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Post-meeting report

Negotiations on ECOSOC WSIS resolution drafting at 22nd CSTD annual session

Held 13-17 May 2019, Geneva, Switzerland

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Introduction

Meeting summary

The [22nd annual session](#) of the United Nations Commission for Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) was held in Geneva, 13-17 May 2019. The annual session consisted of high-level roundtables on:

- The role of science, technology and innovation (STIs) in:
 - Empowering people and in insuring inclusiveness and equality
 - Building resilient communities, including through the contribution of citizen science
- The impact of rapid technological change on sustainable development
- Review of progress made in the implementation of World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes

The following reports from the Secretary-General were considered:

- [Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels \(2018\)](#)
- [The impact of rapid technological change on sustainable development](#)
- [The role of science, technology and innovation in building resilient communities, including through the contribution of citizen science](#)

The following report by the CSTD Secretariat was presented:

- [Implementing World Summit on the Information Society outcomes, 2018](#)

In addition, the [43 Member States](#) of the CSTD negotiated two draft ECOSOC resolutions on the final two days of the meeting:

- [Science, Technology and Innovation for Development](#)
- [Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society](#)

Traditionally, the STI for development resolution has been far less contentious than the WSIS resolution, and is completed well before the end of the last day of the annual CSTD session. The WSIS resolution, on the other hand, has tended to be far more difficult for governments to reach consensus on. In the last two to three years, frustrated at the lack of any substantial movement in the WSIS resolution updates, some governments have been introducing some of the concepts previously limited to WSIS discussions to the STI for development resolution drafting, with the result that its drafting is now a little more complex than in its early years. The introduction of similar issues and texts to both negotiation processes also means that there is now the risk of diverging paths for those issues, despite both resolutions being developed within the same commission.

About the CSTD

The United Nations Commission for Science and Technology for Development ([CSTD](#)), is one of the [many bodies](#) that sits under the Economic and Social Council ([ECOSOC](#)) umbrella. At its creation in 1992, the CSTD focused on science and technology for development, but after the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process (2003-2005), ECOSOC delegated CSTD responsibility for assessing progress made in implementing and following up on the WSIS outcomes.

For just over the past decade, every year at its annual session, CSTD Member States have developed two draft ECOSOC resolutions on:

1. Science, technology and innovation (STI) for development ([archive of resolutions](#))
2. Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the WSIS ([archive of resolutions](#))

The draft resolutions are negotiated in parallel, with many governments, who are only represented by a single person, having to prioritise which resolution drafting to engage in. ECOSOC's [54 Member States](#) generally adopt the draft resolutions approved by CSTD Member States without making any substantial changes.

In addition to its resolution drafting, as part of its WSIS-related responsibilities, the CSTD has hosted multistakeholder working groups on:

- [Improvements of the Internet Governance Forum \(2011-2012\)](#)
- [Enhanced Cooperation on Public Policy Issues Pertaining to the Internet \(2013-2014\)](#)
- [Enhanced Cooperation on Public Policy Issues Pertaining to the Internet \(2016-2018\)](#)

For more information about who can participate in CSTD, see the Appendix A.

For more information on what the CSTD does more broadly, see:

<https://unctad.org/en/Pages/aboutus.aspx>

Contextualising this year's WSIS resolution negotiations at CSTD

Internet issues have historically dominated debate

Despite WSIS covering a wide range of issues, a small subset of WSIS issues – mostly related to the Internet - have historically taken up most of the time available for negotiations:

1. Internet governance
2. Internet Governance Forum
3. Enhanced cooperation
4. The WSIS Forum

Where there is no consensus on proposals to add, delete or change text in the resolution, the CSTD Member States have adopted the practice of agreeing to keep the existing text. As a result, much of the WSIS resolution has barely changed over the years. In fact, in some years, the only updates made to the draft WSIS resolution have been to update the titles of documents and reports, and dates of annual events mentioned in the resolution.

Moving from “consensus by exhaustion” to “consensus by deadline”

Before 2018, negotiations for the WSIS resolution would often continue through to the small hours of Saturday morning.

In 2018, the Secretariat decided to invoke a procedural rule previously not used by CTSD, requiring the UN in New York to review possible programme budget implications (PBI) before a draft resolution can be adopted by the CSTD's membership.

The WSIS resolution generally has no outcomes that require funding, so the invoking of the PBI rule is more to do with stopping the negotiations dragging on into Saturday mornings than it does with fiscal responsibility. Invoking the PBI requires, in theory, giving the UN in New York six hours to review the draft resolution and return a verdict on budget implications back to the CSTD in Geneva. But given the WSIS draft resolutions haven't contained any new activities that need to be budgeted for, in practice, New York is able to reply within an hour or two. But the CSTD Secretariat pushes for a 6 pm Geneva time end to WSIS drafting, to give a midnight end time to the CSTD annual session, on the basis that the PBI process could conceivably take a full six hours to conduct.

The outcome of truncating the time available to discuss proposed updates to the resolution is that even fewer updates are likely to reach consensus in the time available.

Summary of negotiation outcomes

The draft ECOSOC resolution on WSIS remained largely unchanged from last year's resolution. A few minor additions were made, but in keeping with the vast majority of WSIS-related negotiations held in many forums over the last decade, most of the proposed amendments proved too divisive and ultimately weren't adopted. A copy of the update draft resolution, with all additions and deletions highlighted, is available in Appendix B.

Changes since the 2018 version

A number of minor editorial updates to the resolution's numbers and meeting details were made (and that need to be made each year.)

Additions to the resolution

New paragraphs:

- Noting the UN Secretary-General's *Strategy on New Technologies*
- Reiterating a commitment to **harnessing the potential of ICTs to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and urging WSIS Action Line facilitators to review their reporting and work plans to implement the 2030 Agenda
- Recognising the work of the United Nations Development Program, including the publication of its **Digital Strategy**
- Calling on all stakeholders to promote an **enabling policy environment for investments** and foster public-private cooperation and partnership for sustainable investment in ICT infrastructure, application and services, content and digital skills with the aim of ensuring the meaningful connectivity needed to advance the sustainable development goals

New references in existing paragraphs to:

- UNCTAD **eTrade for Women network**
- **Cultural and linguistic diversity**
- The **value of gender disaggregated data** to contribute to the bridging of the digital gender divide
- **Global Media and Information Literacy Week** (24 to 31 October 2018)
- **Emerging technologies**
- A reference to the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 19**, on freedom of expression

Removals from the resolution

- A reference to the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) 2017 was deleted and replaced with a reference to the higher event within the ITU decision-making framework: the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2018.

Interestingly, the **Internet governance** and **Internet Governance Forum** text was remarkably non-contentious this year. In previous years, many hours have been spent

debating these paragraphs, with the final outcome invariably being very little change to the text, if any, being approved.

Proposals that failed to make it into the final 2019 version

The proposals that *didn't* make it into the final draft ECOSOC resolution should be of more interest to digital policy makers, as this list is a good indication of the issues that remain highly contentious and that are likely to crop up in other venues discussing digital policy

New paragraphs that were rejected:

1. Recognising that **offline rights also must also be protected online** and that progress towards achieving WSIS goals is related to the protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms
2. Revising the text about **not imposing unilateral sanctions** to make it more about being all States supporting the full achievement of economic and social development for all.
3. Recognising the importance of the **private sector investment in ICT infrastructure**, content and services, and encouraging governments to create conducive regulatory environments for this.
4. The role that **community networks** can play in promoting affordable **connectivity**
5. Recognising that **trust** and **security** are vital for harnessing the potential of the **digital economy** and **emerging technologies** and that an **international framework for privacy and personal data protection** is needed to achieve this
6. Encouraging Member States to respond to UNESCO's invitation to conduct national assessments of the **Internet Universality Indicators**
7. The **AI for Good Summit** organised by ITU in partnership with 36 UN agencies and bodies
8. Expressing concern about the increased use of **government-imposed Internet shutdowns**
9. Proposals regarding **enhanced cooperation**:
 - Expressing concern about the delay in implementing enhanced cooperation
 - Regretting that the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation couldn't find agreement on recommendations on how to implement enhanced cooperation
 - Requesting the UN Secretary-General organise a high-level dialogue during the 74th UN General Assembly on the implementation of enhanced cooperation
10. Emphasising the need to consider the dual context of **rapid technological change** and the 2030 Agenda in assessing progress towards implementation of the WSIS goals
11. Proposals regarding the **WSIS Forum**:
 - Adding a "WSIS Forum" heading before the paragraphs referring to the WSIS Forum
 - Adding a reference to the WSIS Forum 2020 as a **WSIS+15** event
12. Requesting the CSTD Secretariat to organise a substantive discussion on WSIS+15 during the 23rd annual session of the CSTD

New references in existing paragraphs that were rejected:

13. The **UNESCO Internet Universality** and **ROAM indicators**

14. A reference to the **ITU's global cybersecurity agenda**

15. The UN Secretary-General's **High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation**

Proposals to make structural changes, including deleting, moving, and merging existing paragraphs (with the aim of making the resolution shorter and grouping similar issues) also were overwhelmingly rejected, mostly due to a lack of time to consider them. This is the second year in a row where proposals to make the resolution easier to read and understand have been rejected due to a lack of time to consider them.

Next steps

The draft WSIS resolution will now be considered by ECOSOC Member States for adoption.

At the end of the negotiations of the WSIS resolution, some of the Member States expressed frustration at how the negotiations continue to be difficult, year after year. A number of proposed ways to change the process for the future were suggested:

- **Begin discussions on the resolution during the inter-sessional panel** held somewhere between November and January each year - perhaps with drafting kicking off during the inter-sessional panel, and continuing in some form until the negotiations take place in earnest at the annual session.
- Member States to **state upfront if there are any proposed amendments that they could not accept under any conditions**, rather than spend time engaging in negotiations to edit text that never had a chance of being accepted.
- Enable States to better prepare for the negotiations by encouraging Member States to **submit proposed amendments well before the start of the week of the annual session**, rather than the mid-week of the annual session itself. (It was also recognised that it is difficult for some groups of like-minded Member States to coordinate between physical meetings.)
- Have the **first reading of the consolidated draft of proposals on the Monday** of the annual session – perhaps at the end of the day, when the plenary meetings have ended.
- Turn the resolution from being general and high-level into a **more holistic set of topics**, including development and economic aspects of ICTs.
- **Offer concrete recommendations** in the resolution. (It was also recognised that many who participate in the negotiations aren't empowered to make recommendations, but one Member State thought that this should change.)
- Make the resolution relevant and current by addressing **the issues developing countries are facing today**.

The CSTD Secretariat acknowledged the concerns and suggestions from Member States and said it would investigate beginning informal consultations on the draft resolution during the inter-sessional panels in future.

Detailed report on the negotiations

Step 1: Written proposals

The Secretariat requested proposals from Member States in the weeks prior to the annual CSTD Session.

- Some groups of Member States submit proposals on a regional basis (for example, Western European and Others Regional Group (WEOG))
- Some Member States submit proposals individually
- Some groups of Member States submit proposals according to informal alliances across regions and developed/developing country designations

Some proposals are submitted before the CSTD annual session; however, most proposals are submitted during the week of the annual session, often just before the housekeeping session for negotiations begins on the Wednesday evening.

- Proposals submitted before the week of the annual session tend to be more elaborate, and focus not just on adding/deleting content, but also on more substantial edits and document structure changes related to trying to turn the sometimes fairly incomprehensible text agreed to at the last minute during the previous year's negotiations into something more accessible and action-oriented.
- Proposals submitted during the week of the annual session often tend to be reactions to the earlier proposed texts that were already circulated to all participants at the start of the annual session, rather than separate, standalone proposals.

The Secretariat also submits proposed edits to the draft ECOSOC resolutions. In the past, these have been limited to proposed modifications to the updated numbers, dates and titles for annual resolutions and meetings referred to in the ECOSOC resolutions. This year however, reflecting a general shift over the past two years in the Secretariat's activities from being a passive support agency for CSTD Members' decisions to a more proactive shaper of the CSTD's agenda, the Secretariat has made more substantive proposals (for example, this year, the Secretariat proposed adding a new paragraph on the UNCTAD e-Commerce Week and first Africa E-Commerce Week, and another new paragraph on the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation).

Step 2: Negotiations: So many issues, so little time

After a very brief administrative briefing at the end of the third day of the annual session, negotiations began at 9:30 am on the fourth day of the CSTD's 22nd annual session and ended at 7 pm on the fifth and final day of the CSTD.

First reading

Because time was short, and there was a desire to achieve early wins, Member States agreed to concentrate on trying to approve straightforward proposals for updates and deletions in the first reading, and not review proposals to merge paragraphs or move existing text around within the draft resolution. It was also agreed that if there was not consensus on proposed updates and deletions, that rather than get bogged down in discussing the reasons for accepting or rejecting the proposed amendments to the resolution, more substantive discussions would be held over until the second reading. The first reading ended at 5:42 pm on Thursday.

In the first reading, 17 amendments were agreed, the majority of which were minor editorial updates. The more substantive changes are listed below:

1. **DELETED** A reference to the **ITU World Telecommunications Development Conference** ([WTDC](#)) 2017 in paragraph 32.

How this happened:

As the resolution is updated annually, it was argued that it should only refer to the most recent events. There was some concern that WTDC is held every four years, so was still relevant to refer to, but it was agreed that the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2018 ([PP-18](#)) had happened more recently and was a higher-level event, so WTDC could be removed.

2. **ADDED** A reference to the **Global Media and Information Literacy Week** from 24 to 31 October 2018” in paragraph 40.

How this happened:

This was a proposal by the CSTD Secretariat. While the addition of an event may not seem like a substantial change, proposals to add events to the WSIS resolution are generally highly fraught, due to various Member State delegates having an assortment of favoured events and UN agencies that other Member State delegates don't feel so warmly about. The result is that when one Member State proposes a new event be added, a Member State with less enthusiasm to the event will either counter with a proposal to add an event from one of their favoured organisations, or outright object to the inclusion of the non-favoured event.

3. **ADDED**: A reference to the **eTrade for Women network** (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) in paragraph 46.

How this happened:

This was a proposal by the CSTD Secretariat. Gender-related text has traditionally been fraught with negotiations during the WSIS resolution drafting. Having the Secretariat propose this inclusion, and the fact that the CSTD Secretariat is performed by UNCTAD, may have helped diffuse some of the political tension usually associated with gender-related proposals.

4. **ADDED**: A reference to the **cultural and linguistic diversity** in paragraph 50.

How this happened:

There were other proposed additions to this paragraph that didn't reach agreement on the first reading (protection of freedom of expression and opinion online and concern about the increased use of government-imposed internet shutdowns), but cultural and linguistic diversity had broad support.

5. **ADDED** The “value of **gender disaggregated data** to contribute to the bridging of the digital gender divide” was stressed in paragraph 76.

How this happened:

Surprisingly, for gender-related text, there was not a single objection to this text. This could have been due, in part to the fact that this was nearly the end of a full day of negotiations, and this was not an issue any delegate really wanted to spend time debating.

Second reading

The second reading began at 6:35 pm on Thursday, 16 May, paused for the night at 8:20 pm, then resumed at 9:30 am pm Friday, finally ending at 12:44 pm.

1. **ADDED** A reference to “**emerging technologies**” in paragraph 38.

How this happened:

There had originally been a proposal to add “**Artificial Intelligence, IoT, big data, smart technologies**” to the paragraph. It was argued that the WSIS resolution was meant to be technology-neutral and that adding specific references to these technologies would run counter to that principle. The proponents of the proposed list argued that the proposed text was about reflecting recent developments, that implementation of technologies like AI was up to each country, and that the list was not recommending specific vendors. The compromise solution was to refer to the overall concept of “emerging technologies”.

2. **ADDED** A new paragraph after 44: “Recognise the work of the **United Nations Development Program**, including the publication of its [Digital Strategy](#), which aims to apply the potential of digital technology to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”.

How this happened:

The proponents for this new paragraph explained that as UNDP is a WSIS Action Line facilitator, it would be appropriate to include some information on the UNDP’s work in this area. It was agreed to include the paragraph, as long as the UNDP’s work was “recognised” rather than “noted with appreciation.”

3. **ADDED** A new paragraph after 44: “Reiterates the commitment to harnessing the potential of information and communications technologies to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed development goals, noting that they can accelerate progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, accordingly urges all Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organisations, the technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders to integrate information and communications technologies into their approaches to implementing the Goals, and requests United Nations system entities

facilitating the World Summit on the Information Society action lines to review their reporting and work plans to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda”

How this happened:

The paragraph was accepted when it was clarified that the words came **directly from UNGA resolution 71/125 paragraph 12**. There are frequently debates about whether specific paragraphs, or parts of paragraphs, can be “cherry-picked” and placed into other resolutions. Often, the result for proposals to include paragraphs from existing resolutions is to simply “recall” the whole existing resolution in the preamble of the current resolution, and omit including any specific text from the resolution.

4. **ADDED** A reference to Article 19 (**freedom of expression**) of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) in paragraph 50.

How this happened:

The originally proposed text referred to “freedom of expression and opinion online”. There was concern that there was no established source for this formulation of text, so the compromise solution was to shorten the proposed additional text and refer to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to place the reference in context.

5. **ADDED** A new paragraph after 73: “Calls upon all stakeholders to promote an **enabling policy environment** for investments and foster public-private cooperation and partnership for sustainable investment in ICT infrastructure, application and services, content and digital skills with the aim of ensuring the meaningful connectivity needed to advance the sustainable development goals”

How this happened:

The text was accepted after a reference to “private sector investments” was changed to “investments”. The role of the private sector has long been a contentious issue for many governments – particularly those from developing countries, who are often frustrated by their inability to counter the influence of multinational companies within their territories (in many cases, profits flow back to the multinationals, while taxes are difficult to levy, due to the lack of any physical presence of the multinationals within the country).

Third and final reading

As with the 2018 negotiations, much of the last afternoon of the annual session was lost to plenary debates about the two high interest topics to be discussed at the 2020 annual session of the CSTD. This meant that the third and final reading didn’t begin until 5:30 pm – only 30 minutes before the target deadline of 6 pm to complete the negotiations and send the consensus text to New York for PBI analysis. As a result of the extremely short time available, and the remaining large amount of proposals to be addressed, Member States agreed that there would be a simple read-through, in which an objection stated by any one government would result in that proposal being removed. This also applied to any proposed deletions of existing text. Even so, the third reading did not end until 6:52 pm – nearly an hour after the target deadline.

As a result of the truncated time available, the only updates agreed to in the third reading were:

1. Minor editorial changes to paragraph 34 on **e-trade and e-commerce**.
2. Minor editorial change to paragraph 35, and a change from the existing “welcomes” to “notes [the holding of the third session of the **Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy]**”
3. **ADDED** An expansion of the text in paragraph 41, on the work of the ITU, to become: “*Recognises* the work of the International Telecommunication Union, including the holding of the **ITU Plenipotentiary Conference** from 29 October to 16 November 2018 in Dubai-UAE, where the membership reaffirmed their commitment to the common vision of a connected world and welcomes its work to support the deployment of broadband wireless networks in developing countries, including the training of local experts”
4. **ADDED** A new paragraph noting “the publication of the [UN Secretary-General's Strategy on New Technologies](#) on how the United Nations system will support the use of new technologies to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and to facilitate their alignment with the values enshrined in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the norms and standards of International Laws”

All remaining proposed amendments were deleted. See the following section for these non-consensus proposals.

Proposals that failed to reach consensus during negotiations

Many of the proposals that failed to reach consensus are likely to appear next year and in other forums discussing digital policy issues. This summary also includes many of the procedural arguments used to object to various proposals, as it provides insight into how proposals aren't judged on substance alone, but also fall prey to the wider international political framework in which governments operate:

1. Recognising that **offline rights also must also be protected online** and that progress towards achieving WSIS goals is related to the protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Why this was not included:

Including text related to human rights is always contentious. For some Member States, human rights and fundamental freedoms are a given; while for others, they come with obligations and responsibilities. Given the contentiousness of human rights generally, the following process issues led to an inability to include this reference:

- Proposed additions (references to **obligations** and **individual privacy**) to proposed new paragraph would have led to **deviation from agreed text in another resolution**. The originally proposed paragraph, before the proposed additions, was identical to a paragraph in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution, A/RES/73/218, [Information and communications technologies for sustainable development](#) (which is almost identical to paragraph 9 of A/RES/70/125, [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](#) (WSIS+10)
- There was an objection to “**cherry-picking text**” from the UNGA resolution, when the UNGA resolution was already referred to in its entirety in the preamble to the WSIS draft resolution.
- There was an objection to “**taking text out of context**” from the UNGA resolution. It was argued that without the paragraphs that accompanied the text in the UNGA resolution from 2018, the offline/online rights paragraph lacked context when placed in the CSTD resolution. In response, the proposers of the paragraph noted that the UNGA resolution of 2018 did not include additional paragraphs related to human rights before or after the paragraph they were proposing to include in the CSTD resolution.

2. Revising the text about **not imposing unilateral sanctions** to make it more about being all States supporting the **full achievement of economic and social development for all**.

Why this was not included:

The word “sanctions” has never appeared in the resolution. Instead, the term “refrain from taking any unilateral measure” has long been used. But even with the use of less-loaded language, the issue is still of deep concern to those who have had sanctions imposed on their countries, as well as for those governments who impose such sanctions. The attempt to revise the paragraph to remove the reference to unilateral

measures failed due to some States not wanting to re-open existing text that has been very carefully negotiated in the past.

3. Recognising the importance of the **private sector investment in ICT infrastructure**, content and services, and encouraging governments to create conducive regulatory environments for this.

Why this was not included:

References to the private sector's involvement in ICTs is another long-standing issue as it tends to be interpreted by the pro-multilateral leaning states as a gateway to praising the multistakeholder model of governance and reducing the role of governments. Proposals to delete the reference to "private sector", but keep the rest of the paragraph weren't acceptable to the proponents of the paragraph as the original text was straight from paragraph 38 of the UNGA's WSIS+10 resolution.

4. The role that **community networks** can play in promoting affordable **connectivity**

Why this was not included:

As at ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2018, there were debates about whether community networks could be referred to when they have **not been properly defined** by the ITU. While this resolution was being drafted for the ECOSOC, ITU was proposed as the correct venue to define community networks, due to its role as the UN's specialised agency for ICTs). It was noted that definitions within the ITU context had a very special context – regulatory – and that the use of "community networks" in the proposed text in the CSTD draft did not require such a rigorous definition. It was agreed by many of the Member States that other terms had been used within the UN system for what was called "community network" in this proposal, such as "local connectivity initiatives" and "local managed access networks". However, ultimately, there was no consensus on what language to use instead of "community networks" in describing how these networks can help provide connectivity.

5. Recognising that **trust** and **security** are vital for harnessing the potential of the **digital economy** and **emerging technologies** and that an **international framework for privacy and personal data protection** is needed to achieve this

Why this was not included:

It was argued that an almost identical proposal was put forward during the 2018 negotiations, and that hadn't been able to reach consensus. It was noted that it had been a big concession for some Member States to agree to add a reference to the digital economy in last year's draft resolution in the paragraph before this proposed new paragraph. It was argued that it was inappropriate to call for an international framework (proposed calls for international frameworks are generally hard to reach consensus on). It was argued that the [Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace](#) had promoted essentially the same ideas as in this proposed text, so the text shouldn't be contentious. Others argued that trust and security should be seen in the context of human rights, and that it was preferable to concentrate on the proposed paragraph about offline/online rights. There were various attempts to change the language to suit various parties, but ultimately, the mix of different areas of concern to the different Member States resulted in no consensus.

6. Encouraging Member States to respond to UNESCO's invitation to conduct national assessments of the **Internet Universality Indicators**

Why this was not included:

It was argued that a proliferation of indicators developed by various agencies had caused governments to be swamped by lots of requests to respond, leading to the [Partnership on Measuring ICT4D](#) had been formed to rationalise and streamline the collection of data from governments. Therefore, it was argued that UNESCO should approach the Partnership for inclusion in its work, and not be recognised as a separate set of indicators outside the existing Partnership. It was noted that there had been a proposal to include a reference to the Internet Universality Indicators during the 2018 negotiations, and that hadn't reached consensus. It was countered that since last year's ECOSOC resolution, the Internet Universality Indicators had been endorsed by the UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication Council. It was argued that the point of the proposed reference was not about the indicators themselves, but to update the resolution with the activities conducted by one of the WSIS Action Line facilitators.

7. The **AI for Good Summit** organised by ITU in partnership with 36 UN agencies and bodies

Why this was not included:

It was noted that while AI for Good Summit was relevant to ICT4D, it was not part of the WSIS follow-up process, and therefore out of scope for the draft ECOSOC resolution. It was argued that if Member States agreed that an event was important, then it could be included. It was noted that the AI for Good Summit was not a Member State approved event, but an event organised by the ITU Secretariat in partnership with other UN agency secretariats, as well as two private sector entities – as such, it was inappropriate for it, and not other similar non-Member State endorsed events, to be included. It was argued that the substance of the Summit should be welcomed and the process leading up to the Summit's creation not be dwelt on.

8. Expressing concern about the increased use of **government-imposed Internet shutdowns**

Why this was not included:

Specific objections to shutdowns weren't raised (no government wants to come out in favour as being favour of shutdowns, but many would like the option to have shutdowns in their national context if needed). But there was an objection based on the proposal to express concern only about shutdowns and not other important issues such as fake news and new technologies; it was suggested that agreeing to a list of all appropriate issues to express concern about would take too much time to reach consensus on. It was argued that the reference to shutdowns would bring balance to the other threats listed in the existing text of paragraph 50 (inc. cyberexploitation). It was countered that shutdowns had nothing in common with the rest of the paragraph and shouldn't be included.

9. Proposals regarding enhanced cooperation:

- Expressing concern about the delay in implementing **enhanced cooperation**
- Regretting that the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation (WGEC) couldn't find agreement on recommendations on how to implement enhanced cooperation
- Requesting the UN Secretary-General organise a high-level dialogue during the 74th UN General Assembly on the implementation of enhanced cooperation

Why these were not included:

It was countered that enhanced cooperation was already happening in many forms, particularly in terms of high-level dialogues (e.g. HLPDC, OEWG). It was argued that the end of WGEC fell into the time period covered by the 2018 version of the resolution and its activities should not be brought up again in the 2019 version, as nothing WGEC-related had happened in this past year. It was argued that text documenting what happened in WGEC needed to remain so that when the next overall review of WSIS happens, people can be well informed about what happened with efforts related to enhanced cooperation. The counterargument was that there is a wealth of information available on the WGEC web page when it comes time to review it as part of a WSIS+20 process. There were arguments about the possible budgetary implications of holding a high-level dialogue at the UNGA. Given the large number of paragraphs dedicated to enhanced cooperation (59-63 in the 2018 version, plus another three new paragraphs proposed, as well as proposals for deletions of four existing paragraphs), there were various efforts to trade inclusion of some paragraphs for deletion of others. Ultimately, however, despite some willingness to accept a paragraph expressing regret about the lack of ability to agree on recommendations within WGEC, as long as the high-level dialogue and delay in implementing enhanced cooperation paragraphs weren't included, none of the three proposed texts reached consensus.

10. Emphasising the need to consider the dual context of **rapid technological change** and the Sustainable Development Goals in assessing progress towards implementation of the WSIS goals

Why this was not included:

It was noted that the UNGA has an entire resolution dedicated to the issue (A/RES/73/17: [Impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets](#)). It was also argued that there are many contexts that need to be taken into account in achieving WSIS goals, and choosing to focus on rapid technological change was problematic. It is worth noting that the proposal for this new paragraph came from the CSTD Secretariat. Traditionally, when the Secretariat only proposed editorial updates to the draft resolution, the changes were not controversial; as the Secretariat moves into proposing substantive texts, even if those texts relate to other UN processes that have already had consensus, more of the Secretariat's proposed changes are resulting in politicised arguments between the governments considering them.

11. Proposals regarding the WSIS Forum:

- Adding a “WSIS Forum” heading before the paragraphs referring to the **WSIS Forum**
- Reference to the 2020 WSIS Forum as a **WSIS+15** event

Why these were not included:

It was noted that proposals to add the heading had not succeeded in previous years (the WSIS Forum was not an outcome of the WSIS Tunis Agenda, but was a later enhancement of the regular Action Line facilitators’ meeting that was in the Tunis Agenda; the WSIS Forum did get its own heading in the UNGA WSIS+10 resolution). It was argued that the “plus” terminology in the UN system had a very specific meaning referring to formal review processes. As the ITU had explained that the use of WSIS+15 for the WSIS Forum 2020 was a branding exercise, rather than a formal review, it was suggested that to use the “plus” terminology for branding was likely to lead governments to interpret the event as being a formal UN review-type process. It was noted that the WSIS Forum of 2014 was labelled a WSIS+10 review, and included a formal, negotiated outcome, so it was inappropriate to refer to the 2020 Forum, which was not such an event, using similar terminology, as it would confuse everyone about its purpose.

12. Requesting the CSTD Secretariat to organise a **substantive discussion on WSIS+15** during the 23rd annual session of the CSTD

Why this was not included: It was explained that as the CSTD Secretariat had conducted a substantive discussion (including report) for WSIS+5, it made sense to do the same five years after the WSIS+10 review. It was countered that when WSIS was brand new, it was useful to conduct a five-year review, but that given the UNGA had deliberately decided against any five-year review, in favour of a 10-year review in 2025, it was not appropriate for CSTD to go against that decision. There were discussions about the budgetary implications of writing a WSIS+15 review report; the Secretariat noted that a couple of governments had expressed preliminary support to fund the report and that if funds weren’t forthcoming, the report would not be developed (the Secretariat has a small staff, so activities such as the proposed report are generally outsourced to consultants). It was suggested that non-government sources of funds could be approached, as happened for the CSTD’s WSIS+5 review report.

Appendix A: Participation in the work of the CSTD

Plenary meetings of the CSTD are open to:

- All 193 United Nations Member States, as well as the Holy See and the State of Palestine
- Representatives from intergovernmental organisations (IGOs)
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in consultative status with ECOSOC
- World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) accredited entities, including NGOs, civil society entities, business sector entities, as well as academic and technical entities (Participation in this category is considered on an exceptional basis, via periodically renewed “[decisions](#)” first adopted in 2007)

Negotiations on the draft ECOSOC resolutions are open to:

- All UN Member States
- NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC, with the permission of the Chair of the negotiations
- Observers from IGOs and WSIS-accredited entities, with the permission of the chair of the negotiations

All UN Member States are permitted to submit proposed texts for inclusion in the draft resolutions. IGOs and other observers with proposed texts must find a Member State willing to propose the text on their behalf.

During the negotiations, all UN Member States – not just CSTD Member States – may take the floor. The only difference between CSTD Member States and the wider group of UN Member States is that if a vote is needed, only CSTD Member States can take part.

Observers may request and take the floor during negotiations if the Chair of the negotiations permits it. On occasion, the expertise of observers may also be specifically requested as input by Member States.

Appendix B: Changes between the 2018 and 2019 WSIS resolutions

Key

~~Red bold strikethrough text~~

Text from 2018 that was deleted in 2019 version

Green bold text

New text from 2019

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 ~~2017/21 of 6 July 2017~~ 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](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution [70/125](#) of 16 December 2015, 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”, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the World Summit vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,² and assessed progress made to date, identified gaps and challenges and made recommendations for the future,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution ~~72/200 of 20 December 2017~~ **73/218 of 20 December 2018** on information and communications technologies for sustainable 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,³

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 report in a timely manner,

~~*Noting with appreciation the holding of the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in Nairobi from 17 to 22 July 2016, and its outcome document entitled “Nairobi Maafikiano: From decision to action: Moving towards an inclusive and equitable global economic environment for trade and development”,⁴*~~

¹ See [A/C.2/59/3](#) and [A/60/687](#).

² General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

³ ~~A/73/66 E/2018/10. A/74/62-E/2019/6~~

⁴ ~~TD/519/Add.2 and TD/519/Add.2/Corr.1.~~

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

1. *Welcomes and urges* the full implementation of General Assembly resolution [70/125](#);
2. *Welcomes* the constructive and diverse inputs from all stakeholders in the overall review of progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;
3. *Reaffirms its commitment* to the full implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit and the vision of the 10-year review of the World Summit beyond 2015;
4. *Reaffirms* the commitment made in General Assembly resolution [70/125](#) to close the digital divides between and within countries, including the gender digital divide, through efforts to improve connectivity, affordability, access to information and knowledge, multilingual content, digital skills and digital literacy, acknowledging specific challenges facing persons with disabilities and specific needs, and groups in vulnerable situations;
5. *Encourages* close alignment between the World Summit process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁵ as called for in General Assembly resolution [70/125](#), highlighting the cross-cutting contribution of information and communications technology to the Sustainable Development Goals and poverty eradication, and noting that access to information and communications technologies has also become a development indicator and aspiration in and of itself;
6. *Reaffirms* its understanding that the success of the 2030 Agenda will depend on increasing access to information and communications technology;
7. *Recognizes* that information and communications technology infrastructure is fundamental to achieving the goal of digital inclusion and that digital divides persist across income groups, age groups, geography and gender, and therefore recalls its commitment to the 2030 Agenda, target 9.c, which aims to significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strives to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020, and in this regard notes the importance of the **Connect 2020 2030** Agenda for Global Telecommunication/Information and Communications Technology, **including broadband, for sustainable** Development;
8. *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;
9. *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, acknowledges that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divides, and encourages all stakeholders to ensure the full participation of girls and women in the information society and women's access to new technologies, especially information and communications technologies for development;
10. *Encourages* the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to continue to give due consideration to the impact of key rapid technological changes on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

⁵ General Assembly resolution [70/1](#).

within the respective mandates and existing resources, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/242 of 22 December 2017](#) [73/218 of 20 December 2018](#);

11. *Welcomes* the holding on 3 May ~~2018~~ **2019** of World Press Freedom Day, proclaimed by the General Assembly and led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;

12. *Also welcomes* the holding of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, celebrated annually on 17 May and led by the International Telecommunication Union;

13. *Notes* the ongoing implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit, 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, regional World Summit review initiatives 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;

14. *Recognizes* the value and principle of multi-stakeholder cooperation and engagement that have characterized the World Summit process since its inception and that are clearly recognized in the 2030 Agenda, and notes that many activities that support the objectives of the World Summit and the Sustainable Development Goals 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;

15. *Underscores* the importance of and encourages continued collaboration between the follow-up and review process of the World Summit and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, including its multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals;

16. *Takes note* of the reports of many United Nations entities submitted as input for the elaboration of the annual report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development 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;

17. *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, ~~Error! Bookmark not defined.~~ 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;

18. *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 encouraging collaboration and partnership among all stakeholders, including international organizations, exchanging information among action line facilitators and other stakeholders, identifying issues that need improvement and discussing the modalities of reporting on the overall implementation process;

19. *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 database;

20. *Highlights* the urgent need for the incorporation of the recommendations contained in the outcome documents of the World Summit into 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 has offered its assistance;

21. *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 outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit;

22. *Also recalls* that, in its resolution [70/125](#), the General Assembly called for continuation of the annual reports on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit, 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;

23. *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;

24. *Welcomes* the fact that the rapid growth in access to mobile telephony and broadband since 2005 has meant that almost two thirds of the world's inhabitants should have access to information and communications technologies within their reach, **95 96** per cent of the world's population lives within reach of a mobile cellular network, with **7.48 8.16** billion mobile-cellular subscriptions, and **48 51** per cent of the world's population uses the Internet, in line with the World Summit targets; the value of this progress is enhanced by the advent of new electronic and mobile services and applications for health, agriculture, education, business, development, financial and government services, civic participation and transactional services, which offer great potential for the development of the information society;

25. *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, and promote digital literacy to bridge the digital and knowledge divides

26. *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 **and landlocked countries**, towards a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy;

27. *Also recognizes* the rapid growth in broadband access networks, especially in developed countries, and underscores the need to urgently address the growing digital divides 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;

28. *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;

29. *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;

30. *Also recognizes* that the number of Internet users is growing and that, in some instances, the digital divide and the knowledge divide are also changing in character, from a divide 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 therefrom, 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;

31. *Emphasizes*, in this regard, the vital importance of multilingualism and local content in the information society, and urges all stakeholders to encourage the creation of, and access to, educational, cultural and scientific content online so as to promote quality of access and ensure that all people and cultures can express themselves and have access to the Internet in all languages, including indigenous languages;

32. *Recognizes* the importance of human capacity-building, an enabling environment and resilient information and communications technology infrastructure, as well as fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships, and assistance to countries in their efforts to strengthen the enabling role of information and communications technology for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, ~~and notes the holding of the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 under the overall theme "Information and Communications Technology for Sustainable Development Goals", in Buenos Aires from 9 to 20 October 2017;~~

33. *Urges* a continued focus on maximizing development gains from e-commerce, through the eTrade for All initiative, which provides a new approach to trade development through electronic exchanges by allowing developing countries to more easily navigate the supply of technical assistance for building capacity in e-commerce readiness and by enabling donors to have a clear picture of the programmes that they could fund;

34. *Recognizes*, in this regard, that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has initiated and implemented rapid e-trade readiness ~~surveys~~ **assessments** of least developed countries in cooperation with other donors and organizations in order to raise awareness of opportunities and challenges related to leveraging e-commerce in the least developed countries;

35. *Welcomes* **Notes** the holding of the ~~first and second sessions~~ **third session** of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy, ~~and takes note of the agreed policy recommendations adopted by the Group of Experts at those sessions;~~⁶

36. *Takes note* of the global report of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, entitled *The State of Broadband 2017 2018: Broadband Catalysing 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

⁶ TD/B/EDE/1/3, sect. I, and TD/B/EDE/2/4, sect. I.A.

the development agenda challenges are met with appropriate impact and in conjunction with all stakeholders;

37. *Notes* the launching by the Broadband Commission of the 2025 targets to support “connecting the other half” and to help to bring online the 3.8 billion of the world’s people who are not connected to the Internet;

38. *Recognizes* that the digital economy **has and emerging technologies have** enormous potential for social good, the implementation of World Summit outcomes and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

39. *Welcomes* the many initiatives of United Nations organizations which support the implementation of the World Summit action lines, and encourages all action line facilitators to continue to work towards implementation of the action lines;

40. *Also welcomes* the work of the Information for All Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which aims to assist Member States in formulating policies to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable knowledge societies **and also welcomes the holding of Global Media and Information Literacy Week from 24 to 31 October 2019;**

41. ~~*Further welcomes*~~ *Recognises* the work of the International Telecommunication Union, **including the holding of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference from 29 October to 16 November 2018 in Dubai-UAE, where the membership reaffirmed their commitment to the common vision of a connected world and welcomes its work** to support the deployment of broadband wireless networks in developing countries, including the training of local experts;

41.bis Notes the holding, in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2018 of the sixteenth World Telecommunication/Information and Communications Technology Indicators Symposium (WTIS);

42. *Recognizes* the work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to promote digital inclusion in Africa and other regions to support poverty reduction and food security;

43. *Also recognizes* the work of the International Labour Organization on the impact on jobs caused by technological change;

44. ~~*Notes with appreciation*~~ *Recognises* the work of the Global Observatory for eHealth of the World Health Organization, including its consideration of how m-health, telehealth, electronic health records and e-learning can contribute to the goals of universal health coverage;

44.bis Recognise the work of the United Nations Development Program, including the publication of its Digital Strategy, which aims to apply the potential of digital technology to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

44.ter.alt Notes the publication of the UN Secretary-General’s Strategy on New Technologies on how the United Nations system will support the use of new technologies to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and to facilitate their alignment with the values enshrined in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the norms and standards of International Laws;

44.quinquies. Reiterates the commitment to harnessing the potential of information and communications technologies to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed development goals, noting that they can accelerate progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, accordingly urges all Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders to integrate information and communications technologies into their approaches to implementing the Goals, and requests United Nations system entities facilitating the World Summit on the

Information Society action lines to review their reporting and work plans to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

45. *Notes with great concern* the fact that women are 12 per cent less likely than men to make use of the Internet, and 33 per cent less likely to do so in the least developed countries, draws attention to the gender digital divide, which persists in women's access to and use of information and communications technologies, including in education, employment and other areas of economic and social development, and, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, calls upon Member States to adopt all appropriate measures, especially by significantly enhancing women's and girls' education and participation in information and communications technologies, as users, content creators, employees, entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders;

46. *Notes* the many initiatives targeted at closing the gender digital divide, including, among others, International Girls in ICT Day (International Telecommunication Union), the Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age (the EQUALS initiative), the EQUALS in Tech Awards (International Telecommunication Union and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women), **and the eTrade for Women network (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development)**, Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), Women on the Homepage (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), the Global Survey on Gender and Media (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), the Broadband Commission Working Group on Broadband and Gender, the Best Practice Forum on Gender and Access of the Internet Governance Forum, the work being done in the World Summit on the Information Society Forum on gender issues and the work of the World Bank in a number of countries promoting opportunities for women and girls in information and communications technologies, as well as the work of many other stakeholders on this issue;

47. *Reaffirms* the commitment to pay particular attention to the unique and emerging information and communications technology challenges facing all countries, in particular developing countries, as envisaged in the relevant paragraphs of General Assembly resolution [70/125](#);

48. *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;

49. *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;

50. *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, **cultural and linguistic diversity**, virtualization and cloud computing and services, mobile Internet and mobile-based services, community networks, cybersecurity, the gender gap, the protection of **online** privacy **and freedom of expression as defined in articles 17 and 19 of the ICCPR** and the empowerment and protection, especially against cyberexploitation and abuse, of vulnerable groups of society, in particular children and young people;

51. *Reaffirms* that, in the outcome document on the overall review of the implementation of the World Summit action lines, the General Assembly called for

the World Summit on the Information Society Forum to be held annually,⁷ and recognizes the value of the Forum in enhancing cooperation, partnership, innovation and the exchange of experiences and good practices by all stakeholders in information and communications technologies for sustainable development;

52. *Notes* the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum ~~2018~~ **2019**, hosted by the International Telecommunication Union and jointly organized by the Union, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva from ~~19 to 23 March 2018~~ **8 to 12 April 2019**, under the theme “**Leveraging** Information and Communications Technologies ~~to build information and knowledge societies~~ for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”, welcomes the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum ~~2019~~ **2020**, in Geneva from ~~8 to 12 April 2019~~ **30 March to 3 April 2020**, and notes the open consultation process, which aims to ensure wide participation in and broad ownership of the Forum;

53. *Encourages* action line facilitators to use the Geneva Plan of Action⁸ as the framework for identifying practical measures to use information and communications technologies to help to achieve the 2030 Agenda, noting the World Summit on the Information Society-Sustainable Development Goals Matrix, developed by United Nations agencies;

54. *Encourages* World Summit action line facilitators to ensure close alignment with the 2030 Agenda when considering new work to implement the outcomes of the World Summit, according to their existing mandates and resources;

55. *Reiterates* the importance of the call by the General Assembly for all stakeholders to integrate information and communications technologies into approaches to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and its request to United Nations entities facilitating the World Summit action lines to review their reporting and workplans to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

Internet governance

56. *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;

57. *Also reaffirms* paragraphs 34 to 37 and 67 to 72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society;⁹

58. *Further reaffirms* paragraphs 55 to 65 of General Assembly resolution [70/125](#);

Enhanced cooperation

59. *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 have an impact on international public policy issues;

60. *Notes* the work of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation, established by the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution [70/125](#), to develop recommendations on how to further implement enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda, and also notes that the Working Group ensured the full involvement of Governments and other relevant stakeholders, in particular

⁷ See General Assembly resolution [70/125](#).

⁸ See [A/C.2/59/3](#), annex.

⁹ See [A/60/687](#).

from developing countries, taking into account all their diverse views and expertise;

61. *Also notes* that the Working Group held five meetings between September 2016 and January 2018, at which it discussed inputs from Member States and other stakeholders, as stipulated by the General Assembly in its resolution [70/125](#);

62. *Takes note* of the report of the Chair of the Working Group,¹⁰ which includes references to the full texts of all proposals and contributions, and expresses its gratitude to the Chair and all participants who submitted inputs and contributed to the work of the Working Group;

63. *Welcomes* the good progress made by the Working Group in many areas and the fact that consensus seemed to emerge on some issues, while significant divergence of views on a number of other issues persisted, and in that regard regrets that the Working Group could not find agreement on recommendations on how to further implement enhanced cooperation as envisioned in the Tunis Agenda;

Internet Governance Forum

64. *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;

65. *Recalls* the decision of the General Assembly, in its resolution [70/125 from December 2015](#), to extend the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum for a further 10 years, during which time the Forum should continue to show progress on working modalities and the participation of relevant stakeholders from developing countries;

66. *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;

67. *Recalls* General Assembly resolution [70/125](#), in which the Assembly called upon the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, within its regular reporting, to give due consideration to fulfilment of the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum of the Commission;¹¹

68. *Notes* the holding of the ~~twelfth~~ **thirteenth** meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, hosted by the Government of ~~Switzerland~~ **France** in ~~Geneva~~ **Paris** from ~~18 to 21 December 2017~~ **12 to 14 November 2018**, under the theme “~~Shape your digital future!~~ **The Internet of Trust**”;

69. *Welcomes* the holding of the ~~thirteenth~~ **fourteenth** meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, ~~to take place in the fourth quarter 2018~~ **hosted by the Government of Germany in Berlin from 25 to 29 November 2019**, and notes that, in the preparatory process for the meeting, recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum are being taken into consideration;

70. *Also welcomes*, in that context, the continuous progress made with regard to the intersessional work of the Internet Governance Forum in the different modalities of connecting and enabling the next billion online, dynamic coalitions and best practice forums, as well as the contributions being made by both national and regional Internet governance forums;

The road ahead

¹⁰ See [E/CN.16/2018/CRP.3](#).

¹¹ [A/67/65-E/2012/48](#) and [A/67/65/Corr.1-E/2012/48/Corr.1](#).

71. *Calls upon* United Nations entities to continue to actively cooperate in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit through the United Nations system, 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;

72. *Calls upon* all stakeholders to keep the goal of bridging the digital divides, in their 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, including through participative models, with a view to narrowing the digital divides among and within countries towards building information and knowledge societies;

73. *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 divides;

73.bis. *Calls upon* all stakeholders to promote an enabling policy environment for investments and foster public-private cooperation and partnership for sustainable investment in ICT infrastructure, application and services, content and digital skills with the aim of ensuring the meaningful connectivity needed to advance the sustainable development goals;

74. *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;

75. *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;¹²

76. *Reiterates* the importance of information and communications technology indicators in open data format 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 the importance of the standardization and harmonization of reliable and regularly updated indicators **and stresses the value of gender disaggregated data to contribute to the bridging of the digital gender divide;**

77. *Acknowledges* the importance of digital measurement and monitoring tools that support the deployment and measurement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

78. *Reiterates* the importance of sharing best practices at all levels, 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;

79. *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:

¹² General Assembly resolution [69/313](#), annex.

(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 Communications Technology for Development and the annual *Measuring the Information Society Report*, which provides recent trends and statistics on access to and the affordability of information and communications technologies and the evolution of the information and knowledge societies worldwide, including the Information and Communications Technology Development Index;

(d) Encourages the Partnership on Measuring ~~Information and Communications~~ ICT for Development to **continue the** follow up on the **relevant decisions of the** Statistical Commission ~~decision 47/110 of 11 March 2016~~ on information and communications technology statistics,¹³ ~~and recommends in that context that the Partnership develop guidance to improve cooperation with the different stakeholders~~ for the purposes of producing high-quality and timely information and communications technology statistics and of leveraging the potential benefits of using big data for official statistics;

~~(e) Notes the holding, in Tunisia from 14 to 16 November 2017, of the fifteenth World Telecommunication/Information and Communications Technology Indicators Symposium, and also notes the sixteenth Symposium, to be held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2018;~~

80. *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 on Science and Technology for Development 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;

81. *Recalls* the proposal in General Assembly resolution [70/125](#) that the Assembly hold a high-level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit in 2025;

82. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General and the related discussion of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its twenty-~~first~~ **second** session;¹⁴

83. *Emphasizes* the importance of promoting an inclusive information society, with particular attention to bridging the digital and broadband divides, taking into account the considerations of developing countries, gender and culture, as well as youth and other underrepresented groups;

84. *Calls for* continued dialogue and work on the implementation of enhanced cooperation as envisaged in the Tunis Agenda;

85. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, on a yearly basis, a report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the present resolution as well as in the other Council resolutions on the assessment of the quantitative and qualitative progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit.

¹³ ~~See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2016, Supplement No. 4 (E/2016/24), chap. I, sect. B.~~

¹⁴ Ibid., 2018, Supplement No. 11 ([E/2018/31](#)).