



As briefly reported in the last issue, the United Nations has announced the *World Summit on the Information Society* to be held in December, 2003 in Geneva and in 2005 in Tunis. This article gives an overview on the basic aims and activities in the framework of this summit and invites church and NGO communicators to actively participate in the preparatory phase.

The „World Summit on the Information Society“ (WSIS)

By Christoph Dietz, CAMECO

When and where?

The first phase of the World Summit will take place in Geneva, hosted by the government of Switzerland, from December 10 – 12, 2003. It will address a broad range of themes concerning the Information Society and adopt a Declaration of Principles and an Action Plan. The second phase of the World Summit will take place in Tunis, hosted by the government of Tunisia, in 2005. Development themes will be a key focus in this second meeting and it will assess the progress made since the first phase and adopt any further Action Plan to be taken.

What are the objectives?

The Summit plans to adopt:

1 a Declaration embodying a set of principles and rules of conduct aimed at establishing a more inclusive and equitable Information Society; and

2 a Plan of Action formulating operational proposals and concrete measures to be taken so that people all over the world will benefit more equitably from the opportunities presented by the Information Society.

Which themes are proposed for handling?

Building the infrastructure

- The role of telecommunications, investment and technology in creating the “Information Society” infrastructure and bridging the “Digital Divide”

Opening the gates

- Achieving universal and equitable access to the “Information Society”
- Meeting the needs of the developing world

Services and applications

- The implications of the “Information Society”

for economic, social and cultural development.

- The implication of the “Information Society” for sciences

The needs of users

- Consumer protection, privacy and security
- Relevant content, reflecting cultural diversity and the right to communicate
- Ethics of the information society
- Worker protection and workplace privacy

Developing a framework

- The role of governments, the private sector and civil society in shaping the “Information Society”
- Information as a common good (public domain information)
- Intellectual property rights and legal exceptions
- Freedom of expression
- Telecommunication and Internet access tariff policies

ICT and Education

- ICT as a lever for educational change
- The learning environment: ICT, teachers, learners and content
- The needs of current workers

The Summit’s High-Level Organising Committee will propose a draft agenda at the preparation meeting (PrepCom1) to be held on July 1-5, 2002. The PrepCom 2 (Spring 2003) will examine the draft documents to be presented at the Summit, and the PrepCom 3 (Autumn 2003) is planned to develop a Declaration of Principles and a Plan of Action.

Who will participate?

For the first time this Summit will bring together heads of states, representatives of government, parliament, international organisations, local

You are welcome to join and to share your ideas and proposals with us! As we depend mainly on voluntary work, any contribution - active participation in our mailing list and preparatory meetings, translation in other languages, financial aid, distribution of leaflets etc. - is welcome. You may subscribe to the public mailing list of CRIS, called *CrisInfo*, from the web at http://www.comunica.org/mailman/listinfo/crisinfo_comunica.org. (or via email by sending a blank message to: crisinfo-request@comunica.org with the word "subscribe" in the subject line). Or contact the co-ordinator of the campaign directly, Seán Ó Siochrá (sean@nexus.ie) or the Secretariat of the Platform for Communication Rights (Pradip Thomas, pt@wacc.org.uk).

- at the moment more concrete steps are being developed.

CRIS was established in October 2001 by the Platform for Communication Rights. The *Platform for Communication Rights* is a world-wide network of NGOs working in the field of communication. It is constituted by about twenty non-governmental organisations active in the field of communication like e.g. the *World Association for Christian Communication (WACC)*, the *World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC)*, the *Latin American Association for Educational Broadcasting (ALER)*, the *Association for Progressive Communication (APC)*, the *Panos Institute*, the *Catholic Media Council (CAMECO)* and the *Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED)*.

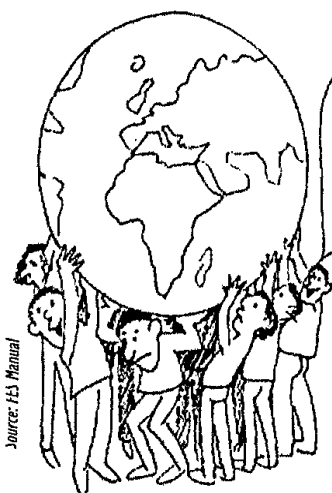
Where to find General Information on the Summit may be found?

- At the *Civil Society Division of the WSIS Executive Secretariat*: This division was created to facilitate the participation of civil society in the preparatory process leading up to the Summit. It is an administrative and support team. Its mandate is to provide civil society participants with the information and working materials necessary for their full inclusion in the preparatory process; to facilitate workshops and seminars on key issues affecting civil society; to guide on-line discussion groups of civil society participants; and to work closely with the media to ensure that the issues of civil society will be heard. Further Information: www.geneva2003.org

- At the "official" web site of the World Summit on www.wsis.int

- If you want to know more about the *International Telecommunication Union (ITU)* go to www.itu.ch.

S U M M A R Y R É S U M É R E S U M E N



We worked terribly hard!



We did nothing because we were not involved.

Les Nations Unies ont annoncé l'organisation d'un « Sommet Mondial sur la Société de l'Information » à Genève en décembre 2003 et en 2005 à Tunis. Quels peuvent être les enjeux et l'importance d'un tel Sommet Mondial pour les communicateurs des Eglises et des ONG ?

Cet article présente une vue générale des objectifs et des activités qui se planifient en relation

avec cet événement et invite les communicateurs des Eglises et des ONG à participer activement à sa préparation, dès à présent. Ceux qui veulent en savoir plus sur ce Sommet Mondial peuvent visiter les deux sites suivants : www.geneva2003.org (site du secrétariat de la société civile) et www.wsis.int (site officiel).

Las Naciones Unidas han anunciado la "Cumbre Mundial para la Sociedad de Información", la cual se realizará en diciembre 2003 en Ginebra y en 2005 en Túnez. ¿Qué finalidades tiene esta Cumbre Mundial y por qué es importante para comunicadores de las iglesias y de ONGs? Este artículo resume los hechos básicos e invita a participar activamente ya en la fase preparatoria. En los próximos dos años "Media Forum" informará continuamente sobre el desarrollo respecto a la participación activa de la Sociedad Civil en la Cumbre. Hasta ahora todavía no hay mucha información disponible en Español: en www.geneva2003.org (del Secretariado de la Sociedad Civil de la Cumbre) y en www.wsis.int (la página oficial) ya se encuentran algunos materiales. Además, la Campaña "Derechos Comunicativos en la Sociedad de Información" (sean@nexus.ie) iniciada en octubre 2001 por un conjunto de ONGs de comunicación invita a participar activamente en la preparación de la Cumbre.