CSTD Roadmap for the WSIS+20 Review

30 March 2023

I.   Background

General Assembly (GA) resolution A/70/125 adopted on 16 December 2015 at the occasion of WSIS+10 review decided that a high-level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) would be held in 2025, involving the input and participation of all stakeholders, including in the preparatory process, to take stock of progress on the outcomes of the World Summit and identify both areas of continued focus and challenges. It recommended that the outcome of the high-level meeting should be an input into the review process for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

CSTD has been mandated by the ECOSOC and the General Assembly to review and assess annually progress at the international and regional levels in the implementation of WSIS action lines, recommendations, and commitments; share best and effective practices and lessons learned and identify obstacles and constraints encountered, actions and initiatives to overcome them, and important measures for further implementation of WSIS outcomes; and promote dialogue and foster partnerships. It has done so primarily through annual reports of the Secretary-General (SG) to its annual sessions. The CSTD also contributed inputs to the WSIS+10 review by the General Assembly in 2015.

The 25th CSTD concluded on 1 April 2022 adopted a resolution on WSIS that was approved by the ECOSOC in July 2022, and that invites the Chair of the Commission to present at its 26th annual session a roadmap outlining the preparations for the contribution of the Commission to the overall review.

CSTD should prepare for the WSIS+20 overall review following the guidance from ECOSOC precedent from WSIS+10. If UNGA or ECOSOC provide further guidance for the WSIS+20, then the CSTD will adjust accordingly.

II.   Proposed Roadmap on WSIS+20

The CSTD's input for the WSIS+20 review needs to take a longer-term view than the annual reports of the Secretary-General and the individual agency-specific inputs of individual stakeholders that are based on current data. In addition to stock taking about the level of implementation of the outcomes of WSIS, the Review may also consider the changes that the information society has gone through over the past twenty years and the implications for the WSIS vision. Below is a proposal for activities and steps towards the WSIS+20 Review Process.

i. ***Role of CSTD in WSIS+20***

- The draft resolution on WSIS to be adopted at the CSTD's 26th annual session in March 2023 could include language defining the contribution that the CSTD should make to the WSIS+20 review.
- During the GA to be held in autumn 2023, as done for the WSIS +10 review, Member States could define, through the annual GA resolution on ICT for sustainable development, the expected outcome from the CSTD in the 20-year WSIS review.

ii. ***WSIS+20 reports***

a) Starting in second half of 2023, the secretariat will prepare a synthesis report on the process of the implementation of the WSIS twenty years after the adoption of the WSIS outcomes. Issues to be addressed will include the dynamic processes of change in the Information Society that have taken place in technology, in the deployment, access and use of ICTs, and their impact on development including in its economic, social, and cultural dimensions, the environment, human rights and other critical relevant areas. It should also consider how ongoing trends and likely new developments will affect progress towards human development in the future using the SDGs as the basic template for the analysis, considering that the WSIS+20 review should provide an input to the more comprehensive review process of the 2030 Agenda.

The report will include as inputs the outcomes of the consultation process described in (iv) below. Relevant stakeholders, including action line facilitators and other international agencies, will also be invited to contribute written inputs providing forward-looking thinking about the ways in which the WSIS process is relevant to today's digital transformation.

The synthesis report should be informed by themes, concerns, and potential outcomes that may emerge in the context of other ongoing international processes at the intersection of digitalization and development, such as the Summit of the Future or the Global Digital Compact (GDC). Although the GDC process and consultations may be taken into consideration, when relevant, to the WSIS+20 CSTD report, the latter should remain a distinct and independent process.

The first draft of the report will be provided as background for the substantive discussion mentioned to be held in March 2024 at the 27th CSTD annual session. The final draft will be made available for the 28th CSTD annual session in March 2025.

b) After the 28th annual session of the CSTD in 2025, the outcome of the Commission's

discussions in the twenty-year review of WSIS will be submitted through the ECOSOC to the General Assembly as inputs for the GA's 2025 overall review.

iii. _Substantive discussion at the CSTD_

In March 2024, the Commission will hold a substantive discussion, at its 27th annual session, on the progress made in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, for which the preliminary findings of the synthesis report described under (ii a) will serve as background. The final draft of the synthesis report by the secretariat will be available as background for the CSTD's overall review of WSIS at its 28th annual session in March 2025.

iv. _Open stakeholder consultations_

Starting from the last quarter of 2023 until late 2024, the secretariat will undertake widespread engagement in different formats such as national, regional, and international consultations, seminars and workshops, including with UN and other multilateral agencies, national governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical communities concerned with the development of ICTs, digital development and development more generally. These engagements could take the form of:

- Three regional consultations with invited participants from different stakeholder groups, jointly with UN regional commissions, regional offices of ITU and UNESCO and UNDP, back-to-back to the respective regional commissions' annual session on ST/ICT (For the Asia-Pacific region, discussions have already been held with ESCAP for 2024 back-to-back with its biennial STICT Commission, and with ECA for Africa, either during its annual WSIS workshop or its annual ICT Commission. In Latin America, it could be with ECLAC, back-to-back with its next Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies). Some of these consultations may take place virtually.
- A joint event will be proposed to ITU and DESA in the 2023 IGF in October 2023 in Japan and/or in IGF 2024.
- A joint event of CSTD with ITU and UNESCO (and DESA) will be proposed during the 2024 and 2025 WSIS Forum.
- An online survey jointly with ITU, e.g. via ITU website addressed respectively to four stakeholder groups: governments, international organizations involved in the WSIS action lines, civil society and private sector.
- Creation by the secretariat of a WSIS+20 review item on the CSTD webpage.
- Other activities that may arise from discussions with stakeholders.

v. **An activity during the GA**
- A joint event of CSTD could be proposed to DESA and to the Office of the Technology

Envoy of the UN Secretary-General in 2025 during the GA to disseminate the outcomes of the CSTD WSIS +20 review.

The scope and depth of the consultation and analytical activities in this roadmap are dependent on the availability of extra-budgetary financial support from member States. Non-CSTD member States are welcome to contribute financial support too. A WSIS-specific trust fund managed by UNCTAD is available for those purposes.