



CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
COMMISSION CANADIENNE POUR L'UNESCO

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NEWS RELEASE

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Ottawa--Canada should take global leadership in the promotion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as a universal and affordable public good. This is one of the recommendations included in the Communiqué released today by representatives of the Canadian Civil Society that participated in the conference *Paving the Road to Tunis – World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) II: The Views of Canada's Civil Society on the Geneva Plan of Action and the Prospects for Phase II* organized by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO in May.

Representatives of civil society released the communiqué after spending the last weeks finalizing the document so it would include their major concerns pertaining to ICTs and traditional media. The communiqué introduces their vision and expectations in the building of an information society in Canada and around the world.

The document includes sections on Human Rights, Freedom of Expression and Diversity; Affordability and Accessibility; Gender Equality; Persons with Disabilities; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural and Linguistic Diversity; Privacy; Access to Knowledge; Education and the Information Society; Internet Governance; Financing Mechanisms; Free & Open Source Software (FLOSS); and Partnerships.

The communiqué will be distributed through the Canadian networks of the organizations represented at the Winnipeg conference and at the international level, through the diverse civil society caucuses established within the WSIS structure. The Canadian Commission for UNESCO will also include the document as a part of the Winnipeg conference published proceedings that will be distributed at the 33rd UNESCO General Conference in October in Paris and at the World Summit in Tunis in November.

The conference *Paving the Road to Tunis* took place from May 13-15 in Winnipeg and brought together 200 participants from all provinces and territories to discuss issues related to building information societies in Canada. The conference was a preparatory meeting for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that will take place in November in Tunisia. The first phase of WSIS took place in Geneva in December 2003.

The role of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO is to act as a forum for governments and civil society, and to mobilize the participation of Canadian organizations and committed individuals in UNESCO's mandated areas: education, natural and social sciences, culture and communication and information.

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Contact persons:

Pauline Dugré, Communication and Information Programme Officer, Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 613.566.4414 ext. 4558 or 1.800.263.5588 ext. 4558

Robert Guerra, Civil society Drafting Group Facilitator, Privaterra, 416.893.0377