

Delivered 27 November 2014, at the CSTD 2014-2015 Inter-sessional Panel, Geneva.

Thank you, Chair.

My name is Matthew Shears with the Center for Democracy & Technology.

I am also speaking on behalf of the following civil society organizations

Association for Progressive Communications
Global Partners Digital, UK
Internet Democracy Project, India
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTAnet), Kenya
Center for Global Communications (GLOCOM), Japan

We welcome the CSTD Secretariat's report - it represents the most comprehensive review of the implementation of the WSIS to date, drawing on a wide range of sources, and importantly, the results of a multistakeholder survey.

We believe the report also offers a balanced view of differing perspectives on the state of WSIS implementation and encourage the CSTD, ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly to take this report into account in its overall review of the WSIS.

As civil society organisations, we remain strongly committed to the WSIS goal of achieving “a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society,

We would like to make the following observations regarding some of the findings in the report:

1) We agree with the report on the significant positive impact that has resulted from the increased availability and use of ICTs, but new divides have emerged as well, both within and between countries.

We would like to emphasise that building a people-centered and development-oriented information society is not just about access to technology; it requires states and other actors to invest in human development, institutional capacity, democratic, transparent and accountable governance and to protect and promote civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

2) We are encouraged to see strong recognition of the important roles that different stakeholders as well as multistakeholder participation and cooperation have played in the

implementation of WSIS outcomes, especially in Internet governance. We do believe that multistakeholder processes are still evolving and that their inclusiveness, accountability and transparency need to be strengthened for the benefit of all.

3) We are pleased to see the recognition of the important role of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the positive contribution it has made to the discussion of not just Internet governance but to a wide range of Internet related issues. We recommend that IGF be renewed for at least a further 10 years and that it continues to improve its capacity to be the world's foremost forum for addressing internet related policy concerns in an open, inclusive and transparent manner.

4) We agree that more needs to be done to increase affordable access to ICTs, and wish to reiterate the importance of public access, which was recognised in the WSIS+10 Vision and urge a greater focus on providing public access through facilities such as libraries and community information centres or information access points, particularly in rural and remote areas.

5) We share the report's concern that ICTs and the information society are not embedded effectively in the SDGs and post-2015 preparatory documents and agree that there should be greater integration between WSIS outcomes and the Post-2015 Development Agenda that will be adopted by the General Assembly in 2015.

In this regard, we would like to use this opportunity to urge all stakeholders to refocus on the development dimension of the WSIS. There is no doubt that Internet governance issues are important, but we must ensure that the original goal of the WSIS - that of harnessing the potential of ICTs for development - becomes the central focus of the WSIS going forward.

Thank you.