

**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

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## United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)

### Answers of the Swiss government to the questionnaire for CSTD's 10-year review of WSIS implementation

The same questionnaire is available online: <http://unctad.org/en/Pages/CSTD/WSIS-10yearReview.aspx>

Please share your experience, views and priorities in response to the following questions, addressing the issues that you consider most important for the CSTD's ten-year WSIS review. Issues that you might consider could include any or more of the following, but need not be confined to these:

- infrastructure, access and inclusiveness;
- content, applications and capacity-building;
- technical, financial and related issues;
- governance and wider public policy aspects of the Information Society;
- social, economic and other development activities and impacts;
- the implications of new trends in technology and services;
- measurement and monitoring of the Information Society; and
- the relationship between the Information Society, sustainable development and the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

#### **1. 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?**

There is an increase of awareness for the challenges related to the information society in Switzerland. In the last 10 years there have been numerous projects, e.g. in the fields of e-accessibility or e-inclusion, that focus on the aspect of people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented information society. Furthermore, the importance of the WSIS-outcomes is reflected in the new Swiss national strategy for the information society of the Swiss Federal Council (see: [www.infosociety.ch](http://www.infosociety.ch)).

At present, not everyone can benefit equally from the advantages of ICT. There are people who do not have access to the new media or who have not yet been able to learn how to use communication technologies. This is where e-inclusion or digital integration comes in: these people should be supported by targeted projects and initiatives so that they can use ICT for their benefit and personal development.

To achieve this, the "Digital Integration Switzerland" national network was founded in 2007, with the aim of helping potentially disadvantaged people to make use of ICT in accordance with their needs. The members of the network jointly drew up an Action Plan. This was updated in 2012: [e-Inclusion Action Plan 2012-2015](#). It indicates areas in which measures should be taken and projects initiated so that the advantages of the information society can truly benefit everyone in Switzerland. The goal is to promote equality of opportunity in Swiss society.

The Action Plan also forms part of the implementation activities in relation to the above mentioned [Federal Council's strategy of March 2012](#) for an information society in Switzerland. As one of its principles for action, the latter provides for equal opportunities, according to which the deployment of ICT should always take account of the needs of potentially disadvantaged groups in Switzerland.

In the implementation of the Federal Council's strategy, inter alia the following principle must be complied with. It applies across all areas of the information society and serve as basic guidelines for the implementation of the strategy

“Human beings are at the centre of the information society.”

Everyone should be able to use ICT in their private and professional life, for their benefit and their future development. Equal-opportunity, barrier-free and non-discriminatory access for all to ICT and competent use of ICT by the inhabitants of Switzerland are an essential prerequisite for this. This also involves consideration of the needs of potentially vulnerable population groups when they use ICT, as well as lifelong learning for all.

## **2. How far do you consider the implementation of specific WSIS outcomes to have been achieved?**

### *C3. Access to information and knowledge*

Please see answer to question 1 and the specific goals and achievements of Switzerland's e-Inclusion Action Plan 2012-2015 as well as the Federal Council's strategy for an information society in Switzerland.

### *C4. Capacity Building*

Switzerland has initiated the national program „Jugend und Medien“ (Youth and Media). The main objective of the program is to promote a safe, age-appropriate and responsible use of digital media by children and adolescents. It offers targeted support and advice for parents, teachers and professionals alike for proper monitoring of children and adolescents.

The Confederation, together with the media industry, is committed to an effective youth media protection in Switzerland. At the same time, the federal government takes over coordination

tasks and fosters cooperation and networking between different actors in the area of youth and media.

[www.jugendundmedien.ch](http://www.jugendundmedien.ch)

### *C7. ICT Applications*

In regard to Action Line C7, the Federal Council adopted the eGovernment strategy and the eHealth strategy respectively.

The Swiss confederation and the cantons have concluded a framework agreement and created a coordination body called "eHealth Suisse". The coordination organ represents a political governance in the steering committee and has representative of numerous stakeholders, including patients, in the advisory board. It has a project management team which coordinate the work of four working groups devoted to a) standard and architecture; b) pilots and implementation; c) the Swiss patient portal and d) education.

The current Swiss eHealth strategy is based on the above mentioned "Strategy for an information society in Switzerland" (its first version elaborated in 1998). eHealth was addressed in 2006 by the added chapter "Health and health services". The strategy includes plans on infrastructural issues and conceptual elements. Another important document is the "eGovernment Strategy", as here eHealth is seen as one key factor to keep pace with international competition.

The eGovernment Strategy, adopted by the Swiss federal council in 2007, was developed in close cooperation with the cantons and the municipalities, under the direction of the Federal IT Steering Unit (FITSU). The strategy constitutes the basis for the Confederation, the cantons, and the municipalities to orient their efforts toward common goals. It also sets out principles, approaches, and instruments for implementation of these goals. The goal of the strategy is to enable both businesses and the population to carry out important transactions with the authorities electronically. The authorities in turn are called upon to modernise their business processes and to communicate electronically with each other. The national eGovernment strategy is a partial strategy of the "Strategy of the Federal Council for an Information Society in Switzerland".

For more Information, please visit <http://www.egovernment.ch/> and [www.e-health-suisse.ch](http://www.e-health-suisse.ch)

### *C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content*

In collaboration with other funding agencies, the Swiss Federal Office of Culture (FOC) initiated an open dialogue in order to enable the cultural policy to adapt to the change in the cultural landscape. The question of the introduction of instruments to support digital transversal projects must be addressed by all Swiss culture funding agencies.

To improve the framework for the cultural sector, the FOC will organize inter alia platforms and information sessions or support the organization of events for knowledge transfer and networking, like e.g. [X Media Lab](#).

**3. How has the implementation of WSIS outcomes contributed towards the development of a "people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society"?**

The Swiss federal council will continue to support the development of a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, i.e. in implementing current strategies and developing new projects in 2015.

**4. 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"?**

For Switzerland the most critical challenges are the emergence of new technological developments and their implications on individuals and the whole society as well as the ongoing need to always engage all relevant stakeholders in the respective discussions.

**5. How are these challenges being addressed? What approaches have proved to be effective in your experience?**

The federal administration is trying to build several national discussion platforms, so that the multi-stakeholder approach can be implemented in the different fields in accordance with their expectations. Namely, the discussion forum "Plateforme Tripartite" was launched by the Federal Office of Communications in 2003. This platform which is open to all interested stakeholders brings the various interest groups from academia, civil society, private sector and authorities together for discussions on relevant topics. This discussion platform has proven to be very useful to collect the diverse views of different stakeholder and to inform them of current developments that may be interesting for the parties concerned.

**6. 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?**

The most important emerging trends in technology over the last few years have been the increasing use of social media and the ever increasing importance of mobile devices. Devices are becoming easier to use, this allows in particular older people a simpler and better use of new technologies. The extensive use of social media, in particular by young people, has raised a number of challenges, in particular related to the protection of private life.

Other big trends are big data and the internet of things, both with a huge impact of the national and international economy as well as our daily life. This impact has to be analyzed in depth in order to decide how to be addressed.

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

The priorities should be focusing on empowerment and capacity building (Action Lines C4 and C5), particularly in the area of privacy, security and risk management.

**8. What role should information and communications play in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda?**

As always, information and communications should play an important role in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and be as open, transparent and inclusive as possible. The use of ICTs offers enormous opportunities for economic, cultural and societal development, but they carry a number of risks as well (see answer to question 6).

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

The review should look at all levels – national, regional and international. The review should focus on how the use of ICTs fosters all people’s exercise of their fundamental rights and freedoms. All stakeholders – governments, business sector, civil society and the technical and academic community - should accept their responsibilities according to their respective role and play an active part in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes.

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](mailto:cstd-wsis10@unctad.org).