

**Civil Society Statement on Human Rights
PrepCom1, WSIS second phase, plenary session
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**Presented by
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I am Souhayr Belhassen, Vice-president of the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, and Vice-president of the Tunisian Human Rights League.

At the beginning of this WSIS second phase, civil society organizations present in Hammamet wish to express their objectives and their working priorities in view of the Tunis Summit in 2005.

At a time where the foundations of international human rights law are being challenged by newly adopted laws and measures, everywhere in the world, in the name of a fight against terrorism, it was important that the Declaration of principles adopted in Geneva in 2003 makes reference to the fundamental principles of universality and indivisibility of all human rights, to the right to development, and specially reaffirms the necessary respect of the integrality of Article 19 of the UDHR on freedom of expression, of information and of communication.

This second phase must go beyond that. Indeed, we intend that it clarifies these principles by also reaffirming the fundamental principle of non discrimination, the necessity to respect international labor standards, and the recognition that a true security can only be reached with measures entirely compatible with internationally recognized human rights, not least the right to privacy. In addition, we cannot accept that the Declaration of principles admits that the rule of law is supposed to «reflect national realities» rather than being in coherence with the legally binding obligations of States according to the international human rights treaties they have ratified.

The Tunis phase will focus on Internet governance and infrastructure financing issues. We will take part in this work, making sure that its results ensure the promotion of the effective implementation of the whole set of human rights, and do not derogate from them.

Without effective implementation, the principles would indeed stay without substance. We request that WSIS allow for these principles to be translated into an information and communication society serving human rights. To this end, we wish that the Summit define precise indicators allowing to evaluate the realization of this objective and set up an international mechanism for their assessment on this ground, at the local, regional and international level.

Finally, we are entirely conscious of the fundamental importance of holding WSIS here and for the people of all the global South countries, and we thus wish its success. However, we wish to reaffirm that it is the duty of the two host countries of the Summit to show exemplarity, especially in the realization of freedom of expression, of information, of communication, as well as of freedom of association and the right to privacy.