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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 level

Statement submitted by

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Internet Society Statement at the 23rd Session of CSTD

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Excellencies, Honorable delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank for the opportunity to participate in this discussion and to say a few words.

The Internet Society (ISOC) is a not for profit organization founded in 1992 to provide leadership in Internet-related standards, education and policy. We have 125 Chapters and over 65,000 individual members around the world, over 100 Organization Members and 10 Special Interest Groups. We are also the corporate home for the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), a standards development organization whose mission is to make the Internet work better.

We are pleased that the Secretary General's Report on the "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of WSIS at the regional and international levels" - which was summarized comprehensively earlier - highlighted some of the activities by non-governmental stakeholders in support of the WSIS objectives.

The Report, while primarily written before the onset of the global health pandemic and its full impact in many aspects of our lives was known, recognizes the vital importance of connectivity and an Internet that benefits everyone.

Earlier in the year as shelter in place measures were implemented across much of the world, work, distance learning, telemedicine among other functions, could continue from home because of the Internet. The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated not only the importance of an open Internet but how resilient the Internet is.

Indeed, there is truth in the observation that the "Internet was ready for the crisis", but this has only been the case because of the work and commitment of many different stakeholders around the world.

We cannot, however, be complacent, there is much work to do, as the continuing digital divide shows us, too often those not connected are denied opportunities to take part in society, another lesson we have witnessed during the Crisis. Without a timetable for the resumption of normalcy, this Crisis will only perpetuate further divides amongst those already on the margins, in particular those who still do not have access to the Internet.

The Internet Society is therefore committed to ensuring that the Internet is globally connected, secure and trustworthy for everyone. In 2020, to build on our existing work, we embarked on a set of initiatives aimed at **Growing and Strengthening the Internet.**

Working together with our global community and our partners, we are focused on not only expanding the reach and reliability of the Internet to people in urban, remote and rural areas through Community Networks, but also ensuring that local technical and operational communities are in place, as a foundation for continued and sustainable growth.

Having Internet access is not a guarantee that people will use it. Security and trust online are preconditions to the Internet's use. Our work is focused on promoting the implementation of initiatives and tools that strengthen the security of the Internet's infrastructure. For example, Mutually Agreed Norms for Routing Security (MANRS).

Therefore, as we look forward, in this Session and beyond, to the re-negotiation of the WSIS mandate in 2025 we should both recognize the achievements made but also the challenges that lie ahead.

The Internet Society looks forward to working with all stakeholders in these important endeavors. As we have seen during the Crisis, it is only by all working together, with our respective competencies and experiences, that we will succeed.

Thank you.

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