



Summary of Side Event: WSIS Cooperation for Accelerating Progress on the SDGs

31 January 2023, 14:30-15:45 CET

Background on the event (one paragraph)

The achievement and the progress for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development require multistakeholder collaboration and partnerships. Given the global challenges and with eight years ahead to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the need for accelerated actions is paramount. To collectively achieve the SDGs, collaboration within the UN system and with non-UN stakeholders, including private sectors, civil societies, academia, youth, and many more is imperative. This session, co-organised by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) focused on how the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the WSIS cooperation can help accelerate the SDGs, learning from the COVID-19 experience to build an inclusive, resilient, and sustainable societies and economies. It is important to strengthen partnerships and digital cooperation towards achieving goals and targets across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Panelists had a fruitful discussion and shared the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines on the ground to achieve the SDGs.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- **Mr. Tomas Lamanauskas**, Deputy Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) emphasized the multistakeholder and partnerships, which are two key values that underpin the WSIS process. He reiterated the importance of UNGIS as a real successful example of existing well-functioning digital cooperation in the UN system. Collaborative efforts among the UN agencies on priority areas are crucial to accelerate action towards the SDGs.
- **Dr. Tawfik Jelassi**, Assistant Director General, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) shared the UNESCO's work on the implementation of several WSIS Action Lines, including WSIS Action Line C3: Access to Information and Knowledge, WSIS Action Line C7: e-Learning and WSIS Action Line C8: Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content. He highlighted that digital connectivity and skills become more important in almost all UN programs that allow the UN agencies to join forces to coordinate common solutions and approaches with each other.
- **Mr. Jean Paul Adam**, Director Technology Climate Change and Natural Resources Management Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) gave insights through perspective at the regional level. Digital transformations are a pillar to accelerate the sustainable development goals across the continent. UN ECA through its work continues to promote inclusive and integrated digital cooperation in Africa countries.
- **Ms. Mei Lin Fung**, Chair and Cofounder, People Centered Internet and Impact Network addressed the WSIS work that contributed to the SDG 5: Gender Equality. She highlighted the WSIS Geneva

Plan of Action that affirms the importance of promoting and maintaining gender equality and women empowerment.

- **Mr. Liberato C. Bautista**, President, Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO) underlined the partnership and engagement of civil society in the WSIS process. The NGOs voice and agency must be afforded access to both multilateral premises and participation in visioning and shaping the substantive promises of the UN, which are the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
- **Mr. Maikel Wilms, Partner & Director, The Boston Consulting Group** highlighted the digital connectivity for the achievement of the SDGs. He further presented the initiative on Partner2Connect Digital Coalition (P2C), a multistakeholder alliance launched by ITU in close cooperation with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, and in line with the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, to foster meaningful connectivity and digital transformation globally.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- As we get into the eighth year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, there is still work to be done as all countries across the world are making efforts to progress towards sustainable development. It is now more urgent than ever before to leverage ICTs to connect everyone everywhere and achieve the SDGs.
- The WSIS process has been an important landmark in the global effort to achieve the SDG through the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines made by all stakeholders.
- Collaboration and partnerships among various stakeholders are key to accelerate the SDGs.
- WSIS Forum provides a great platform to widen the engagement of all stakeholders in promoting and showcasing ICTs for sustainable development.