

# Press Release – **CRIS Campaign**

**World Summit on the Information Society Preparatory  
Committee (Geneva, 1-5 July 2002)**

**1.7.2002**

## **Civil Society demands full participation in World Summit on the Information Society.**

The WSIS Preparatory conference opens today in Geneva. Its first task is to define the rules and procedures for the entire WSIS process. After a briefing session by the conference organizers, members of civil society are concerned that the current process will close the door on true and transparent participation in the Summit.

This contradicts the stated aims of the WSIS, 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 deliberations of the WSIS.

Communication Rights in the Information Society campaign (CRIS) and associated civil society organizations have therefore issued a communiqué calling on the Preparatory Committee to adopt rules and procedures to ensure that Civil Society has full and meaningful access to deliberations and negotiations throughout the World Summit process.

**For further information, contact the CRIS Campaign during  
WSIS Prepcom 1**

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“Civil society actors should, in substantive agenda development, debate, and drafting modalities, be treated as peers and equals to nation states and private sector organizations/corporations.” - **UNESCO (June 2002)**

“Full and effective involvement of civil society and the private sector in the WSIS process should be elicited at all levels (...) of decision making (...)”- **The Declaration of the African Regional Conference for WSIS (Bamako 28-30 May 2002)**

“The preparatory process is very important and representation for all interested parties should be sought in order to give a clear signal of all-inclusiveness.” - **The European Union (19 June 2002)**

The CRIS campaign aims to ensure that communication rights are central to the information society and to the upcoming **World Summit on the Information Society** (WSIS). The campaign is an initiative of the **Platform for Communication Rights**, a group of NGOs involved in media and communication projects around the world.  
[www.crisinfo.org](http://www.crisinfo.org)

## COMMUNIQUE

To:

President of the Preparatory Committee  
World Summit on the Information Society

Geneva, 1 July 2002

### **Civil society participation in WSIS**

We, the undersigned civic sector organizations, 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 NGO participation throughout the WSIS process.

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 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 supported by:**

African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET), Agencia Latino Americana de Información (ALAI), Article 19, 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 Federation of Journalists (IFJ), 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), Signis VECAM, World Association for Christian Communications (WACC), World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), Worldview International.  
World Council of Churches (WCC)

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

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