



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

Official Form for Written Submissions

A. Your Information

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B. Formal Input

The Just Net Coalition² (JNC) comprises several dozen civil society organisations and individuals from different regions globally, concerned with issues of Internet governance, from the perspective of all human rights, including democracy and economic and social justice.

1. To what extent has progress been made on the vision of the people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society in the ten years since the WSIS?

We welcome the + 10 review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), and we hope the outcomes of the review will provide new directions to the global community – new directions for using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to empower diverse purposes, at the same time new directions for preventing its harmful use. By harmful uses, we mean not only security threats, but quite particularly negative implications on human rights, equity, social justice and democracy. ICTs have considerably changed the world in the last ten years since WSIS. It is time to take a deep and critical look at what has changed and how, and at what are our collective political responsibilities in this regard. We refer in this context to the Just Net Coalition's Delhi Declaration:

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

²<http://justnetcoalition.org>

<http://www.justnetcoalition.org/delhi-declaration>

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have provided revolutionary new means of communication, of accessing information and for organizing. ICTs are transforming almost every sector. But at the same time, the last decade of widespread ICT absorption in our social structures has also been a decade in which inequality has risen faster than at almost any time in history. Why are the new ICTs, and the Internet, being celebrated as egalitarian technologies, when in fact they are not leading to a more equal world? ***There seems to be something not quite right with the current ways of Information Society governance, i.e. the governance frameworks that affect how ICTs impact and transform our social institutions and structures.*** The WSIS+10 review must examine this key issue. We must move beyond a fascination with technology, no matter how tempting, towards addressing the deeper structural and governance questions that face us today regarding how our information society is emerging. (Please note that we have decided not to capitalize “information society” as we believe that digital technology and thus the context for the information society is or is rapidly becoming all pervasive and not a special condition for global social formation.)

2. What are the challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes?

With a truly monumental task facing the WSIS +10 review, we are very disappointed with the highly truncated nature of that review process. We note with regret that we will not have a summit level review, with a full preparatory process, such as that of the original WSIS (a full process was called for, incidentally, by the G77+China). In this formative stage of a new epoch in human history – the advent of an information society – abdication of our collective governance responsibilities will have ramifications that are also historic. Importantly, the information society is inherently more global than earlier social forms, so there are even more pressing global governance imperatives than ever before – the WSIS+10 process must address them. ***We note an unfortunate lassitude when it comes to the application of global governance, especially in this space where global governance is what we need most. We must rise above this, earnestly promoting our political duties and their application in policy.***

3. What should be the priorities in seeking to achieve WSIS outcomes and progress towards the Information Society, taking into account emerging trends?

Since time is very short for this review process, we suggest that we should focus on developing high level principles for information society governance, taking from what was agreed in Tunis. The two phases of WSIS have produced very sound documents. But now it is time to take note of the sometimes-tectonic changes and new developments since 2005. The new high level principles must be clearly and precisely connected to key issues that are most salient and important to the world today. They should provide clear and specific directions for continued, meaningful work in these areas. They should also direct and help us prepare for a full summit level review, in 3-5 years, of the then current context of the information society. ***The plus 10 review must call for a full summit in 3-5 years, to review information society governance issues, and to develop the grounding for this.***

4. What are general expectations from the WSIS+10 High Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly?

Information society governance can be seen in two parts, as the original WSIS process partly did. These parts are (1) ICTs for development, which was treated, if rather inadequately, under the 'financing mechanisms' track of WSIS, and (2) global digital architectures, generally, the Internet governance stream.

We now believe the terminology should be as ICTs **and** Development since, as elsewhere, the role and significance of ICTs are a pervasive influence in the area and context of “development”: *the UNDP should be given a clear mandate to examine and present key principles and formulations for the use of ICTs in support of development*, said mandate to integrate the principles into its programs, and also the UNDP to advise and support national governments and other agencies in this mission. *UNCTAD should be mandated to look at the macro impacts of ICTs on developing economies*, to provide high level principles, and also to advise and help developing countries. Specific standing mandates and programs for these agencies should be instituted by the WSIS review process, along with the needed resources. It should be understood that ICTs are transforming and disrupting Developing Country economies and societies in a manner similar to those of Developed Countries by enabling certain economic processes over others. Many of these are being driven by outside economic forces. ICTs effectively used by the grassroots can counter these forces while developing strategies and applications which contribute to more broadly based and sustainable development. The use of ICTs in the Development process must be seen as one involving a collaboration between ICT expertise and locally expressed needs and it is the responsibility of agencies such as the UNDP and others to enable and facilitate such processes.

On the Internet governance (IG) side: We note the urgent need to *develop a new anchor point inside the UN system to address international Internet-related public policies. This is one of the key unfinished agendas from WSIS*. Indeed, the top three priorities identified by the Working Group on Internet Governance, now from more than a decade ago, are still priority issues today: the asymmetric role of the US government, the lack of security, and the high connectivity costs for developing countries. Further, many very important global governance issues have arisen since the WSIS and have become urgent to be addressed, such as: understanding the economics of data and developing appropriate data governance frameworks; regulating Internet platforms and intermediaries; the structural impact of the Internet on key sectors such as media, health, education, and agriculture; and the impact on jobs and income-inequality both within and between countries (to mention but a few).

A high level acceptance of the commitment, along with some basic details, to develop such a new UN-based anchor point, and the required institutional mechanisms, should be negotiated and agreed upon. The task of implementation of this recommendation should then be handed over to a duly empowered body, which should report to the UN General Assembly in a time-bound manner.

With regard to the technical management of the Internet, or the *ICANN* side of global IG: That should remain fully decentralized while *strengthening its political accountability and adherence to internationally agreed norms and policies*. The structure of such governance has to be truly international. *This is possible only when underwritten by an international treaty*, which preserves the current decentralized forms, at the same time instituting appropriate international oversight.

In this regard we refer to concrete recommendations for an appropriate institutional architecture that the Just Net Coalition provided to the NetMundial Conference. This addresses both the public policies side and the 'ICANN oversight' side: see

<http://content.netmundial.br/contribution/democratising-global-governance-of-the-internet/164>

5. What shape should the outcome document take?

The outcome document from the WSIS+10 overall review should be a resolution or a declaration.

The document should revisit the formative information society landscape in detail. It should provide directions for the global community to maximize its benefits and meet its challenges for the greatest benefit of humanity. It will be useful to make the report in four parts - the first part should deal with general follow up on the original WSIS documents, and the developments since; the second and the third parts should focus, respectively, on 'ICTs and Development' and on 'Internet Governance'; and the fourth part should lay the roadmap ahead, with specific means of implementation and follow up. This fourth part should also set in motion a process toward a full-fledged World Summit on Information Society in 3-5 years.

The document should contain the following specific elements:

1. ICTs must be used to further all human rights, including the right to development.
2. All people have the right to basic digital enablement, being the right to: access the Internet, and its content and applications; participate in content and applications development; and, to receive the necessary training and capacity-building for effective use of the Internet and other digital tools.
3. Access to ICTs, and in particular the Internet, must be considered as a human right. Attempts towards universal broadband service have shown significant market failures especially in sparsely populated and rural areas. It is important to look at public funded fibre backbones to serve across all areas of habitation, coupled with community-based last mile models. Community owned network initiatives should be given policy and funding support on the lines of support provided for community media.
4. It must be recognized that the Internet is a global public good, which must be managed in the interests of all the world's peoples.
5. Steps must be taken to safeguard against concentration of power and of centralized control of ICTs.
6. Impacted populations and communities have the right to participate in decisions with respect to the planning and implementation of ICT and Development initiatives.
7. Resources must be provided for the development of applications which respond to the expressed needs and development directions of grassroots populations and communities.
8. The global governance of ICTs, including the Internet and its names and addresses, must be democratic, participative, open and transparent, involving globally democratic multilateral bodies, with multistakeholder participation, and the UN system should facilitate the development of international public policies. In particular:
 - 8.1. The UNDP should be given a clear mandate to examine and present key principles and formulations for the use of ICTs in support of economic and social development.
 - 8.2. UNCTAD should be mandated to look at the macro impacts of ICTs on developing economies.
 - 8.3. A new anchor point should be developed inside the UN system to address international Internet-related public policies.
 - 8.4. For ICANN, an international treaty process must establish political accountability and adherence to norms.
9. There is a need for universal binding instruments to combat cybercrime and to limit cyberwar and cyberattacks.
10. There is a need to take up and issue directional guidelines for important new governance areas such as 'economics of data' and data governance, platform governance, net neutrality (and other kinds of neutralities like search neutrality), cloud computing, Internet of Things, and so on.

11. Personal and social data must belong respectively to the relevant individuals and social groups.
12. Urgent attention is required for new governance paradigms for global Internet platforms (also called intermediaries), because these have become society-wide horizontal structures of immense social, economic, political and cultural significance.