General Assembly's overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes

Official Form for Written Submissions

A. Your Information

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B. Formal Input

Some guiding questions for your submissions are listed below:

1. To what extent has progress been made on the vision of the people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society in the ten years since the WSIS?
2. What are the challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes?
3. What should be the priorities in seeking to achieve WSIS outcomes and progress towards the Information Society, taking into account emerging trends?
4. What are general expectations from the WSIS + 10 High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly?
5. What shape should the outcome document take?

The Government of Japan is pleased to submit our views on the General Assembly's overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes as follows.

1. We need to share the principle of "the free flow of information" and "the multi-stakeholder approach"

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[1] When specifying your stakeholder type, please indicate one of the following: Government, Civil Society, Private Sector, Academia, and Technical Sector.

We are of the view that based on the WSIS outcome documents of 2003 and 2005, great achievements have been made by the cooperation among the government, private sector, civil society, academia and all stakeholders. We have invented and developed various kinds of technologies and made use of them, but no other technologies have brought about benefits to human beings in such a short time than ICT. Technological innovations, such as cloud computing, IoT, big-data analysis, AI are expected to make more progress, and these technologies have created a new global space, the space where ICT brings people together with people, people to things, and things to things at anytime, anywhere. The wisdom of those who are living on the earth now is being tested regarding how to utilize this space for the prosperity of humankinds.

With this in mind, in reviewing the progress made in this decade, ensuring the free flow of information and establishing the multi-stakeholder approach are of vital importance. First, in the course of the overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes, we need to share this understanding among all stakeholders, and then undertake the overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes.

(1)   Ensuring the free flow of information
Current social economic systems have been composed of people, things and money, but as the ICT develop, the role of 'information', in addition to people, things, and money, has become all the more important. The information that freely flows domestically, regionally, and internationally enables us to solve problems respective countries face and global issues that need to be tackled as soon as possible, such as global warming. This also can be an engine for innovation, creation of added values and economic growth. Especially, the 'global digital connectivity' that connects people to people, people to things and things to things   needs to be recognized as a current important agenda. We have seen many cases in which the flow of information has been hampered and, as a result, has caused serious problems. It must be recognized that securing safe and secure cyber space is important to ensure free flow of information.

(2)   Establishing the multi-stakeholder approach
Tunis Agenda declares that multi-stakeholders are essential. And in this decade, great achievements have been made by the cooperation among the government, private sector, civil society and academia and all stakeholders. A government alone cannot solve the problems, and cooperation from industry, academia, civil societies and other stakeholders are indispensable. However, in the recent discussion on the Internet policy issues, it seems that we do not have a common understanding on the importance of the multi-stakeholder approach yet, though that approach has achieved notable results. On this occasion of the overall review, we need to reaffirm our understanding on this point.

2. Based on these points mentioned above, our comments for the General Assembly's overall review are as follows.
(1) The outcome document should be a concise document which mainly consists of references to the existing documents or reports that were already made after a lot of

discussion and efforts. We should not repeat detailed discussions for each topic. The relevant documents include outcome documents of the WSIS+10 High Level Event in 2014 and CSTD report on 'A Ten-year Review' in 2015.

(2) Remaining issues should be continuously addressed in the existing scheme, which has been successful with notable results, and a new mechanism should not be created. Japan is determined to contribute all the more to the resolution of the remaining issues in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

10 years ago, we set a common goal for the information society, and have worked to facilitate the use of ICT worldwide towards that goal. As a result, we recognize that the common vision of the WSIS has been significantly achieved, and great results have been obtained. This achievement is made by the cooperation among the government, private sector, civil society and academia and all stakeholders.

Technological innovations that were hard to foresee at the time of 2005, such as the spread of mobile communication, have progressed more than we expected, and also contributed to the achievement of our common vision.

On the other hand, we also recognize that there still remain areas that need to be addressed. These areas include promotion of access to ICTs for developing countries, capacity building and education, issues of youth, women and so on. These issues have not been fully resolved in this decade, but situations have been improved. For addressing these issues, we oppose to making a new mechanism, which we believe would not provide helpful solutions, but rather result in the hindrance of the current progress by just building up another scheme over the existing scheme.

What is required now is to continue our efforts and enhance our cooperation for resolving these issues, such as harnessing results of technological innovation and strengthening the multi-stakeholder approach, and to work for the achievement of these goals. Japan is determined to join these efforts in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

(3)   IGF should be continued.

Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a unique platform to gather all stakeholders and allow them to share their experiences and best practices and exchange opinions freely. We support the extension of Internet Governance Forum (IGF) without changing the current practice.

(4)   Multi-stakeholder system should be strengthened.

Last year's WSIS+10 High Level Event was successful because it adopted the multi-stakeholder approach. In Japan, the IT Strategic Headquarters, which were established based on the multi-stakeholder approach, took a leading role in promoting ICT policies and deploying the most advanced infrastructures. When Japan was struck by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, we recognized that "information is a lifeline for protecting our lives" and adopted the multi-stakeholder approach, and we were able to overcome the unprecedented crisis. We can see many other examples in other countries, too. In the process leading to the December's High-level meeting of the General Assembly,

participation of multi-stakeholders in its true sense should be encouraged.
In solving issues, the multi-stakeholder approach is essential, and the best practices should be shared among countries, so that we can accelerate concrete activities through actual implementation using that approach, rather than abstract discussions.

(5)   We should have a common understanding that results of the technological innovations should be strategically harnessed.
  In many countries, an issue of bridging the digital divide still remains as one of major issues to be addressed. However, even though it cost a lot to deploy fixed networks when there was no alternative, recently, with the availability of wireless networks, access to ICT networks has become easier than before. In other words, 'leap-frogging' effects have been made possible due to technological innovations. From now on, more innovations can be expected by such technologies as IoT and AI. Since such innovations can greatly contribute to the solution of existing issues, innovations should be promoted and strategically harnessed. At the same time, needless to say, due attention should also be paid to such issues as information security and privacy.