World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2015
Auditorium, WIPO, Geneva, 26 May 2015

Statement by Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,
Representatives of the private sector and civil society,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to address the opening of the *WSIS Forum 2015*. This is a pivotal year for the United Nations and our efforts in setting the course for the future we want. In September, we will meet in New York to agree on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). A few months later, the General Assembly will have its High Level Meeting to conduct its Overall Review of the first ten years since the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Add to that the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa and the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP21, in Paris and we have an unprecedented agglomeration of major UN gatherings.

Against this background, this year's *WSIS Forum* offers a unique opportunity to examine the interface between ICT and the major development processes. As is well illustrated through the different WSIS action lines, ICT affects a wide range of development aspects. It is clear that the potential of information and communications technologies must be fully harnessed if we are to succeed in meeting the SDGs, enhancing financial inclusion as well as coping with climate change.

In this context, I commend the joint efforts by all action line facilitators to develop the matrix of interfaces between WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs. I would urge all stakeholders to study it carefully and provide feedback on how it may be further improved. As was discussed this morning among the members of the UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS), having a clear idea of the link between SDGs and the action lines will allow us to have a head start once we turn our attention towards implementing the SDGs.

As newly elected UNGIS Chair, UNCTAD will seek to deepen the collaboration among all UNGIS members, and in particular the other vice-chairs. UNGIS is a valuable mechanism to ensure that the UN family as a whole gives adequate attention to information and communications technology in all areas of development.

As many of you are aware, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development met three weeks ago here in Geneva. As a part for its discussions on the ten-year review of WSIS, the Commission deliberated on a report on the progress made in the implementation across different areas of WSIS commitments, drawing on contributions from wide range of stakeholders. It noted among other things that the vision for a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society is still valid.

Many participants at the Commission recognized the role of ICTs as important tools and enablers for inclusive social and economic development, with the capacity to provide solutions to key development objectives. The importance of mainstreaming ICTs into the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda was particularly emphasized.

In its draft resolution on the Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the WSIS outcomes, the Commission decided to recommend ECOSOC to submit the ten-year review report as an input to the preparatory process of the General Assembly's overall review of WSIS alongside the summary of the Commission's substantive discussion on the related topic. I trust that the General Assembly will make good use of these inputs as it embarks on its important and challenging task.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen

Let me conclude my opening remarks by thanking ITU, UNESCO and UNDP for constructive collaboration in the process of preparing for the WSIS Forum and WIPO for allowing us to make use of its premises. I also encourage all participants to make the best use of the Forum with a view to identifying constructive approaches to advancing the role of information and communications technologies in the key development processes that are awaiting later in the year.

Thank you for your attention.