



United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS)

Submitted by the General Secretariat

Background

The second phase of WSIS, conducted in Tunis in 2005, built upon the achievements of the Geneva Plan, with the resulting Tunis Agenda addressing additional issues, such as financing and internet governance. It also requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB) to establish within the CEB, a United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS), consisting of the relevant UN organizations with the mandate to facilitate the implementation of the WSIS outcomes.

UNGIS was endorsed by the CEB in April 2006 and it serves as an interagency mechanism to coordinate substantive policy issues facing the United Nations system's implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society, thereby contributing to improving policy coherence in the UN system, as requested by the 2005 World Summit.

UNGIS at WSIS Forum 2015

The annual meeting of UNGIS took place at the WSIS Forum 2015. This meeting concluded almost one and a half year chairmanship of ITU in UNGIS. Since May 2015 ITU, along with UNESCO, UNDP and UNDESA, continues to play a role of the vice-chair of UNGIS. ITU also continues to provide secretariat support to Group as well as maintains the official UNGIS webpage www.ungis.org.

The high level meeting of UNGIS, attended by the heads of the agencies, was held on 26 May 2015 and welcomed WSIS-SDG Matrix as a new tool developed by a number of United Nations agencies to map how information and communications technologies (ICTs) may contribute to the implementation of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The mapping exercise describes the interfaces between the Action Lines adopted at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) with the proposed SDGs. The matrix was developed by the various facilitators of the Action Lines, under their respective mandates, with the aim of identifying where the potential for ICTs to promote and realize the development goals is the greatest.

Mr Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of ITU and the outgoing Chair of UNGIS (2014–2015) congratulated the UN family for the excellent achievement and thanked them for great collaboration on the WSIS Action Lines and SDG Matrix while stressing: “ITU was pleased to coordinate this effort and I hope that the Matrix will serve as an easy reference for stakeholders engaged in shaping the future of both, the SDGs and the WSIS processes beyond 2015”

Mr Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD and newly appointed Chair of UNGIS (2015–2016) noted in a comment: "This exercise has illustrated the value of different parts of the United Nations working together. Once the matrix has been finalized, it will serve as a basis for recommending ways for information and communications technologies to help accelerate progress towards implementing the SDGs."

Working level meeting of UNGIS was held on 28 May 2015 which provided an opportunity to set up the UNGIS action plan for the years 2015-2016. It also provided an opportunity for discussion on the role of the UNGIS coordination mechanism during the upcoming UN General Assembly Overall Review of the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes.