

**WSIS**  
**World Summit on the Information Society**  
**ICT4D and Communications Participants**  
**Staff Evaluation**  
**December 9-12**  
**Geneva, Switzerland**

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**December 16, 2003**

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**world summit**  
**on the information society**  
Geneva 2003 - Tunis 2005

## Introduction and Background

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The first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) took place in Geneva, Switzerland from Dec. 9-12, 2003. IDRC participated as a member of the official Canadian delegation to the Summit and staff and developing world partners from IDRC played a key role in the ICT4D platform adjacent to the official Summit assembly. More than 12,000 people came to Geneva to participate in the Summit and the ICT4D pavilion.

IDRC organized two workshops at the ICT4D Platform, exhibited projects at the Canadian Pavilion, completed webcast "street" interviews and special coverage from the Summit, and participated in numerous workshops and events to promote digital inclusion in the information society. Following the conclusion of the Summit IDRC staff who participated in the ICT4D pavilion completed an evaluation form to reflect their impressions and feedback from the Summit. The numeric rating and verbatim responses by participants follow.

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## Response Patterns

Qualitative responses are listed and/or grouped to reflect all of the comments made by the participants. All quantitative responses for the survey in Annex 1 can be found in Annex 2 (21 respondents).

### 1. The thing I liked most about WSIS was:

- *The energy and inspiration*
- *All the beautiful, great people*
- *ICT4D – halls*
- *Networking*
- *Meeting up with old contacts over and over again*
- *Diversity of people and cultures*
- *Us*
- *Team building*
- *Meeting old friends*
- *The people and the initiatives from NGOs, CSOs, and other institutions*
- *All of us being together at once*
- *The opportunity to explore, in further details, what other countries are doing on ICT4D*
- *Networking with current and future partners, and IDRC colleagues*
- *Networking with partners at ICT4D platform*
- *The multiplier effect – a reward for earlier efforts*
- *Space provided for side forums and incorporation of the outcome of these meetings in the WSIS Plenary (hopefully in the final report). A feeling of solidarity globally*
- *Some of the very committed people I met*
- *People networking and ICT4D Platform*
- *Breadth of information*
- *The activities- all the participants show their interest in what IDRC is doing as a leader*

2. The think I **liked least** about WSIS was:

- Too many things to process
- Too expensive
- Too tiring
- The noise level, the poor internet access, the sheer volume of people to try and meet with
- Too long
- The World Bank display with cocktails, the difficulties with audio during workshops
- Them
- No time to attend sessions
- Waste of funds
- Poor connectivity on site, the noise level
- Explaining basic things over and over again
- Too much going on, it was like information overload, no time to cover it all \*
- Like most big meetings – overwhelming, cigarette smoke, no sound proofing
- Noisy place – difficult to have conversations or listen to presentations
- Too much going on – couldn't come near to capturing even a small portion
- The feeling of being torn apart with the infinite number of meetings which leaves one with a feeling of little value added \*
- The overwhelming pace of meetings, events, and presentations
- The inability to do what I had hoped to. I was not able to meet and talk to enough partners
- The noise levels!
- Compromises with Canadian partners in Pavilion

3. Participants were asked to rank 8 dimensions of the meeting using a 10-point scale with 10 being the highest score.

Table 1.0 below presents the average score for each dimension of the conference. Please see the table in Annex 2 for a complete listing of all the scores.

The average overall rating of the conference was 8.1 out of 10.

**Table 1.0**

Item	Individual Participant Scores	Average
IDRC Sponsored Workshops	<b>Please see Annex 2</b>	7.7
IDRC Sponsored Demonstrations		7.2
Participation of Developing World Partners		8.0
Participation by IDRC Colleagues		7.8
Networking with Partners		8.6
Meeting new partners & collaborators		8.2
Webcast Interviews		8.6
Other		8.4
<b>Total Experience</b>		<b>8.1</b>

4. I **Would** \_\_\_\_ **Would Not** \_\_\_\_ want to participate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of the World Summit in Tunisia (Choose one).

Would (W)	Would Not (WN)
18	3

Why?

- (W) Only if there is a parallel fair – not the Summit
- (W) I would if and only if I have a concrete agenda to portray/perform (as I did for this 1<sup>st</sup> phase)
- (W) Because, expensive and process laden as it is, it can't be avoided
- (W) To demonstrate our race inot the ICT4D future with each of our projects
- (W) This was a learning experience
- (WN) Go for small/content rich/high profile/southern-based presence
- (W) Oh well, someone has to
- (W) But to ensure there is more publicity and coordination among the various groups of IDRC and affiliates
- (W) Would "participate" if it means developing projects in lead up to summit
- (W) To follow how the ideas, promises, and suggestions evolved from Geneva to Tunis
- (WN) If Pan Asia is represented, I don't need to be here for networking. On the other hand, ENRAP will have more to share by 2005
- (W) Great opportunity to network with partners with similar interests
- (W) Never been to Tunisia – seriously it will be again the place to be – showtime!
- (W) I think a good opportunity for IDRC to refocus our strategy and have a greater impact at Tunis
- (W) We need to consolidate presence in the ICT4D areas and form new partnerships
- (WN) I am unsure what value added I could bring. Who are we trying to reach/influence, needs to be clearly defined
- (W) Excellent opportunity to gather information
- (W) Interested in progress accomplished at that time. See who will be there

5. If ICT4D@IDRC was to participate in **WSIS** again, the element that would be most **important to maintain** would be?

- The team participation
- Partners coming too
- Webcasting, definitely!
- Civil society support and engagement
- Bringing our Policy/LINK Centre etc. partners to talk, and this time, the black African voices
- Participation of IDRC partners
- Pack approach, demos and panels
- IDRC message
- Exhibition
- Participation of our partners to our South
- Partners in control as much as possible
- The participation of different Canadian institutions/departments supporting ICT4D
- Promoting cheap, affordable technologies to remote, disadvantaged communities
- Have the ICT4D platform

- Webcast and developing partner excellence Canada Connections
- Sponsor workshops
- The team spirit and the relationship with partners in the participation at WSIS itself
- Broad-based participation to allow potential partners to see the breadth of experience and expertise we bring to any table
- Participation of partner
- Booth, webcast, participation from IDRC colleagues and partners

6. The most important **development project** for **ICT4D@IDRC** to pursue following the WSIS should be:

- OSI collaboration
- Support for various Africa networks from bandwidth consortiums to civil society
- ICT policy Africa/Innovations in access technologies, Research and dissemination of our findings
- Digital opportunities for young people. Prepare new generations for the future
- Wireless Roadshow
- Policy oriented data gathering
- Tech capacity building
- Open Source solutions for the South
- Move IDRC style projects, cutting edge southern driven research esp. WiFi, regulation, and IPR
- Good preparation for WSIS II, get good showcase for Tunis
- Human Rights and ICTs scaling up on health
- 1) Statistically rigorous and respected study on ICTs & Poverty. 2) Study on Rural Connectivity & Universal Access (current status, implications and concrete solutions for developing world)
- ICT4D: South-South networking ICA: e-Link
- I am unfamiliar with all projects but I think mobile technologies (GSM, VSAT, WiFi) show great promise
- LINK Centre initiative/regulation framework

7. The most important **change** in **ICT4D@IDRC** following the **WSIS** in Geneva should be:

*Lessons section*

- Do scaling up projects
- Better representation of ICT4D initiatives vs. corporate
- Make collaboration between the PIs
- Focus on IPRs, governance, New(er) access
- Unified presence led by ICT4D, not Comms
- Less integration into over all Canada Pavillion, and more autonomy like Bellanet kiosk
- Increase support to policy research
- More synthesis globally and on the issues
- 1) we MUST re-strategize and take leadership in showing the way in ICT development and application amidst a VERY crowded ICT field 2) we MUST target to find strategic, high profile projects, with great impact globally and draw on IDRC's strong resources
- A clean communications outcome
- Advance targeting of information on IDRC projects

*GLK3*

8. From this **WSIS** I learned that ....

- *We're making progress*
  - *Human network go first and are the most important issue to consider*
  - *Mesh networking is even cooler than I imagined*
  - *We are still the smart kids on the block, but there is a lot of noise out there*
  - *Even with all previous difficulties, things can be done*
  - *Something as useless as the Digital Solidarity Fund was partially adopted*
  - *CA + Acacia intend to merge*
  - *IDRC + OSI are the coolest dev. Organizations on the planet*
  - *Still processing my learning*
  - *Big is beautiful too ... but warts are easy to see*
  - *It is possible to foster development in developing countries with the use of ICTs*
  - *ICT4D is on the right track, that IDRC is highly viewed by southern partners*
  - *We are still at the head of the class, but still have lots of running to do*
  - *1) Multi-stakeholder partnerships are the way to go 2) Technical solutions exist and case studies of successful ICT applications are needed (real evidence) for full commitment to act*
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- *Big conferences can actually be good if one knows how to milk them*
  - *Summits are more about connecting with colleagues/interested parties than making decisions*
  - *The position of the booth is important in attracting visitors – great positioning of IDRC*
  - *IDRC is a leader in the development field*

9. **On a scale out of 10**, I would give the overall experience of the **WSIS** a \_\_\_\_\_.  
(10 is the highest score).

- *The average score for all respondents is **8.1**. (Please see table in Annex 2)*

10. Other Comments

- *Wonderful! So glad we did it!*
- *In all of the above, replace WSIS with ICT4D Platform. WSIS was absolutely irrelevant!*
- *I didn't have big expectations about the formal platform, so no big surprise. Definitely, the event didn't attract sufficient media attention. Perhaps in Tunisia ...*
- *We are clear leaders but need to build partnerships and continue to develop it. We must continue to distinguish ourselves!*
- *The organization of WSIS and ICT4D platform was poor (bad connectivity – expensive as well, bad acoustics, small booth, stupid IDRC promotional policy – could only "promote" IDRC in the booth)*
- *My experience relates mainly to the ICT4D Platform, not substantive participation of which I have no experience*
- *Need better promotion materials on workshops if we do this again*

## ANNEX 1

### Evaluation Sheet World Summit on the Information Society

1.0 The thing I liked most about WSIS was?

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2.0 The thing I liked least about WSIS was?

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3.0 On a scale out of 10 (with 10 being the highest score) I would rank ( - ) as:

-The IDRC Sponsored Workshops	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-The IDRC Sponsored Demonstrations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-The Participation of Developing World Partners	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-The Participation by IDRC Colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-The Networking with Partners	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
- Meeting new partners and collaborators	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-The Webcast Interviews	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-Other _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4.0 I Would \_\_\_\_\_ Would Not \_\_\_\_\_ want to participate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of the World Summit in Tunisia.  
(Choose one)

Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5.0 If ICT4D@IDRC was to participate in WSIS again, the element that would be most important to maintain would be?

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6.0 The most important *development project* for ICT4D@IDRC to pursue following the WSIS should be:

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7.0 The most important *change* in ICT4D@ IDRC following the WSIS in Geneva should be:

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8.0 From this WSIS I learned that.....

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9.0 On a scale out of 10, I would give the overall experience of the WSIS a \_\_\_\_\_? (10 is the highest score).

Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_