

## **United Nations General Assembly's Overall Review of the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes**

Zero Draft

### **Preamble**

1. Recalling the request in paragraph 111 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society to the General Assembly to undertake the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2015, and in this regard reaffirming the centrality of the General Assembly to this process;
2. Recalling that the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/302 of 31 August 2014, decided that the overall review would be concluded by a two-day high-level meeting of the General Assembly, preceded by an intergovernmental preparatory process that also takes into account inputs from all relevant stakeholders of the WSIS. We additionally recall that the overall review shall take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS and address potential information and communication technology (ICT) gaps and areas for continued focus, as well as challenges, including bridging the digital divide and harnessing ICT for development;
3. Building on the WSIS reviews conducted by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) in May 2015, the UNESCO-hosted multistakeholder conference Towards Knowledge Societies for Peace and Sustainable Development, held in February 2013, and the multistakeholder WSIS +10 High Level Event hosted by ITU in June 2014, including the WSIS+10 Statement on the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes and the WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015;
4. We reaffirm our common desire and commitment, undertaken at the WSIS, to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
5. We also recognize the need for respect for political independence, territorial integrity and sovereign equality of states, non-interference in internal affairs of other states, as well as applicable international law, in the realization of the WSIS vision.
6. We reiterate our commitment to the objectives, goals and targets established in the Geneva Declaration of Principles, the Geneva Plan of Action, the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, as well as its Action Lines.
7. We recognise the remarkable evolution and diffusion of ICT, unforeseen ten years ago, which have seen penetration into almost all corners of the globe, restructured social interaction and business

models, contributed to economic growth. Increased connectivity and access to ICT have played a critical role in enabling progress on the Millennium Development Goals, and will play a similarly foundational role for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with ICT access also becoming a development indicator and aspiration in and of itself.

8. We note, however, that there are still critical digital divides between and within countries, and between men and women, which need to be addressed through affordability, education, capacity-building, appropriate financing, and an enabling policy environment.
9. We acknowledge that particular attention should be paid to address the challenges facing developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States. Particular attention should also be paid to address the specific challenges facing children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, women, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced people, migrants and remote and rural communities.
10. We also recognise that effective participation, partnership and cooperation of governments and all stakeholders, in their respective roles and responsibilities, especially with balanced representation from developing countries, is vital in developing the Information Society. We reaffirm the value and principles of multi-stakeholder cooperation and engagement that have characterized the WSIS process since its inception.

## **1. ICT for Development**

11. We recognize with satisfaction that the last decade's considerable increases in connectivity, use, creation, and innovation have created new tools to drive economic, social, and environmental betterment, especially in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Fixed and wireless broadband, mobile Internet, smartphones and tablets, cloud computing, social media and big data were only in their early stages in Tunis, and are now understood to underpin sustainable development.
12. We reaffirm that the spread of these technologies must be a core focus and outcome of the WSIS process. We are highly encouraged that the number of mobile phone subscriptions is estimated to have risen from 2.2 billion in 2005 to 7.1 billion in 2015, and that by the end of 2015, 3.2 billion people are expected to be online, over 40 per cent of the total world population and of which 2 billion are from developing countries. We also note that fixed broadband subscriptions have reached a penetration rate of almost 10 per cent, as compared to 3.4 per cent in 2005, and that mobile broadband remains the fastest growing market segment, with continuous double-digit growth rates and an estimated global penetration rate of 32 per cent, or four times the penetration rate recorded just five years earlier.

13. We note that the digital economy is an important and growing part of the global economy, and that ICT connectivity is correlated with increases in GDP. ICT has created a new generation of businesses and jobs, and, while altering and making obsolete others, have also generally increased the efficiency, reach, and ingenuity of all sectors.
14. We also recognize that ICT is contributing to higher levels of social benefit and inclusion, providing new channels among citizens, businesses and governments to share and augment knowledge, as well as participate in decisions that affect their lives and work. As envisioned by the WSIS Action Lines, we have seen ICT-enabled breakthroughs in e-government, e-business, e-education, e-health, e-employment, e-agriculture and e-science, allowing greater numbers of people access to services and data that might previously have been out-of-reach or unaffordable. We have also seen ICT become central to disaster and humanitarian response. At the same time, we recognize that ICT is fundamentally altering the way individuals and communities interact, spend their time, with new and unforeseen health and social consequences.
15. We further recognise that increasing use of ICT both generates certain environmental benefits and imposes certain environmental costs, and we call for increased attention to mitigation. We welcome the opportunity afforded by sustainable energy to potentially decouple ICT growth from contributions to climate change, and we also note ICT's catalytic value for renewable energy, energy efficiency, and resilient cities, among other abatement options. However, we encourage further action to improve the energy efficiency of ICT, and to reuse, recycle, and safely dispose of e-waste.

### **1.1 Bridging the Digital Divide**

16. Despite the last decade's achievements in ICT connectivity, we recognize that digital divides remain – including within and between countries and between women and men – that slow sustainable development. Indicatively, we acknowledge that, as of 2013, around 60 per cent of people globally lack internet access, only 37 per cent of women have internet access, and an estimated 80 per cent of online content is available in only one of 10 languages.
17. We affirm our commitment to bridging the digital divide, and we recognize that our approach must be multi-faceted and include an evolving understanding of what constitutes access, increasingly focused on the quality of that access. We acknowledge that speed, affordability, language, and people's capabilities to both use and create ICT are core components of quality today, and that high-speed broadband is already an essential enabler of sustainable development. We appreciate that divides may worsen or change with technological and service innovation, and we call on CSTD, UNESCO, and ITU to regularly analyse the nature of the digital divide.

18. We recognize that relevant local content and services should be developed and made available in different languages and formats that are accessible to all people, who also need the capabilities and capacities, including media and information literacy skills to make use of ICT.
19. We moreover call for a significant increase in access to ICT and to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet to all by 2020. We welcome the targets for the growth of access, broadband for all, inclusiveness, innovation and partnerships in ICT, as agreed by the international community under the Connect 2020 Agenda, adopted at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in 2014.
20. We draw attention, in particular, to the gender digital divide which persists in access to and use of ICT, and also in ICT education, employment and other economic and social development factors. We commit to mainstream gender in the WSIS process, including through a new emphasis on gender in the implementation of WSIS Action Lines. We call for immediate measures to ensure gender equality in internet users by 2020, and to enhance women's education and participation in ICT, as users, entrepreneurs and leaders.
21. We note that divides are often closely linked to education levels, and that policy and financing frameworks also strongly influence quality of access. We therefore call for a special focus on interventions that improve the enabling environment for ICT and expand related capacity-building.

## **1.2 Enabling Environment**

22. We recognize that certain policies have substantially contributed to bridging the digital divide and ICT's value for sustainable development, and we commit to continue identification and implementation of best and emerging practices for establishment and functioning of innovation and investment frameworks for ICT. We acknowledge that school curriculum requirements for ICT; open access to data and free flow of information; fostering of competition; creation of transparent, predictable independent, and non-discriminatory regulatory and legal systems; access to finance; allowance of public-private partnerships; national broadband strategies; and public access facilities have in many countries facilitated significant gains in connectivity and sustainable development.
23. We recognise that a lack of access to affordable and reliable technologies and services remains a critical challenge among developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States. Deliberate efforts, especially through research and development, may be necessary to spur lower-cost connectivity options.
24. We request the UN agencies to regularly advise governments and all stakeholders of specific, detailed interventions they can consider to support the enabling environment for ICT and development.

## **1.3 Financial Mechanisms**

25. We welcome that total public and private spending on ICT has increased substantially in the last decade, now reaching to the trillions annually, and has been complemented by a proliferation of new financing mechanisms, both results marking progress on paragraphs 23 and 27 of the Tunis Agenda.
26. We recognise, however, that harnessing ICT for development, bridging the digital divide, and creating enabling environments will require greater and sustainable investment in ICT infrastructure and services, capacity building, and transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms over many years to come. These mechanisms remain a primary focus for all countries and people, particularly in developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States.
27. We call for close consideration of public resource allocation to ICT deployment and development, recognizing the need for ICT budgeting across all sectors, especially education. We recommend that capacity development should be emphasised to empower local experts and local communities to fully benefit from and contribute to ICT development applications.
28. We recognise that official development assistance and other concessional financial flows for ICT can make significant contributions to development outcomes, particularly where it can de-risk public and private investment, as well as use ICT to strengthen tax collection. We encourage greater input of developing countries on the deployment of funds for ICT.
29. We also encourage a prominent profile for ICT in the new technology facilitation mechanism established by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and for assessment of how it can contribute to gaps in implementation of the WSIS Action Lines.
30. We express concern at the lack of progress on the Digital Solidarity Fund, welcomed in Tunis as an innovative financial mechanism of a voluntary nature, and we call for a review of options for its future.
31. We recognise the critical importance of private sector investment in ICT access, content, and services, and of legal and regulatory frameworks conducive to investment and innovation. We recognise the importance of public-private partnerships, universal access strategies and other approaches to this end.

## **2. Internet Governance**

32. We recognise the general agreement that the governance of the Internet should be open, inclusive, and transparent. We reiterate the working definition of Internet governance set out in paragraph 34 of the Tunis Agenda, as 'the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision making procedures and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet'.

33. We reaffirm the principles agreed in the Geneva Declaration that the management of the Internet encompasses both technical and public policy issues and should involve all stakeholders and relevant intergovernmental and international organizations, within their respective roles and responsibilities as set out in paragraph 35 of the Tunis Agenda.
34. We recognise that there is a need to promote greater participation and engagement of all stakeholders, from developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States in internet governance discussions.
35. We recognise the principle and importance of net neutrality, and call for its protection accordingly.
36. We note that a number of member states have called for an international legal framework for internet governance.
37. We acknowledge the unique role of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as a multistakeholder platform for discussion of Internet governance issues, while taking into account the report of the CSTD Working Group on improvements to the IGF, which was approved by the General Assembly in its resolution and ongoing work to implement the findings of that report. We extend the IGF mandate for another five years with its current mandate as set out in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. We recognize that, at the end of this period, progress must be made on Forum outcomes and participation of relevant stakeholders from developing countries.

### **2.1. Enhanced Cooperation**

38. We acknowledge that various initiatives have been implemented and some progress has been made in relation to enhanced cooperation. We acknowledge that the organizations and processes that coordinate Internet governance have evolved in response to changes in technology and demands from their stakeholders, which has included efforts to increase participation of stakeholders from developing countries. We note the Reports by the Secretary General on enhanced cooperation (A/66/77; E/2009/92) and the work of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.
39. We recall paragraphs 69 and 71 of the Tunis Agenda, and note concerns that their full implementation has not been achieved. We call for strengthening enhanced cooperation, to enable governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities, in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, but not in the day-to-day technical and operational matters, that do not impact on international public policy issues. In order to address these concerns, we call for an inclusive, democratic, and transparent dialogue on enhanced cooperation.

### **2.2. Human rights**

40. We reaffirm, as an essential foundation of the Information Society, and as outlined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, that this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. We underscore the need for respecting freedom of expression and the independence of press. We believe that communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and the foundation

of all social organization, and is central to the Information Society. Everyone, everywhere should have the opportunity to participate and no one should be excluded from the benefits the Information Society offers.

41. We reaffirm the commitment set out in the Geneva Declaration and the Tunis Commitment to the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.
42. We reaffirm the principle, recognised in General Assembly resolution 68/167, that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online.
43. We emphasise that no person shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home, or correspondence, consistent with countries' applicable obligations under international human rights law. We encourage all stakeholders to ensure respect for privacy and the protection of personal information and data.
44. We reaffirm our commitment to the provisions of Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of their personality is possible, and that, in the exercise of their rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. These rights may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In this way, we shall promote an Information Society where human dignity is respected.

### **2.3 Building Confidence and Security in the use of ICTs**

45. Strengthening confidence and security in the use of ICT is a prerequisite for the development of information societies and ICT success as a driver for economic and social innovation.
46. We acknowledge the work that governments, businesses and other stakeholders are undertaking, through a wide variety of initiatives, to strengthen cybersecurity, including the work of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Group on Cybercrime. We recognise the need for governments, which have responsibility for national security and the personal safety of their citizens, to play an enhanced role, alongside other stakeholders, in ensuring cybersecurity.
47. We reiterate the importance of cyber ethics in establishing a safe, secure, tolerant and reliable cyber space and strengthening the role of ICT as the enabler of development, as emphasised in paragraph 43 of the Tunis Agenda and mentioned under the Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. We recognise the need for special emphasis on the protection and empowerment of children online. In this regard, governments and other stakeholders should work together to help all children to enjoy the benefits of ICT in a safe and secure environment.
48. We recognize the central importance of the principles of international law enshrined in the UN Charter in building confidence and security in the use of ICT, particularly the political independence,

territorial integrity and sovereign equality of states, non-interference in internal affairs of other states and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

49. We are concerned about certain uses of ICT that increasingly threaten national security, including terrorism and cybercrime. We reiterate our belief that a global culture of cyber security needs to be promoted, developed and implemented in cooperation with all stakeholders and international expert bodies in order to foster trust and security in the emerging Information Society.
50. We call for increased global efforts and cooperation in combating cybercrime, cyberterrorism and countering cyber-threats, including discussion forums, information sharing, the development of national capabilities and elaboration of national cyber security strategies, improved indices for measuring cyber security; and cooperation on cyber security standards and technical specifications. We acknowledge the call for a convention on international cybercrimes. We recognise that approaches to cybersecurity should be compatible with human rights and fundamental freedoms.

### **3. Implementation and Follow-Up**

51. The implementation of WSIS outcomes will require the continued commitment of all stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, international organisations, governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community and academia. All stakeholders across government, industry, civil society, the technical community and international organisations should continue to focus on practical implementation measures that address the full set of WSIS Action Lines.
52. The continued implementation of WSIS outcomes should take place within the context established by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Close links should be established between WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure that the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness will serve to accelerate human progress, bridge the digital divide and develop knowledge societies.
53. We call for the continuation of annual reports on the implementation of WSIS outcomes through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD).
54. We call for the continuation of the work of the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS), in coordinating the work of United Nations agencies. We also urge United Nations Regional Commissions to conduct regular regional reviews of WSIS implementation.
55. We recognize that the WSIS Forum has been a valuable platform through which all stakeholders can review the implementation of WSIS outcomes, and should continue to be held annually.
56. We call for increased efforts to improve the extent of data collection and analysis, including quality of connectivity and the impact of ICT on development, based on international standards and definitions; the inclusion of ICT statistics in national strategies for the development of statistics and in regional statistical work programmes, and the strengthening of local statistical capacity by assessing capacity needs and delivering targeted training on ICT statistics. The activities of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development have made a valuable contribution to data gathering and dissemination and should be continued.

57. We call for a review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes by the UN GA in 202X, the conclusions of which would feed into the review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with input of all relevant stakeholders in both its preparatory process and its proceedings to guide the intergovernmental process. We also call for further reviews on a regular basis each decade.
58. We recognize that in the preparation of the WSIS review a number of challenges have been identified, requiring further consultations in the framework of a higher level process. This could include the assessment and reconsideration of Action Lines; potential new legal instruments; and further improvements on enhanced cooperation. We agree to hold a [World Summit] [High Level Meeting] on the Information Society in 202X in order to discuss such issues.