Contribution to the CSTD ten-year review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes

Submitted by
SWEDEN

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
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Q4: Country: Sweden

Q6: Which stakeholder category do you belong to? Government

Q7: To what extent, in your experience, has the "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society", envisaged in the opening paragraph of the WSIS Geneva Declaration of Principles, developed in the ten years since WSIS?

Since 2006, the world has changed considerably in terms of use and availability of ICTs. The digital divide has narrowed and the use of ICTs (mobile, mobile broadband) has had a substantial effect on global development. Global access to information has increased exponentially. The advent of completely new technologies, such as mobile money, has brought immense benefits for millions of people that previously had no access to financial services. The impact of ICTs has been substantial in many sectors: health, finance, education. Importantly, the growth of technologies has reached broad segments of society, has to a large extent taken place in low- and middle-income countries, and has contributes to both economic and social development. International cooperation on internet related issues has been considerably enhanced; most international organisations and forums today deal with different aspects of the global information society. On a technical level, the globalisation and increased inclusiveness of ICANN, not least through its Governmental Advisory Committee, has vastly improved cooperation around core internet functions of names and numbers. The Internet Governance Forum has surged in importance as a crucial meeting place where the most important technical organisations, such as the IETF and W3C, are now also participating. Important work has also taken place within the UN system, through for instance, discussions in First, Second and Third Committee in the UN General Assembly, in ECOSOC/CSTD, in the Human Rights Council as well as in Unesco, ITU, WIPO, UNCTAD and other organisations.

Q8: How far do you consider the implementation of specific WSIS outcomes to have been achieved?

We are still facing a situation where two thirds of the world lack access to the Internet. Sweden has, therefore, made increased access to and use of the Internet and ICTs a key part of its international development agenda. The goal of the WSIS process must be to increase efforts to ensure that ICTs contribute to global development goals.
Q9: How has the implementation of WSIS outcomes contributed towards the development of a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society"?

Respondent skipped this question

Q10: What are the challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes? What are the challenges that have inhibited the emergence of a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society"?

The main development challenges lie in the lack of legal, technical and human capacity in policy-making, leading to a disconnect between different stakeholder groups. ICTs are still a new technology, and are as such poorly understood by policymakers. Improving the capacity to create the regulatory, institutional and legislative environment that results in open, transparent and effective markets has proven to be key to achieving this. To that effect, the importance of ensuring that globally agreed principles of the applicability of international law, human rights and the rule of law are equally crucial for the information society domain.

Q11: How are these challenges being addressed? What approaches have proved to be effective in your experience?

Respondent skipped this question

Q12: What do you consider the most important emerging trends in technology and other aspects of ICTs which have affected implementation of WSIS outcomes since the Summit? What has been their impact?

Respondent skipped this question

Q13: What should be the priorities for stakeholders seeking to achieve WSIS outcomes and progress towards the Information Society, taking into account emerging trends?

Respondent skipped this question

Q14: What role should information and communications play in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda?

Sweden has since long included ICTs as an important tool in its international development cooperation. Increased access to ICTs and the Internet opens up new venues for development, innovation and growth. Therefore, the WSIS process cannot exist in a vacuum, but needs to relate to the broader global development goals.

Sweden supports the statement by the UN Group on the Information Society, which posits ICTs as an important means to achieving development goals. We particularly agree with their conclusion on the need for “strategic policies, human capacity, appropriate knowledge management, relevant content development, infrastructure deployment, and enabling environment are critical factors to ensure that the potential of ICTs for sustainable development is fully harnessed by and for all.”

Q15: Please add any other comments that you wish to make on the subject of the review that you believe would be helpful.

Respondent skipped this question
Q16: We would also welcome any documents, reports, etc. that you can forward which you think will provide useful evidence for the review. Please send these to cstd-wsis10@unctad.org. It would be helpful if you could list these in this box, together with any URL which enables access to them on the World Wide Web.