



## **WSIS Forum 2018 OUTCOME DOCUMENT**

### **Template for Submission of Executive Summaries for**

### **Thematic/Country Workshop/ Action Line Facilitation Meetings/ Interactive Sessions/ High Level Dialogues/Publication Releases/Briefings**

**Deadline: Thursday 22 March, 2018**

**Exception: For sessions on Friday 23 March, please send at the latest 2 hours after the session**

*Please note that the WSIS Forum 2018 Outcome Document will be released on the **23<sup>rd</sup> of March** (the last day of the Forum)*

- 1) Title of your session:** ICT Access and Use in the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS – Opportunities for Sustainable Development and Trade
- 2) Name of Organization/s organizing the session:** ITU, UNCTAD, eTrade for all
- 3) Relevance with the WSIS Action Lines – please specify the Action lines C1 to C11:** C2, C6
- 4) Key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, and commitments (these will be reflected in the press release and Outcomes Document of the WSIS Forum 2018):** N/A
- 5) Main outcomes highlighting the following:**

#### **I. Debated Issues**

- Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) enable the world's most vulnerable countries to tackle key development challenges, including in areas such as financial inclusion, poverty reduction and health. They are a key building block of the digital economy and for the development of e-commerce. For Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), the Internet and e-commerce open up new possibilities and trade routes.
- While ICT access has increased substantially, more than half of the world's population remains offline and only one in six people in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) currently uses the Internet. The share of people using broadband is lower still, hampering the ability of many countries to take advantage of the evolving digital economy. Pacific Island countries have made great effort to improve access/connectivity and there have been significant public and private sector investments in undersea cables. Now the focus is moving from access/connectivity, to its use and to mainstreaming ICTs into the delivery of services, including government services. The ICT potential in the Pacific Islands is still largely untapped.
- Public private partnerships are important to drive ICT uptake: while the private sector has an important role to play in investing resources and in ensuring that ICT infrastructure is available, policy makers need to provide the right regulatory framework. National coordination is critical to ensure that ICTs are mainstreamed across all sectors.

#### **II. Quotes**

- **"For landlocked developing countries, the Internet is the sea"** – Jane Coffin, Internet Society



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- “E-commerce is helping businesses do more, and do it better” - Andrea Giacomelli, Pacific Islands Forum

### III. Overall outcomes of the session highlighting

- There are many examples of impressive leapfrogging triggered by enlightened policies in LDCs/LLDCs and SIDS and a number of studies identifying key recommendations for policy makers. These include the ITU’s ICTs, LDCs and SDG report, UNCTAD’s Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessments, and ISOC’s SIDS and LLDC and reports (to be published, shortly). Key recommendations include:
  - i. Policy makers need to make ICT a priority: High level commitment and strategic ICT sector plans are key components of driving ICT uptake and use. Policy makers are also encouraged to foster national coordination to ensure that ICTs are mainstreamed across sectors. Ownership of the process at the country level- and at the highest level possible- is a key enabler to effective ICT mainstreaming.
  - ii. ICT use is cross-cutting and is therefore important to mainstream ICT through the entire spectrum of the policy arena
  - iii. Countries need to have sufficient international Internet bandwidth (including through undersea cables) and build a robust domestic backbone, including core Internet infrastructure, such as IXPs and datacenters.
  - iv. Policy makers need to foster competitive markets and rationalize taxation to improve connectivity-
  - v. In many countries resources from Universal Service Funds could be liberated and used to build infrastructure and develop ICT projects in such areas as community networks and IXPs
  - vi. New business models and innovation in technologies, especially in last-mile connectivity, can be used to connect rural and remote areas. Public-private partnerships models should be explored
  - vii. Skills remain critical to ensure that more people benefit from the opportunities of ICTs: while most people today are covered by, and have access, to networks and the Internet, many still do not make use of them. The lack of skills is also a key reason why pilot projects are not sustainable and eventually fail. Donors need to invest not only in infrastructure but also in skills. This includes investing in public institutions and building government employers’ skills, as well as community skills.
  - viii.

### IV. Main linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 9, 10, 17

### V. Emerging Trends related to WSIS Action Lines identified during the meeting

### VI. Suggestions for Thematic Aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2019

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