

## **Template – Session Outcome Document**

*(2 pages max)*

**Summary of Session: [Harnessing emerging technologies for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: Role of Government]**

**[RWANDA]**

**[16<sup>th</sup> March 2023, 16:30-17:30 (UTC+01:00T)]**

**<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2023/Agenda/Session/208>**

### **Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

The session focused on:

- The vital role of governments in promoting the use of emerging technologies to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Examining the current state of government policies related to emerging technologies, and their impact on sustainable development,
- Identifying the key challenges faced by governments in promoting the adoption of emerging technologies for the achievement of the SDGs, and
- Exploring best practices for government approaches that support the responsible and inclusive use of emerging technologies for sustainable development.
- The session provided recommendations for future government policies that can support the integration of emerging technologies into sustainable development strategies.

**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)**

Emerging Trends:

- Increasing importance of digital transformation: With the rapid pace of technological advancements, digital transformation has become a critical element for social and economic development. The WSIS Action Lines will need to address the growing demand for digitalization across different sectors.
- Growing need for cybersecurity: As the world becomes more connected, cybersecurity threats have increased, and protecting sensitive information has become a top priority. The WSIS Action Lines need to address the cybersecurity challenges that come with the use of ICTs.
- The rise of 5G technology: The implementation of 5G networks has begun to take shape, and it is expected to have a significant impact on how people and businesses connect and communicate. The WSIS Action Lines need to adapt to the changes brought about by 5G technology.

#### Challenges:

- The digital divide: Despite the progress made over the past two decades, there is still a significant digital divide between developed and developing countries. Bridging this gap remains a challenge that the WSIS Action Lines must address.
- Privacy concerns: The increasing use of ICTs has raised concerns about privacy and data protection. Addressing these concerns is crucial in ensuring that the benefits of ICTs are not overshadowed by privacy breaches.
- Access to affordable and reliable ICT infrastructure: Access to affordable and reliable ICT infrastructure remains a challenge in many developing countries. The WSIS Action Lines need to prioritize efforts to expand access to ICT infrastructure, particularly in rural and remote areas.

#### Achievements:

- Increased access to the internet: The WSIS Action Lines have played a crucial role in increasing access to the internet, particularly in developing countries. As of 2021, more than half of the world's population has access to the internet.
- Improved digital literacy: The WSIS Action Lines have also contributed to improving digital literacy, particularly among vulnerable populations. This has enabled individuals to take advantage of the opportunities presented by ICTs.
- Increased e-commerce and digital trade: The WSIS Action Lines have contributed to the growth of e-commerce and digital trade, which have become important drivers of economic growth and development.

#### Opportunities:

- Leveraging emerging technologies: The WSIS Action Lines can leverage emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), the internet of things (IoT), and blockchain to drive social and economic development.
- Enhancing collaboration: The WSIS Action Lines provide an opportunity for collaboration among stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, and academia, to drive the implementation of WSIS goals and objectives.
- Advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The WSIS Action Lines can contribute to the achievement of the UN SDGs, particularly SDG 9, which seeks to promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

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

- Exploiting emerging technologies means inclusive, collaborative and evidence-based policies to build digital platforms and new services. Government commitment is critical and political will is the driving force to promote the responsible and inclusive use of emerging technologies for sustainable development, through:
  - Developing coherent policies
  - Fostering partnerships and innovation while managing risks
  - Prioritize public safety and privacy
  - Promote capacity building



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

- For the WSIS Forum 2024 (WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event), several thematic aspects could be included to address the latest challenges and opportunities in the field of information and communication technologies. These may include the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain on society, the importance of digital inclusivity and access to technology for all, the role of data privacy and cybersecurity in a connected world, the need for international collaboration and regulation in the digital space, and the potential of technology for achieving sustainable development goals. Additionally, issues such as digital literacy, e-governance, and digital entrepreneurship could also be explored to facilitate the advancement of a digital society.