

WSIS Forum 2010

**"Measuring the WSIS Targets"
10 May 2010, 16:00-17:30 hours
Room K, ITU Headquarters, Geneva**

Summary for final report

Measuring the Information Society was one of the key outcomes of the WSIS¹. The year 2010 marks the midpoint between the Tunis phase of the WSIS and 2015, the deadline for achieving the WSIS targets, in line with the target date of the MDGs. It is therefore critical to review progress made on the ten WSIS targets, based on measurable indicators. So far, no international monitoring mechanism has been established that allows countries to track progress on the targets. The *Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development* has developed a core list of ICT indicators that are increasingly collected at the national and international level, but the WSIS targets are broad and go beyond these indicators.

The WSIS Forum session on "Measuring the WSIS targets", which was organized by the *Partnership*, presented the findings of the ITU's World Telecommunication/ICT Development Report 2010 and was attended by more than 80 participants from national, regional and international organizations and from civil society. The report represents the first effort to monitor the WSIS Targets and has been prepared as a collaborative effort with other UN agencies and WSIS stakeholders. The report identifies a set of measurable indicators for each WSIS target and reviews the status of the targets based on available data.

The available evidence points to considerable differences between developed and developing countries in each of the targets, with developing countries still lagging behind for most of the indicators identified. Good progress has been made since WSIS on improving connectivity via mobile technologies, TV and radio coverage, Internet access in central governments, research institutions; schools, hospitals, libraries, museums in major cities of developing countries. Substantial challenges remain, however. For example, 80% of people in developing countries are still not using the Internet, let alone via a broadband connection, and most households, schools, health centers and other public institutions outside urban areas are still not connected. Language diversity on the Internet is also still very limited and the report highlights not only the persisting broadband divide, but also a content divide, which policy makers need to address.

The presentations made by representatives of the organizations that collaborated on the report (namely, ITU, UNESCO/UIS, WHO, UNDESA, and FUNREDES) explained the rationale and background for each target, listed the proposed indicators that could be used to monitor countries' progress towards achieving the targets, and highlighted some conclusions and policy recommendations. ECLAC's work on monitoring Information Society goals in Latin America, closely related to the WSIS targets, was also presented.

To continue the monitoring process, the *Partnership* has created a new Task Group on Measuring the WSIS Targets and invited all stakeholders to contribute². The main objective of the task group will be to track progress towards the achievement of the WSIS targets until 2015. The task group is expected to discuss and refine the indicators proposed in the WTDR, to prepare a framework document for monitoring the WSIS targets and to prepare a final report in 2015.

¹ The WSIS Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda highlighted the importance of benchmarking and measuring progress towards the information society using indicators and statistics that are comparable at the international level.

² A discussion forum was set up for this purpose, see <http://groups.itu.int/wsis-targets>.