



WSIS Forum 2009

"Measuring the impact of ICTs"

11:00-12:30, Room A, ITU Headquarters
19 May 2009, Geneva

Summary for final report

Measuring ICT was a key objective in the WSIS.¹ More recently, the UN Economic and Social Council (resolution E/2008/31) recommended that the *Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development* continue working on ICT measurement to track progress in the achievement of WSIS goals and targets.

The *Partnership* meeting at the WSIS Forum 2009, which counted approximately 60 participants, provided a progress report on its work and debated the need to measure the social and economic impacts of ICTs. The *Partnership* also welcomed the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) as a new member that will contribute its valuable expertise notably in the measurement of e-government.

The *Partnership* noted that while infrastructure and access indicators are widely available, indicators on ICT use (e.g. by households, individuals and businesses) are less frequent, especially in developing countries. Also, the measurement of ICT impact in developing countries is just beginning. The *Partnership* will continue to build capacities in developing countries to produce ICT statistics, including developing new indicators on e-government and providing guidance on measuring ICT impact.

Following presentations by the ITU, the OECD, ECLAC and Portugal's Knowledge Society Agency, the debate chaired by UNCTAD highlighted that measuring the impact of ICTs is important as it helps to assess and set priorities for ICT policies. ICTs are powerful tools to enhance productivity and growth when combined with complementary assets, such as ICT skills. In developing countries, more than in developed countries, the active participation of government is essential to ensure that society and the economy reap the benefits of ICTs.

Better statistics – micro-data and indicators of ICT use – are needed to analyze correctly the impact of ICTs, including the spillover effects into non-ICT economic sectors and how ICTs help accelerate the diffusion of knowledge. The harmonization of methodologies and standards for ICT measurement are necessary for international comparability, and requires close cooperation between international organizations, notably the *Partnership*², national statistical offices and other stakeholders.

¹ The WSIS Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda stressed the importance of ICT data and indicators that are comparable at the international level in order to monitor the digital divide.

² The Partnership is composed of 11 international organizations: the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNESCO Institute for Statistics, World Bank, UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat).