

Tatiana Ershova's Intervention to C1 and C11 Action Line Facilitation Meeting

Geneva, WSIS Forum, 5 May 2016

9:00-10:45, Room G2, Montbrilliant building

Dear participants!

I would like to present the results of an analysis of the information society development in the Commonwealth of Independent States, or CIS, conducted in May through December 2015 on the initiative of Zerde, the National Infocommunications Holding of Kazakhstan. Before that, in November 2014, Zerde was entrusted by the Council of Heads of Governments of the CIS countries with the function of “basic organization” in the field of ICT for the whole region.

The research in question was made in the framework of implementation of the state task of the Committee of Communication, Informatization and Information of the Ministry on Investments and Development of Kazakhstan with participation of leading experts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Russia, and Ukraine. I was coordinating the work of the regional expert group.

The analysis was conducted from the viewpoint of the implementation of WSIS outcomes and documents adopted within CIS, on seven WSIS Action Lines – from C1 to C7. We used different methods, but the major one was desk research focused on strategic documents and legal acts of the CIS countries in the ICT area and the leading international rankings such as those of ITU and the World Economic Forum. Desk research was combined with field research in each CIS country where expert interviews as well as interviews with representatives of governments, civil society, business and academic community were carried out on-site.

The analysis states that after the adoption of the WSIS key documents in Geneva and Tunis practically all CIS countries started intensive work on the preparation of strategic and policy documents aimed at the large-scale use of ICT for socio-economic development. Due to this, the region in general professes a purposeful policy for the information society development, which has led to a considerable growth in ICT access and use in recent years.

Visible successes became possible last but not least thanks to effective intergovernmental cooperation and the implementation of the relevant agreements and decisions made within the CIS. Key documents here were the CIS Cooperation Strategy in the field of Information Society Development up to 2015 and the Action Plan for its implementation, both adopted by the Council of Heads of Governments of the CIS States in September 2012. They helped to coordinate efforts, share best practices, develop agreed approaches to building infrastructures, and harmonize the regulatory basis.

2015 was the year of summarizing the results and further planning of the information society development at the global, regional and national levels. Consequently, the draft CIS Cooperation Strategy in the field of Information

Society Development up to 2025 and the Action Plan for its implementation have been elaborated, which give due respect to the key WSIS outcomes and Action Lines, with focus on C1, C2, C5, C7, C9, C11.

As for C1 Action Line, we introduced 6 indicators in our research to analyze the situation in the CIS countries.

Indicators no. 1&2: Availability & Comprehensiveness of IS Dev't Policy and Action Plan (relate to SDG 3 – promote healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages and SDG 4 – inclusive and equitable quality education, LLL for all)

Currently, certain strategic and program documents have been developed and implemented in the majority of CIS countries. Their assessment was carried out from the viewpoint of not only their availability but also in terms of activities recommended by the WSIS Plan of Action. Besides, not only national policies and programs, but also sectorial documents in the field of ICT, including sections of common sectorial policies and programs were taken into account. The most well conceived strategic planning documents have been showcased by Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia – they presented almost all areas recommended by WSIS.

In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, on the contrary, there are neither existing information society strategy or policy nor formulated and implemented ICT programs or action plans. But there is a reverse situation in Tajikistan: an ICT strategy is available but not backed by a current national action plan (the previous one expired in 2004). The strategy itself lacks targets that would determine the achievement of goals and objectives.

Indicator no. 3: Importance of ICTs to Gov't Vision (relates to SDG 3-4; SDG 11 – inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable human settlements; SDG 13 – combatting climate change, SDG 14 – marine resources for sustainable dev't; SDG 15 – terrestrial ecosystems, biodiversity)

This indicator is used in the World Economic Forum's Networked Readiness Index of the Global Information Technology Report. The scores for those countries not covered by WEF were given by experts during the interviews in the countries. Traditionally, high rating on this indicator receives Azerbaijan (in the latest rankings by the WEF it is among the ten leading countries). Good performance show Armenia and Kazakhstan. Other CIS countries are estimated to have global average or lower values of this indicator in 2015.

Indicator no. 4: Gov't Success in ICT Promotion (relates to SDG 11, 13-15)

This indicator is also used in the WEF Networked Readiness Index, and the lacking scores were also given by experts during the interviews in the countries. High scores on this indicator receive the same countries as in the previous one – Azerbaijan (in the latest WEF ranking it is also included in the top ten), as well as Armenia and Kazakhstan. Other CIS countries are estimated to have global average or lower values of this indicator in 2015. According to WEF, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine belong to a group of outsiders of this index.

Indicator no. 5: Use of Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Mechanism in the Dev't & Implementation of the IS Policy (relates to SDG 9; SDG 16 – inclusive societies, justice, institutions; SDG 17 – global partnership for sustainable dev't)

In some CIS countries (e.g. in Moldova), there are acting laws on public-private partnerships, but there are only few examples of the use of such mechanisms in the ICT area. The champions here are Kazakhstan and Russia. In Kazakhstan, in accordance with current legislation, all draft decisions and regulations regarding ICT development are circulated and discussed in the relevant associations of the industry. In Russia, public-private partnerships are important tools for the development of ICT infrastructure in remote and hard-to-reach areas.

Indicator no. 6: Venture Capital Availability (relates to SDG 8 – economic growth, employment; SDG 9 – infrastructure, industrialization, innovation; SDG 12 – consumption, production)

Another indicator of WEF Networked Readiness Index, so all of the above on such indicators is right for it.

The values of indicators are low for all CIS countries – from 2 to 3.2 on a 7-point scale. The best scores demonstrate Tajikistan (38th place in the world according to WEF) and Kazakhstan (47th place). Belarus, which is not participating in the WEF ranking, was assessed approximately at the level of Kazakhstan on this indicator during the study.

Taking the **C1 Action Line generally**, the CIS countries were ranked the following way: Kazakhstan (the highest score – 5 of 7), Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan (approximately the average CIS score – 3.75), Armenia, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan (the lowest score – 2.1).

The study allowed to formulate the following **recommendations**:

1. To the draft CIS Cooperation Strategy in the field of Information Society Development up to 2025 and the Action Plan:

- develop model strategic planning documents in the field of information society;
- development model laws regulating the activities of MSPs;
- improve the information society monitoring system in the CIS countries.

2. To the Council of the Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications in conjunction with the Coordinating Council of CIS Member States:

- develop and adopt a model tool for monitoring the use of ICT, in particular in state and municipal administration, education, health, social protection, culture;
- develop a composite index of the Information Society in the member countries.

3. To public authorities responsible for the development of the information society in the CIS countries:

- develop and adopt the entire set of national strategic planning documents in the field of information Society, taking into account the recommendations of international organizations, best practices and national factors;
- extend the use of the MSP mechanism in the development and implementation of the national strategic planning documents;
- implement the harmonization of statistical monitoring of the information society development with the recommendations of OECD and ITU, as well as the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development.

While concluding, I would like to invite you all to join the Thematic Workshop “The Information Society Development in the CIS Countries” organized by Kazakhstan at 15:00 today in Room K2, Montbrilliant. There will be more detail on the research briefly presented here just in one part.

Thank you very much for your attention.