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| **Council Working Group on WSIS&SDG34th meeting – Geneva, 25 September 2019** |  |
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|  | **Document CWG-WSIS&SDG-34/005-E** |
| **26 July 2019** |
| **English only** |
| **WSIS Forum 2020** |

The World Summit on the Information Society Forum (WSIS) 2020 is scheduled to be held from 30 March to 3 April 2020 at ITU Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

The **WSIS Forum** is a global United Nations (UN) multistakeholder platform facilitating the implementation of the [WSIS Action Lines](http://www.wsis.org/sdg) for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD, in close collaboration with all WSIS Action Line co-/facilitators and other UN organizations (UNDESA, FAO, UNEP, WHO, UN Women, WIPO, WFP, ILO, WMO, ITC, UPU, UNODC, UNITAR, UNICEF and UN Regional Commissions). It represents the world's largest annual gathering of the ‘ICT for development’ community. It provides an opportunity for information exchange, knowledge creation and sharing of best practices, while identifying emerging trends and fostering partnerships, taking into account the evolving Information and Knowledge Societies.

In follow up to the outcomes of the UN General Assembly Overall Review of the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes ([Res. A/70/125](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/125)) and with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ([Res. A/70/1](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1)), the WSIS Forum is constantly evolving and strengthening the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs.

The 2020 WSIS Forum (WSIS+15) will provide an opportunity to serve as a platform to track the achievements of WSIS Action Lines in collaboration with the UN Agencies involved and provide information and analyses of the implementation of WSIS Action Lines since 2005. WSIS Forum 2020 will mark 15 years since the initiation of the WSIS Process and five years before 2025.

**WSIS Forum 2020 Open Consultation Process**

The WSIS Forum is the only event of its kind where the programme and agenda are completely crowdsourced during the Open Consultation Process. The process aims at ensuring a participatory and inclusive spirit of the Forum and actively engages governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, the technical community and intergovernmental organizations in the preparatory process to ensure broad ownership and further improvements of the Forum.

The Open Consultation Process will include a collection of inputs from regional and national WSIS related events and the physical meetings of the Open Consultation Process will benefit from remote participation.

The Open Consultation Process for the WSIS Forum 2020 is structured in five phases as follows:

* **Phase I: Tuesday, 4 June 2019, 16:00-17:00:** **Launch of the Open Consultations** - The virtual launch of the open consultations took place at ITU Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland. Stakeholders were invited to participate remotely through the remote participation facilities.
* **Phase II: Thursday, 20 June 2019, 17:00-18:00: 1st Physical Meeting** - The first Physical Meeting of the open consultations took place at ITU Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland.
* **Phase III: 25-29 November 2019 (TBC): 2nd Physical meeting** - The second Physical Meeting of the open consultations will take place during the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2019.
* **Phase IV: January/February 2020: 3rd Physical Meeting -** The third Physical Meeting of the open consultations will take place at ITU Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland.
* **Phase V: Monday, 3 February 2020: Deadline for Submissions of Official Contributions and Binding Requests for Workshops.**
* **Phase VI:** **Friday, 28 February 2020: Final Brief on the WSIS Forum 2020** - The final brief on the WSIS Forum 2020 will take place at ITU Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland.

**Increased participation of the Youth**

At the request of WSIS Stakeholders, the WSIS secretariat is working closely with partners, such as UN Agencies and Universities to strengthen the engagement and participation of the youth at the WSIS Forum. Besides the Hackathon, several participatory workshops on integrating the voice of the youth, learning from young innovators and hands on training and mentorship sessions are being explored.

**Creation of Multistakeholder WSIS Thematic groups**

At the end of the WSIS Forum 2019, Stakeholders requested the creation of multistakeholder thematic groups, with regard to topics of interest for the next WSIS Forum, including Gender, Youth, Ageing, Sports, and Accessibility.

**Innovations at the WSIS Forum 2020**

Till date the following streams of innovation have already been identified and announced, while others are still being identified through the open consultation process:

**1)** **Hackathon:** As a continuation of the discussions initiated at the 2016 WSIS Forum, first ever Hackathon was held successfully in 2017 on e-Health, in 2018 on e-Agriculture, and the recent one in 2019 on education. Partners for the next year’s Hackathon is still to be identified.

**2)** **Extended Reality for SDGs**: Pursuing a first partnership in 2016, WSIS and World VR Forum join forces to be at the forefront of Virtual Reality for advancing development. A shiny new Extended Reality Track will be held at the WSIS Forum 2020 bringing together high-level personalities, world class VR and Augmented Reality experience and a very special focus on education.

**3) WSIS TalkX:** After pioneering the successful WSIS TalkX for the first time at WSIS Forum 2019, the WSIS TalkX is back to bring inspiring stories from drivers of social change in the ICT Ecosystem.

**4) Regional Engagement and Outreach:** Each year, the United Nations Regional Commissions report on their actions and WSIS work plans at the *WSIS Forum Regional Commissions Meetings* held at the WSIS Forum. In follow up to the UNGA overall review and discussions held at the WSIS Forum 2016, efforts are dedicated towards strengthening engagement of stakeholders at the regional level in the alignment of the WSIS and SDG processes and through effective implementation of the WSIS Action Lines.

**5)** **Special Tracks**: WSIS Forum 2020 will showcase technology and innovation and feature stimulating discussions through its special tracks, including Youth and ICT, Gender Mainstreaming, Older Persons and ICT, Sports and ICT, Space and SDGs, etc.

**6)** **New Services & Tools for Stakeholders Engagement**:

* Website in 6 UN Languages
* Sign language interpretation
* Machine Captioning

**Call for Nomination of the High-Level Track Facilitators (HLTF)**

Following good practice of the last two years and the guidance of the WSIS Stakeholders, the Policy Sessions will be moderated by High-Level Track Facilitators (HLTF) nominated and identified by the following stakeholder types, Private Sector, Civil Society, Technical/Academic community and International Organization.

Each stakeholder type is invited to launch an Open Call to identify HLTF to represent their respective communities. The names of the nominated representatives should be submitted to the WSIS Secretariat at wsis-info@itu.int by **3 February 2020**. Please note that all HLTFs are to cover their own expenses for travel, accommodation and insurance. The main task of the HLTF is to capture the vision, Identify emerging trends, opportunities and challenges shared by the leaders of their session.

**Call for Financial Support for the WSIS Forum 2020**

WSIS Forum is organized on an extra budgetary basis. ITU membership and other WSIS Stakeholders are encouraged to partner with the WSIS Forum 2020. WSIS Forum 2020 Partnership Packages may be found in all the six UN Languages here: [www.wsis.org/forum](http://www.wsis.org/forum)