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**Regional activities towards alignment of WSIS and SDG processes**

Implementation of the WSIS process at the regional level has been growing over the years and lots of input in 2019 came as a joined effort by the regions, while at the same time many WSIS process activities are being shaped to include regional needs and objectives.

In accordance to Para 109 of the Tunis Agenda, ITU, UNESCO and UNDP continue playing lead facilitating roles in the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action and organize a meeting of moderators/facilitators of action lines. In line with the General Assembly Resolution [A/70/125](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/125), the UN Regional Economic Commissions continue their work in implementation of WSIS and their contribution to the reviews thereof, including through regional reviews organized in collaboration with UN Agencies, including ITU.

In line with the instruction of the PP-18 Resolution 140 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), ITU continues to undertake a number of actions in order to strengthen – involving, among others, the ITU Regional and Area Offices – coordination and collaboration at the regional level with the UN Regional Economic Commissions and the UN Regional Development Group, as well as all UN agencies (in particular those acting as facilitator for WSIS action lines), other relevant regional organizations, especially in the field of telecommunications/ICT.

ITU is working in collaboration with the UN Regional Commission and other regional organizations to hold regional WSIS reviews, exploring the implementation of WSIS Action Lines and SDGs in the Regions. These could serve as a platform to asses and review national implementation of WSIS Action Lines and SDGs. ITU regional offices are also working together towards building the agenda and the programme of the annual WSIS Forums

Annual UN Regional Commissions Meeting at the WSIS Forum 2019 discussed the key role played by the regional commissions in the wider deployment of WSIS Action lines for SDGs at the regional level. UN Regional Commissions presented their regional perspectives on WSIS, especially the successful regional reviews as well as the convening of the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development. The UN Regional Commissions expressed their willingness to collaborate together and with other international and regional organizations to exchange experiences, to peer learn and to use the regional space as an opportunity to consolidate lessons learnt through national and sub-regional implementation and to reflect on knowledge deficit areas, and other new opportunities that will enable institutional and regional co-ordination to exchange best practices vis a vis WSIS outcomes. UNESCAP was appointed as the chair of the WSIS Regional Commission Group for 2019-2020.

BDT through its regional offices is strengthening collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions to facilitate the implementation of WSIS at the Regional level. It is important to connect the dots at the regional level to make study group questions and WSIS action lines more coherent to make greater impact.

ITU Regional Offices continue contributing to the series of the UN Regional Forums for Sustainable Development, held on the annual basis in six regions. Number of thematic sessions, targeted interventions, and exhibitions were organized in 2019 in order to forge multistakeholder partnerships and advance implementation of ICT for SDGs projects and initiatives, while aligning WSIS Action Lines and SDGs. The following presents the series of meetings that took place in 2019 with the engagement of the ITU Regional Offices:

* [ESCAP: Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development](http://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/apfsd5)
27–29 March 2019, Bangkok, Thailand
* The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for UNECE Region
21-22 March 2019, Geneva, Switzerland
* [ECLAC: Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development](http://sdg.iisd.org/events/forum-of-the-countries-of-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-on-sustainable-development-2018/)
22 - 26 April 2019, Santiago, Chile
* [ESCWA: Arab Regional Forum for Sustainable Development](http://sdg.iisd.org/events/escwa-regional-forum-on-sustainable-development-2018/)
9-11 April 2019, Beirut, Lebanon.
* [ECA Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development](http://sdg.iisd.org/events/uneca-regional-forum-for-sustainable-development-2018/)
16-18 April 2019, Marrakech, Morocco

In addition ITU Regional Offices, on the regular basis, continue proactively contribute to the meetings of the UN Regional Coordination Mechanisms and UN Regional Development Groups advocating for enabling role of ICTs for SDGs, advising on incorporation of ICTs in the UN development assistance frameworks and the projects delivered by other sister agencies, while developing strategic partnerships with regional counterparts of UN system and other relevant stakeholders. Building upon the process of monitoring of the national sustainable development plans and national voluntary reviews on SDGs carried out by the member states, continuous efforts are made in order to strengthen the role of the ICTs at the level of strategic planning of countries.

Moreover, in response to the WTDC-17 resolves, a series of ITU Regional Development Forums with the overall theme of ICTs for Sustainable Development are being organized in 2019 in order to provide an open platform for partnership building and coordination of implementation of ITU Regional Initiatives approved by WTDC-17 and aiming at contributing to the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines and achievement of SDGs. RDFs continue to engage regional stakeholders, help in developing partnerships, involve regional/international organizations and UN agencies. The following provides an overview of all RDFs held in 2019:

* The ITU Regional Development Forum for Africa will take place in 2019
* The ITU Regional Development Forum for the Americas Region, will take place on 30 September 2019 in Asunción, Paraguay
* The ITU Regional Development Forum for the Arab States took place ​on 19 March 2019 in Beirut, Lebanon
* The ITU Regional Development Forum for the Asia and the Pacific Region will take place in 2019 in New Delhi, India​ (TBC)
* The ITU Regional Development Forum for the CIS will take place on 2 and 3 October 2019 in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. ​
* The Regional Development Forum for Europe took place on 6 May 2019 in Rome, Italy.

With the aim of ensuring that ITU Regional Offices effectively use WSIS Forum for strengthening coordination with UN partners, including economic commissions and other stakeholders as well as proactively contributing to sessions focusing on regional implementation, a special session on regional implementation of WSIS was co-organized by ITU and UN Regional Economic Commissions during the first day of the WSIS Forum 2019. Moreover several sessions benefited from interventions by the Regional Directors drawing attention to ITU Regional Initiatives as well as ITU flagship actions. In the outcomes of the UN General Assembly overall review on the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (GA Resolution A/70/125), **UN Regional Commissions** are invited to coordinate the implementation of the WSIS at the regional level. The upcoming UNESCAP meeting on the Regional Review of the World Summit on the Information Society Action Lines Implementation will take place on 28 August 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand, and will also serve as the Inter-agency Working Group on ICT, thereby facilitating information sharing among the WSIS Action Line Facilitators at the regional level. Along with ITU, this meeting will be supported by UNESCO, UNDP, to play leading facilitating role in the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action (para 109 of the Tunis Agenda), as well as UNESCAP (UN Regional Commission); and other UN Agencies to facilitating role in the implementation of the WSIS Action lines.

The outcomes of this meeting will serve as inputs to the WSIS Forum (30 March – 3 April 2020, Geneva, Switzerland) and its open consultation process, WSIS Stocktaking, WSIS Prizes, thereby bringing to forefront emerging trends, opportunities and challenges from the regional layer in a multi-stakeholder format. Regional good practices shared will be highlighted at the global level within the framework of the official WSIS Stocktaking process. In addition, outcomes of the meeting will be reported to the ESCAP Committee and Commission sessions.

All WSIS Process activities, including the WSIS Prizes, WSIS Stocktaking and inputs to the WSIS Forum are engaging with the regional layers. As the results of the Open Consultation Process will include a collection of inputs from regional and national WSIS related events, we invite all to participate in this process towards WSIS Forum 2020.

Strengthening the process of implementation of the WSIS outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in collaboration with the regional/area offices and together with relevant regional telecommunication organizations, UN Economic Regional Commissions and UN Regional Development Groups, as well as all UN Agencies (in particular those acting as facilitators for WSIS Action Lines), is crucial in furthering the regional activities towards alignment of WSIS/SDG processes.

Therefore, we invite all to participate in the regional events organized by ITU and regional organizations on WSIS and SDGs, to promote regional WSIS+15 Forum in 2020 and to participate at regional WSIS Forums in the Regional Development Forums. We also invite you to submit and share regional initiatives to the WSIS Stocktaking database and submit ICT projects for the WSIS Prizes 2020.