



Worldwide Association of Regions
for the Information Society

Declaration of the African Forum of Local Collectivities on the Information Society

African Regional Forum to prepare the II
World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on
the Information Society (Bilbao 2005)

Dakar, 13, 14 y 15 July 2005

Approved in Dakar on 15 July 2005



sommet mondial sur
la société de l'information
Genève 2003 - Tunis 2005



BILBAO2005

Dakar Declaration

We, the participants, representatives and officials of the Cities, Regions and Local Authorities, of Civil Society and of International Organisations, assembled at the African Forum of Local Collectivities on the Information Society (FACOLSI), organised by the Regional Council of Dakar on 13, 14 and 15 July 2005 in Dakar, express our thanks to the Government of Senegal and to the Regional Council of Dakar for providing us with this opportunity to exchange opinions on the construction of a more equitable Information Society.

Taking into consideration

- the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva;
- the African Regional Plan of Action for the Knowledge Economy (PARAES) initiated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (CEA),
- the African Regional Plan of Action for the Knowledge Economy;
- the Bilbao Declaration;
- the Nouakchott Declaration and Plan of Action;
- the Lyon Declaration;
- the Accra Commitments for the WSIS in Tunis;

Taking into consideration that the construction of the Information Society must take into account the development orientations and the specific necessities of all countries, especially the least developed ones;

Taking into consideration that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) offer equalitarian access for a new kind of citizens;

Taking into consideration that the role of African civil society, private sector and public authority bodies is fundamental at the time of applying ICT solutions for sustainable African development;

Taking into consideration that cities, regions and local authorities are determining players for the development of a fairer or more solidary Information Society and have a fundamental role to play in order to guarantee that all persons have access to information and knowledge;

Having verified that ICTs are an essential element of the viewpoint from which local collectivities contemplate economic growth, the creation of employment and improvement of social conditions;

Having verified that the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society has not reached consensus on a series of issues which are essential for Africa with regard to the elimination of the digital divide;

In the conviction that, in order to achieve practical solutions to the different problems raised by the construction of the Information Society, achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and reduce the digital divide, local collectivities have an important role to play in the II World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society;

In the conviction that decentralisation is an inevitable way to effectively tackle the concerns of the population from the grassroots level, especially on Information Society matters;

Having verified with satisfaction the creation of the Digital Solidarity Fund,

The Forum has decided to:

1. **Uphold** the financing and the operation of the Digital Solidarity Fund by means of the creation of an African Network of Local Collectivities for Digital Solidarity (RACOLSON) ;
2. **Uphold** the proposal of the United Nations Secretary General to promote the world Digital Solidarity Fund initiated by the President of Senegal, Abdoulaye WADE;
3. **Ask** the President of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Bertrand DELANOË, Mayor of Paris, to reaffirm, before the next session of the United Nations General Assembly, the need to apply the “Geneva principle” at worldwide scale, involving all members of the international community;
4. **Support** the project to call a World Digital Solidarity Conference, in late 2006 / early 2007 in order to guarantee long-term financing for the reduction of the digital divide and ask international, governmental and non governmental bodies, local authority associations, the private sector and civil society, to implement all the necessary measures to guarantee its success;
5. **Promote** good governance by means of the implementation of appropriate infrastructures in order to reinforce the instruments and mechanisms of government and for managing the local economy;
6. **Promote** the popularisation, the training of instructors and the use of free software in order to develop local electronic governance programmes;
7. **Promote** the implementation of a legal and regulatory framework for the Information Society and a security policy;
8. **Strengthen** the powers of local authorities and local elected officials, especially by making use of the training tools made available to them through the network of the International Training Centres for Local Authorities (CIFAL);
9. **Establish** cooperation based on a North-South and South-South economic model that proves to be mutually beneficial, with the aim that an authentic Information Society can see the light;
10. **Foster** cooperation between technical training institutes and universities regarding local development policies for the Information Society;
11. **Promote** collaboration with governmental and international players, private enterprise and representatives of civil society with a multisectoral approach which is fundamental for the development of good electronic governance;

- 12. Promote** decentralised cooperation so that a greater number of cooperation projects take the development of information and communication technologies into account;
- 13. Take into account** and incorporate ICTs into decentralised cooperation projects;
- 14. Support** the World Digital Solidarity Fund in its proposal to make a “digital solidarity pack” available by offering local collectivities possibilities of connection and access to contents on a large scale. This will enable local collectivities, currently marginalised by their lack of resources, to develop social applications that respond to the fundamental expectations of their citizens;
- 15. Promote** the participation of African local elected officials in the administration of the different branches of digital solidarity;
- 16. Request** the support of the “World Digital Solidarity Agency” ?? for the drawing up and putting into operation of local electronic governance programmes and gaining access to sources of financing with the purpose of implementing decentralised cooperation projects;
- 17. Sensitise and mobilise** African public opinion to implement a local e-collectivities project (Integrated Management System for the Civil State, identity cards, territorial planning management, financial management, etc.) and especially the need to create very solid consensus on emerging issues and, above all, on Internet governance;
- 18. Sensitise** personalities from the cultural, sporting, economic and political world so that they become mobilised, individually and collectively, for the purpose of building an Information Society which is, at the same time, more inclusive and more solidary for the wellbeing of all.

The representatives of the African local authorities call on all mayors and presidents of local authorities to take an active part in the II World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society, which is to be held from 9 to 11 November 2005 in Bilbao, Spain.

Drawn up in Dakar, on 15 July 2005