

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

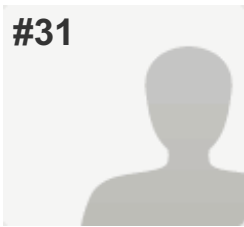
**Contribution to the CSTD ten-year review of the implementation of WSIS
outcomes**

Submitted by

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Q1: Salutation:

Ms

Q2: First Name, Surname:

N. Neelley Hicks

Q3: Organisation:

The United Methodist Church/UMCom

Q4: Country:

United States

Q6: Which stakeholder category do you belong to?

Other (please specify) Religious Institution

Q7: 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?

Over the last decade, the development of appropriate technologies, open-source software, and access to mobile phones have created an environment where inclusivity of people in low-resource parts of the world can occur more readily, and information-poverty lessened. Low-power computing has made the cost of solar installations more reasonable, which can greatly benefit educational institutions who generally lack access to modern printed resources. Open-source software has helped overcome the barriers presented by traditional software manufacturers who require costly updates, and has helped build a culture of innovation among users who need adjustments for contextual reasons. The mobile phone has been perhaps the greatest development towards an inclusive Information Society, as 90% of the world now has access to a device that can be a courier of life-saving and life-changing information, access to banking, insurance, books, and more.

Q8: How far do you consider the implementation of specific WSIS outcomes to have been achieved?

While these technologies are now available, there is need for greater awareness within low-resource regions of the technologies built for those who may not have access even to learn of them. As stated, "We are aware that ICTs should be regarded as tools and not as an end in themselves." Likewise, these tools need to be interpreted for usability, and knowledge needs to be shared for specific information outcomes to be met.

Connectivity continues to be exclusive, as it is priced beyond what can be afforded by many individuals and programs in the developing world. Programs that depend upon connectivity often cannot be sustained without outside interventions. The availability of offline content on low-cost servers is strengthening access to more educational content even when connectivity is out of the range of possibility.

Q9: How has the implementation of WSIS outcomes contributed towards the development of a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society"?

Where there is full access to information through affordable and appropriate technologies, societies can become more development-oriented. The implementation of WSIS outcomes has contributed to a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, as ICT programs in education, healthcare, agriculture and job skills have taken root.

Q10: 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"?

A lack of access to electricity strikes at the root of all ICT interventions in low-resource regions of the world. A lack of affordable and available Internet access points reduce the possibilities of an inclusive Information Society.

Educational institutions that teach Western-ideals in ICT programs add to the challenge, rather than helping to overcome them as technologies that require air-conditioning and high-energy access have no place in the developing world.

Q11: How are these challenges being addressed? What approaches have proved to be effective in your experience?

Affordable and alternative power supplies are helping to overcome the challenge of unstable electricity. Solar power that can keep cellphones, tablet computers, e-readers, and laptop computers charged help increase the capacity for effectiveness in building a global information society.

Mobile providers who offer 3G coverage are strengthening access to the Internet, so that people can access knowledge wherever they are.

Q12: 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?

Low-energy computing with long-battery life allows people without stable electricity to still seize the power of ICTs. The availability of portable and low-cost solar power devices is helping to reappropriate funds previously used for fuel-generated programs. Open-source software is allowing people to refine programs for their own contexts, free of charge. The mobile phone, now accessible by over 90% of the world, provides people with access to banking, books, insurance, information on health, agriculture, education and more.

Q13: What should be the priorities for stakeholders seeking to achieve WSIS outcomes and progress towards the Information Society, taking into account emerging trends?

Best practices in the use of ICTs need to be affirmed to promote the use of low-energy computing and solar power. Mobile providers need to be urged to provide 3G network access in parts of the world where broadband is largely unavailable, thus bringing about greater inclusivity in the global information society.

Educational institutions need to teach technologies that are appropriate for low-resource contexts, and not just the technologies that work well in a largely Western context.

Q14: What role should information and communications play in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda?

Information and communications must continue to be a priority, with special attention to women's access rights since women are largely excluded in the ICT field. Sustainability models for information-based programs must be developed, as there are still many programs that give way to the financial pressures after donor fatigue have set in.

Questionnaire for the CSTD's ten year review of WSIS implementation

Q15: Please add any other comments that you wish to make on the subject of the review that you believe would be helpful.

Respondent skipped this question

Q16: 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. It would be helpful if you could list these in this box, together with any URL which enables access to them on the World Wide Web.

United Methodist Communications has published two white papers this year, which I will deliver to this email. You may also access them online:

Using Technology for Social Good: <http://www.umcom.org/global-communications/using-technology-for-social-good>

Maximizing Information and Communications Technologies for Development in Faith-Based Initiatives: www.umcom.org/ict4df