The significance of the
World Summit on the Information Society
for OA

Presentation at the Berlin 4 Open Access conference,
Potsdam-Gohl, Max Planck Institute for Gravitational Physics,
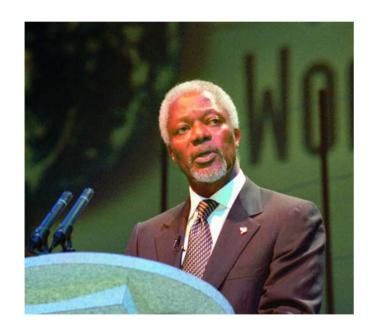**Wednesday 29 March 2006**
by
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Welcome to the WSIS

K. Annan, SG of the UN

Y. Utsumi, SG of ITU

Plan of presentation

- The challenge
- Origins of WSIS
- The UN Resolution 56/183
- A multistakeholder approach
- Geneva preparatory process and the Geneva Summit
- Summit Outcomes of Geneva, including outcomes on OA
- Tunis preparatory process and the Tunis Summit
- Summit Outcomes of Tunis, including on OA
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- A personal view what was and what was not achieved

The Challenge (1)

"The modern world is undergoing a fundamental transformation as the industrial society that marked the 20th century rapidly gives way to the information society of the 21st century. This dynamic process promises a fundamental change in all aspects of our lives."

(Source: from the first WSIS-brochure, 2001)

The Challenge (2)

"The Internet is a communication medium that allows, for the first time, the communication of many to many, in chosen time, on a global scale. As the diffusion of the printing press in the western world created what McLuhan called the 'Gutenberg Galaxy', we have now entered a new world of communications: the Internet Galaxy"

(Source: Manuel Castells, The Internet Galaxy, OUP, 2001)

The Challenge (3)

« I was in India interviewing Nandan Nilekani at Infosys. And he said to me, "Tom, the playing field is being leveled." Indians and Chinese were going to compete for work like never before, and Americans weren't ready. I kept chewing over that phrase - the playing field is being leveled - and then it hit me: Holy mackerel, the world is becoming flat. »

(Source: An Interview with Thomas Friedman in "Wired", 13/05)

The Challenge (4)

There are a number of challenges, and the challenges themselves are evolving fast. Some of these challenges are, <u>inter alia</u>:

a) Technological challenges
- Information travels at the speed of light
- Storage is becoming increasingly cheap or nearly gratis
- Access to broadband becomes widespread in some east-Asian and Nordic countries, and prices are falling
- Moore's law continues to be valid (i.e. that the complexity of an integrated circuit will double about every 18 months)
- GRID computing increases capacity for high-demand applications

The Challenge (5)

b) social and economic challenges

- to keep up with the speed of change and with the speed of information (in Government, in the media etc.)
- to protect the fundamental freedoms (thought, speech etc.) threatened by new technological developments
- to adapt to outsourcing, a challenge to several developed economies
- to control the dark sides of the Internet and the World Wide Web (cybercrime, pedophilia on the Internet etc.). This is a collective learning process.

The Challenge (6)

c) cultural challenges

- to avoid a looming cultural desert and to foster multiculturalism and multilingualism, especially on the Internet
- to create local content and to preserve local knowledge
- to allow the free exchange of ideas and concepts, including the concept of modernity
- to avoid new digital divides at the classroom / village level
- Internet as a new medium and a new way to distribute media content
- blogging etc. as a new way of communication and information distribution.

The origins of WSIS (1)

Resolution 73 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference at Minneapolis in 1998 resolved:

"To instruct the ITU Secretary-General to place the question of the holding of a World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) on the agenda of the UN Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), and to report to the ITU governing body, the Council, on the results of that consultation."

The origins of WSIS (2)

ACC (today called the Chief Executive Board, CEB) reacted positively and a majority of other UN organs and agencies expressed interest in being associated with the preparation and holding of the Summit.

After consultation with potential host countries, the SG of ITU recommended and the ITU Council endorsed the framework for the Summit in two phases, in 2003 and 2005, a novelty with regard to UN-type World Summits.

Then the WSIS was placed on the Agenda of the UN General Assembly by the host countries Switzerland and Tunisia.

Resolution A/RES/56/183

The UNGA, in its Resolution 56/183, inter alia:

- *Recognized* the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology for promoting the goals of the UN Millennium Declaration and to find effective and innovative ways to put this potential at the service of development for all.

- *Called* for a meeting at the highest political level, for the development of a common vision and understanding of the Information Society.

Resolution A/RES/56/183 cont'd

The UNGA, in its Resolution, further:

- *Considered* that the Summit should be convened under the patronage of the SG of the UN with the ITU taking the lead role in its preparation, along with other UN bodies, international organizations, as well as the host countries Switzerland and Tunisia.

- *Encouraged* effective contributions and active participation of all relevant UN bodies, other international and regional organizations, NGOs, civil society and the private sector in the Summit and its preparatory process.

Resolution A/RES/56/183 cont'd

The UNGA, in its Resolution, further *recommended*:

- that the preparations for the Summit take place through an open-ended intergovernmental preparatory committee, which would define the agenda of the Summit, finalize both the draft declaration and the draft plan of action, and decide on the modalities of the participation of other stakeholders in the Summit

A multistakeholder approach (1)

The Rules of Procedure (ROP) of the Preparatory Committee, based on the Resoultion of the UNGA, decided that the following other stakeholders in the Information Society should have observers status in WSIS:

- Entities and international organizations having received a standing invitation from the UNGA

- Specialised agencies of the UN, other UN organs, and other intergovernmental organizations

- Accredited NGOs and civil society entities

- Accredited business entities

- Associate members or regional commissions

A multistakeholder approach (2)

The ROP make a strong distinction between Governments and observers. Governments are sovereign and can vote, observers do not have voting rights and they can speak only with the permission of the chair.

But in reality, WSIS, over time, became a nearly true multistakeholder process. All stakeholders were allowed to submit written statements, observers could submit contributions that were edited during the drafting process together with Government contributions, and each day of the PrepCom, observers could speak for 45 minutes.

A multistakeholder approach (3)

Governments had to recognize that observers, and especially business entities, have a very important role in the Information Society. Therefore, Governments, at PrepCom 1

- invited all stakeholders to submit substantive written contributions that would be published on the WSIS website. The principle of publishing all substantive contributions on the WSIS website was upheld during the whole WSIS preparatory process.

- decided that multi-stakeholder thematic roundtables were to be organized by the Executive Secretariat as an informal part of the Preparatory Committee meetings. The same decision was later also taken with regard to the Summit.

The Preparatory Process of the Geneva Summit

- The Geneva Summit was prepared by 3 PrepComs and 1 intersessional meeting. It took 37 working days of negotiation to prepare the outcome documents. The first PrepCom took 4 days only to negotiate the Rules of Procedures.

- The Geneva Declaration and the Geneva Plan of action are to a large extent a condensed version of the outputs of the regional meetings (Bamako, Bucharest, Tokyo, Beirut, Bavaro-Punta Cana) and thematic meetings that took place in 2002 and 2003. As a result, there are many duplications and redundancies in the outcome documents of Geneva. <u>These texts are not scientific documents, they are the result of a negotiation process.</u>

The Geneva Summit (10-12.12.2003)

Successful first phase of the Summit:

- More than 11'000 participants, 4590 from Governments
- 174 States, with 44 Heads of State or Government
- 100 UN and International Organizations with 1192 participants
- 3'310 representatives from 481 civil society entities
- 514 representatives from 98 business entities
- 979 media representatives from 631 media entities
- More than 300 Parallel events, and 16.000 m2 of exhibition space (ICT4D-exhibition in Hall 4 of Geneva PalExpo)

Summit Outcomes: Geneva (1)

Geneva Declaration:

A common vision of the Information society

"We […] declare our common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life…" (Declaration, Paragraph 1)

Summit Outcomes: Geneva (2)

11 Action lines

C1 The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

C2 Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for an inclusive information society

C3 Access to information and knowledge

C4 Capacity building

C5 Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

C6 Enabling environment

C7 ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life (subdivided in 8 sub-chapters)

C8 Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

C9 Media

C10 Ethical dimension of the information society

C11 International and regional cooperation

Summit Outcomes: Geneva (3)

Geneva Plan of Action: Inspired by the MDGs, the Summit decided a set of connectivity targets to be reached by 2015

a) to connect all villages with ICTs

b) to connect all educational institutions

c) to connect all scientific and research centres;

d) to connect all public libraries, museums and archives

e) to connect all health centres and hospitals;

f) to connect local and central government departments

g) to adapt all primary and secondary school curricula to meet the challenges of the Information Society;

h) to ensure that all have access to television and radio services;

i) to encourage the development of content on the Internet;

j) to ensure that more than half the world's inhabitants have access to ICTs within their reach.

Source: Adapted from draft WSIS plan of action.

Summit Outcomes: Geneva (4)

Unfinished business from Geneva:

a) Financing: The UN Secretary-General was asked to create a Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) to study the adequacy of current financial mechanisms and the possibility to create a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund. The TFFM should report to PrepCom-2 of the Tunis phase.

b) Internet Governance: The UN Secretary General was asked to set up a Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG), in an open and inclusive process, to investigate and make proposals for action, as appropriate, on the governance of Internet. WGIG would report to PrepCom-3 of the Tunis phase

Geneva Summit outcomes on OA (1)

From the Geneva Declaration,

Chapter 3 on « Access to Information and Knowledge »:

- "24. The ability for all to access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge is essential in an inclusive Information Society.

- 25. The sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development can be enhanced by removing barriers to equitable access to information for economic, social, political, health, cultural, educational, and scientific activities and by facilitating access to public domain information, including by universal design and the use of assistive technologies."

Geneva Summit outcomes on OA (2)

Chapter 3 of the Geneva Declaration, continued:

- "26. A rich public domain is an essential element for the growth of the Information Society, creating multiple benefits such as an educated public, new jobs, innovation, business opportunities, and the advancement of sciences. Information in the public domain should be easily accessible to support the Information Society, and protected from misappropriation. Public institutions such as libraries and archives, museums, cultural collections and other community-based access points should be strengthened so as to promote the preservation of documentary records and free and equitable access to information."

Geneva Summit outcomes on OA (3)

Chapter 3 of the Geneva Declaration, continued:

- "27. Access to information and knowledge can be promoted by increasing awareness among all stakeholders of the possibilities offered by different software models, including proprietary, open-source and free software, in order to increase competition, access by users, diversity of choice, and to enable all users to develop solutions which best meet their requirements. Affordable access to software should be considered as an important component of a truly inclusive Information Society.

- 28. We strive to promote universal access with equal opportunities for all to scientific knowledge and the creation and dissemination of scientific and technical information, including open access initiatives for scientific publishing."

Geneva Summit outcomes on OA (4)

The Geneva Plan of Action is structured similar to the Declaration. Chapter 3 on « Access to Information and Knowledge «, speaks inter alia about:

- Access to public domain information
- Access to public official information
- Access to informaton for vulnerable groups
- Access to software (without making a choice between proprietary software and FLOSS)
- Capacity building for local authorities as a means of improving local governance

Geneva Summit outcomes on OA (5)

But finally, the chapter on Access to Information and Knowledge «, in the Geneva Plan of Action, para 10:

« h) supports the creation and development of a digital public library and archive services, adapted to the Information Society, including reviewing national library strategies and legislation, developing a global understanding of the need for "hybrid libraries", and fostering worldwide cooperation between libraries.

i) Encourages initiatives to facilitate access, including free and affordable access to open access journals and books, and open archives for scientific information. »

The Preparatory Process of the Tunis Summit (1)

- The Tunis Summit was prepared by 3 PrepComs (PrepCom-1 at Hammamet and PrepCom-2 and -3 at Geneva) and 1 intersessional meeting. It took 28 working days (and partly nights) of negotiation to prepare the outcome documents. The documents were finalized at 23.00 on the day before the opening of the Tunis Summit.

- The preparations for the Tunis Summit differed from the preparations of the Geneva Summit. The Tunis Summit outcome documents were largely drafted by a Group of Friends of the Chair, with inputs from all stakeholders. As a result, the text of the Tunis outcome documents is more coherent and has less redundancies.

The Preparatory Process of the Tunis Summit (2)

Also, very different from the Geneva Summit preparations, PrepCom-1 of the Tunis Summit (held at Hammamet, Tunisia) took clear decisions regarding content. PrepCom-1 decided that the Tunis outcome document(s) should focus:

- Follow-up and implementation of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action

- Consideration of the report of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) and appropriate action;

- Consideration of the report of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) and appropriate action;

- Furthermore, PrepCom-1 decided that agreements reached in the Geneva phase should not be reopened;

The Tunis Summit (16-18.11.2005)

- 19'401 participants, out of which 5857 from Government
- 174 States, with 50 Heads of State or Government
- 92 UN and International Organizations with 1508 delegates
- 6241 representatives from 606 civil society entities
- 4'816 representatives from 226 business entities
- 979 media representatives from 642 media entities
- 306 Parallel events, and 20.000 m2 of exhibition space (ICT4All-exhibition)

Summit outcomes: Tunis (1)

In the Tunis Commitment, Governments reaffirmed the commitments set out in the Geneva Declaration and Plan of Action and stressed the necessity for timely implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action.

There are no new commitments with regard to Open Access (in the sense of the BBB definition) in the Tunis Commitment, the text, like in the Geneva outcome documents, uses the word access in many different ways, and focuses mostly on access to information and access to ICTs, while stressing the importance of removing barriers to bridging the digital divide.

Summit outcomes: Tunis (2)

The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society was structured exactly according to the decisions taken at PrepCom-1 at Hammamet. The documents has 4 chapters:

- Introduction
- Financial Mechanisms for meeting the challenges of ICT for Development
- Internet Governance
- Implementation and follow-up

Summit outcomes: Tunis (3)

The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, <u>inter alia</u>:

- welcomes the voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund
- asks the UN Secretary General to convene a new Forum for multistakeholder policy dialogue, called the *Internet Governance Forum* (IGF)
- calls for national, regional and international implementation of the WSIS outcomes
- requests the UN SG to create, within the CEB, a UN Group on the Information Society (UN-GIS)
- requests ECOSOC to review the mandate of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)
- asks the UN Agencies, and notably ITU, UNESCO and UNDP, to facilitate the implementation of the Plan of Action and to organize a meeting of moderators/facilitators to coordinate implementation

Summit Outcomes: Tunis (4)

In the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, chapter on Internet Governance, and especially in para 90, are an number of references to access. Para 90 k) reaffirms the commitment of Governments to the targets of the Geneva Plan of Action by:

"*supporting educational, scientific, and cultural institutions*, including libraries, archives and museums, in their role of developing, providing equitable, open and affordable access to, and preserving diverse and varied content, including in digital form, to support informal and formal education, research and innovation; and in particular supporting libraries in their public-service role of providing free and equitable access to information and of improving ICT literacy and community connectivity, particularly in underserved communities."

Summit outcomes: Tunis (5)

It is important to understand the implementation mechanisms of the Tunis Agenda. Governments agreed to remain fully engaged, nationally, regionally and internationally, and that building the information Society is a multistakeholder effort. They further agreed on a mechanism of Action line facilitators/moderators for each Action line:

« We **attach great importance** to multi-stakeholder implementation at the international level, which should be organized taking into account the themes and action lines in the Geneva Plan of Action, and moderated or facilitated by UN agencies when appropriate. An Annex to this document offers an indicative and non-exhaustive list of facilitators/moderators for the action lines of the Geneva Plan of Action". (Para 108 of the Tunis Agenda)

Summit outcomes: Tunis (6)

A meeting took place on 24.2. 2006 at Geneva to discuss possible lead facilitators. Based on the annex of the Tunis Agenda, the following entities are proposed as provisional lead facilitators:

- ITU for C2 and C5

- UNDP for C4 and C6

- UNESCO for C3, C8, C9, C10 and for e-learning, and e-science

- UN-DESA for C1, C11 and e-government

- UNCTAD for e-business

- WHO for e-health

- ILO for e-employment

- FAO for e-agriculture

- WMO for e-environment

Implementation and follow-up (1)

UNESCO as the lead facilitator for C3 will hold an first Action Line Facilitator's (ALF) meeting on the implementation of Chapter 3 in the near future. Further information will be put on the WSIS website, from where we will link to the UNESCO website.

This meeting will very probably take place either at Geneva or at Paris. This first meeting will discuss its own agenda, and may perhaps decide to work on the basis of annual or bi-annual themes etc. The Tunis Agenda does not prescribe the exact process of the Action lines facilitation. Depending on the subject, the groups, under the leadership of the facilitator(s) will decide itself on how to proceed.

Implementation and follow-up (2)

Entities interested in OA could propose to act as co-facilitators/co-moderators for Action Line C3, together with UNESCO. At the moment, there are no clear rules established regarding co-facilitation.

The process is informal, all stakeholders can participate in the meetings, including (but not exclusively) WSIS-accredited entities.

The basic idea of the Action line facilitation is information exchange, creation of knowledge, sharing of best practices, and assistance in developing multi-stakeholder and public-private partnerships, as laid down in para 110 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. The ALF does not have a coordination role.

Implementation and follow-up (3)

More information on the implementation by Action line is at http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/index.html. At http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/consultation24feb.html is a Summary of the meeting held on 24 February at Geneva.

On the same webpage are draft terms of reference for Action line facilitators and also draft term of reference for lead Agencies. These TORs may clarify to a certain extent what the actual thinking in ITU, UNESCO and UNDP is on the matter.
An open question is the link between this bottom-up process and the top-down follow-up and coordination process within the UN, steered by the UN-GIS and the CSTD.

Implementation and follow-up (4)

The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, para 105, further **requests** that ECOSOC oversees the system-wide follow-up of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes of WSIS. "To this end, **we request** that ECOSOC, at its substantive session of 2006, reviews the mandate, agenda and composition of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), including considering the strengthening of the Commission, taking into account the multi-stakeholder approach."

Implementation and follow-up (5)

An Informal Inter-Agency Consultation on the future role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)in the UN system-wide follow-up to WSIS is scheduled for 16 May 2006 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. This meeting will very probably be open to all WSIS stakeholders.

The presence of some of the main scientific entities interested in OA would perhaps be useful. The Commission may decide to work, in future, with a 2 years thematic approach. Access in general and also OA could be one of the themes, but OA would need some lobbying with Governments, who may be afraid to put OA on the Agenda because of the (wrong) fear of raising Intellectual Property problems in the CSDT.

What WSIS did achieve (1) (a personal view)

- The Summit, in its two phases, raised awareness of Governments, at the top level, about the crucial importance and the challenges they face in the upcoming Information Society, and about the possibilities of the new (and old) ICTs to help reaching the MDGs.

- The Summit reconfirmed the basic human rights of access to information, as laid down in Art. 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: « Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers » and confirmed that this right is equally valid in cyberspace.

What WSIS did achieve (2) (a personal view)

- The Summit brought together a multistakeholder « community of practice » including Governments, International Organizations, NGOs and other civil society entities, business entities and the media

- Summit participants agreed on the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda for the information society, as well as on mechanisms for implementation by all stakeholders, and multi-stakeholder follow-up.

- The parallel events and the exhibitions (ICT4D in Geneva, ICT4All in Tunis) attracted high attendance and were a great success.

What WSIS did not achieve (1)
(a personal view)

The Summit failed to address some important elements of the upcoming information society:

a) International regulation of cyberspace. While specific problems like spam and cybercrime were addressed, the Summit did not make a general call for an international cyberlaw treaty. Developing an international legal framework dealing with issues of cyberspace, including cybercrime, security, taxation, intellectual property protection, and privacy, remains a task for the future.

b) The Summit did also not address the question of DRM, Digital Rights Management, and the problems of restricted access to knowledge because of intellectual property claims. Governments considered that IPR problems should be dealt with in WIPO.

What WSIS did not achieve (2)

(a personal view)

c)   While the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society welcomes the the voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund, the Summit was unable to agree on a more binding UN-based finance mechanism for bridging the Digital Divide (example: UN-AIDS fund).

d)   The Summit agreed on a number of points regarding Internet Governance, but could not agree on a global Internet governance framework. The time was not yet ripe for a new governance model. Several open questions were therefore referred to a new "Internet Governance Forum", to be created by the UN SG, for further discussion. This new multistakeholder "Forum" is not a decision-making body, and its relation to the UN is - at the actual stage - unclear. It may evolve as an important player in the continuing search for a Global Internet Governance model, or remain a an inefficient talk shop. Only the future will tell us.

What WSIS did not achieve (3)
(a personal view)

e) While the Summit outcome documents stressed the importance of the ICTs for achieving the MDGs, they do not contain clear vision about the mechanisms. Governments of developing countries, in their national information society strategies and PRSPs, seldom make a distinction between strengthening <u>ICTs as a sector</u> and strengthening <u>ICTs as an enabler</u>. The sector approach has no direct incident on poverty reduction (only the old trickle down effect). The "enabler" approach empowers ordinary people to take their destiny in their own hands. The keywords here are transparency, accountability, empowerment and bottom-up approach There is a risk that lessons of 30 years of development cooperation (the importance of bottom-up decentralized and people-centred approaches) are forgotten when it comes to ICT4D.

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Thank you for your attention