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| **Memorandum**  |  |
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| 10 June 2014 |
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| **Ministry for Foreign Affairs** **Sweden** |
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Ambassador Olof Ehrenkronas intervention at the WSIS+10 High Level Event, 10 June 2014

Chairman, Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sweden started to contribute to developing the global information society well before the Tunis agenda was adopted.

As one of the world’s largest donors, we have funded IXPs and fibre networks. We have built data centres and supported e-government solutions. And we are supporting innovation hubs and human capacity building throughout the developing world.

We do this because the Internet is a transformative technology. It generates growth, lifts people out of poverty and improves whole societies.

In short, it promotes development through freedom. Freedom of expression and freedom of information means equal access to knowledge and knowledge in itself is the basic development tool in our days as well as in the future.

I am therefore pleased to announce, for the first time in an international setting, that the Swedish government has decided to make ICT one of the main pillars in our development strategy for global, sustainable economic growth.

Sweden will focus even more of its resources on ensuring better access to and use of ICTs. We will put a special emphasis on closing the gender gap. We will work to build human capacity for innovation. We will make sure ICTs help people to exercise their human rights, such as freedom of expression.

And, importantly, we will support stakeholders from developing countries to take part in the global discussion on the future of the Internet.

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Chairman,

Sweden believes that the United Nations has a role ensuring that ICTs, as well as the Internet, contribute to achieving development goals and that ITU-D, together with the United Nations development bodies should work to ensure better access to ICTs worldwide.

The WSIS process has, and can continue, to contribute positively to the international agenda on these issues. It plays an important role in focusing the UNs work in this field.

Sweden does not however believe that the WSIS process should be tool to politicize and reshape the way the Internet is governed.

Furthermore we take this opportunity to once again underline the necessity to protect, respect and promote all human rights online and offline if we wish the WSIS process to achieve its objectives.

We are deeply disappointed with the fact that it was impossible to reach consensus on what should be self-evident principles for human rights online, the role of media, its independence as well as basic principles regarding safety for journalists and bloggers.

We take note of the fact that it was the multilateral component in this process that blocked the consensus on media freedom online. We see this as confirmation of the central role the multistakeholder model must play in order to protect human rights online.

The lack of progress in the human rights field shows clearly why the WSIS process must not be a tool to politicize and reshape the way the Internet is governed.

Like many others, we believe this process must focus less on governance of and on the Internet, and more on good governance in the time of the Internet.

It must recognize and relate to the important processes underway elsewhere, such as the recent NETmundial meeting in Sao Paolo.

Let me therefore be very clear. The WSIS process cannot exist in a vacuum. If it is to remain relevant, it needs to put development issues first.

Bridging the digital divide between developed and developing countries is one of the grand challenges of our time. It is about access. Affordable access provided by a strong and capable institutional infrastructure as well as the necessary technological means. And not at least access to content through freedom to gather and spread information, ideas and knowledge.

The discussion on post-2015 development goals is well underway. We must ensure that the WSIS process better aligns with these ongoing discussions, as underlined by the UNGIS Joint Statement at the WSIS Forum last year.

The WSIS process is the forum where we should focus on substantive results: lifting people out of poverty, generating economic growth and improving access to education, healthcare and financial services.

In this work Sweden is prepared contribute - not as a super power but as a super partner to everyone who is prepared to see the opportunities and use the new means of technology to liberate and empower all men and women in their societies.

Thank you.