COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)

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Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2020 to implement the outcomes of the WSIS

Submission by

World Bank Group

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 24th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

The following report is submitted to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) by the World Bank Group (WBG) as part of its commitment to report annually on the implementation of the Action Plan of World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS – Geneva 2003; Tunis 2005). This is in line with ECOSOC Resolution 2006/46. The report follows the template proposed by the CSTD, it its letter of September 22, 2020.

Part One: Executive Summary

The World Bank Group continues to be fully committed to upholding the principles set out in the WSIS Declaration of Principles and implementing the WSIS Action Plan. It does this, in concert with other development partners, through its lending program (including credits and grants made available through the International Development Association), through its technical assistance program, through its analytical work program, and through the private sector activities of the IFC. New initiatives in 2020 focused on developing a digital response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as outlined in Box 1 below. All WSIS stakeholders are invited to join the Digital Development Partnership, a multi-partner Trust Fund established with the aim strengthening the digital economy.

Part Two: Trends and Experiences in WSIS Implementation

Interest amongst the membership of the World Bank in the development of the Information Society, and in particular of the Digital Economy, continues to grow. To this end, in 2018, the World Bank established the "Digital Development" Global Practice (GP) and during 2019 and 2020 the unit has been strengthened with recruitment of new staff.
During 2020, highlights have included:
- The publication, on September 2, 2020, of Digital Regulation Handbook, and online platform at www.digitalregulation.org The handbook was jointly published by the World Bank and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and marks the twentieth anniversary edition of the original Telecommunications Regulation Handbook. The new Handbook is intended to serve as a guide and resource for ICT sector regulators around the globe, particular those that are newly created, such as those in Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti.
- Completion of over 20 **Digital Economy for Africa (DE4A) diagnostic studies**, using a common methodology based around five pillars of digital infrastructure, platforms, financial service, skills and entrepreneurship. The new DE4A studies completed in 2020 included Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia (see: https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/all-africa-digital-transformation/country-diagnostics). In addition, the basic methodology used to develop the reports has been upgraded. Another cohort of studies is currently under preparation while others have been requested for 2021. These will form the analytical basis for future lending programs.
- Launching Digital economy assessments in South Asia and Latin America region.
- **Launch of a new report on the "E-Conomy Africa2020",** in November 2020, prepared jointly with Google, which shows that Africa's internet economy could contribute some US$180bn by 2020 (see https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/publications_ext_content/ifc_external_publication _site/publications_listing_page/google-e-conomy).

- Building upon this analytical work (regional Africa studies, country-specific diagnostic studies, and Future of Work), **a series of new digital lending programs have been launched,** including Niger Smart Villages (US$100m), Digital Cabo Verde (US$20m), Login Georgia (US$80m), and an additional financing for eTransform Ghana (US$115m). Other projects ar under preparation include the Kenya Digital Economy Acceleration Program (KDEAP), the Ethiopia Digital Foundations Project, Digital Tanzania, Digital Rwanda, Uganda Digital Acceleration Program and several more.
- **Development of regional digital programs** in the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions**.**
- The expansion of the Digital Identification for Development (**ID4D**) program, with a new regional program lending launched in West Africa (WURI).
- The expansion, both in funding and membership, of the **Digital Development Partnership**, a multi-partner Trust Fund, established by the WBG, of its implementation of the 2016 World Development Report on *Digital Dividends*. Membership of the DDP is open to all development partners.
- Technical assistance programs in the field of digital development continues in a wide-range of countries. Of particular interest is the support the WBG is providing to the establishment of **new ICT regulatory authorities** in Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia.
- Development of the speedboat initiative with ITU, GSMA and WEF to deepen sector reforms.
  Finalizing the World Development report 2020 focusing on data. Report to be launched in 2021.

Box 1: World Bank Group Digital Response to the COVID-19 pandemic

In structuring a digital response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Bank Group has sought to use all of the instruments at its disposal to prepare urgent and longer-term actions that help countries to respond to the challenge of the pandemic, with the following objectives in mind:

- **Objective 1: Increasing bandwidth and managing congestion to keep the internet from "breaking" in the short terms and ensure sustainability in the medium term**
  o Helping telecom operators to reconfigure their network, optimize traffic management, and access to spare capacity in infrastructure (spectrum, fiber optic) to provide connectivity to institutions, hospitals, households and SMEs.
- **Objective 2: Ensuring the business continuity of government and education and continuity of public services to safeguard the welfare of populations across the territory leveraging of digital**
  o Helping client countries to use digital as the "new normal" for work and government services, and to avoid risks of being left further behind if the crisis expands or repeats.
- **Objective 3: Powering FinTech and digital business models to support the most impacted businesses and communities**
  o Economies are increasingly relying on digital payments to stay afloat, and demand for digital services such as mobile payments, food delivery, and e-commerce shopping will grow exponentially.

On April 21, 2020 the WBG together with ITU, WEF and GSMA launched a joint initiative to help member countries tackle the pandemic

Part Three: Ongoing and Future Initiatives

Among the different initiatives listed above, the DDP is particularly closely related to the WSIS action plan (see: https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/digital-development-partnership). During 2020, a fifth tranche of funding for DDP programs was launched with a specific focus on COVID-19. The DDP windows can be matched to the WSIS.

Action Lines, as shown in the table below.

DDP activity / Pillar	Corresponding WSIS action line(s)
1. **Data and Indicators** -- Under the workstream on Data and Indicators, DDP seeks to scale up the use of data and indicators to benchmark and advance the readiness of low- and middle-income countries to reap digital dividends. Activities include the "Doing Business Digitally" and "IC4D2018: Data Driven Development", Ongoing activities include studying the regulation of disruptive technologies and operationalizing Big Data Analytics in WBG lending programs. New activities include a study of Fragility, Conflict and Violence as a context for digital economies, the Gender Dimensions of the Digital Economy, the Poverty and Welfare Benefits of Digitization, and Leveraging Data for Development.	Partnership for Measuring the Information Society C11 – International Co-operation
2. **Digital Economy Enabling Environment** -- Activities under this workstream seek to overhaul obsolete regulations, remove bottlenecks to the development of digital ecosystems, and foster competition. Issues of policy and regulation of the digital space to be addressed include cloud services, local content creation, open data, consumer privacy and data protection, and, more generally, the interface between digital or ICT regulations and other sector regulations. Programs include the "Digital Regulation Handbook and online platform". New and ongoing country-specific programs are underway in Cote'd'Ivoire, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt and Rwanda as well as South East Asia.	C6 – enabling environment
3. **Cybersecurity** -- through the Cybersecurity workstream, DDP helps advance the capacity of World Bank clients in the development of cybersecurity policies and standards and supports good practices in the use of cybersecurity tools, safeguards, and risk management instruments. Activities include "Cybersecurity Maturity Model Assessments" and "Capacity-building for policy makers". New activities launched in Brazil, India and Turkey, and completed in India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia.	C4 – capacity building C5 – Global culture of cybersecurity
4. **Internet for all** -- Under this workstream, DDP offers technical assistance to support client countries in enhancing their connectivity, covering matters of national policy and strategy, regulation and markets, technological standards, infrastructure sharing and development, spectrum management, taxation, gender aspects of connectivity, and regional ICT markets. Existing activities are ongoing in Ethiopia, which is undertaking a major reform of its telecom sector, and on innovative business models for	C2 – Infrastructure

extending fiber optic connectivity. New activities include a feasibility study for what it would take to connect every African University to high-speed broadband, models for reaching the bottom 10 per cent, and a study of 5G mobile communications.	
5. **Digital Government** -- DDP supports client governments in the development of digital government infrastructure platforms and shared services. Work areas include digital government leadership, public sector IT architecture and governance, data and analytics platforms, and interoperability. Activities include " "Digital Government Readiness Assessments" in selected countries based on strong counterpart's demand, including Myanmar, Vietnam, Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Senegal.	C3-Access to information and knowledge C4 – capacity building C6- enabling environment C7, eGovernment
6. **Mainstreaming digital services, applications and platforms**, including in the agriculture, transport and education sectors -- Under this workstream, DDP fosters digital capabilities in a range of areas where collaboration with other World Bank Units, associations, firms, donors, and other partners can foster growth and inclusion. This implies jointly leveraging digital enablers such as Internet of Things, cloud computing, and mobile platforms and payment systems. Existing activities include testing the development potential of cargo drones in East Africa, digital skills initiatives in South East Asia and Africa and work on the digital acceleration of agriculture.	C3 – Access to information and knowledge C7 (all)