

Message from the World Electronic Media Forum II to the World Summit on the Information Society (16 November 2005)

The 300 participants in the second World Electronic Media Forum, meeting in Tunis on 15 and 16 November 2005 on the role of broadcasters in bridging the digital divide, are committed to an open and participative information society.

To this end, they call on the heads of state and government attending the World Summit on the Information Society to:

1. Develop the information society in the spirit of freedom of expression, pluralism, cultural diversity and public service as set out in the Broadcasters' Declaration of 2003.
2. Guarantee free and open access to editorially independent radio, television and new non-linear services in all countries through appropriate legislation and funding arrangements.
3. Support the development of technologies, software and open standards for the production of quality low-cost media content oriented to the needs of local populations.
4. Enable broadcasters to restructure, and to re-train their staff, in ways adapted to respective social, technical and economic conditions, in order to optimize the "digital dividend" offered by the new technologies for production and transmission.
5. Provide support for urgent action to preserve the world's audiovisual heritage, enabling future generations to access archives on their own social and cultural history, and for establishment of an international ad hoc group on audiovisual archives comprising the world's broadcasting unions, UNE SCO, specialist organizations and financing agencies.
6. Affirm the vital role of the media as communicators of information, exchange and dialogue between cultures, and of public service broadcasters in particular as having a particular duty of technical and programme innovation.
7. Foster different forms of media for local communities, including associative radio, to improve dialogue and democratic participation, particularly in rural areas with poor infrastructure.
8. Encourage the transfer of competence and technology in digital production, transmission and asset management through regional and international cooperation and solidarity – including that of the world's broadcasting unions.
9. Collaborate with broadcasters in addressing global development and humanitarian issues, for example within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.
10. Promote before the UN Security Council an initiative to improve the security and physical integrity of journalists, media collaborators and associates in situations of armed conflict, and support practical efforts, such as safety training, for all situations where journalists are at risk because of their work.

The broadcasters present at the WEMF request recognition by the WSIS as full partners in establishing a truly global information society – not least as participants in the Internet Governance Forum.