

# CONSTITUTION OF THE GLOBAL CITIES DIALOGUE ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

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## PREAMBLE

We, Mayors signatories of the Declaration of Helsinki "Mayors of the World for a Global Cities Dialogue on the information society";

Aware that the information society is a massive challenge and presents cities with a wide range of issues, changes and opportunities, from democracy to more cost effective services, including electronic commerce and others;

Believing that the development of the information society should be for the benefit of all citizens, communities and peoples of the world, regardless of race, social position, creed, gender, disability or age;

Recognising the role of local authorities in global areas of governance such as the divide between the "information rich" and the "information poor", low technological literacy, poor public access and shortage of skilled people,

Recognising the major role of cities in the development of electronic government and democracy, in the introduction of evolutionary innovation in public services, in creating a favourable business environment and in stimulating the wide uptake of electronic commerce and of the new economy;

Believing that global dialogues are essential for the achievement of mutual understanding, information exchange, and the emergence of best practices in the making of a global, inclusive, peaceful and multi-cultural society;

Considering the strong pioneering experience of cities and local and regional organisations in the implementation of information society technologies, in order to improve access and services for the citizens, consumer communities and business; and that a growing number of cities and local administrations have obtained very good and practical results, but that most cities are only in the beginning of a learning process;

Considering that solid foundations for the development of a Global Cities Dialogue on the information society already exist, notably in the context of the Joint Political Platform of the Telecities network and cities involved the former Global Bangemann Challenge, nowadays the Stockholm Challenge Award;

Considering that the Global Cities Dialogue was launched in Helsinki on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 1999, with the signatory ceremony of the Helsinki

Declaration;

Have gathered together in the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2000, and have agreed the following Constitution.

## NAME

The Global Cities Dialogue on the information Society (GCD) is an open and collective framework initiative of the member cities. A corporate logo is adopted and should be used in all actions under the umbrella of the GCD.

## MISSION

The mission of the Global Cities Dialogue (GCD) is to provide an open framework for all cities signatories of the Helsinki Declaration "Mayors of the World for a Global Cities Dialogue", for policy debate and action, based on the principles and commitments of the Declaration.

The Helsinki Declaration is attached to the present Constitution and forms an integral part of it.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Global Cities Dialogue is open to membership for all cities throughout the world complying with applicable UN regulations. Membership is subject to signature of the Declaration of Helsinki. Relevant organisations and institutions may participate as observers.

## ADMISSION

Admission to membership is normally instrumented through specific ceremonies of collective signature of the Helsinki Declaration by City Mayors, in order to enhance the visibility and political relevance of the GCD.

Admission would also be possible on written request by Mayors of cities wishing to join the Dialogue and sign the Declaration.

## RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS

All member cities have the right to participate in the various activities, events and actions of the GCD and have access to all information, data and documentation that the GCD Secretariat can provide.

Member cities have the obligation to support and promulgate the principles and the commitments of the Helsinki Declaration and shall liaise with other cities and relevant city networks and organisations in order to promote the GCD world-wide.

Member cities can dedicate resources to develop specific initiatives and to support the activities of the Secretariat or of other member cities. Relevant organisations proposed by member cities can also contribute to the goals and

means of the GCD with dedicated resources.

Member cities sitting in the steering structure will have to demonstrate a clear commitment to offer and implement specific actions that will help build the Dialogue into a relevant and exciting enterprise.

## ORGANISATION

The governance of the GCD is executed by:

- the General Assembly
- the Steering Committee
- the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Steering Committee
- the Secretariat of the Steering Committee

### The General Assembly

The General Assembly is composed of the Mayor, Deputy-Mayor or a nominated high political representative of the member cities. Its role is to oversee the overall policy and actions of the GCD with particular responsibility to:

- adopt any revisions of the Constitution
- elect the Chair, vice-Chairs and members of the Steering Committee
- deal with all matters placed on its agenda by the Steering Committee
- decide on the dissolution of the organisation.

The General Assembly shall convene at least once every year. General Assembly meetings shall be convened by way of a written notification to all member cities, at least two months before the date of the meeting. Notifications of an Assembly meeting shall be sent out at the request of the Chair or of one third of the members of the Steering Committee. The notification shall indicate the place of the meeting and the draft agenda.

All signatory cities will have the right to participate in the General Assembly of the GCD. Individuals from member cities and authorised observers are entitled to speak at meetings of the General Assembly. However, only City Mayors or their officially nominated representatives may vote, if a collective decision is needed.

Decisions shall be carried out irrespective of the number of member cities represented and by a simple majority of the votes cast.

Every General Assembly meeting shall be compiled in a minutes report reflecting all issues dealt with and all decisions taken. Every member shall receive a copy of these minutes.

### The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is an evolving and scalable structure, comprised of leading City Mayors or their delegated political representatives, and shall develop into a committee that is representative and balanced at the global level, including members from the major regions of the world and observers

from the most relevant organisations.

In order to maintain continuity, at least half of the members of the first Steering Committee will be elected for a two-year term. The other half will be elected for a one-year term. From then onwards all cities should be elected for two years. Elected cities will be able to apply for re-election for one additional period only.

The duties of the Steering Committee are to define the strategic direction of the GCD and to ensure that the strategic principles and commitments of the Helsinki Declaration are achieved.

To this end the Steering Committee develops and adopts an Annual Action Plan, comprising individual initiatives and events, common specific tasks related to the most relevant issues, and the information and communication strategy, with particular attention to the use of the Internet as a communication and participation tool.

The Steering Committee shall meet at least twice a year and whenever it is necessary to take decisions on matters within its competence. Committee meetings shall be convened by way of written notification to all Committee members, at least two months before the date of the meeting.

Notifications of a Steering Committee meeting shall be sent out at the request of the Chair or of three Committee members. The notification shall indicate the date and the place of the meeting and the draft agenda.

Members of the Steering Committee who fail to attend or to be represented at three meetings of the Committee in succession shall be assumed to have relinquished their membership.

Meetings of the Steering Committee are quorate only if at least the Chair or one Vice-Chair and four other members are directly represented. Decision making by the Steering Committee shall ordinarily be achieved by consensus. When it is necessary to make a decision on the basis of voting, decisions will be based on a simple majority. In the case of a tied vote, the Chair shall have a casting vote. For this purpose he can delegate to one of the Vice-Chairs.

The resolutions and decisions of the Steering Committee are recorded in minutes signed by the Chair or one of the Vice-Chairs and kept in a minute's book. A copy of the minutes of each meeting will be sent to each nominated representative of the member cities. The minute's book will be kept by the Secretariat.

## The Chair and the Vice-Chairs

The Steering Committee is chaired by a Mayor from a Member City who is elected by the GCD General Assembly, together with the Vice-Chairs and the other members of the Steering Structure, for a two years term. Nominations for the positions of the Chair and the Vice-Chairs may be made by the Steering Committee or at least six member cities from different countries.

The Chair is the principal representative of the GCD and chairs the meetings of the Steering Committee and of the General Assembly. He/she is assisted

by Vice-Chairs who also represent the GCD when appropriate. These Vice-Chairs should cover the major regions of the world.

The Chair and Vice-Chairs have the right to resign. Notifications of resignation shall be addressed to the Steering Committee.

## The Secretariat of the Steering Committee

Steering Committee is assisted by a Secretariat. The Chair City shall assure that adequate resources are provided to the Secretariat.

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Any proposal for a revision of the Constitution or the dissolution of the organisation shall emanate from the Steering Committee or from not less than six cities from different countries. Member cities shall be notified of the proposals at least two months before the meeting of the General Assembly at which they should be considered.

Decision on amendments to the Constitution or dissolution of the organisation will require at least two thirds majority of the represented member cities.

Voting should be made possible by electronic means.