

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

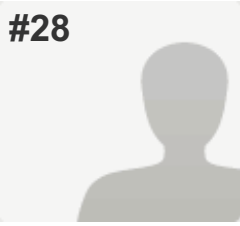
**Contribution to the CSTD ten-year review of the implementation of WSIS
outcomes**

Submitted by

THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Collector: Website Collector 1 (Website Survey)

Started: Friday, September 12, 2014 9:11:56 AM

Last Modified: Friday, September 12, 2014 9:17:49 AM

Time Spent: 00:05:53

IP Address: 193.133.226.4

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Mr.

Q2: First Name, Surname:

Paul Blaker

Q3: Organisation:

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

Q4: Country:

United Kingdom

Q6: Which stakeholder category do you belong to?

Government

Q7: To what extent, in your experience, has the "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society", envisaged in the opening paragraph of the WSIS Geneva Declaration of Principles, developed in the ten years since WSIS?

Since the global community met for the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), first in 2003 in Geneva, then in 2005 in Tunis, the global community has experienced huge economic and social benefits from the development of information and communication technologies, including mobile, fibre-optic broadband and satellite and platforms and capabilities such as cloud computing and the advent of the Internet of Things. This has been enabled by a governance model based upon the concept of multi-stakeholderism endorsed at WSIS, in which all stakeholders including Governments, businesses, civil society and the technical community are able to engage and take part in decision-making.

The key driver in the development of a people centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society has been the private sector and individual consumers. Private companies have invested in communications networks and created commercial offerings which have attracted consumers around the world. As a result, many people from around the world have been able to benefit from accessing mobile communication services. However, it is recognised that some developing and less-developed countries continue to require assistance in developing the infrastructure and services to benefit from the information economy in the future.

People centred needs are a key driver to realising the benefits of WSIS. New services and opportunities have developed with respect to culture, education, health, rights of expression, and rights of access in recognising diversity of culture language and heritage. The diversity and plurality of needs and experience which has developed means that no one focal point for any stakeholder is sufficient. This means that as the Internet has evolved, so too has the understanding of stakeholder and relevant interested parties. Over the 10 year period since WSIS, the governance model has evolved to become more inclusive, reflecting a broader range of voices and experience. Despite the greater diversity of stakeholder roles, stakeholders are working more closely together, as evidenced by the examples from the CSTD Working Group indicating where enhanced co-operation now exists.

That WSIS has embedded the concept of multi-stakeholder engagement in global policy thinking is evidenced by the successful NETmundial conference held in São Paulo in April 2014. By stakeholders working together and sharing understanding and views, we saw significant development of common ground and a clear identification of areas where further cooperation is needed.

In the UK, great strides have been made to facilitate the deployment of the basic building blocks upon which an information society has developed. Benefits to all stakeholders have accrued. As well as social benefits there have been great economic benefits: for example, significant increases in consumer purchasing on line has allowed for rapid development of businesses, enabling them to reach a broader market more easily and allowing customers easier access. This has required close collaboration across many industries to make it happen. Other areas that have benefitted from the Information Society include engagement with government services and access to finance/ banking services.

Q8: How far do you consider the implementation of specific WSIS outcomes to have been achieved?

There have been great strides in delivering the goals envisioned by WSIS and that can be seen in the outcomes over the past 10 years. Many countries have made considerable progress in implementing the WSIS Action Lines in the form of concrete proposals, projects and services to the benefit of their own businesses and citizens. This can be particularly seen in the many infrastructure projects around the world to boost communications networks be they for mobile; broadband or for other communication services. Many Governments have worked with the private sector to create an enabling environment to provide a wide range of electronic communication services. The number of people online has expanded tremendously and the information society is providing benefits in areas such as agriculture, education, media, healthcare and in promoting transparency, accountability and good governance.

For example, the UK notices the excellent work that Rwanda has done where over the past 10 years it undertaken the necessary investments in its infrastructure and human capacity which has resulted in Rwanda being on course to meet all its MDGs which has been aided considerably by its investment in broadband, mobile technologies and setting up Internet Exchange Points (IXPs). Rwanda as part of its '2020 Vision' has positioned broadband as a driver of transformation of the country from one that relied on agriculture to that of one which will increasingly become a knowledge-based economy, and who have now launched a national broadband project to link its national fibre backbone network to a 4G LTE last mile network and provide 95% population coverage by 2017. Given that Rwanda is a landlocked country, they are a great exemplar on what can be achieved, when you have the vision and drive to achieve them over a relative short period of time. There is clearly more to do to complete the WSIS outcomes. In many countries investment in infrastructure is held back by disproportionate licence fees, "luxury taxation" of communications services and an unstable or unpredictable regulatory environment. In many parts of the world, freedom of expression online is curtailed by censorship or blocking, denying citizens their fundamental rights and undermining transparency and accountability. Continued efforts are needed to overcome these barriers to a people centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society.

Q9: How has the implementation of WSIS outcomes contributed towards the development of a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society"?

The WSIS outcomes have supported the development of the Information Society in many ways, including ways that were not envisioned 10 years ago. The development of social networking, for example, has broadened the appeal and use of communication technologies in ways that were not previously expected. Social networking has brought tremendous opportunities and benefits in terms of people-centred and inclusive social development. The new ways in which people from all backgrounds can now access information, express themselves and associate online has allowed people from around the world to communicate, collaborate, find solutions and create new ideas and new opportunities for economic and social development.

Q10: What are the challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes? What are the challenges that have inhibited the emergence of a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society"?

There is a need further to recognise that the successes of the last ten years have not been driven by governments alone but by all stakeholders working together. For this reason, the multi-stakeholder approach is crucial to the on-going success of the WSIS outcomes. The multi-stakeholder model needs to be strengthened to become more inclusive and accessible so that all stakeholders are able to engage in discussions and decisions. There needs to be greater transparency and openness to enable all stakeholders and relevant interested parties to contribute and collaborate effectively. This needs to be reflected in the various organisations, including the inter-governmental organisations, which currently exist in the eco-system. The WSIS process needs a clearer focus on practical development issues to ensure that it delivers real change. There needs to be a stronger emphasis on the development agenda and clearer links to the global post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, in order to ensure that global efforts are effectively focused and coordinated. This focus needs to address the continuing need for capacity building in developing countries. In the original Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ICT's were specifically referred in Goal 8 (to "create a global partnership for development with targets for aid, trade and debt relief"), which stated that "in cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications". The current discussion over the new post-2015 development goals has so far largely ignored the potential of ICTs which does need to be addressed. The post-2015 development goals and the WSIS+10 outcomes need to be more closely inter-linked going forward.

We also need to promote the roll out of broadband networks and make more of the potential of local IXPs to enable more efficient traffic routing, reducing costs and encouraging the development of more local content. For instance the Internet Society report on the effects of IXPs on local economic growth is very relevant to this issue - <http://www.internetsociety.org/news/new-study-reveals-how-internet-exchange-points-ixps-spur-internet-growth-emerging-markets>

To achieve real and practical change we need, as mentioned above, to build more stable and predictable regulatory environments which promote competition and attract inward investment. Transparency of legal process, equitable civil processes for dispute resolution and accountability for government decisions are critical enablers. Proportionate license fees and avoidance of "luxury taxation" are also essential for the private sector to flourish and to deliver new infrastructure, new capacity and new services.

Finally, WSIS should provide a challenge to those instances where freedom of expression online is curtailed by censorship or blocking, denying citizens their fundamental rights and undermining transparency and accountability. The WSIS agenda should reinforce all human rights online and offline and promote an inclusive governance model that is transparent, and multi-stakeholder.

Q11: How are these challenges being addressed? What approaches have proved to be effective in your experience?

It is clear that there has been progress in overcoming some of the challenges that have been encountered. In many countries around the world, for example, we have seen how the liberalisation of telecommunications markets and the removal of barriers to foreign investment have led to benefits which were unimaginable in the days when telecommunications was effectively a state monopoly.

People-centred approaches have been effective in addressing challenges over the last ten years. "Bottom up" solutions have worked effectively, in which people collaborate to find their own solutions or in which competition and a free market allows people to make their own choices. These approaches have proved to be more effective than "top down" approaches imposed from above.

The approach that has been most beneficial is to increase co-operation and collaboration in a transparent manner by all relevant parties. Support for open policy-making and open forums for debate has allowed stakeholders to come together and develop new opportunities and new ways forward. The Internet Governance Forum and the many national and regional Forums, are excellent examples of how open, inclusive forums can effectively bring people together to understand and address issues through shared understanding. The IGFs mandate should be strengthened so that it is able to play this role more fully and deliver more tangible outcomes for all stakeholders.

Finally, it is important to mainstream issues and not duplicate work. The Information Society affects the work of many different national and international institutions and it covers a wide range of areas, such as technical cooperation, health care, human rights, trade policy and so forth. In order to address challenges most effectively, WSIS outcomes should be properly embedded within all the relevant institutions. This will ensure that those institutions take WSIS outcomes fully into account and ensure that those working on WSIS outcomes have the relevant knowledge and expertise to address challenges effectively.

Q12: What do you consider the most important emerging trends in technology and other aspects of ICTs which have affected implementation of WSIS outcomes since the Summit? What has been their impact?

From a technical perspective the major changes have been the development and increased deployment of broadband (mobile, fibre-optic and satellite), where consumers and individuals are always connected. The roll out of such technology and the ease of access it provides has led to an exponential increase in participation in the Information Society.

Increased affordability of devices and services has also promoted greater access to the Information Society. This has largely been driven by competition and open markets.

In particular for developing and less-developed countries the introduction of mobile technology has increased their respective citizens connectivity both in a social and economic context. For example farmers in a number of developing countries now have access to wider markets to sell their products and have mobile banking facility available to process those type of transactions, where traditional banking facilities are not available in their locality.

Q13: What should be the priorities for stakeholders seeking to achieve WSIS outcomes and progress towards the Information Society, taking into account emerging trends?

All stakeholders have a role in continuing to implement the WSIS outcomes over the next decade. The priorities should be:

- Greater focus on practical development issues and capacity building, fully aligned with the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals. It has become increasingly clear that the WSIS outcomes and the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals should increasingly have a symbiotic relationship going forward
- Promoting a stable legal and regulatory environment which promotes competition and investment
- Strengthening the multi-stakeholder model and supporting multi-stakeholder forums, including a renewed mandate for the Internet Governance Forum
- Promoting Human Rights online
- Mainstreaming the WSIS outcomes across the full range of stakeholders, including specialist organisations in non-ICT sectors

Q14: What role should information and communications play in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda?

The work since 2005 has demonstrated the benefit of the information society to sustainable development. ICTs are delivering great economic and social benefits to developing countries. The post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda should fully harness these benefits to deliver its goals. Given that one of the main aims of WSIS is to assist developing and less developed countries in the use of ICTs in providing both social and economic benefits, there is a case for WSIS and the post 2015 Sustainable Development goals being more closely aligned, if not merged to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness on delivering those benefits going forward. It is recognised that ICT's will continue to play an increasing important role over the next decade and beyond in delivering global sustainable development.

The Sustainable Development agenda should adopt a multi-stakeholder approach, particularly in order to draw on the skills and knowledge of the full stakeholder community and to leverage the power of the private sector to invest in the development of new infrastructure and services. As mentioned above, the WSIS outcomes should be closely aligned to the post-2015 goals in order to ensure that global efforts are effectively focused and fully coordinated and to avoid duplication, whether by Governments, inter-governmental organisations, International organisations, business or civil society stakeholders. In short, all stakeholders should be working together to achieve the post-2015 goals.

ICTs can also play an important role as a tool for transparency and openness, promoting greater accountability and good governance.

Lastly, more needs to be done to continue to empower the world's citizens, including holding governments and others to account. For instance, the 'Making All Voices Count' initiative – <http://www.makingallvoicescount.org> is a global initiative that supports and enables citizens from around the world to harness new technologies to engage with governments and other stakeholders to improve policies and services in their locality, and for governments to respond back to citizens feedback.

Q15: Please add any other comments that you wish to make on the subject of the review that you believe would be helpful.

The UK Government welcomes the CSTD review and the opportunity to contribute. We would urge CSTD to take full account of the previous reviews of WSIS facilitated by UNESCO (in 2013) and the ITU (in 2014). These reviews undertook a great deal of thorough work, in full consultation with stakeholders, and we hope that their outcomes will be fully reflected in the work of the CSTD.

The reviews established that great progress was made in implementing the WSIS outcomes. We hope that the CSTD review should identify and focus on those areas where more progress still needs to be made. There is a danger that a very broad WSIS agenda will spread efforts too thinly to make a meaningful difference. The UK believes that we need to focus on those areas where further work is required, in order to deliver real change and achieve a people centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society.

Q16: We would also welcome any documents, reports, etc. that you can forward which you think will provide useful evidence for the review. Please send these to cstd-wsis10@unctad.org. It would be helpful if you could list these in this box, together with any URL which enables access to them on the World Wide Web.

As a member of the Commonwealth, the UK Government has contributed to important Commonwealth multi-stakeholder projects and initiatives which have resulted from stakeholder consultations conducted by the Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum (CIGF) which was established as a Commonwealth response to WSIS (see <http://www.commonwealthigf.org/>). These include:

Online Child Protection Toolkit - a collaboration between the CIGF, the Children's Charities Coalition on Internet Safety, the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC), the International Telecommunication Union and the GSMA (Groupe Speciale Mobile Association). The toolkit is accessible at: <http://www.commonwealthigf.org/toolkits-collection/>

The Commonwealth Cybercrime Initiative (CCI) - a cooperative, multi-partner programme to assist Commonwealth Member States develop all elements of an effective response to cybercrime including prevention measures, and establishing the appropriate legal frameworks and attendant investigative, technical, enforcement and prosecutorial capabilities. The CCI partners include the ITU, UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Council of Europe, Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation, Organisation of American States, ICANN, Interpol and the Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG). Further information about the CCI is available at: <http://www.commonwealthigf.org/cigf/cybercrime/>

The UK also has sponsored the Global Cyber-Security Capacity Centre, who has conducted a number of research projects - <http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/research>

The UK Department for International Development (DfID) with its other international partners has conducted a number of projects in developing countries with regard to the provision of ICT -

[http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Search/SearchResults.aspx?](http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Search/SearchResults.aspx?search=themesearch&Projects=True&Documents=True&SearchType=3&Topic=6&Themes=27)

[search=themesearch&Projects=True&Documents=True&SearchType=3&Topic=6&Themes=27](http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/Search/SearchResults.aspx?search=themesearch&Projects=True&Documents=True&SearchType=3&Topic=6&Themes=27)

Finally, The Internet Society has a good programme with technical support in developing countries and information about capacity building - <http://www.internetsociety.org/development>