



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?

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

Introduction:

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) membership includes over 6 million companies of all sizes and across all sectors as well as chambers of commerce and business associations and spans more than 130 countries. ICC has been actively engaged on behalf of the private sector through all stages of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process from its inception and is a firm supporter of the WSIS action lines and overall vision. ICC's Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI) coordinated the involvement of global business at the WSIS events in 2003 and 2005. Business leaders expressed the need for continued global coordination of business interests in global processes established by the Summit, thus ICC responded to this call by launching its Business Action to support the Information Society (ICC BASIS) initiative. Since then, ICC BASIS has been actively engaged in all WSIS-related events and forums, present at all Internet Governance Forums (IGF), at Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) meetings, and the other annual and special WSIS follow-up events hosted by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and International Telecommunications Union (ITU) respectively and collectively.

ICC BASIS contributions serve as primary resources for business expertise for governments, international organizations and other stakeholders. The organization has demonstrated a consistently strong commitment to both voice the perspectives of businesses worldwide and to work cooperatively across all stakeholders to support and advocate for effective and impactful multistakeholder approaches to Internet governance issues.

We welcome the opportunity to share our reflections on your questions and look forward to subsequent discussions as deliberations on the input are undertaken.

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?

Substantial progress has been made on the WSIS vision as noted in the *May 2015 Implementing WSIS Outcomes: A ten-year review* report of the CSTD, the *June 2014 WSIS+10 High Level Event Outcome document* facilitated by the ITU, and UNESCO's 2014 review of action implementing the WSIS outcomes, *Building Inclusive Knowledge Societies* document.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have had an enormous impact on social and economic development since 2005. Some of the developments of note where business has been actively participating and/or driving include:

- Dramatic improvement in global connectivity and access to ICTs
 - International bandwidth capacity has increased considerably, with almost all countries now connected to high-speed international submarine cable networks
 - Mobile phone networks now extend to the large majority of rural areas, which has reduced the divide in basic voice telephony (WSIS targets reached early with growth from 2.2bn in 2005 to 6.9bn subscribers in 2014)
 - In low-income countries mobile subscriptions make up more than 90% of subscriptions and mobile broadband deployment is correspondingly deployed more rapidly and more extensively than fixed broadband;

The increased potential of mobile networks and devices and falling prices has contributed to growth in Internet use that has been substantial in almost all countries. Mobile connections and devices have transformed societies and economies by putting real-time information directly into the hands of citizens, governments, consumers, and businesses when and where they need it.

- Capacity and innovation improvements: The increase in global connectedness has enabled:
 - innovation and entrepreneurship to flourish with notable examples in developing and least developed countries, especially where support networks and other educational initiatives exist for small and medium sized businesses as well as all individuals to become producers of locally relevant services and information;
 - initiatives that focus on enabling and empowering women, girls, and all youths with appropriate skills necessary for success in an information society;
 - availability of mobile money services that lower barriers of access to financial services in developing or rural areas;
 - cloud services that provide access to a shared pool of computing resources at a cost that is reduced by up to 40%, where high-speed broadband is available, significantly lowering the barriers of market entry for new businesses, facilitating experimentation and innovation.
- Knowledge sharing and tools: The proliferation of applications, technologies for smart cities, energy, water etc., data analytics and research collaboration speeding up advancements and enriching global and shared research and development output; service innovations for e-government, e-learning and e-health bringing communities benefits.
- Inclusive information society: WSIS emphasis on supporting every person to become ICT-capable have resulted in increased attention to development of technologies and initiatives that range from enabling groups that face barriers to education and skilling due to their gender, race, class, age etc., to empowering the disabled as well as to allow Internet access in native languages, not just with localized content, but also internationalized software (e.g., can accept email addresses and recognize domain names in local – especially non-ASCII – languages).
- Shift of participation and focus from the Global North to the Global South countries: Ten years ago most Internet users were primarily North Americans and Europeans. Now, the Global South has eclipsed the Global North in the online population. WSIS and the corresponding action lines have also resulted in a significant shift in focus in policy discussions. Meaningful and active participation of developing and developed countries, including governments, business, civil society, academia and technical communities, have been emphasized and are increasingly visible in all WSIS related activities and policy discussion forums, as well as other international initiatives.

Business has embraced multistakeholder approaches, partnering with governments, civil society, international organizations, and other stakeholders in achieving the above results, consistent with the WSIS action lines, and in support of sustainable development.

The Internet's transformative impact – to individual users and to entire societies alike – cannot be overstated. As both Internet access and use has increased, it has resulted in the growth of nearly every sector of every economy around the world, supported the development of new products, services, and business models, and

enabled businesses of all sizes, especially individual entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises, to reach users all over the world with increasing ease. The past decade has also witnessed what is sometimes referred to as the “social web”. New platforms for communication, social media and new platforms and tools for sharing and collaboration have brought diverse communities closer together; facilitated new and excited conversations; greatly eased sharing of knowledge; promoted collaborative research, scientific and technical development; and changed the shape of society.

WSIS has increased awareness of the potential benefits ICTs could bring to the world. The underlying principles of the Geneva Declaration and Tunis Agenda have catalysed progress through the Action lines and promoted efforts to address the global digital divide and harness ICTs for poverty reduction and economic development. These examples serve as a testament to the progress that has been made in the last 10 years – it is unlikely this progress could have been achieved without the global multistakeholder commitment to the WSIS process. It is important to recognize at this juncture that these fundamentals have fuelled dialogue and action to preserve the stability of the Internet and promote ICT-enabled growth - making important strides to foster an innovative and connected global community.

2. What are the challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes?

ICC BASIS notes the challenges outlined in the CSTD’s May 2015 *Implementing WSIS Outcomes* report. Rather than further elaborating on these here, we will instead focus on selected areas that can be overcome through continued multistakeholder efforts. Enabling environments are essential for continued fulfilment of the WSIS outcomes and ICT for development goals. Market barriers and investment barriers will result in businesses being unwilling to risk the capital necessary for implementation.

Governments have a role to play in securing necessary policy conditions (such as ensuring rule of law, competition, intellectual property protection) for the private sector to continue to drive innovation to bring the Internet’s promise to more communities, and to help communities that are already online to take better advantage of that access. Realising WSIS outcomes will require that the necessary legal, policy and regulatory frameworks and approaches that are in place at national levels continue to promote investment in ICTs and infrastructure, foster entrepreneurship and innovation. The discussion above shows that when governments work together with other stakeholders, significant progress can be made in raising capacity, knowledge, and understanding of the issues. Policy making and outcomes can also be improved in many instances due to the inclusion of business, technical community and civil society in the assessment of policy issues and solutions. This inclusion can lower the risk of unintended consequences and increase legitimacy and adoption. This collective and cooperative approach is essential for furthering the progress and ensuring the on-going stability and continuity of an inclusive, people-centred Internet that can attain the WSIS vision beyond 10 years to foster ICTs for knowledgeable societies and sustainable development.

The list of issues below outlines where sustained efforts are needed by the global multistakeholder community to overcome outstanding challenges and continue to bridge the digital divide:

- **Encouraging investment in broadband development:** The single most important issue for developing economies continues to be the question of how to create a sustainable broadband ecosystem that attracts investment and promotes the use, development and deployment of broadband and related products and services. Strategies proven to promote broadband deployment and, in turn, fuel the growth of the Internet include: (1) open and competitive markets with fair, investment-friendly and comparable regulatory intervention for all actors active in the digital value chain; (2) a strong reliance on voluntary commercial arrangements; (3) policies that promote efficiency through engineering-driven

design, such as the creation of IXPs; and (4) policies that promote the growth of the products and services delivered over broadband.

- Open markets: Policies that restrict lawful use of the Internet or protectionist regulations such as localization requirements and other non-tariff trade barriers can inhibit the level of investment, innovation, and competition that would spur growth and creativity in local industry, evolve local ecosystems, and result in broader sustainable economic development. The rule of law, competition policies and frameworks encourage the necessary investment, innovation and growth to achieve the WSIS goals.
- Spectrum allocation: Availability of spectrum, for both shared licensed and unlicensed use, has a critical role in promoting the accessibility of the Internet. Research and development on new technologies that lower cost and increase bandwidth, and opening up markets to competition, where feasible, can also help lower cost.
- Promote development of locally-relevant content, resources and tools: Content is an important driver of broadband adoption. Increased availability of content that is relevant to local communities will drive adoption and a sustainable broadband ecosystem. Policies that promote the continued creation of locally relevant content should be encouraged, including protections for the freedom of expression, the press, privacy and intellectual property, the development of e-commerce infrastructure, consumer protections, and trusted online payment systems. Such policies should be market-driven and based on voluntary commercial arrangements, avoiding schemes that unduly burden any one sector over another such as mandatory must-carry regimes.
- Promote capacity building and development of local businesses and innovations: Policies are also necessary to continue the support of capacity building initiatives that seek to empower individuals and businesses locally to become content producers and develop business models that are unique and relevant to national economies. Small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) and individual entrepreneurs are the growth engine for sustainable economic development. Such capacity building initiatives need to focus on youths as the next generation that can strongly impact growth, and seek to encourage participation of girls and women.
- Strengthen institutional capacity and North-South cooperation – Capacity-building remains critical to ensuring that institutions throughout the world are better able to collaborate on-line to address developmental issues and share information that can improve the quality of life for all people. In turn, more innovative financing is required to enable such investments. Greater efforts could be made through appropriate regional and global entities – such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) – to sow the seeds for expanded north-south cooperation that would facilitate the transfer of technology and know-how needed to realize the transition to a digital economy. The views of emerging economies are critical. The next billion Internet users will come from less-developed countries and they will play important roles in driving and shaping the development of the Information Society and the digital economy.
- Build inclusive information societies – People with disabilities experience a variety of barriers to fully participate in the information society, including inaccessible web sites, mobile phones, personal computers, tablets, as well as many other digital interfaces in public and private spaces such as electronic kiosks, banking machines, or electronic voting machines. If ICT accessibility requirements are not adequately addressed, people with disabilities and senior citizens with sensorial, physical or

cognitive impairments are excluded from mainstream information sources and services, reducing their ability to participate in information societies, and thus minimizing their potential contributions. Such issues affect a population of one billion people worldwide who are living with a disability, two thirds of them with a severe disability and 80% of them in developing nations, a population grossly underestimated until proper statistical methodologies were promoted by the United Nations Group on Disability Statistics.

- Promote privacy and security – Further cooperation and effort is needed to develop practices aimed at ensuring protection for personal data that not only provides necessary protection of sensitive personal data and privacy, but also enables data driven innovations. Notably, the processing of pseudonymized data would give more flexibility to companies while still maintaining a high level of data protection.

Global cross border data flows enable both economic growth and societal benefits. Any public policy limitation to these flows should be consistent with agreed GATS commitments and applied fairly to all actors in the ICT economy. Where there are multiple ways possible of being compliant with data protection and privacy regulations, businesses should be able to use the least burdensome but equally efficient method of compliance.

Trust and confidence in the availability, reliability, and resiliency of information systems and networks, including the Internet, must continue to be strengthened in order to realize ICT-enabled economic growth and ensure the seamless operation of global business. All stakeholders must work together to promote effective cyber security practices and policies that protect users' privacy and promote the open, secure, stable, resilient, and globally interoperable Internet.

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

Again, ICC BASIS supports the priorities outlined in the conclusions of the CSTD *Implementing WSIS Outcomes* report and notes the actions to focus on explained in question 2 are the keys to addressing these priorities. From the above list, see emphasized here three important priorities from the private sector perspective:

1. It is critical to foster the creation of a sustainable broadband ecosystem that attracts investment and promotes the use, development and deployment of broadband and related products and services, while ensuring the enabling environment and capacity building that is required for society to reap the maximum benefits.
2. All stakeholders should recommit both to the principles of WSIS and to working together to ensure the current model of Internet governance continues to evolve in-keeping with the Internet and ICT innovation so that the way forward remains accountable and inclusive of all stakeholders. Continued improvement of the current model of governance should enable all stakeholders, particularly those from developing and least developed countries, to meaningfully contribute to the Internet governance process and that process should facilitate all stakeholders' participation.
3. Renewal of the IGF mandate to enable continuation of the valuable interactions amongst the stakeholders on issues relevant to implementing the WSIS outcomes and the evolving technological challenges. The growth of the regional and national IGFs has increased awareness of how the Internet can help achieve sustainable economic development and has further enabled knowledge sharing.

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

The WSIS + 10 High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly should reaffirm the vision of the Tunis Agenda, noting a renewed commitment to the multistakeholder approach and recognizing the value of the Action Lines both in focusing attention on what needs to be done, and in demonstrating where there is more work to do.

The WSIS + 10 review provides an important opportunity to recognize and learn from the significant progress that has been achieved, while safeguarding an open, secured, stable, resilient, and globally interoperable Internet. It is the timely occasion to set a clear path applying the WSIS vision beyond 2015 for alignment and implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The considerable progress that has been made since the WSIS has been possible in large part because of the forward looking framework established by the WSIS principles and action lines. ICC BASIS considers that a clear lesson from the last ten years is that the best formula for success is for all stakeholders to work collaboratively toward common goals.

ICC BASIS expects the following issues to be specifically addressed at the WSIS + 10 High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly:

- Linkage of the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs - We urge continued close interaction between the post-2015 WSIS implementation process and the SDGs in order to ensure that efforts across relevant UN agencies are coherent and coordinated. We agree with the statements of UN Members and stakeholders alike at the 1 July and 2 July WSIS Consultations, which underscored that the WSIS Action Lines, as enabled by ICTs, have a direct and critical role in achieving the SDGs. The digital economy is increasingly *the economy*. In the post-2015 period, sectors as wide-ranging as manufacturing, agriculture, logistics, and finance all will rely to some degree on ICTs and a secure, stable, and resilient Internet to develop their businesses.
- Expanding and reconfirming stakeholder participation – The UNGA should reconfirm the importance of preserving the flexible, bottom-up nature of the Internet and stakeholder freedom to innovate and connect within this environment. The High Level Meeting should embrace meaningful participation and engagement of all relevant stakeholders in Internet governance-related discussions and decision-making. Where direct participation is not possible, there should always be ways for a broader range of stakeholders to provide their views or concerns, and there should also be due consideration of the issues and concerns of those who are unable to connect to the process, including those from developing countries, least developed countries and small island states who might not yet be connected to the Internet or those in need of remote participation tools.
- Explicit reference to accessibility and inclusion – Persons with disabilities were largely invisible in the Millennium Development Goals process. The UNGA should help correct that oversight by using the WSIS High Level Meeting to leverage on-going innovation offered by new ICTs and ensure that they become enabling solutions for persons with disabilities to participate in the information society. The UNGA can promote the development of policies that support an inclusive information society and that help to implement the WSIS Action Lines and the dispositions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Global Initiative on Inclusive ICTs (G3ict) and UNESCO have jointly

prepared an analysis of WSIS progress to date on promoting inclusion of persons with disabilities. That report includes a set of strong and specific recommendations for additional progress moving forward.

- Renewing the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) mandate – As mentioned above, the UNGA should use the opportunity of the WSIS High Level Meeting to extend the IGF mandate for at least 10 years.

One of clearest successes of the WSIS is the blossoming of the IGF. It has grown into the premier forum for all stakeholders interested in the information society. The IGF, and its regional and national supporting counterparts, provides a valuable and unique opportunity for productive dialogue among the private sector, civil society, governments, and individual users: to learn about best practices; discuss the challenges to their beneficial implementation; discover the needed policy environments; and exchange information on case studies and related practices. This has also allowed multistakeholder participation to provide constructive inputs that support work in other forums.

Continuing the IGF's funding and mandate, while improving the portability of this knowledge and experience, will help further the SDGs and foster continued implementation of the relevant WSIS action lines.

- Enabling environment – The WSIS+10 High Level Meeting should recognize that an enabling policy environment is a crucial element of the foundation for developmental success. Such an environment should consist of a light-touch regulatory framework that promotes innovation, a range of financing and investment opportunities, cross-border information flows, and other policies designed to enable businesses – ranging from SMEs to multinational corporations - and individuals to innovate, invest, and conduct their operations.
- Need for infrastructure – ICTs require certain infrastructure to deliver economic and social benefits. Such infrastructure includes not only electricity and communications, but also roads, transportation, and logistical infrastructure. In terms of human capital, ICTs also need linguistic, entrepreneurial, and technical skills in the workforce to deliver on their developmental promise. The UNGA should recognize that such infrastructural needs are most effectively addressed by working cooperatively with all stakeholder groups to define and address those needs.

Looking forward, we need to continue to work together, leveraging the multistakeholder approach to help create a holistic and enabling policy environment that will continue to promote sustained investment, innovation, and enable the flow of information necessary to support development of ICT services and applications that can empower every person and organization to experience the full potential of the information society. New challenges will need to be addressed as technology continues to evolve, and capacity building will need to incorporate these new challenges. There must be a clear linkage between the WSIS action lines and the SDGs, as some of the issues raised above regarding gender equality, accessibility, and inclusiveness are further developed in the SDGs. There should also be measurable goals.

5. What shape should the outcome document take?

Concise statement of high-level principles – ICC BASIS believes the outcome document should be crafted in a manner that is readily usable and accessible to all stakeholders – but particularly to those from emerging economies. The document should have enduring value and provide stakeholders with a concise framework for Internet governance that enables all to understand foundational elements needed to create an enabling environment that unleashes the power of ICTs to realize the SDGs. The statement cannot anticipate how

technology will evolve, but it can provide an approach to Internet government for governments and stakeholders that respects the flexible nature Internet-based innovation.

These high-level principles should:

- recognize:
 - the tremendous progress achieved globally since WSIS
 - the substantial contributions made possible because all stakeholders have worked together
 - that great achievements have been possible due to “enhanced cooperation” that has been evident in the numerous tangible results of the action lines
- reaffirm:
 - the continued validity of the Geneva and Tunis vision and declarations as a foundation enabling continued Internet-based innovation, economic development, and social welfare benefits
 - the importance of retaining the CSTD as the lead UN Agency to continue in the post-2015 period its thoughtful and thorough evaluation of the role of ICTs in fostering economic development and societal benefit
 - continued coordination with other UN agencies on related initiatives, leveraging on-going efforts wherever possible
 - the importance of participation and collaboration by all stakeholders in considering issues related to governance of the Internet -- regular stakeholder consultations should be an integral part of the UN General Assembly’s consideration of ICT for Development issues going forward
 - the importance of creating a favourable environment to foster the development of the ICTs
 - the importance, in turn, of ICTs as catalysts for realizing all 17 of the SDGs, and the clear linkage between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs
 - the importance of a long-term renewal (at least 10 years) of the IGF and sustainable funding to enable this forum to realize its potential as a convener for discussion of best practices, capacity building, digital literacy, including practical solutions aimed at bridging the digital gender gap, and valuable lesson sharing and reflections on policy options
 - respect for human rights and the rule of law
- create:
 - an on-going mandate for a renewed and strengthened IGF involving all stakeholders
 - a dialogue on meaningful and measurable objectives that link the WSIS action lines and the SDGs.

Achieving the WSIS ambitions and broadly shared vision of the Geneva and Tunis principles as we hope to see reinforced at the UNGA High Level Event will require the meaningful participation and consideration of all stakeholders, including those from developing and least developed countries. ICC BASIS looks forward to supporting this review process and beyond. We remain committed to contributing insights and value wherever we can.

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