

WSIS TUNIS AGENDA

<http://www.highwayafrica.ru.ac.za/hana>

Internet governance still problematic

Delegates attending PrepCom-3 of the Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) had by yesterday afternoon failed to agree on the establishment of a 'forum' that will be mandated to oversee the administration of the internet.

Debates and submissions on several issues on internet governance were pushed forward to smaller committees for further consultations, as some delegations insisted that the United Nations (UN) oversee aspects of internet governance.

PrepCom-3 is the official preparatory process leading up to the opening of the Summit today.

The Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI), the official representative of business and industry at the WSIS, proposed that the administration and continued development of the internet be left to evolve within existing organisations

Speaking on behalf of the CCBI, Ayesha Hassan, the executive officer of ICT Policy of the International Chamber

of Commerce said, "the business community believes that a radical overhaul of the present internet governance architecture is not only unnecessary, but also threatens the stability and security of the internet itself and the inclusiveness that the free flow of information provides."

Parts of the draft paragraphs 74-75 of Chapter 3 of the WSIS Tunis working documents, request that the UN Secretary-General be invited to examine a new space for policy dialogue by creating a 'forum' that would convene by the second quarter of 2006.

Several delegates meeting under the auspices of Sub-Committee A of PrepCom-3 proposed that, the 'forum' be referred to as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and have a mandate to promote and assess the, "embodiment of WSIS principles in internet governance processes."

Other delegates proposed that the establishment of such a forum needed further consideration.

With delegates agreeing to about ninety percent of Chapter 3, Ambassador Masood Khan who chairs Sub-Committee A said, "We have made major



CONSULTING: Masood Khan, Chairman of the Sub Committee A of WSIS together with Dr. Tim Kelly the Secretary of the same committee consulting with delegates yesterday during a session on internet governance.

progress. But we have to be cautious, to come up with proper documentation that is acceptable to all nations."

Khan added that while the procedure was going ahead, the establishment of the forum to oversee governance of the internet and future mechanisms was still problematic.

The Geneva PrepCom-3 meeting in September this year

set up the Sub-Committee A to negotiate many of the contentious issues on internet governance. After failing to agree on a way forward during the final PrepCom-3 of WSIS 2005, the PrepCom Bureau decided to reconvene early this week at the Kram Palexpo, Tunis, venue of the summit for a three-day session. The meeting was set to end yesterday.

May 17 to become World Information Society Day

Subcommittee B of the PrepCom3 has ended in style, with government officials agreeing to set May 17 as World Information Society Day.

The move stems out of the

need for building more awareness about the Internet and making it a global facility available to the public.

Among other major decisions reached include committee's

reaffirming the governments' commitment to empowering young people as key contributors to building an inclusive Information Society.

On this matter, they resolved

actively engage youth in innovative ICT-based development programmes and widen opportunities for youth to be involved in e-strategy processes.

Continued on page 2



Des questions restent en suspens

P6

Africanos esperam redução da fractura numérica

P7

Journalists must grapple with a new info arena, says Prof.

In a world of expanding information, journalists will have to re-assemble their erstwhile audiences by serving them through print, online, broadcast and mobile, says Australian journalism professor Stephen Quinn.

"Media (today) is fragmenting, breaking into smaller niche markets. Journalists therefore have to learn to cater for many different audiences – to re-aggregate and reach more of the audience," he said.

Speaking to a meeting of the Unesco-sponsored body, Journet in Tunis on Monday, Quinn described how public habits were changing in the First World. "Instead of the daily routine of reading newspaper or watching the evening TV news, now it is something we do on the run. You grab info snatches while reading email, or summaries while driving."

In some places, men even caught up by scanning newspapers displayed on the walls restaurant toilets, said the Deakin University academic.

Quinn cited research that US citizens could be consuming an average of 11 hours of media daily by 2008. Already, he said,

more than half these people last year were spending more of their time online and less watching TV. Two in three of them went online daily to get news.

Highlighting the impact of the internet on old media, Quinn said a total of 21 hours a week were spent surfing the web in the USA, compared to three hours reading newspapers. He also noted that when the BBC recently retrenched many journalists, none were laid off on the online section. "In fact, they are hiring".

Quinn further urged the media to appreciate people's desire and need for community. He said this underpinned the success of blogging – individual's personal accounts posted on the internet which allow for interaction by readers.

More Americans read blogs each day than newspapers, said Quinn, citing research by the Pew Centre. Many ordinary people were also nowadays contributing content to the mass media – the BBC had received 25 000 emails in the first week of the Tsunami, and 50 video clips or pictures (taken with cellphones) within one hour of the London bombing.



Stephen Quinn

According to the professor, already half of teenagers in the USA have contributed content for the web. "Personal journalism" was now being created in the form of "moblogs" – web content created by cellphones, "pod casting" – audio programmes distributed for listening to on an MP3 player, and

"vlogs" in the form of online video generated by cellphone.

Quinn argued, however, that "if anyone is going to blog, it should be journalists because they have the traditional skills in research, writing, interviewing - which make them better bloggers than the people who produce a lot of rubbish".

May 17 to become World Information Society Day

Continued from page 2
Government ministers and senior officials were in the last three days attending the sessions at the Palexpo Kram in Tunis where the three-day World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) will be taking place beginning today.

Children also received attention and recognition, as officials participating in the subcommittee agreed to strengthen action to protect them from abuse, as well as defending their rights in the context of ICTs.

The Tunis Commitment,

which is the sub-committee's final document on the matter, sums it up: "in that context, we emphasise that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration."

Discussing financial mechanisms for ICTs development, the subcommittee put special emphasis on the need for adequate and sustainable investments in ICTs to bridge the digital divide.

Delegates agreed that the transfer of technology through capacity building would work effectively over many years.

To this end, they called on

the international community to promote this transfer as assistance to the poor countries, saying particular attention should highlight the funding needs of the developing world, especially those facing stiff challenges in ICT development.

The officials also reaffirmed their desire and commitment to building a people-centred inclusive and development-oriented information society.

They unanimously agreed that on the efficacy of the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF), established in Geneva, Switzerland,

two years ago, as a voluntary mechanism of transforming the digital divide into a digital opportunity for the poor nations.

The Task Force on Financial Mechanism (TFFM) was created by the UN Secretary General to thoroughly review the adequacy of existing financial mechanisms in meeting ICT for development challenges.

The TFFM report, published earlier this year, set out the complexity of existing private and public mechanisms that finance ICTs in developing countries.

"Information Society needs radio and TV"

Broadcasters insisted yesterday that their role should not be eclipsed by the internet in the building of a global information society.

Dr Ihron Rensburg of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), who chairs the 14-country Southern African Broadcasting Association, told the World Electronic Media Forum (WEMF) in Tunis that radio and television were central, not marginal, in the context of Africa.

"It is wrong that narrowly defined information and communication technologies are seen as

central to the Information Society," he said, pointing out that 14 southern African broadcasters spread information in almost 60 local languages.

"Public and national broadcasting is the most freely, readily and widely available medium in Africa, and in the most languages – despite still using analogue technology," he said.

Rensburg however, emphasised that policies and laws were needed to transform state broadcasters into editorially independent public service broadcasters. "The window of opportunity is there, and

activists, media executives and government leaders should use it and push for more decisive transformation over next few years," he said.

His comments about broadcasting's relevance came against the backdrop of remarks by Shashi Tharoor, UN under-secretary for Communication and Public Information who described the internet as "a medium without a passport."

Tharoor however, pointed out that it was only in the North that over 70% of people had online access.

"The 400 000 citizens of Lux-

embourg have more bandwidth than 800 million people in all Africa. India has made amazing strides in ICT, but internet penetration there is still below 3% of the population."

In addition to the digital divide, said Tharoor, there was still a need to tackle the "Content Divide" in both internet and broadcasting.

"What passes for global media remains in reality the media of the developed west. Content is produced in and for Western countries in Western languages, even if the typing pool has moved further south," he said.

Spam, Spyware and viruses

As the Tunis phase of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) opens today there might be pain in identifying some of the hazy issues that surround internet governance.

One that many delegates here at the Tunis Summit consider to be the major stumbling block to the continued evolution of internet governance is the insistence of the United States government that it retain its historically exclusive role in connection with authorizing changes to the root server A, particularly with respect to country code top-level domains (ccTLDs).

The root server system is made up of 13 file servers that are distributed around the globe and contain authoritative

databases that form a master list of all top-level domain names (TLDs). Root server A replicates changes to the other servers on a daily basis. The US government plays a role in maintaining servers.

A number of states argue that while the US had expressed its intention to retain the oversight of the root zone file just after the first WSIS phase in 2003, it had not acknowledged that governments maintained the legitimate right to manage their country code top level domains.

Although internet governance appears to be most contentious issue, cyber-crime, network security and e-mail spam, or 'junk' e-mails sent to some unsuspecting internet

users, are also on the agenda of delegates.

Currently, spam, un-solicited e-mail and e-mail viruses are said to be the biggest threat to the internet. The International Telecom Union (ITU) has acknowledged that the menace of spam is slowly acquiring dreadful dimensions that it is depriving bonafide users from using the internet legitimately and efficiently.

According to the ITU the ineffectiveness of current laws to deal with new online crimes or conventional crimes committed on-line, is one of the major issues of concern while discussing internet governance.

The Indian government has suggested that this issue be tackled in a concerted manner

with governments being advised to incorporate suitable provisions in their ICT or Cyber Acts to curb the menace of spam at its origin.

Other delegates argue that spam, spyware and viruses are not reason enough, to justify the need for change. They outlined the right to privacy filtering, rating of content and censorship as some of the contentious issues.

Several delegates from Asian states attending the summit here in Tunis say that least developed states should play an appropriate role in Internet Governance at national and international level, while leaving operational issues – in particular those issues with commercial implication to private organisations.

Summit Participants call for more Entrance Gates

Delegates attending the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS-05) have criticized the extended queues at the entrance of the Kram Palexpo Centre, venue of the summit.

Participants had to queue for up to one hour this morning

before getting into the centre. Delegates called for more gateways into the venue in order to improve the time spent on security screening.

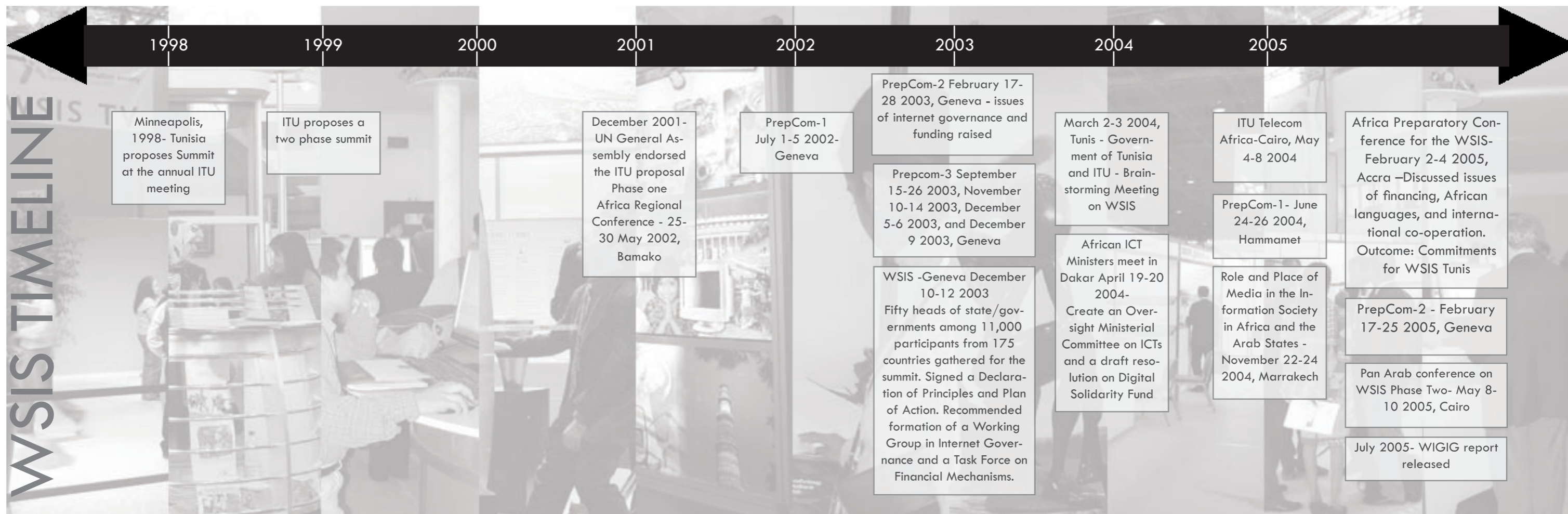
Ken Lohento of Panos Institute said spending an hour in the queue does not help the organisa-

tion of activities as some participants may be forced to come late for events.

Lohento said whilst the security screening was necessary, entrance gates to the centre should be increased to facilitate the movement of people into the

Kram Palexpo centre.

"Nothings stops the organisers from designating more 'excellence' entrances similar to those currently enjoyed by ambassadors and top government officials at the summit," said Nnenna Nwakanma, an ICT independent advisor.



Highway Africa News Agency interviewed Albert Kan-Dapaah, Minister for Communications in Ghana and also chairman of inter-ministerial committee for Africa that has been preparing for the World Summit on the Information Society. Excerpts (full interview is available on <http://www.highwayafrica.ru.ac.za/hana/>).

African position holds sway - Kan-Dapaah

The inter-ministerial committee was formed to harmonise outcomes of the regional preparatory meeting in Accra and the inter-ministerial committee in Dakar and to present Africa's position regarding issues in the WSIS.

Q: Tell us about some of the highlights of your meetings.

A: I think the Committee on Africa has been fairly successful, and Africa has been fairly successful in the negotiations leading to this particular summit. We did start with the financing mechanisms, and if I can explain that - the position of the world has always been that Africa should look up to the private sector in providing the financing that is needed



Albert Kan-Dapaah, Communications Minister of Ghana.

to fund the infra-structural requirements of Africa.

The principle is that if the information society is good for the elite and the rich in the urban areas and in the cities then it must be even better for the poor people in the rural areas and it is important that we don't leave them out. Africa came out together, and although there was a lot of opposition from the world, we were able to get the world to

accept that there was a need for a special financing mechanism to take care of such areas. That was our first major achievement.

In the ongoing summit, some of the major issues have been on internet governance, and it is very, very heart warming to note that the positions that have been adopted by Africa happen to have been the positions that have gained

Continued on opposite page

Continued from previous page favour with the two extreme positions that are being canvassed on the floor.

Q: Can you tell us more about the two extreme positions?

A: The concern at the summit is we should introduce a more democratic governance to involve more countries, more people in the governance of the internet than is the case today, this is one position.

And there are people who insist it must be done immediately and then there is another position that it can be done but remember that there has not been any problem with the technical competence of the internet so if the chain is not broken, why do you want to fix it.

Africa's position has been that clearly there is need for more democratic governance, there is need for multi-stakeholder approach but lets recognize the contribution that the founders have made and lets work for an evolutionary approach to changing the system

instead of an revolutionary approach that demands change now.

Q: Proposals on implementation?

A: We are proposing a number of things but these are the major ones.

There is the implementation mechanism after all the summit is meaningless unless what we agree upon can be implemented. Implementation will not be a problem in the developed countries, they have been implementing for years. It will be a major problem in developing countries therefore implementation mechanisms will significant to us in Africa.

We have suggested some UN agencies specifically the ITU, UNESCO, UNDP should be given the responsibility of ensuring implementation is effectively carried out in all countries. There are some countries that would not want these agencies to be specifically mentioned but just leave it in the hands of UN SG.

African Union Launch African ICT Week

The African Union (AU) on Monday launched the African ICT Week to promote the use of information and communication technologies for Africa's development.

The campaign launched by AU's Human Resource and Science Commission in Tunis, under the theme 'towards a digitally literate society,' will run from November 14-20.

Professor Nagir Essayed, the AU's Commissioner for Human Resource, Science and Technology said the initiative was in line with the African Union Commission's strategic objectives to bridge the digital gap and reinforce African connectivity.

"The vision of the African Union is to build an integrated, prosperous Africa in peace, drawn by its citizens and constituting a dynamic force on the international scene," said Essayed who urged Africans to

integrate the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as working tools in their daily activities and development programs.

The commission will make the African ICT Week an annual event aimed at focusing the African public on the use of ICTs, promoting the use of ICTs for the socio-economic development of the continent, and encouraging young people to take up careers in ICTs.

Several African ministers and delegates attending the summit applauded the event which coincided with World Summit on the Information Society taking place here from November 16-18.

Mrs. Patricia Kaliyati, Malawi's Minister of Information, Communications and Tourism welcomed the initiative as a boost to the evolution and use of ICTs on the continent.

CONFERENCE DE PRESSE DU SG DE L'UIT, YOSHIO UTSUMI

Des questions restent en suspens

Les négociations sur la gouvernance de l'Internet et les mécanismes de mise en œuvre sont toujours en cours. A quelques heures du démarrage du Smsi 2005, hier, le secrétaire général de l'Union internationale des télécommunications (Uit), M. Yoshio Utsumi, affichait néanmoins un optimisme qui contraste avec l'absence de consensus devant garantir la mise au point d'un document final. Au point qu'on se demande si ce rendez-vous, dont le slogan renvoie à «sommet des solutions» répondra aux attentes de la communauté internationale.

A propos de la gestion du serveur racine et des noms de domaine de premier niveau (country code top-level domains) correspondant aux codes des pays, les positions exprimées par certains pays industrialisés sont

aux antipodes des exigences des pays en développement. Alors que les Etats-Unis veulent continuer à avoir une main mise sur la gouvernance de l'Internet, les autres pays, au rang desquels les pays du Sud, exigent une démocratisation de la gestion du «réseau des réseaux». Un compromis sera trouvé, prédit M. Utsumi.

«Chacun est d'accord pour dire que la réalisation est importante», souligne le patron de l'Uit, maître d'œuvre de l'événement, qui «espère voir des mécanismes concrets». Au-delà des enjeux qui tournent autour de ce sommet, M. Utsumi estime qu'il faut surtout retenir «le niveau d'engagement des différents acteurs concernés par le processus. La société civile, le secteur privé et les Etats sont tous d'accord qu'il faut réduire le fossé numérique».

Des accords sur la création



M. Y. Utsumi, Sg de l'UIT.

d'un forum multipartenaire qui serait chargé de définir les politiques générales, sur l'importance de la coopération des gouvernements sur un pied d'égalité sont autant de points «qui sont en cours de négociation». Mais le patron de l'Uit se dit confiant quant à leur issue

heureuse. Tout en reconnaissant un «conflit de calendrier» qui serait à l'origine de l'absence de certains chefs d'Etat de pays développés (Canada, Etats-Unis, France, Grande Bretagne...), M. Utsumi se réjouit tout de même de la présence de 173 pays au niveau ministériel.

FINANCEMENT DES TICS

Les mécanismes pour un système efficace

L'investissement économique pour un développement doit être diversifié. Il peut être privé, public, institutionnel. Mais quel qu'en soit l'origine, «l'investissement dans le domaine des technologies de l'information (Tic) est primordial pour le développement des pays africains», soutient le vice-président des Opérations régions Nord et Sud de la Banque africaine de développement (Bad), M. Théodore Nkodo.

La table-ronde sur «le financement des Tic pour le développement», qu'il a

présidé hier, a permis de poser un regard global sur plusieurs nécessités et préalables. Ainsi, souligne un représentant des pays arabes, «le financement seul ne suffit pas. Nous avons besoin d'une assistance pour la gestion des fonds». Tout comme on a entendu soutenir que «la diaspora africaine a son mot à dire dans ce financement». Représentant de la Diaspora africaine pour la société de l'information, M. Cissé Kane se pense d'autant plus fondé à défendre cette idée que dans certains pays africains les émigrés constituent une des

principales sources d'apport de devises et d'investissements au niveau communautaire.

Identifier, mobiliser et organiser les actions des partenaires potentiels, échanger des expériences et savoir-faire, ce sont donc quelques objectifs sur lesquels Tunis 2005 doit permettre d'aller plus loin, pour le développement des Tic dans les pays en voie de développement. Aussi bien en milieu urbain qu'en milieu rural. Seulement, prévient M. Théodore Nkodo, disposer de la télévision, d'Internet, du téléphone portable, etc., ne suf-

fit pas pour créer un système d'information efficace. «La formation, le développement d'applications et de contenus, ainsi que l'amélioration des conditions environnementales telles que la santé et l'éducation sont nécessaires», ajoute-t-il.

A Genève, en décembre 2003, il était question de mettre les technologies de l'information et de la communication au service du développement. C'est l'enjeu principal du combat que mènent les pays africains pour la réduction de la fracture numérique.

Sociedade da informação: africanos esperam redução da fractura numérica

Os participantes africanos na Cimeira Mundial sobre a Sociedade de Informação cuja inauguração oficial tem lugar esta quarta-feira em Tunes, esperam que o evento promovido pelas Nações Unidas resulte na redução da fractura numérica entre a África e o resto do mundo.

«Esperamos dessa cimeira uma maior solidariedade para com os países em desenvolvimento, nomeadamente da África subsaariana e mobilizar recursos pois esta parte do continente está no último lugar no que respeita as tecnologias de informação e comunicação (TIC)», afirmou Yahiaoui Ali, do Banco Africano de Desenvolvimento (BAD).

Precisando que essa solidariedade numérica deve envolver outros parceiros como o Banco Mundial, a União Europeia, os bilaterais e o sector privado, aquele responsável precisou

que o BAD criou um grupo de trabalho para se debruçar sobre a política de desenvolvimento das TIC em África.

«Os resultados serão apresentados num conselho de administração do banco, em 2006, e nessa base poderemos elaborar uma política de trabalho e um plano de acção para orientar a nossa intervenção nesse sector», referiu.

De igual modo, as organizações da sociedade civil africana querem aproveitar a cimeira de Tunes para «criar sinergias e assim poder reforçar suas respectivas actividades».

«As nossas expectativas são a implementação de sinergias regionais e internacionais e a inclusão pelos governos da questão género nas políticas relacionadas com as TIC», precisa Fatma Mint Elkory, da ONG mauritaniana «NTIC & Solidarité».

Um dos objectivos dessa ONG (www.maurifemme.mr) é combater a fraca presença das

mulheres nas TIC, mobilizando e procurando sensibilizar as raparigas para as novas tecnologias e as profissões ligadas àquela área.

Por sua vez, a ONG senegalesa Bokk Jang/Bokk Jef (www.bokk.org) quer estabelecer parcerias e «se for possível, levar para outros países em desenvolvimento», a sua experiência em matéria de educação através da Internet das meninas que tenham abandonado a escola.

«É uma forma de combate à delinquência juvenil», justifica Fatimata Seye Sylla, presidente da referida organização.

Vários países africanos, entre eles representantes de Cabo Verde constam dos cerca de 180 Estados presentes na cimeira de Tunes, cuja primeira fase decorreu em 2003 em Genebra.

«Vimos mostrar o que fizemos em matéria de tecnologias de informação desde Genebra, nomeadamente o recurso às TIC para melhorar a produção agrícola», refere Kauxique Man-

galal, do Ministério da Educação de Moçambique.

Segundo Mangalal, uma das principais realizações prende-se com a implementação de centros comunitários multimédias em todo o país (dez localidades já foram contempladas) que permitem a formação dos jovens e a difusão de informações locais através da Internet e de uma rádio comunitária.

A cimeira de Tunes arranca oficialmente nesta quarta-feira, sob a presidência do Secretário-geral das Nações Unidas, Kofi Anan e na presença de cerca de 60 chefes de Estado e de Governo e 2.000 jornalistas.

No entanto, os trabalhos iniciados segunda-feira decorrem até sexta-feira e incluem oito sessões plenárias e perto de 200 ateliers sobre temas diversos como o financiamento das TIC, a educação através das TIC, o papel da diáspora africana na redução da fractura numérica, os direitos humanos ou o cyber-crime.

Using Video in Post-conflict Advocacy.

In a remote village in Kivu, a group of women and men are gathered to discuss their new documentary. They have a video camera but no script; they want to tell their story to the rest of the world.

In this part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), children are rare, even the five year olds are forced to behave like teenagers. They were born in war and are recruited to the camps by the 10 militia groups operating in Eastern DRC.

For the community, the only way to grieve for their lost childhood is by recording the children's voices and chronicling what they do in militia camps. A young boy describes the killing methods used in militia camps while the other narrates how he was recruited «to defend his country». In the video back-

ground, a girl holding tight to her rifle smiles.

«I was recruited to fight for my country. I met the militia leader and was taken through training in the camps», says one boy, speaking in Swahili.

The video was used at a session to discuss how Information Communication Technology (ICT) can bring about change in post-conflict societies. The session, at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) meeting in Tunisia was calculated to underscore the importance of video in advocacy.

The video has also been distributed worldwide by www.witness.org an organisation that promotes the use of video images to document human rights abuses and lobby governments for change.

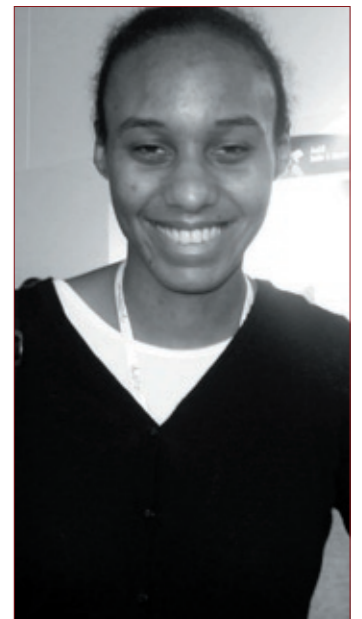
According to Hakima Ab-

bas, program coordinator at Witness, the video in Kivu was aired to the local community and was aimed at cutting down the recruitment of child soldiers, both voluntary and involuntary. Having gone through a decade of civil war, the militias claim legitimacy and recruit children under the guise of «fighting for freedom».

Abbas, program coordinator adds that video has been widely used to tell stories and capture the magnitude of some of the human rights abuses. Her organisation has worked with grassroots groups to produce videos in Senegal, Sierra Leone, Gambia, South Africa, and Paraguay among other countries.

«Video is a complementary method to other ways of reporting human rights abuses. It allows one to tell their stories

and the audience is able to capture the victim's emotion», says Abbas.



Hakima Abbas

The African Market in Exhibition

With several Heads of States expected to arrive today for the second phase of the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) delegates from governments and civil society organisations, have set up various exhibitions at the PalExpo Kram in Tunis, venue of the summit.

Over seven African organisations are exhibiting their work under the African village stands at the exhibition hall. They are confident that the digital gap can be closed.

“Through networking and possibly getting funding, we will go back and assist the women and youth back home to be digitally advantaged,” says Fatimata Seye Sylla president of Senegalese NGO Bokk Jang/ Bokk Jeff.

Jason Hudson of the Shuttleworth Foundation in South Africa is among those operating a stand at the exhibition. The foundation’s newly designed touch-screen liquid crystal display called the Freedom Toaster, has been a hit with delegates.

“There seems to be an interest in this machine. We’re hoping that there’ll be takers and we also hope to get what we can from other exhibitors here,” said Hudson.

One of the objectives of the summit is bridging the digital



pic: Chris Kirchhoff



divide among first and third world countries. The divide occurs equally among countries and peoples inhabiting the same continent.

Owing to inadequate funding and infrastructure, Africa is one

of the continents still lacking Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Many African organisations however, believe the results of the summit will be positive for the continent.



pic: Chris Kirchhoff

Quelques coins d'Afrique au Smsi

Dans la fourmilière que constitue l'espace des expositions, ils sont une dizaine de pays africains à avoir tenu à marquer ce Smsi de leur empreinte. A travers une représentation officielle ou à travers des Ong, ils affichent les ambitions et réalisation de l'Afrique dans la société de l'information.

Au stand du Mali, il est frappant de tomber sur un grand écran de télévision où s'affiche comme texte : «Un marabout à la recherche d'information sur le net». L'annonce illustre un projet de télécentre initié dans la ville de Tombouctou au Mali, travers lequel les populations ont un meilleur accès à l'Internet. Et aujourd'hui, «les jeunes, les femmes et même les marabouts utilisent les technologies de l'information et de la communication», explique Lansana Fofana de l'Agence des Tic du Mali, responsable du stand.

Un peu plus loin, le Sénégal expose, à travers l'Ong Book Jang/ Bokk Jéf (savoir ensemble, agir ensemble) l'expérience d'une structure qui œuvre pour promouvoir l'accès et l'utilisation par les femmes et les filles des Tic. Son programme Digital Freedom Initiative a permis la création de télécentres et la formation en maintenance et en gestion de 124 gérants. De même, 45 leaders de 106 groupements de femmes teinturières ont été formées en teinture, gestion financière et comptable et en administration de site web

On peut continuer la ronde avec l'Afrique du Sud le Nigeria, la Mauritanie, le Kenya ou la Tanzanie, à travers des stands où secteur privé, structures étatiques et société civile affichent la touche africaine.