



Siemens Comments on post-WSIS tasks in ITU

“How the ITU might adapt itself in the post-WSIS environment”

Preamble

WSIS addressed a variety of issues pertaining to the development of the global information society: infrastructure and contents, access to knowledge, regulatory framework, Internet governance, bridging the digital divide etc.

It identified many fields where action is urgently required, potential measures for improvements and agencies which should take care of these issues.

Implementation of WSIS Outcomes

Effective and timely implementation of such measures is crucial; it can only be achieved by a coordinated approach with all stakeholders contributing their expertise in a most efficient way.

We therefore support a management framework for post-WSIS tasks as suggested by the Tunis Agenda, with ECOSOC overseeing the system-wide follow-up of the Geneva and Tunis outcomes of WSIS, and a *UN Group on the Information Society* within the UN system Chief Executives Board, for coordination of the relevant UN bodies and organisations with the mandate to facilitate the implementation of WSIS outcomes.

Role for ITU

ITU can play an important role with respect to achieving the WSIS goals. It is a worldwide acknowledged organization whose merits are in technical telecommunication standardization as well as in regulation and management of frequency spectrum and naming/numbering and addressing resources. Moreover, ITU helps especially developing countries to plan, finance and realise ICT infrastructure projects and operate and maintain communication networks and services.

ITU has the experience and procedures which would allow effective handling of those WSIS issues that it should take care of:

- Information and communication infrastructure
- ICT Applications such as e-government, e-health etc.
- Security of ICTs
- Capacity building and enabling environment for ICTs

When implementing WSIS outcomes, ITU should focus on its existing lines of competence and should not strive to take on tasks outside its core business. Rather, cooperation with existing bodies should be sought to avoid duplication of work.

Reform of ITU

a) Goals of the Reform

ITU should continuously strive to improve its structure and working procedures with the aim to perform in an optimal way, with the goal of providing excellent and quick results that are worldwide agreed, and achievable at reasonable cost.

b) Structural Reform

To this aim, the existing ITU structures should be scrutinized. Does it still make sense, especially in the light of the tasks stemming from WSIS, to maintain the existing ITU Sectors with their current (sometimes overlapping) tasks, or to keep the rigid Study Group structures within the Sectors? It might be better to allocate work, wherever possible, to task forces which would only work for a certain period of time ?

Not all sectors need to have the same components such as study groups. Work in the Development Sector, for example, should concentrate on consulting, provision of planning tools, capacity building, financing support; issues that can much better be performed by small ad-hoc expert groups than in large study groups with their formal and sometimes cumbersome procedures.

c) Multistakeholder Approach

As to the multi-stakeholder approach, ITU still has a lack of civil society/NGO participation, as only member states or sector members may attend meetings. Improvements to this situation should therefore be discussed and implemented.

d) Cooperation with other Bodies

ITU has started to cooperate with other standards-developing organizations such as ETSI or IETF, and these liaisons should be continued and even enhanced. The current work split should not be questioned unless there are strong arguments in favour of change requests.

The same holds for the present Internet name and address management system. There is no urgent need seen to transfer responsibilities from the institution(s) currently in charge to another body. Of course there is room for improvement, but this should be addressed within the body/ies so far concerned and should be implemented there.

e) Adaptation to New Technologies

However, when new technologies are evolving, such as IP-based, multi-purpose *Next Generation Networks* which are capable of combining telecommunication, Internet and broadcasting services, ITU should actively contribute its technical expertise, its

regulatory competency and its creditability all over the world to make such a technology a success.

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