

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
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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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Introduction

- Thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon at this annual Session of the UN CSTD; I am pleased to be able to join you all, even if virtually.

Russia/Ukraine in relation to CSTD

- First, I would like to recall comments made by others on Monday.
- The UK deplores and condemns firmly the Russian actions in Ukraine; including the wanton attacks on civilians, the disinformation campaign by Russia and the widespread and indiscriminate destruction of critical communications infrastructure. The very structures that countries need to take advantage of in harnessing the technologies and innovations we have been discussing in this CSTD Plenary;
- It is clear that we cannot stand back and allow this to continue, with over 20% of the Communications facilities reportedly already destroyed,

The importance of the WSIS Process

- Secondly, I would like to thank the CSTD Secretariat for this excellent Report and the overview by the Secretariat of it, thank you also for the constructive and thought provoking remarks of the panellists;
- On the question of COVID pandemic and the need for universal Internet connectivity, I do not have a lot to add to the excellent remarks of previous speakers; though would emphasise the need for positive action; the pandemic has been a wake up call which we cannot afford to ignore;
- Mr Chairman, it is worth noting the excellent work that is taken forward each year in the WSIS Forum to discuss not only progress made in meeting the targets and goals set in the Tunis agenda but also topics of interest to the wider ICT Community;
- The UK will be hosting a Session at the Forum next month on the “Future of the Internet” - looking at how we can ensure that, as evolution takes place in the technologies and standards underpinning the Internet, it remains free, open, secure and global in nature, for the benefit of all.
- A vital part of upholding a positive vision for the Internet’s future is the recognition of the important role that the multistakeholder community plays in developing and governing the Internet, collaboratively.
- Looking ahead, the UNGA discussions on the future of the WSIS mandate are important for the continuation of the multi-stakeholder governance of the Internet.
- There is a real opportunity here, for us all, to agree the actions we still need to take to ensure universal access to the Internet,
- The renewal and updating of the WSIS mandate is also important in relation to the continuation of the UN IGF; which has become, since the first one in Rome in 2006, an important annual occasion for debating topical ICT issues. I look forward to participating this year in Addis Ababa and in 2023 in Tokyo.
- The actions and targets from 2005 are still largely relevant today but, in light of the progress we’ve made, 20 years on, we have the opportunity to set ourselves new and challenging goals to make sure all citizens have the opportunity to enjoy an open and global Internet. We should not shirk such opportunities;
- The UK, in recognition of the importance of the UN and its agencies working to ensure everyone has the benefit of such a global Internet, is seeking membership of the ITU Council at its Plenipotentiary Conference in the autumn.

Conclusion

- The CSTD has a key role to play in the review phase of the WSIS+20 process as It did in the 10 year review process, and we look forward to a wider debate, with involvement of a range of stakeholders, in the 26th CSTD Plenary session in 2023;