

## Closing Ceremony

Friday 6 May 2016

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Room Popov

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>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the time to start the closing ceremony of the WSIS Forum 2016 is. We have the pleasure of having with us the four Distinguished Representatives of the UN agencies, co-organizers of the WSIS Forum. Mr. Malcolm Johnson, Deputy Secretary-General of the ITU, Mr. Brahima Sanou, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau as well as Indrajit Banerjee, high level representative of UNESCO and Torbjorn Fredriksson, representative of the UNCTAD. So I am handing over the floor to our Deputy Secretary-General of the ITU, Malcolm Johnson. Apologies. The floor is yours.

>> MALCOLM JOHNSON: Thank you very much Jaroslaw. Good afternoon, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you very much for coming here for this closing ceremony of the WSIS Forum 2016. I hope very much that you have enjoyed the week.



That you found it informative and productive and a good opportunity to exchange ideas, make new contacts and take back home with you some ideas on how to further implement the WSIS action lines.

This year's Forum attracted I believe a record 2,000 stakeholders and we had people coming from 150 countries. We were honored to have many high level representatives from the wide WSIS stakeholder community, more than 85 Ministers and Deputy Ministers. We had CEOs. We had many Ambassadors. We had academia. We had Civil Society and the private sector all actively contributing.

And, of course, the highlight was the presence and the address of the Prime Minister of Tonga which is the reason the Secretary-General is not here to join us. He is seeing the Prime Minister off at the airport. So we are very pleased. Also had a very good participation remotely this year. The record number of participants joined the sessions remotely. Something we are pursuing for the WSIS Forum and more generally in the ITU. I would like to start thanking, thanks to all engagement of all stakeholders, to the Government, Civil Society, academia, private sector and the technical community. The WSIS Forum I believe has proved to be an efficient mechanism for the coordination and implementation of activities, exchange of information, knowledge creation, and sharing of best practices. And also a chance to develop new partnerships to advance the goals of the WSIS and the Sustainable Development Goals. As proof your off commitment to the outcome to the orientation of the WSIS Forum, I am pleased to inform the outcome of the WSIS Forum is already available on website. And that includes the following documents. The WSIS Forum 2016 High-Level Track outcome document, the WSIS Forum 2016 Forum track outcomes and executive brief, the WSIS action lines supporting implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the WSIS stock taking report, 2016 and the WSIS stock taking success stories, 2016.

So I would like to thank and congratulate all those that put in tremendous effort and hard work to achieve this output so quickly before the end of the week. And, of course, these documents will be submitted to the CSTD for its consideration at its meeting takes place next week.

I believe the event is also demonstrated excellent collaboration within the UN system. The WSIS Forum, of



course, is coordinated by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD and in close collaboration with the WSIS action line facilitators and cofacilitators. So that's UNDESA, FAO, UNEP, WHO, UNWOMEN, WIPO, WFP, ILO, WMO, ITC, UPU, UNODC and UNICEF and the UN regional commissions.

So I would like to thank all our UN colleagues for their great spirit of collaboration and the efforts they have made to strengthen the Forum as a unique platform for discussing ICTs and its role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thanks also to the High-Level Track facilitators that moderated the high level policy track panel discussions. I believe this was a new innovation this year that everyone found to be a very good idea. Thanks very much to them.

And, of course, thanks especially to the Chairman of the WSIS Forum 2016, Ambassador Daniel Sepulveda for his leadership and guidance. Unfortunately he had to return to the U.S. today. And finally I would like to thank our partners who have generously contributed to this year, to making this year's WSIS Forum to make it a success. In particular United Arab Emirates and especially the telecom regulatory authority for its support since the inception of the WSIS Forum. Our partners for specific activities Poland, Rwanda, ICANN, IEEE, the Internet Society and IFIP. And all our supporting partners. I encourage you all to continue supporting the WSIS Forum and helping us with our preparations for the 27th edition and that's preparations will start in December. Finally let me thank our WSIS team Jaroslaw Ponder. (Applause.)

>> MALCOLM JOHNSON: Aply supported by Gitanjali Sah. (Applause.)

>> MALCOLM JOHNSON: And the team. It is a very small team. It is incredible how they manage to do this with the resources they have. But it is largely thanks to the tremendous efforts that our interns make, voluntary interns helping the team and putting them to work. Thanks very much to our interns.

(Applause.)

>> MALCOLM JOHNSON: So thank you all very much. Thank you. I wish you a safe journey home and hope to see you all here again next year. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much for the remark



and kind words and all the partners and the collaborators. Now let me turn to our partner agency, UNESCO and the floor is yours.

>> INDRAJIT BANERJEE: It is a pleasure for UNESCO once again to be a key partner in this WSIS Forum 2016. We are coming to the end of one more WSIS Forum full of rich debates and discussion and I see nothing else but to congratulate ourselves on the sheer stamina we have shown running from 2014 to 2015 to 2016. Your commitment to this process which also underlines the relevance of this process. It is a beautiful day in Geneva as you have witnessed. I wish the same could be said of the situation in the world we inhabit today. I woke up to read the government of India's Ministry of Health report stated that 3500 children under the age of 5 die every day which means about 1.26 million children die under the age of 5 every year in India alone. I leave it to your imagination to wonder at the staggering statistics when you consider the world aggregates on this matter and how tragic and unacceptable they are. We are assaulted on a daily basis with the statistics of loss of life and poverty that go against fundamental human rights. I sometimes pause and wonder whether we have become immune to the pain and sufferings of the underprivileged and marginalized and unfortunate sections of world population. It is time we begin to genuinely care and Act together to put an end to human suffering and tragedy. SDGs give us an opportunity to combine peace and prosperity for all and must ensure that SDGs are not another wish list of goals and indicators but to attain concrete targets and make the world a better place. ICTs as we have heard throughout the last week are definitely a means to mitigation and welcome many of these challenges. And this is indeed the real value of WSIS. Whenever collective human endeavor efforts have been mobilized we have succeeded in achieving our goals and we must assure we pledge our commitments to attending the SDGs. If we can send spacecraft to Mars we can overcome poverty and hunger. Imagine the billions of dollars that are spent by technology companies to developing applications, games and so on and how much of it goes to fighting poverty and hunger and all forms of deprivation but we must stop putting all blame on Governments. I think they are doing what they can in the conditions that they face, resource constraints. I think that every stakeholder must assume responsibility. I am sorry to end on

such a grim note but the human tragedy that we are witnessing today calls for a serious and unwavering commitment to human development. On the positive side UNESCO is convinced there is no peaks or mountains that cannot be scaled and no oceans deep enough to discover. I hope when we meet next year we can all say that the world is a better. We support all initiatives to move us forward to achieving the SDGs together.  
(Applause.)

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much and let me turn to UNCTAD, Torbjorn Fredriksson.

>> TORBJORN FREDRIKSSON: Thank you Jaroslaw. Deputy Secretary-General, Excellencies, colleagues and friends, happy to say a few words here on behalf the UNCTAD Secretary-General who was unfortunately cannot be with us here today. Let me start by thanking ITU for their tremendous work that you have put in preparing for and in implementing the WSIS Forum 2016. It is really outstanding I think. I would also like to thank our colleagues in UNESCO and UNDP for great collaboration as always and also big thanks to all sponsors and stakeholders who have contributed to the many varied sessions that's organized through our participants or in the audience. UNCTAD is very proud to be a co-organizer of the WSIS Forum and we see it is a valuable platform. And I think we already this year saw some very useful and valuable innovations in its format. We look forward to working with all partners in further developing the format and usefulness of our common endeavors here at the WSIS Forum. Let me conclude by welcoming all next week to the CSTD annual session where the WSIS relate the discussions will continue. Will not leave you easily. I wish everyone a nice week end. Thank you.

>> JAROSLAW PONDER: Thank you very much for these remarks and now Ladies and Gentlemen let me turn to Deputy Secretary-General for the last words.

>> MALCOLM JOHNSON: Very short last word. I declare the WSIS Forum 2016 closed.

(Applause.)

(Session concluded at 1629 CET)

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