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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on
their efforts in 2017 to implement the outcome of the WSIS**

Submission by

European Union

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 21st session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

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2017 Report

Summary

In May 2015, The European Union launch its first comprehensive approach to mainstream digital technologies and services across development policies, entitled Digital for Development.

"Digital4Development" is a framework for mainstreaming digital technologies into development policy, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring effective delivery based on existing policies, funding instruments and partnerships involving the public and private sectors. Digital4Development should be guided by a vision that maximises the uptake of digitalisation as a strong driver for economic growth in partner countries and reduces the digital divide by providing access for all, with particular emphasis on women, youth and vulnerable groups, and on their education.

The framework is based on the following priorities:

- promote access to affordable and secure broadband connectivity and to digital infrastructure, including the necessary regulatory reforms;
- promote digital literacy and skills;
- foster digital entrepreneurship and job creation; and
- promote the use of digital technologies as an enabler for sustainable development.

Achievements

Over the last fifteen years, EU has devoted approximately EUR 350 million to digital initiatives in partner countries [approximately: EUR 92 million in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of States, EUR 49 million in Asia, EUR 90 million in Latin America, EUR 32 million in the Neighbourhood East and EUR 87 million in the Neighbourhood South].

In addition, a number of digital projects are on-going for an amount of more than EUR 110 million [approximately: EUR 21 million in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of States, EUR 10 million Central Asia, EUR 37 million in South East Asia, Middle East and the Pacific, EUR 39 million in Neighbourhood and Accession countries and EUR 8 million in Latin America].

On top of that, between 2008 and 2016 a number of digital infrastructure projects have been also funded in Africa and the Indian Ocean by the EU through the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund, via grants amounting at EUR 18.6 million and leveraging EUR 760 million [Seychelles East African Submarine Cable System (EUR 4 million EU contribution) and the Satellite

enhanced Telemedicine and eHealth for sub-Saharan Africa (EUR 4 million of EU contribution) as well as the African Internet Exchange System project (EUR 5.1 million EU contribution) and EASSy (EUR 2.6 million EU contribution).

AfricaConnect is aiming at connecting European research and education institutions with peer institutions in partner countries

Although initially these actions started off as infrastructure networks, today they have evolved into research collaboration platforms and have the potential to expand cooperation in the digital domain even further. Building on the experience of previous programming period, AfricaConnect 2 project is currently implemented (from 01/06/15 to 30/11/18 with total budget: EUR 26.6 million and EU contribution EUR 20 million under the PanAfrican programme)

Global objective: contribute to the reduction of the digital divide by harnessing the potential of ICT for sustainable development in Africa.

Specific objectives: facilitate the creation, development and use of regional education and research communication networks and high-capacity Internet connectivity with a gateway to global research collaboration.

Realisation to date: by 2016, the project has contributed to connect over 670 higher education institutions and research centres in Africa to affordable high-band internet connectivity, thereby enabling students and researchers to communicate, exchange data and engage in research collaboration with their peers in Europe and the world. Improved connectivity also allows for the development of applications (e-education, telemedicine, etc.).

BELLA submarine cable

The EU is contributing to an improved broadband coverage and high-speed connection between Latin America and Europe as well as among Latin American countries: In the framework of the programme BELLA (cable), co-funded by the European Commission (investing a total of EUR 26.5 million, EUR 8 million coming from DEVCO), by 2019 it is expected that a high-speed submarine communication cable will have been built between Brazil and Portugal and that the quality of fibre optic cables and their link in South American countries will have been improved.

The programme will provide a strong basis for an enhanced digitalisation and close digital cooperation between Europe and the South American countries. It will allow increased exchanges between universities and research centres in the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean regions and contribute to economic growth. Negotiations have recently started to involve Mexico and Central America in the network.

Achieving the SDG`s using digital technologies

- The EU has established an e-health and 'silver economy and society' strategy, including an eHealth Action plan which helps the EU to meet SDG#3 on good health and wellbeing;
- The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition a flagship initiative within the new Skills Agenda for Europe which supports the EU to fulfil the goals on education (SDG #4); Let me also mention the EU's annual "code week". Code Week 2017 takes place in this week across our continent.
- We are committed to supporting new approaches and novel use of ICT to address SDG#6 "Clean Water and Sanitation". Some of these efforts are also contributing to SDG #11 "Responsible Consumption and Production" Specifically; ICT has great potential to improve management – and consumption - of water resources in Europe, both at the level of utilities and the citizen consumers.
- The EU's digital policy aims to contribute to energy efficiency, for example through its actions on and support to smart energy grids, smart metering and smart cities thereby addressing the challenges of affordable and clean energy and address the climate change(SDG#7 and #13)

- The Digital Single Market and its objective to maximise the growth potential of our European Digital Economy is considered to be the single most important source to create future growth and job in Europe, thereby meeting goal # 8 on decent work and economic growth.
- In relation to SDG #9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure-), the EU is committed to facilitating the provision of comprehensive and affordable access to internet to citizens across the EU, especially in rural areas and in less developed regions. Concretely under the connectivity package of the Digital Single Market we have set clear broadband targets and are aiming for connectivity of at least 100 Mbps for all European households by 2025. Here the private sector's active involvement is essential to meet the targets.
- On Innovation side there are several examples of EU action and policies with an ICT edge that aim to foster innovation and the development of skills necessary for a sustainable future. Let me mention one, the Innovation Radar – a data-driven initiative of the European Commission to identify and champion the best innovators developing innovations in EU funded programmes such as H2020. The "innovation Radar prize" is still open for public votes so invite you all to participate on the EC website.
- Finally, since 2014, under our research programme Horizon 2020 we have been commitment 100s of millions of euros for research and innovation projects developing novel ICT-enabled solutions in the area of "Smart Cities and Communities" SDG #11. The European Commission is also supporting the "European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities (EIP-SCC)" an initiative bringing together cities, industry, SMEs, banks, research and other smart city actors. Aims to develop and implement integrated smart city solutions, focuses on the intersection of Energy, ICT and Transport

The External Investment Plan

The External Investment Plan (EIP) is a flagship initiative and priority for European Commission President Juncker, as part of the overall efforts in reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Achieving the latter will require massive investments until 2030. As outlined by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, these ambitious targets can only be met by developing inclusive partnerships, holistic solutions and mobilising private resources for development.

The EIP and its European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) provide a coherent approach to address these challenges, with the main objective of leveraging additional private investments, improving business environments and creating decent jobs, thereby addressing some of the root causes of migration. The EIP is a new, integrated tool based on three interlinked pillars: Pillar 1, the EFSD, with a new innovative guarantee and regional investment platforms/blending facilities, Pillar 2, Technical Assistance, seeking to develop financially attractive projects as well as improvements to regulatory and policy environment and Pillar 3, policy reforms and dialogue.

This new approach to development is expected to unlock private investment, and mobilize additional EUR 44 billion of investments until 2020. The EIP will start in Africa and the European Neighbourhood and is coherent with the G20 Africa partnership.

A digital window in the EIP has been secured and a proposal is on the table, guaranteeing investments in 3 areas: last mile broadband connectivity, seed money for start-ups and digital service infrastructure for e-Gov services. We are pushing the idea that guarantee money should be coupled with blended grants in order to motivate governments to access loans, especially for e-Gov services. The amount suggested for the EIP is up to 300 million euro.