International Telecommunications Union (ITU)
Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
UN Regional Commissions (ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA)
UN ICT Task Force
World Bank

Partnership on "Measuring ICT for Development"

Joint contribution to the document to be prepared by
the Group of Friends of the Chair (GFC) of the PrepCom of WSIS
2 November 2004

This contribution is jointly submitted by the members of the global Partnership on "Measuring ICT for Development": the ITU, OECD, UNCTAD, UIS, four UN Regional Commissions (ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA), the UN ICT Task Force and the World Bank.

Political Chapeau

Reaffirming the need for "a realistic international performance evaluation and benchmarking (both qualitative and quantitative), through comparable statistical indicators and research results" (paragraph 28, Geneva Plan of Action), we note that measuring the Information Society, in particular the use and impact of ICTs, is a precondition for

- formulating and assessing ICT policies and strategies
- monitoring the digital divide
- evaluating and benchmarking Information Society developments
- documenting the impact of the Information Society on the implementation of the MDGs and measuring progress in the use of ICTs to achieve the MDGs.

Operational part

Chapter I: From words to action: a Summit of sustainable solutions

The work done by all stakeholders in implementing the Geneva decision

Following the WSIS Geneva, a number of key stakeholders involved in the statistical measurement of ICTs joined forces to create a global Partnership on "Measuring ICT for Development". The Partnership provides an open framework for coordinating ongoing and future activities in the area of Information Society measurements, and for developing a coherent and structured approach to advancing the development of ICT indicators globally, and in particular in the developing countries. The Partnership was officially launched at the occasion of UNCTAD XI, which was held in Brazil in June 2004.

The Partnership has three main objectives: first, to achieve a common set of core ICT indicators, to be harmonized and agreed upon internationally, which will constitute the basis for a database on ICT statistics. Second, to enhance the capacities of national statistical

offices (NSOs) in developing countries to develop statistical compilation programmes on the Information Society, based on internationally agreed upon indicators. Third, to develop a global database on ICT indicators and to make it available on the Internet. NSOs from advanced countries are invited to contribute to Partnership activities, provide expertise and advice to NSOs from developing countries, and transfer knowledge in areas such as methodologies and survey programmes. [1]

Since WSIS Geneva, a number of joint activities have been carried out/ are planned:

a) A global stocktaking exercise was initiated by the UN Regional Commissions, in cooperation with other partners. In July 2004, a metadata questionnaire on ICT statistics was sent out by ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA and UNCTAD to statistical offices in all non-OECD countries. The OECD will carry out a similar exercise with its member countries at the end of 2004. The results of the stocktaking will provide a global overview of the current availability of official Information Society statistics and indicators and will be presented in early 2005.

b) The UN Regional Commissions, with the substantive support of other partners, are organizing workshops to take stock of e-measurement activities, taking into consideration the results of the metadata questionnaire. The workshops identify priorities for action in the area of ICT indicators and agree on a common set of core indicators at the regional level.[2]

c) A WSIS Thematic Meeting on "Measuring the Information Society" will be organized in Geneva on 7-9 February 2005. The main goal of this global meeting is to consolidate the outcomes of the regional workshops, and agree on a final list of core ICT indicators to be collected by all countries, including on basic access and usage by households and individuals, businesses and schools. The meeting will also discuss developing country technical assistance needs as regards the compilation of ICT indicators, identify ICT indicators relevant to monitoring the achievement of the MDGs, and present ongoing work concerning the creation of a global database on ICT indicators. The outcome of the meeting will provide concrete suggestions on how to measure Information Society developments, as an input to the second phase of WSIS and its follow-up.

Definition of appropriate mechanisms for the implementation of the Plan of Action

The Partnership represents a practical way for coordinating among key stakeholders the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action in the area of measuring and monitoring Information Society developments and for producing internationally comparable statistical indicators. A number of capacity building activities are foreseen to be carried out under the umbrella of the Partnership, to enhance the production of Information Society indicators in developing countries. They can be broadly divided into activities at the national, regional and international levels.

a) National level: to build capacity at the national level as regards the design and implementation of ICT statistical compilation programmes.

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[1] For more details on the Partnership, see http:// measuring-ict.unctad.org

[2] Dates and venues: ESCWA (Western Asia), Beirut: 4-5 October 2004; ECA and ITU (Africa), Gabarone, Botswana: 25-29 October 2004; ECLAC (Latin America and the Caribbean), Santiago de Chile: 3-4 November 2004; and ESCAP (Asia-Pacific), Bangkok: early 2005 (t.b.c.).

- Development and testing of training material on definitions, methodologies and survey vehicles.
- Conducting training workshops for local staff involved in the collection of ICT indicators; and for policy makers to raise their awareness about the importance of indicators for monitoring ICT policies and carrying out impact analysis.
- Assisting NSOs in ICT data collection and database development.

b) Regional level: to build capacity as regards methodologies and definitions of ICT indicators, to ensure the harmonisation of ICT data and statistics across countries of the region; and to build regional statistical networks for ICT indicators.

- Establishment of technical working groups on ICT indicators at the regional level, which will ensure that particularities of different developing regions are recognized in the development of ICT statistics.
- Conducting of technical workshops at the regional level to exchange experience and discuss methodologies, definitions, survey vehicles and data collection.

c) International level: to develop common approaches towards the collection of ICT data and statistics and harmonize the work on ICT indicators at the global level; and to consolidate the results of the work carried out at the regional level and agree on common international standards on ICT statistics.

- Development of a core list of ICT indicators. These core indicators will be harmonized and agreed upon internationally and will constitute the basis for a database on ICT statistics. An agreed-upon list of core indicators will be presented to PrepCom2.
- Conducting of expert meetings on ICT indicators.
- Development of an international guiding manual on ICT indicators, in particular for developing countries.
- Development of an international database on ICT indicators.
- Development of an Internet platform to share information, host a discussion forum and make available ICT data and statistics.

Chapter IV: The way ahead

Follow-up to and review of the WSIS process will require continuous monitoring of progress of Information Society developments, in particular in developing countries. This will require the development of comparable statistical indicators by all countries. Based on the commitment of the members, the Partnership on "Measuring ICT for Development" provides a mechanism for implementing Information Society measurement beyond WSIS Tunis, when the Partnership will enter into its second phase (until 2008).