

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-first session
Geneva, 14-18 May 2018**

**Item 2: Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the
outcomes World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and
international level**

Statement submitted by

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COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)
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Thank you Chair for this opportunity to address this meeting.

My remarks will focus on three areas:

1. Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2017
2. IGF 2018
3. IGF – looking forward

IGF 2017:

My remarks on IGF 2017 are drawn from the formal submission of the IGF Secretariat and are greatly abbreviated. I urge everyone to read the full report on the CSTD website. There has been a lot of effort and a lot of progress made.

The 12th IGF was hosted by the government of Switzerland, from the 18 to 21 December 2017 and held here in the United Nations premises in Geneva under the overarching theme: 'Shape Your Digital Future!'.

The IGF provides a platform for engaged and informed discussions about Internet public policy issues affecting all of us.

During the four-day meeting, more than 2000 delegates from 142 countries participated in over 200 sessions, with thousands more individuals participating online. Of note: of the onsite participants - 43% were female, and governments and Intergovernmental Organizations made up 26%, with Civil Society at 44% and the Private Sector and Technical community each at 14%. The IGF is still heavily WEOG centric with 46% of the onsite participants coming from that region, though the MAG is working actively to increase participation from other regions.

The IGF continued its focus on fulfilling the recommendations of the CSTD Working Group on Improvements to the IGF, while also taking into account suggestions from the stocktaking activities of the IGF community itself as well as suggestions coming through the UN system.

And, 2017 was a record-breaking year on a number of fronts:

- participation of Governments and policymakers increased again, with Government delegations from almost one hundred different countries registered. 2017 also saw the most number of sessions ever organized by Governments
- more than twenty different IGOs participated underscoring the rapidly growing relevance of digital issues in diverse policy fields, including humanitarian and environmental mandates
- Also important to note that governments make up 42% of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), and when combined with IGF host country and IGO representatives who also hold roles, the percentage is 57% government seats (43 of 75). <The remaining MAG seats total 32 and these are split evenly across the 3 stakeholder groups.>

- As part of the IGF community's effort to enhance the outcome-orientation of the IGF, sets of key messages called 'Geneva Messages' were published online in near real time and provided succinct takeaways on some of the IGF's major themes.
- To maximize capacity building and to promote stakeholder inclusion, all sessions were live streamed, and session videos instantly uploaded for viewing. Transcripts and webcasts from all of the sessions were also streamed. And, workshop reports and summaries of the more than 200 sessions held throughout the meeting were published on the IGF's website.
- <Several official UN press releases were released, and to strengthen media engagement and make more content from the IGF available to the general public, daily press conferences with high-level IGF participants were organized for accredited media outlets.>
- Social media channels featured prominently, providing visibility as well as facilitating additional platforms for dialogue.

The 12th IGF addressed a broad range of themes and issues. Cybersecurity and 'New Technologies and Emerging Issues', were the most popular themes. The sessions on cybersecurity focused on capacity-building; exploring more effective avenues for cooperation; and on preliminary steps for developing cybersecurity norms.

New Technologies drew together sessions related to Artificial Intelligence, the 'Internet of Things', big data, blockchain technologies, virtual reality and 'Fakenews'. These joined returning topics such as access; the digital transformation; youth and gender issues, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); human rights online, etc.

The 12th IGF saw delegates recommit themselves to policy processes and proposals that channel the immense potential of the Internet to help achieve the SDGs. Among these discussions were those on e-commerce for development, digital literacy and cyber capacity building, and governance as applied to the gig or sharing economies.

A number of sessions were organized around digital trade. Participants acknowledged closer transnational cooperation would be needed to ensure these are equitable and in line with the principles and spirit of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Big data was also a recurring theme, with a special session on 'Data for Sustainable Development Roadmaps', and on policy initiatives in relation to data production, rights, sharing and use.

Finally, the IGF continues to be an important platform for the discussion of digital rights issues. A vibrant digital rights session organized by National and Regional IGF Initiatives emphasized the importance of access as a precondition to enjoying rights online and the equivalence of digital rights with fundamental human rights.

Many participants underlined the essential role of the IGF in fostering the necessary cooperation and partnerships across sectors for undertaking all these issues.

Increasing the participation of developing countries is critically important, and one way is through the National, Regional and Youth IGF Initiatives (NRIs) which have been emerging spontaneously since the IGF was first convened in 2006. NRIs are independent in their work, and organized in accordance with the core IGF principles. Over the last three years, the number

of NRIs has grown tremendously and the total number of officially recognized NRIs has more than doubled in the last two years from 43 NRIs at the end of 2015 to 97 at the end of 2017.

The NRIs are active and immensely important contributors, contributing significantly to the global work of the IGF. Just as importantly they are a critical resource in implementation efforts at national and regional levels.

In 2017, the IGF furthered its work on Policy Options for Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion(s) by focusing on concrete case studies to highlight how projects on the ground help to make progress in key sustainable development goals.

The IGF's Best Practice Forums (BPFs) continue to offer unique platforms to investigate topical Internet policy challenges by broadening and then aggregating community input. In 2017 there were three (3) BPFs: Cybersecurity, Gender and Access, and Local Content.

IGF Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) are multistakeholder topic focused discussion groups on a variety of topics. There were 17 DCs in 2017 covering topics such as Blockchain, Platform Responsibility, Trade, Access, etc.

To help orient first-time participants to the IGF and to foster their integration into the IGF community, a set of continuous activities was developed under a Youth and Newcomers Track.

II – IGF 2018

We are close to finalizing the venue – there were several promising starts for this year that for various reasons did not work out. We expect to announce in the next week or two. The dates are expected to be 11 - 15 November if in Europe, or 10-14 December if in Asia. Preparations in the MAG and the Community are well underway and we are on schedule for this years IGF.

The good news is we have a host country in place for 2019 and are well advanced for 2020 and 2021 with a goal to have those finalized before the end of 2018, and thereafter maintain a minimum 3 year horizon.

Based on requested improvements, the MAG is taking a new approach to shaping the program for this years IGF. Our goal is to facilitate more concrete, focused and cohesive discussions, while avoiding duplicate sessions, and reducing the number of parallel tracks. The MAG is focusing on a thematic approach and process changes that we believe will deliver more and stronger outputs.

In addition, this years MAG extended several key working groups begun last year focused on strategic program or improvement efforts. One working group focuses on building a multi-year strategic work program, another focuses on continued implementation of IGF improvements. Both focus on suggestions from the CSTD WG on IGF Improvements, WSIS + 10 recommendations, and various IGF stocktaking exercises. To that end, there are two other Working groups, one focused on Outreach & Communication, and another on Fundraising to address other desired improvements.

III – IGF – Looking Forward

The WSIS Forum, Enhanced Cooperation, and the IGF are all major outcomes of the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS); all captured in the Tunis Agenda. These have individual and distinct roles, yet importantly, are complementary.

The IGF is unique in the UN system in that it is convened by the United Nations Secretary General to be an open, multistakeholder forum bringing together all stakeholders **as equals – in all aspects of its work.**

The IGF's UN mandate gives it convening power and the authority to serve as a neutral space for all stakeholders. At the same time, its operations are open, inclusive, community led and bottom-up, and this hybrid model is what gives the IGF its value.

There is a lot of interest in new or frontier technologies, specifically recognizing the rapid pace of change and significant implications inherent in these new technologies – in international public policy, economic, and social spheres.

The work of the IGF continues to facilitate implementation of all the agreed WSIS action lines, and provide support to the Sustainable Development Goals, directly and through enabling a stronger, more inclusive global ICT environment.

It is why participation from all stakeholders, in all the activities across the IGF ecosystem, is so important -- to ensure these technologies and all advancements are advanced for the public good, and that all interests are addressed. Broad participation will enrich our collective knowledge enabling better resolutions of these complex, nuanced and deeply intertwined issues.

The IGF ecosystem and the global IGF community are working hard to help address these issues, while enabling solutions to be advanced at international, regional, and national levels, with policy makers, governments, the private sector, civil society and the technical and scientific community fully engaged. This is, in fact, why the IGF was chartered by Member States during WSIS.

Some of the resources available within the IGF ecosystem were mentioned earlier. They are: the IGF Annual Meeting itself, its Intersessional activities (major Policy Initiatives, Best Practice Forums, Dynamic Coalitions, etc.) and very importantly around the National, Regional, and Youth IGF Initiatives (NRIs).

The IGF is uniquely positioned and we can do more. We are working hard to address the suggested improvements and would benefit from more support - deeper and broader participation in all our activities. And, as the IGF is an extra-budgetary project of the UN, I have to say through increased donations to the UN IGF Trust Fund.

Thank you.