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

Official Form for Written Submissions

A. Your Information

Title:	Ms.

First name:	Ameena	*Last name:*	*Mohyuddin*

Name of Organization: Family Education Services Foundation *Stakeholder Type[1]:* Civil Society

Country:	Pakistan	*Email:*	AmeenaMohyuddin@gmail.com

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?

   Over the last ten years the increased emphasis on technology transfer has been the role of multinational corporations and the developing governments. Since WSIS, the information society has reached countless lives around the developing world. A success has been the access to television and radio services. Even in the remote parts of the country, television is the most prevalent source of information. Globally the private media has witnessed a surge in independent television stations. In Pakistan alone, more than 50 stations are available. It is the most used medium for disseminating information to the masses.

   However, the overarching progress has been disproportional. Due to the lack of economic and political stability and lack of a supportive regulatory environment innovation has been stunted.

---

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

Lack of solid infrastructure (including public utilities, ie. increasing load shedding) has also hindered in reaching potential.

For example, Pakistan as an Information Society is considered in its young growth stages. Although there are many innovative IT companies and entrepreneurs with ideas and products, the lack of bandwidth creates roadblocks. The bandwidth is limited; slow in large urban areas, and often non-existent in rural areas. This lack of high speed bandwidth impacts negatively on new innovative technologies as it limits access and ability to utilize the materials.

FESF, through the Pakistan Sign Language website (http://psl.org.pk), has created a very needed and user friendly resource for the country's deaf population. However, in rural areas, where the need is greatest, there is limited access due to the lack of available IT equipment or internet access. Similarly, the PSL phone app has challenges since not all have access to smart phone equipment for its utilization.

The access that is available is oftentimes limited to those with a higher social position. In male dominated developing societies such as Pakistan, the majority of the women are susceptible to the entrenched gender bias. Although a number of women are thriving in the IT world as entrepreneurs and leaders, they are from the small group with access and knowledge of the system due to their social position.

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

There is no universally recognized definition for WSIS concepts. As definitions tend to differ from country to country (or organization to organization), there is a lack of basic understanding. For instance, "technology transfer" lacks a universal threshold. This leads some countries or organizations to place a disproportionate emphasis on manufacturing capacity as the most valuable form of technology transfer for developing countries. Technology transfers opportunities should be practical and appropriate for local conditions and reflect the best use of resources for sustainability. The debate regarding technology transfer and building manufacturing capacity in developing countries must be explored on individual basis. Post-Doha arguments of manufacturing capacity are intertwined with local industrial policies and should be analyzed closely.

6b. **Connecting universities, colleges, secondary schools and primary schools with ICTs** is a challenge because although private schools (that cater to elite) are loaded with ICTs, the majority of public and government are not. ICTs in schools for children with disabilities are sorely lacking or non-existent. For instance, at Deaf Reach schools in Pakistan, one of the few to utilize ICTs, deaf students thrive, having a rich learning environment using the PSL online dictionary, (PSL digital stories in sign etc.) via ICTs in the classroom which results in successful learning. This is not the case for the majority of schools for children with disabilities. Experience indicates that even one computer, or a tablet in an institution can go a long way.

6e. **Connecting health centers and hospitals with ICTs** is a challenge because most facilities do not have robust ICT services/networks. Similar to education, the few private hospitals (that cater to the elite) do have established network systems. For the most part, government hospitals and training hospitals lag behind due to funding, resources, and lack of utilities. In Pakistan, FESF is working in collaboration with World Population Foundation to set up online "e-health" service that would provide basic information and respond to inquiries. This hopes to meet the challenge of reaching marginalized populations and communities.

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

    Priorities should include supportive IP protection; a well-developed national infrastructure of natural resources and public utilities; and a supportive regulatory environment. Information societies should ensure that governments establish cybercrime legislation. For example, a Dutch study found that technology based violence exposed women in Pakistan to a harms. The study identified gaps in remedial options available to women who are victimized by digital technologies. Global initiatives, such as Take Back the Tech! Campaign, should be a priority.

    Further, there is a need for greater access, especially for people of low income, or with disability, as well as more gender equality. More awareness for the general public and more government involvement in providing solutions is necessary (e.g. equipment, training, access, etc.).

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 WSIS vision and should cohesively define technology transfer; endorse multi-stakeholder approaches to localized solutions; and outline concrete steps to address the challenges of cybercrime, infrastructure, and resources. It is expected that the meeting will be conducted in an open and inclusive manner, substantive participation from all stakeholders.

5. What shape should the outcome document take?

    The outcome document should take the shape of a concrete declaration that address the harsh realities of Information Societies in the developing world.