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| **Council Working Group on WSIS&SDG 34th meeting – Geneva, 25 September 2019** |  |
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| **WSIS Forum 2019: Outcomes** | |

**Highlights of the WSIS Forum 2019**

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2019 was held on 8-12 April 2019 under the theme “Information and Communication Technologies for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals” at ITU Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The Forum was co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD and UNDP, in close collaboration with all UN agencies. More than 3,000 information and communication technology (ICT) experts and implementation actors contributed to and participated in the recent WSIS Forum to foster partnerships, showcase innovation, exchange best practices and announce new tools and initiatives to use ICTs to advance the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This year marked the 10-year anniversary of the establishment of the WSIS Forum. For the last 10 years, the WSIS Forum has has proven to be an efficient global multistakeholder platform that is open and inclusive for all to exchange knowledge and information, enhance collaborative networks, and to share best practices in the ICTs sector.

From 8-12 April, over 300 content-rich workshops, knowledge cafes and open-space talks enabled on-site as well as virtual participants from over 150 countries to engage with more than 500 high-level representatives of the wider WSIS Stakeholder community, including ministers and deputies, ambassadors; and leaders from the private sector, academia and civil society.

The WSIS Forum provided a platform to celebrate the power of innovation as the emergence of the fourth industrial revolution ushered in by emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain, 5G and many others. While this offers many opportunities, there are also many development challenges including the risk of a new digital divide.

WSIS Forum 2019 was chaired by H.E. Mr. Mustafa Jabbar, Minister, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, Bangladesh.

The concrete outcomes of WSIS Forum 2019 will enable stakeholders to strengthen implementation of WSIS Action Lines and the alignment of the WSIS and SDG processes, and include among others:

* UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) reiterated commitment to the WSIS Action Lines implementation and alignment of the WSIS and SDG processes, with an UNGIS Joint Statement to be released during the high-level political forum 2019, UNDP and ITU were appointed as the UNGIS co-chairs for the year 2019-2020.
* UN Regional Commissions committed to strengthen regional-level WSIS action through multistakeholder platforms and a series of regional face-to-face meetings. WSIS will continue to be included in the UN Regional Coordination Mechanisms and WSIS4SDG will become one of the pillars of the regional SDG Forums.
* Launch of the WSIS Forum 2019 Agenda mobile application developed by the University of West Indies and ITU.
* Ministerial Round Table participants emphasized the importance of the WSIS Action Lines framework as a key UN framework for work on the information and knowledge societies, and reiterated that many national digital agendas were built upon it. They applauded the WSIS Forum for creating global partnerships and collaborations. WSIS Prizes were cited as an important global recognition of impactful ICT projects. The need for sharing existing resources and for strengthened collaboration for building digital skills and ICT incubation programmes and fighting cyber threats was highlighted.
* ITU, UNESCO and University of Geneva organized the Hackathon, Hacking Solutions for Lifelong Learning and Livelihoods.

The WSIS Forum also included the announcement of the WSIS Prizes 2019 winners and champions, which represented all seven continents and all WSIS stakeholder groups. In addition, the winning entries of the WSIS Forum Photo Contest 2019 were unveiled, highlighting how ICTs are playing a vital enabling role on the road to achieving the SDGs.

**Outcome Documents of the WSIS Forum 2019**

WSIS Forum 2019 was also an opportunity for partnerships to be forged and valuable tools and initiatives to be launched. The full list of Official WSIS Forum 2019 Outcomes, and the below information materials are available on the WSIS Forum 2019 website (<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2019/>):

* **WSIS Forum 2019: Outcome Document**

*This document is a compilation of the outcomes of the sessions (Thematic Workshops, Country Workshops, Action Line Facilitation Meetings, Interactive Sessions, Information Sessions and Policy Sessions) organised by the WSIS Stakeholders responsible for their respective sessions.*

* **WSIS Forum 2019 High Level Track Outcomes and Executive Brief**

*This document is a compilation of the statements/speeches/briefings delivered at the High-Level Policy sessions of the High-Level Track by high-ranking officials of the WSIS Stakeholders community, representing the Government, Private Sector, Civil Society, Academia and International Organizations.*

* **WSIS Stocktaking Report 2019**

*This document reflects around 1,062 activities relating to ICTs for development, submitted to the WSIS Stocktaking Platform from the 2nd July to 12th December, each one highlighting the efforts deployed by stakeholders involved in the implementation of the SDGs. The Report is based on the multistakeholder approach, including input from stakeholders from all over the world responding to ITU’s official call in 2019 for Stocktaking updates and new entries. The inputs from WSIS action line facilitators and co-facilitators also contributed to the present Report.*

* **WSIS Forum 2019 and SDG Matrix**

*This Matrix document emphasises linkages between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs as well as highlighting rational for each linkage that has been established. WSIS Stakeholders identified a clear relation and connection between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs in their respective workshops.*

* **WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2019**

*This document contains ICT success stories that best showcase the possible achievement of SDGs, through the implementation of projects related to the WSIS Action Lines.*

* **WSIS Forum 2019: Report - WSIS Action Lines Contributing towards Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality**

*This document outlines the key priorities, opportunities and challenges for the respective WSIS Action Lines towards the achievement of the SDGs, in particular in line with the theme of the High level Political Forum 2019, empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.*

**Innovations at the WSIS Forum 2019**

* Website of the WSIS Forum 2019

WSIS Forum 2019 website was made available in all six UN official languages to make the content and information accessible for wider stakeholders. The WSIS stakeholders appreciated this effort and supported the improvement of the WSIS Forum website.

* Sign language interpretation

WSIS Forum 2019 had the WSIS Accessibility Day, in which the sign language interpretation was provided at the sessions. The sign language interpreters help to facilitate communication ensuring equal access to information and participation.

* Machine Captioning

WSIS Forum 2019 pioneering the automatic captioning through a machine on-site at some of the thematic workshop sessions.

**WSIS Forum 2019 partners**

WSIS Forum 2019 was made possible through the generous support of its strategic partners:

* Gold plus partner: United Arab Emirates;
* Gold Partner: Saudi Arabia;
* Partners for Specific Activities: Japan, IEEE, Oman, Switzerland;
* Contributing Partners: Poland, Rwanda, ICANN, ISOC, ELM;
* Supporting Partner: IFIP and University of Geneva.