

WSIS + 10 Briefing Note

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(TIMELINE:

https://docs.google.com/a/publicknowledge.org/document/d/1VSS2mCGfFjMkBI326Lkm9y1Tb5IAOubJEs_BcoKjeGI/edit)

(ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

https://docs.google.com/a/publicknowledge.org/document/d/17N69ZZToe7maQ4mgAdw9cdUE1wRimY_FbMIPINbxhMk/edit)

(BEST BITS WORKSHEET: <http://bestbits.net/ws-is-work-sheet-2/>)

Background

In 2013, 10 years after the original World Summit on Information Society (“WSIS”) events, the WSIS+10 event was held at the ITU headquarters in Geneva, with the goal of reviewing progress in the past 10 years since the original WSIS events.

WSIS is a global conference to allow people to give their input on issues of Internet access, security and privacy. The original WSIS debates were held in 2003 in Geneva and 2005 in Tunis with twin aims of bridging digital divides and discussing internet governance. Those events were the birthplace of the Internet Governance Forum,¹ which was formed to promote multi-stakeholder discussions about internet policy and address issues which do not clearly fit into the agenda of other bodies.

The 2003 Geneva meeting came up with a Plan of Action² listing several objectives which the groups wanted to achieve. The WSIS+10 event didn’t come up with a Plan of Action but does have a vision document. One of the purposes of the WSIS+10 event was to review progress since 2003 on the items listed in the 2003 Plan of Action.

The WSIS+10 conference attempted to bring together multiple stakeholders who are interested in Internet Governance, such as civil society groups, governments and other policy makers. Leading up the WSIS+10 event, there were a series of meetings that invited various groups to participate through an open consultation process which proceeded in six phases from July 2013- May 2014.³ Participants could file draft outcome documents.

¹ <http://www.internetsociety.org/short-history-wsis>

² <http://www.itu.int/ws-is/docs/geneva/official/poa.html>

³ <http://www.itu.int/ws-is/review/mpp/#phase1>

Phase One asked for various private sector groups, civil society groups, governmental organizations and international organizations to submit their Draft Outcome documents.⁴ These submissions provided answers from the groups to various questions such as “What are the key challenges to be faced in the next 10 years,” “What have been the main achievements in the past 10 years in implementing WSIS action lines?”

Phase Two involved a physical meeting in Geneva in early October 2013. Action Lines were reviewed in a few areas: Information and communication infrastructure, Capacity building, Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs, Enabling environment, and ICT Applications: E-learning.⁵ Stakeholders were invited to prepare comments on the first drafts of the “WSIS+10 Statement on the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes” and the “WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS beyond 2015” documents.⁶

In January, 2014, there was concern about the cumbersome process of review for the outcome documents and the level of duplication which they contained.⁷ The Internet Society asked for a better process oriented towards short, concise outcome documents. The third physical meeting took place Feb. 17 2014 at ITU Headquarters, after the end of submission of comments and proposals by all stakeholders on the WSIS+10 statement and vision documents.⁸ The comments and initial draft documents were read at this meeting. Action lines discussed at this meeting were the role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development, E-government, E-health, E-employment, E-environment, E-science, Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content, media, Ethical dimensions of the Information Society, and international cooperation.⁹ US delegation made a statement on the WSIS+10 process proposing that they concentrate on implementation activities of WSIS.¹⁰

The fourth physical meeting was April 14, 2014 at ITU Headquarters. Participants agreed on some of the text of the upcoming WSIS+10 Statement, text of some of the Overview of Implementation of Action Lines statements, and other sections of the outcome documents.¹¹ At the fifth physical meeting, held May 28 at WIPO in

⁴ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/mpp/pages/phase1-submissions.html>

⁵ http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/phase3/WSIS10.hle-ocp_phase3_MainOutcomes.pdf

⁶ http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/phase3/WSIS10.hle-ocp_phase3_MainOutcomes.pdf

⁷ <https://isoc.app.box.com/s/pnehz2up6wctxpcdma7h>

⁸ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/mpp/pages/consolidated-texts.html>

⁹ http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/phase4/WSIS10.hle-ocp_phase4_MainOutcomes.pdf

¹⁰ http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/phase4/WSIS10.hle-ocp_phase4_MainOutcomes.pdf, annex 1

¹¹ http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/phase5/WSIS10.hle-ocp_phase5_MainOutcomes.pdf

Geneva, more work was done on the text of the “WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS beyond 2015” documents on several sections.¹²

The Media section generated three proposals about the various ways which media might benefit from ICT-Media legislation, increase participation by women, and grow diversity.¹³ There was so much contention that it seemed possible that this section could be removed.¹⁴ Greater consensus was achieved in other areas and draft text was proposed for those areas. Inputs to the fifth physical meeting can be found under “Zero Draft: WSIS+10 Statement on the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes” on the consolidated texts page.¹⁵ At the end of this event, there was still some dispute about a few elements, including the Media Action line¹⁶, one point in “Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs”¹⁷ one point in “Cultural Diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content”¹⁸ and a section of Part III.¹⁹

A final pre-event was held June 9, 2014 in Geneva to produce the “WSIS+10 Statement on the Implementation on WSIS Outcomes” & the “WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015” documents.²⁰ Full consensus was not reached on all the items that had been in dispute.²¹

Participants had a range of takes on the process, from believing that it showed the value of open dialogue²² to wishing the documents had stronger language promoting human rights.²³ WSIS attempted to achieve broad through two websites which collected comments and statements, www.wsis.org/review and www.wsis.org/mpp and through allowing remote participation in many of the run-up events.

At the June 2014 WSIS+10 High Level Event, WSIS outcomes were reviewed and progress over the last 10 years was shared. The event was hosted by several UN organizations (“ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD with the engagement of other

¹² http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/phase6/WSIS10.hle-ocp_phase6_MainOutcomes.pdf

¹³ http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/phase6/WSIS10.hle-ocp_phase6_MainOutcomes.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.internetsociety.org/blog/public-policy/2014/06/setting-2015-wsis10-review-right-track>

¹⁵ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/mpp/pages/consolidated-texts.html#statement>

¹⁶ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/phase7/v/wsis10-6-3.docx>

¹⁷ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/phase7/v/wsis10-6-1.docx>

¹⁸ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/phase7/v/wsis10-6-2.docx>

¹⁹ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/phase7/v/wsis10-6-4.docx>

²⁰ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/mpp/pages/consolidated-texts.html>

²¹ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/final/wsis10.mpp-FinalReport.pdf> p5

²² <http://www.internetsociety.org/blog/public-policy/2014/06/setting-2015-wsis10-review-right-track> and <http://www.uscib.org/index.asp?documentID=4756>

²³

<http://internetdemocracy.in/2014/06/assessing-the-wsis10-high-level-event-outcome-documents-what-has-been-achieved/>

UN Agencies, including FAO, ILO, ITC, UNDESA, UNODC, UPU, UN Women, WMO, WHO, WFP, WIPO and UN Regional Commissions²⁴) and invited civil society groups, private participants and governments from around the world to attend. The main WSIS Stakeholders are governments, private sector, civil society and international organizations, and all have participated in the High Level meetings. Since 2005, Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) have become more prevalent, and have played important roles in helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The event had two tracks, the High Level track which had “formal statements, ministerial round table, handing over of prizes, and endorsement of the Outcome Documents”²⁵ and the forum track that included discussion of continuing implementation of WSIS activities.

At the same time, there is still a great deal of disparity, especially in terms of access to ICTs.²⁶ There is also a gender divide, with fewer women accessing and using ICTs. An enabling environment to promote inclusion is seen as important as infrastructure investment. Achievement of greater broadband deployment²⁷ and mobile market expansions were heralded.

WSIS+10 Statement on the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes

The High Level Event statement notes that there have been issues identified in the implementing of the 30 WSIS Action Lines (for list of Action Lines see <http://www.itu.int/wsis/stocktaking/help-action-lines.html>).²⁸ The event stressed that these Action Lines which will need attention moving forward. They mainly cover areas around protection of human rights, gender equality & poverty reduction & the deployment of networks and other means to ensure access to digital resources & lessen technology gaps. These include issues such as need to respect all human rights, online & offline; gender equality issues; more engagement of youth and the disabled; expanding internet access to the half the population which lacks it. Also there is a lack of low cost telecommunications networks for countries, which could be helped by spectrum and satellite management. Affordable access to communications technologies and knowledge is called out as a pressing need, in part to ensure equality between rural and urban communities and reduce poverty.

The WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015²⁹ document lists some further action lines covering different areas. In the “Role of Public Governance Authorities & Stakeholders” area, the action points call for greater collaboration and partnerships

²⁴ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/final/wsis10.mpp-FinalReport.pdf>

²⁵ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/final/wsis10.mpp-FinalReport.pdf>

²⁶ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/final/wsis10.statement.pdf>

²⁷ http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/ralfreports/WSIS10_ALF_Reporting-C2.Summary.pdf

²⁸ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/review/inc/docs/final/wsis10.statement.pdf>

²⁹ <http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/2014/forum/inc/doc/outcome/362828V2E.pdf>

between governmental organizations and various stakeholders. They call for affordable public access to the Internet and monitoring & evaluation of progress towards these goals. Under "Information & Communication Infrastructure," the goals again mention achieving universal access to technology and the Internet, possibly through the use of Universal Service Funds or Public/Private partnerships. Affordability and interoperability are presented as key attributes for telecommunications equipment and services. The original WSIS action lines were seen as still relevant 10 years later.³⁰

Under "Access to Information & Knowledge" there are goals covering universal access (particularly multilingual and culturally diverse access & development) to knowledge and skills, and the expansion of access to public access points which are affordable or free.

In "Capacity Building," the goals include increased collaboration ensure access to ICT and ICU enhanced education, especially in areas of telecommunications/ICT to help bridge the digital divide.

Under "Building Confidence & Security in the use of ICTs," goals include the expansion of security frameworks, promoting research & cooperation on the use of electronic documents for authentication, and helping establish national Computer Incident response Teams.

Under "Enabling Environment," there is a goal to recognize potentials of ICTs to small businesses, including helping them by streamlining administrative procedures and helping them get access to capital; there is also a goal to "foster an intellectual property framework that balances interests" of users & creators.

The WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015³¹ document which was produced at the event contains some areas of focus, such as focus on existing Action Lines, which were found to still be relevant. It also addresses new forms of technology which have recently emerged, including "broadband, social networks, mobility, digital inclusion, massive open online courses (MOOCs) and e-participation" and calls on continued knowledge sharing around internet and communications technologies.

Some criticisms of the events before the main WSIS+10 event note that much of what was discussed was a repeat of common themes (need for more transparency and inclusiveness) without real action steps being planned. An internet governance scholar has said "a substantial chunk of the actual decision-making that shapes the

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<http://www.humanrights.gov/2014/06/17/ws-is-10-hle-multistakeholder-consensus-with-multilateral-affirmation>

³¹ <http://www.itu.int/ws-is/review/inc/docs/final/ws-is10.vision.r1.pdf>

Internet and its use at both the national and global levels remains outside the ambit of the model of multistakeholderism”³²

At the UN General Assembly’s 69th Session, there will be a decision about whether or not to renew Internet Governance Forum for another 5 years, and decide if there should be another WSIS event in 2015.

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http://www.academia.edu/1998240/Drake_William_J._2011._Multistakeholderism_Internal_Limitations_and_External_Limits_In_MIND_Multistakeholder_Internet_Dialog_Co_laboratory_Discussion_Paper_Series_No._2_Internet_Policymaking_68-72_Berlin_Co_laboratory, discussed at <http://policyreview.info/articles/analysis/wsis10-self-praising-feast-multi-stakeholderism-internet-governance>