

**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

**MEXICO**

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

### 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?

First of all, the Information Society is focused on people. Its main objective is to guarantee its benefits to the people, in both economic and social terms. WSIS actions are ultimately people-centered.

The value of an inclusive Information Society is not limited to a country's borders; it lies in the exchange of experiences, and in the share of knowledge on what is yet unknown to others. WSIS multistakeholder approach has been critical in developing policies aiming at encouraging a productive Information Society.

Regarding the inclusive approach, Mexico believes that, in general terms, it has been achieved. WSIS multistakeholder model allows us to listen and to take into consideration approaches from all the actors involved in the Information Society. It also applies to the whole population, as its the benefits are for everyone rather than just a few. Furthermore, it not only includes people, but also governments, business, international organizations, academia and civil society.

Likewise, the WSIS Action Plans is ultimately designed to have an impact on development. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have proved to have a direct positive impact on the social, economic and political development of countries.

Nonetheless, there still too much work for governments, private sector, and civil society regarding the inclusion of the entire population in the Information Society and, therefore, having a positive impact on development. The importance of the WSIS 10-year implementation review relies on the capacity of the stakeholder to assess what is working and gaps in order to achieve the goals envisaged.

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

During the past 10 years many outcomes have been realized within the framework of WSIS.

One of the most important achievements of WSIS is the interest of diverse stakeholders in constructing together an open and inclusive Information Society with the ultimate goal of contributing to social growth and economic development, particularly in developing countries. When the issue was introduced to the international and regional agenda, governments, civil society and other international organizations shifted their attention to it due to the perception of the potential benefits for the population. In a relative short period of time, we have for the first time at the global level a series of guiding principles and plans of action oriented to guide countries on ways to grant people access to the Information and Knowledge Society.

At the same time, the topic gained recognition at the national level. Nowadays, governments are fully committed to achieve WSIS goals. An increasing number of countries have recognized the importance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and are adopting and/or preparing either national digital strategies or agendas. For instance, in Latin America, various economies like Mexico (National Digital Strategy, [www.mexicodigital.gob.mx](http://www.mexicodigital.gob.mx)), Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay, among others, have implemented plans of action in order to bring their populations into the Information Society.

There have undoubtedly been significant achievements. In the last few years many more people have access to ICT. ICT supply and demand is on the rise. Infrastructure has been expanded and developed worldwide. Technology has also seen positive developments, many of which were unthinkable 10 years ago. Information and knowledge access has been expanded thanks to technological advances in connectivity, mobile penetration and increased broadband access, as well as the emergence of new platforms and applications, such as social media and cloud computing.

International cooperation has had a key role in the establishment of a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society. Countries that have rapidly advanced in implementing and fulfilling WSIS outcomes are willing to share best practices, particularly with developing countries and emerging economies, as well as technical assistance and, in some cases, by providing funds and expertise.

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

Advances in connectivity, increases in mobile penetration and broadband access, as well as the emergence of new platforms and applications, such as social media and cloud computing have enabled the inclusion of diverse population groups into the Information Society. In terms of inclusion, efforts have been oriented towards expanding ICT access to vulnerable groups such as women, the elderly, and children. In addition, the actions and policies oriented towards creating the capacity for people to use ICT have contributed to WSIS inclusive approach.

The multistakeholder approach of WSIS has made possible for all voices and opinions, representing the interests of various actors, to be heard. This has supported WSIS's inclusive approach when establishing priorities and action lines.

WSIS outcomes have helped in recognizing and proving the positive impact that the use of ICT has on economic and social development, as well as raising the level of competitiveness at the global level.

### **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"?**

The unprecedented speed and development of ICT has raised challenges for the stakeholders, we can mention the following:

- New approach for the governance of the relations among governments, industry and civil society.
- New threats as regards to security and confidence.
- Universal access to ICT. Only a few countries, including Mexico, have established Internet access as a constitutional right. A significant number of people around the world do not have access to the Internet, and therefore, to the benefits of digital inclusion and the Information Society. There are still many remote and marginalized areas that lack connectivity infrastructure, but also due to the high cost of the service to access broadband.
- Digital gap. Many rural regions in developing countries do not have mobile telephone network coverage while many citizens are unable to afford these devices.

Governments have to work jointly with the private sector in order to encourage competition in the telecommunications sector with the aim of reducing Internet costs, as well as establishing free Internet in public areas. Furthermore, governments should also take measures to support a competitive environment to favor investment in ICT infrastructure and developing new connection services.

The lack of confidence in the Internet as regards to security has prevented an inclusive approach.

An additional challenge is capacity building for using ICT. The introduction of computers, Internet access and technical training in education programs is now a priority. Digital alphabetization strategies are designed to take ICT-oriented education beyond classrooms to society as a whole in order to ensure that current and future generations are better prepared to harness the benefits of Information Society.

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

In terms of digital inclusion, governments are working to teach and empower peoples in ICT use through education programs and training. Other measures are designed to build capacities and facilitate skills development on ICT.

Many countries are expanding their broadband infrastructure and adopting measures to improve quality, increase connectivity, foster competition and reduce communication connection costs, through a series of reforms and amendments. For example, in Mexico, the newly adopted Telecommunications Reform ([www.reformas.gob.mx](http://www.reformas.gob.mx)) encourages competition and investment in the sector, guarantees better quality of telecommunications services at a lower cost, and ensures right of access to ICT while enabling Mexicans to live in a society with equal access to knowledge and a more competitive economy.

Governments and regulators are transforming their policies on spectrum management, for example by shifting from analog broadcast standards to digital broadcast standards. This makes large parts of the spectrum available for use. The newly available spectrum will allow the creation of opportunities for innovative networks at lower cost to reach the marginalized population. At the same time, governments and the private sector are working to narrow the digital gap through the expansion of broadband infrastructure.

Regarding the issue of security, governments, civil society, academia and private sector are establishing policies to guarantee information security. In addition, many educational programs and child online protection initiatives are being implemented in order to make people aware of the risks they may be subject to when using ICT and ways to prevent them.

**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?**

Governments have seen emerging trends affecting the full and effective implementation of WSIS outcomes. One of the most important is related to security. In recent years, the debate concerning the human rights approach, as well as privacy and data protection in the use of ICT has reached higher level among stakeholders.

Security plays a key role in users' confidence for the use of the Internet. Confidence and security are two of the most important pillars of the Information Society. If an individual is not confident on safe browsing and on the protection of personal data, the full advantage of the benefits of the Information Society can be jeopardized. Therefore governments, in cooperation with the private sector, should work to prevent, detect and respond to threats, misuse of ICT and cybercrime. In addition, it is important to raise public awareness and a prevention culture on the possible risks one may be exposed while using Internet, including issues like online privacy and means of protection.

This trend is directly associated with the ethical dimension of the Information Society. Stakeholders should promote privacy and personal data protection, and adopt preventive measures against the abuse of ICT, in

the form of illegal behaviors and other acts based on racism, xenophobia, intolerance, violence and child abuse, including human trafficking and exploitation.

Another emerging trend is related to environmental protection. Governments and the population should be more aware of the link between ICT and climate change, electronic waste and environment sustainability. In this respect, international cooperation could be an important tool for establishing international standards regarding green technologies, as well as the disposal of electronic waste and hazardous materials.

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

Priorities for stakeholders should be oriented to guarantee universal, affordable Internet access as well as security, privacy and data protection.

Regarding universal access the main priority is ICT public ownership. Every individual should have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and capacities to take full advantage of the Information Society while narrowing the digital gap. Capacity building, education and digital skills are essential to fulfil this task.

There is no point in making efforts to expand the infrastructure required to grant universal access, if people do not have the ability to use ICTs. In this respect, is essential to develop and implement programs and training for digital inclusion skills, especially for the vulnerable groups such as the elderly, women, children and ethnic groups. The aim is that the population becomes part of all the benefits entailing the use of ICT.

On international cooperation issues, the priority focuses on sharing best practices, information, successful cases and collaboration on different topics in order to bring populations into the Information Society. This is the best way to find solutions and develop public policies to face problems and challenges. For example, regional cooperation should be strengthened among countries to work jointly on specific aspects and priorities. The action plan for Latin America and the Caribbean (e-LAC), bearing in mind goals and objectives of the MDG and WSIS, states that ICT comprises tools for economic development and social inclusion (Link: <http://www.cepal.org/elac2015/default.asp?idioma=IN>).

International cooperation on cyber security and child online protection could be beneficial in terms of security and confidence in ICT use.

Another priority is related to Internet governance. The multistakeholder approach constitutes the first step towards the integration of the different structures of Internet governance whether formal, informal, business-related, technological, and hierarchical or decentralized.

Furthermore, it is important to measure outcomes through a series of statistical indicators that could be useful to compare and monitor the implementation of WSIS Action Plan, taking into consideration the circumstances of each country.

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

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have a potential role to be a game-changer for all countries' efforts to achieve sustainable development. There is increasing evidence that widespread access, transfer, national capacity building, and ICT use can help to eradicate poverty, and accelerate the achievement of several of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), such as those aimed to gender equality, environmental sustainability and health issues, among others. Nonetheless, there are still a



number of challenges to be overcome in order to remove the wide development disparities and allow everyone to enjoy universal access to information and knowledge.

The speed in the availability and accessibility of the Internet since the MDG were first set has laid the foundations for sustainable development. Although governments may create access to ICT, the general population uses this access to create sustainable business opportunities.

In the past, governments missed the opportunity to integrate ICT into the MDG. Nonetheless, we now have the opportunity to highlight their importance in the post-2015 development agenda. All UN agencies should be engaged in this process, and the WSIS review process outcome must also be connected to this agenda by aligning this discussion with the overall work of the UN and the agenda itself.

Mexico believes that ICT should be included in the post-2015 development agenda as a tool for achieving the SDG goals, as well as being a goal in itself. The role of ICT for reaching development must be fully recognized. It is important to guarantee the integration of WSIS Action Lines in the post-2015 development agenda.

As ICT have the potential to act as enablers for development and become a key component of development solutions, they should be recognized as tools for empowerment and economic growth. As a tool for development, they positively affect poverty alleviation, the quality of education, health services, government service delivery, economic activities, as well as population's everyday lives. Likewise, ICT provide a strong impetus for the adoption of new, more efficient means of production; they are closely linked to innovation and encourage a more intelligent, ecological use of human, natural and economic resources.

Furthermore, they have the potential to provide new solutions to development problems. In this respect, it is essential to ensure that ICT are available to everyone and that each person has the capacity to adequately use them. Thus, national governments, in cooperation with international organizations and other countries, must establish comprehensive action plans and strategies to bring to their populations the benefits of Information and Knowledge Society, and to accomplish the new goals of the post-2015 development agenda, as well as their national objectives.