

*Position Paper for the World Summit on the Information Society*

The treaty topics before the World Summit on the Information Society are: Preamble; Priority Areas; Action Lines; Other Issues; Accountability and Measurement; and Final Provisions. The Republic of Estonia is deeply committed to creating a comprehensive outcome document that reflects the current needs and challenges relating to information and communication technology.

**I. Preamble**

Estonia has prioritized the advancement and good governance of information and communication technology (ICT) for over 20 years. The country currently reports some of the highest percentages of Internet users and wireless broadband subscriptions in the world. Estonia has ratified numerous international treaties relating to ICT including: *Convention on Cybercrime*, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, *European Union Convention for the Protection of Individuals with Regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data* and the *World Intellectual Property Organization Convention*. Estonia's main focus in the creation of the WSIS outcome document is to ensure the discussion and inclusion of the following themes: human rights, infrastructure, e-governance, cybersecurity and gender mainstreaming.

**II. Priority Areas**

In 2007, Estonia experienced extensive and aggressive cyberattacks in the public and private sectors, witnessing firsthand the implications these attacks can have on personal privacy, national security, and the economy. Estonia considers cybersecurity to be a means to prevent oppressive governments and criminals from causing excessive destruction, while providing a secure space for the freedom of expression and exchange of ideas for individuals. Estonia also supports the promotion and sharing of e-governance strategies. In 2005, Estonia became the first country to provide its citizens with the opportunity to vote online remotely in parliamentary and municipal elections. E-governance academies have been set up by Estonia to train leaders from developing countries in the best practices of ICT for the purpose of promoting good e-governance. The Estonian government considers e-governance to be crucial to long-term sustainable development. It helps make governments more transparent and efficient while enhancing citizens' civic engagement in policy-making processes. Estonia encourages WSIS to incorporate a larger focus on e-governance and the role of ICT in creating and sustaining good governance.

**III. Action Lines**

As a member of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Estonia has been able to advocate for the importance of ICT as a means for achieving these goals. It is important to the Estonian government that the new WSIS outcome document reflects recent progress in the international approach towards sustainable development while building upon established frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals and the existing WSIS action lines. Estonia recognizes the rapid technological advancements that have been made since the creation of the Millennium Declaration. Estonia emphasizes that the WSIS must anticipate future advancements in ICT in order to produce a relevant framework for action.

In 2008, the Estonian Government and the Estonian Association of Information Technology and Telecommunications joined together to create EstWin - a project that installs high-speed broadband throughout rural Estonia, with all of Estonia having access by 2015. Estonia believes that there needs to be a renewed focus on the infrastructure of information and communication technology, by replacing Action Line C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure: An

Essential Foundation for the Information Society. While many points within this goal are still pertinent, Estonia believes a new goal on infrastructure could better serve the outcome document, with a particular focus on mobile devices, wireless internet and access in rural areas.

Estonia believes that the Action Line C5: Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs should be expanded to reflect the increased needs for cybersecurity and data privacy that have arisen since the 2003 Geneva Summit. To advance human rights and access to information, a global culture of cybersecurity needs to be adopted by all stakeholders, which could be shaped within this Action Line. For Estonia, the multi-stakeholder approach is a critical part of the success of WSIS Lines, not only in the drafting of the new outcome document, but also in the implementation of the Action Lines.

#### **IV. Other Issues**

Estonia strongly believes that access to information and internet freedom should be considered inseparable from human rights. Estonia emphasizes that emerging technologies present new possibilities for ensuring and advancing human rights at the individual and societal levels. Estonia recognizes the importance of mainstreaming gender throughout the action lines, and considers this practice vital to the successful implementation of each priority area. Empowering women, ethnic minorities, and other historically marginalized groups to participate in national and international discussions on ICT and policy will accelerate progress towards establishing an inclusive Post-2015 Development Agenda. Estonia argues for greater recognition of human rights and gender equality as foundational elements of a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous information society.

#### **V. Accountability and Measurement**

In order for the outcome document to be successful, Estonia supports the creation of Action Lines with clear and concise targets and indicators. Estonia emphasizes the need for comprehensive and inclusive definitions for frequently used terms, including but not limited to information and communication technologies, universal access, and ICT goods. For Estonia, it is important that the indicators be applicable to both developed and developing countries, as the digital divide is found both within states and amongst them. Estonia recognizes that progress can be difficult to measure in the rapidly evolving landscape of technology and access; therefore, it is important for the body to set targets and indicators that will be able to gauge the level of success throughout the next ten years.

#### **VI. Final Provisions**

The Republic of Estonia is privileged to be a part of the body shaping the WSIS+10 outcome document, as ICT and the Information Society are of great interest to this country. Estonia hopes the document produced builds upon the previous work of WSIS and is reflective of the evolving needs of technology and society. Estonia would like to see a legally-binding WSIS+10 outcome document signed & ratified by all participating states. The Republic of Estonia also will propose another review conference in 2030 to review and update the WSIS+10 outcome document. As this should be a consensus document all are behind, Estonia feels it would weaken the outcome document to allow for any reservations by States Party.