Issue couplings for WSIS: Inserting development, gender and rights into ICT

ICT at WSIS is a hybrid issue?
The book about the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that the Association of Progressive Communications (APC) recently published, suggests that ICT as an issue is particularly susceptible to “hybridization.” That is, couplings with other issues, in the run-up to the World Summit, the articulation of ICT as an object of policy making (and contestation) is in many cases done by “splicing” ICT with other issues: ICT and development, ICT and privacy, ICT and gender, ICT and security, ICT and human rights, etc.

WSIS according to civil society: A platform for inserting rights and gender into the ICT agenda?
The WSIS is seen as it is disclosed by civil society organizations does show the presence of hybrid issues. We will see that the issues of rights/ICT at the heart of the organizations working directly on ICT, itself — appear the margins of the network issuecrawler.net.

Engendering issue-drift: Civil society attempts to renew the agenda from development/ICT to rights and gender?
The WSIS network as it is disclosed by the International Telecommunications Union / ITU and ITU-R, equally shown in the proceedings of hybrid issue WSIS. The ITU appears as caught up with development. Moreover, juxtaposing the civil society and the ITU networks, we gain a sense of the kind of re-definition of the planning issues that the civil society networks is trying to accomplish. One can say that the re-definition of civil society networks extending the kind of “articulation of ICT which the summit is to accomplish. But it is perhaps more pertinent to say that the civil society network is striving to open up the issue of ICT into rights and gender — to hybrid ICT even more. The question is, did they succeed?

Did civil society succeed in coupling ICT with rights and gender issues?
In order to give an answer to that question we take a closer look at the ICT groups, and building the presence of “rights” and “gender” is them. Gender was present in the composition of statements from the first round, and rights — as Senegalese presented it in the third round. But in a more recent, documents, an official declaration integrated by the president of the summit, both terms have disappeared. Instead of the uptake of the issues of civil society the WSIS process has shifted to the existing out of those issues, at least by 10 October 2003. In the SS/adopted text the term “civil society” is present, but not its issues. This could be read as implying that rather than involving civil society to participate in setting the agenda, the WSIS process involves civil society as an implied actor, with no specific issues of its own.