

Intervention on Behalf of the Group of 77 and China by the Representative of South Africa at the First Preparatory Meeting for the General Assembly Overall Review of the Implementation of the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

New York, 1 July 2015

Co-facilitators,

The Group of 77 and China would like to express its gratitude for the proficient manner in which you are handling this process. We would also like to express gratitude for the due consideration that has been given to the group's inputs thus far.

With regards to the matter at hand, the Group would like to point out that the mandate for the overall review of the implementation of the WSIS is clearly spelt out in Operative Paragraph 4 of the Modalities Resolution, which says:

"Decides that the overall review by the General Assembly shall take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and address potential information and communications technology gaps and areas for continued focus, as well as addressing challenges, including bridging the digital divide, and harnessing information and communications technologies for development; We would propose that the following eight (8) areas are important for fulfilling the task set forth in OP4.

1. Implementation of the Vision of the Tunis Agenda

It is imperative that, as per the modalities resolution, the focus of this review is anchored in the vision of the Tunis Agenda. There is no need to renegotiate or re-invent the Tunis Agenda.

Central to this vision is the emphasis on the use of ICT's for development and for the benefit of developing countries.

Moreover, the review process presents a significant opportunity to critically consider the progress made on the implementation of the Tunis Agenda under the 11 Action Lines, and to update these actions lines to make necessary course-corrections to ensure that the target populations of these action lines in developing countries attain maximum growth and benefit from the use of ICTs for development.

2. Bridging the Digital Divide

The express WSIS Vision to bridge the digital divide remains unfulfilled. A large majority of the over 3 billion people that still continue to be denied access to the Internet live in the developing world. These populations have been marginalized and sidelined in the spread of ICTs, and the review must focus on addressing this grave issue.

Within the larger context of the digital divide, the gender digital divide has become a growing concern. Women are being left further and further behind in developing countries and this is creating a new digital divide where men are twice as likely to have access to the Internet as women. This is particularly true in low-to-medium income countries, which, as we have said before, are already facing a large digital divide and a lack of access to ICTs. The WSIS+10 review process must factor in this growing problem, and heed the call by developing countries to double the number of women with online access within the next three years. Most importantly, women

have to be prioritized in getting access to education that will enable them to acquire technical competencies to play a central role in developing ICT applications and ICT policies that can address the various socio-economic challenges rather than being relegated to consumers and users of ICT.

3. Funding Mechanism for ICTs

The review must focus on and rectify the lack of follow up on the funding mechanisms for ICTs, particularly under para 9 of the Tunis Agenda. There has been too little progress on capacity building for ICTs in developing countries, and on the transfer of technology to developing countries by those nations which have mastered ICT technologies, so as to assist developing countries in their pursuit of development. These funding mechanisms are central to the effective implementation of ICTs for development, and the review should emphasize the need for such mechanisms to be implemented in the outcome document.

4. Linkage with Post 2015

We recognize that this review process overlaps with another extremely important intergovernmental process, which is the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals. Just as the MDGs were linked to the Tunis Agenda in 2005, the outcome document of this review process must also recognize the obvious and explicit synergies between the Vision of utilizing ICTs for Development and the newly crafted SDGs.

There is already widespread recognition that ICTs are enabling tools in the implementation of these goals, and this recognition must be further pronounced through this review process. The WSIS+10 Overall Review outcome document must recognize these interlinkages and synergies between ICTs and the ongoing discussions at the United Nations, and ensure that document is drafted with the larger context of the post-2015 Development Agenda. A useful matrix in this regard has already been provided by the ITU and could be referred to.

5. Right to Privacy

This review needs to establish a common understanding on the applicability of international rights, ethics, freedom of expression and norms to activities in cyberspace.

It also presents a unique opportunity for all member states to create conditions that can prevent violations of international rights online and to curb activities that may pose a threat to the democratic stability of other member states.

We need to ensure better protection of all citizens online.

6. Internet Governance

The review must take stock of the progress made on the issue of internet governance and make it more representative than it has been thus far.

It is important for governments, alongside relevant WSIS stakeholders, to play a role in international public policy issues pertaining to the internet.

7. Enhanced Cooperation

It is unfortunate that the mandate of the Tunis Agenda has been implemented selectively to suit the narrow interests of a few influential players in the multi stakeholder community.

It is critical that this review process commit steps to fulfill the yet unfulfilled mandate of Para 69 of the Tunis Agenda on Enhanced Cooperation.

The Tunis Agenda called for Governments to, on an equal footing with each other, carry out their roles and responsibilities on international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet.

However, ten years later, tangible progress on this specific mandate of Enhanced Cooperation, which would allow developing nations with important ideas to contribute to Internet policy, has been blocked. It is imperative that this important issue be resolved, so that all nations have an equal say in the public policies affecting the Internet.

8. Net Neutrality

The Group of 77 and China would like express its strong support for the principles of net neutrality. To ensure equal access for all and preserve the notion of the Internet as a public good, all internet traffic must be treated on equal parity, and the key tenets of net neutrality must be recognized as tools to ensure to ensure equal access for all.

9. Maintenance of Cyber Security

It is necessary to prevent the use of the internet for criminal and terrorist purposes. The international community should promote cooperation on combating cyber-crime, address the threat of cyber terrorism, and foster a global culture of cyber security.

In maintaining cyber security, States should abide by the following principles: sovereign equality; the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means without jeopardizing international peace and security, and justice; consistency with the principles of the United Nations; and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States.

Thank you.