

Volunteer Action Plan 2003-2005

Document for submission to WSIS, presented at plenary on 12 December 2003.

12 December 2003

Mr. Chairman, Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman:

On behalf of the WSIS Volunteer Family, we thank you for making it possible for us to be actively involved in the WSIS process.

I would like to mention some of the results of the extended process of involvement by the Volunteer Family¹ dating back to the Bamako Regional Conference in May 2002:

- We organized a series of consultations including an International Symposium held in Dakar in October 2003;
- We have just concluded a two-day Summit Event on Volunteering and ICTs.
- We have created a variety of information resources for the Summit, including a web site on Volunteering and ICTs, and a set of substantive documents on volunteering available on the official WSIS web site.

The process has led us to create a Volunteering Action Plan which identifies a range of priorities between now and Tunis 2005. These build on the role of Volunteering in capacity building as recognized in the WSIS Plan of Action document. We consider them to be important contributions to the successful implementation of the Summit's Plan.

The Volunteering Action Plan 2003-2005 contains points related to both sides of the ICT-Volunteering relationship.

First, on how Volunteering can help to expand the use of ICT for Human Development.

At the operational level, we propose:

¹ Comprised by the United Nations Volunteers programme, IAVE, ICVolunteers, etc. (to complete)

- Support and promotion of the role of volunteers for local content generation;
- Mechanisms to make Free/Open Source software –itself a product of volunteer work— applicable to development needs wherever suitable;
- Widespread involvement of volunteers in Community Telecenters, both locally and internationally;
- Support for national and international university volunteer networks in ICT for Development;
- ICT Volunteering contributions to programmes that combat HIV/AIDS.
- ICT Volunteering initiatives for digital inclusion of people with disabilities and homebound people.
- ICT support for volunteers in natural disaster situations
- Volunteer involvement in ICT initiatives aimed to create opportunities and to provide information in refugee camps.

As policy issues we have identified the need to:

- Establish and promote national and international online volunteering services;
- Raise awareness of the contributions that ICT volunteering brings to development;
- Support Diaspora volunteer networks in ICT for Development;
- Promote corporate volunteering initiatives in ICT for Development;
- Recognize ICT Volunteering as one factor in mainstreaming ICT in development processes.
- Implement a calendar of events and meetings to extend collaboration among volunteer organizations and other actors.

Secondly, on how ICT can be used by Volunteers and Volunteer Organizations:

- Define and promote groupware systems and tools that will help volunteers and volunteer organizations to access valuable information resources and better communicate. One use of it will be to establish an e-Forum for the WSIS Volunteering Working Group during the period running up to 2005.
- Create a “map” or catalog of ICT Volunteering involvement.
- Harness the power of ICT for marketing, awareness raising and advocacy purposes.
- Make use the proper ICT to facilitate the involvement of people with disabilities to volunteer.

The Summit process was an encouraging beginning, but we need to further strengthen cooperation between the volunteer sector, governments, academia, the private sector, and other civil society organizations. We look forward to joint action enabling us to expand the power of solidarity that is inherent to volunteerism.

Thank you for your attention.

Presented by Viola Krebs, Focal Point of the WSIS Volunteer Family

Agenda

- ✓ CIVICUS World Assembly, 21-24 March 2004, Botswana
- ✓ Open Software Conference, June 2004, Norway
- ✓ IAVE World Conference, 17-21 August 2004, Spain
- ✓ Eurofestation, November 2004, the Netherlands

- ✓ Regional Conferences by continent to be determined