

**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?

This very much depends on the region and on the drivers of policies thereof. On the one hand, the digital divide still is an issue in many parts of the world while at the other hand so many people already found there way to access and use the Internet. The question of development is also rather broad and if we understand the term as meaningful and sustainable it's much less compared to some wide range of content. For many people still inclusion is far from achieved, i.e. by the use of visualized presentation with no transcription (flash et al). And the main precondition to all that is an inclusive, value-oriented education. I think that compared to some ten years ago, much has been achieved to open access to the general population. Though, the need for guidance is bigger than ever.

While ICTs can become an enabler for Millennium Development Goals, I see much attraction by rather superficial/shallow or even harmful content. That's not a technical but a socio-cultural issue.

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

When we look at how youth is today using ICTs it gives hope for the possibility to become future creators and developers of digital content. The skills to access information and to share and re-use it are spreading quickly. That also contributes to the potential for entrepreneurship and community/organization building. I do not see though, who's taking the lead in protecting children rights and individual/social wellbeing online.

While the potential for democratic participation could be increased for the "haves" the status of the "have nots" is still vague. Again, (civic) education is needed to understand and influence such processes. In addition, the need for defending and fostering human rights is a crucial precondition as much as the principle of rule of law.

And even if there was some progress to involve more females in numbers, the "gender divide" still exists and is - like other issues being perceived as technology rather than media and cultural basic skills - far from being erased.

Whereas I see a big potential for empowerment in principle, it's still a matter of the concrete social, cultural, and political environment, if such potential can be realized or not. I think that the leading people and institution need to understand that in modern democracy inclusion and participation are key to all kinds of development, especially in a society built more and more on information and knowledge.

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

The process of WSIS, the Action Lines, IGF, and other post-WSIS activities have certainly contributed in such a direction. In particular by a trans-national (Geneva) plan of action and the

understanding of the entire matter as an all stakeholder-activity. Including civil society as an equal partner and consultants from the academia was another big plus. Though, when this crucial agenda was left in national responsibility (National ICT policies), the gap between the words being expressed in Geneva or Tunis and people's realities was sometimes really disappointing, especially when it comes to real and full empowerment of the people.

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"?

As described above, the main challenge is the (lack of) will of the decision makers in politics, business, technology, and education to fully support the empowerment of the entire population. In so many examples, WSIS was seen mainly as a way to gain a positive image and stopped at rolling out products/sales. The underlying socio-cultural backbone stayed unchanged very often. So such policies were perceived as empty promises and PR-activities mainly. Especially in authoritarian regimes the promises of such a development is far from becoming a reality. On the contrary, access, content, and even connections are in control of the elite, and seen as means for further societal stratification.

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

One important part here is the measurement of ICT for development and the use of indicators based on HDI and others that also include the social and cultural sphere. The main point is the change of mindset from "the big machine" of the last century into a society based on creativity, knowledge, and mutual support.

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 availability of smartphones and social media which helped to connect people and build bridges not only on the local but also on the global level. Now people can learn from and about each other much more directly and can build networks on similar interests.

In addition, the use of ICT in education (MOOC, OCW) and health was another great contribution to how people can connect and exchange for achieving much better standards and for better understanding of processes that were intransparent to most before.

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 main priority should be on improving the socio-cultural framework of (social) organization and real empowerment, which also means to secure zones free from harmful and destructive influences. I think that the principle of a caring society - which includes protection of vulnerable - needs to be implemented at first hand. Within the given framework there could be as much

liberty and freedom possible. That's summed up by the term ordo-liberalism.

The need for tackling crime, fraud, scam, and other forms of destructive and content that might be liable to corrupt the young is obvious on many different levels and it needs technical and foremost political/legal measures to ensure a beneficial and indeed empowering use of ICTs for a more inclusive and (positive) development-oriented society.

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

These are two pillars for development as without the necessary knowledge and distribution thereof it is not possible to understand or to change the situation as is. They also are necessary ingredients for transparency and not only between citizens and public authorities but in general. People need to be informed and trained to know their rights and duties, to become active citizens and build responsible organizations, profit or non-profit.

For this process, especially intermediaries are necessary to provide the public with the necessary information and to come up with presentations that can be understood easily, i.e. data.gov

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

I find it most useful to appoint an International Information Society "Ambassador" who is working directly with the UN bodies, i.e. UNGIS, in every country there is. Only national responsibility sometimes is not sufficient for the citizens' needs. Very similar to supranational courts of human rights, ICC and other institutions to guarantee fundamental freedoms and liabilities.

Sincerely yours,

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