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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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?**

Formation of information society and ICT in the country dates back to the "National Strategy on *Information and* Communication Technologies for *development* of the Republic of *Azerbaijan*" adopted in 2003. State programs and special Action Plan of the Government targeted at resolving issues arising from the National Strategy were adopted, necessary infrastructure was established, appropriate laws aimed at formation legal base in this field were adopted, as well as numerous relevant laws and regulatory enactments were confirmed.

Today, 73 out of every 100 people in Azerbaijan are internet users, with 55 users of broadband internet. Due to these indicators, Azerbaijan consolidates its leadership among CIS and Central Asian countries.

Within last five years, capacity of internet channel improved 12.9 times and reached 250 Gbit/s, the volume of internet services market increased approximately 4 times. On February 8, 2013 the Republic of Azerbaijan launched its first telecommunications satellite "Azerspace-1" into orbit. This was one of the greatest achievements which Azerbaijan has gained since its independence.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is initiator and active executor of some regional projects. Realization of the project Trans Eurasia Super Information Highway (TASIM) supported by the Resolutions of UN General Assembly (adopted in 2009, 2012 and 2013 years), as well as use of opportunities of the Europe-Persia Express Gateway (EPEG) where our country participated, will contribute to significant increase of internet access of our country.

Serious attention is paid to the formulation of "e-government" in the country and serves to the facilitation and making relationships between officers and citizens transparent by using means of IT and elimination of bureaucratic obstacles.

There was confirmed Development Concept called "Azerbaijan – 2020: Vision into the future" Development Concept by the Decree of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated November 29, 2012. Main target of the Concept is to increase gross domestic product for 2 times in Azerbaijan in the future 8-10 years, and

reach this increase mainly by the help of development of non-oil sector, replacement of oil factor of great potential with non-oil factor and realization of it through building the knowledge society in Azerbaijan.

"National Strategy for Development of Information Society in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2014-2020 years" confirmed by the Order of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated April 2, 2014 serves to the implementation of tasks set forth in the Concept.

The National Strategy is guided by the outcomes of works done up to now regarding formulation of information society and determines state policy, main goals and duties, priorities and leading directions of activity in order to develop them more. Demand of the society to modern technologies, world experience, recommendations of international organizations, as well as International Telecommunication Union and European Union, UNESCO, issues arising out of "Open Government Initiative" were taken into account in this Strategy.

The priority directions of the National Strategy are development of ICT infrastructure and services at the level of world standards in the country, strengthening of high technologies field and scientific and technical potential for its development, increase of role of "electron government" and generally ICT as a development factor of society, provision of staff training and information security, enlargement of national content.

All of these opportunities are figures indicating development of information society in the international experience. Our country was in the first place among the first 10 countries for its development dynamics in the world according to the annual report of the International Telecommunication Union called "Measuring Information Society" and advanced from the 83rd step into the 61st step in 2012 in comparison with 2009. It was placed in the 49th place in the report of the World Economic Forum called "Network Readiness" for 2014.

2. **To what extent do you think the special outcomes of WSIS have been implemented?**

As a result of practical actions implemented during the last 10 years, the role of state, private sector and citizens in the process of development of ICT in Azerbaijan has been increased, necessary infrastructure has been built in this field, the significant results regarding obtaining information, increasing training of specialists, providing information security, applying ICT in all life levels, enlargement of international cooperation in this field have been achieved.

3. **What kind of contribution did the implementation of WSIS outcomes give to organization of "Inclusive and development-oriented Information Society serving to people"?**

   With the view of developing competitive and high export potential, innovative ICT industry in the territory of country, the State Foundation of Development of Information Technologies and "High Technologies Park" have been built. These two entities provide financial and organizational support to strengthening economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, involvement of foreign investments and enlargement of production of ICT products in the territory of country, organization of new companies' activities and innovative start-ups.

4. **What are the problems in the implementation of outcomes of WSIS? What problems do prevent the development of "Inclusive and development-oriented Information Society serving to people"?**

   As some of the problems we can show the constant increase of electronic threats, insufficient coordination of international cooperation in this field, non-availability of unified administrative models in the process of internet governance, etc.

5. **How have these problems been eliminated? What kinds of approached did give its yield in your experience?**

   In the direction of avoiding electronic threats, two entities have been organized and the organizational works have been fulfilled in the provision of security in state bodies and in the territory of country as a whole. Furthermore, improvement of legislation base gave its contribution to the reducing this problem, too.

6. **According to you, what are the most important and newely-emerged tendencies that have affected to implementation of the outcomes of the Information Society in technology and other aspects of the ICT since the Summit? What were mainly their influence.**

   Citizens' expectations are changing and government has to change to meet these expectations. The future of government ICT is not just about technology. It is also about how the government uses information and technology to deliver better services in a constantly changing environment. After WSIS Summit worldwide ICT trends have to meet these challenges.

This is the main focus of our state strategy on ICT as well. Main goals of our country is transforming Azerbaijan into a knowledge-based society so as to enhance the country's competitiveness in the world in order to stimulate and sustain economic growth through the systematic application and innovative use of ICT.

Our main target is to become a country with an advanced information society where the use of ICT, expanded access to modern infrastructure, rich digital content and advanced informational services drives to economic competitiveness, population welfare and good governance of the country. Surely, all impacts of these challenges and emerging trends have been mentioned in the our development Concept "AZERBAIJAN – 2020: THE VISION OF THE FUTURE" and in the "National Strategy for Information Society Development in Azerbaijan for 2014-2020".

7. **Given the emerging tendencies, what should be the priorities for the partners who wish to achieve WSIS outcomes and make advances regarding the Information Society?**

The primary goals of the future development of information society of the Republic of Azerbaijan are achieving sustainable economic growth and progress due to development of non-oil sector, as well as diversification of the economy. Our development strategy is intended to decrease the feature of dependence on natural resources in the structure of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as well as to ensure the prioritization of non-oil factor in revenues and spending of government budget and to set and develop strong motivating mechanisms for deployment of innovations in the economy. Benefiting from existing resources, geographical position and socio-economic development Republic of Azerbaijan need to meet up-to-date requirements and boost competitiveness of the economy which would, in turn, allow national products to gain its fairly worthy position in the world market. We can easily classify these objectives as follow:

- Expanding non-oil sector, directing the income gained through oil,
- Creating innovative economy,
- Increasing competitiveness of our economy,
- Enabling the national products to take advanced position in the world market
- Developing human resources to achieve these goals.

8. What should be the role of Information and communications in implementation aof the post-2015 development plan?

Today, the ICT is viewed to be an auspicious tool for ensuring stable and reliable development of the country, strengthening intellectual potential, business advancement, fight against corruption, poverty and unemployment reduction, improvement of transparency and democracy in the society. Through creating new values in public administration, education, healthcare, business, banking and other fields, the ICT has become a critical part of public and economic relations. Development of internet media, availability of freedom of expression, prevalence of electronic newspapers and magazines, social networks are new opportunities which ICT granted to the society.

With the view of realizing the key target set forth in the Concept, it is required to broaden the ICT sector for 4-4,5 times, reinforce economic potential of the ICT, meet the ICT needs of the society in coming ten years. For the purpose of meeting these targets the following tasks attach unwavering importance:

-formation of innovative, competitive and export-oriented ICT potential;
-turning the country into the centre of regional information services;
-development of space industry and large-scale application of satellite technologies;
-empowering citizens and society to benefit from existing opportunities, product and services; and boosting their level of ICT knowledge, skills and readiness;
-development of "e-government" and harnessing e-services in all levels of public administration,
- ensuring information security of the existing ICT infrastructure and ICT users,
-training of highly skilled specialists and scientific manpower;
-scientific support to performed work,
-close integration of the country into global information environment.

Development of the ICT, as well as internet economy will play a vital role in development of traditional economic fields. It is internet economy that promotes nascency of new outstanding environment of utilization and participation, boost of productivity, gaining strategic predominance over rivals, strengthening relations with partners, optimal usage of information resources and promoting welfare of society as a whole.