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

Official Form for Comments on the Non-paper

A. Your Information

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B. Formal Input

The Internet Society thanks the co-facilitators for their work in developing the non-paper for the United Nations General Assembly Overall Review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), based on the contributions submitted by a wide variety of stakeholders in the WSIS process. The Internet Society also thanks the co-facilitators for giving stakeholders in the WSIS process the opportunity to comment on the non-paper and looks forward to contribute to the zero draft due for publication at the end of September.

General Comments

In the following paragraphs, there are three key areas that we consider merit particular attention:

- **Security:** security for the digital age requires collaboration among a diversity of stakeholders, and needs to focus on the protection of economic and social development.
- **Internet governance:** flexible, open and inclusive governance frameworks have been essential to the success of the Information Society up to date.
- **Development:** strong synergies should be found with the UN Sustainable Development Agenda. Internet access-related development should focus its efforts on the promotion of local content and the use of Internet Exchange Points for faster and more affordable traffic.

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1 When specifying your stakeholder type, please indicate one of the following: Government, Civil Society, Private Sector, Academia, and Technical Sector.
We also strongly believe that the WSIS Review should more clearly reflect the result of the various regional WSIS dialogues that have taken place all over the world. For example, just two weeks ago, a regional WSIS Review preparatory meeting was held in Pattaya, Thailand, with a group of experts from 29 organizations, to discuss the WSIS Review process.

The “Pattaya Key Messages on the WSIS+10 Review: Voices from the Asia-Pacific Region”\(^2\) analyzed the impact of the WSIS+10 Review in three key areas: development, human rights and Internet governance. Other regional and national WSIS consultations have taken place, such as at EUROdig. At IGF 2015, there will also be a main session on WSIS+10. We encourage the co-facilitators to take into account the outputs of these various dialogues. These discussions offer valuable local and regional insights on the Information Society that should guide the global WSIS review.

**Comments on the preamble**

- **Paragraph 6:** To more clearly define where the focus of efforts to bridge the digital divide should be, the Internet Society suggests distinguishing the digital divide that affects the most vulnerable countries – in particular, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states – from digital divides that need to be addressed across all societies – in particular, women, young people, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and marginalized communities.

- **Paragraph 8:** To assist all stakeholders in the WSIS process, particularly the ongoing stream of new entrants to the Information Society, who may not be aware of the full spectrum of WSIS-related activities, the Internet Society suggests that the names of all the WSIS+10 outcome documents from the UNESCO, ITU and CSTD-hosted review events be included:
  - “Information and Knowledge for All: An Expanded Vision and a Renewed Commitment”, from the first WSIS+10 Review Event, Towards Knowledge Societies for Peace and Sustainable Development, hosted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
  - “WSIS+10 Statement on Implementation of WSIS Outcomes and the WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015”, from the WSIS+10 High Level Event hosted by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
  - “Implementing WSIS Outcomes: A Ten-Year Review”, a report by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)

**Digital Divide**

- **Paragraph 9:** We agree that tremendous progress has been made in bridging the digital divide in terms of connectivity, ICT use and content creation. This paragraph could be made stronger with data that reflects all three aspects, not only the connectivity aspect. Relevant data points on this include the following:

\(^2\) [http://www.wsis10.asia](http://www.wsis10.asia)
Paragraph 11: Similar to the Internet Society’s concerns with paragraphs 9 and 10, the Internet Society believes it is important to acknowledge that the gender digital divide is the result of a number of factors and cannot be solved by Internet access alone. Here, and with other marginalized groups, the digital divide closely reflects disparities and divides in the non-digital world. Just as ICTs are an enabler for the SDGs, ensuring real world rights and equal opportunities for all is a key enabler for closing the digital divide for women and other disadvantaged or marginalized people.

Paragraph 12: The Internet Society suggests adding a reference to Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) as a way to keep local Internet traffic within local infrastructure and to reduce the costs associated with traffic exchange between Internet Service Providers (ISPs). IXPs represent a vital way to increase affordability and quality of connectivity. In addition, improvements in access speed facilitated by IXPs often result in incentives for local developers to produce more relevant local content and applications and host it locally. The presence of an IXP may also encourage international content providers to establish themselves in a country. As demonstrated in a 2011 OECD-UNESCO-ISOC study, there is a close relationship between local infrastructure, access prices and the development of local content.

Paragraph 13: The Internet Society welcomes the targets adopted by ITU Member States but believes that it would not be appropriate to highlight the efforts of only one organization in this paragraph. If the aim of this section is to address the digital divide, with its full range of issues to be addressed, other activities by WSIS stakeholder organizations should be included, such as UNESCO’s efforts to include linguistic and cultural diversity online, and the Internet community’s efforts to enable use of multilingual domain names via the standardization efforts of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) and the implementation efforts of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

Paragraph 14: The Internet Society suggests using the agreed language from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

[We encourage all stakeholders to take measures to] “Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020”.

Human Rights

Paragraph 21: The Internet Society suggests including a reference the source of this text: United Nations General Assembly (UN GA) Resolution 68/167.

The Internet Society also suggests recognizing the important role that the Human Rights Council (HRC) has played in leading the discussion of human rights in the age of the Information Society and encouraging the HRC to continue work in this important area.

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3 http://www.ixptoolkit.com
Internet governance

- **Paragraph 25**: With regards to the text referencing ongoing internationalization of Internet governance, the Internet Society suggests explicitly adding a sentence to mention that “as stated by paragraph 71 of the Tunis Agenda, the process toward enhanced cooperation “involve(s) all stakeholders in their respective roles” (paragraph 71). Excluding the reference to all stakeholders would be a step backwards from 2005.

- **Paragraph 26**: The Internet Society, along with many other Internet governance stakeholders, has long supported ongoing efforts to strengthen and improve the Internet Governance Forum. The CSTD Working Group on Improvements to the IGF was a key milestone in cooperative international efforts to strengthen the IGF and make it of more use to stakeholders. In addition, the IGF has been constantly evolving since its initial creation, with the community and Multistakeholder Advisory Group reflecting on each year’s IGF to provide improvements for the next year’s IGF.

The Internet Society, therefore, suggests that the text of paragraph 26 also recognizes the ongoing, iterative efforts of the multi-stakeholder community to enhance the IGF and work toward concrete outcomes that all stakeholders in Internet governance can make use of. Examples of recent improvements include the creation of Best Practice Forums and, in 2015, the high-level work stream to develop Policy Options to Connect the Next Billion. Importantly, this work is consistent with the outcomes of the Sustainable Development Agenda where the world agreed to strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020. It is also a useful way to connect the global IGF to the many regional and national IGF initiatives that have been created.

- **Paragraph 26 bis**: The Internet Society suggests including a new paragraph calling on all stakeholders to work together, in a spirit of renewed collaboration and cooperation, in the many forums and processes that discuss Internet-related issues, including UN agencies, as well as technical Internet-related organizations.

- **Paragraph 26 ter**: As the future of the IGF is examined, The Internet Society considers it is essential to stress that its success is linked to its unique format, which was defined in § 77 of the WSIS Tunis Agenda:
  “The IGF would have no oversight function and would not replace existing arrangements, mechanisms, institutions or organizations, but would involve them and take advantage of their expertise. It would be constituted as a neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process. It would have no involvement in day-to-day or technical operations of the Internet.”

We believe these features must remain at the heart of the IGF’s governance model going forward and would like to see that reflected in the outcome document.

Cyberspace

- The Internet Society believes that it would be useful for the WSIS Review outcome document to stress the importance of collaborative security in the Information Society. In an interconnected world, no one actor alone can address security issues related to ICTs and the Internet. It is important to recognize that the responsibility to ensure a secure and trusted cyber space is an obligation to be shared by all stakeholders. Governments and other stakeholders should also strive to use security as a means to
protect economic and social prosperity, rather than as an end in and of itself. The Internet Society has developed these principles under the notion of Collaborative Security.

• The Internet Society believes it is important to add a new paragraph at the beginning of the section that acknowledges the wider range of security issues that are of relevance to the Information Society:
  o “We recognize that security fosters confidence in ICTs and ensures the continued success of ICTs as a driver for economic and social innovation. WSIS stakeholders have a shared responsibility towards the system as a whole. Security solutions should be compatible with fundamental human rights and foster trust at all levels. Effective security relies on agile evolutionary steps based on the expertise of a broad set of stakeholders and collaboration.”

Follow-up and review

• Because the success of the implementation of the WSIS targets is intimately linked to the involvement of all stakeholders, the Internet Society suggests including a paragraph at the beginning of this section to reflect this requirement.

• Paragraph 35: The Internet Society suggests adding text noting that efforts to improve cyber security should also preserve the fundamental properties of the Internet, in particular, interoperability, open standards, global reach, accessibility, and permission-less innovation.

• Paragraph 36: The Internet Society strongly supports improved data collection and analysis and, as noted in the suggestion for a new paragraph at the beginning of this section, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders to assist in this effort.

The comments above are complemented by existing resources related to the Internet Society’s engagement in the WSIS Review process:


• ISOC resources on the WSIS+10 Review Process http://www.internetsociety.org/wsis/wsis10-overview

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5 http://www.internetsociety.org/collaborativesecurity