
Internet Society (ISOC) Written Submission for the WSIS+10 Non-Paper

The United Nations and its 10-year Review of the World Summit on
the Information Society in December 2015

JULY 2015



Introduction

The Internet Society thanks the co-facilitators of the United Nations General Assembly's World Summit on the Information Society review (WSIS+10) for this opportunity to contribute toward the non-paper due to be published by the end of August 2015. As demonstrated by the past 10 years, openness and transparency are essential factors in ensuring the legitimacy of WSIS outcomes. The openness of this current call for written submissions from all stakeholders is a very important step in the review and we look forward to continued inclusiveness.

As one of the organizations involved in the WSIS since its inception, the Internet Society is following the WSIS+10 process closely and participating to the greatest extent possible. In particular, the Internet Society is gathering information and sharing it with its network of 75,000 members, 110 Chapters all over the world and 145 Organization members.

2015 is a historic year in UN history. Over the past months, critical negotiations have been converging towards two landmark events: the UN Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda to be held this September in New York, and the UN General Assembly high level meeting on the overall review of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+10), during which the Assembly will also decide on the future of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

In this broad context, the international community has today an unprecedented opportunity to seize. By underscoring the principles that have led to the success of the Internet over the past decade, stakeholders can lay the foundations of tomorrow's Information Society where the Internet can play an even stronger role in supporting economic growth and social progress, in all parts of the world.

Specifically, **the international community needs to reaffirm the value of a distributed model of governance where each stakeholder group has its own role and responsibility in the evolution of the Internet** - while all converge towards a common goal of enabling an Internet of opportunity for all.

WSIS+10 is not only an opportunity to celebrate the progress made over the past years in developing Internet infrastructure and supporting human empowerment, it is also a chance to tackle remaining challenges to bring the Internet to its full development potential.

Furthermore, **WSIS+10 can become a historical milestone to build a collective vision for the future of the Information Society, based on three pillars:**

1. **Collaborative networks for human empowerment and Sustainable Development;**
2. **Collaborative security for trustworthy environments;** and
3. **Collaborative governance where open frameworks lead to successful discussions.**

In this submission, we set out a positive vision for the WSIS+10 Review that reflects the progress made since 2005; the challenges still before us to build a truly global Information Society; and the benefits of an open and inclusive dialogue both during and leading up to the High Level WSIS+10 event.

1. Progress made in achieving a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society

Since the end of the second phase of WSIS in 2005, significant progress has been made toward the vision of the people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society. Beginning with the Geneva Declaration of Principles, the WSIS outcome documents strongly endorsed inclusiveness and cooperation between stakeholders as a key component of achieving WSIS goals.

Such collaboration between stakeholders has become an essential approach to addressing issues affecting the information society. In particular, a more cohesive and representative Internet community has emerged. Stakeholders from all sectors and countries have learned to work together in many fora, such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). At the local level, a bottom-up movement has spread around the world to create locally designed and run Internet governance dialogues and forums where communities can share ideas and recommend action to ensure that the Internet remains open, secure, and responsive to local concerns.

Inclusiveness of diverse ideas and collaboration in the growth and use of the Internet have produced great dividends. The development of many Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) around the world, for example, has only been possible due to the close collaboration of local communities, technical experts, industry and government stakeholders.

There are now 3 billion people connected to the Internet. It took over two decades for the Internet to reach its first billion users in 2005; five years to reach the second in 2010; and four years to reach the third billionth person in 2014. The mobile platform is increasingly the primary means of accessing Internet, particularly in developing countries (read more on Mobile developments in ISOC's 2015 Global Internet Report here: <http://www.internetsociety.org/globalinternetreport>). The development of Internet infrastructure around the globe has spurred economic growth and social development on all continents. Today, the digital economy contributes 5 to 9 percent to total GDP in developed markets, and in developing markets it is growing 15 to 25 percent per year. The accelerating speed of gaining access to the Internet, and its growing impact on society, demonstrate the success and ongoing viability of a collaborative, people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society.

This approach has resulted in **significant progress in addressing concrete Internet policy issues**. For example, recent reports have shown that, worldwide, spam is now at its lowest levels since 2003, due to concerted efforts to take legal action against spammers themselves and technical actions against "botnets" (robot networks) that are used to send spam. Progress in addressing Internet policy issues is the result of the efforts of all stakeholders. Together,

private sector investment, end user creativity, open exchange of ideas among communities, the technical community's vision and a policy environment that enables growth form stronger, more robust, sustainable and people-oriented solutions for WSIS goals than any one stakeholder group alone could have achieved. In addition, this WSIS approach to collaboration and cooperation has greatly contributed to awareness of the importance of the multi-stakeholder approach in achieving good public governance.

Over the past decade, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have also revealed their potential to enable human empowerment and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Internet Society has written about the linkages between the SDGs and ICTs at:

<https://www.internetsociety.org/doc/internet-and-sustainable-development>

The Internet, in particular, is a unique platform **for innovation, creativity, economic opportunity and social inclusion**, which can make a major contribution to human well being and achieving the SDGs. The 2015 UN Commission for Science and Technology and Development (CSTD) report: "Implementing WSIS Outcomes: a Ten-Year Review" showcases the many ways that governments, business, civil society and individuals have adopted ICTs to transform their operations and communities. **ICTs have an impact both at the global scale as well as the individual human level.** For example:

- ICTs in health can now track emerging disease threats around the globe as well as enable patients living in remote areas to access medical information and advice via apps on mobile phones;
- Mobile telephony, Internet access and social media have transformed communications opportunities for individuals, while governments and businesses increasingly rely on the Internet for communications and administration, delivering services and disseminating information;
- Many governments and development agencies have adopted strategies to leverage ICTs for development (ICT4D) and introduced programmes that take advantage of the Internet – stimulating access to information through telecentres and mobile applications; promoting business sectors such as outsourcing and software development; disseminating agriculture and health information; offering distance learning opportunities; development of mobile financial services; and establishing mechanisms to provide early warning of natural and man-made disasters.;
- Small and Medium Enterprises in both developing and developed countries now have access to customers around the world due to increased levels of Internet connectivity;
- Women that learn ICT skills or start their own businesses are now able to share in the benefits of markets previously difficult for them to access.

These impacts have grown as technology has become more sophisticated, user numbers have risen, more bandwidth has become available, and new services have been introduced. Further developments now underway – such as cloud computing and the Internet of Things – mean that the Internet will have even greater impact on development implementation and outcomes in the post-2015 era. **Both the SDGs and the original WSIS vision place people at**

the centre of their processes; as ICTs continue to evolve – which can only happen through the creativity and collaboration of people, regardless of stakeholder group – we will continue to see benefits accrue to all people of the world.

2. Challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes

While there have clearly been great steps to achieve the WSIS goals in the past 10 years, there are still challenges to be overcome. For instance, today, roughly two thirds of the world's population remains off-line. Given the clear linkages between ICTs and sustainable development, the digital divide presents a major challenge to meeting other related development goals such as reducing inequality, fostering innovation, and ensuring quality education for future generations.

Below, the Internet Society highlights **four key challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes**. In the subsequent session, on priorities, the Internet Society proposes ways to prioritise and overcome these challenges.

a. The challenge of connectivity and development

As stated above, access remains a key priority in the coming decade. Despite the progress that has been made in the communications sector, whole communities remain disconnected from the value of the global Internet.

Removing barriers to connectivity is one of the most critical digital divide issues of our time. For example, cross border connectivity remains a serious challenge in many parts of the world that contributes to the high cost of Internet access for end users. In too many countries, taking fibre across a border is still an enormous task. All too often, bureaucratic roadblocks, insufficient cross-border agreements, and lack of regional cooperation lead to delays that slow down or even deter investment. One only needs to hear the stories of multi-year delays for cross-border connections to be established across the span of a single river – delays caused not by technology but by policy and regulatory obstacles that halt progress – to know that we can, and should, do better.

There also continues to be a lack of locally relevant online content and services in many emerging economies and minority communities. This can discourage communities from using the Internet, even when basic services are available to them. Capacity building in this area along with further development of infrastructure through Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) and community development can help address these challenges.

b. The challenge of trust in the Internet

It seems that every week, we hear new reports of people's financial or personal information being stolen by attackers who can be located on the other side of the planet, but are seconds away online. Large-scale data breaches involving records of millions of people now seem routine.

Beyond the impact to individuals, these data breaches have a far greater impact on the overall system of communication. These attacks erode the trust of users in ICTs – and create apprehension and fear among those users not yet connected.

In February and March 2015, the Internet Society conducted a survey (<https://www.internetsociety.org/doc/internet-governance-survey-2015>) that attracted over 800 participants. Participants identified cybersecurity, privacy and the threat of mass surveillance as some of the key challenges of the information society going forward.

Collaborative security is perhaps the greatest challenge we face today, with the worldwide adoption of the Internet. How do we increase the level of trust in the systems that make up the Internet – not just the technology, but also the systems of governance and operations?

Confidence in the use of ICTs would be assisted by greater collaboration in the development of and commitment to a more secure, robust and resilient Internet environment. No single stakeholder – government, users, technical community, etc. – can solve these complex challenges alone. We need to work together to stay ahead of the constantly changing security landscape. The Internet Society has captured this approach in a framework called “Collaborative Security”: www.internetsociety.org/collaborativesecurity

c. The challenge of openness and the enjoyment of human rights

As more people join the information society, an increasing challenge is ensuring that human rights are not only recognized online as they are offline, but also that they are effectively implemented in both environments.

For those new to the Internet, we must safeguard our collective ability to connect anytime, anywhere, to speak freely, to innovate without top down controls, and to share knowledge. For the Internet to thrive, it must allow users to choose between competing ideas and innovations. Freedom of expression is critical for the information society to reach its full potential.

d. The challenge of governance

Going forward, there is a need for increasing awareness of the existing governance mechanisms in the Internet governance space. Many participants in the Internet Society’s recent survey, referenced above, noted that newcomers to the Information Society can find the number of parallel processes and different modes of participation unsettling, and a barrier to full participation. Therefore, efforts should be made to make governance processes easier to understand and engage with.

This is why the Internet Society has developed a fellowship program to assist technical Internet community and policy practitioners to better understand how the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) processes work. Many other stakeholders lead efforts in this field. For instance, the Geneva Internet Platform (GIP) is also conducting important efforts to produce regular Internet governance updates for

diplomats and all interested stakeholders.

As well as better recognition and understanding of existing governance processes, greater collaboration by stakeholders within and between governance frameworks would assist in removing some of the remaining challenges in achieving WSIS goals.

3. Priorities in seeking to achieve WSIS outcomes and progress towards the information Society

In light of the challenges mentioned above, the Internet Society suggests ways to prioritize and overcome these difficulties. In particular, WSIS stakeholders are invited to focus their efforts on building **three pillars on which the future Information Society – one that is fully people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented - can be built:**

<https://www.internetsociety.org/wsisis10-position-paper>

a. Collaborative networks for human empowerment and sustainable development

- **Affordable and widely available access** is an essential foundation and should remain a primary objective of the WSIS Review. Going forward, ISOC recommends that efforts to connect all populations draw on a local community of technologists, innovators and early-adopters who can build, maintain and ultimately grow and sustain networks to their full potential. We have found that everywhere the Internet has flourished, it has done so thanks to the existence of a robust technical class of engineers, technicians and users who not only ensure the network keeps running, but also create the tools, forums and services that create local demand.
- While affordable and widely available access is an essential foundation, ISOC also believes it is essential the WSIS review showcases how Internet access and ICTs **enable meaningful opportunities for human empowerment:** the ability to connect but also to speak, to innovate and share, to choose and to trust. This set of abilities which can be amplified by the power of the technology, and remain at the heart of societies from any era (Read more: <http://www.internetsociety.org/who-we-are/mission/values-and-principles>).
- Furthermore, ISOC also believes that an Internet experience based on the **respect of Human Rights online** is a necessary foundation in order to reap the full benefits that the Internet can offer. The implementation of human rights, both on and offline, must remain a key priority.
- We also see value in finding synergies between the WSIS process and the adoption of new **U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Indeed, for many years, the Internet and ICTs has been drivers and enablers of development; we firmly believe that the power of the open Internet can create innovation, change, and local solutions with global impact. The open Internet is and will continue to be an essential tool in facilitating the implementation of all SDG goals, as well as a key means to leverage the

ingenuity, collaboration and partnerships needed to make them a reality (Read more: <https://www.internetsociety.org/doc/internet-and-sustainable-development>).

b. Collaborative security for trust-worthy environments

- Because no one actor can fix the security of the Internet, we believe that any WSIS+10 security-related discussions should be based on a collaborative approach and reflect the following principles:
 - **Fostering confidence and protecting opportunities:** The objective of security is to foster confidence in the Internet and to ensure the continued success of the Internet as a driver for economic and social innovation.
 - **Collective Responsibility:** Internet participants share a responsibility towards the system as a whole.
 - **Fundamental Properties and Values:** Security solutions should be compatible with fundamental human rights and preserve the fundamental properties of the Internet — the *Internet Invariants*.
 - **Evolution and Consensus:** Effective security relies on agile evolutionary steps based on the expertise of a broad set of stakeholders.
 - **Think Globally, act Locally:** It is through voluntary bottom-up self-organization that the most impactful solutions are likely to be reached (Read more: <http://www.internetsociety.org/collaborativesecurity>).
- **Examples of the benefits of this collaborative approach** in action are found throughout the existing Information Society and **must be replicated**. For instance, Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs) around the world bring together representatives of government, industry, educational institutions and other organizations to collaborate on improving the security of their individual systems. CSIRTs also cooperate and exchange insights among themselves on how to improve Internet security through the IGF Best Practices Forums (<http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/best-practice-forums/2-establishing-and-supporting-csirts>).
- Another example is the Mutually Agreed Norms for Routing Security (MANRS – <http://www.manrs.org>) project where network operators have agreed to work together collaboratively to improve the overall security and stability of the Internet's routing infrastructure.
- Measures such as these, and many others like them, are critical to raise the level of trust in the Internet as a means of communication, connection, collaboration and commerce. People must trust in the security, privacy and availability of their connections in order to fully realize the opportunities available to them in the Information Society

c. Collaborative governance where open frameworks lead to successful discussions

- The post-2015 arrangements should reaffirm the principles agreed in 2005: “*The management of the Internet encompasses both technical and policy issues and should involve all stakeholders and relevant intergovernmental and international organizations*” (paragraph 35 of the Tunis Agenda).
- ISOC also strongly supports the renewal of the mandate of the **Internet Governance Forum (IGF)** as a multistakeholder forum that provides a unique opportunity for governments, business, civil society and the technical community to share experiences and best practices that can inform decision-making in their local communities. In its ten-year existence, the IGF has indeed proven to be an indispensable element of the Internet ecosystem; it has emerged as a key forum enabling all stakeholders to engage directly with each other on Internet-related issues. For instance, this year, participants are tackling important challenges such as developing policy options to connect the next billion, or developing best practices to counter abuse against women online (Read more: <https://www.internetsociety.org/doc/internet-society-positions-renewal-igf-mandate-and-wsis-2015-review>)
- The success of the ten-year Review of the WSIS is intimately linked to the openness of its preparatory process. We invite all stakeholders to sign on to a letter calling for the President of the UN General Assembly and the two co-facilitators to lead a **WSIS+10 preparatory process that is open and inclusive of all stakeholders** (<http://www.openwsis2015.org/>). This call has already been endorsed by 125 organizations and individuals.

4. The Internet Society’s expectations from the WSIS+10 High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly

In accordance with the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (paragraph 108), the WSIS+10 Review should assess “the multi-stakeholder implementation at the international level [...] taking into account the themes and action lines in the Geneva Plan of Action”. The review process should focus on the implementation of existing goals. WSIS+10 should **also reaffirm the principles and commitments made in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005** and emphasise the importance of the multi-stakeholder approach at all levels.

Specifically, **WSIS+10 should reaffirm the value of a distributed model of governance where each stakeholder group has its own role and responsibility in the evolution of the Internet** - while all converge towards a common goal of enabling an Internet of opportunity for all.

Furthermore, WSIS+10 can become a historical milestone to build a collective vision for the future of the Information Society, based on three pillars:

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We also believe that broad participation in the WSIS process is a condition to its success and that **the preparatory process should be as inclusive and multi-stakeholder as possible**, in line with the Tunis Agenda. All preparatory meetings and related events should follow the multistakeholder model and be open and inclusive. The Internet Society invites all stakeholders to endorse a letter to the President of the UN General Assembly explicitly calling for an open preparatory process: <http://www.openwsis2015.org>.

In order to enhance participation in the preparatory process, we would strongly suggest that the majority of the preparatory meetings be carried out online, including regular conference calls and creating mailing lists on various Action Lines, or adjacent to major conferences such as the tenth annual meeting of the IGF, in November 2015, in Brazil. The use of open webcasts of preparatory meetings in New York, as well as the use of Twitter and email to enable stakeholders to ask questions during the open stakeholder consultations, have been a great step in increasing the transparency of the process. In addition, we also encourage the Secretariat to facilitate remote participation for in-person meetings in order to enhance transparency and to enable stakeholders from around the world to engage meaningfully in this critical debate.

Finally, the Internet Society recommends that the Review include a discussion on **how to improve the annual follow-up of the WSIS evaluation**. The review should, among other things, focus on the concrete assessment of the implementation of the summit's outcomes. In this context, we recognise the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as one of the most successful outcomes of the WSIS and note the contribution it has made to the growing endorsement and acceptance of the multistakeholder model by triggering national and regional IGF type initiatives across the globe. We therefore recommend strengthening the IGF as a significant contribution to the implementation of WSIS, while maintaining its multi-stakeholder nature.

5. Outcome document

Recognizing the short timeframe in which the outcome document is to be developed, the Internet Society supports the co-facilitators of the preparatory process in encouraging the development of a **short, high-level outcome document**.

The Internet Society strongly believes the outcome document must recognise the Tunis Agenda, and the progress made in achieving the WSIS outcomes in the past 10 years, through using the WSIS-mandated principles of collaboration and partnership between all stakeholders. The value of collaboration among stakeholders cannot be undervalued. Instead, there should be an emphasis on the relevance of collaboration in achieving WSIS outcomes, particularly in driving Internet development.

As the world increasingly relies on the Internet as an enabler for development, the outcome document should recommend **broadening partnerships and cooperation** in WSIS activities to include a wider, more comprehensive range of stakeholders. In particular, the Internet Society recommends including Internet sector foundations, development agencies, Small and Medium Enterprises from emerging regions and many others who have a critical stake in the Internet's development as stakeholders mentioned in the outcome document.

The outcome document should also **highlight the strong links between the WSIS and SDG processes**, and perhaps take the opportunity to clarify the important role that ICTs have in enabling the SDGs to be achieved.

As an administrative note, we urge that the outcome document, in addition to the formal PDF publication, be published in an HTML format with a link to online translation tools that enable people from around the world to read the document in their own languages and not only the six official languages of the United Nations.

Conclusion

The General Assembly's 10-year review of WSIS is a key opportunity to reflect on the successes achieved over the past decade using the WSIS principles of collaboration, inclusiveness and diversity first set out in the 2003 Geneva Declaration of Principles. It is also an opportunity to use those same principles, which have developed in sophistication over time and through experience, in the current preparatory process, the December High Level Meeting and in the outcome document, which will help provide a vision for the way forward beyond 2015.

The Information Society has developed dramatically in the past 10 years in ways that the original WSIS participants could never have envisaged. It is important, as we move forward in this review of the WSIS process, not to forget that at the heart of the Information Society, it is people who matter and that ICTs, while important, are tools for people-centred development – and tools will by necessity always change and adapt according to what people need and aspire to achieve.

A key element of this post-2015 vision is to bring about an “Internet of opportunity” that is accessible to all people around the world and trusted as a means of communication, connection, collaboration and commerce. The Internet Society looks forward to working with the UN General Assembly and all the many WSIS stakeholders to make this vision a reality.

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