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Media Release

Outstanding Internet projects put spotlight on youth

Committed drug patent debate information portal, dedicated design training project for slum kids, and rich interactive youth community resource win at World Summit Youth Award (WSYA) – best young econtent producers will be honoured at WSYA Gala on opening evening of UN summit

Salzburg/Tunis, November 7, 2005 – From over 300 applicants hailing from more than 70 countries, the top three projects in each WSYA category – **Development, Creativity & Culture**, and **Community Engagement** – will take centre stage in Tunis for the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS, November 16–18, 2005).

WSYA winners will get onto the global stage and receive unprecedented international recognition at the WSYA Gala on November 16, 2005 in Tunis, on the opening evening of the WSIS. The event is going to be broadcast live by Tunisian TV.

500 high-level guests are expected to attend the World Summit Award Gala, of which the WSYA Gala is a crucial part. Montassar Ouaili, Minister of Communications Technology of the Republic of Tunisia, and Franz Morak, State Secretary for the Arts and Media at the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria, will deliver opening speeches.

WSYA Laudators, who will hand out awards, are Viviane Reding, Member of the European Commission Responsible for the Information Society & Media, Lynn St. Amour, President of the Internet Society, and Thomas Ganswindt, Member of the Corporate Executive Committee Responsible for Information & Communication of Siemens PLC, Germany.

Ammu Irivinti, the 16-year old winner of the **Development** category from the US, joined forces with youth from the UK, the Netherlands, India and Australia to create a dynamic, one-stop shop for information on the patent debate around HIV/AIDS drugs." Her knowledge-sharing resource around the fight for more accessible, affordable drugs – featuring facts, articles, news items, surveys and much more – shows that young people do care and are indeed not afraid of expressing and discussing their opinions. "I continue to be amazed at the power of the Internet and the opportunities it offers to people all over the world to get together and share knowledge and opinions," said Ammu.

At 22 years of age, Wilson Masaka Magambo of "Nairobites Digital Design School" won in the **Creativity & Culture** category by using digital design training to transform the lives of slum youth in Kenya. "Nairobites Digital Design School has been the vehicle out of poverty, unemployment and crime in some of the worst areas of Nairobi," said Wilson. "The impact is exponential as the students then teach others through workshops and mentoring across Kenya."

In the **Community Engagement** category, Tom Dawkins' "Vibewire.net" won with a rich interactive youth community of blogs, discussions forums, articles and resources for the youth of Australia. Despite the media's portrayal, young people are not angry, apathetic and disconnected with the community around them. "Vibewire.net" is a platform where 15-30 year-old writers, activists and culture makers can find a voice, interact and communicate with like (and unlike) minded people. "I wanted to create an online forum that is truly inclusive, a community where young people access resources, engage in cultural and political discourse, and empower themselves and others using technology," said Tom.



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The over 300 projects were evaluated in a two-round judging process by an international jury of 15 experts in the fields of youth engagement, new media and social entrepreneurship.

Organised within the framework of the WSIS, the WSYA is a joint project of the World Summit Award and the WSIS Youth Caucus, in partnership with TakingITGlobal. It is held under the patronage of Viviane Reding, Member of the European Commission responsible for the Information Society and Media, and Franz Morak, State Secretary for the Arts and Media at the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria. Sponsors of WSYA include the Internet Society (ISOC), Logitech and Siemens AG.

Rank	Category	Project Description	Organization
Winner	Development	<i>Patent Wars on AIDS Drugs</i> An information resource and online community with flash animations, interactive games, stories and galleries on today's greatest global challenge	Ammu Irivinti, International Coordination Team www.patentbattles.com
Runner-Up	Development	<i>Biotechnology, The Food Solution</i> Interactive website designed to raise awareness on the use of agricultural biotechnology in combating food shortages and insecurity in Africa	Samuel Odofin, Nigeria www.odofin.com
Third Place	Development	<i>Youth.HR</i> Comprehensive web resource centre for Croatian youth with a forum, blogs, virtual workshops, events, grant information and free web design services for other youth organizations.	Ivanovic Plasko, Atlas Youth Organization, Croatia www.youth.hr
Winner	Creativity & Culture	<i>Nairobi's Digital Design School</i> From the slums of Nairobi to the cutting edge of digital design, this web platform showcases the creative ICT skills offered to its students and acts as a media channel for local African content	Wilson Masaka Magambo, Kenya www.nairobis.org
Runner-Up	Creativity & Culture	<i>Absynthe Muse</i> From a small seed of creativity, Absynthe Muse has become one of the world's premiere writing communities for youth	Elisabeth Wilhelm, United States of America www.absynthemuse.com
Third Place	Creativity & Culture	<i>Electrobel</i> Interactive web portal for young electronic artists to share music and skills in a space of collaboration, innovation and cool	Laurent d'Havé, Belgium www.electrobel.be
Winner	Community Engagement	<i>Vibewire</i> By rewiring youth media' in Australia, this popular, interactive community empowers young people using technology	Tom Dawkins, Australia www.vibewire.net



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Runner-Up	Community Engagement	<i>Hyperstaffs</i> Dynamic collection of educational multimedia lessons and games that has revolutionized the way 5 to 13 year old kids see and do homework	David Smith, Staffordshire University, United Kingdom www.hyperstaffs.info
Third Place	Community Engagement	<i>Hai Ti! (Listen Up!)</i> Weekly series of print and web-based comics created to empower youth, democratize civic education and develop ICT skills of educators	Ebben Haitukalipi, Schoolnet Africa, Namibia www.schoolnet.na/haiti

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- For more information on WSYA and our events at WSIS, visit www.youthaward.org

About the WORLD SUMMIT AWARD



The World Summit Award is a global initiative to select and promote the world's best projects that focus on providing rich e-content. Austria's official contribution to the WSIS, it involves representatives from numerous countries on each continent and sees the bridging of the digital divide and narrowing of the content gap as its overall goal. By highlighting outstanding Internet content and applications around the world, the World Summit Award helps businesses, policy makers and civil society organisations everywhere to harness the potential of ICT for empowering people and promoting development (www.wsis-award.org).

About the YOUTH CAUCUS



The WSIS Youth Caucus, formed on the occasion of the 1st WSIS Preparatory Committee Meeting in July 2002, is acting as an umbrella group for all young people and youth organizations interested and/or involved in the WSIS process and ICT policy formulation. One of the most active civil society groups, the Youth Caucus aims to mainstream youth perspectives into civil society, the private sector and government inputs throughout the WSIS process. (www.wsisyouth.org).

About WSIS



The UN World Summit on the Information Society provides a unique opportunity for all key stakeholders to develop a common vision and understanding and to address the whole range of relevant issues related to the Information Society. It aims to bring together Heads of State, international organizations, civil society entities, industry leaders and media representatives to foster a clear statement of political will and concrete plan of action to shape the future of the global information society. Phase I of WSIS was held in Geneva on 10-12 December 2003 and Phase II will be held in Tunisia from 16-18 November 2005 (www.wsis.org).