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

Official Form for Written Submissions

A. Your Information

Title: Head of International Relations Service OFCOM

First name: Frédéric   *Last name:* Riehl

Name of Organization: Federal Office of Communications *Stakeholder Type[1]:* Government

Country: Switzerland   *Email:* Frederic.riehl@bakom.admin.ch

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?

Tremendous progress has been achieved since 2003. Today there are, for example, almost as many mobile phone subscriptions as people on earth, as it is reported in the excellent ten year review report, which was prepared by the CSTD Secretariat. However, there remain challenges that have to be tackled before reaching a universal and inclusive information society: The international community has to continue to attach the highest priority to bridge the evolving digital divides, in particular with regard to broadband internet access, which remain between developed and developing countries as well as between developed and least developed

---

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

countries and within societies. Another divide worth mentioning is the gender gap in ICT access and use. We should continue to pursue the promotion of access to ICT, but at the same time we have to be clear that access alone is not sufficient. It is essential to not forget the need for capacity-building for users and citizens to use ICT in a competent, conscientious and responsible way. Capacity-building is indispensable to make full use of the opportunities provided by ICT. Capacity is e.g. the premise for the formation of public opinion and political participation of citizens in order to enable citizens to participate in the democratic debate. We need to build additional capacities that allow all stakeholders to shape the discussions and the decision-making on an equal footing, in their respective roles.

The United Nations General Assembly will conclude the overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes by a two-day high-level meeting in December. We propose to hold this meeting at the highest level possible to attract public attention and to stress the importance of the subject. To this end, it is key and necessary to include all stakeholders in the preparation process and ideally also in the high-level meeting itself, as the WSIS process substantially is based on the premise that everybody is being included to the extent possible. This was the case during WSIS 2003 and 2005, where the civil society, the private sector and the technical and academic community were part of the summit and allowed to have a say, even though as observer. The inclusive multi-stakeholder model has become essential in the WSIS process ever since 2005: In all fora and committees which were tasked with the implementation of WSIS results, like the WSIS Forum organized by ITU, UNESCO and others, the WSIS+10 preparatory conferences of the ITU and UNESCO in 2013 to 2015, and also at the UN Internet Governance Forum, all stakeholders have been part of the discussion as practically equivalent partners. Stakeholders are also completely involved in discussions at meetings of the CSTD and are even allowed to attend negotiations as observers. Multi stakeholder dialogue and cooperation on matters of public policy will help us find the most appropriate solutions for developing an information society that corresponds to the vision outlined by the WSIS back in 2003 and 2005. It is therefore necessary that an inclusive and transparent multi stakeholder cooperation is further strengthened. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of the WSIS process beyond 2015, all stakeholder from all regions should be part of it, including non-governmental stakeholders, because, otherwise, the further evolution and implementation of WSIS vision and outcomes would be significantly hampered.

As outcome of December's WSIS+10 High Level Meeting, we favor a short, crisp and outcome-oriented document which focuses on future actions on concrete issues and contains a brief overview of the achievements in the past 10 years, built upon the excellent inputs from the review process conducted by UNESCO, ITU und CSTD. The vision of a 'people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society' as laid out in the Geneva Declaration of Principles is still valid in its main features and maintains its strength as a commonly agreed aspiration. Therefore, we should avoid to reopen the discussion concerning points that were adopted in the Tunis Agenda, but strive to identify pending challenges which have to be tackled in order to work towards an Information society for all beyond 2015.

In light of its unique open platform function, we encourage particularly the further development of the Internet Governance Forum and the renewal of its mandate. The IGF provides a unique opportunity to discuss public policy issues pertaining to the Internet in an inclusive manner among all stakeholders on global, regional and national levels.

Furthermore, the link between WSIS and Sustainable Development Goals has to be stressed, for example in underlining the importance of ICTs and their possible role in the implementation of the SDGs by referencing to an elaborated WSIS-SDG Matrix of the ITU.

To conclude, we would welcome if the UN Group on the Information Society, which worked as WSIS Action Line Facilitators since 2005, would continue their work together with the CSTD. Notably ITU, UNESCO and UNDP should continue to play leading facilitating roles in the implementation of WSIS outcomes, as it was agreed in the Tunis Agenda.