WSIS+10 High-Level Event 2014

Opening Policy Statements

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Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As President of IFIP, it is my honour and privilege to address you at this event and to have the opportunity to discuss with you issues that are close to the heart of IFIP.

The International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) is the global federation of national and international scientific, technical and professional ICT societies. IFIP aims at achieving a worldwide professional and socially responsible development and application of information and communication technologies. This goal is accomplished:

* by enhancing international cooperation amongst individuals and between national and international organizations in all aspects of research, development and application of ICT,
* by disseminating and exchanging information,
* by educating and enhancing public understanding,
* by increasing professionalism in the ICT workforce and
* by promoting global digital equity.

IFIP is in a unique position to do so through its membership structure and its lines of activities. In each line of activities work is done that relates to one or more of the WSIS action lines. I refer to the additional background in the annex to this statement.

Here I would like to make two comments. IFIP has been involved in WSIS since the Tunis event in 2005. We are very pleased to note that reaching the Millennium Development Goals has become a truly multi-stakeholder effort. Cooperation with various partners is a concept that IFIP itself constantly strives for. Sharing knowledge and experiences is essential in order to make efficient use of scarce resources. We look forward to a continuation and expansion of this cooperation in the ongoing work in the scope of the WSIS action lines.

A second comment concerns the role of the individual ICT professional and the contributions they can make to the MDG’s. I want to emphasize that these professionals, united in ICT societies, can play a very important role in capacity building and strengthening ICT development in a country. Governments and other stakeholders should utilize this knowledge and potential and get these professional societies involved in policy making and in projects. Unfortunately due to economic and sometimes other circumstances it can be very difficult to establish and maintain active ICT societies. And if they are established, it is often very difficult to join their international colleagues to share knowledge and experiences and to discuss possible ways forward. IFIP would like to make a strong appeal to governments and industry in emerging and developing countries to encourage and stimulate the establishment of ICT societies in those countries where no such society exists and to support and strengthen the societies where they do exist but where they lack the means to be as effective as they could be. Make use of these mechanisms to share information and use the resources of volunteers. And facilitate participation in international activities. It goes without saying that IFIP is more than willing to cooperate in this effort.

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to raise some issues and I look forward to discussing these issues further with you in the next few days.

Leon Strous

IFIP President

Annex

Additional background

The International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) is a global federation of national and international scientific, technical and professional ICT societies from more than 55 countries or regions, covering all 5 continents with a total membership of nearly a million individuals.

More than 3.000 volunteers from academia and industry, organised in 13 Technical Committees and about 120 Working Groups, engage in IFIP activities such as 80-90 conferences annually.

A specific activity is the World IT Forum (WITFOR) that has been organized five times so far since 2003. This event is organized by IFIP in cooperation with the government of the host country. The overall goal of WITFOR is to assist developing countries in developing and implementing sustainable strategies for the application of ICT and to share experiences that will help to bridge the digital divide and improve the quality of life. The specific goals are:

* To share and discuss experiences in drafting and implementing ICT policies;
* To share and discuss experiences in initiating and implementing ICT projects;
* To present and discuss research concerning the overall goal.

IFIP realizes that there are many conferences and events that address the same issues and try to achieve the same. Fortunately, because a lot of those are needed. IFIP does not claim that WITFOR is unique but we do claim that WITFOR has a successful concept by bringing together high level politicians on ministerial level, policymakers, researchers and practitioners from developed, emerging and developing countries together in one event with the aim of discussing together ICT policies and practical experiences. We have succeeded in this in the past five editions in Europe, Africa and Asia, growing from 700 to 1500 participants from around 70 countries and with the intended mixture as mentioned. Numbers are not a measure of success in itself, the reactions of the participants and the level of interaction are more important. IFIP seeks more cooperation with other events and organizations in order to make an effective and efficient use of the scarce resources in the form of our many volunteers that are willing to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Finally it should be mentioned that IFIP is working hard to increase and promote the professionalism of ICT professionals, something definitely linked to capacity building. But also helping in other WSIS action lines such as security. With this line of activities we have and will continue to contribute to WSIS events and for us cooperation with different stakeholders is key to success.