

**STATEMENT BY HON. MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, GHANA**  
**ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP TO SUB-COMMITTEE 'B' OF**  
**PREPCOM-3, GENEVA,**  
**20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2005**

Madam Chair,

We in Africa believe that Agreements on Internet Governance and indeed, all other WSIS issues already addressed and yet to be addressed make sense only if they are effectively implemented. This underscores the relevance and importance of this particular session which you are privileged to chair, and for those of us who have come to know you over the years, PrepCom couldn't have chosen a better more competent Chairperson.

The Africa Group would want me to congratulate you for your election to this high position and to let you know that we wish you well as Chair of this important Sub-Committee.

Madam Chair,

It is of crucial importance that all nations are empowered to move from Principles to Action. This is the only way we can uphold our commitment to "build a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented" Information Society, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and effective multilateralism so that people everywhere can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge to achieve their full potential and to attain the internationally agreed development goals of the Millennium Declaration.

Madam Chair,

As we embark upon this important journey to translate our noble Principles to Action, the Africa Group agrees with the need to develop sustainable national e-strategies. This in fact has been done by virtually all Member States. Thanks to the support, advice and direction we have had from the Economic Commission for Africa, NEPAD, the Africa Union and the ITU.

We subscribe to the need for Regional and International cooperation including multi-stakeholder partnerships just as we accept that the WSIS targets must be accepted as indicative targets and as global references.

Madam Chair,

As we have already alluded to, what is equally important to the African Group is the need to ensure that this noble objective to build a people-centered and all-

inclusive Information Society is not aborted after Tunis. We must therefore seek to put in place sustainable follow-up mechanisms, taking into account the reality of developing countries where national capacities can only exist with support from regional organizations and the UN family.

Madam Chair,

On the basis of the foregoing, at the African level, the following follow-up mechanisms are proposed:

In order to build an inclusive Information Society the continent needs to commit itself to keep fully engaged, nationally, regionally and internationally, to ensure sustainable follow-up to the implementation of agreements and commitments reached during WSIS process during the Geneva and Tunis summits.

Taking into account the multifaceted nature of building the Information Society, effective cooperation among all stakeholders is needed, based on respect for their mandates and leveraging on their expertise. In this context, it is essential to set up the following follow-up mechanisms:

- National WSIS follow-up committees composed of all stakeholders, including Governments, civil society, private sector, academia, local and rural collectivities etc to monitor and assess implementation of the Summit decisions and the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE),
- Sub-regional coordination committees at the level of Regional Economic Committees (RECs) to monitor and coordinate implementation at the sub-regional level.
- Technical implementation and follow-up Committee, at the continental level, under the political umbrella of the African Union (AU) Commission and the technical coordination of Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

In order to implement the above structure and recommendations a regional conference should be organized every 2 years to assess implementation of the WSIS decisions and the ARAPKE, based on national, sectoral and sub-regional reports to be prepared by all stakeholders.

Madam Chair,

While thanking you for this opportunity to make this intervention on behalf of the African Group, let me re-emphasise how much we look forward to excellent progress on these matters over the next couple of days. Thank you, Madam Chair.