

**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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Questionnaire for CSTD's 10-year review of WSIS implementation

1. To what extent, in your experience, has the “people-centered, 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?

During two phases of WSIS in 2003 to 2005, the representatives of various countries approved the common vision for WSIS by identifying the main principle of building a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society. We believe as a whole that remarkable progress has been achieved on the development of information society in the past decade, as the foundation for information society has been preliminarily established:

First, the telecom/ICT accessibility has been growing rapidly over the past decade. Statistics from ITU indicates that the number of mobile phone users had exceeded 6.8 billion globally in 2013, whose penetration rate reached 96.2%. The global Internet users had numbered over 2.7 billion with the penetration rate at 38.8%. The telecom/ICT has gradually improved people's life and arisen as indispensable crucial infrastructure.

Second, a variety of telecom/ICT applications have witnessed robust development in the past decade. On one hand, the vibrant innovation in Internet and mobile Internet applications accelerated the integration of people into the information society and exerted profound impact on people's lifestyle and working pattern. On the other hand, the applications of information technology continued to transform the traditional industries, reform the production mode and improve the production efficiency.

Third, with concerted efforts of international organizations, state governments and industries, people's skill in the use of relevant telecom/ICT application services has

been noticeably enhanced.

In addition, the development of information society also advanced the evolution of knowledge society, which is based on freedom of expression, equal access to good education, universal access to and non-discriminatory use of information and knowledge as well as the principle of respecting cultural and linguistic diversity and cultural heritage.

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

We believe that WSIS outcomes have been well implemented as a whole over the past decade. From the perspective of Geneva Plan of Action, remarkable progress has been registered in different countries, including (1) ICT-related development strategies and promotion policies have been formulated among countries, which enable the ICT sector to gain robust development in the past decade; (2) ICT infrastructure has been developed as one of priorities and network and IT facilities have been fundamentally improved in terms of coverage, performance and quality; (3) The vibrant ICT application innovation, in particular various innovations in Internet and IT applications have been deep integrated into traditional economic and social sectors for public service; (4) People's capability in the use of ICT technologies and applications has been greatly enhanced; (5) Transparent, non-discriminatory legal and regulatory policies and institutional environment have been established among countries. In addition to facilitating competition, the industrial management also got better regulated; (6) Closer international cooperation have been made among countries in the development of ICT technology and applications, policy making and resource management.

However, we are not yet to fully achieve the development goal proposed by WSIS outcomes:

1. Despite remarkable development in the information and communications infrastructure, the goal of digital inclusiveness **still needs** to be realized so as to provide sustainable connection and access for the rural, remote and marginalized areas in the countries and regions.

2. Countries have attached great importance to cyber security, but **still need** to reinforce their capabilities in technological methods and management system by establishing laws, systems and international rules in relation to cyber security and deepening international cooperation in this regard so as to work together against security challenges.

3. ICT plays an important role in social and economic development by creating more jobs and carrying forward entrepreneurship. However, well-designed policies and framework are **still needed** for SMEs to get benefited from economic potential brought out by ICT.

4. The WSIS forum with its process has become an efficient and effective platform to integrate ICT programs for WSIS actions and made useful contribution to sharing best practices on a global level. However, an evaluation mechanism of outcomes and goals **still needs** to be established to identify the gap and causes, which will help WSIS outcomes to be better promoted towards its stated objective.

5. The overarching goal of building a multilateral, democratic and transparent Internet governance system is not yet realized, for the monopoly of Internet basic resources and crucial facilities by minority countries has not been changed fundamentally. It is underlined that the international society should continue to take practical measures to realize the goal for a multilateral, democratic and transparent Internet governance system as soon as possible.

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

The WSIS outcomes are implemented through 11 action plans formed in Geneva phase. The implementation of WSIS outcomes by different countries will first, help gain shared perception of the aspiration for realizing truly global interconnected and inclusive information society. Countries play a key role in many fields including poverty reduction and illiteracy eradication with the advancement of ICT technology and promote the development of overall information society by virtue of development potential with information technology. For example, the C2 action plan will facilitate advances in connection technology, growth in mobile penetration, promotion of broadband access and emerging of new platforms and applications such as social

media and cloud computing, as well as expand and deepen the information and knowledge acquisition, thus laying a foundation for the Information Society. The C4 action plan will promote more use of ICT in education, which enhances capability of different groups and offers support to development of skill-based labor.

4. What are the challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes? What are the challenges that have inhibited the emergence of a “people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society”?

We believe that along with huge achievements in the development of information society over the past decade, there also exist challenges reflected in the following four aspects:

First, the digital divide still exists and even tends to further widen. Besides the gap in terms of network access and ICT use, due to the robust development of new-generation ICT technology exemplified by cloud computing and big data, the gap between developed countries and developing countries in this field is also further widened, which may create new digital divide.

Second, the issue of cyber security becomes increasingly prominent and has become a common challenge for all countries. With information technology pervasive in every corner of our life, the safe and reliable network environment constitutes the prerequisite for sound development and universal use of ICT. The cyber security issue will arise as one of key challenges that constrain the development of Information Society.

Third, Internet has become a key area in the information and communications sector. However, there are still big divergences among countries in Internet management and policy making, international Internet governance and multi-party participation pattern for Internet development, which will affect long-term and sound development of Internet and constrain its more important role in the economic and social development.

Fourth, as cyber terrorism is a common challenge facing all the countries, it has

become one of the consensuses within WSIS to crack down cyber terrorism. However, in retrospect of current situation, the spread of terrorist ideas and demonstration of explosion and terrorist skills by terrorist organizations is growing instead of declining. Hence, the international society should tighten coordination to put the consensus of cracking down crimes and terrorism into practical cooperative measures.

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

First, the countries should explore common principles and code of conduct with regards to development and use of Internet and cyber space so as to jointly promote development and prosperity of the latter. We believe that countries should agree on the following four principles in global shared governance of Internet: (1) Equality and open-up. Every country's network sovereignty, rights to network development, network management and governance for international Internet participation should be respected. (2) Multi-party participation. The involved parties should include governments, Internet enterprises, Internet social organizations, technical communities and netizens, among which the governments should take the lead to device the public policies conducive to Internet development and protection of people's rights and interests. (3) Safety and reliability. State governments should enhance their cooperation to crack down network crimes and illegal acts. The whole world should join hands together to crack down terrorist activities in cyber space. (4) Cooperation for win-win result. The international community should set up positive cooperation mechanism for the exchange of ideas and experience, enhancement of consensus and creation of more interest coherence and growth areas of cooperation.

Second, we call for efforts to seek common ground while reserving differences under the principle of equality, openness, multi-stakeholder participation, security, credibility and win-win cooperation in order to reach the following 7 consensus: (1) Internet should be a benefit instead of harm to the humankind, bringing welfare to people of the world. (2) Internet shall bring peace and security to all countries rather than being used by one country as a "weapon" to attack other countries; (3) Internet should serve the interests of developing countries more as they are more in need of opportunities that Internet can bring about. (4) Internet should not

become a hotbed of crimes or a terrorist tool. High attentions should be paid to the protection of the legitimate rights and interests of citizens who use the Internet. (5) Internet should be a civilized and credible space and not a space inundated with slanders and frauds. (6) Internet should transmit positive energy and help carrying forward and building up good human culture. (7) Internet should be helpful to the healthy growth of minor people as they are the future of humankind.

Third, we should continue to strengthen international exchanges and cooperation, increase mutual trust and work together to develop policies and mechanisms to tackle the above challenges. In order to address the cyber security issue, for instance, we believe that the international community need to build an effective mechanism of communications and consultations to strengthen cooperation among governments and multiple stakeholders with the aim of **developing an international cyber security rule in the interest of all countries under the principle of equality and mutual benefit** to prevent and crackdown crimes such as economic frauds, violence, terrorism and destruction of national security through usage of information technologies and resources, and ensure building and healthy development of an information society.

Fourth, countries should develop clear strategies, implementation plans and enabling mechanisms at the national level to address these challenges. Taking the issue of digital divide as an example, China has developed its national strategy and implemented the “Village Connect” project for ten years with a total investment of 14.5 billion USD. As a result, almost every village now in China has telephone connections and the broadband penetration has exceeded 20%, and rural communications has achieved rapid growth.

Fifth, countries should support and encourage R&D and applications of related technologies and solutions such as technologies for low cost network coverage in rural and remote areas, low cost smart terminals and network security protection.

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

First, the ICT infrastructure represented by the broadband network has become the strategic resources supporting economic development of countries. Governments have all adopted broadband development strategies to boost the ICT sector and inject new vitalities into economic growth.

Second, the new generation of ICTs represented by mobile Internet, cloud computing, big data, and artificial intelligence is developing rapidly. While providing more powerful tools for information society, these new technologies have greatly expanded the connotation and denotation of information society. New objectives and tasks will be identified for the building of information society.

Third, ICTs are integrating and upgrading the traditional sectors in an accelerating manner. The deep integration of Internet applications and models with traditional sectors has lowered the cost of economic and social activities and has improved the efficiency of traditional sectors. How to use ICTs to upgrade traditional sectors and create new impetus for economic growth will become a key direction for the building of information society in the next phase.

Fourth, ICTs enable the cross-sector convergence and bring the vertically separated services onto a horizontal-centralized platform. This has raised higher requirements for regulators.

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

We believe that the multiple stakeholder approach should promote the public-private-partnership (PPP). The priorities should be given to the following areas: the role of ICTs in enhancing the ability of vulnerable groups to access information and knowledge, education, health and other public services; the availability of ICT infrastructure; creating an enabling environment; creation, sharing, access and protection of information and knowledge; the role of ICTs in protecting environment,

mitigating natural disasters and ensuring the sustainability of natural resources. In terms of enhancing users' confidence in ICTs and the security of ICTs, in particular addressing the cyber security challenges, we advocate that countries in the world, should work together to explore effective governance guidelines and collaboration mechanisms on the basis of respecting national laws. With an open and cooperative mind, China is willing to join hands with countries to bring Internet governance into an era of global joint governance.

We have noticed that the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is one of the specific outcomes of WSIS and an important platform for the discussions of Internet governance within the UN framework. Against the backdrop that the Internet governance objectives set by WSIS have not been achieved, the role of IGF should be further enhanced, with its mandates extended. Granting decision-making power to IGF could also be considered.

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

Sustainable development is an important target of the development agenda beyond 2015. The wide application and popularization of ICT not only help to speed up the process of social progress and human civilization, but also bring about new opportunities for sustainable development.

First, ICT helps to eliminate poverty and achieve common development. To accelerate rural construction is a priority for the developing countries including China to build the people-centric, harmonious and inclusive information society. We should continue with our support to the rural information infrastructure construction so as to enable the people in the rural and remote area to get access to employment, education and healthcare through Internet and ICTs, thus improving people's living quality and achieving common development.

Second, ICTs promote the sustainable economic and social development. The wide application of ICTs is conducive to the renovation and upgrading of traditional industries, development of information service industry and strategic restructuring of

the national economy. It also helps to reduce the energy and material consumption per unit of production, curb environmental pollution and do good to the circular economy. The application of ICTs enables the transformation of national economic growth mode from depending on capital and resource input to relying on technology progress and quality improvement of the labor forces. Hence the quality and efficiency of economic growth is increased.

Third, ICTs facilitate the building of inclusive information society. We should make more efforts in the universal service fund and giving more policy support to provide the vulnerable people in the rural and remote areas with broadband information access, bridge digital divide, build up the ICT capacity for the youth and women, increase employment and income for the labor forces and build the development-oriented, people-centric and inclusive society with ubiquitous ICTs.

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