Session Outcome Document

Building an Enabling Environment for Indigenous, Rural and Remote Connectivity

Association for Progressive Communications, Rhizomatica and ITU-D Digital Inclusion

Wednesday, 29 May 2024 / 10:00–10:45 (UTC+02:00)

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Agenda/Session/474

Key Issues discussed

- Enabling environments must be created for indigenous, rural and remote communities to access telecommunications services to strengthen their ways of life, cultures and territories.

- It is necessary to have a vision in which connectivity is only the starting point to achieve the real and meaningful insertion of digital tools in these communities. Therefore, it is also necessary to talk about access and accessibility from the design to the implementation of ICT processes.

- A fundamental part of these enabling environments is the creation of mechanisms for theses communities to generate their own communication projects and meaningful connectivity solutions, such as the community networks.

- For this type of community-owned projects to be successful and sustainable over time, it is necessary to work from a multi-stakeholder perspective on aspects such as capacity building, access to financial resources, relevant public policies and regulations, promotion of local content production and access to relevant information, etc.

- Capacity building and training for the deployment, maintenance and management of local meaningful connectivity solutions is fundamental, but strategies that accompany the subsequent implementation of the projects, such as micro-grants or mentoring, are required.

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

- Spaces such as WSIS are strategic for connectivity, access and accessibility to telecommunications services in indigenous, rural and remote communities, as they allow for a multi-stakeholder discussion with a view to generating the necessary enabling environments to meet their communication needs.

- The WSIS+20 review process represents an important opportunity to strengthen communication processes and access to digital technologies in communities. However, strategies are required that allow real dialogue with the communities through the construction of spaces in their own spheres of discussion and collective decision-making.

Tangible outcomes (such as key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, commitments, figures, and success stories)

- Community network initiatives around the world that have been supported and funded by the Internet Society.
- The Local Networks initiative (APC and Rhizomatica) for the creation of enabling environments for community networks in the global south.
- The Training Programme for ICT Network Managers in Indigenous and Rural Communities in Latin America, developed by ITU in collaboration with CSOs in the region, to be replicated in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia Pacific.
- The study of connectivity and access conditions in different communities in the Amazon coordinated by Derechos Digitales.
- Different projects and initiatives of the Government of India to increase access to broadband and devices in rural areas of the country.

Actionable plan and key recommendations

- As a fundamental action to be developed in WSIS+20 review, we recommend the creation of a strategy of dialogue with indigenous communities, through the development of peer-to-peer forums and documenting good practices.
- Review each of the current WSIS action lines to see how each has developed in the context of indigenous, rural and remote communities.

Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2025 (one paragraph)

- Experiences of good practices in public policy for the promotion of complementary connectivity solutions.
- Necessary conditions for the accessibility of the diversity of people living in indigenous and rural communities.
- The creation of AI projects from indigenous communities.