

WSIS+10 Informal Interactive Stakeholder Consultations
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Panel 1: Progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society

Contribution from M-H. Carolyn Nguyen, Microsoft

Good morning Mr. President, Co-Facilitators, and Excellencies. My name is Carolyn Nguyen, Director of Technology Policy at Microsoft, and part of the ICC-BASIS initiative to include business experience in the WSIS process. We are grateful to the President of the UN General Assembly and his Office for convening this WSIS+10 Informal Interactive Stakeholder Consultation, and for the opportunity to contribute. As an active participant in the WSIS process since the beginning, we are honored to share our perspective, and are delighted for your consideration of the stakeholders' input in the review process.

As part of Microsoft's mission to "empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more," we are focused on creating innovative ICT solutions and initiatives that are diverse and inclusive, thus helping to realize the full potential of the peoples around the world and enabling sustainable social and economic development through partnerships with local business, governments, civil society, and others in countries where we operate. By "ICT," we don't just mean the technology, but a more holistic and layered framework that includes: affordable and universal access to broadband services and the Internet; and local capacity-building to enable not just adoption, but also production and consumption of localized content and services through training for young people, particularly girls, and disadvantaged populations, and support for local small- and medium-sized enterprises.

An example of affordable access and community empowerment is the Mawingu Project in Kenya, launched in 2013, that aims to deliver low-cost wireless broadband access to previously unserved locations near Nanyuki, Kenya. The project was developed in partnership with the Government of Kenya's Ministry of ICT, Kenyan telecommunications operator Jamii Telecom Limited, Nanyuki-based systems integrator Mawingu Networks Limited, USAID, and strongly shaped by input from local communities on how to best serve their economic and social needs. It utilizes a new TV White Space technology that Microsoft developed which enables low-cost yet long-range broadband connectivity, and solar panels to provide power for the base stations and charging capabilities for the devices that are used. To date, Mawingu has delivered broadband access to 315 primary school- and 1,070 secondary-school students, a local farm, restaurant, public library, county government offices, and the local Red Cross. Beatrice Ndorongo, principal of Gakawa Secondary School, reported that with access to online content and standardized test preparation materials, her students have improved their scores in every subject in the Kenya National Exam and their chances for entrance to universities. By working together with local communities and other stakeholders, we were able to deploy a sustainable solution that addresses real needs, reinforcing the value of the multistakeholder approach.

A total of 14 similar projects have been implemented in other countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe, supporting 70 primary and secondary schools serving 36,000 students, and 8 universities

servicing 99,000 students. Other applications include healthcare and a wide range of new business opportunities.

The initial engagements for some of these projects can be traced back directly to our participation in the IGF, providing concrete examples of the value afforded by the Forum. It is a unique and successful creation of the Tunis agenda, as exemplified by the growth in attendance and active involvement of a variety of stakeholders, the number of developing countries involved, and the increase in variety of topics for discussion. The growth of the national and regional IGFs demonstrates the increased awareness of how the Internet can help achieve sustainable economic development. We believe that the IGF mandate must be renewed so that these valuable interactions can continue.

A critical part of capacity building is to empower the next generation with the appropriate skills necessary for success in an information society. In 2012, Microsoft launched YouthSpark – a global initiative to create opportunities for 300 million youths by 2015. As of the end of last year, and via 30+ programs and partnerships with more than 350 youth-serving non-profits, we have created new opportunities for more than 227 million young people in over 100 countries. In developing these programs, we collaborated with governments, civil society, non-profits, and businesses globally to understand the challenges that young people face – again, demonstrating the value of the multistakeholder process.

These are just a few examples of the impact of the multistakeholder approach in achieving the WSIS Action Lines, building a foundation for sustainable development. Each stakeholder contributes unique value, with governments providing appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks that enable these achievements. Such approaches can also enable more rapid adaptation to the introduction of new technologies including cloud, data analytics, and the Internet of Things, and more opportunities to leverage these innovations to address real needs.

There is of course more work to do to fulfill the vision laid out by the Tunis Agenda, and Microsoft will continue to work with others globally in support of this vision. Together with the technological advancements that have been enabled by an open, secured, stable, resilient, and globally interoperable Internet over the past 10 years, the Action Lines have succeeded in focusing the world on a set of goals to build a global information society. The WSIS+10 review provides an important opportunity to recognize the significant progress that has been achieved, and to set a clear path to future realization of the sustainable development goals.

We need to continue to work together, leveraging the multistakeholder approach that has enabled the visible gains and transformations achieved thus far, to create a holistic environment that will continue to promote sustained investment, innovation, and development of ICT services and applications that can enable every person and organization on the planet to reap the full potential of the information society, while addressing the new challenges posed. Achieving this vision will require meaningful participation and consideration of all stakeholders, including those from developing and least developed countries. Microsoft, and other private sector companies, look forward to supporting this process, and contributing value wherever we can.