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WSIS+10

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Draft WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015

C3. Access to information and knowledge

Recognizing the importance of access to information and knowledge for the development of inclusive Information and Knowledge Societies as well as the efforts dedicated towards implementation of WSIS Outcomes, in particular related to Action Line C3, since 2003 significant progress has been achieved and several emerging trends and challenges have been identified.

Following provides guidance and priorities for implementation of WSIS Action Line C3 beyond 2015,

a) Access to information and knowledge is an enabler of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms that contribute to inclusion, empowerment and participation of citizens around the world

1. Access to information and knowledge in almost any subject becomes increasingly accessible online.
2. The Internet and ICTs should be seen as enablers of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, particular related to access to information and freedom of expression.
3. Rights and freedoms people have offline should be promoted, ensured and protected the same way as those which are related to online.
4. Undermining access to the Internet not only restricts benefits to economic and social development, but can also threaten the ability of users to enjoy their most fundamental rights.
5. Focus on market-based solutions instead of global regulation is needed as it helps in creating enabling environments of further liberalization and competition that encourages private sector investment.

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b) Accessibility, affordability and adaptability contribute to the creation of enabling environment where access to information and knowledge is guaranteed to all members of society

6. Improve accessibility to Internet services by reducing broadband subscription costs to levels affordable by a wider section of the community, with concessions for free and open access in public areas.
7. Mainstream accessible ICTs and Assistive Technologies for inclusive education and education for all, with particular emphasis on women and youth, including with disabilities.
8. Develop content respecting accessibility and open standards to all members of the community.
9. Promote Universal Design for all parties.
10. Facilitate access to information and knowledge for persons with disabilities and people in remote areas by providing accessible services and tools. The urgency of ICTs in education for persons with disabilities in order to provide new and innovative solutions for persons with disabilities to access information and knowledge.
11. Promote the integration of persons with disabilities to the ICT ecosystem.

c) Provide access to multilingual information and knowledge

12. Focus on content development on the web to serve various nations in using different languages, including those which are lesser-used.
13. Promote and share multilingual user-generated content in all local relevant languages.
14. Promote the use of the languages in Internet domain names to allow communities to access the Internet in the mother language, particularly in Arabic speaking countries.
15. Increase the availability of digital Arabic content in order to encourage usage by large segments of the population and provide free access to online content on the Internet in order to encourage knowledge creation and sharing.

d) Open standards ---for making access to information and knowledge

16. Raise awareness on importance of non-proprietary formats and their usefulness for making public data accessible to citizens both for high- and low-income countries.
17. Use of open-source software promotes openness, standardization. It also helps to reduce costs.
18. Exchange of practices and collaborate among national, regional and international organizations working in the field is required for raising awareness on usefulness of open solutions for development.
19. Develop multilingual and accessible Open Education Resources (OER).
20. Foster the use of Open Systems Solutions as effective long-term sustainability priorities to address key challenges.

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21. Foster professional training (“education of the educators”) as well as children’s elementary education, into and through Open Systems.
22. Secure and enhance the creation of accessible Open Knowledge Commons that enable access to the growing range of Open Systems Solutions, including FOSS, Open Data, Open Hardware and their related processes, methodologies and experiences.
23. Greater emphasis on open software systems to promote open access to information and education.
24. Consider the Free and Open Source Software for facilitating access, and develop the need procedures in this regard.
25. Encourage the use of Open Systems Solutions as effective long-term sustainability priorities.
26. Acknowledge, support and promote small-scale, independent or user-defined FOSS incubators, in addition to the allocation of public funds and procurement processes.
27. Encourage collection and distribution of open data which will create a demand for new data-enables services contributing to the achievement of broad range of development goals at national and international levels.

e) Exploitation of technological innovations for sustainable development

28. Access to information and knowledge could flourish in environments that enable investment and innovation, which in turn ensure that international telecommunications networks remain open to the global exchange of information and ideas. Governments, consumers, citizens, and society could benefit significantly when all market players have the flexibility to innovate and develop new services in competitive markets, in response to consumer demand.
29. Telecommunications markets should be structured in the way that attracts investment, fuel technological advancement, and become efficient in delivering services to consumers.
30. Create and support thematic information networks such as industry, trade, agriculture, health, education and others.
31. R&D should contribute to the promotion of green innovation, promotion of life innovation, promotion of technical innovation which will lead to a paradigm shift, recovery and restoration from the area after natural disasters or conflict, and measures for safety improvement in preparation for disasters are raised as R&D themes which should be addressed.
32. Develop innovation and entrepreneurship programs that provide funding, mentorship and knowledge, and moreover helps in promoting and supporting social entrepreneurship for the aim of creating solutions for social, economic and environmental challenges.
33. Ensure that all its citizens have access to the Internet, including making the Internet free to access at local libraries and other local authorities buildings, particularly in developing countries.

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34. Promotion of cloud computing.
35. Develop digital terrestrial television and mobile Internet.
36. Acquire new frequency bands to the civilian use.
37. Harmonize management of radio spectrum.

f) Access to public information and knowledge

38. Take appropriate measures that strengthen online library systems.
39. Libraries should be strengthened and the capacities of information and library professionals enhanced as libraries are the only place in many communities where people could access to information that will help improve their education, develop new skills, find jobs, build businesses, make informed agricultural and health decisions, or gain insights into environmental issues.
40. New public use access spaces such as libraries should be established that increase access to open information and knowledge. There are already over 330,000 public libraries worldwide, with 230,000 in developing countries which could play an important role on providing access to information and knowledge. Libraries contribute to distribution of existing resources that can be used to deliver information policy goals.
41. Support the creation of electronic networks of libraries, museums, etc.;
42. Needs attention to increasing importance of training education and information professionals to use ICTs to train people with (and without) disabilities.
43. Create so-called electronic services platforms in public administration offices to access public information;
44. Newest ICT technologies that enable facilitating access (open system, open data, open hardware etc.).
45. Encourage the expansion of broadband infrastructure and the construction of community computing centers.

g) Literacy

46. Media and information literacy training needs to be embedded in school curricula and library and information professionals can work alongside educators to build students' capacities.
47. Assessment should be carried out on country's readiness to uptake literacy initiatives and competencies of key social groups such as teachers in service and training should be done prior to policy formulation and implementation.
48. Measures on improvement of information literacy.
49. Take actions towards the development of digital skills (digital literacy), especially in rural and vulnerable areas, with the use of ICT technologies in order to obliterate the differences in access to education due to the gender or social status.
50. Social media literacy, information and Digital literacy should be promoted.

h) Open access to scientific information

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51. Focused efforts are required to improve access to information and knowledge in developing countries.
52. Encourage adoption of open access to scientific information strategies and e-education. New payment or merit schemes are needed to release scientific publications.
53. There is a need to develop and disseminate educational easy-to-use devices to enable better education process and enhance learning abilities.
54. Address questions of ownership of digital information (vs. licensing).

i) Promotion of gender equality

55. Assure and mainstream gender aspects by providing women the access to information, research, databases, legislation, and career and business opportunities.
56. Mainstream accessible ICTs and Assistive Technologies for inclusive education and education for all, with particular emphasis on women and youth, including with disabilities.

j) Access to information and knowledge in education and research

57. There is still a lot that needs to be done in ensuring that ICT products and services are made available in mainstream education, especially in developing countries – which will help both education professionals to deliver bespoke courses, as well as helping students to reference material which will enhance the education that they receive.
58. Promote efforts for research and development with social implementation and global deployment in mind.
59. Create the interactive educational programs and applications.
60. Facilitate the access for children and young people to modern ICT devices (including tablets), useful in the education process;
61. Access to information and knowledge, particular digital mean in education, should become accessible to all different groups in society including people with low income, people living in rural areas, people with disabilities and special needs, and indigenous people. It is therefore important to propose appropriate strategies, policies and innovative solutions which are support by open and transparent cooperation of all states.

k) Ethical application of Internet

62. Continue to insure the free flow of information. Blocking and filtering should be avoided.
63. Formulate laws to facilitate access to information while ensuring data and user privacy.
64. Promote literate use of Internet.
65. Introduce balanced copyright frameworks that respect the public interest and enable cultural institutions to preserve and make available cultural heritage in digital formats.

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l) Encourage multi-sector and multi-stakeholder partnerships

66. Need to pay attention to the issues of protecting the rights of consumers and end-users in the access to information – an important role to play here is for the regulators, who are supporting in their activities the guaranteeing of healthy relationships between all actors on the market;

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