In keeping with its mandate to promote policy coherence and programme coordination in the UN system, as well as provide guidance on issues related to inclusive Knowledge Societies and especially on information and communications technologies (ICTs) in support of internationally agreed development goals, the 30 members of the UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) recognize this joint statement to the UN Secretary General and the UN Task Team. The statement is a collective contribution to the dialogue on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, a unified effort to harness inter-agency expertise and experience to support deliberations on Post-2015 priorities, and a united commitment to a UN system poised to address development challenges in the 21st century.

1. When the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established in 2000, the international community was only beginning to understand the catalytic potential of ICTs to advance development agendas and priorities. One of the targets under Goal 8 calls for making the benefits of technologies, particularly ICTs, available to all. Two years before the deadline for achieving the MDGs, Target 18 seems achievable by 2015 when it comes to access to mobile services. However, the potential of ICTs as key enablers for inclusive development have yet to be fully acknowledged, harnessed and specifically linked to the achievement of all other MDG targets.

2. In 2003 and 2005, at the two phases of the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS), the international community agreed on a set of commitments that recognize ICTs as enablers for development. World leaders representing Governments, international organizations, the private sector and the technicosocial community set out a strategic framework for their deployment and use with the engagement of and in partnership with multi-sectoral stakeholders. This framework captures the potential of ICTs in enhancing access, especially of vulnerable populations, to education, health care and other public services, to information, finance and knowledge, and the role of ICTs for the protecting the environment, for mitigating natural disaster risks, for ensuring sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable food production and for women’s empowerment. This is in line with the internationally-agreed development goals in general and with environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources in particular, as mentioned in both the Rio Principles and Agenda 21. In this context it is important to note that there is an existing UN goal for the post-2015 sustainable development era that already addresses a key component of the information society. UNGIS was established in 2006 to ensure coherence in the implementation of these commitments across the UN system.

3. Thirteen years since the UN Millennium Summit and ten years after WSIS 2003, the ICT landscape has changed dramatically – new diffusion and uptake of mobile technologies, the expansion of access to the Internet in particular, play an important part in ensuring rights-based development, especially enabling wider exercise of freedom of expression and press freedom, which in turn are critical to combating corruption, ensuring gender-sensitivity, deepening accountability, and promoting socially inclusive and sustainable development.

3.4 ICTs play a transformative role in governance and institutional development at the global, regional, national and local levels, which are essential for sustainable development in the 21st century. ICTs in general, and the Internet in particular, offer a valuable knowledge and resource base that has been developed in the past decade on a multi-stakeholder basis and can help inform the setting of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. UNGIS can provide assistance particularly in the following ways:

1. Support the post-2015 process, including by providing substantive expertise in support of the Open Working Group as it starts to frame proposals to the General Assembly.
2. Making experts available to Member States through their Permanent Representatives to the UN, specifically as they reflect on lessons learned in the past 10 years in WSIS.
3. Coordinate the access to the full set of UN, including at the regional level and within the UN Development Group, to facilitate the effective integration of ICT-enhanced, innovative development solutions in their own frameworks.

4. In keeping with its mandate, UNGIS is committed to both support the UN community as it frames the post-2015 Development Agenda and help deliver on the new set of goals by ensuring policy and programme coherence, and providing guidance on the central role of ICTs in development.

Members of UNGIS


*UNESCO is UNGIS’ 2013 Chair

**ITU, UNCTAD, UNDP and UNDESA (2013) are UNGIS’ Vice-chairs

About UNGIS

UNGIS serves as an interagency mechanism, which aims at coordinating substantive and 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. Subsequently, UNGIS ensures coordination within the United Nations development system to respond to the international attention being given to science and technology and technology transfer as reflected by the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit.

Following the recommendations of its 9th UNGIS meeting that took place in UNESCO Paris in the framework of the first WSIS+10 Review in February 2013, UNGIS agreed to present a Joint Statement to ensure that ICTs, applications and services, be underlined and included prominently in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. More information on UNGIS can be found at: www.ungis.org, or email us at: contact@ungis.org