

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Statement by
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on the occasion of the
Second Meeting of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom-2)

**Item 5 d) “Preliminary report of the Working Group on Internet
Governance”**

World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis Phase)
Geneva, Switzerland, 17-26 February 2005

Geneva, 24 February 2005

Mr President of the Preparatory Committee,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for giving UNESCO the opportunity to intervene on the Preliminary Report of the Working Group on Internet Governance (Agenda Item 5 d).

UNESCO congratulates Mr. Dessai and Mr. Kummer on behalf of the Working Group on Internet Governance on the impressive openness and the efficiency of the consultation process.

UNESCO endorses the observation that Internet governance should be based upon democracy, transparency and multilateralism and that it encompasses a wider range of conditions and mechanisms than IP numbering and domain name administration, as the “Inventory of Public Policy Issues and Priorities” that WGIG¹ recently established clearly indicates.

UNESCO appreciates that “multilingualism“ has been included as an infrastructural issue in the list of “Key issues” by WGIG (paragraph 34 of the report.

UNESCO urges WGIG to ensure that the issues of “cultural diversity” and “freedom of expression” be included in the list of high-level, horizontal or cross cutting issues that is mentioned in paragraph 35 of the report as they should be in all key documents from this Summit.

In this context, Mr. Chairman, UNESCO would like to highlight the **Marrakech Declaration**, adopted on 24 November 2004 by the participants of the conference on *"The Role and Place of the Media in the Information Society in Africa and the Arab Region"*.

The Declaration states:

“The international debate on "Internet Governance" should allow better cooperation on Internet management. It should not be a pretext to regulate Internet content of news or opinion. In particular, security considerations and the demands of the battle against crime including terrorism should not imperil freedom of expression and press freedom”.

UNESCO fully endorses this statement and stresses that any Internet governance mechanism should safeguard the inherent openness of the Internet infrastructure and must respect Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of

¹ <http://www.wgig.org/docs/inventory-issues.html>

Human Rights that includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

The Internet is a major opportunity to improve free flow of information and ideas throughout the world. Internet governance mechanisms should be based on the principle of “openness”, encompassing interoperability, and freedom of expression in Knowledge Societies. Necessary changes in Internet governance mechanisms to enhance inclusiveness should be contributing to enable greater use of the Internet in the developing countries and by citizens with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and should not jeopardize the stability of the Internet.

Mr. Chairman,

UNESCO looks forward to the proposals for action, including functions and actors, Internet governance mechanisms, formal institutional arrangements, non-formal arrangements and capacity building, that the WGIG will shortly present and is ready to contribute to the implementation of governance structures when they are related to its mandate.

Thank you