



General Assembly’s overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes

Official Form for Comments on the zero-draft

A. Your Information

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B. Formal Input

Please input your comments below:

Introductory remarks

This document is the response of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and its initiative Business Action to Support the Information Society (BASIS) to the WSIS +10 zero draft, sharing the perspective of the global business community.

ICC BASIS applauds the effort of the co-facilitators to review and reflect the input of the non-governmental stakeholder community in the zero draft. We also commend the co-facilitators for continuing their effort to participate in stakeholder exchanges and listen to the relevant views of those not part of the intergovernmental process but that will be impacted in expressly meaningful ways by the conclusions. We encourage consideration that any future deliberations on this topic to fully integrate the multistakeholder cooperation that has been a very unique feature of Internet governance thanks to the WSIS vision. It must be recognised that the distance that the innovative WSIS multistakeholder concept has travelled merits more than participation of stakeholders in a side

¹ When specifying your stakeholder type, please indicate one of the following: Government, Civil Society, Private Sector, Academia, and Technical Sector.

meeting or recognition of their presence in an intergovernmental outcome document. The collective investment and engagement of the stakeholders merits future deliberations to reflect the truly shared responsibility and policy leadership of the Internet by the multistakeholder community – bringing governments, business, technical expertise, academia and civil society together as partners.

Private sector investment and innovation has driven the transformation of the Internet from the information exchange network it was at the end of the last century to the platform for sustainable social and economic development that we know it as today. The road to the achievement of nearly all the Sustainable Development Goals needs to be paved with the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) both connected over the Internet and in back end-systems. The investment required needs policies and environmental conditions in place to allow commercially viable enterprises to continue the expansion and evolution of the technology to connect all people on the planet and enable their access to and use of technology.

We offer the perspectives of the private sector as citizens and users of the Internet in addition to sharing our views as those with the closest understanding of what policy options enable business to play its critical role in the development of ICTs and the spread of the infrastructure that form the basis of the Internet. Legal uncertainty, regulatory barriers to trade flows, lack of protection for investments such as absence of intellectual property and competition law, are just some of the impediments that policymakers need to understand and address or investment needed will fall short. We contribute these views and participate fully as we are committed to working with all stakeholders on the ambitious but worthy societal and economic goals of the 2030 agenda.

Specific comments

Preamble

We commend the reinforcement of the vision of the Tunis agenda and the recognition of the importance of ICT and the digital economy for the sustainable development goals.

We suggest citing the declaration that resulted from the UNESCO-hosted multistakeholder conference Towards Knowledge Societies for Peace and Sustainable Development, held in February 2013, by adding the following text into paragraph 3: *including its final declaration "Information and knowledge for all: an expanded vision and a renewed commitment"*

For paragraph 7 we suggest the language would be improved if edited to the following:

We recognize the remarkable evolution and diffusion of ICT which have seen penetration into almost all corners of the globe, restructured social interaction and business models, contributed to economic growth and societal benefit. Increased connectivity and access to ICT have played a critical role in enabling progress on the Millennium Development Goals, and will play a similarly foundational role for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with ICT access and use also becoming a development indicator and aspiration in and of itself.

For paragraph 9, we suggest adding refugees to the list of people.

For paragraph 10, to better capture the idea the reference should be to multistakeholder cooperation and we propose adding the digital economy into the reference so the text edit would result in the

following: *We also recognize that effective participation, partnership and multi-stakeholder cooperation, in their respective roles and responsibilities, especially with balanced representation from developing countries, is vital in developing the digital economy and Information Society. We reaffirm the value and principles of multi-stakeholder cooperation and engagement that have characterized the WSIS process since its inception.*

1. ICT for Development

We affirm and support the recognition of the valuable contribution of ICTs while also stressing the imperative of enabling the unrealised potential of ICTs to move society towards the sustainable development goals.

We propose adding the following text to the end of paragraph 11: *We also recognise that ICT will continue to evolve and that it is important to continue to enable and encourage the continued pace of technology innovation to preserve the progress cited.*

For paragraph 14, we propose the text to be edited to read as follows: *We also recognize that ICT is contributing to higher levels of social benefit and inclusion, providing new channels among citizens, businesses and governments to share and augment knowledge, as well as participate in decisions that affect their lives and work. As envisioned by the WSIS Action Lines, we have seen ICT-enabled breakthroughs in e-government, e-business, e-education, e-health, e-employment, e-agriculture and e-science, allowing greater numbers of people access to services and data that might previously have been out-of-reach or unaffordable. Similarly the potential improvements in medical research from new uses of information across the developed and the developing world show great promise. We have also seen ICT become central to disaster and humanitarian response. At the same time, we recognize that ICT is fundamentally altering the way individuals and communities interact and spend their time.*

1.1 Bridging the Digital Divide

We applaud the recognition of the inter- and intra-country divides to be addressed.

For paragraph 16 we suggest highlighting the importance of content that local communities find relevant. As a significant amount of content citizens of emerging countries will find relevant is content not yet online or created, attention should not only be brought to the number of language translations of existing content that has been made available. Measuring and reporting the number of people who do not see the value in an Internet connection as content is not relevant to their lives would be useful in understanding where and how to address this.

We suggest paragraph 18 include the following text: *We recognise that greater availability of relevant local content and services in different languages and formats that are accessible to all people, who also need the capabilities and capacities, including media and information literacy skills to make use of ICTs, will increase the value of ICTs and help close digital divides.*

We suggest a correction for paragraph 19 as it inaccurately notes the Connect 2020 Agenda as being agreed by the 'international community' when it was more precisely something agreed to by 'member states of the ITU'.

1.2 Enabling Environment

We propose the words 'allowance of' public-private partnerships be replaced by *encouragement of public-private partnerships* in paragraph 22 and that the final sentence of paragraph 23 be amended to read as follows: *Deliberate efforts, including through research and development, policy approaches and mechanisms that encourage development and deployment of such technologies, may be necessary to spur lower-cost connectivity options.*

For paragraph 24 we propose it be clarified to read as follows: *We request the UN agencies within their current missions to regularly advise governments and all stakeholders of specific, detailed interventions they can make to support the enabling environment for ICT and development.*

1.3 Financial Mechanisms

We suggest the following language revisions to paragraphs 28 and 29:

28. *We recognise that official development assistance and other concessional financial flows for ICT can make significant contributions to development outcomes, particularly where it can de-risk public and private investment, as well as use ICT to strengthen tax collection as a result of growth of local economy. We encourage greater input of developing countries on the deployment of funds for ICT.*

29. *We also encourage a prominent profile for ICT in the new technology facilitation mechanism established by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and for assessment of how it can contribute to fill the gaps in implementation of the WSIS Action Lines and support the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.*

As noted before, in "Implementing WSIS Outcomes: A ten-year review", the Digital Solidarity Fund Foundation was dissolved by its Board in 2009. Taking this development as the effective cessation of this funding mechanism, we advise to strike paragraph 30 and rather look ahead to the alternative opportunities raised by the outcomes of the Addis Ababa negotiations. However, if this cannot be agreed we suggest that the paragraph include: *we call for a review of its mechanisms as well as options for its future.*

2. Internet Governance

We applaud the recognition of the Geneva principles and Tunis agenda as the on-going basis for Internet governance and believe the stable, secure and inclusive development of the Internet and all that has been achieved because of it has been made possible because of adherence to this vision.

There are multiple places where stakeholders are working through complex issues and many of them take time to develop a common understanding both of the idea and the implication. We believe this remains to be the case for the issue of network neutrality and that paragraph 35 cuts off this debate too early. As written it only captures a narrow network perspective and misses taking into account the vast differences in understanding of this idea. It also presents challenges given the many diverse national approaches to the issue. It is an example of a question better suited to environments where discussions between all stakeholders advance understanding and perspectives can be fully aired

before policies are put in place that have a host of unintended consequences and may enforce one value to sacrifice another.

To avoid this, the paragraph could capture the broad value intended by stating:

We recognise the importance of an open Internet that enables consumer choices and improves the free flow of data, and call for its advancement globally.

In paragraph 36 we propose it be better balanced as: *We note that a number of member states have called for an international legal framework for Internet governance, while other member states wish to maintain and support the present multistakeholder approach for Internet governance.*

We applaud the extension of the IGF but note that 5 years is too short for investments and planning purposes, and the effort towards renewal diverts resources from all the impactful work that is being advanced and evolved as the IGF continues to fulfilling its objectives as laid out by the Tunis Agenda. Also, as ICT becomes the underpinning for realising the SDGs, we recommend that the IGF extension be coincided with the next revision of the SDG in 2030. Regarding outcomes, we note the improvements being made with a continual feedback learning loop that is built into the organization and oversight of the IGF. Results have been obtained, directly and indirectly, within the existing IGF framework.

2.1. Enhanced Cooperation

We reiterate there have been many examples of enhanced cooperation on a range of Internet governance issues catalogued by the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation under UNCTAD and this approach where governments and stakeholders are working together to identify, understand and address important and emerging Internet governance topics leveraging their respective expertise, roles and responsibilities should serve as the basis for continued cooperation aiming at the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs).

We propose adding the text in italics to the end of paragraph 38: *We note the Reports by the Secretary General on enhanced cooperation (A/66/77; E/2009/92) and the work of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, in particular their effort Mapping of international Internet public policy issues.*

2.3 Building Confidence and Security in the use of ICTs

We offer the following edits for paragraph 45: *Strengthening confidence and security in the use of ICT is an important aspect of the development of information societies and ICT success as a driver for sustainable economic growth and social innovation.*

We suggest paragraph 46 be amended as follows: *We acknowledge the work that governments, businesses and other stakeholders are undertaking, through a wide variety of initiatives, to strengthen cybersecurity, noting among the work of intergovernmental activities: the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Group on Cybercrime.*

Paragraph 50 was missing acknowledgement of the Budapest Convention so we propose the last half of the paragraph be edited to read: *We acknowledge the call for a convention on international cybercrimes and the existence of an international treaty on cybercrime, the Budapest Convention. We recognize that approaches to cybersecurity should be compatible with human rights and fundamental freedoms.*

3. Implementation and Follow-Up

We call for the continuation of the important roles set out by the various annual review by the CSTD of the WSIS outcomes, and for an overall review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes through to 2030. We stress that all reviews of the WSIS should be done in an open and inclusive manner with the multistakeholder community to ensure the full breadth of understanding and perspectives. We call for coordination of reporting on ICT for development within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We suggest paragraph 57 read: *We call for a multistakeholder review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes in a timeframe that would permit its conclusions to feed into the review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

We propose that paragraph 58 be deleted as a further high level meeting or summit would not be necessary before the review process outlined in paragraph 57.

Conclusion

ICC BASIS appreciates the opportunity to contribute its views to the WSIS Review and commends the efforts of the UN General Assembly President and co-facilitators for openly engaging with the stakeholders. We remain committed to working with the UN General Assembly along with the community of stakeholders to ensure that the review process culminates in an endorsement of our collective path and recognition that we will only get further along to realising our shared goals and the full benefits of an Information society for all if we continue openly listening to understand better and cooperatively to implement better and more legitimately.