

# **UK CONTRIBUTION TO EU OPENING STATEMENT**

Thank you, chair.

The United Kingdom would like to associate itself with the statement of the delegation of the European Union.

We would like to thank the co-facilitators for all the hard work they have done.

We would also like to thank all the stakeholders who contributed responses to the non-paper and who attended the stakeholder meeting yesterday.

The discussion yesterday was valuable and fruitful and we look forward to further opportunities for stakeholders to engage in the review as we prepare for the High Level Meeting.

We believe that the zero draft has many elements that will find broad support, but there is more work to do to ensure that it is balanced and that we focus on our task:

that is, to take stock of the progress made in the implementation of WSIS outcomes and to look at potential gaps, areas for continued focus and challenges.

## **Achievements and challenges**

We believe that very significant achievements have been made in implementing the WSIS outcomes over the last ten years.

These achievements have been made largely thanks to private sector investment and thanks to governments that have created an enabling environment for that investment. We welcome recognition of this in the draft outcome document.

Multi-stakeholder cooperation continues to be essential to the successful development of the Information Society. That's why we would like to see stronger commitment in the Preamble to the multi-stakeholder nature of WSIS

## **Sustainable Development**

Significant challenges remain, of course, and the zero draft sets these out very clearly, based on the evidence from the CSTD review.

In order to meet these challenges, we would like to see much greater emphasis in the document on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and how the WSIS Action Lines should align with the Sustainable Development Goals.

We are concerned about the suggestion to review the Digital Solidarity Fund. We believe we should look forward.

We now have the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, recently endorsed by the UN General Assembly. This is a historic international agreement which recognises the essential role of the private sector in mobilising the resources to fund sustainable development, especially in sectors such as infrastructure.

The WSIS review outcome document should make sure that the potential of ICTs for development is fully integrated in this Action Agenda.

### **Internet Governance**

We welcome the statement that Internet governance should be open, inclusive and transparent and the emphasis on promoting greater participation of all stakeholders, particularly from developing countries.

We do not support calls for an international legal framework for Internet governance. This would undermine the multi-stakeholder governance model that was agreed at Tunis and put at risk the dynamism and innovation which across the world have brought so many social and economic benefits.

We are also disappointed at the suggestion of a 5 year extension to the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum.

We support the recommendations of the CSTD Working Group on IGF improvements and the work already well underway to implement these improvements. Those recommendations were made following a process of multi-stakeholder consultation and discussion.

The IGF must maintain its unique character as an open, multi-stakeholder Forum with the mandate set out in the Tunis Agenda.

In June this year, the Council of Europe, which comprises 47 Member States, called for a 10 year extension. We need a ten year extension to provide certainty to donors, to participants and to future hosts and to show our commitment to this important Forum.

### **Human rights**

We welcome the affirmation in the zero draft that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online. We also welcome the importance attached to gender equality and empowering women.

We are disappointed, however, that the draft document does not recognise the serious threats to human rights that exist in many parts of the world, including online censorship, restrictions in social media and website blocking.

The outcome document must recognise these challenges and call on states to address them urgently.

The outcome document must also recognise the threats facing journalists, bloggers and human rights defenders.

And we agree with the many voices who have said that human rights apply to the whole of the WSIS agenda and this section of the document should not be a sub-section under Internet governance.

### **Building Confidence and Security**

We believe that all stakeholders have a responsibility to promote confidence and security in the use of ICTs.

Governments have a vitally important role to play, of course, but we do not support the proposal in paragraph 46 to enhance their role.

We will not be successful if we try to increase the role of governments at the expense of other stakeholders.

We also note that there is already an International Convention on Cybercrime – the Budapest Convention – and we do not believe there is a need for another one.

Overall, it is very disappointing that this section in the zero draft strays into issues such as national security and terrorism which are clearly outside the scope of WSIS and which are being properly addressed in other Forums, such as the UNGGE.

In our view, the WSIS review should concentrate on the development issues involved in building confidence and security in the use of ICTs: issues as such education, capacity building, skills, regulatory best practice and multi-stakeholder cooperation.

There should be a focus on the needs of developing countries, and this subject should be considered in the ICT for Development section.

## **Review of progress**

Finally, we believe it makes sense to link future review of the WSIS agenda to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

We have not heard any convincing arguments why a Summit is necessary.

We will need a multi-stakeholder review mechanism in the future which is focused on practical solutions to emerging challenges, particularly for developing countries.

That review should be aligned with the review of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

A High Level Meeting in ten years time would allow us to do that.

This review of WSIS started almost three years ago. We have had major reviews led by UNESCO, by the ITU and most recently by CSTD.

We have had many consultations and reports and meetings over that time which have built up to an impressive body of evidence and analysis.

We have developed robust assessments of the challenges and we have agreed some impressive consensus-based outcome documents on the ways forward.

We do not need to re-open all this work by planning another Summit.

Now is the time for action.

Now is the time

- to take the opportunity of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda
- to use the expertise and experience we have built up and
- to take practical steps to build the Information Society that we all want to see.

Thank you.