



**Presentation by ICT4Peace to UNGA Sustainable Development Summit
Sept 27, 2015, UN HQ New York**

Introductory salutations

ICT4Peace is a Foundation dedicated to the cause of a peaceful cyberspace, one in which the huge potential of contemporary information and communication technologies (ICT) are employed for the benefit of humanity as a whole. Success in achieving sustainable development will increasingly depend on the smart use of ICTs. Acknowledgment of this reality should be a core tenet of efforts to implement the SDGs over the next 15 years.

Allow me from the perspective of ICT4Peace to make a number of points (six to be precise) to those who will carry forward this vital work of realizing the SDGs. I do so as one who has been involved from the earliest efforts of the international community to develop a vision of how ICTs could contribute to the goals of the United Nations. I refer to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that over its two phases of Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005) first expressed some basic principles of conduct for all stakeholders in cyberspace. Principal among them and the inspiration for creating ICT4Peace was the commitment to prevent conflict in cyberspace and harness the power of ICTs for the UN's peace building objectives. We need to ensure that the vision set out in paragraph 36 of the Tunis Commitment continues to guide our collective efforts today, in the future and in all contexts.

My first point therefore is to stress the importance of maintaining a peaceful cyberspace, free of threats from either state or non-state actors. As the preamble of the draft outcome document for the SDGs clearly recognizes **there can be no sustainable development without peace**. Inter-state cooperation to establish norms of responsible state behavior in and in relation to cyberspace should be encouraged as a precondition for achieving an environment conducive to realizing the SDGs.

Secondly, and in furtherance of the goal set out in 16.7 for "inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making" we must ensure a credible participation by civil society, the private sector and academia in developing the type of cyber security policy that facilitates the realization of the SDGs. Excluding the chief stakeholders of the internet in developing its governance is simply wrong-headed, given the role and expertise of these non-governmental stakeholders both in

developing the technologies involved and finding solutions to problems – whether technical and normative - that emerge around them.

Third, it is regrettable that the outcome document does not grant specific reference to ICTs or the internet and universal access. With half the world's population on-line and two-thirds of users residing in the global south, it is difficult to understand how a SDG outcome document could fail to mention these powerful tools. While it is evidently important to avoid the trap of technological determinism, progress on implementing the SDGs will be enabled through applying ICTs and their role, already important, will become only more indispensable over the next 15 years. Some way should be found to give appropriate recognition of ICTs, including the Internet, as crucial enablers of the objectives contained in the SDGs.

Fourth, we should acknowledge that no one institution will be able to manage all the varied ICT-related activity that will contribute to implementing the SDGs. A functional approach that differentiates among forums and fully utilizes the partnership potential offered by civil society, academia and the private sector should be promoted. It should also focus on capacity building as advocated in goals 10 and 16.a if we are to reduce those inequalities among countries and empower the less developed amongst them to exploit ICTs and contribute to realizing the SDGs while simultaneously contributing to global cyber security. Realistically it may be easier to engage regional and sub-regional organizations in some of this work initially, although the universal body of the UN must never lose sight of its responsibilities with respect to this most universal of technologies.

Fifth, throughout the SDG implementation process, full use should be made of ICT-enabled procedures of transparency and accountability. By making smart use of ICTs, all stakeholders can benefit from access to official proceedings and documentation to permit positive monitoring of what is actually being done to put the lofty goals of the SDGs into meaningful action on the ground.

Finally, recalling the latest Reports of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, ICT4Peace reiterates the need for the SDGs to affirm the empowering and enabling potential of ICTs in sustainable human development, while also calling on all states to ensure the appropriate balance between rights and security in responding to malicious use of ICT.

I thank you for this opportunity to hear the views of ICT4Peace, an NGO which I can assure you will strive to do its part to contribute to the realization of the SDGs.

(Delivered by Dr. Daniel Stauffacher, President ICT4Peace).

