WSIS stocktaking

WSIS Executive Secretariat issues preliminary report

Statistical summary

What progress has been made so far in implementing the decisions in the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action endorsed at the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in December 2003? According to a preliminary stocktaking report, a total of 1196 activities had been submitted to the WSIS Executive Secretariat by mid-January 2005, with half of them from governments and a third from international organizations. Civil society, business entities and other stakeholders make up the remaining percentage (see Figure 1). More than half of the activities submitted are either regional or international in scope; with Western Europe and North America accounting for nearly a third of all submissions (31.3 per cent), followed by Africa (8.9 per cent). The most popular activities relate to access to information (58.2 per cent) and capacity building (49.5 per cent). Over 70 per cent of all activities are relevant to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) — notably Goal 8 calling on countries to "develop a global partnership for development".

A dual purpose

The WSIS Stocktaking exercise serves the dual purpose of providing an inventory of activities being implemented by governments and other stakeholders in response to the Geneva decisions, and tracking the progress made in building the information society. The WSIS Executive Secretariat launched the WSIS stocktaking project in October 2004. Following a brainstorming meeting of stakeholders, an online consultation and discussions within the WSIS Bureau on the form WSIS stocktaking should take, a questionnaire was developed and sent to all stakeholders.

The database

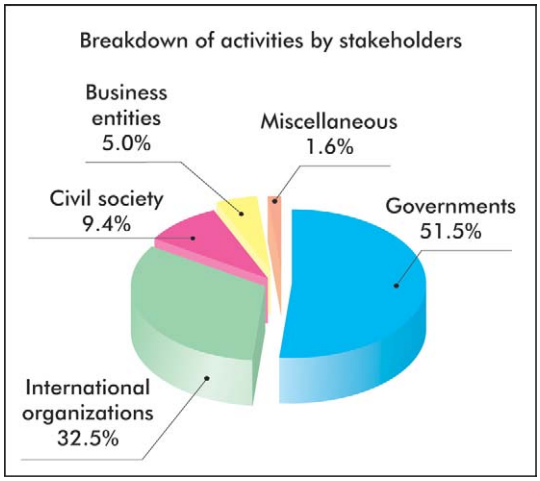
WSIS stocktaking is a continuous process. A searchable database of WSIS-related activities has been created and remains open for new submissions. The preliminary report, presented in February 2005 to the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom-2) of the Tunis phase of the Summit, was prepared on the basis of the first round of submissions. Table 1 provides a representative summary of activities broken down by WSIS action lines, and is intended only to point to the much richer information that is updated continually in this new database (see www.itu.int/wsis/stocktaking). An online data entry tool is available on this website for stakeholders to submit new activities or to update their earlier entries. Activities submitted by 30 June 2005 will be reflected in another stocktaking report to be presented at PrepCom-3, scheduled to take place in Geneva from 19 to 30 September 2005.

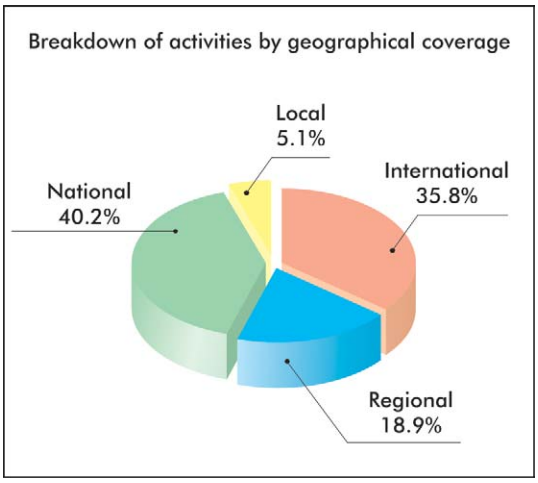
The WSIS stocktaking database is intended to be a dynamic, on-going resource that is available to all WSIS stakeholders and is open to the public. Over time, the usefulness of the database will increase as it becomes more comprehensive in its coverage of WSIS-related activities and as interactivity is enhanced. The database is intended to be a portal providing access to a much richer range of Web-based information.

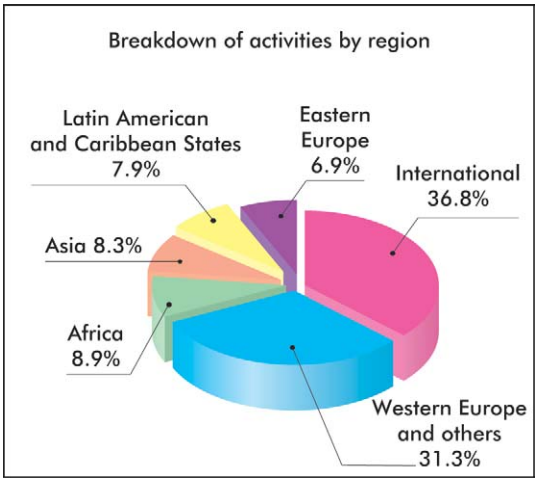
Depending on the decisions to be taken in Tunis in November 2005, the stocktaking database will continue to be updated and enhanced to provide a permanent record of the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action.

Figure 1— Breakdown of WSIS-related activities in the stocktaking database

by source, by geographical coverage by region and by action line

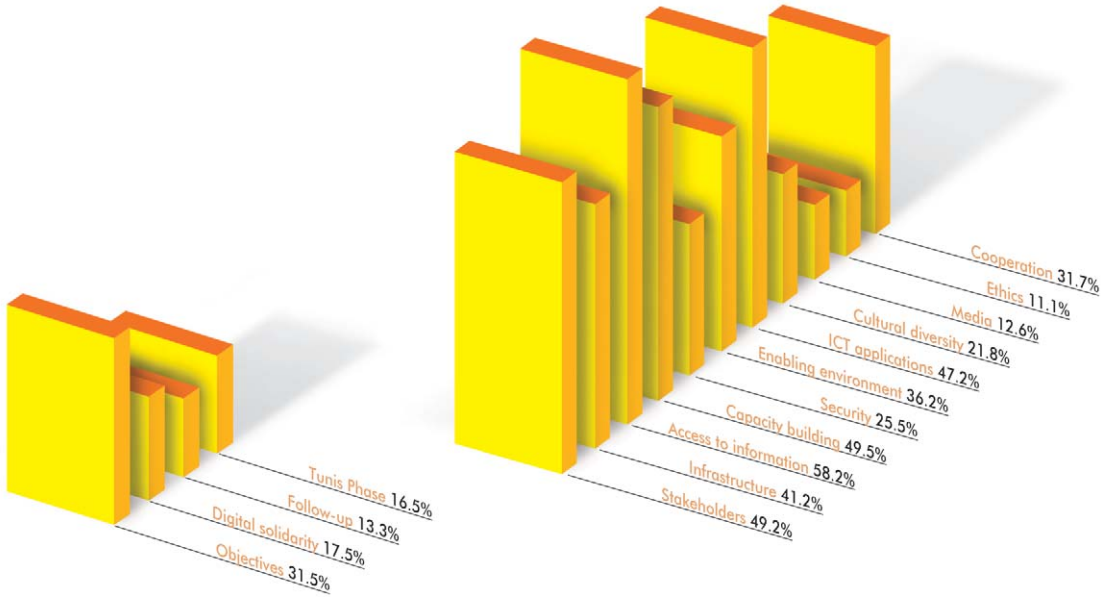






Note — The percentages in these charts sum to more than 100 per cent as many projects are relevant to more than one action line. United Nations regional groupings have been used in the analysis.

Percentages by WSIS action line



Source: *WSIS Stocktaking Database, based on 1196 activities submitted as at 15 January 2005.*

Table 1— WSIS-related activities by action line

Submissions by action lines in the WSIS Plan of Action

Action lines	Total	Governments	Inter-national organiza-tions	Civil society	Business entities	miscella-neous
Stakeholders	576	63.4 %	18.9 %	8.9 %	6.9 %	1.9 %
Infrastructure	480	61.5 %	18.5 %	10.0 %	8.3 %	1.7 %
Access to information	683	55.6 %	20.6 %	13.5 %	7.9 %	2.3 %
Capacity building	582	56.4 %	21.0 %	13.6 %	6.7 %	2.4 %
Security	294	60.2 %	22.1 %	7.5 %	7.1 %	3.1 %
Enabling environment	424	55.2 %	27.6 %	10.8 %	4.0 %	2.4 %
ICT applications	552	62.9 %	19.6 %	10.1 %	6.0 %	1.4 %
Cultural diversity	253	46.6 %	20.2 %	20.9 %	9.1 %	3.2 %
Media	145	55.2 %	19.3 %	16.6 %	5.5 %	3.4 %
Ethical dimensions	127	50.4 %	18.1 %	23.6 %	3.1 %	4.7 %
Cooperation	375	47.5 %	28.0 %	13.1 %	9.1 %	2.4 %
Objectives	365	63.6 %	14.5 %	11.8 %	9.3 %	0.8 %
Digital solidarity	205	54.1 %	17.6 %	10.7 %	16.1 %	1.5 %
Follow-up	155	45.2 %	31.0 %	13.5 %	8.4 %	1.9 %
Tunis phase	190	55.8 %	23.7 %	13.2 %	3.2 %	4.2 %

Note —"The Total" column reflects the number of submissions in the database that were considered relevant to each action line. The other columns show the percentage of activities per WSIS action line from different stakeholder groups.

Source: WSIS Stocktaking Database, based on 1196 activities submitted as at 15 January 2005.

Information society initiatives

The preliminary stocktaking report gives a brief summary of the many nation-wide projects and initiatives being implemented around the world. International cooperation among stakeholders is vital to promoting universal access and bridging the digital divide, both within and between countries. So the preliminary report also highlights the activities that promote wider partnership amongst international and regional organizations that are concerned with mainstreaming ICTs in their work programmes and assisting developing countries at all levels. This article illustrates a few examples of nation-wide projects and national multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Serbia and Montenegro has set up a National Strategy for the Information Society in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to lay the foundation for all future activities in the promotion of an information society. The strategy represents the Government's commitment to integrating ICTs into Serbian society.

Bangladesh has launched the "Hub for ICT" policy under the leadership of the Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology. The ministry has been involved in providing physical and ICT infrastructure facilities for the software industry, drafting an ICT Act, and assisting in the disbursement of equity funds to the ICT sector.

Japan has developed a Policy Package for the realization of a ubiquitous network society. This package aims to enable anyone to access the network easily "anytime, anywhere and with

anything", making communications convenient.

Brazil has launched a Telecentre Network project installing one unit in each municipality of 6000 people or more. The aim is to improve the competitiveness of enterprises, as well as employment and income conditions of its population. The project focuses on consolidating infrastructure, developing products and services and monitoring development initiatives.

Examples of national multi-stakeholder partnerships

Canada's District Capacity Building Project (DISCAP) aims to strengthen the capacities of local government bodies. The Government is implementing DISCAP in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. The IT aspects of the project include increasing connectivity within and across three regions and providing ICT support to their 24 districts.

Chile has encouraged public-private partnerships in order to set up a Digital Action Group to coordinate and oversee projects on the information society. The group consists of 22 institutions, including the Ministry of Telecommunication and other related ministries, associations of industry and academic sectors. The work of the group resulted in "Digital Agenda 2004–2006".

Egypt is implementing the Free Internet Initiative through public-private partnerships to achieve the goal of encouraging private investment in the deployment of infrastructure and provision of services. The "Free Internet" is essentially a pay-as-you-go connectivity scheme, with the cost of Internet dial-up being included in the local telephone call. The initiative provides users with complete flexibility and choice.

Lebanon has launched the "SmartBus" as one of its national capacity building projects, deploying a mobile Internet unit equipped with a literacy training module, a local area network server, audiovisual teaching aids, a laser printer and a fax machine. SmartBus is a public-private partnership designed to reach rural communities and provide them ICT training. It is also a certified training centre expected to train up to 4800 people per year.

The United States is undertaking a Joint Federal Rural Wireless Outreach Initiative — a partnership between federal governments and private industry to coordinate activities and information, financial and other assistance. The main objective of the initiative is to encourage greater access and deployment of wireless services to enhance economic development throughout rural America. ■

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso has developed an operational strategy for the development of a national plan on ICT infrastructure. This document is the outcome of a long process of deliberation, consultation and negotiation, intended to define a framework for the construction of the new society, where the opportunities for communication, social interaction, access to information and knowledge, and improvements in governance will better the lot of the citizen and give him or her the wherewithal more quickly to confront the challenges that condition sustainable human development in this country.

The adoption, in October 2004, of this strategy document, designed to accelerate progress towards the objectives of the strategic framework in the battle against poverty, signals the intentions of the government of Burkina Faso to ensure that the coming information/knowledge age does not become an additional source of difficulties hampering the country's efforts to make up lost time in a number of areas of development, but rather a means of strengthening people's capacities, and developing leverage for economic and social development. To this end, the government has committed itself to achieving nation-wide broad dissemination of ICT technologies, making them accessible and available to citizens in all walks of life and mobilizing their potential, in line with the national development strategies.

This strategy was elaborated with the support of the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The total cost of implementing the programme from 2004 to 2006 (not including expected investment by telecommunication operators) is estimated at some USD 74.24 million, of which 51.63 million has yet to be raised. The funds already enlisted come from the World Bank (USD 10.680 million); Taiwan, China (USD 5 million); UNDP (USD 2.5 million); the African Development Bank (USD 1.9 million); the European Union (USD 450 000); with Burkina Faso itself raising USD 2 million. ■

Bulgaria

iBulgaria: "Access and skills for all"

Implementation of the "iBulgaria Programme" started in May 2004 under the auspices of the Minister of Transport and Communications. The programme's objectives are twofold: to stimulate e-services, e-applications and e-content and to develop the underlying broadband infrastructure and address security matters. Bulgaria's primary goal is to achieve, by the end of 2006, the average levels for information society development indicators of the Member States of the European Union. Businesses are expected to act as the driving force and role model for developing the information society. And public authorities are to facilitate and promote change, acting both as a reference and a guarantor, keeping the right balance among the various interests.

The iBulgaria Programme consists of a portfolio of five large-scale projects to be implemented by the ICT Development Agency within the Ministry of Transport and Communications in cooperation with public and private partners, including the United Nations Development Programme (for three of the projects).

■ i-Center: Access to computers and Internet for all

The project seeks to establish a nation-wide network of public telecentres to provide access to the Internet and e-government services to the widest possible range of users (including in small and under-served communities). As well, the telecentres will help raise people's qualifications and education through distance learning and online courses and create new jobs and business opportunities.

■ i-Class: PCs at school

The i-Class project sets the basis for modernizing the country in its transition towards a knowledge-based economy. It aims to computerize and offer high-speed Internet connectivity to all schools — 1200 schools will be connected during 2005. Apart from creating a new learning environment for all students, the project aims to improve the skills and qualifications of teachers (see table).

Activities	2005	2006	2007	Anticipated results
Established PC classes	2 480	3 230	3230	11 computers per 100 students
Schools with Internet connectivity	1 200	2 000	2500	45 000 computers connected to the Internet
Number of trained teachers	45 390	89 490	47 350	All schools provided with qualified staff
Educational portal, software and content	Portal established	Distance learning and content for five subjects ensured	Content for all subjects ensured	Distance learning and content for all students ensured

Ministry of Transport and Communications/bis.bg/bulgaria

■ ESI Center Bulgaria

European Software Institute (ESI) Center Bulgaria is the "Regional Software Engineering Excellence Center" of the European Software Institute. An important aspect of its activities is to help local and regional software companies create competitive business models and increase their readiness to achieve world-class certifications on internationally accepted industry standards.

■ i-Net

This project focuses on creating high-speed national and international Internet connectivity between universities, research institutes and high schools in Bulgaria.

■ i-University: Distance learning for all students

The project includes the creation of computer laboratories in all State-owned universities and special schools that will be connected by a common network. ■