

**Report on the Implementation of the
World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)
by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)
(January 2008 to December 2008)**

Briefing Note on the Implementation of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society during the reporting period January 2008 to December 2008

During the indicated reporting period, UNDESA, as the leading facilitator for Action Lines C1, C7eGov, and C11, and administrator of the IGF¹ and GAID² Secretariat Units, concentrated its efforts in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) through a number of modalities and initiatives listed below.

Activities of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM)

In 2008, DPADM focused its attention on facilitating the exchange of views, information and experiences, building capacities and promoting policy dialogue and advocacy for mainstreaming information and communication technologies for development (ICTD) among member States, stakeholders, civil society and the players involved in the implementation of the above mentioned action lines.

As in the past, DPADM organized in Geneva, during the World Information Society Week, the Third Facilitation Meeting of Lines C1, C7eGovernment and C11 of the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda (22 May), which provided a platform to create synergies among different stakeholders for more effective knowledge sharing and collaboration to ensure the WSIS implementation at the international, regional and national levels.

With the aim of promoting policy dialogue and supporting the building of policy making capacities and technical skills of government officials and practitioners from developing countries' in back office management for electronic and mobile government, and in the implementation of e-government services, policies, strategies and solutions, DPADM organized various Capacity Building Workshops (Shanghai, People's Republic of China, 27-28 May 2008; and Beirut, Lebanon, 18-20 November 2008). DPADM also strengthened the technical capacity of the UNPAN Online Training Centre with a governance and public administration learning content management system encompassing up to 15 online capacity-building courses on various topics in public administration in a multi-language environment.. During 2008, the courses were delivered to 1,525 participants from around the world. Also, in partnership with the Centre for Technology in Government (CTG), University at Albany, State, University and the Microsoft Corporation, DPADM finalized the development of METER2, which is a ready-to-use interactive web-based tool, which aims to assist governments in monitoring and refining their enabling environment for e-government.

DPADM continued supporting its engagement in several technical cooperation activities with the aim of strengthening the internal capacity of the government to use ICT for a more effective and efficient service delivery and for improved service outputs. As part of its "Capacity Building Initiative on ICT for Development", in 2008 DPADM provided technical and substantive assistance for the implementation of e-government projects in Belize and Ghana.

¹ Internet Governance Forum

² Global Alliance for ICT and Development

In the effort to promote worldwide knowledge sharing, information dissemination and state-of-the-art research on e/m government development in Member States, via up-to-date information and communication technologies (ICT) towards better public administrations, DPADM underpinned in early 2008 the content and operation features of the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN). DPADM also launched the UN Electronic/Mobile Government Knowledge Repository (UN emGKR), a “free” and openly accessible global online facility attempting to gather cross sectoral national and international stakeholders and UN agencies in an effective partnership for knowledge sharing to further the capacities of national governments in e/m government development and to achieve national e-solutions. In line with this goal in 2008, DPADM published the Compendium of ICT Applications on Electronic Government Vol. 1.

In 2008, DPADM published the UN E-Government Survey 2008: From E-Government to Connected Governance. By providing a comparative analysis of the e-government readiness of the 192 Member States, based on various features, such as website assessment, telecommunication infrastructure, and human resource endowment, DPADM aims at helping to reduce the digital divide. The 2008 UN E-Government Survey focuses on e-government initiatives directed at improving operational efficiency through the integration of back-office functions. The following countries requested and funded DPADM’s Advisory Service missions: Bahrain, Colombia (October 2008), Lesotho (June 2008), Oman (May and November 2008), and Singapore (June 2008) to strengthen their respective e-government capacities to develop solutions and services, as well as policies and strategies. An Expert Group Meeting on the "E-Government Survey: Getting to the Next Level” was organized in New York, on 11-12 December 2008, with the purpose of reviewing and validating the survey questions in the effort of enhancing the quantitative part of the Survey by developing five sets of measurable, additional/revised e-government indicators.

Activities of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament

As in the past, UNDESA and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) cooperated through the jointly established Global Centre for ICT in Parliament to strengthen the role of parliaments in advancing the Information Society and in contributing to the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS.

The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament organized the “First Parliamentary Forum on Shaping the Information Society: the Role of Parliaments and Legislators” in Geneva in conjunction with the cluster of WSIS-related events. The forum brought together legislators with major responsibilities for developing Information Society policies from parliaments in over 40 countries to share views on themes such as cybersecurity, equitable access, and citizens’ rights in the Information Society and to lay the foundation for ongoing collaboration in helping to reduce the digital divide. In collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNDESA, through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, organized the “Second Parliamentary Forum on Shaping the Information Society: the role of Parliaments and Legislators” on the eve of the third Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to discuss the themes of on-line child protection, cybercrime, and privacy, and to encourage parliamentarians to bring a parliamentary dimension to the discussions on Internet Governance-related issues.

The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament started to develop a legal repository aimed at gathering legislation from countries from all over the world on emerging ICT issues in order to facilitate the sharing of legislative practices. The Repository currently contains legislation from over 70 countries on six main topics (Child on-line Protection; Cybercrime; Open Standards; Privacy; Freedom of Information and e-Accessibility).

DESA, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament released the World e-Parliament Report 2008 which represents a first effort to provide an assessment on how ICT are being employed across the array of activities for which a parliament is responsible. The Report is based on a survey conducted among 105 assemblies.

Building on the results of the World e-Parliament Report, UNDESA, the European Parliament and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament organized the World e-Parliament Conference 2008 to promote the exchange of views on new technologies as tools to strengthen the representative, legislative and oversight functions of regional and national assemblies. At the World e-Parliament Conference 2008, UNDESA, in collaboration with the People's Assembly of Egypt, launched the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN) to promote collaboration, knowledge-sharing and mutual support among parliamentary administrations of African parliaments on an ongoing basis on legislative processes, research, and information technology.

The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament reinforced its technical assistance activities to support parliaments in developing countries.

Activities of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development in 2008

In its work programme during 2008, the Global Alliance for ICT and Development focused its attention on helping to mainstream ICT into the broader United Nations Development Agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals, and on helping developing countries to integrate ICT into their national development policies, strategies, and programmes.

GAID was instrumental in mobilizing the support of the technology and business communities to meet emerging development challenges, such as food security and development financing. Together with the Global Compact and other United Nations entities, it co-organized on 24 September 2008 at the United Nations Headquarters, on the eve of the General Assembly's High Level Session on the MDGs, the first ever "*United Nations Private Sector Forum*", which provided a platform for securing specific pledges of support from technology and business leaders in developing a long-term response to the global food crisis and endemic poverty.

At the Conference on Financing for Development last November 2008 in Doha, Qatar, GAID was responsible for drawing attention to the exciting potential of new web-based, distributed, and viral modes of mobilizing financing for development, by convening a "*High-Level Working Session on Innovative Financing for Digital Development*" on 29 November 2008. During the event, business leaders and innovators brainstormed on new ways to mobilize resources for realizing the ICT for development agenda via Web 2.0 technologies and social networking platforms, drawing upon the outcomes and recommendations of GAID's landmark conference, "*United Nations Meets Web 2.0 - New Media, New Entrepreneurs and New ICT Opportunities in Emerging Markets*" held on 25-26 March 2008 in New York and of the "*Global Forum on Access and Connectivity: Innovative Funding for ICT and Development*" held on 19-20 May 2008 in Kuala Lumpur.

A "*GAID Panel discussion on ICT for Development – Programmes and Strategies in the Developing World*" held on 28 May 2008 in Geneva in the context of the 11th session of the CSTD, helped highlight the developing country experiences and diverse perspectives and cutting edge ideas on how to leverage ICT to speed up and scale efforts to meet national development goals.

In 2008, the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ICT), a GAID flagship partnership initiative, continued to flourish and mobilize multi-stakeholder cooperation for promoting ICT solutions and standardization for people with disabilities. A "*Joint UNITAR/G3ICT/GAID Seminar on Implementing the Digital Accessibility Agenda of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Challenges and Opportunities for Signatory States*" held on 3 December 2008 in New York culminated a highly successful two-year programme, contributing to the rapid and effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular its Article 9, which calls for a universal framework for addressing the accessibility of ICTs and assistive technologies.

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) moved into the third year of its provisional five-year lifespan and held its annual meeting in Hyderabad, India, on 3-6 December 2008.

In 2008, there was also a spread of national and regional IGF initiatives that fed into the annual IGF meeting. Two initiatives were reported from Africa: an East African IGF (EAIGF) was held in Nairobi, bringing together outcomes from national meetings held in Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. Another meeting took place in Dakar, focusing on West African country issues for Internet governance. An IGF in the Latin America and Caribbean Region was held in Montevideo and a European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG) took place in Strasbourg. National IGF meetings were held in the United Kingdom, In Italy and in Germany. The UK IGF process led to the development of a crime reduction partnership.

The overall theme of the Hyderabad meeting was 'Internet for All'. More than 1400 participants from 94 countries took part in the meeting. There were many comments that the third edition was the best so far and in general terms, it was felt that the IGF had matured insofar as it allowed the discussion of politically sensitive issues in a climate of good faith, and succeeded in reducing people's apprehensions and concerns.

The main sessions were organized as thematic days under the following headings: 'Reaching the Next Billion', 'Promoting Cyber-Security and Trust', 'Managing Critical Internet Resources'. The last day covered 'Emerging Issues - the Internet of Tomorrow' and 'Taking Stock and the Way Forward'. In parallel, 87 self-organized workshops, best practice forums, dynamic coalition meetings and open forums were scheduled around the broad themes of the main sessions and the overall mandate of the IGF.

The discussions were reflected in a Chairman's Summary, which is available on the IGF Web site³. There were some common threads that emerged from the discussion.

- Multistakeholder cooperation was seen as a pre-requisite to tackle all existing problems. All users were part of the Internet and all actors had a shared responsibility to find solutions.
- While it was recognized that there was a need to discuss Internet governance issues globally, it was felt that there was a need for acting locally. It was often more urgent to find solutions at the national and regional levels.
- There was a general understanding that there were no 'one size fits all solutions'. All countries had to find their own solutions, corresponding to their own situation. Through the sharing of best practices and the exchange of information, they could find solutions that were adapted to their needs.

The 2008 meeting also addressed the review process, called for by the Tunis Agenda which, in Paragraph 76, requests the Secretary-General "to examine the desirability of the continuation of the Forum, in formal consultation with Forum participants, within five years of its creation, and to make recommendations to the UN Membership in this regard". The formal consultations will be held at the fourth IGF meeting in 2009, to allow for a timely decision by the UN Membership within the five-year deadline.

The fourth annual meeting will be held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on 15-18 November 2009.

³ <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/hydera/Chairman's%20Summary.10.12.2.pdf>