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 Republic of Poland would like to fully align itself with the WSIS+10 written submission of the European Union. It is a document which accurately focuses on the challenges and sets out goals for the High Level Meeting and the outcome document. Additionally, Poland would like to present its national submission complementing the EU written input. Both documents highligh the importance of the WSIS+10 review for the EU and Poland.

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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.

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?

Over the last 15 years the ICT revolution has driven global development in an unprecedented way. We have been experiencing technical progress, infrastructure deployment and falling prices, which all have brought growth in ICT access and connectivity to billions of people around the world. In 2015 there are more than 7 billion mobile cellular subscriptions worldwide, up from less than 1 billion in 2000. Globally 3.2 billion people are using the Internet of which 2 billion are from developing countries. In 2000 there were only 400 million Internet users. ICTs will play even more significant role in the post 2015 development agenda and in achieving future sustainable development goals as the world moves faster and faster towards the digital society. Our mission is to connect everyone and to create a truly inclusive information society.

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

Poland believes that WSIS is a tool to overcome the obstacles on the path to a developed, modern, inclusive, people-centred information society. Poland, however, is convinced that the paramount problem is the citizens' lack of trust towards public bodies and decision-making processes. The governments should ensure the emergence of this trust through transparent and inclusive decision-making process. ICTs, due to their unique characteristics, offer a possibility to engage societies and empower people to truly participate in the political process.
WSIS should support the global multi-stakeholder community in building a coherent and stable information society. It should serve as a mechanism for sharing best practices and easily applicable tools and policy programmes to be used in national contexts. WSIS should also serve as a reminder for policy leaders that digital technologies, openness, innovation and creative industries are the answers to the unemployment, low GDP growth and other challenges.
Currently, the range of the present action lines in WSIS is too broad. We should keep in mind that the pace of progress of the digital economy renders some of them redundant. More attention should be paid to the coordination of their implementation, monitoring and effective and appropriate financing.
3. What should be the priorities in seeking to achieve WSIS outcomes and progress towards the Information Society, taking into account emerging trends?

The WSIS + 10 Review is a key event which will summarize the recent activities of the UN members and agencies within the broad field of information society. Results of the review have to focus on developing an open, inclusive and safe information society, especially through access to data and information and promotion of knowledge.
Innovation is brought up during every single UN meeting and it has to be emphasized once again in the document along with fostering innovation, promoting e-skills and enabling ICT's for development. It is crucial not to overregulate innovations, because they always develop faster than the legal framework. All the above should be dealt within the framework of multi-stakeholder cooperation.
We cannot forget about the goal of bridging the global digital divide. The activities so far have proven to be, to some extent, insufficient and this matter should be included in the future goals and priorities of WSIS beyond 2015.
Poland is committed to foster free, open and prosperous societies through ICT that enhance the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of expression, access to information using neutral global network of networks, and that enables citizens to fully enjoy the social, cultural and economic benefits of cyberspace, including by promoting more secure digital infrastructure.
WSIS should underline that the same rights that people enjoy offline must also be protected online.

In line with the outcomes and progress with the Information Society, we cannot forget about the Sustainable Development Goals, which the WSIS process goals should be aligned to. ICTs and their horizontal impact on almost all socio-economic areas can significantly contribute to accomplishing the SDG. They both deal with fostering innovations and it has to be clearly underlined that these processes should not be duplicated.

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

Poland supports the need to fully engage all stakeholders within the WSIS+10 process. By that, all stakeholders, not only governments should have the opportunity at least to:
1)   Present their point of view within the process;
2)   Take part in the process in person or by remote participation;
3)   Have meaningful impact on the shape and content of documents.

Apart from multi-stakeholder engagement on the UN level, the multi-stakeholder model and cooperation should be supported, which in return allows for better exchange of information and opinions in many fields. In this context, a reference to the Internet Governance Forum has to be made. Poland fully supports the renewal of the IGF mandate. It is a platform, which truly reflects the phenomenon of multi-stakeholder cooperation and allows the non-governmental organizations to enrich the discussion about the Internet. The IGF also enables valuable exchange of views and information among governmental institutions, academia, private sector, the information society and the technical community.

Nonetheless these processes in the international arena should also be initiated and strengthened at country level, through multi-stakeholder open public consultations, and the collected opinions should be duly considered and included in national delegations' positions . Public consultations should be organized in a transparent manner and should be made available on-line to any interested parties. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations will bring positive examples from the civil society.

Moreover the issues of human rights and gender equality cannot be forgotten. As it has been stressed by Poland many times, rights online must be equivalent to the rights offline. In this case, ICTs play a crucial role in bridging the gender gap as well as to help protect and reinforce the human rights.

The expectations of the High Level Meeting also concern the extension of the mandate of the WSIS Forum. The WSIS Forum proved to be an effective platform for cooperation, which promotes goals for the multi-stakeholder environment. Its aim is to remain a coordination center among all the UN agencies. It contributes to the WSIS action lines accomplishment and therefore Poland promotes and supports the WSIS platform. As the technological challenges arise, the mandate should be extended, but first and foremost the Forum should be open to all with the effective multi-stakeholder approach in all areas (such as the Open Consultation Process – Multi-stakeholder Preparatory Platform).

5. What shape should the outcome document take?

As far as the outcome of December's WSIS+10 High Level Meeting is concerned, Poland favours a brief and outcome-oriented document focusing on future actions on concrete issues and containing a brief overview of the achievements in the past 10 years, building upon the inputs from the review process conducted by UNESCO, ITU and CSTD. The review documents were the product of a very hard work and long debates, therefore they provide a basis for further work and the review process.