ONE PAGE ABOUT COMCOM – a view by

* **What is comcom?**

x

* **What are possibilities and duties linked to being an active participant in ComCom**

x

* **How can ComCom  operate inside WSF process at large, for the progress of this process**

x

* **What are the notions used when answering the first three points**

x

* **What are the topics to  discuss in more depth in this meeting**

x

* **What are the review item points for which i propose to be exposing person**

See “@” sign in the list below

A List of inputs related to comcom working plan paragraphs

Type of input, see central columns

* VISION : input related to vision - terminology - fundamentals - vision - vocabulary - identity
* MODES : input related  ot our modes of operation inside comcom
* COOP: suggestion about concrete cooperation issue with existing group in  ongoing dynamics
* OUTREACH : to IC organisations an WSF participant organizations about comcom and facilitation
* NOT? why/ how  did not we act as we said in the document ? what can be done?
* NEWPROP : suggestion about opening new topics /facilitation initiative
* CALENDAR : input related to wsf calendar (time line  on, paper sheet )
* DOC : proposal of change/update in the comcom working plan

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| DOC related to practical  update of document Pierre / Caritas France | Type of input |  |
| **Background and common agenda** |  |  |
| A-1 dimensions of com - (somehow adressed in first review of expectations part 1) |  |  |
| A-2 com practices in WSF context (somehow adressed in first review of expectations part 1s) |  |  |
| A-3 challenge of common process in 2011 -12 |  |  |
| A-4 involvement of IC ( to be adressed at the end of afternoon part 5) |  |  |
| A-5 8 working groups plan |  |  |
| A-6 validation and reference text |  |  |
| A-7 comcom cooperation with office and extended staff |  |  |
| A-8 organisations involved |  |  |
| B-1 intercommission issues ( to be adressed in the end of meeting part5) |  |  |
| B-2 seminar on ic communication issues |  |  |
| B-3 integrate tools – portal issues |  |  |
| **Internal communication** |  |  |
| 1-1 sfex initiative |  |  |
| 1-2 newsletter |  |  |
| 1-3 portal common redesign |  |  |
| 1-4 tool for wsf related groups |  |  |
| **Shared coverage** |  |  |
| 2-1 video exchange project |  |  |
| 2-2 radio exchange project |  |  |
| 2-3 alternative media |  |  |
| 2-4 virtual media center |  |  |
| **Teams and tools** |  |  |
| 3-1 stimulation of technical webteam – wsf software support community group |  |  |
| 3-2 stimulate exchange on design of websites |  |  |
| 3-3 wsf participants data base |  |  |
| 3-4 global campaign on wsf sustainability |  |  |
| 3-5 visual identity group |  |  |
| 3-6 address cultural, artistic and dialogic dimensions of communication |  |  |
| 3-7 commission strategy seminar |  |  |
| 3-8 office expanded |  |  |
| **IC and other commissions** |  |  |
| 4-0 tomorrow commission meeting |  |  |
| 4-5 IC meeting inputs from comcom |  |  |
| 4-1 exchanges with expansion |  |  |
| 4-2 exchanges with methodology |  |  |
| 4-3 exchanges with ressources |  |  |
| 4-4 exchanges with stategy |  |  |

THE COMMUNICATION COMMISSION

>> [this document is mid October 2010, before Dakar rush and assuming there was a two year process budget](http://openfsm.net/projects/communication-commission/communication-commission-draft-plan-v.01)

Now  we can make a collective update six months later after Dakar strains and with no clear budget perspectives

draft plan 2011-2012

A - BACKGROUND

A-1 The Communication Commission was established in 2003 and has since then been addressing the different dimensions of information and communication related with the WSF process. This has to do with the visibility of the WSF as a whole, but also with many other issues – among which facilitating the exchange of information, the communication among participants and promoting the possibilities offered by the internet and other technologies.

The communication process is critical in building the narrative of the World Social Forum as a political space. The diverse and plural practices of alternative and independent, community media, social networks and citizens content production push for the democratization of communications and communication rights and represent a huge potential to boost the mobilization and struggles for social change.

A-2 The experience accumulated in these years has allowed to better define the scope and concrete possibilities of communication and information activities, which are becoming key practices for the progress of the WSF process. The latter is taking the form of a variety of events and dates, spread over the next two years   
It is moving from «yearly events», owned by regional organisation committees (with exception of the Global Day of Action) to a «WSF calendar» with a succession and diversity of events locally owned, and of dates (mobilisations) promoted by thematic networks and assemblies within the WSF dynamics.

A-3 The challenge is now to help stimulate inter-communication processes between committees and participants, make the linkage of these dates and events felt in a common process, and make this common process visible to media and public opinion in general. The form adopted for 2009-2010 (including moments/days dedicated to a common issue – such as “another exit from the crisis is possible”) leads us to explore novel ways in communication capable of enabling massive inclusion of new actors in the process.

 >> status?

A-4 The involvement of IC member organizations in the communicational process remains the main condition for the success of these proposals, as well as the active participation of and synergy with the organising committees of the “global” and “local” / thematic social forums. In 2011 and 2012, since the form of the forum has not yet been defined (after Dakar), from the communication point of view it is important to maintain and reinforce a permanent and inclusive exchange among all relevant actors and to support and adapt to the progressive changes that will take place, helping to connect and facilitating the alliance-building.   
-assess the current directions -  WSF calendar ,   extended social forum practices and concerted participation in non WSF events

The Commission has been active with 4 «shared communication projects» in Porto Alegre 2005 and Nairobi 2007, and with 6 more structured projects in Belem 2009; it has taken care of communication and information support for the Global Day of Action in 2008 and the development of Social Forum “expanded” distance participation.

A-5  The Communication Commission has a working plan based on 8 working groups (international press/maintream media; independent/alternative media; radio; video-tv; intercommunication/social forum expanded; technologies; memory; languages/other dimensions of communication), reviewed in the Berlin (2007), Abuja (2008), Rabat (2009) and Mexico City (2010) IC meetings, addressing media (both indipendent and mainstream), intercommunication (among participants) and online participation, internal communication, memory, visual identity and “other languages” (both in terms of translation and of different communication means, including artistic expression).

 >> status?

A-6 The Commission's plan has been updated, presented and approved at every IC meeting. The working groups are open to observers and volunteers who are involved in communication activities and want to help the WSF process. There are some reference text (Guidelines, How we take decisions online, communication plans, reports from meetings, etc.) in the Commission's space on [www.openfsm.net](http://www.openfsm.net/).   
>> status?

A-7 The Commission operates in coordination with the S.Paulo office staff and is trying to activate number of interns/dedicated staff from IC member organisations for the general communication tasks (in order to have inputs and translations in different regions of the world). As of September 2010, the Comcom's space in Openfsm.net has 100+ participants (of which 15-20 more regular contributors) and various mailing lists for the working groups.

 >> status?

A-8  The execution of the plan is taken in charge by organisations who are members of the IC, who sign an agreement to manage funds according to the [resources' commission guidelines](http://openfsm.net/projects/resources-commission/project-home/09-22-08-RM-Draft-Guidelines.doc) (pdf) and to the [comcom funding terms of reference](http://openfsm.net/projects/communication-commission/terms-of-reference-en). The administration of the funds is made through the collaboration with the Ethical Bank Foundation in Italy.

  >> status?

B - WORKING PLAN

B-1 In the IC in Mexico (May 2010), the Communication commission promoted a debate on [the future] communication strategies for the WSF process, starting with an exchange on the work done in each of the IC commissions in order to to build together the elements for a coherent communication strategy. The discussion allowed to address the complexity and broadness of the issues at stake, as well as to share ideas and proposals. With its progressive expansion and decentralization, communication becomes key for the WSF process – allowing new people to get to know about the wsf, about the way it works, how to participate, what is being discussed and what outcomes emerge. For 2011, the Communication commission will continue to stimulate and work with all the IC commissions and member organisations, to integrate and redesign its plan and activities.

    >> status?

B-2  Moreover, it will prepare for a seminar on IC communication policies, starting in Dakar 2011 and open to a wider public of wsf participants who are interested in contributing with concrete experiences, resources and competences.

    >> status?

B-3  At the same time, the Commission will consolidate the work done in the last 3 years with the tools it created and promoted: from the websites that need to be more integrated among each other and with a portal website (more than just a restyling of the general WSF website), to the activation of a participants database and the further developing the concept and practice of distance participation (social forum extended – interlink) and of different communicational dimensions and languages.

 >> status?

The working plan is divided in 3 parts, each addressing specific aspects of information and communication.

1. FACILITATING COMMUNICATION WITH SF ORGANISERS AND BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS   
  
It is important to assure that the infrastructure for communication be prioritized and guaranteed in/for the next World Social Forum events, following the guidelines defined in the IC document issued in Berlin (2007). Moreover, particular attention should be given to include Free, Libre, and Open Source Software communities, as well as Free Culture movements (anti-Intellectual Property, creative commons) and (inter)Net Neutrality, mobile networks/infrastructure. The Commission can be supportive to organising committees for these issues.   
  
  
1-1 - SFEX (Social forum expanded): after two years of experimentation, the Commission will work in the direction of mainstreaming the “extended” mode, i.e. direct links and distance participation between Forum related activities. This “instrument” is promising and challenging at the same time, with an enourmous potential to include and help dialogue between participants.

>> status?

1-2- Distribute information on the WSF process by supporting the WSF Office in improving the bi-weekly newsletter, bringing it from 4 to 6 languages, linking it to the WSF participants database [see further down]. Ensuring that the website and forum agenda is kept updated.

>> status?

1-3 - WSF Portal: Redefine the general “institutional” website (forumsocialmundial.org.br) together with the S.Paulo Office, shaped as a portal, linking to the WSF “universe” (events, process and participation), with functionalities that may include the integration of activity and outcomes registration, online donation, memory, multimedia [video, radio, other media], virtual media center, etc.

>> status?

1-4– Improve and maintain a tool for wsf-related working groups to participate in the wsf process – openfsm.net -, in order to facilitate exchanges among organisations and individuals. The website includes the online working spaces of the International Council and open spaces for continuous on line participation and durable collaboration, interlinking participants in the wsf process and supporting them in its use.

>> status?   
  
2. PROMOTING SHARED COVERAGE AND MEMORY OF EVENTS

2-1- The video exchange hub (wsftv): since the Global Day of Action 2008, wsftv.net has been used to facilitate the building of a online video community to promote the coverage of the different social forum events around the world. The general objective is to develop the visual memory archive in terms of mapping, cataloging and uploading all available video material. In 2011-2012 it will be further developed and continue to collect the image memory of the forum, help enhance the visibility of the WSF events (also towards public tv broadcasters) as well as experiment on live streaming.

>> status ?   
  
2-2- The Radio exchange platform (forosocialderadios) has been renewed in 2010 and must be consolidated and expanded with the participation of radios from all continents, also through the support of a campaign for communication rights, where community radios have a strong engagement.   
>> status ?

2-3- The alternative media platform (ciranda), which was created with the first edition of the forum in Porto Alegre and is dedicated to the animation and edition of a collaborative platform for the coverage of themes and events of the wsf among alternative media and social communicators – in 2011 will increase its contacts, visibility and access of existing and new participants from all continents.

>> status ?

2-4- The Virtual Media Center (worldsocialforum.info) will be linked into the portal, while the work on the international press will concentrate on updating and networking journalists around the WSF themes in synergy with the local organisers of sf events.   
>> status ?

3. BUILDING TEAMS AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE GLOBAL WSF PROCESS

3-1 Past experience with development of WSF websites has lead to try to setup a “Technical webteam “and a “WSF Software support community” in order to work with a community of developers worldwide to help find better technical solutions within a “political” context and promoting the use of free/libre open source software.

Several websites and tools have been created for the wsf process throughout time. Today there are 2 main servers in common hosting them: wsftv.net, openfsm.net, forosocialderadios.org, participants.worldsocialforum.info, forumsocialmundial.info, and the the development server (svc) for code exchange, as well as 2 experimental opensource softwares for streaming and teleconferencing. A further advancement in the involvement of freesoftware communities and activist will be persued, and a participatory process to define needs and functionalities for the existing and future developments.

3-2 The objective is thus to consolidate and manage existing websites and tools, allowing where possible data exchange and consistency - as well as to stimulate sharing of experience about design and functionnalities of event sites between webteams associated to various events and processes.

>> status?

On the infrastructure side, the tasks are aimed at optimizing servers and hosting, data transmission, softwares and databases for the different needs of communication described in this plan.

For 2011-2012, the following tools (initiated in 2010) should be improved/developed:   
  
3-3 - WSF Participants database: reorganise, update and maintain a database of participants (both individuals and organisations, including media) of the WSF as a whole – allowing access to organisers and participants and connecting it to the WSF portal and to the newsletter(s), as well as to registration systems from event sites.   
>> status ?

3-4- Develop a global campaign for self-sustainability of WSF (based on the organisations' and participants ownership of the wsf process - in terms of both inkind and economic resources) and promote the online donation system in connection with the participants' database and in collaboration with the Resources commission.

>> status ?

Visual identity and other dimensions of communication

3-5 - For a coherence in the online tools promoted by the WSF, there is the need of having some elements of common visual identity in order to make the connection among the various events visible and immediate. The activity will consist in stimulating a group of “wsf designers” and the production of promotional “materials” for the wsf process (graphics design, logo, banners, general visual identity) in open digital formats to be shared and promoted throughout, as the ones adopted by the 2010 events, and to be used for virtual communication (websites, newsletters, widgets, viral distribution, etc.).   
>> status?

3-6 - As discussed in Porto Alegre 2010 and in the Mexico IC, the wsf process needs to address cultural, artistic and dialogic dimensions of communication: cultivating participatory methods of communication emerging from the Forum dynamics and linking the different events.

Dimensions of the cultural programme in past WSFs and the conception of the WSF in Mumbai have demonstrated the potential of cultural expression and artistic languages as a means to stimulate creative and innovative strategic planning, political understanding, motivated participation and respect for cultural diversity.

These ‘other languages’ have also been used within the planning and execution of elements of the political programme within the WSF process (seminars, workshops and assemblies) as effective methodologies to ensure ‘dialogic’ dynamic participation, the exchange of knowledges, consensual decision-making and bridging between social movements and organised sectors/NGOs within civil society to strengthen their events and integrate their campaigns in a global quest for social transformation.

Above all, cultural expression and artistic languages are effective means for communicating to those who are sceptical about or resistant to the aims and claims of the WSF, or outside its social and political networks. These dimensions celebrate the humanity and visions of the WSF protagonists, present proposals in an inviting, engaging and dialogical form rather a didactic and ideological form, and affirm the multiple intelligences, humanities and capacities of those receiving our communication.

Used with confidence, these ‘other languages’ can ensure the WSF itself becomes much more participatory, dialogic and humanizing. The communication commission wants to stimulate this approach and identify ways to facilitate its discussion.

>> status?

 Decentralizing and strategizing   
  
Finally, other two activities could be of great importance in the strenghtening of the WSF process – since a more mid-term strategic work is necessary:   
  
3-7 - Commission strategy seminar

A 2-3 days meeting to discuss in depth communication strategy issues related to the mid- and long-term WSF process, networking, promotion as well as to the work on the detailed plan for 2012. A diagnostic of what social movements and global civil society is using to communicate (in terms of tools, campaigns, resources) should be prepared to inform the discussion. This meeting could involve various IC commissions members, but also observers interested in contributing. Date to be defined (depending also on resources), possibly by May 2011.

[see lg sheet info](http://openfsm.net/projects/communication-commission/comcom-icmeeting-sheet-paris)

3-8 - Office expanded:

in January 2009, in Belem, a proposal to develop a “decentralized” wsf office was made and presented at the IC. The idea is to have a number of people hosted by IC member organisations who can work on supporting the S.Paulo office. The communication commission in particular has supported this proposal and started discussions with several organisations who may be willing to host or provide people for this end, specifically for communications tasks, as well as support for translations. For the latter, this group could also constitute the core of the translators pool (6/8 languages: EN, ES, PT, FR, DE, AR, HI, SW), in order to enlarge the number of “official” languages of the WSF and make it possible to reach other geographical regions.

In 2010, the objective is to build this group and its Terms of reference, mainly on voluntary basis; the following IC member organisations have already been contacted or have demonstrated their interest: EED (Germany), Focus on the Global South (India, Thailand), Amarc, IPS, Via campesina (Indonesia), Sodnet (Kenya), TWN Africa (Ghana), Alternatives International (Canada - Morocco), Unponteper (Italy)  People health Movement ( india) ...

>>status?

