WSIS Implementation
Consultation Meeting on Action Line C7

"ICT Applications: E-government"

Open to all WSIS Stakeholders

Tuesday, 16 May 2006, 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Conference Room XXIII, Palais des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland

**Provisional
Facilitator For
Action Lines
C1 & C7eGov**

SUMMARY REPORT *(Revised 7 June 2006)*

1.   The first Consultation Meeting on the Implementation of Action Line C7egovernment took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 16 May 2006 from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. The objective of the Meeting was to exchange information and discuss possible cooperation modalities among stakeholders for the implementation of the specific Action Line.

2.   The Meeting was open to all stakeholders—the entities committed to and involved in the deployment of ICT applications to optimize government's operations—and was attended by 48 participants, including: 13 representatives from Member States, 22 representatives from UN agencies and regional and international organizations, 10 from civil society and academia, and 3 from the private sector[1]. The Meeting took place on the occasion of the Cluster of WSIS-related Events around the World information Society Day.

3.   The Meeting was convened by UNDESA, opened by Mr. Patrizio Civili, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of UNDESA, and chaired by Ms. Haiyan Qian, Chief of the Knowledge Management Branch of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management of UNDESA. Mr. Nikhil Chandavarkar, Chief of the Communications and Information Management Service of UNDESA assisted in the facilitation of the meeting.

4.   Mr. Civili opened the Meeting by recalling the objectives of the consultation, namely to bring about a first exchange of views on the implementation modalities of action Line C7, in its eGovernment component, of the WSIS Plan of Action. He then noted that UNDESA had been designated interim moderator/facilitator for Action Lines C1, C7eGov and C11, and reminded participants the principles that the collaboration among stakeholders was supposed to follow. Mr. Civili also informed participants that how to approach the multi-stakeholder requirements of WSIS Implementation was a matter still under discussion at the then ongoing session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, to which he had participated in the morning of the same day. Finally, he presented the Action Line C7 making special reference to its eGovernment component, and highlighted the main challenges related to its implementation.

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[1] A complete list of participants is to be found in Annex I

5. Following the opening session, the Chairperson, Ms. Haiyan Qian, gave the floor to Mr. Charles Geiger, Executive Director of WSIS, who made a presentation of the background of WSIS and of the international multi-stakeholder process set forth in the WSIS outcome document, in particular the Tunis Agenda.

6. Subsequently, the Chairperson asked participants to introduce themselves and the work of their respective entities; then she opened the floor for participating stakeholders to discuss possible cooperation modalities.

7. At the stocktaking session, the representatives of a number of entities participating presented their respective projects, to include:

    a) Council of Europe
    b) Cisco Systems
    c) Development Gateway Foundation
    d) Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne
    e) Egypt
    f) Italy – Ministry of Innovation and Technologies
    g) ITU
    h) ITU – WSIS Secretariat
    i) Microsoft
    j) Siemens
    k) UNCTAD – Service Infrastructure for Development and Trade
    l) UN/DESA – Communications and Information Management Service
    m) UN/DESA – Division for Public Administration and Development Management
    n) UNESCO
    o) WIPO

8. The themes that emerged in the presentations and discussion included:

    a) e-government and e-governance; Public sector reform; Good governance in the information society; Connected government framework;
    b) ICT in public administration; e-Government services; e-government strategies;
    c) Public/Private Partnership (PPP) and Multi-Sector Partnership (MSP); Models and examples of e-government financing using PPPs; The cost of ICT; Mechanisms of cooperation in PPPs;
    d) Enabling environment for ICT; Legislation for outsourcing; Procurement rules; Regulatory framework for ICT development; Intellectual property rights;
    e) Local e-Government; local e-Government strategies; e-Local governance in Africa; African Diaspora for the Information Society;
    f) Public electronic governance as entry point for e-strategies; e-Government road map (how to implement different steps).
    g) e-Government training and education; Internet training centers; management of change; International Government Partnership Exchange Programs: hands-on learning; e-learning.
    h) Exchange of information on good practices and examples of e-government applications;
    i) Knowledge management in public administration.

j) Measuring ICT and e-government, indicators; collection of data for e-government and ICT indicators; Partnership on measuring ICT for development (global multi-stakeholder initiative); e-government readiness assessment

k) ICT Applications: e-procurement; global e-tendering solutions for governments; Aid harmonization solutions for governments; Public debt management systems; Customs integration systems; Foreign direct investments gateways;

l) Mapping ICT applications that are used to optimize government by making it more accessible, effective and accountable;

m) Inter-operability; interoperability as integrator of level of coordination; Technical knowledge on interoperability

n) Standardization; Standards and protocols;

o) ICT for efficiency and effectiveness of Parliaments;

p) Access for ICT opportunity; Information literacy;

q) e-participation at the local level; Freedom of information; Rule of law; Human rights; e-democracy;

r) e-Government policy coordination; International and regional cooperation on e-government

Areas of Discussion and General Consensus

a) The activity of the group is informal. No decision taken by the group is bounding. The key objective of the group is sharing information—including information on good practices—and establishing synergies among stakeholders. Key to success of the group is to establish good communication channels and processes.

b) WSIS implementation is a multi-stakeholder process which involves the organisation of activities conducted in the field, through programmes, projects and partnerships. On the other hand, general follow-up of post-summit activities is the process of review of how implementation is working.

c) The definition of the Action Lines should be open to review: the Action Lines are the result of a process of negotiation rather than analytical classification, and as such they are the expression of the will of Member States. In order to facilitate the process of implementation, stakeholders should exercise a degree of discretion and good judgment in interpreting language, re-organizing the items by theme, establishing linkages among action lines, clustering/bundling up items within and across action lines, and creating sub-themes.

d) A large number of participants who pre-registered to this meeting eventually could not travel to Geneva. In addition, a number of stakeholders have expressed their interest in being kept informed of developments of the work of the C7eGov Group regarding the Action Line Implementation. On-line tools should be used in the consultative process to the largest extent possible. The tools should be interoperable and accessible to all interested stakeholders.

e) The WSIS Stocktaking database seems to be a good starting point for sharing information on the activities of stakeholders of the C7eGov Group. However it is necessary to coordinate with representatives from ITU in adapting its current database to fit the needs of the individual Action Line Implementation, and to make the database fully accessible to participating stakeholders, not only for entering information on their respective

projects and activities, but also for obtaining information from the database in a user-friendly manner.

f) The WSIS Stocktaking exercise lists projects mainly undertaken by International Organizations. What is lacking in that database is a record of those actions that national governments are conducting in the field, which are not considered as projects, but national programmes.

g) As a number of stakeholders stated their intention to build partnerships to strengthen the implementation of the specific activities of competence, it was perceived that the Action Line consultation process could indeed facilitate the establishment of synergies among stakeholders.

h) There are issues regarding Action Line implementation mechanism and modalities of cooperation among stakeholders which are common to all action lines (e.g. linkages among Action Lines, clustering themes, creating sub-themes, stocktaking exercise, etc). These common issues will be subject of discussion at the next Action Line Facilitators Meeting, to be held in the Fall of 2006.

i) How to approach the multi-stakeholder requirements of WSIS Implementation was a matter under discussion at the session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development which was running in parallel with the C7eGov meeting. The results of the CSTD discussion should be reported to the next meeting of the C7eGov group.

j) It seems to be challenging for governments to learn about technology. Top-down training can be effective only to a limited extent. A good learning experience about ICT seems to be the one that is hands-on. Successful examples include study tours, inter-governmental exchange programmes and on-the-job training.

k) In order to be beneficial to all parties, public-private partnerships require trust. Trust can only be built on clear institutions—a set of norms and rules—like an enabling environment for ICT, legislation for outsourcing and public procurement rules, which provide a controlled and sustainable environment for building trust. It is one of the role of the UN to help governments develop the set of institutions which are the basis for trusting partnerships.

l) Within the many themes discussed in the meeting, a number of areas emerged as key issues for e-government implementation in most countries:
   i.   Inter-operability and standardization; interoperability as integrator of levels of coordination; standards and protocols of how ICT can connect governments agencies in a country and governments internationally;
   ii. Measuring ICT and e-government; defining indicators, availability and quality of data; access to data (including on-line access); collaboration among stakeholders in measuring efforts;
   iii. Sharing of experience on partnerships would be very useful to stakeholders, as there is increasing evidence of the advantage of partnerships in implementing e-Government applications;
   iv. Training and learning approaches, international government exchange programmes.

Specific Proposals

a) Start building knowledge on good (and not so good) partnership practices.

b) Stakeholders were invited to participate in contributing information to a compendium of ICT solutions, which will provide a collection of modern ICT applications used by governments around the world to support their administrations and to address governance challenges.

c) The C7eGov-Group will continue to exchange ideas through the e-forum accessible through the UNPAN website.

d) The C7eGov-Group will launch an on-line consultation to further discuss the work of Action Line C7eGov, the themes and the modalities of the Action Line implementation process. The result of this consultation would be reported at the Second Action Line Meeting (time and place to be established).

e) UNDESA should further explore the feasibility of using the WSIS Stocktaking Database as a tool to map the activities of stakeholders of Action Line C7eGov to minimize duplications and explore possible partnerships. The WSIS stocktaking tool should be adapted and upgraded to the specific needs of the Action Line Group.

f) It would be useful to stakeholders if the facilitator would promote sharing of examples of Public/Private Partnerships and Multi-Sector Partnerships.

g) The representative of EPFL (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne) mentioned the goal of establishing a global "e-Government research community" to enable knowledge sharing in this area, through the "Executive Master in e-Governance" that EPFL is currently organizing in collaboration with prestigious organizations worldwide.

h) DESA is the manager and coordinator of the United Nations Network on Public Administration (UNPAN), a global network that has been active for several years now. DESA makes available this platform of UNPAN, its tools and services to the stakeholders' team of Action Line C7 – e-government to help facilitate its work. The platform of UNPAN could serve as a clearing house for stakeholders to look at what is being done around the world on specific themes.

i) The representative of WIPO requested to be considered as Observer in the Action Line Group.

j) The Representative of EPFL (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne) suggested that the second Action Line Meeting is held back-to-back with the EPFL Conference on "Shaping the Open World of Tomorrow: Identity Management and Security Threats at the local and regional level" that will take place in Lausanne on 14th October 2006.

9. The Chairperson concluded the meeting recognizing that progress was made towards a common understanding of how to best ensure that implementation for Action Line C7eGov takes place, and that synergies have been established among its stakeholders. She also stated that a draft report of the meeting, together with other related information, would be made available on the Action Line webpage for comments, and that UN/DESA would follow-up on the agreed proposals made in the meeting to bring further the consultative activities, together with all stakeholders of the Group, on Action Line C7eGov implementation.