

Statement of IPDC Chair, Ambassador Anna Brandt

Information Meeting: Voluntary national assessments of Internet Universality Indicators

24 May 2019, UNESCO Headquarters room IV

Distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

First of all, let me thank the Secretariat for organizing this information meeting in order to give an update to Member States on the implementation of the Internet indicators.

The IPDC Council supported the Secretariat to develop these indicators based on the four ROAM principles included in the concept of 'Internet Universality' that was endorsed by UNESCO's 38th General conference.

At its meeting in November last year, the IPDC Council endorsed the Internet indicator framework as a useful resource for Member States. The Council further encouraged interested Member States and all stakeholders, on a voluntary basis, to support and conduct national assessments of Internet development with these indicators.

Ensuring that the Internet is an open arena, accessible to all, nurtured by a multi-stakeholder participation and based on human rights is at the very heart of UNESCO's mandate.

And the Internet indicators are tailored to areas within UNESCO's fields of competence. These include of course Communication and Information, but the indicators are also of direct relevance to how the Internet can benefit Education, Culture and the Sciences.

The Internet is evolving at a fast pace that is affecting everyone around the globe, and as such, the indicator framework is relevant to all countries – developing as well as developed.

As Chairperson of the IPDC, my hope is that Member States will see the value of the voluntary implementation of the indicators and how they can be used to assess the national Internet environment and to inform policy making in order to address digital gaps and accelerate sustainable development. The link with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is very strong.

Using this tool is a way to map where and how we can share international standards and good practices in advancing human rights, openness, accessibility to all and a multi-stakeholder approach, as well as in promoting gender equality, empowering youth and children, and improving the digital use for people with disabilities.

This is why Sweden chose to contribute with extrabudgetary funding to the development of the Internet Universality indicators, and also to support UNESCO's work in implementing them at national level.

The Internet indicators are an important addition to the other indicators developed under the IPDC. The Media Development Indicators, for instance, have proven successful in helping Member States to assess the situation, and thereafter enabling informed policy decisions and introducing reforms to support media development.

The process of developing the Internet indicators has been thorough and rigorous. I recognize the Secretariat's work in conducting the process in an inclusive and consultative manner. I would also like to thank all those Member States and stakeholders who engaged in the development process, and at the same time call for your further support in the next step: the implementation phase.

In this way, each of us can identify gaps in our given countries, and help foster evidence-based changes so as to ensure that our digital connections, content and methods bring us closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

I thank you.