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?

Telefónica, S.A. has been engaged during the last years in the WSIS process both directly participating in meetings and contributing to the preparation of the annual report of the Secretary-General to the CSTD on the WSIS follow-up, and indirectly by our participation as members of different business organizations such as the International Chamber of Commerce BASIS initiative, ETNO and GSMA.

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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.

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 WSIS?

We think Information Society has developed very much during these last 10 years in that direction, mainly due to the extension of mobile communications. This fact has allowed the connection of hundreds of millions of people to the Internet, mainly coming from developing countries. This has been complemented by a considerable growth in international bandwidth capacity with a majority of countries already connected to high speed telecommunications networks. Finally, the increased competition among private companies has allowed for a continuous decrease in access prices with a combined effect of connecting more and more people to the Information Society.

The increased connectivity and accessibility have permitted a flourishing of innovation in the form of new services and applications bringing great benefits to all communities, mainly to those in developing economies, and to every sector of the economy.

The increased interconnection among people facilitated by global services and applications helps the inclusion of persons from different geographies and cultures. The same increase in terms of connection has eased access to educational resources and private lead incubators and financing are allowing young entrepreneurs from all over the world to develop innovative applications.

Moreover, projects and actions oriented to that part of the population in risk of digital exclusion have also contributed to a big extent to universalize access to the benefits of the digital world.

In other fields the increased participation of all actors has also being reinforced, and bottom-up multistakeholderism has gained terrain to classic multilateral processes.

There are still more unconnected than connected, but the advance in this field has been quite promising.

What are the challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes?

The lack of an enabling environment is, in our view, the most important challenge to be overcome. Clear and equilibrate rules to allow for an open and competitive market, are the best tools to achieve the WSIS objectives. We should aim to have a level playing field for all actors as the best incubator for innovative companies and ideas. Other important factor for the extension of the Information Society is the needed digital confidence. Citizens need to recover it if we want to connect more and more people.

Overcoming outstanding challenges to the WSIS outcomes would require that the necessary legal, policy and regulatory frameworks and approaches are implemented at national level to promote sustainable broadband ecosystems that attract investment and promote the use, development and deployment of broadband and related products and services, foster entrepreneurship and innovation. Light, fair, clear, predictable and non-discriminatory regulatory models as one of the main factors to conform the enabling environment all businesses need to invest in new infrastructures.

Please click here to know more about challenges, ideas, examples and further related information to the developing of the Information Society: http://www.digitalmanifesto.telefonica.com/manifesto/

What should be the priorities in seeking to achieve WSIS outcomes and progress towards the Information Society, taking into account emerging trends?

In our view the priority is to allow for a liberalized market, transparent, deregulated and vibrant, where ideas can develop into realities. To this end a level playing field as well as an enabling environment for private investment is urgently needed.

Mobile technology is and will be the most disruptive technology to give access to those still not connected. Mobile broadband will be the tool for connecting developing world to the Internet. This, together with the laydown and extension of fiber infrastructures, will boost the development of quality access to the Internet, favoring the exchange of great amounts of information at broadband speeds.

Deregulating markets and giving access to needed mobile spectrum are some of the most urgent measures to be achieved. Also to be mentioned is the need for more cooperation between developed and developing countries in order to foster capacity building.

What are general expectations from the WSIS + 10 High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly?

We expect that the WSIS + 10 High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly will be an excellent occasion to renew the engagement of the UN system to the multistakeholder nature of Internet Governance and to the need to preserve the flexible, bottom-up nature of the Internet.

This meeting should renew the IGF mandate for a period of time enough to give the Forum the needed stability, maintaining its deliberative character, reinforcing its multistakeholder nature by ensuring, among others, a truly balanced MAG composition in line with the global nature of the Internet, and solving its financial viability.

The WSIS+10 High Level Meeting should recognize the need for an enabling environment such as the one already described in this contribution and work towards overcoming the challenges to the full development of a digital society for all.

What shape should the outcome document take?

The Outcome Document should be as simple and understandable as possible. It should help all stakeholders to work in a coordinated way towards the creation of an enabling environment for the development of a digital society and the rapid spread of its benefits to all, especially in developing countries.

This document should recognize the importance of all stakeholder groups working together and the concrete achievements this cooperation has allowed during the last years. It also should underline the importance of ICTs as a fundamental lever to achieve the sustainable development goals.