

IEEE POSITION STATEMENT

Building a Sustainable Global Information Society

Approved by the IEEE Board of Directors

12 February 2017

IEEE shares the vision of a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented information society as outlined by the United Nations through the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). We are committed to working with all categories of stakeholders¹ seeking to leverage information and communication technologies in order to implement the WSIS vision.

1. **We support the position that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) will play a central role in sustainable development².** Connecting the world's citizens and achieving sustainable development is our common responsibility. IEEE is committed to supporting ICT development and adoption, as well as global connectivity, as these are foundational to accelerating social and economic growth and sustainable development, both in developed and developing regions of the world.
2. **We are committed to working towards increasing trust in the internet and its underlying technologies** through transparency, ICT education at all levels of expertise, technical community building, partnership across regions and nations, and service to humanity with integrity in service.
3. **We support the WSIS process, which provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to engage in open and transparent dialog on many key issues and to work together to develop tangible and actionable programs.** IEEE considers it important to work with all categories of stakeholders on issues that

¹ Working Group on Internet Governance, set up by the UN Secretary General under the WSIS mandate, defined the following categories of stakeholders: Governments, the private sector and civil society. Report of the Working Group on Internet Governance, June 2005, p. 4, available at <http://www.wgig.org/docs/WGIGREPORT.pdf>.

² While there is no universal definition of sustainable development, a frequently quoted definition is "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The definition and additional information are in the 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future (also known as the Brundtland Report), available at <http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm>.

the technical community views as globally relevant, while understanding local variations and needs. We work at the intersection of technology and policy, bringing to the forefront technical expertise from across technical domains to address the challenges and opportunities that multi-regional and cross-disciplinary experiences bring to policy.

BACKGROUND

In December 2015, the United Nations held a 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The WSIS+10 Resolution on 16 December 2015 noted a strong link between digital technologies and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.³

The WSIS Forum provides an environment for discussing the role of ICTs as a means of sustainable development. In 2015, UN Action Line Facilitators created a direct link and derived linkages between the WSIS Action Lines and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁴ This created a clear and explicit connection between the key aim of the WSIS--harnessing the potential of ICTs to promote and realize the development goals--and the post-2015 development agenda. The Facilitators found that all 17 SDGs rely on the implementation of ICTs.

ABOUT IEEE

IEEE is the largest technical professional organization dedicated to advancing technology for the benefit of humanity. Through its highly cited publications, conferences, technology standards, and professional and educational activities, IEEE is the trusted voice in a wide variety of areas ranging from aerospace systems, computers, and telecommunications to biomedical engineering, electric power, and consumer electronics.

³ Outcome Document of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Overall Review of the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes, December 2015, available at <http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN95707.pdf>

⁴ WSIS-SDG Matrix: Linking WSIS Action Lines with Sustainable Development Goals, available at http://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/sdg/Content/wsis-sdg_matrix_document.pdf.