

## **Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society**

*The Economic and Social Council,*

*Recalling* the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society,<sup>1</sup>

*Recalling* also its resolution 2006/46 of 28 July 2006 on the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society and review of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the mandate that it gave to the Commission,

*Recalling* further its resolution 2012/5 of 17 August 2012 on the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 67/195 of 21 December 2012 on information and communications technologies for development,

*Taking note* with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional and international levels,<sup>2</sup>

*Taking note* of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Internet Broadband for an Inclusive Digital Society”,<sup>3</sup>

*Expressing its appreciation* to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for his role in helping to ensure completion of the aforementioned reports in a timely manner,

### **Taking stock: reviewing the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society**

1. Notes the ongoing implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society<sup>1</sup>, emphasizing, in particular, its multi-stakeholder nature, the roles played in this regard by leading agencies as action line facilitators and the roles of the regional commissions and the United Nations Group on the Information Society, and expresses its appreciation for the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in assisting the Economic and Social Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up to the World Summit;

2. Takes note of the reports of many United Nations entities, with their respective executive summaries, submitted as input for the elaboration of the annual report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Commission, and published on the website of the Commission as

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<sup>1</sup> See A/C.2/59/3, annex, and A/60/687.

<sup>2</sup> A/68/65-E/2013/11.

<sup>3</sup> E/CN.16/2013/3.

mandated in Council resolution 2007/8 of 25 July 2007, and recalls the importance of close coordination among the leading action line facilitators and with the secretariat of the Commission;

3. Notes the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional level facilitated by the regional commissions, as observed in the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional and international levels<sup>2</sup>, including the steps taken in this respect, and emphasizes the need to continue to address issues of specific interest to each region, focusing on the challenges and obstacles that each may be facing with regard to the implementation of all goals and principles established by the World Summit, with particular attention to information and communications technology for development;

4. Reiterates the importance of maintaining a process of coordinating the multi-stakeholder implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit through effective tools, with the goal of exchanging information among action line facilitators, identifying issues that need improvement and discussing the modalities of reporting on the overall implementation process, encourages all stakeholders to continue to contribute information to the stocktaking database maintained by the International Telecommunication Union on the implementation of the goals established by the World Summit, and invites United Nations entities to update information on their initiatives in the stocktaking database;

5. Highlights the urgent need for the incorporation of the recommendations contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit in the revised guidelines for United Nations country teams on preparing the common country assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, including the addition of an information and communications technology for development component;

6. Recalling General Assembly resolution 60/252 of 27 March 2006, in which the UNGA requested the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to oversee the system-wide follow-up of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes of the Summit, and to that end requested the ECOSOC, at its substantive session of 2006, to review the mandate, agenda and composition of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, including considering strengthening the Commission, taking into account the multistakeholder approach;

7. Notes with satisfaction the holding in Geneva, from 13 to 17 May 2013, of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2013, organized by the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Development Programme, as a multi-stakeholder platform for the coordination of implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit and to facilitate the implementation of the World Summit action lines;

8. Calls upon all States, in building the information society, to take steps to avoid and to refrain from taking any unilateral measure not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries and that hinders their well-being;

9. Welcomes the progress highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General, in particular the fact that the rapid growth in mobile access since 2005 has meant that more than half of the world's inhabitants have access to information and communications technologies within their

reach, in line with one of the World Summit targets, the value of this progress being enhanced by the advent of new services and applications, including m-health, m-agriculture, mobile transactions, m-government, e-government, e-business and development services, which offer great potential for the development of the information society;

10. Notes with great concern that many developing countries lack affordable access to information and communications technologies and that, for the majority of the poor, the promise of science and technology, including information and communications technologies, remains unfulfilled, and emphasizes the need to effectively harness technology, including information and communications technologies, to bridge the digital divide;

11. Recognizes that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing the new technologies, such as an appropriate enabling environment, sufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity, as well as issues related to technology ownership, standards and flows, and in this regard calls upon all stakeholders to provide adequate resources, enhanced capacity-building and transfer of technology and knowledge to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries;

12. Also recognizes the rapid growth in broadband access networks, especially in developed countries, and notes with concern that there is a growing digital divide in the availability, affordability, quality of access and use of broadband between high-income countries and other regions, with least developed countries and Africa as a continent lagging behind the rest of the world;

13. Further recognizes that the transition to a mobile-led communications environment is leading to significant changes in operators' business models and that it requires significant rethinking of the ways in which individuals and communities make use of networks and devices, of government strategies and of ways in which communications networks can be used to achieve development objectives;

14. Recognizes that, even with all the developments and the improvement observed in some respects, in numerous developing countries information and communications technologies and their applications are still not available or affordable to the majority of people, particularly those living in rural areas;

15. Also recognizes that the number of Internet users is growing and that in some instances the digital divide is also changing in character, from one based on whether access is available to one based on the quality of access, information and skills that users can obtain and the value they can derive from it, and recognizes in this regard that there is a need to prioritize the use of information and communications technologies through innovative approaches, including multi-stakeholder approaches, within national and regional development strategies;

16. While noting the global report on the *State of Broadband 2012; Achieving Digital Inclusion for All*, by the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, takes note with interest of the continuous efforts of the Broadband Commission in promoting high-level advocacy for the establishment of an enabling environment for broadband connectivity, in particular through national broadband plans and public-private partnerships for ensuring that the development agenda challenges are met with appropriate impact and in conjunction with all stakeholders.

17. Notes that, while a solid foundation for capacity-building in information and communications technology has been laid in many areas with regard to building the information society, there is still a need for continuing efforts to address the ongoing challenges, especially for developing countries and the least developed countries, and draws attention to the positive impact of broadened capacity development that involves institutions, organizations and entities dealing with information and communications technologies and Internet governance issues;

18. Recognizes the need to focus on capacity development policies and sustainable support to further enhance the impact of activities and initiatives at the national and local levels aimed at providing advice, services and support with a view to building an inclusive, people-centred and development-oriented information society;

19. Notes that topics continue to emerge, such as e-environmental applications, the contribution of ICTs to early warning, mitigating climate change, social networking, virtualization and cloud computing and services, mobile internet and mobile-based services, the protection of online privacy and the empowerment and protection, especially against cyber exploitation and abuse, of vulnerable groups of society, in particular children and young people;

20. Reiterates the importance of information and communications technology indicators as a monitoring and evaluation tool for measuring the digital divide among countries and within societies and in informing decision makers when formulating policies and strategies for social, cultural and economic development, and emphasizes that the standardization and harmonization of reliable and regularly updated indicators capturing the performance, efficiency, affordability and quality of goods and services is essential for implementing information and communications technology policies;

### **Internet governance**

21. Reaffirming that the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society related to Internet governance, namely, the process towards enhanced cooperation and the convening of the Internet Governance Forum, are to be pursued by the Secretary-General through two distinct processes, and recognizing that the two processes may be complementary,

22. Reaffirms also paragraphs 34 to 37 and paragraphs 67 to 72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society;

### **Enhanced cooperation**

23. Recognizes the importance of enhanced cooperation in the future, to enable governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities, in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, but not in the day-to-day technical and operational matters, that do not impact on international public policy issues.

24. Recognizes that the process towards enhanced cooperation, to be started by the UN Secretary General, involving all relevant organizations by the end of the first quarter of 2006, will involve all stakeholders in their respective roles, will proceed as quickly as possible consistent with legal process, and will be responsive to innovation. Relevant organizations should commence a process towards enhanced cooperation involving all stakeholders, proceeding as quickly as possible and responsive to innovation. The same relevant organizations shall be requested to provide annual performance reports.

25. Recalls that, in resolution 67/195, the General Assembly invited the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to establish a working group on enhanced cooperation to examine the mandate of the World Summit on the Information Society regarding enhanced cooperation as contained in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, through seeking, compiling and reviewing inputs from all Member States and all other stakeholders, and to make recommendations on how to fully implement this mandate; and requested the working group to report to the Commission at its seventeenth session, in 2014, as an input to the overall review of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;

26. Recalls that, in resolution 67/195, the General Assembly requested the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to ensure that the working group on enhanced cooperation has balanced representation between Governments, from the five regional groups of the Commission, and invitees from all other stakeholders, namely, the private sector, civil society, technical and academic communities, and intergovernmental and international organizations, drawn equally from developing and developed countries;

27. Notes the conclusion of the first meeting of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation, convened by the Chair of the Working Group in Geneva on 30 and 31 May 2013. Notes that a questionnaire would be issued to gather substantive inputs from all stakeholders and that the next meeting would be held on 6-8 November 2013, and takes note of the report made of the progress thereunder;

#### **Internet Governance Forum**

28. Recognizes the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and its mandate as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on various matters as reflected in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, including discussion on public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance,

29. Recognizes also that national and regional IGF Initiatives have emerged, taking place in all regions, which address internet governance issues of relevance and priority to the organizing country or region.

30. Recalls GA resolution 67/195 which requests the Secretary-General to submit, as part of his annual reporting on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit of the Information Society, information on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the working group on the improvements to the IGF, in particular on enhancing participation of developing countries. .

31. Notes the seventh Internet Governance Forum held in Baku, Azerbaijan from 6-9 November 2012 under the main theme entitled “Internet Governance for Sustainable Human, Economic and Social Development” and hosted by the government of Azerbaijan.

32. Welcomes the eighth Internet Governance Forum to be hosted by the government of Indonesia, scheduled to take place from 22-25 October 2013 in Bali and notes that the preparation process for the meeting has taken into consideration recommendations from the report of the CSTD working group on the IGF improvements.

## The road ahead<sup>4</sup>

33. Urges United Nations entities still not actively cooperating in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit through the United Nations system to take the necessary steps and commit to a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, and to catalyse the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration<sup>5</sup>

34. Calls upon all stakeholders to keep the goal of bridging the digital divide, in its different forms, an area of priority concern, put into effect sound strategies that contribute to the development of e-government and continue to focus on pro-poor information and communications technology policies and applications, including access to broadband at the grass-roots level, with a view to narrowing the digital divide among and within countries;

35. Urges all stakeholders to prioritize the development of innovative approaches that will stimulate the provision of universal access to affordable broadband infrastructure for developing countries and the use of relevant broadband services in order to ensure the development of an inclusive, development-oriented and people-centred information society, and to minimize the digital divide;

36. Calls upon international and regional organizations to continue to assess and report on a regular basis on the universal accessibility of nations to information and communications technologies, with the aim of creating equitable opportunities for the growth of the information and communications technology sectors of developing countries;

37. Urges all countries to make concrete efforts to fulfil their commitments under the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development;<sup>6</sup>

38. Calls upon United Nations organizations and other relevant organizations and forums, in accordance with the outcomes of the World Summit, to periodically review and modify the methodologies for information and communications technology indicators, taking into account different levels of development and national circumstances, and therefore:

(a) Notes with appreciation the work of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technology for Development;

(b) Encourages member States to respond to the WSIS Geneva Plan of Action Objectives, Goals and Targets survey that will be conducted between July and September 2013 by the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, so as to contribute to its final assessment report on the achievement of the WSIS targets to be issued in 2014 on the occasion of the ITU-coordinated event titled WSIS+10 High Level Event to be held in Sharm El Sheikh in April 2014.

(c) Notes the holding, in Bangkok, Thailand from 25 to 27 September 2012, of the tenth World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Meeting, which enhanced the capacity of Governments in the collection of relevant data at the national level on information and communications technologies;

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<sup>4</sup> See also Executive Summary of the Report with symbol E/2013/31-E/CN.16/2013/5

<sup>5</sup> See General Assembly resolution 55/2

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18–22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

(d) Encourages member states to collect relevant data at the national level on information and communications technologies, to be able to respond satisfactorily to surveys such as the WSIS Target survey, to share information about country case studies and to collaborate with other countries in capacity-building exchange programmes;

(e) Encourages United Nations organizations and other relevant organizations and forums to promote assessment of the impact of information and communications technologies on poverty and in key sectors to identify the knowledge and skills needed to boost impacts;

(f) Calls upon international development partners to provide financial support to further facilitate capacity-building and technical assistance in developing countries;

39. Invites the international community to make voluntary contributions to the special trust fund established by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to support the review and assessment work of the Commission regarding follow-up to the World Summit, while acknowledging with appreciation the financial support provided by the Governments of Finland and Switzerland to this fund;

40. Urges the Secretary-General to ensure the continued functioning of the Internet Governance Forum and its structures, in preparation for the eighth meeting of the Forum, to be held in Bali, Indonesia from 22 to 25 October 2013, and future meetings of the Forum, taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the CSTD Working Group on Improvements to the IGF;

41. Recalls paragraph 111 of the Tunis Agenda, in which the General Assembly was requested to make an overall review of the implementation of World Summit outcomes in 2015, and paragraph 106 of the Tunis Agenda, according to which the World Summit implementation and follow-up should be an integral part of the United Nations integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences;

42. Also recalls paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 67/195, in which the Assembly reaffirmed its role in the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit, to be held by the end of 2015, as recognized in paragraph 111 of the Tunis Agenda, and decided to consider the modalities for this review process by the end of 2013;

43. Recommends that, consistent with the World Summit process and subject to the decision by the General Assembly, an appropriate preparatory process should be launched, drawing from the experience of the two phases of the World Summit;

44. Notes the role of the Commission, set forth in Council resolution 2006/46, in assisting the Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit;

45. Takes note with appreciation of the report on the stocktaking of activities related to the World Summit, which serves as one of the valuable tools for assisting with the follow-up, beyond the conclusion of the Tunis phase of the World Summit;

46. Reiterates the importance of sharing best practices at the global level, and, while recognizing excellence in the implementation of the projects and initiatives that further the goals of the World Summit, encourages all stakeholders to nominate their projects for the annual World

Summit Project Prizes as an integral part of the World Summit stocktaking process, while taking note of the report on the World Summit success stories;

47. Requests the Commission to collect inputs from all facilitators and stakeholders and to organize a substantive discussion during its seventeenth Session in 2014 on the progress made in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, and to report through ECOSOC to the UN General Assembly as it makes an overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes in 2015.

48. Further requests the Commission to submit after its 18<sup>th</sup> Session its ten-year review of progress made in the implementation of WSIS outcomes through ECOSOC to the General Assembly as it makes an overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes in 2015.

49. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, on a yearly basis, a report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the present resolution as well as in the other Council resolutions on the assessment of the quantitative and qualitative progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit;

50. Emphasizes the importance of promoting an inclusive information society, with a particular attention to bridging the digital and broadband divide, taking into account considerations of gender, culture, youth and other under-represented groups.

51. Takes note and encourages state members to promote the First Global Youth Summit to be held in Costa Rica, organized by the ITU in September 2013 to empower young people as the key contributors toward building the information society and widen opportunities and innovations.

52. Welcomes the offer by Egypt to host the ITU-coordinated event titled “WSIS+10 High Level Event” in April 2014 in Sharm El Sheikh, that will address the review of the progress made in the implementation of WSIS outcomes, taking into account the modalities of the overall review that will be considered in the GA resolution in its 68th session, in consultation with the CSTD and all relevant UN agencies.