Session Outcome Document

Summary of Session:
Embracing Biodiversity – How the ICT sector can go beyond COP 15

ITU

Monday, 22 May 2023

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2023/Agenda/Session/515

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Speakers highlighted that it is critical to ensure materials are sourced from mines or companies adhering to best practices and regulatory standards that incorporate environmental criteria.

- The session emphasized improving traceability is critical for making informed and actionable decisions in supply chain sourcing.

- Speakers stressed that ICTs are part of the solution in protecting biodiversity. There is a significant opportunity for conserving nature with technology through the preservation or biodiversity and managing natural resources sustainably.

- The session also highlighted ICTs and digital technologies such as IoT, artificial intelligence and digital twin are helping monitor biodiversity through remote sensor networks, data gathering and management to promote the conservation of biodiversity.

- Speakers also addressed that ICTs and digital technologies can be used to beyond the goals set out by COP 15 through the support of international standards.

Towards WSIS+20 and WSIS beyond 2025, please share your views on the emerging trends, challenges, achievements, and opportunities in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines to date (5-8 bullets)

- WSIS Action Line 6: Enabling environment
  - To ensure the widespread adoption and effective use of ICTs for social and economic development, it is important to understand the role of biodiversity and how digital technologies can be leveraged to drive decision-making, collaboration and awareness

– all of which can contribute to the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity with the help of ICTs.

- WSIS Action Line 7: ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life
  - There is significant potential of ICT applications in promoting efforts, environmental sustainability, and biodiversity management.
  - This can be achieved through international standards that supports and enhances our understanding of ecosystems, promote conservation practices and addresses the challenges facing biodiversity in a rapidly changing world.

Tangible outcomes (such as key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, and commitments (3-5 bullet points)

- The ICT sector has agreed to measure and monitor its impact on biodiversity.
- There is a general consensus to continue developing standards, benchmarks and guidelines to help the ICT sector evaluate its impact on biodiversity.
- The ICT sector is dedicated to preserving biodiversity and exploring the potential of digital technologies as a part of the solution.

Actionable plan (2-5 points)

- There is a need to provide a standardized biodiversity footprint score for a company or portfolio of companies.
- In order to improve the management effectiveness of protected areas and use appropriate technical solutions to meet challenges.
- There is a need to develop a unique "benchmarking tools" that use digital technology to track progress and improvement of protected areas and use digital technology to better monitor and assess.

Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2024 (WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event) (one paragraph)

- The upcoming WSIS Forums should prioritize a more thorough exploration of biodiversity as a central theme. The impact of the ICT sector on biodiversity is substantial, considering its high energy consumption and utilization of natural resources. Consequently, it becomes imperative for the industry to acknowledge its responsibility and actively strive to minimize its environmental impact. ICTs and digital

technologies possess both opportunities and challenges when it comes to biodiversity. Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate the direct and indirect effects of ICT solutions on biodiversity in order to comprehend their overall influence.