



GROUP OF FIFTEEN

The Summit Level Group of Developing Countries

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G-15 Joint Statement

WSIS Forum

Geneva, 12-16 June 2017

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Fifteen (G-15), a Group of Developing Countries representing Asia, Africa and Latin America that aims for mutually beneficial cooperation and collaboration for realizing sustainable development and economic progress. Our Group is deeply pleased to be part of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the world's largest annual gathering of the ‘ICT for the development community.’

As a niche Group of the Global South, the G-15 has identified the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an important global process to be involved. The G-15 also wishes to acknowledge the concerted efforts made by the International Telecommunication Union to highlight the role that ICTs play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard we are particularly encouraged by the WSIS Action Lines in support of the implementation of the SDGs. Our Group believes that ICTs continue to play a critical role in promoting, advancing and measuring the SDGs and wish to enhance the capacities of our member countries in this regard. We believe that ICTs are an important engine for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Goals 9 and 17 are among the most relevant. Goal 9 addresses the promotion of inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation in general and information and communications technology, in particular. Goal 17 refers to science, technology development and transfer, and capacity building as means of implementation which play crucial roles in achievement of the 2030 Development Agenda. Although the SDGs, and also the Tunis Agenda make several direct and indirect references to transfer of technology, their cross-cutting relevance is not properly reflected in the SDG indicator framework. A major challenge that is facing many developing countries is the lack of appropriate technology that is required for the achievement of the SDGs. In this regard, resolution E/RES/2016/22, titled: “Assessment of the progress made in

the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society” calls upon all stakeholders to provide adequate resources, enhanced capacity-building and transfer of technology and knowledge to developing countries.

The G-15 views Information Communication Technology as a key area for focused cooperation among the members. In this context, we are glad to engage with the WSIS Forum and ITU in a constructive manner in order to further enhance capacities among our member countries.

The past year has seen significant developments in the interactions between the G-15 and the ITU. On two separate occasions there have been high level meetings with participation of representatives of G-15 and ITU officials on numerous avenues of cooperation that could be enhanced between our two organizations.

In this respect the G-15 is committed to enhancing capacities among its member countries through robust South-South cooperation initiatives and also seeks opportunities for collaboration with international organisations, including the ITU. There are serious concerns with regard to the digital divide between the developed and the developing countries while there are closer relationships between the two in all walks of life. While progress has been made in terms of closing the gaps and differences in some areas, a considerable technological divide still exists between and within countries. Such divides often act as impediments in harnessing the potential of science, technology and innovation for the ongoing processes, such as the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. To overcome this gap, technology development and transfer and capacity building have a crucial role to play. These provide means for empowerment of people and communities, and are an essential element towards creating an inclusive information society. It is also the observation of the G-15 that much could be achieved through sharing of resources and experiences among the developing countries with the support of international partners such as the ITU. In this regard the G-15 wishes to further engage with the ITU to seek opportunities and arrangements for training and capacity building for its member countries which would offer tangible benefits. This could be done in partnership with other States and regional and international organisations.

On behalf of the G-15, I would like to wish every success to the WSIS Forum.
