

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
FOR DEVELOPMENT**

**Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation**

**Contribution to the guiding questions agreed during first meeting of the  
WGEC**

**Submitted by**

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### **Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation on Public Policy Issues Pertaining to the Internet (WGEC) 2016-2018**

*Following the first meeting of the WGEC on 30 September 2016, stakeholders were invited to answer the two questions by 7 December 2016. These will be discussed at the next WGEC meeting on 26-27 January 2017*

Question 1:

**What are the high level characteristics of enhanced cooperation?**

Question 2:

**Taking into consideration the work of the previous WGEC and the Tunis Agenda, particularly paragraphs 69-71, what kind of recommendations should we consider?**

UN, CSTD: “For the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved within 15 years, unprecedented forms of collaboration and cooperation will be required across regions, sectors and stakeholders as well as solutions that balance economic, social, and environmental concerns. New innovation approaches are needed that foster collaboration across different sectors, unlock financing for innovation in unconventional ways, and promote locally-contextual solutions for and by grassroots communities.”

High level characteristics of enhanced cooperation require a high level multistakeholder agreement.

The vision of multistakeholderism recommends a more collaborative, global and decentralized model of decision making, enhanced coordination and cooperation across institutions and actors, increased interoperability in terms of identifying and describing issues and approaches for resolution throughout the ecosystem, open information sharing and evidence-based decision making, and expertise to allow for both localization and scale in problem solving.

The exponential spread and scale-up of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), including the Internet, have profound global implications, creating opportunities in terms of sustainable development and inclusive growth, as well as people empowerment and enhanced democratic governance. It however entails also new challenges and threats. Digitalisation needs to be properly mainstreamed across all policy areas, while addressing cyber challenges and assuring the promotion and protection of human rights, including privacy, data protection and freedom of expression, with particular attention to freedoms online, in the digital age; There is reference to ICT throughout the UN 2030 Agenda both as specific targets and as means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The WSIS+10 review in December 2015 is calling all relevant stakeholders to integrate ICT when implementing the SDGs.

It is underlined the significant contribution of digital technologies in all socio-economic and environmental dimensions as well as their role in promoting democracy, good governance, inclusion and participation in decision-making processes, non-discrimination, equality and equity, as well as transparency and accountability, including through eGovernment processes. Digital technologies hold great potential for enhancing the effectiveness of the public administration services and making them more citizen and business oriented, particularly,

open data is critical for an evidenced-based policy-making that boosts development and growth;

In spite of good progress achieved in recent years, there is concerns about the persistent digital divides and the unequal distribution of ICT benefits. There is need to bridge these divides with a particular focus on facilitating access, affordability, and the further development of content and services in a variety of languages and formats that are accessible to all people who also need the capabilities and capacities, including media, information and digital literacy skills, to make use of and further develop information and communication technologies. In line with the overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda to “Leave No One Behind”, particular focus should be placed on access for underserved and marginalised communities, notably in least developed countries, as well as on promoting gender equality, youth empowerment and the inclusion of persons with disabilities, in order to prevent the enlargement of existing inequalities and the rise of new ones;

Sound institutional governance and access to energy are key conditions for improving access to digital technologies. Access to affordable and non-discriminatory digital infrastructure and broadband connectivity remain major obstacles to development in many developing countries, notably in rural and remote areas. Its deployment requires a business friendly environment based on legal certainty and the reduction of administrative obstacles in order to boost investment.

Publicly financed open access infrastructures can also be used to extend services where private investment is lacking. Developing independent and neutral Internet peering capacities represents a crucial prerequisite to improve the quality of Internet connection and reduce prices;

It is important promoting a free, open, inclusive and safe Internet. Recalling paragraph 29 of the Tunis Agenda, it is recognised that the management of the Internet as a global facility includes multilateral, transparent, democratic and multi-stakeholder processes, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society, international organisations, technical and academic communities, and all other relevant stakeholders with their respective roles and responsibilities. It is welcomed the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority function stewardship transition to the global multi-stakeholder community. Autonomous and effective management of national internet domains (ccTLDs) represents a key part of ICT development in each country;

Enhancing digital literacy and skills is essential to ensure that development interventions, enhanced by the use of digital technologies, generate positive outcomes for the target groups and leave no one behind;

It is important using ICT as an enabler for sustainable development, inclusive growth and inclusive societies. Digital by default should be a guiding principle for implementing development projects in the 21st century, with sensitivity to existing digital divides;

There is need to enhance knowledge sharing and coordination in a balanced manner. Fostering partnerships with all relevant stakeholders that are active in the ICT sector is essential to enhance the positive impact of ICT on sustainable development. Stronger coordination and engagement in multilateral fora as well as multi-stakeholder policy dialogue with developing and emerging economies can also create common ground for global governance mechanisms preventing trends of Internet fragmentation.