

**Statement and Suggestions by the WSIS Gender Caucus,
DAWN, AMARC Africa, IT for Change concerning the
Political Chapeau/Tunis Commitment to
Document WSIS-II/PC-2/DOC/3-E)
January 20, 2005**

The Gender Caucus is deeply concerned that the document does not contain references to gender equality and women’s empowerment. We cannot consider the Political Chapeau finalized until our concerns are addressed. Our recommended language is inserted in bold and italic letters below.

Annex 1

11 January 2005

[Political chapeau / Tunis Commitment

Idea	Text
From Geneva to Tunis	<p>1. We, the representatives of the peoples of the world, have gathered in Tunis from 16-18 November 2005 for this second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to reiterate our unequivocal support for the <i>Declaration of Principles</i> and <i>Plan of Action</i> adopted at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in December 2003. We reaffirm our desire and commitment to build a people-centred, <i>gender equitable</i>, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and effective multilateralism, and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, so that <i>women and men¹</i> people everywhere can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, to achieve their full potential and to promote sustainable development, to improve quality of life, to eradicate poverty and to attain the internationally-agreed development goals of the Millennium Declaration.</p> <p>2. The Tunis Summit represents a unique opportunity for us to <i>create a truly empowering Information Society in which everyone can contribute and benefit.</i> strengthen the confidence in the future while its core subjects concerning the Information Society shift world attention away from narrowly defined concepts to global ones, which transform peoples’ activities and interactions in ways that challenge traditional assumptions. The implementation of the commitments undertaken in the Geneva Summit is taking place amidst accelerating development of ICTs, which impact policies, human, economic, social and cultural development, bringing about profound changes in society.</p>

¹ Please note it is plural: “women and men” and not “woman and man”.

	<p>3. This Summit is an important stepping-stone in the world's efforts to eradicate poverty and to attain the internationally-agreed development goals of the Millennium Declaration. By the Geneva decisions, we established a solid long-term link between the WSIS process, and other major United Nations conferences and summits. <i>(The Gender Caucus supports this period.)</i> We call upon governments and all stakeholders to join together to implement the commitments set forth in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. In this context, the outcomes of the recently concluded Summit meeting of the General Assembly on the review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration are of special relevance.</p> <p>4. We seek to reaffirm the commitments made in Geneva and build on them in Tunis by focussing on Financial Mechanisms for bridging the digital divide, <i>including the gender digital divide</i>, on Internet Governance and related issues, as well as on follow-up and implementation of the Geneva and Tunis decisions, as referenced in chapters two, three and four of [the operational part of this document/the operational document: Tunis agenda for action].</p>
Key principles	<p>5. We reaffirm our resolution in the quest to ensure that everyone can benefit from the opportunities that ICTs can offer, by recalling that governments, as well as private sector, civil society and the United Nations and other international organizations, should work together to: improve access to information and communication infrastructure and technologies as well as to information and knowledge; build capacity; increase confidence and security in the use of ICTs; create an enabling environment at all levels; develop and widen ICT applications; foster and respect cultural diversity; recognize the role of the media and <i>the new opportunities in the information society for participatory and pluralistic media</i>; address <i>the social justice ethical</i> dimensions of the Information Society; and encourage international and regional cooperation. We confirm that these are the key principles for building an inclusive Information society, the elaboration of which is found in the Geneva Declaration of Principles.</p>
Development orientation	<p>6. We recognise that knowledge is vital to human existence and that strengthening diffusion and exchange of knowledge would contribute to economic, social and cultural development, and help all countries reach the internationally-agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.</p> <p>7. Furthermore, ICTs have made it possible for a vastly larger population than at any time in the past to join in sharing and expanding the base of human knowledge, and contributing to its further growth and application to education, health and science. ICTs have enormous potential to expand access to quality education, to boost literacy and universal primary education, and to facilitate the learning process itself and thus lay the groundwork for a fully-inclusive and open information and knowledge society.</p> <p>8. We also recognize that, [just as] the ICT revolution can have a tremendous positive impact as an instrument of sustainable development ‡, in the absence of an appropriate enabling environment at national and</p>

international levels, it could reinforce and increase existing social and economic divisions, widen the gap between rich and poor countries, between regions, and between individuals—including between *women and men* ~~men and women~~. (*The Gender Caucus supports removal of the brackets*)

9. We reaffirm our commitment to removing all obstacles to bridging the digital divide, *including the gender digital divide*, particularly those that hinder the full achievement of the economic and social development of countries and the welfare of their citizens, in particular, in developing countries.

Alternate 9. We urge states to take steps to assist in overcoming obstacles to bridge the digital divide, particularly those that impede the full achievement of the economic and social development by the population of the affected countries and hinder the well-being of their population. (*The Gender Caucus proposes that this paragraph be deleted.*)

10. We shall strive unremittingly, therefore, to promote universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to ICTs for *women and men*² ~~people~~ everywhere, to ensure that the benefits are more evenly distributed between and within societies, and to bridge the digital divide in order to create digital opportunities for all.

Alternate 10+11: We shall strive unremittingly, therefore, to promote universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to ICTs for people everywhere, to ensure that the benefits of the Information Society are more evenly distributed among and within societies, and to bridge the digital divide in order to create digital opportunities for all. In so doing, we shall pay special attention to the roles and special needs of all countries and all segments of society and **we reaffirm** the commitments taken in this regard in the Geneva Declaration of Principles. (*The Gender Caucus proposes that the paragraph alternate 10+11 be deleted.*)

11. To that end, we shall pay special attention to the roles and particular needs of all countries and all segments of society, and reaffirm the commitments taken in this regard in the Geneva Declaration. (*The Gender Caucus proposes that paragraph 11 be deleted.*)

Alternate 11A. To that end **we shall pay special attention to gender equality and to** the role and particular needs of children, young ~~people~~, *as well as older people* ~~women~~, marginalized and vulnerable groups of society including migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees, unemployed and underprivileged people, minorities and nomadic people, people with disabilities, poor people, particularly those living in remote, rural and marginalized urban areas, indigenous peoples, *women and men*³ ~~people~~ of developing countries, countries with economies in transition, Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States, Landlocked Developing

² Please note it is: “women and men” and not “woman and man”.

³ Please note it is plural: “women and men” and not “woman and man”.

	<p>Countries, Highly Indebted Poor Countries, countries and territories under occupation, and countries recovering from conflict or natural disasters.</p> <p>Alternate 11B. To that end, we shall pay special attention to the role and particular needs of the youth, women and older people and to the special situation of indigenous peoples. We also recognize the role and special needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups of society including the disabled, migrants, internally displaced persons, refugees, underprivileged and poor people and of people of countries facing adverse economic situations, geographic isolation, occupation, conflicts or natural disasters. <i>(The Gender Caucus proposes that this paragraph be deleted.)</i></p>
Further commitments	<i>We hereby undertake further commitments to ...*</i>
Resource mobilisation, including human resources	<i>We commit ourselves to mobilising resources, including human resources, to*</i>
Participation and international cooperation	12. We are convinced that our goals can be accomplished through the involvement, cooperation and partnership of governments and all stakeholders and that international <i>partnership</i> cooperation and solidarity at all levels are indispensable if the fruits of the Information Society are to be shared equitably by all.
Conclusion	<p>13. Our efforts will not stop with the conclusion of the Summit. The emergence of the global Information Society to which we all contribute provides increasing opportunities for all our peoples and for the global community that were unimaginable only a few years ago. We must harness these opportunities.</p> <p>14. [We strongly believe that full and timely implementation of decisions we took in Geneva and in Tunis, the establishment of appropriate, <i>multistakeholder</i> follow-up mechanisms, and closely integrating this process in the overall strategy embodied in the Millennium Declaration—through openness, inclusiveness and transparency; promotion of co-operation among stakeholders; and flexibility—is the way to achieve this goal. We therefore reaffirm our strong resolve to develop and implement an effective and sustainable response to challenges and opportunities of building a truly global Information Society that benefits all our peoples.] <i>(The Gender Caucus supports this paragraph and proposes that the brackets be removed.)</i></p>

* Note: *Text in italics indicates that additional contributions are required for drafting suggestions.*