

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The African Civil Society on the Information Society held its Abuja Forum as a pre-event to the African Regional Preparatory Meeting (ARPM) of the World Telecommunications Development Committee (WTDC). This forum was made possible by the support of the people and the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria through its Nigerian Communications Commission – NCC.

The Forum was a timely one which offered the African Civil Society on the Information society the needed space to address issues and challenges of the African information society with a special emphasis on the Civil Society. On the other hand, civil society entities got educated on the World Summit on the Information Society as well as the other issues in the Africa Information Society Initiative - AISI.

BACKGROUND

- 1 Information and communication technologies (ICT) play a significant role in development efforts and poverty alleviation. ICTs open up new horizons for the creation and exchange of knowledge, for education and training and for the promotion of creativity, cultural development and intercultural dialogue.
- 2 Many African governments are facing the challenge to seize the opportunities of ICTs and to apply and integrate them into a wide range of activities. Particular challenges include the improvement of information literacy, an improvement of ICT infrastructures, the enhancement of access to ICTs, the practical use of ICT, in particular in education at all levels.
- 3 Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and Non-Government Organisations (NGO) are crucial partners in the development, advancement and stability of our society. It is in recognition of the importance of CSO's and NGO's that this Civil Society Forum is being organized from the 1st-3rd July 2005, during which Civil Society entities will engage in the issues of the preparatory conference. This will be followed by a Multi-stakeholder consultation on the 4th of July 2005.
- 4 Many factors which impinge on the accessibility to ICT's by African's, such as education, are in some form of crisis at all levels of education. Institutions of higher education and learning, along with many other basic infrastructures, which are the stepping stones of the country towards partaking in the emerging global knowledge society, suffer from a debilitating lack of financial resources and insufficient learning tools.
- 5 Much of the requisite infrastructure is either non-existent or grossly inadequate and insufficient. Even in the urban centres where they do exist, their operations are epileptic and their services are undermined by poor funding, obsolete and inadequate equipment. These inadequacies seriously impede the infrastructural basis for the development of the continent and prevent the citizens and institutions from engaging in and

benefiting from global exchanges that ICT facilitates. In sum, the potential role of knowledge development and management, innovation and research, as tools for social development and as means of communications have become seriously eroded.

- 6 Structural rather than political constraints are thus the major impediments facing the increased and enhanced use of ICT's in knowledge development and management as a vital component renovating and innovating our economic wellbeing and quality of life. Resources and services need to be designed to enable ICT's to facilitate knowledge based solutions that cater effectively to the social, cultural and developmental needs of our citizens at all levels in Africa, for sustainable development.
- 7 To help improve the above situation, the Civil Society Forum has been organised to secure a mandate, chart a vision, and develop an action plan for its implementation.

OBJECTIVES OF FORUM

- 1 In order to secure a mandate, chart a vision, develop an action plan for its implementation various issues must be reviewed/ examined, taking into account the present ICT infrastructure. In that connection, a series of issues must be addressed and clarified. These issues are enumerated in the Breakout Session guides.
- 2 The immediate objectives of the forum are to:
 - A To exchange experiences from the sub-regional and national perspectives
 - B Capacity Building/Training
 - C To compile and present African Civil Society contributions to the Regional Prep COM of World Telecommunications Development Conference in 2006 (WTDC '06) in Doha Qatar.
 - D To exchange African sub-Regional experiences in the use of Information for development.
 - E To assess conditions, challenges and make recommendations on way forward.
 - F To examine possible broad-based projects which could be presented to the Digital Solidarity Fund
 - G To draft concrete recommendations towards the WTDC'06 prep COM
 - H To engage in other brainstorming to refine our way forward to Tunis.
 - I To examine related funding issues
 - J To networking and build a strong social capital.
 - K To examine the implication of the proposed debt relief on the development of the region.
 - L To facilitate the formation of coalitions, partnership and alliances.

Management of the Forum

Proceedings were organized in plenary and breakout sessions. Plenary sessions were used to harmonize African CS visions on the Information Society in general and listen to sectoral challenges in the CS engagement in development. They also gave the opportunity for participants to hear from experts on diverse Information Society issues that included:

- The Role of the Civil Society,
- Policies and Regulation,
- Media,
- Training and Reinforcement of capacities,
- Child Safety on the Internet,
- Public Health Strategies,
- Free and Open Source Software,
- Electronic Waste,
- Geo-Information,
- Millennium Development Goals - MDGs

Participation

The support given to the African Civil Society on the Information Society – ACSIS by the Nigerian National Communications Commission – NCC allowed members of African civil society entities from all five regions of the continent as well as the African Diaspora to meet in the beautiful city of Abuja for three days. Daily participation to the African Civil Society Forum numbered well over 120. ACSIS expresses profound gratitude to the NCC for the support received by participants before, during and after the Forum.

Organization of workshops

To better effect the deliberations during the Forum, six parallel thematic workshops were organized in breakout sessions. They were as follows:

1. **Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSP) in the WSIS implementation,**
2. **Priorities in the use of ICT for African Development,**
3. **Processes, Policies and Regulation in ICT,**
4. **Finance and Financing Mechanisms,**
5. **Mainstreaming the African Civil Society in the realisation of the MDG goals,**
6. **The African Media in the Information Society: WSIS and beyond.**

Recommendations and conclusions from workshops

SESSION I: The following recommendations were made:

- A Civil Society has to be better organized at national, regional and continental levels; it has to become professional in the implementation of its activities in order to become a credible partner to the government and the private sector.
- B African governments should create development institutions which would support civil society activities;
- C The African Civil Society has to collect and document positive MSP experiences,
- D Civil society's negotiation skills/ capacities have to be strengthened; this capacity building should be also done internally;
- E The African Civil Society has to advocate and lobby so that they get more and more involved by governments, in governance initiatives, at the national, regional and international level;
- F The African Civil Society should create a monitoring group/system in order to insure that it's own initiatives (initiatives of the different NGOs and associations, for example) respect ethic standards;
- G Governments and international organizations should better involve African civil society in the decision-making;
- H African society has to establish an effective partnership with private sector, but has to take care of to protect its independence and ethic values.

SESSION II: The following conclusions were reached:

- A The African Civil Society is a vital component of the tripartite multi-stakeholder strategy for effective implementation of ICT4D in Africa.
- B Efficient transparent and accountable partnerships with public and private sectors are essential for the sustainable African ICT4D.
- C African Civil Society is best placed to facilitate and advocate the above processes.

SESSION III: The following conclusions were reached

- A Governments should make provisions in their national budgets for IT investment in addition to the Global Digital Solidarity Fund
- B Civil Society should implement the bottom-up approach to policy development through a participatory approach based on rights

- C Civil Society should be ready to consult and confront the US with regards their decision to retain supervision of the DNS root servers

SESSION IV: It was concluded that it is now time for civil society to take its place and broker, sensible to the private sector and sensitive to the poor, financing options for the benefit of all.

SESSION V: Recommendations for the participation of the ACS in the next steps of the implementation of the MDGs. The MDGs will be the focus of a midterm review (New York + 5) in September, 2005. The ACS, particularly in regard to ICT, has to take into account that new situation to prepare its future contribution to the next phases of the MDGs process. To that end, the following recommendations are formulated:

- A A research to be conducted to ensure the financial autonomy of ACSIS;
- B ACSIS will make sure to effectively engaged in monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the MDGs. She will also make input into the midterm review of September, 2005;
- C ACSIS will promote transparency and accountability in the implementation of the MDGs, as well as the NEPAD, the PRS and the Commission for Africa. This will be achieved in partnership with other groups ;
- D ACSIS will advocate for her inclusion in the realization process of the MDGs, similar to the ACP-EU Agreement where the Civil Society is classified among the "Non State Actors".
- E ACSIS will collaborate with her various partners on ICT-related projects and activities for the achievement of the MDGs. The ACS's involvement is indispensable for the successful outcomes of the MDGs.
- F The details of roles and contributions of the ACS at the various stages of the MDGs process will be clearly spelt out, and especially for the midterm review in September 2005. These roles should be clearly acknowledged by the other members of the partnership including governments and international development institutions.

SESSION VI: The recommendations so derived are:

- A Increase the participation of journalists and media groups in activities and issues relating to the pending World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) and the World Telecommunications Development Conference (WTDC);
- B The promotion of a conducive environment for media pluralism that enhances cultural identity and diversity.

- C Establish an independent media sustainability fund in member states.
- D Better networking, especially through strategic sharing of resources like the setting up and patronizing of independent news agencies;
- E African governments should ratify and implement all Treaties and Declarations that ensure and promote the Freedom of Expression Concepts that are rooted in Article 19 of the UDHR.
- F African leaders should make haste in signing unto the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and to make media pluralism and freedom of expression as further criteria for this important assessment.

Projects for consideration:

- 1 An Africa based Virtual Library which is expected to have two aspects:
 - A The *subscription to full text databases in all major fields of study relevant to Higher Education institutions;*
 - B The *development of indigenous content.* This activity is envisaged to be crucial to the survival of our heritage, dialects, languages, cultures, value systems, and collective memory/ history which will otherwise be subsumed by the more dominant languages or cultures of the world.
- 2 The *opening of an appropriately regulated community radio window for the underserved and disadvantaged communities, with a lower threshold for participation,* in the existing national broadcasting policy of various African Countries.
- 3 Development of *rural multimedia community centres.*

SESSION I

Theme: **Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSP) in the WSIS implementation**

1 Aims and Objectives

The following Aims and Objectives were identified:

- A Evaluate the MSP status of the African CS in the WSIS process so far
- B Document particular positive examples
- C Signal particular negative experiences
- D Take stock of challenges
- E Recommendations for the way forward to Tunisia and Qatar
- F Recommendations on the way forward after summits, Etc ...

2 Issues and details

The following were discussed:

- A The Multi stakeholder Partnership is a concept not yet really understood, notably by civil society. It relates to collaboration between three sectors to implement projects: government, private sector and the civil society. It can be understood as collaborative framework cooperation which is being institutionalized, notably since the organization of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the World Summit on the Information society. Each of the three sectors has its "natural" expertise, and put together they have complementary competences. Collaboration between them should therefore bring about sustainability and inclusiveness. However, MSPs are not an end in themselves.
- B The Government has the role of a regulator, thus its participation is essential to create an enabling environment for developmental initiatives. Governments are also responsible for social peace.
- C Private sector has the financial resources and they are playing a prominent role in the development of IT infrastructure and services in Africa.
- D Civil society takes care of the protection of public interest, advocate for good governance and contributes to capacity building of communities, especially in the field of ICTs. Civil society is therefore the watchdog of government and private sector initiatives.
- E The following challenges were identified:
 - I In Multi-stakeholder Partnership, civil society appears to be the weakest actor; civil society is also too much financially dependant on private sector and government and therefore civil society is not seen as a credible actor.

- II Civil society appears only as a critic in the eyes of the governments and the private sector. It has been suggested therefore that civil society should learn to become a negotiator.
- III Civil society has not yet established real partnerships with private sector in the process of the WSIS or out of that process;
- IV Partnerships in general can threaten civil society independence and ethic values.
- V Civil Society is not very organized and very professional, and does not have a good image
- VI Civil Society is more supported at the international level than at the national level in most cases

3 Management Arrangements

The following were discussed:

A African Society MSP Status in the WSIS Process

- I The WSIS is a Multi stakeholder Process and civil society has participated actively in it.
- II During the first phase of WSIS, the African civil society issued a position paper which was taken into account in the international civil society contributions. Some of these contributions have been put in the final Declaration of Principles and Action Plan, even though civil society was not happy with those two documents. The participation of African civil society continued during preparatory conferences in Accra, Ghana and in Abuja, Nigeria as well as during past PrepComs. Electronic debates on WSIS issues (internet governance, financial mechanisms, etc.) were organized. The ACSIS association contributed largely to Africa's productive participation in the WSIS. However, civil society organizations have to better organize themselves to improve their contribution to WSIS.
- III African civil society has two representatives in the International Civil Society Bureau and the Digital Solidarity Fund.
- IV On the other hand, civil society and the private sector have observer status at WSIS whereas governments have the power to make decisions. It was called for a better inclusion of civil society in the process of the WSIS, even though one can understand this observer status. Civil society often had no means to contribute effectively to the WSIS, notably because of financial constraints.

B The following experiences were recounted:

- I Three examples of Multi stakeholder Partnerships were collected; the CIPACO project of the Panos Institute West Africa, some of FOSSFA initiatives (such as the Idlelo 2 Conference) and the Nigerianet.org project.

- II CIPACO project works to increase African participation in the decision-making at regional and international level, regarding ICT policies. Within this framework, a study on the participation of the African private sector in the WSIS is being undertaken in partnership with an business organisation in Senegal. CIPACO in general collaborates with public institutions, the private sector and civil society.
 - III FOSSFA is trying to help African governments adopt FOSS policies. The association is currently working on free software policies for Africa. In the Multistakeholder Partnership spirit, FOSSFA secretariat is will be transferred to South Africa, where it would be hosted by a governmental structure. The private sector will also contribute through equipping the secretariat.
 - IV Nigerianet is an information and networking portal designed for civilian society and donor agencies working in and around the field of human rights in Nigeria. It is an initiative of civil society. The board of directors is composed of representatives of civil society, private sector, and government. One of the objectives of this strategy is to increase transparency in governance.
- C Four types of multi-stakeholder partnerships were identified:
- I Partnership between the public sector and civil society: Civil society has to play a more constructive role for inclusive and sustainable development. It has to act as the intermediary between the government and the population. Thus, it has to play a crucial role in the follow-up and evaluation of development programs.
 - II Partnership between the private sector and civil society. However, in most cases, the only interest of the private sector is to make profits. Civil society has to get organized to become a watch dog, and to work to safeguard social rights and to bring private businesses to take into account their social responsibility.
 - III Partnership inside civil society: this includes on the first hand, a partnership between its various families, notably with academia; and on the second hand, partnership between IT and non IT civil society. It has been urged that this sort of cooperation should be reinforced.
 - IV Partnership with international organizations: the recognition of civil society at the national and regional level will legitimate it at the international level.

4 Action Plan

The following action plan was enumerated:

- A The African Civil Society should collect and document positive MSP experiences
- B Civil society has to strengthen its negotiation skills/capacities internally;

- C Civil Society should organize itself at national, regional and continental levels;
- D The African civil society should advocate and lobby so that they get more involved by governments, in governance initiatives, at the national, regional and international level;
- E The African Civil society should create a monitoring group/system in order to insure that it's own initiatives (initiatives of the different NGOs and associations, for example) respect ethic standards;

5 Conclusion

The following recommendations were made:

- A Civil Society has to be better organized at national, regional and continental levels; it has to become professional in the implementation of its activities in order to become a credible partner to the government and the private sector;
- B African governments should create development institutions which would support civil society activities;
- C The African Civil Society has to collect and document positive MSP experiences;
- D Civil society's negotiation skills/ capacities has to be strengthen; this capacity building should be also done internally;
- E The African civil society has to advocate and lobby so that they get more and more involved by governments, in governance initiatives, at the national, regional and international level;
- F The African Civil society should create a monitoring group/system in order to insure that it's own initiatives (initiatives of the different NGOs and associations, for example) respect ethic standards;
- G Governments and international organizations should better involve African civil society in the decision-making;
- H African society has to establish an effective partnership with private sector, but has to take care of to protect its independence and ethic values.

SESSION II

Theme: **Priorities in the use of ICT for African development**

1 Aims and Objectives

The aim was to find ways to fully integrate African Civil Society into all Information Communications Technology for Development (ICT4D) processes at local, national and regional levels.

The session examined the 21 priority objectives that came out of Bamako 2003, and narrowed them down to the following:

- A National ICT strategies (drawing up national ICT policy to serve as a guideline for growth)
- B Building infrastructure/maintenance of infrastructure equipment
- C Human resource development and capacity building
- D Partnership between the public and private sectors (as well as civil society)
- E Research and development with emphasis on software development
- F Regional cooperation
- G E-applications (e-governments, e-health, e-education, e-commerce etc)

2 Issues and Details

The session suggested that the content of National ICT strategies should incorporate all the other priorities. In addition:

- A R&D: should include studying the environmental impact of ICT e.g. in disposing of obsolete computers, effect of radiation from telephone masts, and health issues arising from heavy cell-phones use etc
- B R&D should also include the building of data- bases for reliable and up to date information about the African continent.
- C Public/Private/Civil Society (PPCS) partnership should acknowledge and respect the watchdog role of civil society e.g. in ensuring that African countries granted debt cancellation or debt relief do not end up again in the debt trap through frivolous borrowings.

3 Management Arrangements

A Any convergence of the actors in the ICT sector?

I The session defined the actors as PPCivil Society (public/private/civil society) Positive convergence can be seen in what they all have in common: working for development. However, areas of conflict often arise when the interests of the Public sector (regulation, fund generation, law and order), and the private sector (profit), conflict with the interest of Civil Society e.g. the continued petrol pricing issue in Nigeria.

II Ultimately, the role of Civil Society should be:

- **advocacy** (pushing for protection of the interest and rights of the ordinary citizen)
- **monitoring** (of actions by public and private sectors)
- **evaluation** (of public and private sector activities), and,
- **ensuring transparency in governance.**

B Country/sub-regional issues that should not be ignored

A Environmental issues (e.g. desert encroachment; oil spillage, refugee problems; drought, flooding)

B Health (AIDS)

C Are there good practices in use of ICT for development by Civil Society? Yes! Here are a few:

I Kgautswane community in South Africa (web site?)

II Wougnet project in East Africa (web site?)

III International Association for Volunteer Effort (www.iave.org)

IV Tunisia: computer for every family (web site?)

V Obafemi Awolowo University assembles computers and sell to staff at N60,000, paid back in easy instalments.

VI Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) through Education Tax Fund (ETF) runs "Teach the Teachers" program for ICT use by faculty in universities

VII Health Informatics for Africa (www.indehela.fi)

VIII Knowledge House Africa; E-youth Project (www.knowledgehouseafrica.org)

4 Action Plan

Civil Society must push for the implementation of the 7 priorities listed above. In more practical terms:

A Civil Society should push for the setting up of a "**catalyst group**" in each country to serve as the nucleus for promoting growth of ICT. The group should draw its membership from IT-active persons in PPCivil Society with emphasis on the universities. This was the pattern adopted by India, and, in a modified form, by China.

B "**Catch them young**" approach: introducing computer use in schools at all three levels: primary, secondary and university. Serious work with computers (such as programming) can be taught at senior secondary, and tertiary (university, IT training schools etc) levels. The catalyst group in each country should be involved in this exercise.

C Civil Society should build **an active data base** of information on who and who can be relied upon for advocacy actions e.g. massive demonstrations like the one now going on in Britain on the eve of the G8 meeting

- D Civil Society should promote massive **publicity campaigns** for wide acceptance of computers and to conquer “**compuphobia**” – fear of high tech.
- E **Local expertise involvement.** For sustainable growth, local experts must be involved at all levels, in projects using ICT for development purposes.

5 Conclusion

The following conclusions were reached:

- A The African Civil Society is a vital component of the tripartite multi-stakeholder strategy for effective implementation of ICT4D in Africa;
- B Efficient transparent and accountable partnerships with public and private sectors are essential for the sustainable African ICT4D;
- C African Civil Society is best placed to facilitate and advocate the above processes;

SESSION III

Theme: **Processes, policies and regulation in ICT**

1 **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of the session was to ensure universal access, availability and affordability of ICT within the African Continent.

The following objectives were listed:

- A Review existing national, sub-regional and regional policies in ICT
- B Evaluate the role of the Civil Society in the processes, policies and regulations
- C Recommend the way forward for a better implication of the African Civil Society for the Information Society (ACSIS) at national, sub-regional and regional regulatory bodies

2 **Issues and Details**

The key issues that were identified include:

- A Policies are loose; separate policies for IT, Telecommunications, Broadcasting, Mass Media etc. There is the need for convergence of these policies
- B Low level of Civil Society participation in the policy formulation processes
- C Civil Society is not aware of major issues in the policies
- D Civil Society is not aware of the existence of some policies
- E Civil Society not sensitized on change management
- F Funding of Civil Society activities is inadequate
- G There are conflicts among Civil Society organizations representing various sectors
- H Civil Society is not aware of the ICT needs of the community
- I There is minimal networking among Civil Society Organizations
- J Gender, IT in Governance and content are not well emphasized by Civil Society
- K Language barriers inhibit effective Civil Society networking

3 **Management Arrangements**

The consensus reached was that the structure of Civil society that would drive the process should be decentralized and informal, with reporting mechanisms that keep all informed.

4 **Action Plan**

The following action plan was enumerated:

- A Examine policies and regulatory frameworks and do yearly reviews within the 5 year review period

- B Document all Civil Society activities and publish these to inform the populace
- C Establish a databank which houses all Civil Society data
- D Establish partnership with the National Statistical Offices in order to get data needs incorporated in surveys
- E Advocate for tax levy on ICT equipment to be reduced
- F Advocate for Civil Society representation in all ICT regulatory bodies and commissions
- G Civil Society should understand the principles of change management and enlighten the masses on it
- H Check the commitments of governments to international treaties
- I Work coalitions, partnerships and alliances with all stakeholders

5 **Conclusion**

The following conclusions were reached

- A Governments should make provisions in their national budgets for IT investment in addition to the Global Digital Solidarity Fund;
- B Civil Society should implement the bottom-up approach to policy development through a participatory approach based on rights;
- C Civil Society should be ready to consult and confront the US with regards their decision to retain supervision of the DNS root servers;

SESSION IV

Theme: **Finance and Financing Mechanisms**

1 **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this session was to establish mechanisms for the continuous mobilisation of funds to achieve Civil Society ICT goals for the benefit of society.

The objectives identified include:

- A Assess, review and document current funding mechanisms vis-à-vis needs
- B Develop mechanisms and systems for accessing and managing existing funds and funding institutions.
- C Propose financial sources and sourcing of funding for Civil Society ICT projects.
- D Propose mechanisms for Civil Society participation in ICT funding mechanisms, systems and decision making and management e.g. Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF).
- E Advocate for lower cost of access for ICTs for all.
- F Establish and manage monitoring systems for existing financial systems for ICT project.

2 **Issues and Details**

The following issues were identified:

- A Civil Society has no money, no power, little or no respect from government and private sector and often suspicion from them. Although ICT Civil Society's have and generate great ideas, the many and autonomous organisations have difficulty with co-ordination, integrity, accountability, expertise often duplicate projects and appears in competition rather than cooperation. Civil Society is often accused of being self serving and self centred.
- B Civil Society has difficulty with getting and managing funding for ICT projects.
- C ICT project are also very expensive partly on account of infrastructure and related technical requirements.

3 **Management Arrangements**

The following management arrangements were suggested:

- A A network of national, sub and regional ICT Civil Society Organisations need to be formed.
- B This network requires a web-based facility for sharing information, expertise etc.
- C A co-ordination unit needs to be formed for Civil Society Organisation finances/financing.

- D Funding Sources;
 - I Loans local and international;
 - II Donations (cash and kind) local and international;
 - III Contributions from ICT Civil Society Organisations and other voluntary organizations;
 - IV From Diaspora Civil Society to organize and launch campaign;
 - V Digital Solidarity Fund;
 - VI Government; taxes, government to give a certain percentage of annual national budget 2% for ICT for development projects in all sectors of the economy and 10% of this should be directly available only to ICT Civil Society Organisations;
 - VII Civil Society to partner with Private sector and governments to conceive and establish projects to benefit the poorer/est sectors of society;
 - VIII Civil Society to manage Digital Solidarity Fund in all African countries.

4 Action Plan

The following action plan was enumerated:

- A **July 2005:** Establish African ICT Civil Society Organisation network; Network, list of African ICT Civil Society Organisations; to be operated by volunteers: Participation will be by invitation and verifiable registration.
- B **August 2005:** Establish virtual tools and database for the African ICT Civil Society Organisation network; Online and live searchable database; the operators are yet to be determined.
- C **September 2005:** Funding sources and mechanisms; suggestions were incomplete.

5 Conclusion

It was concluded that it is now time for civil society to take its place and broker, sensible to the private sector and sensitive to the poor, financing options for the benefit of all.

SESSION V

Theme: **Mainstreaming African Civil Society in the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) goals.**

1 Aims and Objectives

The following aim was listed as Civil Society includes all the associations which are neither government, nor private sector. It is characterized by an autonomous organizational and operational capacity.

The objectives highlighted:

- A The objective of African Society are the mobilization of the resources in the governments, the private sector and other partners in development for the improvement of the conditions of life of the populations, based on the realization of the MDG goals by 2015.
- B The role of Civil Society is the mobilization of the populations around the DMG goals. The African Civil Society will participate in setting up the national and sub-regional programs for Poverty Reduction within the MDG framework.
 - 1. Recommend viable CS partnerships on the regional and international levels in the MDG;
 - 2. Recommend what role has the African Civil Society played so far in the process of the MDG.

2 Issues and Details

- A The following were enumerated as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) which include:
 - I Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. With an initial target of halving poverty from today's rates by the year 2015.
 - II Achieve universal primary education
 - III Promote gender equality and women's empowerment
 - IV Reduce child mortality
 - V Improve maternal health
 - VI Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
 - VII Ensure environmental sustainability
 - VIII Develop a global partnership for development
- B What role has the African Society played so far in the MDG process?
 - I The African Civil Society (ACS) has not played a crucial role in the determination of the MDGs because it was not in a position to make significant contribution to the process that ended in September, 2000,
 - II Once the Declaration was signed and adopted, the ACS tried to appropriate the MDGs, sometimes with the support of the United Nations System (UNS) and the other partners in order to

facilitate its implementation. For that reason, various consultations were held on a sub-regional (Dakar, Bamako, Lagos, Ouagadougou in Africa of the West) as well as a linguistic bases (English-speaking, French-speaking, etc.). The following lessons can be drawn :

- While the importance of the ICTs has been acknowledged in the conception and the initial implementation of the MDGs, the ACS notes that these have been established more according to an economic perspective than a social dimension. This explains that after the MDGs, the NEPAD was launched, appearing as an African translation of the MDGs; and the NEPAD was in turn followed closely by the process of the PRS.
- At national level, for example in Nigeria, the role of the ACS rather concerned the use of the ICTs in the sensitization of the populations on the MDGs through actions such as the GCAP (Global Campaign Against Poverty);
- At the Africa sub-regional level, especially in Central Africa, the implementation actions related to the NEPAD have in turn concerned the MDGs.

C What are challenges for the African Civil Society in the implementation of the MDGs:

I The difficulties and problems that face the ACS can be summarized as follows :

- The necessity of a reorientation of the MDGs towards the real preoccupations of the populations through a debate at national and sub-regional level;
- Beyond the mere speech of circumstance, the problem of a real political will to implement of the MDGs

D The effective and structured implication of the ACS, poorly represented so far in the MDGs' implementation processes, in a context where still prevail suspicions and prejudices between the CSOs and the public institutions;

E Illiteracy and low incomes of the populations, as well as the weakness of the basic infrastructures make it difficult to initiate swift changes in the mind sets required for the implementation of the MDGs;

F The development partners' procedures may constitute a constraint to the CS effective participation in the MDGs' implementation to complement government actions.

3 Management Arrangements

The ACS partnerships in the implementation of the MDGs:

I For the realization of the MDGs, the ACS places its ICT-related action in partnership with the global civil society within the framework of the

WSIS, phases I and II. For that purpose, its partners at national, sub-regional and regional level include:

- A The public institutions at national (governments, parliaments, etc.), as well as local levels (local and municipal councils);
- B The populations which are the target groups of the MDGs, organized in socioeconomic interest communities using ICTs (community radio associations, cooperatives, etc.);
- C Sub-regional and regional organizations and communities using ICTs and/or contributing to their promotion for the improvement of life conditions of the populations (African Union, the 5 sub-regional communities, NEPAD, etc.).
- D The development partners involved in the implementation of the MDGs at bilateral and/or multilateral levels as well as in the decentralized cooperation: the United Nations system (UNDP, ECA, FAO, ITU, UNESCO, WHO, UNHCR, ...), the Breton Woods' institutions (IMF and World Bank), the ACP-UE Agreement of Cotonou, the G8, the local communities of the North.

4. Conclusion

Recommendations for the participation of the ACS in the next steps of the implementation of the MDGs. The MDGs will be the focus of a midterm review (New York + 5) in September, 2005. The ACS, particularly in regard to ICT, has to take into account that new situation to prepare its future contribution to the next phases of the MDGs process. To that end, the following recommendations are formulated:

- A A research to be conducted to ensure the financial autonomy of the ACS;
- B The CSA will make sure to effectively engaged in monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the MDGs. She will also make input into the midterm review of September, 2005;
- C The ACS will promote transparency and accountability in the implementation of the MDGs, as well as the NEPAD, the PRS and the Commission for Africa. This will be achieved in partnership with other groups ;
- D The ACS will advocate for her inclusion in the realization process of the MDGs, similar to the ACP-EU Agreement where the Civil Society is classified among the "Non State Actors".
- E The ACS will collaborate with her various partners on ICT-related projects and activities for the achievement of the MDGs. The ACS's involvement is indispensable for the successful outcomes of the MDGs.
- F The details of roles and contributions of the ACS at the various stages of the MDGs process will be clearly spelt out, and especially for the midterm review in September 2005. These roles should be clearly

acknowledged by the other members of the partnership including governments and international development institutions.

SESSION VI

Theme: **The African Media in the Information Society: WSIS and beyond**

1 Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the discussion on The African Media in the Information Society: WSIS and beyond were

- A to outline the role and challenges – both institutional and environmental – of the media, especially in light of the information age, as is being projected through the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Process, and the pending World Telecommunications Development Conference.
- B To generate recommendations that will address those challenges.

2 Issues and Details

Ahead of the Tunis Phase of the WSIS scheduled for November 2005, Group Six identified a number of issues that have held up the African media in properly reporting on and participating in the information age. Among other things, these challenges have held up full participation in the drive towards an inclusive information age, especially and including the need to influence decisions at the conference. Accordingly, the deliberations recognized the following challenges:

- A The apparent lack of clarity as to what is “media” and how it sits in relation to Civil Society;
- B The lack of awareness and training for journalists in issues relating to new technology in communications for development;
- C Constraints in the realization of freedom of expressions, freedom of information and basic human rights in most African countries;
- D Inadequate access and absence of local content/language that would afford people at the grassroots the opportunity to better understand and appreciate the information society;
- E Lesser understanding and opportunities for print and editorial level journalists in the WSIS process;
- F Poor working conditions - including low and delayed wages, inadequate insurance coverage – for journalists, leaving a situation of threat to ethical or moral based practice;
- G Reluctance of the media to utilize services provided by independent news services like Highway Africa News Agency (HANA) and SIMBANI (Developed by AMARC – the international association of community radios), which are designed specifically to provide servicing for WSIS related issues, and to correct the negative image that is often projected of Africa;
- H Reluctance on the part of some African leaders to adopt the African Peer Review Mechanism, which should propel them into greater respect for human rights and freedom;

- I The absence of key National and Regional media bodies at WSIS and other key ICT fora.

3. Action Plan

In order to ensure full participation and involvement of the media in the information society, and considering the deliberations and challenges that were pointed out, Group Six evolved the following recommendations that would guide organizers in developing a path for maximum participation and cooperation in the information society, including the pending World Telecommunications Development Conference.

The recommendations so derived are:

- A Increase the participation of journalists and media groups in activities and issues relating to the pending World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) and the World Telecommunications Development Conference (WTDC);
- B The promotion of a conducive environment for media pluralism that enhances cultural identity and diversity;
- C Establish an independent media sustainability fund in member states;
- D Better networking, especially through strategic sharing of resources like the setting up and patronizing of independent news agencies;
- E African governments should ratify and implement all Treaties and Declarations that ensure and promote the Freedom of Expression Concepts that are rooted in Article 19 of the UDHR;
- F African leaders should make haste in signing unto the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and to make media pluralism and freedom of expression as further criteria for this important assessment.

Appendix I: **Groups & membership**

GROUP I

Moderator: **Ken Lohento**
Rapporteur: **Sylvie Niombo**
Language Facilitator: **Ken Lohento**

Members:

Delphine Nana	Ahmed Hamou	Chris Ogedengbe
Otamere Gbinigie	Ekade Abali	Fatimetou Mint Saleck
Edwin Okugbo	Yesufu T. K.	Nzeako A. N.
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Salamatu Garba	Rose Ekeleme	Ebenezer Taryi
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Debo Williams	Ahabue Omighe	

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Moderator: **Jummai Umar**
Rapporteur: **Isaac Kofi Danner**
Language Facilitator:

Members:

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Emma Okonji	Ikekeonwu Gam	I O Eze
Y. Z. Ya'u	Chike Asadu	Bankole Olubamise
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GROUP V

Moderator: **Boubacar 55 Barry**
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GROUP VI

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Ken Lohento - Senegal	Isaac Kofi Danner - Sierra - Leone	George Christensen - The Gambia
Mawaki Chango - Mozambique	Nnenna Nwakanma - Cote d'Ivoire	

Appendix II: **Documents and Presentations Received**

- 1 Keynote Address: **Fatimetou Mint Saleck**
- 2 Capacity Building: **Sylvie Niombo**
- 3 Free and Open Source Software: **Edwin Okugbo**
- 4 Internet and Child Safety: **Mahendrath Busgopaul**
- 5 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policy and regulation:
Jummai Umar
- 6 Priorities in Use of ICT for Africa's Development: **Adefemi S. Sonaike**
- 7 Mainstreaming African Civil Society in the realisation of the MDG goals:
Boubacar 55 Barry
- 8 Geo-information in land use and disaster prevention: **Fofona Mamadou**
- 9 ICT & Public Health Strategies: **Mba Nwakanma**
- 10 Achieving Millennium Development Goals Through Communiitty Software:
Bildad Kagai

Appendix III

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