

**COMMUNIQUÉ**

To the President of the Preparatory Committee  
World Summit on the Information Society

From the Campaign on  
Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS)

Geneva, 1 July 2002

**CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN WSIS**

We, as a coalition of civic sector organisations, are deeply concerned that at the opening of proceedings of the first Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society there is not a clear commitment to full and meaningful NGO participation throughout the WSIS preparatory process and summit meetings.

The WSIS aims to build a "common vision and understanding of the Information society". This will only be achieved if civil society is fully involved in the negotiations and the deliberations of the WSIS including its Preparatory Committee stages through an open and transparent process providing full access to proceedings.

The UN Secretary General has called for civil society to be a key player in a renewed international partnership. This should build on practice and procedure for inclusion of non-governmental organisations established since the foundation of the UN system.

The Declaration of the African Regional Conference for WSIS (Bamako, 28-30 May 2002) called for "full and effective involvement of civil society" in the WSIS process.

The European Union (19 June 2002) has stressed "the preparatory process is very important and representation from all interested parties should be sought in order to give a clear signal of all-inclusiveness".

UNESCO (June 2002) in their contribution to the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee has stated that "...civil society actors should, in substantive agenda development, debate and drafting modalities, be treated as peers and equals"

For the effective and continuing involvement of civil society the Preparatory Committee must adopt Rules and Procedures for its own activities and for the World Summit itself which are designed to guarantee and support civil society participation at all levels including plenary sessions, sub-committees and working groups.

The Rules and Procedures should ensure NGOs have full and meaningful access to deliberations and negotiations of the Preparatory Committee and the World Summit.

As a minimum we call on the Preparatory Committee:

1. To support Option B on rule 55 of the draft Rules of Procedure of the Preparatory Committee of the WSIS.
2. To support Option B on rule 61 of the draft Rules of Procedure for the World Summit on the Information Society.

3. To establish a Working Group of Sub Committee 1 (Rules and Procedures) to address issues concerning civic sector participation in the WSIS and to fully involve NGOs in its discussion and formulation of appropriate measures.

We believe interaction between Governments and civil society organisations should be formally and explicitly assured throughout the WSIS process including civil society participation in the Bureau (provided for but not guaranteed by rule 9) and full access to participation in the Sub-Committees of the Preparatory Committee (rule 44).

We are seeking a clear and immediate commitment from the Preparatory Committee to the full participation of civil society from the commencement of the WSIS process.

We also seek clarification on the inclusion of individual private sector firms when private sector representation is already assured through appropriate associations.

We undertake to prepare and to submit a more detailed issues paper for Sub-Committee 1 for the Working Group on civil society participation in the World Summit.

**The CRIS Campaign is endorsed by:**

African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET), Agencia Latino Americana de Información (ALAI), Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación Radiofónica (ALER), Association for Progressive Communications (APC), Cameco, Centre of Community Networking and Information Policy Studies (CCNS), European Communication Research Consortium (ECCR), Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED), Global Community Networking (GCN), International Women's Tribune Centre, InterPress Service (IPS), Les Penelopes, MediaChannel, Nexus, Panos Institute, People's Communication Charter, Rede de Informações para o Terceiro Setor (RITS), VECAM, World Association for Christian Communications (WACC), World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), World Council of Churches (WCC)

**This communique is also endorsed by the following organisations:**

InterNews, Computer Professionals For Social Responsibility (CPSR), Asociacion Latinoamericana de Educacion Audiofonica, Laneta (Mexico), Communities Online (UK), Foundation for Media Alternatives (Philippines), IRIS - Imaginons un Reseau Internet Solidaire (France), Pain Pour le Prochain (Switzerland), MISA - Media Institute of Southern Africa, Telecommunities Canada, CREIS - Coordination de recherche et d'enseignement sur l'informatique et société, African Centre for Women and ICTs/Horn of Africa Region Women's Knowledge Network (HAWKNET), Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

**Contact the CRIS Campaign during WSIS Prepcom 1**

CICG Box Number 59

Telephone: +41 (0) 79 470 1664

Email: [prepcom@crisinfo.org](mailto:prepcom@crisinfo.org),

List: [wsis-prep1@lists.cpsr.org](mailto:wsis-prep1@lists.cpsr.org),

Press: [rguerra@cpsr.org](mailto:rguerra@cpsr.org)