

**USA Contribution to the International Telecommunication Union  
Council Working Group on the World Summit on the Information  
Society**

**Introduction**

The United States welcomes the upcoming open and inclusive session of the ITU Council Working Group (CWG) on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) scheduled for September 29-30 in Geneva. The CWG-WSIS continues to serve the ITU membership as an open and effective platform for stakeholder collaboration and engagement on ITU-related WSIS activities. The United States has reviewed the draft agenda for this session, which we believe provides an important opportunity for information exchange among participants and allows for membership feedback on ITU activities. We look forward to an update on ITU's role in WSIS implementation and ITU's role in the Overall Review, including the opportunity for membership to provide inputs concerning ITU's activities in WSIS implementation. We do not, however, believe CWG-WSIS should be used as a platform to influence ongoing negotiations in other fora, and we do not agree with convening a separate session on October 5.

**Procedural Matters**

The draft agenda includes a section on the UNGA Overall Review, including documents that are currently being negotiated. We believe

this is a good opportunity for information sharing among the membership, as well as an opportunity to discuss ITU's contribution to the Overall Review. We do not agree with using CWG-WSIS as a platform to discuss ongoing negotiations in other fora.

Further, the draft agenda for the CWG-WSIS contains the following:  
*“Should Zero Draft Paper of the UNGA Overall Review of the Implementation of WSIS be made available later than 28 September, a special meeting of the CWG on WSIS will be held on 5 October (PM) to provide a platform for ITU Membership to discuss the document.”*

The United States does not agree with a separate session on October 5. The proposed meeting is after the completion of the work within the remit of the already confirmed September 29-30 meeting of the CWG WSIS. Holding a separate session on October 5 requires a change in the published agenda and puts a logistical burden on participants, since additional days in Geneva impose additional financial burden and hardships. Further, participants will not even be able to make travel arrangements until they have already arrived in Geneva, if arrangements are even still possible. These burdens are most pronounced on the stakeholder community and developing countries, whose input is so valuable to the WSIS discussion.

Such scheduling may also be construed by participants to exclude them from effectively participating in an important WSIS discussion, since it is not aligned with the timing of the CWG-WSIS.

Finally, the utility of such a meeting is uncertain. Because the Zero Draft will have been just released, most member states and stakeholders will not have had time for internal discussions necessary to provide feedback on the paper. The UNGA process solicits comments until October 15, which will be followed by face-to-face discussions beginning 19 October. This is already a compressed timetable for consultation, and adding an additional meeting in Geneva would only

make the already challenging task of participating within the parameters established in the WSIS+10 modalities more difficult.

### **Way Forward**

We appreciate that the ITU has been engaged collegially with other UN agencies, and this is deeply valued by the United States. However, we believe the scheduling of an additional meeting on October 5 would be neither constructive nor helpful.

Rather, we suggest allowing participants an opportunity under Agenda Item 6 to discuss the submissions they made to the preparatory process for the Overall Review and feedback on the contribution made by the ITU. The time could also serve to promote awareness of the WSIS+10 timeline and the opportunities for all stakeholders to submit written comments and participate in the established WSIS + 10 process.