



Civil Society Space Report- Input

Input by ITU: Civil Society participation in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Process

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), a UN process coordinated by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), has been notable in its adoption of a multistakeholder approach since its inception. This has been strengthened in the implementation phase with the direct involvement of civil society and the private sector alongside governments and international organizations. The WSIS Process recognizes that building inclusive Information and Knowledge Societies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a joint effort which requires solidarity, partnership and cooperation among all Stakeholders.

The Civil Society plays an important role in the WSIS Process and in leveraging ICTs to build information and knowledge societies for achieving the SDGs. At the national, regional and international level civil society engages and participates actively in the various components of the WSIS implementation process in particular, the annual WSIS Forum, WSIS Prize, WSIS Stocktaking and Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development.

The annual [WSIS Forum](#) (WSIS Forum 2018: 19-23 March, ITU, Geneva) is a global multistakeholder platform facilitating the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines for advancing sustainable development. The Forum is hosted and coordinated by the ITU and is co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD, in close collaboration with all WSIS Action Line co-/facilitators and other UN organizations (UNDESA, FAO, UNEP, WHO, UN Women, WIPO, WFP, ILO, WMO, ITC, UPU, UNODC, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNHCR and UN Regional Commissions). It provides an opportunity for information exchange, knowledge creation and sharing of best practices, while identifying emerging trends and fostering partnerships, taking into account the evolving Information and Knowledge Societies.

In follow up to the outcomes of the UN General Assembly Overall Review of the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes (Res. A/70/125) and with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Res. A/70/1), the WSIS Forum is constantly evolving and strengthening the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals. The WSIS Forum is the only event of its kind where the programme and agenda are completely crowdsourced. This process actively engages the civil society in the preparatory process to ensure broad ownership and further improvements of the Forum. Inputs from the civil society are integrated in the development of the agenda and programme of the Forum. Civil society organizations worldwide actively participate by organizing workshops, exhibition spaces, participating in the photo contest and WSIS Prizes sharing information about their projects from the ground and forging partnerships with other stakeholders during the WSIS Forum.

The WSIS Forum 2018 will be held from the 19-24 March and the deadline to contribute to the agenda and programme of the WSIS Forum 2018 is 30 January 2018.

The [WSIS Stocktaking Process](#) is a follow-up to WSIS that was initiated in 2004. Its purpose is to provide a global register of activities carried out by governments, international organizations, the business sector, civil society and other entities, in order to highlight the progress made since the landmark Summit. More than a decade after, the Web 2.0 WSIS Stocktaking Platform continues to foster implementation of the WSIS outcomes and to facilitate exchange of information among 300,000 members representing governments, the private sector, international organizations, civil society, and other stakeholders. ITU continues to maintain and improve the WSIS Stocktaking Database, which contains around 9,000+ entries this year. This encouraging outcome reinforces stakeholders' belief in and commitment to the WSIS Stocktaking process and their desire to share best practices. As the Web 2.0 platform continues to flourish, so does the promotion of the power of civil society in social development and economic growth through ICTs.

In relation to the participation of civil society groups in international policy-making and the potential contribution of ICTs for sustainable development, WSIS Stocktaking and [WSIS Prizes](#) may play a crucial role towards better involvement of the civil society in the evidence-based policy making. The contribution of the civil society to the WSIS Prizes contest has grown over the years. In 2017, the final list of 345 nominated projects represented a wide range of stakeholders, including 56 from civil society (16.1%), and 145 from governments (41.7%), 78 from businesses (22.4%), 22 from international organizations (6.3%), and 47 from other entities (13.5%). WSIS Prizes 2016 nominated 311 projects, with 31 projects from the civil society (9,9%), while 79 projects came from the government sector, 41 from the business sector, 14 from international organizations, and 46 from academia and other entities.

We are witnessing the increasing participation of the civil society in providing best practices from the ground to the international repository of ICT projects and we hope to strengthen the involvement of the civil society. ITU announced an official call for updates and new entries and urges these stakeholders, along with civil society, to continue submitting such contributions in the future as WSIS pursues the ongoing stocktaking process. The deadline for submissions to the WSIS Prizes 2018 is the 2nd of January 2018.

ITU and partner UN agencies consider the multistakeholder approach, in particular, the participation of civil society in national, regional and international WSIS implementation activities to be essential to ensure sustainable implementation and follow-up of the outcomes and commitments of the WSIS process, reached during the Geneva and Tunis phases of the Summit and the UNGA review in 2015.