Advance unedited version

Draft resolution

2016/…   Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of
and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society,[1]

Recalling also its resolution 2006/46 of 28 July 2006 on the follow-up to the World Summit and review of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the mandate that it gave to the Commission,

Recalling further its resolution 2015/26 of 22 July 2015 on the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 70/1 entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 70/125 entitled "Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society", which reaffirmed the WSIS vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society; assessed progress to date; identified gaps and challenges; and made recommendations for the future,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 70/184 of 4 February 2016 on information and communications technologies for development,

Taking note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional and international levels,[2]

Expressing its appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for his role in helping to ensure completion of the aforementioned reports in a timely manner,

Taking stock: reviewing the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society

Welcomes and urges the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/125;

Welcomes the constructive and diverse inputs from all stakeholders in the overall review of progress made in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes;

Reaffirms our commitment to the full implementation of the WSIS outcomes and the WSIS vision beyond 2015;

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 * For the discussion, see chap. II.
 [1] See A/C.2/59/3 and A/60/687
 [2] A/71/67-E/2016/51

Encourages close alignment between the WSIS process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as called for in General Assembly resolution 70/125, highlighting the cross-cutting contribution of ICTs to the Sustainable Development Goals and poverty eradication, and noting that access to information and communication technologies has also become a development indicator and aspiration in and of itself.

Reaffirms that one of the goals of the 2030 Agenda to significantly increase access to information and communications technology.

Welcomes the remarkable evolution and diffusion of information and communications technologies, underpinned by the contributions of both public and private sectors, which have seen penetration into almost all corners of the globe, created new opportunities for social interaction, enabled new business models, and contributed to economic growth and development in all other sectors, while noting the unique and emerging challenges related to their evolution and diffusion;

Notes with concern that there are still significant digital divides, such as between and within countries and between women and men, which need to be addressed through, among other actions, strengthened enabling policy environments and international cooperation to improve affordability, access, education, capacity-building, multilingualism, cultural preservation, investment and appropriate financing. Further, we acknowledge that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divides, and encourage all stakeholders to ensure the full participation of women in the information society and women's access to new technologies, especially information and communications technologies for development.

1.   *Notes* the ongoing implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, emphasizing, in particular, its multi-stakeholder nature, the roles played in this regard by leading agencies as action line facilitators and the roles of the regional commissions and the United Nations Group on the Information Society, and expresses its appreciation for the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in assisting the Economic and Social Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up to the World Summit;

1bis *Recognizes* the value and principle of multistakeholder cooperation and engagement that have characterized the WSIS process since its inception and are clearly recognized in the 2030 Agenda and notes that many activities that support WSIS objectives and the SDGs are being implemented by governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, academic and technical communities and multi-stakeholder partnerships in their respective roles and responsibilities;

2.   *Takes note* of the reports of many United Nations entities, with their respective executive summaries, submitted as input for the elaboration of the annual report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Commission and published on the website of the Commission as mandated in Council resolution 2007/8 of 25 July 2007, and recalls the importance of close coordination among the leading action line facilitators and with the secretariat of the Commission;

3.   *Notes* the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional level facilitated by the regional commissions, as observed in the

report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit at the regional and international levels, including the steps taken in this respect, and emphasizes the need to continue to address issues of specific interest to each region, focusing on the challenges and obstacles that each may be facing with regard to the implementation of all goals and principles established by the World Summit, with particular attention to information and communications technology for development;

4. *Reiterates* the importance of maintaining a process of coordinating the multi-stakeholder implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit through effective tools, with the goal of exchanging information among action line facilitators, identifying issues that need improvement and discussing the modalities of reporting on the overall implementation process, encourages all stakeholders to continue to contribute information to the stocktaking database maintained by the International Telecommunication Union on the implementation of the goals established by the World Summit, and invites United Nations entities to update information on their initiatives in the stocktaking database;

5. *Highlights* the urgent need for the incorporation of the recommendations contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit in the revised guidelines for United Nations country teams on preparing the common country assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, including the addition of an information and communications technology for development component, for which the United Nations Group on the Information Society offered its assistance**;**

6. *Recalls* General Assembly resolution 60/252 of 27 March 2006, in which the Assembly requested the Council to oversee the system-wide follow-up to the Geneva and Tunis outcomes of the World Summit;

6bis. *Recalls* that General Assembly resolution 70/125 called for continuation of the annual reports on implementation of WSIS through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to the Council, and reaffirms the role of the Commission, as set forth in Council resolution 2006/46, in assisting the Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment of progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit;

8. *Calls upon* all States, in building the information society, to take steps to avoid and to refrain from taking any unilateral measure not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries and that hinders their well-being;

9. *Welcomes* the fact that the rapid growth in access to mobile telephony and broadband since 2005 has meant that more than half of the world's inhabitants should have access to information and communications technologies within their reach and make use of them by the end of 2016, in line with one of the World Summit targets, the value of this progress being enhanced by the advent of new services and applications, including m-health, m-agriculture, mobile transactions, m-government, e-government, e-learning, e-business and development services, which offer great potential for the development of the information society;

10. *Notes with great concern* that many developing countries lack affordable access to information and communications technologies and that, for

the majority of the poor, the promise of science and technology, including information and communications technologies, remains unfulfilled, and emphasizes the need to effectively harness technology, including information and communications technologies, to bridge the digital and knowledge divides;

11. *Recognizes* that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing the new technologies, such as an appropriate enabling environment, sufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity, as well as issues related to technology ownership, standards and flows, and in this regard calls upon all stakeholders to provide adequate resources, enhanced capacity-building and transfer of technology and knowledge to developing countries particularly the least developed countries;

12. *Also recognizes* the rapid growth in broadband access networks, especially in developed countries, and underscores the need to urgently address the growing digital divide in the availability, affordability, quality of access and use of broadband between and within high, middle, and low-income countries and other regions, with special emphasis on supporting the least developed countries, small island developing States and Africa as a continent;

13. *Further recognizes* that the transition to a mobile-led communications environment is leading to significant changes in operators' business models and that it requires significant rethinking of the ways in which individuals and communities make use of networks and devices, of government strategies and of ways in which communications networks can be used to achieve development objectives;

14. *Recognizes* that, even with all the developments and the improvement observed in some respects, in numerous developing countries information and communications technologies and their applications are still not available to or affordable for the majority of people, particularly those living in rural areas;

15. *Also recognizes* that the number of Internet users is growing and that, in some instances, the digital and knowledge divides are also changing in character from one based on whether access is available to one based on the quality of access, information and skills that users can obtain and the value that they can derive from it, and recognizes in this regard that there is a need to prioritize the use of information and communications technologies through innovative approaches, including multi-stakeholder approaches, within national and regional development strategies;

16. *Takes note* of the global report of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, entitled "The state of broadband 2015: broadband as a foundation for sustainable development", and notes with interest the continuous efforts of the Broadband Commission in promoting high-level advocacy for the establishment of an enabling environment for broadband connectivity, in particular through national broadband plans and public-private partnerships for ensuring that the development agenda challenges are met with appropriate impact and in conjunction with all stakeholders;

16bis Reaffirming the commitment made in UNGA Resolution 70/125 to close the digital divides between and within countries, including the gender digital divide, through efforts to improve connectivity, affordability, multilingual content, digital skills and digital literacy, acknowledging specific challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs, and groups in vulnerable situations;

16ter. We further reaffirm the commitment to pay particular attention to the unique and emerging information and communication technology challenges facing in particular developing countries, as envisaged in the relevant paragraphs of UN General Assembly Resolution 70/125;

17. *Notes* that, while a solid foundation for capacity-building in information and communications technology has been laid in many areas with regard to building the information society, there is still a need for continuing efforts to address the ongoing challenges, especially for developing countries and the least developed countries, and draws attention to the positive impact of broadened capacity development that involves institutions, organizations and entities dealing with information and communications technologies and Internet governance issues;

18. *Recognizes* the need to focus on capacity development policies and sustainable support to further enhance the impact of activities and initiatives at the national and local levels aimed at providing advice, services and support with a view to building an inclusive, people-centred and development-oriented information society;

19. *Notes* that topics continue to emerge, such as e-environment applications and the contribution of information and communications technologies to early warning, mitigating climate change, social networking, virtualization and cloud computing and services, mobile Internet and mobile-based services, cybersecurity, the gender gap, the protection of online privacy and the empowerment and protection, especially against cyberexploitation and abuse, of vulnerable groups of society, in particular children and young people;

20bis *Reaffirms* that the outcomes of the UNGA Overall Review related to the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines called for the WSIS Forum to be held annually, the most recent of which took place from 2 to 6 May 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland, as a platform for discussion and sharing of best practices in the implementation of the World Summit outcomes by all stakeholders.

20 quater Encourages WSIS Action Line facilitators to use the Geneva Plan of Action as the framework to identify practical measures to use ICTs to help achieve the 2030 Agenda, noting the WSIS-SDG Matrix, developed by the UN Agencies, and further encourages these entities to ensure close alignment to the 2030 Agenda when considering new work to implement the outcomes of the WSIS, according to their existing mandates and resources.

20sexies Reiterates importance of request by UNGA to all stakeholders to integrate information and communications technologies into approaches to implementing the SDGs and call to United Nations entities facilitating the World Summit on the Information Society Action Lines to review their reporting and work plans to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Internet governance

21. *Reaffirms* that the outcomes of the World Summit related to Internet governance, namely, the process towards enhanced cooperation and the convening of the Internet Governance Forum, are to be pursued by the Secretary-General through two distinct processes, and recognizes that the two processes may be complementary;

22.   *Also reaffirms* paragraphs 34 to 37 and 67 to 72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society;[3]

22bis. *Further* reaffirms paragraphs 55 to 65 of the outcome document of the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, General Assembly resolution 70/125;

Enhanced cooperation

23.   *Recognizes* the importance of enhanced cooperation in the future, to enable Governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, but not in the day-to-day technical and operational matters that do not impact on international public policy issues;

23ter. *Notes* the proposal by the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the structure and composition of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation as mandated by resolution 70/125;

23quater.ALT1 *Recommends,* bearing in mind past practice, that the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation, in deciding on its methods of work, should consider ensuring transparency, inclusiveness and diversity of views, including by being open to active participation of all member states and observer States of the Commission and representatives from other relevant stakeholders and that it should aim to adopt its report and recommendations by consensus, reflecting different options and opinions if necessary.

Internet Governance Forum

32.   *Recognizes* the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and its mandate as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on various matters, as reflected in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda, including discussion on public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance;

32bis. *Recalls* the General Assembly's decision, in resolution 70/125, to extend the IGF's mandate for a further 10 years, during which the Forum should continue to show progress on working modalities and the participation of relevant stakeholders from developing countries;

33.   *Also recognizes* that national and regional Internet Governance Forum initiatives have emerged, taking place in all regions and addressing Internet governance issues of relevance and priority to the organizing country or region;

34.   Recalls General Assembly resolution 70/125 in which the Assembly calls upon the Commission within its regular reporting to give due consideration to fulfilment of the recommendations contained in the report of the CSTD Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum.

35.   *Notes* the holding of the tenth meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, hosted by the Government of Brazil in João Pessoa from 10 to 13 November 2015, under the theme entitled "Evolution of Internet governance: Empowering sustainable development";

36.   *Welcomes* the holding of the eleventh meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, to be hosted by the Government of Mexico from 6 to 9 December 2016 in Guadalajara, under the theme "Enabling inclusive and sustainable growth", and notes that, in the preparatory process for the meeting,

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[3] See A/60/687.

recommendations from the report of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum are being taken into consideration;

36bis. *Welcomes*, in that context, continuous progress made in regard to the IGF's inter-sessional work in the different modalities of Connecting the Next Billion Online, Dynamic Coalitions and Best Practice Forums; as well as the contribution being made by both national and regional IGFs.

The road ahead

43.ALT   *Calls upon* United Nations entities to continue actively cooperating in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit through the United Nations system and to take the necessary steps and commit to a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society and to catalyse the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;[4]

44.   *Calls upon* all stakeholders to keep the goal of bridging the digital divides, in its different forms, an area of priority concern, to put into effect sound strategies that contribute to the development of e-government and to continue to focus on pro-poor information and communications technology policies and applications, including access to broadband at the grass-roots level, with a view to narrowing the digital divides among and within countries;

45.   *Urges* all stakeholders to prioritize the development of innovative approaches that will stimulate the provision of universal access to affordable broadband infrastructure for developing countries and the use of relevant broadband services in order to ensure the development of an inclusive, development-oriented and people-centred information society, and to minimize the digital divide;

46.   *Calls upon* international and regional organizations to continue to assess and report on a regular basis on the universal accessibility of nations to information and communications technologies, with the aim of creating equitable opportunities for the growth of the information and communications technology sectors of developing countries;

47.   *Urges* all countries to make concrete efforts to fulfil their commitments under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development;[5]

20.   *Reiterates* the importance of information and communications technology indicators as a monitoring and evaluation tool for measuring the digital divide among countries and within societies and in informing decision makers when formulating policies and strategies for social, cultural and economic development, and emphasizes that the standardization and harmonization of reliable and regularly updated indicators capturing the performance, efficiency, affordability and quality of goods and services are essential for implementing information and communications technology policies;

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[4] General Assembly resolution 70/1
[5] General Assembly resolution 69/313

47bis Acknowledges the importance of digital monitoring tools, that support the deployment and measurement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

47ter Reiterates the importance of sharing best practices at the global level, and, while recognizing excellence in the implementation of the projects and initiatives that further the goals of the World Summit, encourages all stakeholders to nominate their projects for the annual World Summit project prizes as an integral part of the World Summit stocktaking process, while taking note of the report on the World Summit success stories;

48. *Calls upon* United Nations organizations and other relevant organizations and forums, in accordance with the outcomes of the World Summit, to periodically review the methodologies for information and communications technology indicators, taking into account different levels of development and national circumstances, and therefore:

(a)   Encourages Member States to collect relevant data at the national level on information and communications technologies, to share information about country case studies and to collaborate with other countries in capacity-building exchange programmes;

(b)   Encourages United Nations organizations and other relevant organizations and forums to promote assessment of the impact of information and communications technologies on sustainable development;

(c)   Notes with appreciation the work of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technology for Development and the annual Measuring the Information Society Report, which provides recent trends and statistics on access and affordability of ICTs and the evolution of the information and knowledge societies worldwide, including the ICT Development Index;

(d)   Encourages the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development to follow up on the Decision of the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 47th session and recommended in that context that the Partnership develops guidance to improve cooperation with the different stakeholders for the purposes of producing high quality and timely ICT statistics and of leveraging the potential benefits of using big data for official statistics;

(e)   Also notes the holding, in Hiroshima, Japan, from 30 November to 2 December 2015, of the thirteenth World Telecommunication/Information and Communications Technology Indicators Symposium;

49. *Invites* the international community to make voluntary contributions to the special trust fund established by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to support the review and assessment work of the Commission regarding follow-up to the World Summit, while acknowledging with appreciation the financial support provided by the Governments of Finland, Switzerland and the United States of America to this fund;

49bis.ALT *Recalls* that the UN General Assembly will hold a high-level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2025;

55. *Takes note with appreciation* the Secretary General's report and the related discussion that took place at the 19th session of the Commission

62. *Emphasizes* the importance of promoting an inclusive information society, with particular attention to bridging the digital and broadband divides,

taking into account considerations of developing countries, gender and culture, as well as youth and other underrepresented groups;