

WSIS EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE WSIS STOCKTAKING

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WSIS stocktaking

1. The WSIS Stocktaking is intended to fulfil the dual purpose of providing an inventory of activities undertaken by governments and all stakeholders in implementing the Geneva decisions (WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action) and of taking stock of the progress made in building the Information Society.

2. The WSIS stocktaking was launched by the WSIS Executive Secretariat (WSIS-ES) in October 2004. Following an initial brainstorming meeting of stakeholders, an online consultation and discussions within the WSIS Bureau on the form the stocktaking should take, a questionnaire was developed and sent to all stakeholders and posted online (see www.itu.int/wsis/stocktaking). On the basis of responses received to date, a searchable database of WSIS-related activities has been created and is publicly accessible. The database contains details of just under 1'200 WSIS-related activities, including project descriptions, supporting documentation and URLs, which is searchable by WSIS action lines the development goals contained in the Millennium Declaration (MDGs), geographical coverage, etc.

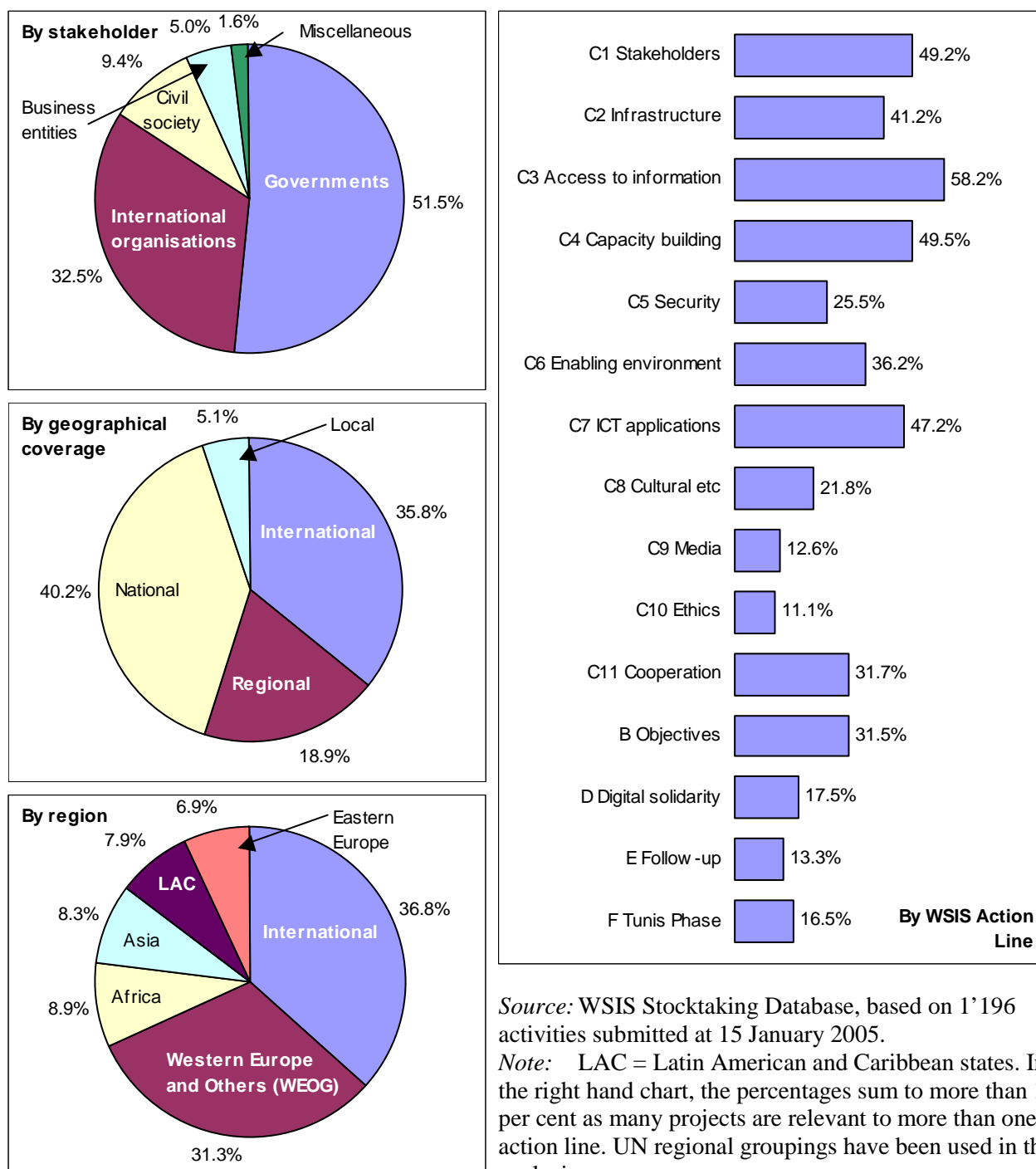
3. The intention is that, over time, the WSIS stocktaking database should become a dynamic portal to all WSIS-related activities undertaken by stakeholders. The database will continue to be updated with new inputs, both up to and beyond the completion of the Tunis Phase. This preliminary report to PrepCom-2 contains a representative summary of activities submitted by stakeholders, but it does not aim to be comprehensive. Rather, it is intended only to point to the much richer, and continually updated information in the database itself. A more detailed report on the stocktaking will be prepared for PrepCom-3.

1.2 Statistical summary

4. The total number of activities submitted by 15 January 2005 was 1'196, of which just over half came from governments and a further third from international organizations. The remaining activities were submitted by civil society, business entities and other entities (see Fig. 1). More than half of the activities submitted were either regional or international in scope; Western Europe and North America accounted for just under a third of all submissions (31%), with the next most important region being Africa (9%).

5. Table 1 summarizes the breakdown of activities by action line. C3 (access to information) is the most active action line, with relevance to 58 per cent of all submitted projects, followed by capacity building, with 49 per cent. Just over 70 per cent of all activities submitted were considered relevant to the goals of the Millennium Declaration (MDGs). MDG Goal #8—developing a global partnership for development—is the most, relevant with a cross-correlation of 56 per cent of submissions.

Figure 1: Breakdown of WSIS-related activities in the stocktaking database
By source, by geographical coverage by region and by action line



2 NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Summary of national implementation projects

6. There were 470 activities dealing with implementation at the national level (40 % of the total number of received activities), with a majority (86 per cent) being implemented by governments.

Table 1: WSIS-related activities by action line

| <i>Action Lines</i> | Totals | Govts. | Int. Orgs. | Civil Society | Business Entities | Misc. |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|------------|---------------|-------------------|-------|
| C1 Stakeholders | 576 | 63.4 % | 18.9 % | 8.9 % | 6.9 % | 1.9 % |
| C2 Infrastructure | 480 | 61.5 % | 18.5 % | 10.0 % | 8.3 % | 1.7 % |
| C3 Access to information | 683 | 55.6 % | 20.6 % | 13.5 % | 7.9 % | 2.3 % |
| C4 Capacity building | 582 | 56.4 % | 21.0 % | 13.6 % | 6.7 % | 2.4 % |
| C5 Security | 294 | 60.2 % | 22.1 % | 7.5 % | 7.1 % | 3.1 % |
| C6 Enabling environment | 424 | 55.2 % | 27.6 % | 10.8 % | 4.0 % | 2.4 % |
| C7 ICT applications | 552 | 62.9 % | 19.6 % | 10.1 % | 6.0 % | 1.4 % |
| C8 Cultural diversity | 253 | 46.6 % | 20.2 % | 20.9 % | 9.1 % | 3.2 % |
| C9 Media | 145 | 55.2 % | 19.3 % | 16.6 % | 5.5 % | 3.4 % |
| C10 Ethical dimensions | 127 | 50.4 % | 18.1 % | 23.6 % | 3.1 % | 4.7 % |
| C11 Cooperation | 375 | 47.5 % | 28.0 % | 13.1 % | 9.1 % | 2.4 % |
| PoA B: Objectives | 365 | 63.6 % | 14.5 % | 11.8 % | 9.3 % | 0.8 % |
| PoA D: Solidarity | 205 | 54.1 % | 17.6 % | 10.7 % | 16.1 % | 1.5 % |
| PoA E: Follow-up | 155 | 45.2 % | 31.0 % | 13.5 % | 8.4 % | 1.9 % |
| PoA F: Tunis phase | 190 | 55.8 % | 23.7 % | 13.2 % | 3.2 % | 4.2 % |

Note: "Totals" shows the number of submissions in the database that were considered relevant to this action line. The other columns show what percentage of these came from different stakeholder groups.

2.2 Examples of national e-strategies

7. Several governments have developed, or are developing, national e-strategies aimed at building the Information Society. The national e-strategies can be grouped broadly according to the focus and extent of their activities. For instance, some representative examples include the following:

8. Information Society initiatives

- a. [Azerbaijan](#) has set up a State Programme on Development of Communication and Information Technologies, covering the period 2005 to 2008. The main goal of the programme to reach international standards for penetration of telecommunication, postal and information technologies and to increase the quality of service for users. The opinions of the private sector, NGOs and International Organisations are also being taken into account in the process of developing this programme.
- b. [Bulgaria](#) launched the iBulgaria initiative in 2004. The initiative is based on two groups of actions: the stimulation of services, applications and content, and the development of the underlying broadband infrastructure and security matters. Implementing the initiative involves citizens and businesses entering into partnership with public authorities.
- c. [Burkina Faso](#) has developed an operational strategy for the development of a national plan on ICT infrastructure for the period 2004 to 2006, with the help of partners in development, including the World Bank. The purpose of the project is to mobilize the potential of ICTs for economic and social development by developing the country's ICT infrastructure.
- d. [Guyana](#) has a plan to launch an ICT project with the objective of increasing the competitiveness of its economy to accelerate economic and social development. The main areas of focus are increasing the use of ICTs in the public sector, expanding Internet access in low-income communities, promoting ICT service exports and increasing human capital. All ministries and the regional offices are expected to be involved in the project.
- e. [Hungary](#) has set up the Hungarian Information Society Strategy (HISS), with the purpose of systematizing the tasks related to the Information Society. With the help of a process model, HISS is intended to set out a plan of action, determine objectives and harmonise the strategies of different sectors. In so doing, it will determine the Central High-Priority Programme and the statutory conditions for effective implementation.

- f. With the aim of building the Information Society, [Luxembourg](#) has launched the e-Luxembourg programme. It seeks to facilitate the usage of the new electronic communication tools for citizens, administrations and businesses. The programme focuses on eight challenges, with the acknowledgement that ICTs must be an element of cohesion and a means of integration.
 - g. [Oman](#) has started implementing the “Digital Oman Society and E-Government Strategy,” which includes streamlining government services, providing youth employment, improving education, enabling knowledge-based industries, supporting a competitive environment, etc. It reflects the adoption and integration of digital technology at home, at work and in places of education and recreation.
 - h. With the aim of developing a competitive knowledge-based economy and improved quality of life, [Poland](#) developed the ePoland strategy for the years 2004 to 2006. It focuses primarily on implementation in the areas of common access and accessibility, developing content and services accessible through the Internet and increasing the people’s ability to use them.
 - i. Having established a National ICT Steering Committee, [Samoa](#) has developed a National ICT Strategic Plan, with the knowledge gained from its participation in the 1st phase of WSIS and PrepCom. The plan is the result of wide consultation with private sector, NGOs, mayors at the village level and women's committees.
 - j. In partnership with UNDP, [Serbia and Montenegro](#) has set up a National Strategy for the Information Society that would lay the foundation for all future activities in the promotion of an Information Society. The strategy also represents the government’s commitment for the integration of ICTs into Serbian society.
 - k. [Slovakia](#) has adopted a ‘Strategy for Building the Information Society’ in 2004. It proposes the realisation of several tasks to achieve the strategy, which include analysing the initial conditions, identifying the main pillars, determining the direction of the process, creating the institutional and legal framework and setting up an action plan.
 - l. [Sri Lanka](#) launched its e-Sri Lanka programme, with the objective of using ICTs to foster social integration and national growth. Through the implementation of the programme, it is planned that an enabling environment will be created, including multi-stakeholder partnerships, and governance that is both transparent and citizen-centric.
 - m. [Syria](#) has elaborated its ICT strategy for the next ten years (until 2013), for the purpose of developing Syrian society to join the new global Information Society. It has set targets to increase service penetration, including 30 per cent for fixed lines and PCs (one per family) 20 per cent for Internet (one account per five persons) etc. Their ICT strategy proposed two executive programmes and five national initiatives.
 - n. With the aim of fostering information society activities, [Turkey](#) has launched an e-Transformation Project, coordinated by the State Planning Organization. Taking into account its priorities and needs, an integrated study with the participation of all stakeholders will be completed in 2005. Key components of the project cover ICTs, the business environment and entrepreneurship, social transformation and e-government.
 - o. [Viet Nam](#) has set up a Posts and Telecommunication Development Strategy, with the aim of achieving at least the regional average, in terms of service and technology, by 2010. The main areas of focus are establishing infrastructure, reducing price and increasing ICT penetration. Finally, it is aimed at using telecommunications to provide the basis for national industrialization and modernization.
9. **Sectoral reforms / New laws**
- a. [Bangladesh](#) has launched the “Hub for ICT” policy, under the leadership of the newly-named Ministry of Science and Information and Communications Technology (MOSICT). The Ministry has been involved in providing physical and ICT infrastructure facilities for the software industry, drafting an ICT Act, and assisting in the disbursement of equity funds to the ICT sector.

- b. [Benin](#) published a document entitled “Elaboration of the policies and strategies of ICT infrastructure”. It is the result of a long process of cooperation between governments, the private sector, NGOs and international organizations, with the aim of utilizing and further developing ICTs in Benin.
- c. In an effort to include the WSIS Declaration and Plan of Action in its legislation, [Honduras](#) is enacting a new Telecommunications Sector Law. This law is expected to pass in March 2005.
- d. [Japan](#) has developed a Policy Package for Realization of the Ubiquitous Network Society. The purpose of the package is to enable people to access the network easily ‘anytime, anywhere, with anything and by anyone’. It also aims at ensuring convenient and freely-available communications.
- e. [Latvia](#) has implemented the European regulatory framework for electronic communications through its Electronic Documents Law, which came into force on 1 January 2003. The Law asserts that state and local government institutions have a duty to accept electronic documents. In addition, Latvia’s Ministry of Justice has launched a project to promote dispute resolution and training of legal practitioners.
- f. [Lesotho](#) is developing a National ICT Policy with a vision of becoming a fully integrated member of the global Information Society. The policy includes implementation strategies that outline the leading role of government (Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology; MCST) and emphasize the restructuring of the regulatory body, in order to reduce its cost and make it more competent and accountable.
- g. [Uganda](#) made an announcement about its e-government strategy for six key ministries. It will go further in developing the necessary network, infrastructure and architectural requirements and finally set up a project management unit. In addition, Uganda has a plan of e-education, aimed at providing education to all schools and adults (continuous education) from anywhere.

10. **Nationwide projects**

- a. With the aim of improving the competitiveness of the enterprise, employment and income condition of its population, [Brazil](#) launched a Telecentre Network proposal installing one unit in each municipality of 6’000 or more people. The proposal focuses on three major areas: consolidating the infrastructure, developing products and services and monitoring initiatives.
- b. In order to cope with the ever-changing Information Society, [Estonia](#) has launched a series of projects, including the “X-road” project for e-services between governments and consumers (G2C), businesses (G2B) and within government (G2G) e-services, and introducing the Estonian electronic ID-card. Estonia has also initiated ‘e-GA’ for the creation and transfer of knowledge concerning e-governance, with a special emphasis on developing democracy and civil society.
- c. [Ethiopia](#) has established a Government Information Network Infrastructure, to connect the federal government with regional governments and district level administrations. This system provides videoconferencing, Internet connectivity and information exchange services, which improve communications between the various tiers of government and enable the effective and efficient provision of services.
- d. [Kenya](#) has started a Data Network and Rural Internet Project, with the aim of providing access to information and services on the Internet. This has been achieved by establishing Internet kiosks and cybercafés across the postal network nationally, employing VSAT technology. The project also aims at providing business with a data network, which is a key factor in the automation of the business process.
- e. [Nigeria](#) has initiated the implementation of an effective and affordable telecommunications system through its National Rural Telephony Programme (NRTP). The programme aims at meeting the basic telecommunications needs of the rural populace. It also will provide the infrastructure backbone to facilitate ICT deployment and roll out.
- f. With the aim of providing information and services to citizens and business in rural areas, [Romania](#) has initiated a “Knowledge-based economy” project. Its purpose is to set up 300 virtual local networks—designated as ‘knowledge centres’—according to the needs of each community. It will connect the main social, economic and educational institutions of local communities to national and global networks.

2.3 Examples of national multi-stakeholder partnerships

11. In order to cope with the evolving nature of the Information Society, which requires new forms of solidarity and cooperation, several governments have initiated, or are initiating, national multi-stakeholder partnerships. For example:

- a. In collaboration with NGOs and other stakeholders, the Government of [Canada](#) has undertaken the District Capacity Building Project (DISCAP) to strengthen the capacities of local government bodies. The IT aspects of the project include increasing connectivity within and across the three project regions and providing ICT support to their 24 Districts.
- b. In order to encourage public-private partnership, [Chile](#) set up a Digital Action Group, to coordinate and oversee digital projects on the Information Society. The group consists of 22 institutions, including the Ministry of Telecommunication and other related ministries, associations of industry and academic sectors. The work of the group resulted in the “Digital Agenda 2004-2006”.
- c. [Egypt](#) has carried out the Free Internet Initiative through the public-private partnership to achieve the goal of encouraging private investment in the deployment of infrastructure and provision of services. The “Free Internet” is essentially a pay-as-you-go connectivity scheme, with the cost of Internet dial-up being included in the local telephone call. The initiative provides users with complete flexibility and choice.
- d. [The Republic of Korea](#) has initiated the “Joint Digital Opportunity” project, in a partnership with the business sector, universities and a research institution. Its purpose is to launch philanthropic initiatives by bringing together the respective resources and expertise. More than 20 community-based technology-learning centres (CTLC) have been established nationally for basic, as well as advanced IT training.
- e. As one of its national capacity building projects, [Lebanon](#) has launched the “SmartBus”, deploying a mobile Internet unit equipped with a literacy training module, a LAN server, audiovisual teaching aids, a laser printer, fax machine etc. It is a public-private partnership designed to reach rural communities and give ICT training. It is also a certified training centre, expected to train up to 4’800 people per year.
- f. [Lithuania](#) has established the “Window on the future” alliance to get business support for the development of the Information Society. It includes business leaders from banks, IT manufacturers and operators. The alliance has launched a public Internet centre project, targeting the expansion of public and private sector initiatives on the establishment and utilization of such centres across the country since 2002.
- g. [New Zealand](#) has set up a knowledge centre, ‘Puke Erika’, the essence of which is to learn about who we are, where we come from and where we are going. It houses a full public library, museum and information centre, which flow from one to another through the sharing of knowledge. Together with the public sectors, many stakeholders, including trusts, banks, newspapers and companies, have taken part in the project.
- h. In the Tunis phase of WSIS, [Spain](#) will present ‘The Information Society in the 21st Century: a requisite for development’, with a broad participation of civil society and private sector. It is a compilation of good practices and lessons focusing on cooperation for development, community access centres, cultural and linguistic diversity etc. Spain made a similar contribution during the Geneva phase of WSIS.
- i. [Peru](#) has set up the Multi-Sectoral Commission for the Development of the Information Society (CODESI), with the broad participation of the public sector, the private sector, civil society and academia. The commission has established six working groups and a Plan of Action has been proposed, which includes infrastructure, human capacity building, e-government etc.
- j. [Switzerland](#) launched the “School on the Net” PPP initiative, with the aim of providing all primary and secondary schools with rapid and easy access to ICT. The main partners of the project are the Confederation, regional governments (Cantons) and business sectors. Besides ICT infrastructure and equipment, the project focuses on training teachers and developing curricula and e-learning software.

- k. [The United States](#) is undertaking a Joint Federal Rural Wireless Outreach Initiative, which is a partnership between federal governments and private industry to coordinate activities and information, financial and other assistance. The main objective of the initiative is to encourage greater access and deployment of wireless services to enhance economic development throughout rural America.

3 REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Partnerships

12. Regional/international multi-stakeholder partnerships

International cooperation among stakeholders is vital to promoting universal access and bridging the digital divide, both within and between countries. Therefore, activities that promote wider partnership amongst international and regional organizations and that are concerned with mainstreaming ICTs in their work programmes and assisting developing countries at all levels, are a focus of Information Society initiatives. This section illustrates a few examples of multi-stakeholder WSIS projects:

13. International fora for e-strategies and e-government

One major focus of the Geneva Plan of Action is the creation of national e-strategies. International and regional organizations are invited to mainstream ICTs in their work programmes and assist developing countries in the preparation and implementation of national action plans to support their achievement. Below are some representative activities aimed at promoting the development of e-strategies:

- a. The [Global ePolicy Resource Network \(ePol-NET\)](#) functions as a virtual network to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of e-strategies, as well as specific subjects, such as e-commerce, e-finance and e-government. Partners for ePol-NET include the Governments of Ireland, Canada, France, Italy, Japan and the UK, as well as the ECA, ITU, UNDP, OECD and the CTO.
- b. [UNCTAD](#) assists developing countries in formulating and implementing national ICT policies to foster the promotion of e-business, export capacity and competitiveness, through sector-specific policies, training programmes and the deployment of ICT tools.
- c. [UN ESCAP's](#) project on training initiatives, in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, seeks to assist the regions' countries to implement e-government. The expected outcome is to provide an opportunity to share experiences of implementing e-government in the participating countries, and to introduce or enhance e-government.

14. Information and communication infrastructure development

Infrastructure is central to achieving the goal of digital inclusion, enabling universal, sustainable, ubiquitous and affordable access to ICTs. Examples of such projects include:

- a. FAO's [Rural Radio and ICTs](#) project focuses on the convergence of new and traditional technologies. It involves partnerships between the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), Centre for Agriculture and Rural Co-operation (CTA), Communication for Development Regional Centres and various Ministries. Connecting rural radio stations to the Internet enables broadcasters to seek new information for their programming.
- b. The [Future WMO Information System \(FWIS\)](#) project aims to develop a single co-ordinated infrastructure for the collection and sharing of weather, water and climate information, based on the use of standards (e.g. metadata) and cost/effective telecommunication services (e.g. managed data communication services, Internet, satellite systems).
- c. ITU's members are leading work to develop [Next-Generation Networks \(NGN\)](#), quickly emerging as an essential initiative towards defining the shape of 21st-Century interpersonal network communications. A key goal is to provide information, content, services and connectivity on a global scale, whilst allowing for different methods of user access to NGN services.

- d. WHO's [United Nations Health InterNetwork](#), one of four major initiatives of the UN Millennium Action Plan, aims to bridge the digital health divide by providing access to high quality, timely Internet information for health professionals, researchers and policy makers in developing countries. The core components of this public-private partnership are content, connectivity, capacity building and policy.
- e. WIPO is assisting Intellectual Property Offices to use ICTs to increase their efficiency and better serve their users. The [WIPONET project](#) provides basic ICT infrastructure and connectivity to such offices in developing countries and economies in transition, with a data centre at WIPO Headquarters, in Geneva, providing opportunities to develop websites and establish IP databases. WIPO also provides IP Offices with a comprehensive automated solution for the modernization of their business processes.

15. Essential Foundations for the Information Society

Strategies to increase global connectivity, to improve affordability, and to encourage and promote the joint use of traditional media and new technologies should help to facilitate improved access to ICTs. International partnerships are being developed to strengthen national, regional and international network infrastructures as an essential foundation for the Information Society. Below are some examples:

- a. [Information for Development Program \(InfoDev\)](#), a consortium of public international development organizations and other partners, was established in 1995 and has a secretariat at the World Bank. It has supported over 400 innovative pilot projects with governments, the private sector, international organizations, NGOs, etc. Its mission is to help developing countries and their international partners use information and promote sustainable economic growth, including support for innovation in extending access to ICTs.
- b. UPU's activity on [Encouraging traditional media to bridge the knowledge divide](#) and to facilitate the flow of cultural content, particularly in rural areas, focuses on the traditional physical communication infrastructure and services provided by regular post, still an essential element in the exchange of information in both developed and developing countries.
- c. The ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) is developing recommendations on tariff and accounting principles on [International Internet Connectivity](#) to facilitate negotiations and agree to bilateral commercial arrangements enabling direct international Internet connections. However, divergent views still exist including on the level of competition in this market.
- d. The FAO Investment Centre's project on [Investment design in support of ICT development](#) supports e-Government initiatives through investment programme development. Major work to date includes: (i) A joint FAO-IADB-ITU Study on Telecentres for Socio-economic and Rural Development; (ii) Formulation of a South American ICT strategy; and (iii) Work with World Bank in appraisal of the e-Lanka Development Project.
- e. The [plan of action for building the information society in the Arab region \(RPoA\)](#) of ESCWA presents a comprehensive strategic framework to create adequate endogenous capabilities to harness information and knowledge, thus helping to build the information society and enhancing regional development.

16. Human Capacity Building

Capacity building provides a good example of public/private partnerships, such as the following:

- a. UNU's [African University Network](#) initiative is designed to enhance the capabilities of African universities to take advantage of the opportunities associated with the emergence of the global information society. ITU, UNEP, GRID and Arendal are the partners.
- b. The UN ICT Task Force has created the [Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative \(GeSCI\)](#), in partnership with the governments of Ireland, Sweden, Canada and Switzerland, as well as McKinsey, UNICEF and SchoolNet Africa. GeSCI will work with local governments, private sector companies and civil society organizations to create effective, end-to-end systems with the functions needed to deliver, operate and support the solutions.

- c. ITU and UNESCO will establish a [computer-training centre](#) in Ethiopia to assist the blind and visually impaired community in that country to gain access to ICTs.
- d. ITU, in partnership with Cisco, is implementing the [Internet Training Centres initiative](#), aimed at establishing 50 Internet training centres in the Least Developed Countries. These centres will be responsible for disseminating ICT knowledge as widely as possible within their communities. There is also an ITU partnership scheme with Vodafone, targeted at developing a [Youth Education Scheme](#) in developing countries, specifically those who are interested in pursuing careers as communication policy-makers, business people, lawyers, or engineers.
- e. The pilot [Joint ITU/WTO Workshop on Telecom and ICT Regulation](#) aims to formulate a specialized training course to build telecommunications and ICT regulation capacity to assist telecommunications regulatory authorities in developing countries to understand the implications of WTO treaties for their work and to improve their skills for regulatory enforcement.

3.2 Thematic Meetings

17. One of the specific activities undertaken to promote implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action at the regional and international level is the organisation of WSIS Thematic Meetings. Those already held include:

- a. A [Workshop on Internet Governance](#) held in Geneva, Switzerland, 26-27 February 2004. The overall objective of the Workshop was to promote the exchange of information and to contribute to ITU's process for preparing its inputs and position in the UN Working Group on Internet Governance.
- b. A [WSIS Thematic Meeting on Countering Spam](#) held in Geneva, Switzerland, 7-9 July 2004 and organised by ITU. The purpose of this meeting was to implement a series of cooperative activities on countering spam, in the shorter and longer term, to foster international cooperation, to create harmonized policy frameworks and to promote the exchange of information and best practices, as well as to provide support to developing countries in the field of spam.
- c. A [WSIS Thematic Meeting on Information Technologies and Law](#) (Legal Informatization) held in Minsk, Republic of Belarus, 28-29 October 2004. The National Centre of Legal Information of Belarus organized the event in partnership with UNESCO and UNDP. The purpose included promoting a wide exchange of opinions on issues concerning the application of modern information technologies in the legal sphere, on the creation of information, and on guarantees for equal access to legal information.
- d. A [WSIS special session on The Information Society: new horizons for science](#) was organised by the Committee on Data for Science and Technology (CODATA), in partnership with the International Council for Science (ICSU), on 10 November 2004, in Berlin (Germany)

18. A number of thematic meetings are planned to take place just ahead of PrepCom-2. These include:

- a. A [WSIS Thematic Meeting on the Economic and Social Implications of ICTs](#), in Antigua (Guatemala), 17-19 January 2005, organized by a partnership involving ILO, ITC, OECD and UNCTAD is organizing.
- b. A [WSIS Thematic meeting on ICT Applications in Natural Disaster Reduction](#), organized by the WMO on 21 January 2005, in Kobe (Japan).
- c. An [International Conference on Freedom of Expression in Cyberspace](#), organized by UNESCO, 3-4 February 2005, Paris, to advance the process of the WSIS in terms of the promotion of freedom of expression and the universal access to information
- d. A [WSIS Thematic Meeting on Measuring the Information Society](#), organized by a partnership of international organizations (see section 4) 7-9 February 2005 in Geneva.

19. Other WSIS thematic meetings are also planned in the period between PrepCom-2 and PrepCom-3, including:

- a. Government of Canada/UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, [Indigenous Peoples in the Information Society: Delivering on the Plan of Action](#), 14-18 March 2005, Ottawa (Canada).
- b. Government of Japan/ITU/UNU, [Towards the realization of the Ubiquitous Network Society](#), 16-17 May 2005, Tokyo (Japan).
- c. Government of the Republic of Korea (MIC/KADO)/ITU [Thematic Meeting on Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Bridging the Digital Divide](#), Seoul, 9-10 June 2005.
- d. A [WSIS Thematic Meeting on Cybersecurity](#), to be organised by ITU, 28 June - 1 July 2005, Geneva.

3.3 WSIS Regional Thematic Meetings

20. A number of WSIS regional thematic meetings have been held. These include:

- a. A Latin-America e-business Forum on [Empowering SME Exporters through ICTs](#) held in San Paulo, Brazil, 2-5 November 2004. The Brazilian Chamber of Commerce organized the event in partnership with the ITC.
- b. [The role and place of media in the Information Society in Africa and Arab Countries](#), held in Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco 22-24 November 2004. The International Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication (ORBICOM) organized this meeting, in partnership with the Ministry of Communication and the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Telecommunications of the Kingdom of Morocco, and the Federal Office of Communication (OFCOM), Switzerland. At the end of meeting, participants adopted the "Declaration of Marrakech".

3.4 Regional Meetings

21. In the run up to the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, preparatory meetings are being held in a number of regions and sub-regions, including.

- a. The [Western Asia Regional Conference](#), was held in Damascus, 22-23 November 2004, organised by ESCWA in association with the Syrian Ministry of Communications and Technology and UNESCO. The objectives of this conference were to review what actions undertaken towards bridging the digital divide, adopt a regional action plan, promote partnerships, and launch key regional projects.
- b. The [African Regional conference](#) organized under the auspices of the President of Ghana coordinated by UNECA, is to be held in Accra, Ghana, 2-4 February 2005, under the theme "Access- Africa's key to an inclusive Information Society". This conference will prepare Africa for an effective participation in the second phase of the WSIS to ensure a strategic and interdependent digital partnership that will promote economic growth and human development of the continent.
- c. The [Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference](#) organised by the government of Brazil will be held in Rio de Janeiro, from 8 to 10 June 2005.
- d. The [Asia-Pacific Regional conference](#) will be organized by UNESCAP, in the second quarter of 2005, aimed at exchanging information on Internet governance and financial mechanisms, culminating in a Regional Action Plan.

4 INDICATORS

22. The WSIS Plan of Action (Para 28) calls upon stakeholders to undertake "a realistic international performance evaluation and benchmarking (both qualitative and quantitative), through comparable statistical indicators and research results".

23. Traditional ICT indicators, such as measures of the penetration of different ICTs, provide good coverage of the “supply side” of the ICT industry, but relatively poor coverage of the “usage side”. Among WSIS stakeholders, the major effort to improve the coverage of Information Society Indicators is being undertaken through the work of the [Partnership on measuring ICT4D](#), which was launched in June 2004. The members of the partnership include ITU, the OECD, UNCTAD, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the UN Regional Commissions, the UN ICT Task Force and the World Bank.

24. The aims of the partnership include developing a core set of ICT indicators, enhancing the capacities of national statistical offices and developing a global database of ICT indicators. In 2004, a number of regional workshops were held and in 2005, the major event is the organization of a WSIS Thematic Meeting on ICT Indicators, due to take place 7-9 February 2005. A report on this event will be provided to PrepCom-2.

25. In addition to the work of the “Partnership,” more than 150 different activities have been submitted in the WSIS stocktaking database that are relevant to Follow-up and Evaluation. These include:

- a. The [“Building Digital Bridges”](#) initiative, being undertaken jointly by ITU and the government of the Republic of Korea (MIC/KADO). A workshop on this theme was held in Busan, 10-11 September 2004 and a WSIS Thematic Meeting is planned for 9-10 June 2005. One of the aims of the project is the elaboration of a composite digital opportunities index, as foreseen in the WSIS Plan of Action (28a), which will draw upon the core set of indicators defined by the Partnership.
- b. A Global ICT Conference on [Digital Divide and Knowledge Economy: Problems and Solutions](#) held in Baku, Azerbaijan, November 2004;
- c. Work of the [UN ICT Task Force Working Group](#) on ICT Indicators and ICT Mapping;
- d. The Egyptian National Scientific and Technical Information Network ([ENSTINET](#));
- e. The creation of a [Spanish Observatory of Telecommunications and the Information Society](#).

5 NEXT STEPS

26. This preliminary report on the WSIS stocktaking has been prepared on the basis of a first round of submissions. The WSIS stocktaking database (at www.itu.int/wsis/stocktaking) is open to the public and continues to be updated with new submissions on a daily basis.

27. The WSIS stocktaking database is intended to be a dynamic, ongoing resource that is available to all WSIS stakeholders. Over time, the usefulness of the database will increase as it becomes more comprehensive in its coverage of WSIS-related activities and as interactivity is enhanced. This will be done, for instance, through improved search facilities, through a feedback form and through the facility for interested parties to contact the original sources of activities that are posted there. The database is intended to be a portal providing access to a much richer range of web-based information.

28. In the next phase of the project, stakeholders are invited to submit new and updated entries on their activities to the stocktaking database, if possible using the online data entry tool available on the website. Those submissions to the database received before **30 June 2005** will be used as the basis for the report to PrepCom-3. In addition, comments on this report are welcome, to be sent to the WSIS-ES at WSIS-stocktaking@itu.int by the same date. Stakeholders can also use the stocktaking database as the basis for other reports and analysis.

29. Depending on the decisions made during the Tunis phase, it is intended that the stocktaking database will continue to be updated and enhanced to provide a permanent record of the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action.