



# Towards Knowledge Societies for Peace and Sustainable Development

## First WSIS+10 Review Event

25-27  
February  
2013

### Introductory Remarks by UNESCO, ITU, UNDP and UNCTAD

The Event *Towards Knowledge Societies for Peace and Sustainable Development*, hosted by UNESCO and co-organized with ITU, UNDP and UNCTAD in Paris from 25 to 27 February 2013, marks a significant step in the WSIS+10 Review process.

Convened in the framework the overall review process of the World Summit on the Information Society, 10 years after its holding in Geneva, and subsequently in Tunis, this Event contributed to the on-going review of the outcomes of major UN Conferences. It addressed in synergy all dimensions of the WSIS achievements, debated related challenges and issues at stake for the future, and outlined common views about the post 2015 arrangements and sustainable development targets in which ICTs should be adequately recognized as enabler of inclusive development and peace.

Access to ICTs has increased tremendously in a decade. Mobile phones now reach into almost every corner of the world, bringing connectivity to many people including in poor and remote communities. The Internet has brought unprecedented information access to a third of the world's population, affecting almost every aspect of society. New interactive services have become available, increasing opportunities for free expression and social networking. More importantly, information and knowledge societies lead to new approaches to re-affirm the freedom of expression in cyberspace and in the new media landscape generated by ICTs, including the Internet. Broadband infrastructure and cloud computing will further influence business development and the delivery of public services in developing countries. ICTs also contribute to the objective of enhancing human diversity in all its forms, including cultural and linguistic diversity, both tangible and intangible.

This transformation in information and communication has empowered individuals, enabled economic growth and contributed towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Access to information and knowledge is, however, far from being universal and equitable. Many people are still excluded from the benefits of the information revolution because of existing challenges in access to affordable ICTs as well as a lack of appropriate policies and skills. Recognising the potential of broadband to accelerate the social and economic progress of countries, there is still an urgent need to bridge the gap between the richest and poorest countries and to address disparities of human capacities and of access to content. Important divides also prevail within countries. Overcoming these challenges will help humanity reap full value from the opportunities that lie before us.

The emergence of the Information Society has raised many hopes. However, information and knowledge are not only forces for social transformation. They are also essential for achieving the promise of sustainable development, mutual understanding and peace. Knowledge Societies build on the sum of human ingenuity, technical innovation and the power of information and knowledge. They have the potential to achieve lasting, positive impacts on education, economic prosperity, social inclusion and environmental protection, taking humanity forward to a new era of peace and sustainable development. Taking advantage of these opportunities should be at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda and the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Urgent action is needed by the WSIS Stakeholders, Governments, Private Sector, Civil Society and International Organizations to ensure that everyone has the skills and capabilities to participate in the Knowledge Societies, facilitated by accessible and affordable ICTs. Participants in the Paris Review Event pledged themselves to build on the achievements made since the WSIS and to work together in this common endeavour for a better world as delineated in the recommendations assembled out of the debates during this gathering.