

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

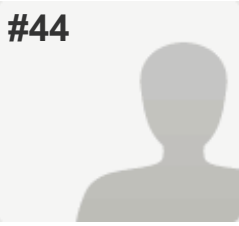
**Contribution to the CSTD ten-year review of the implementation of WSIS
outcomes**

Submitted by

WEB FOUNDATION - A4AI

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#44

**COMPLETE****Collector:** Website Collector 1 (Website Survey)**Started:** Monday, September 15, 2014 1:37:41 PM**Last Modified:** Monday, September 15, 2014 3:39:16 PM**Time Spent:** 02:01:35**IP Address:** 72.74.158.44

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Q1: Salutation:

Ms

Q2: First Name, Surname:

Sonia Jorge

Q3: Organisation:

Web Foundation - A4AI

Q4: Country:

United States

Q6: Which stakeholder category do you belong to?

Civil Society

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?

The number of internet users worldwide has more than doubled since WSIS, from 16 percent of the global population in 2005 to 39 percent in 2013. In the past five years alone, 13 countries (Argentina, Bahrain, Brazil, Chile, Greece, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Uruguay) have rapidly increased connectivity, with some recording gains of over 30 percent, showing what is possible when political will exists.

Nevertheless, in the developing world, only a minority of mobile phone owners use their phone to get online. The proportion ranges from a low of only six percent in Pakistan to a high of 37 percent in China. Hence, the mobile revolution notwithstanding, the most powerful information technology – the internet – is still out of reach for three in five of the world's people and for over four in five Africans. Only one developing country in the Web Index – Morocco – has achieved the WSIS target level of 50 percent internet use. There are a surprising number of high income countries that are languishing just above this threshold, including two G8 members – Italy and Russia.

The Web Index, Web Foundation, 2013

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

There is exciting evidence from the Web Index and other sources that the growth of user-driven spaces on the Web and social media can help to create an expanded public sphere, breaking down barriers to knowledge, and giving a voice to previously unheard groups. But by and large, governments are failing to meet their WSIS commitments. As a result, a second Gutenberg revolution has yet to arrive for the majority of the world's people.

Overall, the country that has made the most progress on achieving affordable and universal access to the internet, while also providing good access to education and skills, is Iceland, followed by Sweden, Finland, the US and Switzerland. Mauritius ranks highest in Africa. Singapore leads in Asia-Pacific and Israel ranks highest among Middle Eastern nations.

The Web Index, Web Foundation, 2013

Q9: How has the implementation of WSIS outcomes contributed towards the development of a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society"?

Please see Chapter 2 of The Web Index Report for a detailed analysis development outcomes, Web Foundation, 2013.

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"?

Very few trainings have been designed to empower youth and consumers to understand and exercise their rights online, and good evaluations of their impact are scarce. A digital rights education agenda would include teaching users how to protect their privacy, to navigate the intense social pressures that online networking platforms can generate, especially among young people; to assess information credibility and understand the non-neutral processes applied by commercial search engines to generate results, and how pictures and video footage can be manipulated.

Disability still prevents sizeable minorities from accessing the Web. Only 16 of 81 countries in the Web Index have a legally binding requirement that government Websites be accessible to people with disabilities. Of those, only France, Germany, Korea and Qatar have accessibility also cited as a government priority. Korea is the only country where access for the disabled is also seen as a priority for technology and Web developers.

While women may have access, they frequently do not necessarily have, or feel entitled to, control and privacy. There are reports from Uganda, India and other countries of fathers and husbands attempting to monitor and constrain women's use of mobile phones. On in five women in India and Egypt believe that the Internet is not appropriate for them. However, nearly all of the same women agree that internet access should be a fundamental right of all people.

Concerning gender-based violence, many governments have not even taken the basic step of setting up a free telephone number, let alone exploiting the potential of newer communication tools. The Netherlands provides a best practice example – the Website huiselijkgeweld.nl allows domestic violence victims to enter their postal code, after which they will receive a list of available help nearby, such as safehouses and legal assistance. In some Latin American Web Index countries (Brazil, Colombia, Argentina and Mexico), the police run toll-free hotlines for victims of violence, and both national and local governments maintain Websites that list available services as well as promoting awareness.

The Web Index, Web Foundation, 2013

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

One example is the Alliance for Affordable Internet - A4AI. The Alliance for Affordable Internet is a coalition of over 60 private sector, public sector, and not-for-profit organisations who have come together to advance the shared aim of affordable access to both mobile and fixed-line Internet in developing countries. Its primary goal is to see the UN Broadband Commission Broadband Target of entry-level broadband services priced at less than 5% of average monthly income realised. In working towards this vision, it is targeted to help billions more users to come online (with a particular focus on low-income countries) and to make universal access a reality.

Another encouraging example highlighted by Web Foundation researchers is Uganda's Barefoot Law, a non-profit organisation serving 128,000 people monthly with free legal advice via Facebook, Twitter, email and SMS. Its objective is to use available information and communication technology tools to disseminate law services and education, cost-effectively.

The government of Mexico is also a good example. It uses the Web to disseminate user-friendly FAQs, pamphlets and videos on a wide range of topics including prevention of violence, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, family planning – although unfortunately only in Spanish. Additionally, it provides online training for matters such as sexual harassment and specialised pages addressing teenagers (with information on relationships, HIV, pregnancy). Moreover, the special prosecutor for crimes against women (Fevimtra) provides good information online and each state has a local women's institute with interactive sites that provide information like the one managed by Mexico City.

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?

A common theme emerging from the Web Index research into the success stories in several Web Index countries is the importance of emotional support as well as factual, unbiased information, and the ways in which online spaces can fill those needs without compromising privacy.

Informal movements have found an affinity with the web's capacity to rapidly build decentralised networks and facilitate distributed action. Clearly, social platforms have enabled messages to spread and movements to grow far more rapidly than would have been possible using traditional media and traditional forms of organising alone. And in more repressive environments, where persecution for physical protest can be harsh, the "virtual" and partially anonymous nature of online opposition is vital to increase activists' room for manoeuvre.

In some countries, a great deal of social media's impact comes from its ability to increase the visibility of causes in the mainstream international media, as our researcher in France pointed out and as has been shown in analyses of the role of social media in the Arab Spring. However this is not universally true. In some cases, social media is increasingly viewed as an alternative to mainstream media.

The Web Index, Web Foundation, 2013

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

Providing information in user-friendly formats that is accessible to small-scale farmers is especially important, since they are responsible for over half of the world's food production and as much as 90 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Greater efforts to make education-related datasets available in open formats online could make a significant contribution to improving the accountability and performance of schools
Of particular importance is data on school budgets and spending.

There is an urgent need for all countries to review existing laws and practices to better address the challenges of powerful new digital surveillance technologies. This extends to the responsibility of technology companies to respect users' rights, including by accelerating and improving their own adoption of privacy enhancements, refusing to adopt specifications that enable excessive government intrusion and cooperating in the development of regulations on the export of surveillance and censorship technologies to repressive regimes

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

There are two factors common to the countries ranking low on the Web Index. The first is a lack of understanding or focus on the Web as a tool for empowering people, and a corresponding failure to give priority to increasing the knowledge, voice and participation of excluded groups such as women, lowpaid workers and farmers. The second, and related, challenge is an outdated approach to communication, more generally. The spread of cheap Web-enabled phones, and the rise of social networking, is bringing about a sea-change in how we communicate, seek information and news, and form connections.

1. The SDGs should include a commitment to achieving universal and affordable access to broadband internet, including the expansion of free public access, as part of a larger commitment on access to ICTs.
2. The SDGs should include a commitment to open up all government data as part of a larger commitment to access to information.
3. The SDGs should include a commitment to freedom of expression and diverse and independent media

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

We urge you to consult the 2013 Web Index report by the Web Foundation: <http://thewebindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Web-Index-Annual-Report-2013-FINAL.pdf>
The report provides our analysis of progress or lack of towards the WSIS goals.

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.

The A4AI 2013 Affordability Report: http://1e8q3q16vyc81g8l3h3md6q5f5e.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Affordability-Report-2013_Final-2.pdf