



**SAMOA NATIONAL ICT STEERING COMMITTEE
LEVEL 2 CENTRAL BANK HOUSE
APIA
SAMOA**

Independent State of Samoa – Contribution to the Second Phase of WSIS

Summary

Samoa participated in the first phase of WSIS. Samoa's participation at the Summit was that of a multi-sector partnership between Government, NGOs and Civil Society, and Private Sector. The Honourable Minister of Communication and Information Technology is the sponsor of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Samoa with his highest commitment to build an equal information society. This commitment was evident in the multi stakeholder delegation to the Summit in December 2003. The Honourable Prime Minister is the champion for ICT development in Samoa and it was the Prime Minister himself who suggested that the Culture Group participate in the first phase of the WSIS. The group performed at various WSIS events including the GKP ICT Awards. What an impact this decision had on Samoa's efforts in building the information society!

Background

The Government of Samoa has recognised ICT an important tool for social development, economic growth, and political progress of Samoa and made every effort to develop ICT at the national level. Realising the importance of ICT, the Ministry of Postal and Telecommunication has been renamed the "Ministry of Communication and Information Technology." In 2001, Government established a National ICT Steering Committee that is playing an important role in coordinating the development of its national ICT strategic plan and participation at the WSIS. This Committee comprises of relevant Ministries, private sector, NGOs and Civil society who will be the partners who will work together in implementing the national ICT strategies.

Samoa is committed to continue the WSIS process at national, regional and international levels and now in the consultative phase of its national ICT strategic plan which incorporates the WSIS Declaration and Plan of Action, signed by Heads of Government in December 2003. In this context, Samoa contributes to the second phase of the WSIS as follows:

Recommendations for the Second Phase

- Samoa supports the views of other countries that the second phase should build on the success of the first phase of WSIS.
- The important role of the second phase should be to coordinate a practical framework on how to implement the Declaration and Plan of Action nationally, regionally and internationally.
- Samoa supports the recommendation by Canada of an overall structure of the second phase especially number iv that the **WSIS Secretariat create 3 or 4 small Advisory Groups with each one responsible for a cluster of 3 or 4 of the themes in the Geneva Plan of Action.** In this context, Samoa strongly recommends that SIDs and LDCs are represented in these small Advisory Groups – participation is the best way to learn.
- Continue the participation by NGOs and Civil Society in the second phase
- Samoa strongly recommend that the WSIS should include the least developing countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDs) in its various committees to ensure that special attention as mentioned in paragraph 16 of the Declaration is not just “word on paper”. LDCs and SIDs must be included in the decision making of WSIS so they may feel empowered by providing input into organising the second phase.
- The second phase should not spent any more time in re-negotiating what has been agreed upon in the first phase. Instead, the second phase should focus more on action and implementation strategies. More importantly, there is a need to discuss the implementation issues and solutions and what barriers are experienced by all.
- A special session is recommended to discuss implementation issues faced by LDCs and SIDs – remember the vision of the WSIS is “ICT for all.” This means the second phase of the WSIS should inclusive and should not be dominated by developed countries and highly populated developing countries.
- WSIS Tunisia should also focus on how LDCs and SIDs can implement the WSIS Pan of Action using ICT the tool to help achieve some of the internationally agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration.
- Samoa reminds the WSIS Secretariat that there is no such UN region called Asia but there is a region called “Asia Pacific”

Expected Outcomes:

- Samoa recommends that the expected outcomes should include a “framework for increasing the awareness” of all, about the Geneva Declaration and a framework for implementing the Plan of Action in LDCs and SIDs.
- The spirit of partnership and collaboration between the different stakeholders established during the first phase was immense and should be a focus of the second phase.
- The second phase should have an outcome called “What is happening Where?” with a focus on the collection of data from participants on what has been done in their countries in terms of implementing the WSIS Plan of Action. Knowing the current situation in each country and region should help in determining a framework of distributing the solidarity fund for developing countries approved during the first phase.

- Another outcome could be progress report at the National, Regional and international level on the contribution of ICT to achieving and advancing the Millennium Development Goals, identify existing projects to reflect this contribution.
- The second phase must have an outcome of “challenges and opportunities of ICT” for LDCs and SIDs to ensure that these two categories are not hidden behind the collective term “developing countries.”
- The Summit Events, especially the ICT4D Expo in the first phase was a great success and should be considered for the second phase.

Samoa looks forward to providing input and assistance for a successful Second Phase of the WSIS.

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