lines. He further underlined that the WSIS follow-up still was in its experimental phase: further meetings and contacts among stakeholders and facilitators of Action Lines were needed to sort out different problems of the follow-up process.

8. Mr. Axel Plathe, Chief of the Universal Access and Preservation Section, Information Society Division, briefly presented the outcomes of the consultation meeting on Action Line C3 “Access to information and knowledge” (UNESCO, Paris, 16 October 2006). He also reported on the consultation meeting on Action Line C8 “Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content” (Geneva, 12 May 2006).

Mr. Boyan Radoykov, Programme Specialist, Universal Access and Preservation Section, Information Society Division, briefly presented the outcomes of the consultation meeting on Action Line C10 “Ethical dimensions of the Information Society” (UNESCO, Paris, 17 October 2006).

Mr. Tarek Shawki, Chief of Education, Science and Culture Section, Communication and Information Sector of UNESCO briefly presented the outcomes of the consultation meeting on Action Line C7 “E-learning” (UNESCO, Paris, 18 October 2006).

Initial sharing of views by stakeholders

9. 37 speakers took the floor to express their opinions, to report on their action and to make proposals on the implementation of Action Line C9.

10 speakers made comments on the WSIS process. Some speakers tried to clarify the role of the consultation meeting and its place and role within the WSIS follow up process and vis-à-vis , UN GIS, UN ICT Taskforce, IGF (Internet Governance Forum), WGIG (Working Group

on Internet Governance) etc. Mr. Geiger indicated these were parallel processes and suggested to spread WSIS for a broader global alliance. Many speakers expressed their will to confirm UNESCO as the facilitator for C9 based on its competence, expertise and resources. Civil society representatives stressed that they rely on UNESCO to make them heard and mobilize resources to facilitate their action. Some speakers discussed the role of “facilitator” and pointed out that UNESCO had a complex and difficult role to play in its quality of “facilitator” but also “major stakeholder” at the same time. In order to get more funding for the process, some participants reiterated the need to further involve the private sector into the implementation of Action Line C9 “Media”, similarly to other Action Lines.

Many speakers supported the draft proposals (ToR, sub-groups and working methods) while others were in favor of setting up additional sub-groups (for example on children/young people and media). Also issues concerning future cooperation, stocktaking exercise, reporting, “co-facilitating”, cross-cutting character of different actions, their relevance to several Action lines (for example “Media” and “Access” and “Ethical dimensions” were raised and discussed.

More specific comments can be summed up in the following way.

- **Freedom of expression:** the need to address the increasing challenges to freedom expression and promote it both in traditional media and cyberspace, as well as in post conflict areas; to enhance legislation and technological tools; to encourage, including through UN Security Council, governments to actively support safety of journalists.
- **Media education and Information literacy,** particularly for children and young people and through different modalities such as self-education for young people and women; e-learning training for students, etc.
- **Journalism Training:** Training for all media professionals including journalists, producers, etc; training of journalists on reporting of certain subjects such as MDGs, HIV/AIDS; ethics training of journalists; to address new roles in journalism such as freelancers, bloggers, etc.
- **Community media, particularly radio and multimedia centers** as a crucial tool for sustainable development, good governance, social inclusion, participative democracy.

- **Media regulation:** legislation and policy makings; good practices; nationwide media reform; the need to address the issue of media concentration.
- **Media archives:** to build national and international media archives, especially audio-visual archives.
- **Content of media and the Internet:** to deal with the issues of illegal content in cyberspace; and with “hate media”, to encourage and promote positive content of information in promoting peace, intercultural dialogue, and good governance; to address the need of non-English speaking new media and Internet.
- **Research:** Specific and cross-cutting research should be strengthened to support all actions; indicators should be developed to measure the freedom of expression and connectivity of information society, media development etc.

Designation of Facilitator

10. All speakers agreed that UNESCO be entrusted with the overall coordination of Action Line C9 in light of its institutional mandate and expertise. The participants unanimously decided to designate UNESCO as official Facilitator of Action Line C9 by acclamation. It was however proposed to consider at a later stage a possibility of “co-facilitating” possible sub-themes.

Sharing on Terms of Reference of Multi-stakeholders of Action Line C9

11. The meeting examined the draft Terms of Reference of Multi-stakeholders of Action Line C9, prepared by UNESCO in line with the Draft Terms of Reference for Moderator/Facilitators of WSIS Action Lines adopted on the occasion of the consultation meeting of Action Lines on 24 February 2006 in Geneva.

11. 8 participants took the floor and made suggestions and comments on the draft Terms of Reference¹. The participants agreed that the Term of References would be reviewed by UNESCO and the revised draft be made available on the UNESCO CI website.

¹ The revised version of the Draft Terms of Reference of the Multi-stakeholder Team is posted at www.unesco.org/webworld/wsisis.

Sharing on Working methods of Action Line C9

12. 23 speakers made comments on the draft working methods, particularly on clustering of subgroups for implementation of C9. UNESCO, as the facilitator proposed two subgroups/teams: one – to “promote the freedom of expression, press freedom, freedom of information and legislation that guarantees the independence and plurality of the media ”and the other – to “contribute to media development and capacity building ”.

Most of speakers supported UNESCO’s proposal while others proposed changes such as another group on “children/youth and media”, as well as on research (which could be cross-cutting) or/and dialogue of cultures.

It should be noted that the draft proposals were prepared in strict conformity with the wording used by the Summit both in Geneva and Tunis and that this wording reflects a delicate compromise reached at the WSIS. Mr. Geiger suggested that the implementation should be perceived as an on-going natural process with topics for common action coming out naturally with no specific operational plan.

Several participants suggested introducing more explicit references to Geneva and Tunis decisions (Declaration and Plan of Action). Some experts proposed to refer to topics/themes of common interest instead of having teams or sub-groups. Others were of the opinion that some sub-groups should be further split.

The importance of monitoring was stressed by many speakers.

13. Suggestions were also made concerning the working methods of the Multi-stakeholder Team:

- Most of the participants agreed on a bottom-up approach as a basis of the implementation;
- One participant suggested that the work of the Multi-Stakeholder Team should be to identify actors working in the sub-themes (of common interest) ;
- Another participant suggested holding conferences organized by civil society before further consultation meetings to better involve the civil society in the WSIS implementation.

Conclusion

14. Mr. Schmidt concluded the session by thanking the participants for their active and constructive discussions enabling the meeting to cover several questions, including the official nomination of the Facilitator, the Terms of Reference of Mutli-Stakeholders coordination, and most importantly, priorities to be worked out in the framework of C9. He invited the participants to pursue the discussion online through a mailing list that UNESCO will establish.

15. The following documents prepared for the meeting will be further updated/revised and made available on UNESCO's WSIS web site at www.unesco.org/webworld/wsis:

- Revised Terms of Reference of the Multi-stakeholder Team;
- Revised Proposal – Working methods of the Multi-stakeholder Team;
- Final list of participants.