

19 October 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the informal interactive consultation with stakeholders on the
WSIS+10 overall review**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good evening to you all.

We are now at the end of this informal interactive consultation with stakeholders. I understand that you have covered a wide-range of issues that will now feed into the intergovernmental negotiations as we build towards the high-level event in December.

On ICTs for development, speakers highlighted the contribution of ICT to the achievement of the MDGs, and the expectation that ICT and the Internet would be even greater enablers for the full breadth of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Some speakers noted that digital divides mirror wider divides and inequalities in society, which may perpetuate digital exclusion and suggested remaining sensitive to social and economic differences in the outcome document and in ICT policy in general. The promotion of community-based practices was suggested by some, with a role for UN agencies in the analysis of the impact of ICT for development at micro and macro levels.

Many felt that universal access to the internet must be a priority, with particular attention needed to build infrastructure and public access for people in Africa, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. In this regard, many welcomed references to the promotion of access and digital literacy among disadvantaged and marginalized communities within countries to make use of ICTs and bridge the digital divide.

Speakers also highlighted the need for infrastructure development to go hand-in-hand with relevant, reliable and multilingual information, for example through promotion of open government etc. They stressed that technology transfer and the strengthening of ICT competencies are essential both to managing networks and services, and to leveraging opportunities afforded by ICT access in education, culture, employment, health, energy and other fields.

The financial mechanisms to bridge the digital divide continue to be of concern and many of you supported linkages between further implementation of WSIS and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The role of private sector and the importance of legal and regulatory frameworks that are conducive to responsible investment was also underscored.

Turning now to Internet governance, speakers clearly signalled that participation of all stakeholders in their respective roles and responsibilities should be encouraged, recognizing that multi-stakeholder models of internet governance were emerging at all levels. There were repeated calls for the governance of the Internet to be open, inclusive and transparent.

Many speakers also stressed the value of the Internet Governance Forum and welcomed indications that it may be continued.

Thirdly, in terms of Human rights and building confidence and security in the use of ICTs, a number of speakers reaffirmed that respect for human rights is a fundamental feature of the information society, and should remain a central concern in the further implementation of WSIS outcomes.

Many stakeholders welcomed a prominent reaffirmation of the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Participants underscored the centrality of the right to freedom of expression and the free flow of information, and recalled that the same rights that people are entitled to offline must also be protected online. At the same time, speakers welcomed the inclusion of a commitment to the right to privacy, and to the exercise of rights and freedoms consistent with international law.

Speakers also underscored that the security and stability of the Internet remain of vital concern, and appreciated the attention given to promoting a global culture of cybersecurity in the WSIS+10 review. One participant called for a commitment to ICT to promote peace and prevent conflict.

Initiatives to strengthen confidence and security in the use of ICTs were recognized and appreciated. Some suggested that a commitment to professionalism and trustworthy conduct could be infused throughout the draft outcome document.

Finally, on implementation and follow-up, speakers expressed support for a focus on practical implementation measures that address the full set of WSIS Action Lines, within the context of the SDGs.

Speakers concurred that more work would be needed on data collection and analysis, and better use of indicators, for example on the impact of ICT on sustainable development within and across countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are amongst the many points we heard today. These valuable contributions will be included in a President's summary that I will circulate shortly. Written comments received on the zero draft will be posted online in full for the benefit of all concerned. I will also bring your discussions to the attention of member states tomorrow.

I thank you all for your active participation and look forward to your further contributions to the process. Please note that registration for stakeholders to participate in the High Level meeting on 15-16 December, will open by the end of this week. I encourage all relevant stakeholders to participate actively in that meeting.