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| **Council Working Group on the World Summit on the Information Society**  **32nd meeting – Geneva, 24-25 January 2018** |  |
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|  | **Document CWG-WSIS-32/02-E** |
| **11 December 2017** |
| **English only** |

**WSIS Forum 2018**

The World Summit on the Information Society Forum (WSIS) 2018 is scheduled to be held from the 19-23 March at the ITU Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The overall theme for WSIS Forum 2017 is Leveraging ICTs to Build Information and Knowledge Societies for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The annual WSIS Forum is a global multi-stakeholder platform facilitating the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines for advancing sustainable development. The Forum is co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD, in close collaboration with all WSIS Action Line co-/facilitators and other UN organizations (UNDESA, FAO, UNEP, WHO, UN Women, WIPO, WFP, ILO, WMO, ITC, UPU, UNODC, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNHCR and UN Regional Commissions). It provides an opportunity for information exchange, knowledge creation and sharing of best practices, while identifying emerging trends and fostering partnerships, taking into account the evolving Information and Knowledge Societies.

In follow up to the outcomes of the UN General Assembly Overall Review of the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes (Res. A/70/125) and with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Res. A/70/1), the WSIS Forum is constantly evolving and strengthening the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**WSIS Forum 2018 Open Consultation Process:**

The WSIS Forum is the only event of its kind where the programme and agenda are completely crowdsourced during the Open Consultation Process. The process aims at ensuring a participatory and inclusive spirit of the Forum and actively engages governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, the technical community and intergovernmental organizations in the preparatory process to ensure broad ownership and further improvements of the Forum.

The Open Consultation Process will include a collection of inputs from regional and national WSIS related events and the physical meetings of the Open Consultation Process will benefit from remote participation.

The Open Consultation Process for the WSIS Forum 2018 is structured in five phases as follows:

* **Phase I: 19 September 2017**: 17:00 – 18:00: Launch of the Open Consultations (Face-to-face meeting during the WG-WSIS)
  + Launch of the  WSIS Forum 2018 Website for the Official Submissions
  + Online discussions at Online Knowledge Societies Platform
  + Official submissions to the WSIS Secretariat on the Thematic Aspects and Innovations on the Format to be made via [www.wsis.org/forum](http://www.wsis.org/forum)
  + Open call for nominations for WSIS Forum 2018 Multi‐stakeholder High‐Level Track Facilitators
  + Launch of the WSIS Photo Contest 2018
* **Phase II: 20 December  2017**: 1st Physical Meeting: Open Forum on Implementation of WSIS Action Lines and WSIS Forum (during IGF)
* **Phase III: 24 January 2018**: 16:30 – 18:00: 2nd Physical Meeting (ITU Headquarters, Geneva)
* **Phase IV: 30 January 2018 -** Deadline for Submissions of Official Contributions and   Binding Requests for Workshops
* **Phase V**: **19 February 2018:** Final Brief on the WSIS Forum 2018 (ITU Headquarters, Geneva)

**Increased participation of the Youth**

At the request of WSIS Stakeholders, the WSIS Secretariat is working closely with partner UN Agencies and Universities to strengthen the engagement and participation of the Youth at the WSIS Forum. Besides the Hackathon, several participatory workshops on integrating the voice of the Youth, learning from young innovators and hands on training and mentorship sessions are being explored.

**Innovations at the WSIS Forum 2018:**

Till date four streams of innovation have already been identified and announced, while others are still being identified though the open consultation process:

1) **Hackathon:** The ITU and FAO will organize a Hackathon on the 18 and 19 of March entitled “Hack for food security and ending hunger”.

2) **Virtual Reality for SDGs**: Pursuing a first partnership in 2016, WSIS and World VR Forum join forces to be at the forefront of Virtual Reality for advancing development. A shiny new Virtual Reality Track will be held at the WSIS Forum 2018 bringing together high-level personalities, world class VR experience and a very special focus on education.

3) **TEDx Geneva at WSIS Forum 2018:**

After a successful debut at WSIS Forum 2016 AND 2017 TEDx Geneva and the WSIS Forum bring you to the crossroads of our fast-changing society--the crossroads of technology acceleration, human tradition, artificial intelligence, and an interconnected world.

4) **From Regional to Global Engagement and Outreach**

Each year, the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions report on their actions and WSIS work plans at the *WSIS Forum Regional Commissions Meetings* held every year at the WSIS Forum. In follow up to the UNGA overall review and discussions held at the last WSIS Forum 2016, efforts are dedicated towards strengthening engagement of stakeholders at the regional level in the alignment of the WSIS and SDG processes and through it effective implementation of the WSIS Action Lines.

**Call for Nomination of the High-Level Track Facilitators (HLTF)**

Following good practice of the last two years and the guidance of the WSIS Stakeholders, the Policy Sessions will be moderated by High-Level Track Facilitators (HLTF) nominated and identified by the following stakeholder types, Private Sector, Civil Society, Technical/ Academic community and International Organization.

Each stakeholder type is invited to launch an Open Call to identify HLTF to represent their respective communities. The names of the nominated representatives should be submitted to the WSIS Secretariat at [wsis-info@itu.int](mailto:wsis-info@itu.int) by **30 January 2018**. Please note that all HLTFs are to cover their own expenses for travel, accommodation and insurance. The main task of the HLTF is to capture the vision, Identify emerging trends, opportunities and challenges shared by the leaders of their session.

**Call for Financial Support for the WSIS Forum 2017**

WSIS Forum is a joint effort of the whole UN system and is organized on an extra budgetary basis. ITU membership and other WSIS Stakeholders are encouraged to partner with the WSIS Forum 2018. WSIS Forum 2018 Partnership Packages may be found in all the six UN Languages here: [www.wsis.org/forum](http://www.wsis.org/forum)