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Report from a Multi-Stakeholder Event to the 8th Plenary Session of the World Summit on the Information Society

18th November 2005, Tunis.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentleman

As President of CODATA, the Committee on Data for Science and Technology, I would like to thank the ITU and the WSIS secretariat for giving me the opportunity to make this intervention.

You may kindly recall that in the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in December 2003, 175 countries adopted a landmark Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action.

Paragraph 7 of the Declaration of Principles states that "Science has a central role in the development of the Information Society."

Article 10 of the Agenda for Action recognizes the importance of "Access to Information and Knowledge," and Article 23 recognizes the important role of "e-Science."

Many institutions and organizations within the scientific community already are engaged in activities that address these principles, in particular the importance of widespread access to scientific data and information. However, there is a growing perception of the need to coordinate and integrate these efforts.

With this in mind, CODATA consulted extensively during the past year with the International Council for Science (ICSU), the International Council of Scientific and Technical Information (ICSTI), the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS), the Science Commons, UNESCO, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), CERN, and scientists and scholars from around the world.

Earlier this week, we held a special event at a WSIS Satellite Event here in Tunis to launch a new initiative to create the **Global Information Commons for Science**.

The *Global Information Commons for Science Initiative* is a multi-stakeholder undertaking with the following goals:

(1) Improved understanding and increased awareness of the societal benefits of easier access to and use of scientific data and information, particularly those resulting from publicly funded research activities;

(2) Wider adoption of successful methods and models for providing open availability on a sustainable basis and facilitating reuse of publicly-funded scientific data and information, as well as cooperative sharing of research materials and tools among researchers; and

(3) Encouragement and coordination of the efforts of the many stakeholders in the world's diverse scientific community who are engaged in efforts to devise and implement effective means to achieve these objectives, with particular attention to developing countries.

The Initiative will not duplicate existing efforts. Rather, it will provide a shared global platform to supplement and support members' work on existing initiatives.

To become a partner, organizations will need to make a commitment to undertake one or more activities that contribute to the stated goals.

More information can be found on our website, http://www.codata.org.

Finally, I would like to quote from an editorial that was published in the journal *Science*, on October 21st of this year: "Science helped to create the Information Society—it can now help extend that society to all."[1]

Many thanks for your time and attention. We look forward to a successful conclusion of the World Summit and to working with all of you on these important issues.

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[1] Iwata, S., and R.S. Chen. 2005. Science and the Digital Divide (editorial). *Science* **310** (5747, 21 October): 405.