



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-centered, 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?

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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.

Executive Summary

ICANN is pleased to have this opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the Overall Review of the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes by the United Nations General Assembly.

We are supportive of the overall WSIS process and believe this Review of the WSIS Outcomes is both timely and important.

In terms of ICT development, the WSIS process has overseen a significant evolution in the use and deployment of ICTs since 2005. Development of new technologies (particularly high-speed mobile connectivity) and business models (including social media) have enriched the user experience and enhanced the contribution ICTs make economically, socially and politically.

There is, however, more to be done; especially to fulfill the original objectives of the WSIS process; not least in terms of affordable and reliable access to the Internet and communication networks; in terms of network security and in the generation and promotion of local on-line content.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)- through its role in the Internet Ecosystem - remains committed to the WSIS process and to the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum. We have been involved, with our partners in the Technical Community, in the Geneva preparatory phase for this important WSIS+10 Review and hope to be able to contribute fully in the consultation process up to and at the WSIS+10 UNGA High Level Meeting in December 2015.

Detail

ICANN background and role in IG Ecosystem

ICANN is a non-for-profit organisation incorporated under Californian Law, which works through a multi-stakeholder Community consisting of governments, businesses, the Technical Community, users and civil society.

The mission² of ICANN is to coordinate, at the overall level, the global Internet's systems of unique identifiers, and in particular to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems.

In particular, ICANN:

1. Coordinates the allocation and assignment of the three sets of unique identifiers for the Internet, which are
 - a. Domain names (forming a system referred to as "DNS");
 - b. Internet protocol ("IP") addresses and autonomous system ("AS") numbers; and
 - c. Protocol port and parameter numbers.
2. Coordinates the operation and evolution of the DNS root name server system.
3. Coordinates policy development reasonably and appropriately related to these

ICANN, as part of the Technical Community, works with its partners, such as the Internet Society (ISOC), the IETF³ and the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) in the overall coordination of the above-mentioned technical identifiers.

² See <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/governance/bylaws-en/#1>

WSIS and Action Lines

ICANN has been involved in the WSIS process since its adoption at the Geneva and Tunis Summits in 2003 and 2005 respectively.

While ICANN has a limited role, compared to the breadth of the WSIS Outcomes, we do have specific responsibilities, such as in promoting multilingualism through the use of International Domain Names (IDNs); through the provision of security mechanisms (such as DNSSEC) to help counter fraud on the Internet Domain Name System, and through DNS capacity building with respect to the Domain Names System. As such we track targets under WSIS Action Lines 4, 5, 6 and 8.

In addition to the annual reporting on the implementation of the Action Lines, ICANN has consistently attended and been part of annual WSIS Forums in Geneva; organized by the ITU in conjunction with UNCTAD, UNESCO and WIPO. The Forums provide an excellent opportunity for discussing progress being made under the WSIA Action Lines and their respective targets; as well as discussing where further work is required.

For the past three years our President and CEO Fadi Chehade represented ICANN. We look forward to a continuation of this annual Forum.

WSIS+10 Review

The Review of the WSIS Outcomes, as called for in paragraph 111 of the Tunis Agenda⁴ is both timely and important; with the UN focus on ICT for Development through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (due in September 2015) a critical backdrop. The usefulness of the WSIS process for helping implement the SDGs will be an interesting focus for discussion.

³ <https://www.ietf.org/>

⁴ 111. We request the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to make an overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes in 2015

ICANN has been involved in all stages of the Review process; from the UNESCO and ITU hosted Review Conferences (in March 2013 and June 2014 respectively) to the CSTD Plenary held in May of this year where discussion focused on the UNCTAD Paper⁵ on the 10-year review of WSIS. The multi-stakeholder dialogue that underpinned these important preparatory events was conducive in the preparation of comprehensive documentation (as recognised in the UNCTAD Report) charting the progress made in implementing the Action Lines.

It is clearly important that this accumulated evidence, including the “Vision” Paper⁶ agreed at the ITU hosted Conference in June 2014, is available to those in New York drafting the Outcome document.

ICANN was involved in the July Open Consultation in New York and looks forward to participate in further discussions with fellow stakeholders, the co-facilitators and governments in relation to the WSIS+10 Review.

Answer to Questions

1. To what extent has progress been made on the vision of the people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society in the ten years since the WSIS?

The deployment of ICTs and the development and spread of the Internet have made a substantial change to the lives of billions of people, not least in the way we work (for example in exchanging ideas and obtaining information), the way business operates, media is deployed and trade is conducted. Advances in mobile technology and new online services have been key for this successful change.

Affordable and high-speed Internet access (while acknowledging the work still to be done) allows people around the world to have access to information, share knowledge and spread innovation, across the globe; aiding development in all regions. ICANN is proud to have contributed to enhanced usage through

⁵ http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/dtlstict2015d3_en.pdf

⁶ <http://www.itu.int/ws/implementation/2014/forum/inc/doc/outcome/362828V2E.pdf>

multilingualism and International Domain Names (IDNs), and enhanced security via DNSSEC.

There are now more than 100 top-level domain names in non-Latin Script including both generic terms and country identifiers; with more names coming on stream this year.

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

One of the challenges that remain, for many in the developing world, is one of affordable access to reliable and secure Internet connectivity. In addition as applications become more complex and bandwidth hungry, a new digital divide emerges; that of speed of access and the quality of connection (a concern recognised during the Open Consultation in July in New York).

A further challenge (as recognized in the work of Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in conjunction with ICANN in their Report “The Connected World: Greasing the Wheels of the Internet Economy”⁷) is the adoption of regulatory and economic policies that promote ICT and Internet adoption, including enhanced competition.

The development and availability of local content also remains an issue, this being linked, inter-alia, to issues such as intellectual property rights, local infrastructure deployment and local skills.

Participation from governments in the developing world in the development of Internet public policy (such as in relation to the DNS) was of concern for some participants at the WSIS Summits in 2003 and 2005. Addressing some of these concerns, within our mandate, ICANN has seen a significant increase in the diversity and number of participating global stakeholders, including governments. Currently 152 countries and 32 intergovernmental organisations are actively engaged with ICANN, and participate regularly in the work of the organization.

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

⁷ <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/bcg-internet-economy-27jan14-en.pdf>

We believe that providing and enhancing access to ICTs and to the Internet, especially in developing countries remains a key priority, this involving all stakeholders working together. In this role governments also have clear responsibilities in providing policy and regulatory environments that encourage ICT adoption, and the deployment and provision of Internet access.

For its part ICANN will continue to work with all of its stakeholders - the governments, the technical community, business, civil society, academia and end users, in fostering a safe, secure and stable Internet environment, where access to knowledge and information can flourish.

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

ICANN looks forward to the adoption of an Outcome Document that is based on the facts, gathered during the Review, and which recognises the substantive progress on the WSIS Action Lines that has been made since 2005; as articulated in the UNCTAD Report; and the outputs from the UNESCO and ITU hosted preparatory events.

We would also hope it recognises the substantial evolution of the Internet, noting how its reliance, stability and security has been enhanced through the multi-stakeholder model.

The Meeting will hopefully reflect on the key opportunity for the WSIS process to further focus on ICT4D; especially in developing countries;

Finally we would hope the meeting would recognise the unique contribution made by stakeholders (including the Technical Community, business, academia, civil society, users and governments from all parts of Community in the 10 years of this unique WSIS process.

5. What shape should the outcome document take?

We hope that the Outcome Document will be short, precise, and point to the facts and the evidence sources (as referenced above) and reflect the input from the whole Internet multi-stakeholder Community.

Summary

ICANN looks forward to the UNGA Review discussions in December 2015 and to taking part in the preceding consultation. We believe the Review offers a key opportunity for an assessment and discussion on the progress that has been made since 2005 in terms of adoption of the WSIS outcomes; while also assessing what more needs to be done.

ICANN; July 2015