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| Note by the Secretary-General |
| ITU’S CALL FOR INPUTS ON WSIS+20 REVIEW |
| **Purpose**This document provides a summary of the submissions received in response to *ITU’s Call for Inputs on the WSIS+20 review* that was launched in August 2024 to contribute views on the work of the ITU in the WSIS+20 review, including ideas related to the review of the WSIS Action Lines. An [annex](#Annex) is included, containing all submissions for which consent to publish has been granted.**Action required**This document is transmitted to the Council Working Group on WSIS and the SDGs **for information**.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References** [*CWG-WSIS&SDG website*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-wsis/Pages/default.aspx)*;* [*WSIS Forum website*](http://www.wsis.org/forum)*;* [*WSIS review*](http://www.wsis.org/review)*; UNGA Resolutions* [*A/RES/70/125*](https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/70/125)*,* [*A/RES/70/1*](https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/70/1)*,* [*A/RES/77/150*](https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/77/150)*; UN ECOSOC Resolution* [*E/RES/2024/13*](https://docs.un.org/en/E/RES/2024/13) *and Report* [*E/2025/31–E/CN.16/2025/4*](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ecn162025d4_en.pdf)*; PP Resolutions* [*172 (Guadalajara, 2010)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-wsis/Documents/Resolution172-PP10.pdf)*,* [*140 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-140-E.pdf) *and* [*71 (Rev. Bucharest 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-071-E.pdf)*; Council Resolutions* [*1332 (Modified 2024)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0141/en) *and* [*1334 (Modified 2023)*](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0120/en)*; WTDC Resolution* [*30 (Rev. Kigali, 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/tdc/D-TDC-WTDC-2022-PDF-E.pdf)*; WTSA Resolution* [*75 (Rev. Geneva, 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/pub/T-RES-T.75-2022)*; RA Resolution* [*ITU-R 61-3 (Rev. Dubai, 2023)*](https://www.itu.int/pub/R-RES-R.61-3-2023)*;* [*Reports of the CWG-WSIS&SDG meetings*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-wsis/Pages/Previous-meetings.aspx)*;* [*Report on the outcomes of the CWG-WSIS&SDG meetings held since PP-18*](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CWGWSIS38-C-0020/en)*;* [*Report on the outcomes of the CWG-WSIS&SDG meetings held since Council-21*](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CWGWSIS38-C-0019/en)*;* [*Roadmap for ITU’s activities to help achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGWSIS42-INF-0006/en)*;* [*ITU Secretary-General’s roadmap: World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20: WSIS beyond 2025 – WSIS+20 Roadmap*](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0059/en)*;* [*WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2025*](https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/stocktaking/Home/Reporting)*.* |

Background

ITU Council Resolution 1332 invited members and stakeholders to contribute to ITU’s work in the 20th year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20) to gather insight into the achievements and challenges of the WSIS process. Out of 97 submissions received, some of which included input from various entities, including governments within regional groups, 62 were published upon consent: [CWG-WSIS&SDG Call for Inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Responses](https://www.itu.int/en/itu-wsis/Pages/CWG-WSIS%26SDG_Call_for_Inputs_2025.aspx).

This summary will be submitted by the Chair of the Council Working Group on WSIS and SDGs to the WSIS+20 overall review by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). In addition, the ITU Secretary-General is invited to consider the outcomes of this Call for Input when submitting the ITU Secretary-General’s WSIS+20 Report to the WSIS+20 overall review, pursuant to the [ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution 140 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-140-E.pdf)). These inputsserve as a valuable reference for all stakeholders towards the WSIS+20 Overall Review by the UNGA.

Introduction

Over the past 20 years, WSIS has advanced global digital transformation by promoting inclusive access to ICTs and bridging the digital divide. Supported by the ITU, WSIS has become a cornerstone of multistakeholder digital governance. The report highlights key achievements, challenges, and impactful WSIS Action Lines, while exploring ways to sustain the inclusive model and address emerging digital trends. The WSIS architecture is recognized as important for implementing the Global Digital Compact, leveraging fora such as the WSIS Forum and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to foster an inclusive, secure digital space.

# I Major achievements of the WSIS Process in 20 years

The WSIS process has contributed significantly to the expansion of global connectivity and internet access in developing countries; efforts to bridge the digital divide; e-government services to enhance transparency and accessibility; transformation of e-health and education; fostering rapid growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the digital economy and e-business sectors; supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with climate action and disaster preparedness; global collaboration through knowledge sharing and capacity-building; cybersecurity and data privacy frameworks; emerging technologies like AI and blockchain under ethical and inclusive principles; multistakeholder participation reinforcing inclusive governance; multilingualism and cultural diversity, and cross-sectoral impact, empowering individuals and communities.

WSIS is instrumental in fostering inclusive, secure, and innovative information (and knowledge) societies. WSIS achievements underscore the role and contributions of the WSIS process in global digital development, social, economic and sustainable growth. Despite this progress, a substantial connectivity gap remains. The WSIS+20 Review presents a valuable opportunity to reflect on collective achievements, draw lessons, and renew commitments to digital development and closing the digital divide. Additionally, WSIS and its Action Lines have demonstrated adaptability in addressing emerging issues, including the rise of social media and transformative and emerging technologies like AI and virtual reality. WSIS provides a UN framework and guidance on digital governance, ensuring that global digital policies are aligned with globally agreed development goals and ethical dimensions of the information society.

# II ITU’s main contributions to the WSIS process

ITU has played a key role in facilitating dialogue among multistakeholders, supporting digital transformation strategies, and ensuring integration for emerging technologies to drive social, economic and sustainable development, some of the key areas referred by stakeholders are:

– **Leadership and coordination:** ITU’s leadership has been critical in coordinating the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action by convening the UN System and other stakeholders to implement the WSIS Process. Its key components, like the WSIS Forum, WSIS Stocktaking database, Partnership on measuring ICT for Development, and United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS), have fostered coherence and collaboration across the UN system.

– **Facilitator of the WSIS process:** Over the past 20 years, ITU has advanced ICT infrastructure development, enhanced capacity building, improved cybersecurity, and enabled policy environments through the implementation of WSIS Action Lines C2, C4, C5, and C6, as the lead facilitator. ITU has also hosted and organized the annual WSIS Forum, maintained the WSIS Stocktaking Platform, and managed the WSIS Prizes. By fostering global dialogue and collaboration, ITU has enabled knowledge sharing, policy development, and the implementation of concrete ICT initiatives aligned with WSIS and the UN development goals.

– **Promoting global connectivity:** ITU has actively promoted the development of broadband and mobile networks, especially in developing countries where connectivity gaps remain significant. Through international telecommunications standards, ITU has ensured global interoperability, enabling equitable access to ICTs.

– **Fostering digital access:** ITU has implemented capacity-building programs aimed at enhancing digital literacy and skills development, particularly among marginalized populations. These initiatives support efforts to bridge the digital divide and ensure that all communities, including women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and those in rural areas, have access to the opportunities offered by ICTs.

– **Enhancing cybersecurity**: ITU has led the development of global cybersecurity frameworks and standards, which help countries and organizations implement robust policies.

– **Supporting sustainable development:** ICTs as enablers of sustainable development have been a significant contribution to the WSIS process. ITU has promoted ICT applications in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and agriculture.

– **Global governance and policy support:** ITU has contributed significantly to the development of internet and cybersecurity frameworks. It has also provided policy and regulatory guidance to member states, helping them craft ICT strategies and programmes that promote digital growth while addressing issues like data protection, market competition, and universal service.

– **Capacity building and technical assistance:** A core area has been building human and institutional capacity in ICTs. Extensive training programs, workshops, and technical assistance missions have empowered governments and institutions—especially in developing countries—to strengthen their ICT infrastructure and policy environments.

– **Promoting innovation and emerging technologies:** ITU is at the forefront of emerging technologies by facilitating global dialogue through initiatives like AI for Good. The organization also supports innovations such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning, 5G and beyond, energy efficiency, blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT).

– **Monitoring and Reporting:** To track progress and share knowledge, ITU has maintained the WSIS Stocktaking database, a comprehensive repository of ICT development initiatives that facilitates global cooperation and learning among stakeholders.

# III Sustaining and strengthening the WSIS process and its multistakeholder model

The WSIS process aims to enhance collaborative frameworks through regular dialogues with governments, private sector, technical community, civil society, international organizations, and academia, as well as through local and regional involvement to ensure diverse perspectives and shared responsibility in progressing the implementation of WSIS.

# IV Major challenges in WSIS implementation

Addressing the digital divide remains a significant challenge; including those of cybersecurity and privacy; governance and regulation; barriers faced by marginalized groups; and economic, social, cultural and environmental impact.

# V Most impactful WSIS Action Lines

**C1: The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development** –The importance of inclusive governance by fostering collaboration among governments, the private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders.

**C2: Information and communication infrastructure** –This is essential in significantly improving connectivity, fostering social and economic growth, and bridging the digital divide in underserved regions.

**C3: Access to information and knowledge** – This supports education, fuels innovation, and empowers informed decision-making —essential for inclusive development and reducing global knowledge gaps.

**C4: Capacity building** –This has enabled more people to engage meaningfully in the digital transformation and to harness technology for personal, educational, and professional development.

**C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs** –Efforts have focused on cybersecurity and secure digital environments to ensure safer online engagement.

**C6: Enabling environment** –This involves fostering regulatory and policy frameworks to support ICT development and innovation, ensuring that digital advancement benefits all.

**C7: ICT applications** –Improved efficiency and transparency of public service delivery and citizen engagement via e-government; expanded access to medical services of e-health; accessible education of e-learning; enhanced trade through e-business.

# VI WSIS Action Lines addressing new and emerging technologies

The WSIS Action Lines continue to adapt to include emerging trends such as AI, blockchain, and IoT; fostering inclusive cooperation among governments, strengthening cybersecurity and privacy frameworks; promoting digital inclusion; investing in capacity-building programs; and establishing effective governance mechanisms and ethical frameworks.

# VII Suggestions and inputs on WSIS+20 Review Action Lines: key milestones, challenges, and emerging trends beyond 2025

Challenges

– *Digital divide –* Significant disparities persist, particularly in rural and underserved areas—an issue that must be addressed to ensure that no one is left behind.

– *Rapid technological changes –* The fast pace of technological advancement poses a challenge for safe, ethical, and inclusive frameworks and standards.

– *Cybersecurity threats –* Adapting and updating cybersecurity frameworks is vital to protect individuals, businesses, and critical infrastructure.

– *Inclusivity –* Meaningful digital inclusion remains a challenge, with a pressing need for targeted policies and programs on equitable access.

Emerging trends beyond 2025

– *Artificial intelligence (AI) and automation –* Key concerns include ethical implications, data governance, and the potential impact on employment, especially in labour-intensive sectors.

– *Internet of Things (IoT) –* IoT technologies offer new opportunities, but also raise critical concerns around data privacy, cybersecurity, and the need for more robust infrastructure support.

– *Blockchain technology –* Blockchain is a powerful tool for enhancing transparency, security, and efficiency in finance, supply chain management, and governance across public and private sectors.

– *Green ICT –* Green ICT initiatives aim to reduce the sector’s environmental footprint via energy-efficient technologies, responsible e-waste management, and climate-conscious innovation.

– *Privacy and data protection –* With the expansion of digital services, ensuring privacy and safeguarding personal data via data protection laws are critical to maintaining public trust.

Suggestions for enhancing the WSIS Action Lines

– *Update Action Lines –* These should be regularly reviewed and updated to be future-oriented and adaptable to the latest technological advancements, trends, and societal needs.

– *Continue to strengthen multistakeholder engagement –* Strengthening collaboration among governments, private sector, technical community, civil society, international organizations and academia is essential for balanced digital policies.

– *Focus on inclusive participation –* Addressing existing disparities in access and usage for vulnerable and marginalized populations.

– *Enhance cybersecurity measures –* Robust cybersecurity frameworks should continue to be implemented and supported to establish trustworthy, secure, sustainable digital ecosystems.

– *Support environmental ICT practices –* Sustainable green ICT approaches will help minimize environmental impacts and align digital growth with climate goals.

# VIII Strengthening multistakeholder platforms like WSIS Forum and IGF

Strengthening regional and national engagement through the creation of hubs ensures that global discussions are informed by regional contexts. Enhancing capacity building and training for stakeholders will improve their understanding of digital issues, while utilizing technology to facilitate remote accessibility for stakeholders with varying levels of digital access is essential. Focusing on actionable outcomes —such as policy recommendations, best practices, or collaborative projects— with tracking and reporting mechanisms will ensure that discussions lead to tangible results. Additionally, fostering innovation and adaptability by encouraging new approaches and solutions, and adapting to emerging trends and challenges, is important. Securing sustainable funding and resources guarantees the long-term viability and effectiveness of these platforms, while enhancing access and representation by actively involving underserved communities, youth, and underrepresented sectors remains crucial. Improving coordination and collaboration between the WSIS Forum and IGF can help address overlapping issues and leverage synergies. Finally, implementing systems for regular review and feedback will help assess progress and make necessary adjustments.

# IX Alignment of the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact (GDC) to achieve shared goals

To align WSIS with the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact, areas of complementarity must be identified in order to harmonize a unified vision of common priorities and avoid redundant efforts that would divert resources for international, multistakeholder cooperation. The WSIS Process, along with its key elements such as the WSIS Action Lines, UNGIS, WSIS Stocktaking, the WSIS Forum, and the IGF, provides a comprehensive framework for implementing the commitments outlined in GDC. The alignment of these processes requires integrating the GDC’s priorities into the existing WSIS framework.

In support of this goal, UNGIS members have developed a matrix to highlight and illustrate how existing UN processes are contributing to the implementation of GDC. The matrix can be accessed here: [UNGIS-CompiledMatrixOfLinkages-WSIS-GDC.pdf](https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/ungis/Content/upload/gdc/UNGIS-CompiledMatrixOfLinkages-WSIS-GDC.pdf).

# X Key emerging digital trends and topics for ITU’s consideration in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025

Key emerging digital trends include focusing on ethical development and access to AI and machine learning, addressing gaps and promoting universal access to 5G and 6G for economic and social development, and strengthening global cooperation on cybersecurity and data privacy. Bridging the digital divide and promoting digital literacy for all essential, including preparing the workforce for the future digital economy as is exploring governance and standardization for the metaverse and virtual and augmented reality. Developing standards for IoT interoperability, data privacy, and security is crucial for ensuring connectivity, user protection, and trust in emerging digital space. Supporting energy-efficient technologies and addressing e-waste will contribute to environmental efforts.

Expanding access to digital health services and ensuring health data interoperability are crucial for advancing digital health and telemedicine. Exploring blockchain for transparency and security while addressing regulatory challenges will enhance decentralized technologies. Monitoring quantum computing developments and their implications for cybersecurity will help prepare for future advancements. Adapting global governance frameworks to evolving digital technologies with a focus on ethics and digital rights will ensure responsible digital governance.

Annex

# Argentina | Open Data Charter | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Open Data Charter

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Argentina

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The WSIS process has brought significant global awareness to the importance of ICT access for socio-economic development, resulting in a growing alignment on digital policy frameworks. Achievements include a notable expansion in connectivity, especially within developing regions, as WSIS initiatives have worked to enhance broadband infrastructure and mobile internet access, though gaps persist. Key efforts have focused on digital inclusion, with programs targeting vulnerable groups like youth, rural populations, and marginalized communities, as well as promoting digital literacy initiatives that have helped integrate millions into the digital economy.

The WSIS process has also facilitated greater collaboration across governments, organizations, and stakeholders to address the digital divide, recognizing the particular challenges faced by women and young people in developing countries. As a result, the percentage of internet users has grown from 12.4% in 2003 to over 64% in 2023, marking substantial progress in bridging the digital divide.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

Over the past 20 years, the ITU has played a key role in the WSIS process, primarily by leading global efforts to establish secure ICT infrastructures through its facilitation of WSIS Action Lines C2 (infrastructure) and C5 (cybersecurity) of the Tunis Agenda.

ITU has driven cybersecurity and trust-building initiatives, helping countries adopt frameworks and standards that enhance security for ICT systems. It has also championed global standards for scalable, reliable ICT infrastructures, facilitating better interoperability and accessibility worldwide.

Additionally, ITU’s work in spectrum management has been essential for coordinating global telecommunications, supporting reliable networks across borders. Recognizing the importance of inclusion, ITU has actively promoted digital skills initiatives aimed at addressing the gender gap and empowering young people with digital literacy.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

To sustain and enhance the WSIS multistakeholder model, it is crucial to empower local, national, and regional stakeholders, allowing them to take ownership of digital development and tailor solutions to their unique socio-economic needs. Continuous feedback mechanisms, where civil society, the private sector, and government stakeholders can review and shape the WSIS process, are essential for adapting to emerging challenges.

Expanding capacity-building programs that specifically target marginalized groups and rural communities can help bridge representation gaps and foster broader, more inclusive participation. Additionally, improved data-sharing among stakeholders would create a transparent system for tracking progress, identifying needs, and refining WSIS initiatives based on evidence. It would be interesting, in terms of capacity building, to reinforce friendly communication about the processes, and to train CSOs who are not directly involved in them so that they can better understand the opportunities for involvement and advocacy.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Despite the progress made, several challenges remain. Many rural and remote areas continue to face high costs or limited access to connectivity, which undermines equitable access to ICTs. Digital infrastructure sustainability suffers different challenges, as maintenance, upgrades, and cybersecurity measures require ongoing resources, which can be especially scarce in low-income regions.

Resistance to the multistakeholder governance model in some areas limits progress, as certain regions are hesitant to involve civil society and the private sector in ICT development. Also, rapid digital expansion has introduced cybersecurity threats that often outpace available protections, particularly in developing countries.

Digital literacy and skills gaps persist, underscoring the need for comprehensive education initiatives to empower individuals to fully leverage ICTs for social and economic opportunities.

Another challenge are the rapid technological changes: keeping pace with advancements such as AI, blockchain, and 5G requires continuous adaptation. This is also connected with the need for ethical and legal frameworks: many countries lack robust frameworks to address the ethical implications of emerging technologies.

Coordination challenges also exist. Ensuring effective collaboration among governments, private sector players, and civil society remains complex. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-stakeholder approach, involving governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, and academia. Efforts should prioritize inclusivity, capacity building, and sustainable development while fostering trust and innovation in ICT ecosystems.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

In terms of impact, several WSIS Action Lines have played pivotal roles in advancing the information society, each addressing distinct but interconnected areas. Among them, Action Line C2 (Information and Communication Infrastructure) has been crucial, as infrastructure forms the foundation of all digital connectivity, enabling both individuals and organizations in even the most remote areas to access online resources. But Action Line C3: Access to Information and Knowledge is particularly powerful because it addresses the core goal of digital inclusion by promoting equitable access to information. This line fosters open access to knowledge, which is essential in bridging digital divides by ensuring that individuals can participate in the knowledge economy, regardless of their geographic or socio-economic backgrounds. By supporting open-access initiatives, multilingual content, and digital repositories, C3 empowers people with the information necessary to make informed decisions, learn new skills, and engage in civic life. Access to knowledge is the basis for informed communities and individuals, and in this way, C3 amplifies the benefits of connectivity achieved through other Action Lines by ensuring information flows are accessible and useful to a broad audience.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

To enhance the implementation of WSIS principles and Action Lines to address new and emerging digital topics, it would be strategic to integrate adaptability and flexibility into the WSIS framework. Rapid advancements in technology, like artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and the Internet of Things (IoT), are reshaping the digital landscape and require a responsive approach.

Promotion of ethical standards for emerging technologies is crucial nowadays. WSIS could develop frameworks or guidelines focused on ethical standards in emerging fields like AI, data privacy, and algorithmic transparency. This emphasis would align with the existing WSIS goal of equitable information access and responsible ICT development, ensuring that digital transformations are both safe and equitable.

Also, it is important to strengthen multistakeholder partnerships by deepening collaboration with private-sector innovators, civil society, and academia, WSIS can ensure that it remains aligned with the latest advancements and societal impacts of technologies. These partnerships can bring in expertise from emerging fields like AI ethics, digital security, and human-centered design, helping to adapt WSIS principles to new contexts.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Key milestones:

Achieve near-universal access to affordable and high-quality internet, especially in least-developed countries (LDCs), rural areas, and marginalized communities. This includes addressing both infrastructure challenges and the affordability of services, as internet access is foundational to education, economic participation, and social inclusion.

Develop harmonized global standards for data privacy, cybersecurity, and internet governance to address fragmentation. As digital technologies continue to evolve, the lack of coherent, cross-border regulations poses a significant risk to the security, privacy, and trustworthiness of digital ecosystems. Therefore, international cooperation to create these standards is essential for reducing fragmentation and ensuring that global networks are secure and accessible.

Scale up ICTs to achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in education, healthcare, agriculture, and disaster management. Technology can revolutionize and highly improve overall quality of life, especially in developing regions by making these services more efficient to be delivered, accessible and inclusive.

Examples: In education, technology can enhance learning outcomes by providing remote access to educational content, online training platforms, and digital tools that support personalized learning, bridging the gap for students in rural or underserved areas.

In agriculture, technology such as precision farming, weather forecasting tools, and digital marketplaces can significantly increase productivity, enhance food security, and improve supply chain efficiencies, empowering small-scale farmers and fostering sustainable agricultural practices.

In disaster management, ICTs can enable real-time monitoring, early warning systems, and rapid deployment of aid, helping communities prepare for and recover from natural disasters.

Establish ethical frameworks and guidelines for AI, blockchain, 5G/6G, and quantum computing deployment to ensure equitable benefits. While these technologies offer significant potential for progress, their deployment must be guided by clear ethical principles to prevent misuse, ensure fairness, and protect human rights, particularly in relation to data privacy, bias, and security.

Fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration among governments, the private sector, civil society, and academia is a key milestone. This collaboration will be essential to driving innovation, developing inclusive policies, and ensuring that technological advancements are equitable and accessible to all, bridging the gap between those with and without access to digital resources. By fostering collective efforts, we can ensure that all voices are heard in shaping the digital future.

Additionally, as mentioned in other responses, it would be ideal to align and collaborate with the implementation of the Global Digital Compact to address the existing challenges of coordination.

Challenges

Digital divide. The digital divide remains a significant challenge, particularly as connectivity becomes increasingly essential for education, work, and access to services. Despite advances in infrastructure, marginalized communities in rural areas and low-income nations still face barriers to reliable internet access and digital literacy. Addressing this gap requires collaborative investment in affordable technologies, localized training programs, and inclusive policies that ensure equitable access to digital tools.

Cybersecurity

The rapid growth of digital services has heightened cybersecurity risks and raised critical questions about data privacy. Cyberattacks on infrastructure, businesses, and individuals continue to escalate, while laws regulating the use and protection of personal data often lag behind technological advances. Achieving a balance between innovation and robust security frameworks is essential to building public trust in digital ecosystems, especially through global cooperation

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Strengthening the alignment between WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires an integrated approach that embeds ICT strategies within national and global development agendas. Governments and stakeholders should explicitly link WSIS Action Lines to specific SDG targets, emphasizing ICTs as enablers of progress in education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), health (SDG 3), and economic growth (SDG 8). Enhanced multi-stakeholder partnerships, including the private sector and civil society, can drive innovation and resource mobilization, while capacity-building programs ensure equitable access to ICT benefits. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks must measure the dual progress on Action Lines and SDGs, fostering data-driven decision-making to address gaps and accelerate impact, especially in underserved regions. By prioritizing inclusivity, affordability, and sustainability, ICTs can effectively bridge divides and catalyze the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Strengthening multistakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and IGF requires a focus on inclusivity, transparency, and measurable outcomes.

The WSIS Forum’s role as a gathering place for governments and multistakeholder actors can be further strengthened by fostering synergies with the IGF. WSIS should draw on the policy ideas and best practices developed in the IGF and use them as inputs for discussions on actionable strategies, frameworks, and global commitments. A shared roadmap or agenda could enhance coherence and streamline efforts toward shared objectives. Encouraging structured collaboration between the two platforms, such as joint task forces or shared agendas, can ensure continuity and coherence in addressing global digital challenges.

Ensure diverse representation by actively involving underrepresented groups such as small and developing nations, marginalized communities, and grassroots organizations. This can be achieved through financial support for participation, virtual engagement options, and capacity-building initiatives to empower voices from all sectors.

Driving Measurable Outcomes: establish clear, actionable goals for each platform's discussions and create mechanisms to track their implementation over time. Regularly publishing progress reports and case studies demonstrating the impact of policy recommendations can help maintain accountability and build trust among stakeholders.

Coordinate efforts with the Global Digital Compact implementation processes to enhance the alignment and coordination of various digital initiatives within the UN framework.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Aligning the implementation of the WSIS process with the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact requires integrating their shared principles of inclusivity, sustainability, and digital equity into coherent frameworks. This can be achieved by mapping WSIS Action Lines directly to the goals of the Pact and the Compact, ensuring that digital technologies are harnessed to uphold human rights, bridge the digital divide, and promote sustainable development. Joint monitoring mechanisms can track progress across these initiatives, fostering accountability and data-driven decision-making. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is essential to harmonize policy priorities, mobilize resources, and share best practices globally. By focusing on shared objectives such as universal connectivity, digital literacy, and ethical technology use, these frameworks can collectively empower individuals and communities, driving equitable digital transformation while advancing the 2030 Agenda.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

In the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025, the ITU should consider emerging digital trends such as the expansion of 5G and the advent of 6G, the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI), and the governance of transformative technologies like quantum computing, blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT). Addressing the digital divide through universal connectivity, affordable access, and digital literacy is crucial, alongside tackling issues of data governance, privacy, and cybersecurity in an increasingly interconnected world. Sustainability must be prioritized, focusing on energy-efficient ICTs, e-waste management, and leveraging digital tools for climate action. The ITU should also address the societal impacts of automation, ensuring workforce readiness and inclusive participation in the digital economy. Strengthening global cooperation, policy harmonization, and multi-stakeholder engagement will be key to fostering an equitable, ethical, and sustainable information society that aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

# Armenia | Permanent Mission of Armenia, UNOG | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Permanent Mission of Armenia to the UNOG and other international organizations

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Armenia

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Armenia recognizes the activities of other UN bodies and agencies in facilitating international cooperation on the implementation of the WSIS action lines.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The 20th anniversary of the World Summit on Information Society is a milestone event to undertake a comprehensive review and take stock of the achievements, challenges and opportunities since the adoption of the Geneva Plan of Action.

We commend the work of the ITU as a leading UN agency in mobilizing international efforts to implement the Geneva Plan of Action.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

When it comes to Internet Governance and promotion of ICTs for sustainable development, we welcome the multistakeholder approach, bringing together the Governments and international organizations, civil society, women’s organizations, young people, Indigenous Peoples, academia and private sector in implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The development of reliable and meaningful connectivity and affordable access with the aim of unlocking the full potential of digital technologies for all, with special emphasis on vulnerable groups and countries in special situations, including Landlocked Developing Countries.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?
2. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

As the humanity continues to face the adverse impacts of the climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and land degradation across all areas of sustainable development, the WSIS action line on the ICT applications, E-environment will continue to remain highly relevant. Armenia stresses the importance of a stronger focus on the application of the ICTs in sustainable consumption of natural resources, climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and protection and other areas of environmental protection.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Armenia approaches the WSIS+20 Review, guided by the ultimate goal of having an inclusive, open, safe, and secure digital future for all.

We stand ready to engage constructively in deliberations in the framework of the WSIS+20 Review for jointly shaping a way towards more inclusive, affordable, environmentally-friendly, safe and secure global digital connectivity, to reap the benefits of digitalization and thrive in the digital economy, while leaving no one behind.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Armenia attaches particular importance to the development of the digital cooperation at all levels, to fully utilize the enormous potential of ICTs for the wellbeing and advancement of people, societies, and as an important driver for achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

The establishment of effective international cooperation for the advancement of people-centered, development-focused, human rights-based, affordable and accessible digital technologies is imperative in terms of ensuring the meaningful contribution of ICTs to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and closing the digital divide.

Digital technologies accelerate achievement of the SDGs and enable upholding human rights. Equally, the misuse of digital technologies can undermine sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental, widen digital divides between and within countries, reinforce structural inequalities and biases, incite violence, hatred, racism and xenophobia, thus affecting enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Therefore, Armenia advocates for a particular focus on identification of risks and threats stemming from the new technologies on the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular incitement of violence, racism and hate crimes on ethnic and religious grounds and spread of disinformation. In this regard, we believe that upholding human rights in digital space should be an integral component of the WSIS vision to establish a “people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented information society”

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Empowerment of women and girls in the field of ICT and their access to technology, digital tools and innovation should remain an important priority. As a leader of the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition “Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality”, Armenia is committed to reduce by half the gender digital divide across generations by 2026 through accelerating meaningful access to digital technologies and universal digital literacy.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

We stress the need to align the future work of ITU with the main principles and purposes outlined in the Global Digital Compact. WSIS+20 Review will be instrumental to identify how WSIS processes can support practical implementation of Global Digital Compact commitments and actions, including by adapting WSIS action lines.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

The ICTs and Artificial intelligence play a growing role in promoting and popularizing culture and art, preserving cultural diversity, monitoring, preservation and restoration of cultural monuments. In this regard the international cooperation on promotion of cultural diversity, protection and preservation of cultural heritage through the use of new technologies and innovation need to stay an important priority in future vision beyond 2025.

# Australia | Department of ITRDCA | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Australia

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The WSIS has been a remarkable success story since first agreed in 2003 and 2005. At that time, the potential the Internet could bring citizens, businesses, and communities was only starting to emerge. Over the intervening 20 years, the world has seen the rapid deployment of the Internet and digital technologies across the world, facilitating communications and trade and bringing the world closer together.

The WSIS has focused the attention of all stakeholders on the need to close digital divides, and created mechanisms that are working to address these. It has been agile in responding to varying regional and national contexts, and it has adapted itself to support many new use cases for the Internet, such as the digitalisation of government services and modern social media. It has worked in a decentralised and distributed manner, bringing together expertise from all sectors to create new opportunity and solve emerging challenges at local, national, regional and global levels.

The WSIS is today the cornerstone of collaborative multistakeholder digital governance, with a legacy of success. The WSIS+20 review is a timely opportunity to reflect, identify ways to improve, and renew the shared commitment and responsibility of all stakeholders to create and maintain a build “a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU has made an important contribution to the WSIS process. As Action Line lead or co-facilitator for seven of the WSIS Action Lines, the ITU has helped close digital divides, supported connecting billions to the Internet, coordinated important multistakeholder fora (such as the WSIS Forum), and facilitated improved interagency coordination through the UNGIS. The ITU’s mix of governments and sector members has positioned it well to engage in multistakeholder WSIS processes and enabled it to leverage its convening power in support of the WSIS Action Lines. The ITU should continue to be a strong contributor among many to the WSIS process going forward.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The multistakeholder model supported by the WSIS has been essential to its ability to close digital divides and foster collaborative and effective digital governance and development. The WSIS Action Lines and the IGF have demonstrated the value of collective effort, bringing together the expertise and resources of governments, international organisations, the private sector, technical community, civil society and academia. All fora discussing Internet and digital issues should reflect the open, multistakeholder approach fostered by the WSIS process.

The WSIS’ multistakeholder approach continues to be strengthened around new deliverables. The Partner2Connect (P2C) Digital Coalition is an excellent example, enabling the ITU and other parts of the multistakeholder community to deliver meaningful change for billions globally. New initiatives, with clear deliverables, will continue to build robust multistakeholder action that supports the WSIS vision.

WSIS+20 also offers an opportunity to strengthen multistakeholder governance mechanisms. Improved governance, sufficient resources to enable meaningful participation from all stakeholder groups and regions, and the adoption of clear process principles, such as those developed through the Sao Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines, provide a blueprint for success. Institutions such as the ITU should be encouraged to iterate on their processes to ensure they continue to foster meaningful multistakeholder participation, including from LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Work remains across all the WSIS Action Lines to ensure global universal and meaningful connectivity and support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For example, there is an urgent need to ensure that the 2.6 billion people who remain offline are connected reliably and affordably to the Internet. This will require the sustained effort of the global multistakeholder community, leveraging both existing and new infrastructure and investment. It is also essential that digital infrastructure is secure, reliable and distributed, to ensure that the benefits of the Internet and digital transformation can be fully realised.

As technology evolves, new challenges must be considered. Closing the gender divide is a prominent example, with 70 per cent of men using the Internet compared with 65 per cent of women. This gap is most prominent in low-income households and least developed countries, where women’s empowerment through the Internet can achieve the most benefit to support social connectivity, foster micro and small businesses, enable access to services, and reduce the risk of domestic harm.

Skills and workforce needs will also shift over time, and ensuring skilled workforces that can develop and maintain future generations of digital infrastructure will be essential.

Ensuring users are safe online, particularly young people, people with disabilities, or other vulnerable users, is also critical. As digital-first generations emerge, the importance of the Internet to education, employment and social connection rise, as does its ability to foster entrepreneurship and innovation and bridge traditional development gaps. Providing safe and secure spaces for users, including through reducing the prevalence of online scams, should remain an ongoing priority for all stakeholders.

Cultural and linguistic diversity must be protected and allowed to flourish. Of the thousands of languages spoken around the world, 10 languages account for 83.8 per cent of online content. Protecting cultural diversity and heritage, encouraging multilingualism, and continuing to foster an Internet for all will be essential to ensuring universal and meaningful connectivity. Significant achievements have already been made at the technical level in this regard, but there is still more work to do in areas such as capacity building.

WSIS+20 also provides an opportunity to further harness the potential of the UN system to help address these and other future challenges, bringing together relevant expertise and capabilities in support of the WSIS Action Lines. Agencies such as UN OHCHR, UN Women, and others could offer valuable insights into elements of the WSIS Action Lines. In some cases, these agencies did not exist in 2005, in others their role in the supporting digital inclusion and connectivity has emerged over time. ITU has a role to play, as does the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies (ODET) to further strengthen intra-UN collaboration in support of the WSIS objectives and ensure the most effective use of resources.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

All WSIS Action Lines have had a significant impact on today’s digital environment. In 2005, an estimated 16 per cent of the world’s population was online. In 2024, it is 68 per cent. This connectivity has been delivered through transformational changes to digital infrastructure, including the rollout of satellite, mobile, wireless, broadband and fibre technologies, as well as local infrastructure such as community networks and Internet exchange points (IXPs). Users have been brought online in a way that has built the capacity of individuals and local communities to leverage technology to address local needs. National and regional action plans have supported local efforts, enabling safe and secure access to the Internet in a way that promotes network security, privacy and online consumer protection.

While challenges remain, it is important to recognise the enormous value achieved through a dedicated focus, over 20 years, to the WSIS Action Lines, and the blueprint that they create for further closing digital divides over coming years.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The WSIS+20 review provides the opportunity to reflect on current progress and ensure it remains effective for the decades ahead. The emergence of social media, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, the rise of increasingly complex digital scams, the ever-present challenges of preventing cybercrime, ensuring cybersecurity and maintaining online safety, the fragility of Internet infrastructure such as submarine cables, the need to continue to guarantee human rights online, maintain a strong and independent media, close the gender divide, support digital transformation, and address increasing environmental impacts of digital technologies are all issues requiring attention.

The existing WSIS Action Lines provide a framework to address these issues.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

We recognise and appreciate the work of the WSIS Action Line leads and co-facilitators to review their work so far, key milestones, and capture the challenges and emerging trends they see beyond 2025. This work, along with the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), will provide a strong evidence base for the review and the future of the WSIS beyond 2025.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

As demonstrated by the WSIS-SDG Matrix, digital technologies have enormous potential to support the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) either directly, or as an enabler of action. The WSIS+20 review provides the opportunity to further emphasise this relationship and recommit to the use of digital technologies to support the SDG targets.

We must make every effort to bring those working on the SDGs and those contributing to the WSIS together and ensure alignment of our collective efforts. Forums such as the IGF, WSIS Forum and others can play an important role, as can direct engagement by the WSIS Action Line leads and co-facilitators. A renewed focus on issues such as reducing online harms, promoting gender equality and human rights online, ensuring competition in online services, empowering youth and supporting the next generation of inventors and innovators, has the potential to create a step-change in global efforts to meet the SDG targets.

UN Resolution A/RES/70/125, WSIS+10, recommended that the outcome of the WSIS+20 process be an input into the review process for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The WSIS Action Lines therefore have the opportunity to shape not only the sustainable development agenda of today, but also provide an essential foundation for the future. It is important that the WSIS+20 review be conducted with a post-2030 future in mind, and that it establishes a long-term, permanent vision for sustainable development through the Internet, digital technology and digital transformation.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Multistakeholder platforms are essential for the success of the WSIS. Whether formally recognised, or based on the WSIS model, they form an important part of the global digital development, governance and policy landscape, enabling the exchange of knowledge, ideas and best practices.

The IGF is a notable example. Delivered through ‘bottom-up’ processes, such as the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), the IGF’s 19 meetings have demonstrated inclusivity, empowerment, policy development and closed digital divides. Strengthening the IGF through a permanent mandate, along with sustainable funding to support intersessional work and participation of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, is an important next step. By improving the IGFs resources, governance and secretariat support framework, encouraging greater diversity in representation, and creating a focus on both output and discussion, the IGF can address the next generation of digital challenges and opportunities.

Other platforms, such as the WSIS Forum and the over 155 national and regional IGF initiatives around the world, amplify this effort. Multistakeholder participation has been essential to these processes; the WSIS Forum open consultation process a notable example. Improving alignment between the WSIS Forum and the IGF, including through coordinated scheduling and complementary agendas, can amplify each forum’s efforts and foster improved global conversations.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The WSIS, Pact for the Future and Global Digital Compact (GDC) share a common objective, to maximise the economic and social benefit of digital technologies. Successfully closing digital divides and meeting this objective necessarily requires the involvement of all stakeholders.

A core strength of the WSIS is its federated approach that brings together UN bodies and specialised agencies, governments, the private sector, technical community, civil society, and academia, underpinning both the WSIS and GDC processes. The WSIS+20 review provides the opportunity to incorporate related initiatives from the GDC, avoid duplication and fragmentation, and maximise the collective impact of both agreements. Expanding the role of coordinating agencies, such as UNGIS, and supporting UN agencies, such as the ITU, UNCTAD, UNESCO, CSTD and others, will be essential in this regard. The Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies (ODET) also has a role to play, supporting these efforts and promoting new partnerships with other elements of the UN system and the wider community of stakeholders, and fostering future investment by all stakeholders to close digital divides.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

The ITU has an important convening and facilitating role to play in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025. As an Action Line lead and co-facilitator, the ITU has an important role to document the success of each Action Line so far, new opportunities, and current challenges, as part of the review process. As a convener through channels such as the WSIS Forum, it has an opportunity to educate, break down barriers to participation, and ensure all voices are heard in the review process. As a leader in telecommunication and information and communication technologies across the UN system, it should also consider how it can best leverage its resources, within its existing mandate, to strengthen understanding and alignment of digital initiatives across the UN family and foster a future generation of multistakeholder partnerships.

# Bangladesh | City University Bangladesh | Academia

## Respondent

1. Organization name

City University Bangladesh

1. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

1. Organization country

Bangladesh

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Over the past 20 years, the WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) process has achieved notable progress in bridging the digital divide, promoting internet access and digital literacy globally, fostering ICT development for sustainable growth, encouraging multi-stakeholder collaboration, and establishing frameworks for internet governance and cybersecurity policies.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU has contributed to the WSIS Process by promoting global internet connectivity, enhancing digital skills, developing international ICT standards, fostering cybersecurity cooperation, supporting innovation and ICT infrastructure, and coordinating multi-stakeholder engagement to advance the information society and sustainable development goals.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

To sustain and strengthen the WSIS process's inclusive multistakeholder model, we must enhance collaborative frameworks, ensure equitable participation, promote digital literacy, encourage public-private partnerships, and adapt policies to evolving technological landscapes, fostering shared responsibility in global digital governance and development.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Challenges include the digital divide, unequal access to ICTs, cybersecurity threats, privacy concerns, and limited resources for developing nations.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Action Lines C2 (ICT infrastructure) and C4 (capacity building) have had the most significant impact by enhancing global connectivity and digital skills.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

To enhance the WSIS principles and Action Lines for new areas, we should foster innovation, strengthen digital policies, expand partnerships, increase investment in emerging technologies, prioritize inclusivity and accessibility, and regularly update frameworks to align with evolving digital landscapes and needs.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Consider focusing on digital inclusion, cybersecurity, AI ethics, sustainable ICT growth, bridging divides, and adapting to rapid technological advancements.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Strengthen WSIS-SDG alignment by integrating ICTs into development policies, fostering digital inclusion, promoting partnerships, enhancing data-driven decision-making, and prioritizing technology's role in achieving sustainable development goals by 2030.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Strengthen multistakeholder platforms by enhancing collaboration, increasing diverse representation, fostering open dialogue, sharing best practices, promoting inclusivity, and aligning agendas with emerging digital trends and sustainable development goals.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Align the WSIS process with the Pact for the Future and Global Digital Compact by fostering inclusive dialogue, integrating digital policies, promoting universal connectivity, and advancing equitable access to digital opportunities.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Key emerging trends include AI and machine learning, 5G and beyond, cybersecurity advancements, blockchain technology, digital equity and inclusion, smart cities, and sustainable tech solutions for climate action and development.

# Bangladesh | BIGRS | International Organization

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety (BIGRS), Dhaka North, Bangladesh

1. Organization type

International Organization

1. Organization country

Bangladesh

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Over the past 20 years, the WSIS process has significantly advanced global connectivity, increasing internet access and fostering digital inclusion through infrastructure development and capacity-building initiatives. It has strengthened internet governance, promoted cybersecurity cooperation, and supported the growth of the digital economy while aligning ICTs with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). WSIS has also championed inclusivity by addressing the gender digital divide, empowering marginalized groups, and fostering knowledge-sharing through platforms like the WSIS Forum. These efforts have established a strong foundation for leveraging ICTs to address global challenges and promote sustainable development.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has been a key driver in implementing the WSIS process over the past 20 years. ITU has facilitated global connectivity by promoting ICT infrastructure development and advocating for universal broadband access. It has played a central role in internet governance and cybersecurity, fostering international collaboration and policy frameworks. ITU has also advanced digital inclusion by addressing the gender digital divide, supporting capacity-building initiatives, and aligning ICTs with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure sustainable and inclusive development.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

To sustain and strengthen the WSIS process as a model of global digital cooperation, it is vital to enhance multistakeholder engagement by ensuring diverse, inclusive, and equitable participation, particularly from underrepresented groups. Aligning WSIS outcomes with emerging challenges like AI ethics, cybersecurity, and SDGs ensures relevance, while transparent processes, robust monitoring, and dedicated funding build trust and continuity. Bridging the digital divide through accessible technology, capacity building, and ethical frameworks fosters inclusion, and leveraging innovation and partnerships across sectors amplifies impact. Regional dialogues and data-driven insights further integrate global and local priorities, ensuring WSIS remains adaptive and effective.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Challenges in implementing the WSIS process include the persistent digital divide, limited funding, and inconsistent political will, particularly in addressing issues like privacy and cybersecurity. Fragmented coordination among stakeholders and evolving technology further complicate progress, while gaps in policy and regulation can undermine effectiveness. Additionally, the lack of robust mechanisms for measuring progress makes it difficult to assess impact and adjust strategies. Overcoming these challenges requires greater investment, policy coherence, and enhanced collaboration across sectors.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Several WSIS Action Lines have had a significant impact, particularly in advancing digital inclusion and addressing global challenges:

Action Line C1 - The Role of Governments and all Stakeholders in the Promotion of ICTs for Development: This Action Line has been pivotal in fostering multistakeholder collaboration, bringing together governments, the private sector, and civil society to drive digital policy and development initiatives. It has helped align global efforts toward achieving the SDGs through ICT.

Action Line C2 - Information and Communication Infrastructure: Focused on building robust and accessible ICT infrastructure, this Action Line has been crucial in expanding internet connectivity, especially in underserved regions, bridging the digital divide, and enabling wider access to digital technologies.

Action Line C4 - Capacity Building: By promoting digital literacy and skills development, this Action Line has helped empower individuals and communities to participate in the digital economy, ensuring that people are equipped to use ICT effectively.

Action Line C7 - ICT Applications: E-government, E-business, E-learning, E-health, E-science: This Action Line has had a profound impact on improving public services, healthcare, and education through digital solutions, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the adoption of e-services.

Action Line C10 - Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society: By addressing issues such as privacy, data protection, and cybersecurity, this Action Line has been critical in ensuring the digital transformation remains human-centered and respects fundamental rights.

These Action Lines have shaped the global digital landscape, promoting sustainable development, enhancing access to services, and ensuring that digital transformation is inclusive and ethical.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

To enhance the implementation of WSIS principles and Action Lines in addressing new and emerging areas, several strategies can be adopted:

Integration with Emerging Technologies: Adapt WSIS Action Lines to include the implications of new technologies like artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things. This involves updating policies to ensure that these technologies are used ethically and inclusively, with a focus on human rights, data privacy, and digital equity.

Cross-Sector Collaboration: Strengthen collaboration between governments, private sector, academia, and civil society to address complex, interconnected challenges like cybersecurity, digital economy, and climate change. This multistakeholder approach ensures diverse perspectives and solutions.

Updating Capacity Building Programs: Expand digital literacy and capacity-building programs to include emerging areas such as data science, cybersecurity, and e-governance, ensuring that all stakeholders are prepared for the digital transformation.

Policy Innovation: Governments and international bodies should align regulatory frameworks with evolving digital landscapes, ensuring that policies are flexible and adaptable to new trends, such as the gig economy and remote work.

Inclusive Digital Infrastructure: Invest in building resilient, scalable, and inclusive ICT infrastructure that can support emerging technologies and connect underserved regions, ensuring equitable access and reducing the digital divide.

Ethics and Governance: Strengthen ethical frameworks around data, privacy, and AI to safeguard human rights, ensuring the WSIS principles are applied in emerging areas where ethical dilemmas are prevalent.

By continuously updating the WSIS Action Lines to reflect these emerging topics and fostering collaboration across sectors, WSIS can remain relevant and effectively address the challenges of a rapidly evolving digital world.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

To enhance the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, it's important to focus on updating Action Lines to incorporate emerging digital trends such as AI, data privacy, and cybersecurity. This should be done while continuing the multistakeholder approach, ensuring inclusive participation across sectors. Challenges like bridging the digital divide and improving capacity-building efforts in underserved areas need addressing. Additionally, fostering stronger cross-sector collaboration and aligning the WSIS Action Lines with the evolving SDGs will be key in tackling new global challenges beyond 2025.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

To strengthen the alignment between WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs, it’s essential to integrate digital technologies into achieving each SDG, ensuring that ICT policies support sustainable development. This includes promoting digital inclusion, enhancing capacity-building, and fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships. Action Lines should be reviewed regularly to ensure they reflect emerging trends and challenges, while directly contributing to SDG targets. Collaboration between governments, the private sector, and civil society is crucial in aligning digital initiatives with the broader 2030 Agenda.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

To strengthen platforms like the WSIS Forum and IGF, fostering inclusive, cross-sector collaboration is essential. Ensuring diverse participation—particularly from underserved regions and marginalized groups—can create more balanced and effective dialogues. Regular updates to the agenda, aligning with emerging digital trends, and creating structured pathways for actionable outcomes will enhance their impact. Further, integrating feedback mechanisms and facilitating continuous engagement will help these platforms address evolving global challenges while maintaining their role as hubs for digital development and governance.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

To align the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future with the Global Digital Compact, both frameworks should focus on common goals like digital inclusion, human rights, and sustainable development. They can complement each other by ensuring shared objectives across digital governance, connectivity, and capacity building. Strengthening collaboration among governments, private sector, and civil society will enable coherent policies and actions, promoting a more inclusive, secure, and sustainable digital transformation that contributes to global development goals.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

As the ITU prepares for the WSIS+20 review and envisions the future beyond 2025, several emerging digital trends and topics are crucial to consider:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning: The rapid advancement of AI technologies presents both opportunities and challenges in areas such as automation, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Integrating AI into the WSIS framework can drive innovation while addressing concerns related to privacy, security, and employment.

ITU

Cybersecurity and Trust: With the increasing reliance on digital platforms, ensuring robust cybersecurity measures is essential to protect data integrity and build trust among users. The WSIS process should focus on developing international standards and collaborative frameworks to enhance global cybersecurity resilience.

SDG KNOWLEDGE HUB

Digital Inclusion and Connectivity: Bridging the digital divide remains a priority. Efforts should be directed towards providing affordable and reliable internet access to underserved regions, promoting digital literacy, and ensuring equitable participation in the digital economy.

UNCTAD

Data Privacy and Protection: As data becomes a critical asset, establishing comprehensive data protection laws and frameworks is vital to safeguard individuals' privacy rights and foster trust in digital services.

SDG KNOWLEDGE HUB

Sustainable Digital Development: Aligning digital transformation with environmental sustainability goals is imperative. The WSIS framework should explore how ICTs can contribute to sustainable development, including reducing carbon footprints and promoting green technologies.

CFR

Digital Governance and Policy: Establishing clear policies and governance structures for emerging technologies is necessary to address ethical, legal, and societal implications. The WSIS process can play a pivotal role in facilitating international dialogues and consensus-building on digital governance.

DIG WATCH

Digital Health and Education: Leveraging ICTs to enhance healthcare delivery and educational opportunities can significantly impact global well-being. The WSIS framework should support initiatives that utilize digital tools to improve health outcomes and access to quality education.

SDG KNOWLEDGE HUB

By addressing these emerging trends, the ITU can ensure that the WSIS process remains relevant and effective in guiding global digital development and governance beyond 2025.

# Bangladesh | Ministry of Finance | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Internal Resources Division, Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh Secretariat.

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Bangladesh

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The key achievements from the implementation of the WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) process over the past 20 years are following:

Increased Global Connectivity:

Expansion of ICT infrastructure, particularly in developing countries, has significantly increased internet penetration and access to digital services, contributing to a more connected global society.

Bridging the Digital Divide:

Focused efforts through initiatives such as WSIS Action Line C2 (Information and Communication Infrastructure) have helped bridge the digital divide between urban and rural areas, providing access to underserved communities.

Growth of Multistakeholder Collaboration:

WSIS fostered global cooperation among governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations. This collaboration has driven sustainable digital policies and improved ICT access.

Support for ICTs in Development:

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have become pivotal in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The WSIS process has contributed to integrating ICTs into areas such as education, healthcare, agriculture, and e-governance.

Capacity Building and Empowerment:

Programs focused on ICT literacy and capacity building have empowered individuals and organizations, especially in developing nations, enabling them to leverage ICT tools for personal and economic development.

Cybersecurity and Data Privacy Awareness:

The WSIS process has heightened awareness of the importance of cybersecurity, privacy, and data protection through initiatives like Action Line C5 (Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs), promoting secure digital environments.

E-Government and Digital Inclusion:

E-government initiatives have expanded, providing more transparent and accessible public services, improving efficiency, and promoting digital inclusion.

These achievements demonstrate the important role of the WSIS process in shaping a more inclusive and sustainable digital society.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU's contributions to the WSIS process over the past two decades are substantial. Here’s a concise summary of its key roles:

Co-leading WSIS Action Lines: ITU has led or co-led Action Lines focusing on infrastructure, cybersecurity, and enabling environments, supporting global ICT development and policy frameworks.

Global Connectivity and Bridging the Digital Divide: ITU has driven efforts to expand broadband and mobile coverage, especially in underserved areas, and supported digital literacy through initiatives like the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development.

Capacity Building and Digital Skills Development: The ITU Academy has provided training programs to enhance ICT literacy and skills, particularly in developing countries.

Cybersecurity Initiatives: ITU has led global efforts in cybersecurity, including the Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) and national cybersecurity strategy development.

ICT for Development and SDGs Alignment: ITU has aligned WSIS goals with the SDGs, focusing on the transformative role of ICTs in sectors like education, healthcare, and agriculture.

Global Policy and Standardization Leadership: ITU has facilitated international ICT policy dialogue and standardization through forums like the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) and Global Standards Symposium (GSS).

Promoting Digital Inclusion and Accessibility: ITU has advanced digital inclusion, especially for vulnerable groups, through initiatives like Connect 2030 Agenda and Girls in ICT Day.

Facilitating WSIS Forums and Dialogues: ITU organizes annual WSIS Forums for multi-stakeholder dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and progress reporting.

WSIS Stocktaking and Reporting: ITU leads the WSIS Stocktaking Process to collect and share data on ICT projects, best practices, and innovations.

Promoting Digital Innovation and Emerging Technologies: ITU has explored and promoted emerging technologies like 5G, AI, IoT, and digital twins to accelerate digital transformation.

Overall, ITU’s efforts have been instrumental in advancing the WSIS process and addressing global ICT challenges.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

To sustain and strengthen the inclusive multistakeholder model of the WSIS process, several key actions are recommended:

Strengthen Multistakeholder Governance by promoting balanced representation and empowering regional stakeholders, including underrepresented groups.

Enhance Collaboration between the private sector, public institutions, and civil society to co-develop solutions, share best practices, and foster continuous dialogue.

Implement Continuous Feedback Mechanisms to regularly assess and adapt WSIS Action Lines to emerging technologies.

Increase Inclusivity in Decision-Making by supporting marginalized communities through financial aid and policies that close the digital divide.

Align WSIS Goals with SDGs by using ICT solutions to support education, gender equality, economic growth, and climate action.

Leverage Emerging Technologies like AI and IoT for inclusive development while promoting ethical use.

Enhance Digital Literacy by expanding ICT education and skills development, especially in low-income countries.

Develop a Global Digital Trust Framework to ensure secure ICT use, focusing on cybersecurity, transparency, and privacy.

Improve Coordination between WSIS and other global digital agendas to avoid duplication and foster synergies.

Maintain Multistakeholder Platforms like WSIS Forums for open dialogue and innovation.

Focus on Sustainable Funding by engaging the private sector, governments, and international bodies to secure long-term resources for ICT projects.

These actions aim to keep WSIS adaptable, inclusive, and impactful for future digital cooperation.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The WSIS process highlights some critical challenges. Here’s a summary of the issues and the importance of addressing them:

Digital Divide: Unequal access to technology due to infrastructure gaps and affordability issues continues to limit participation, especially in rural areas and among those with lower digital literacy.

Inclusion of Marginalized Groups: Barriers faced by women, youth, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities need to be addressed to enhance inclusivity and effective participation.

Coordination Across Stakeholders: Inconsistent coordination among governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations can lead to inefficiencies and fragmented efforts.

Cybersecurity and Trust Issues: The growing digital landscape requires robust cybersecurity measures and global standards to build trust and protect against cyber threats.

Regulatory and Policy Gaps: Rapid technological advancements outpace existing regulations, creating governance challenges, particularly for emerging technologies.

Sustainable Development Alignment: Aligning ICT initiatives with SDGs requires better data, metrics, and resources to measure and track impact effectively.

Capacity Building and Skills Development: There is a need for scalable and sustainable training programs to develop digital skills and address the shortage of ICT professionals.

Sustainability of WSIS Forums: The forums need improved resources, participation, and accessibility to remain relevant and effective in fostering dialogue.

Addressing these challenges is crucial for the WSIS process to fully achieve its goals and promote a more inclusive, secure, and sustainable digital society.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

The WSIS Action Lines that have had the most significant impact are often those that address fundamental aspects of ICT development and access. Here are some of the most impactful Action Lines and their contributions:

Action Line C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure

Impact: This Action Line focuses on developing and improving ICT infrastructure, which is foundational for digital inclusion and economic development. Significant advancements have been made in expanding global broadband networks, improving connectivity in underserved areas, and supporting infrastructure projects that enable digital access.

Why: Infrastructure development is crucial because it directly impacts the availability and quality of ICT services. Enhanced infrastructure facilitates greater connectivity, reduces digital divides, and supports other ICT-related initiatives.

Action Line C5: Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs

Impact: This Action Line addresses cybersecurity and digital trust, which are essential for the safe and reliable use of ICTs. Efforts in this area include the development of global cybersecurity frameworks, national strategies, and initiatives to enhance data protection and user confidence.

Why: Security and trust are critical for the growth of the digital economy. Effective cybersecurity measures and a trustworthy digital environment encourage wider adoption of technology and protect users from threats.

Action Line C6: Enabling Environment

Impact: This Action Line emphasizes the creation of policies, regulatory frameworks, and environments that support ICT growth and innovation. It includes aspects such as ICT policies, governance, and enabling conditions for digital entrepreneurship and development.

Why: A conducive policy environment is vital for fostering ICT investment, innovation, and development. Proper regulatory frameworks ensure that ICT growth is sustainable, equitable, and aligned with broader development goals.

Action Line C7: ICT Applications – E-Government

Impact: E-Government applications have transformed how governments interact with citizens and provide public services. This Action Line focuses on using ICTs to improve government efficiency, transparency, and accessibility.

Why: E-Government initiatives enhance public service delivery, reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, and increase citizen engagement. They play a crucial role in modernizing governance and making public services more accessible and efficient.

Action Line C4: Capacity Building

Impact: Capacity Building addresses the need for education and training in ICT skills, essential for empowering individuals and communities to participate effectively in the information society. This includes initiatives to enhance digital literacy and professional skills.

Why: Building digital skills is fundamental for enabling people to use ICTs effectively, participate in the digital economy, and drive innovation. It ensures that individuals and organizations can leverage technology for personal and professional growth.

These Action Lines have had a significant impact because they address critical areas of ICT development, from infrastructure and security to policy and capacity building. By focusing on these aspects, WSIS has contributed to broader goals of digital inclusion, economic growth, and sustainable development.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

To enhance the implementation of WSIS principles and Action Lines in addressing new and emerging areas, several strategies can be employed:

Integrate Emerging Technologies:

Approach: Update WSIS Action Lines to incorporate the latest technologies such as AI, blockchain, 5G, and IoT. Develop specific guidelines and frameworks for their integration.

Impact: This ensures that WSIS principles remain relevant and applicable to current technological advancements, facilitating their effective deployment and addressing related challenges.

Strengthen Multistakeholder Collaboration:

Approach: Enhance collaboration between governments, private sector, civil society, and academia to address emerging issues. Establish specialized working groups or forums focused on new technology areas.

Impact: Diverse perspectives and expertise will lead to more comprehensive and effective solutions, fostering innovation and addressing complex, cross-cutting issues.

Focus on Cybersecurity and Data Privacy:

Approach: Expand Action Line C5 to address emerging cybersecurity threats and data privacy concerns associated with new technologies. Promote the development of international standards and frameworks for secure technology use.

Impact: Improved cybersecurity measures and data protection will build trust in digital systems and support the safe adoption of emerging technologies.

Adapt Capacity Building Initiatives:

Approach: Develop training programs and educational resources that focus on new technologies and their applications. Collaborate with educational institutions and industry leaders to provide relevant skill development opportunities.

Impact: By aligning capacity building with emerging trends, individuals and organizations will be better equipped to leverage new technologies effectively.

Promote Inclusive Innovation:

Approach: Ensure that the benefits of emerging technologies are accessible to all, including marginalized and underserved communities. Implement policies and programs that promote digital inclusion and equitable access.

Impact: Inclusive innovation ensures that technological advancements contribute to broad-based development and do not exacerbate existing inequalities.

Enhance Data Collection and Measurement:

Approach: Develop new metrics and indicators to assess the impact of emerging technologies on WSIS goals and SDGs. Improve data collection methods to track progress and inform policy adjustments.

Impact: Better data will enable more informed decision-making and help measure the effectiveness of WSIS implementations in new contexts.

Update Policy Frameworks:

Approach: Regularly review and update policy frameworks to address new challenges and opportunities presented by emerging technologies. Engage stakeholders in the policy development process to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

Impact: Updated policies will ensure that regulatory environments are supportive of innovation and aligned with current technological realities.

Leverage Global Partnerships:

Approach: Strengthen partnerships with international organizations, tech companies, and research institutions to address global challenges and share best practices.

Impact: Global partnerships can provide valuable resources, expertise, and collaborative opportunities to tackle complex issues and drive progress.

By implementing these strategies, the WSIS principles and Action Lines can be more effectively applied to address new and emerging areas, ensuring that they continue to support the development of an inclusive, secure, and innovative information society.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

For the WSIS+20 Review, focusing on the WSIS Action Lines, key milestones, challenges, and emerging trends, here are some suggestions and inputs to consider:

Key Milestones

Advancements in ICT Infrastructure:

Milestone: Significant progress in global broadband expansion, particularly in underserved regions, and advancements in 5G deployment.

Suggestion: Continue to prioritize infrastructure development, especially in remote and rural areas, and promote initiatives for universal connectivity.

Enhanced Cybersecurity Measures:

Milestone: Development and adoption of international cybersecurity frameworks and national strategies to combat cyber threats.

Suggestion: Focus on improving global cooperation on cybersecurity and developing standards that address emerging threats such as cyber warfare and ransomware.

Increased Digital Inclusion:

Milestone: Growth in digital literacy programs and initiatives aimed at marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

Suggestion: Expand efforts to ensure that digital inclusion strategies are culturally and contextually relevant, and address barriers to access and participation.

Integration of Emerging Technologies:

Milestone: Widespread adoption of technologies such as AI, IoT, and blockchain, with increasing use in various sectors including healthcare, education, and governance.

Suggestion: Support research and policy development to address ethical, regulatory, and social implications of these technologies.

Challenges

Digital Divide and Access Issues:

Challenge: Persistent gaps in ICT access and digital skills, particularly in developing countries and among marginalized populations.

Suggestion: Enhance targeted programs to bridge the digital divide, focusing on affordability, infrastructure development, and digital skills training.

Cybersecurity and Privacy Concerns:

Challenge: Evolving cybersecurity threats and data privacy issues as technology advances.

Suggestion: Invest in robust cybersecurity measures and data protection regulations. Promote international collaboration to address cross-border cyber threats.

Policy and Regulatory Gaps:

Challenge: Outdated or fragmented policies and regulations that do not keep pace with technological advancements.

Suggestion: Regularly review and update policy frameworks to address emerging technologies and ensure alignment with WSIS goals and SDGs.

Sustainability of WSIS Initiatives:

Challenge: Ensuring the long-term sustainability and relevance of WSIS initiatives amid changing technological and geopolitical landscapes.

Suggestion: Strengthen mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of WSIS initiatives to ensure their continued effectiveness and alignment with global trends.

Emerging Trends Beyond 2025

AI and Automation:

Trend: Increased integration of AI and automation in various sectors, leading to advancements in efficiency but also raising concerns about job displacement and ethical implications.

Suggestion: Develop frameworks for ethical AI use and strategies for reskilling the workforce to adapt to automation-driven changes.

Green ICT and Sustainability:

Trend: Growing focus on the environmental impact of ICTs and the development of green technologies and sustainable practices.

Suggestion: Promote initiatives that support the adoption of environmentally friendly technologies and practices within the ICT sector.

Digital Sovereignty and Governance:

Trend: Rising concerns about data sovereignty, digital governance, and the geopolitical implications of technology.

Suggestion: Foster international dialogue on digital sovereignty and governance to address issues related to data ownership, privacy, and cross-border data flows.

Decentralized Technologies:

Trend: Increased use of decentralized technologies such as blockchain for various applications, including financial transactions and supply chain management.

Suggestion: Explore regulatory approaches to support innovation.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Strengthening the alignment between WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is crucial for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Here are some strategies to enhance this alignment:

1. Integrate SDG Targets into WSIS Action Lines

Approach: Map specific SDG targets to relevant WSIS Action Lines. Ensure that the goals of WSIS Action Lines directly contribute to achieving these targets.

Impact: This alignment will ensure that WSIS initiatives are explicitly designed to support and measure progress toward SDGs, facilitating coherent implementation.

2. Develop Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks

Approach: Create integrated monitoring and evaluation frameworks that track progress on both WSIS Action Lines and SDGs. Include common indicators and metrics to assess the impact of ICT initiatives on sustainable development.

Impact: Improved tracking and reporting will provide a clearer picture of how ICT investments contribute to SDGs and allow for better coordination and adjustments.

3. Foster Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

Approach: Strengthen partnerships among governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations to align efforts and resources. Facilitate dialogue and collaboration on projects that address both WSIS Action Lines and SDGs.

Impact: Collaborative approaches can pool resources, share best practices, and drive more impactful and sustainable outcomes.

4. Promote Inclusive Digital Development

Approach: Ensure that WSIS initiatives focus on inclusivity by targeting marginalized groups and underserved regions. Develop programs that address digital divides and promote equitable access to technology.

Impact: Inclusive development will contribute to SDG targets related to reducing inequalities, fostering economic growth, and improving education and health outcomes.

5. Enhance Policy Coherence

Approach: Align national and international ICT policies with the SDGs. Encourage the adoption of policies that integrate both WSIS Action Line objectives and SDG targets.

Impact: Coherent policies will ensure that ICT strategies and investments are supportive of broader development goals and can lead to more effective implementation.

6. Support Capacity Building and Skills Development

Approach: Prioritize capacity-building initiatives that address both WSIS and SDG goals, focusing on skills development in areas such as digital literacy, e-governance, and sustainable technology use.

Impact: Building relevant skills and capacities will empower individuals and institutions to leverage ICT for sustainable development and effectively contribute to the SDGs.

7. Leverage Data and Technology for SDG Monitoring

Approach: Use advanced technologies and data analytics to monitor progress on both WSIS Action Lines and SDGs. Develop tools and platforms that facilitate data collection and analysis relevant to both frameworks.

Impact: Enhanced data capabilities will provide insights into the effectiveness of ICT initiatives in achieving SDGs and allow for more informed decision-making.

8. Promote Innovation for Sustainable Solutions

Approach: Encourage innovation in ICT solutions that address SDG challenges. Support research and development of technologies that contribute to sustainable development goals, such as clean energy, health solutions, and education.

Impact: Innovative solutions can drive progress in key areas, accelerating the achievement of SDGs and showcasing the transformative potential of ICT.

9. Raise Awareness and Advocate for Integration

Approach: Advocate for the integration of WSIS principles and SDG targets within global and local agendas. Raise awareness about the role of ICT in achieving sustainable development and promote best practices for alignment.

Impact: Increased awareness and advocacy will foster greater commitment and action towards aligning WSIS and SDGs, driving collective efforts toward the 2030 Agenda.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Strengthening multistakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is crucial for advancing digital development and addressing governance and policy issues. Here are some strategies to enhance their effectiveness:

1. Enhance Inclusivity and Representation

Approach: Expand participation to include a broader range of stakeholders, particularly from marginalized and underrepresented groups, such as smaller organizations, youth, and local communities.

Impact: Increased diversity will ensure that multiple perspectives are considered, leading to more comprehensive and equitable outcomes.

2. Improve Coordination and Collaboration

Approach: Foster better coordination between the WSIS Forum and IGF, and other relevant platforms and organizations. Develop joint initiatives or collaborative projects that address overlapping issues.

Impact: Improved coordination will reduce duplication of efforts, streamline processes, and leverage synergies between platforms.

3. Strengthen Regional and National Engagement

Approach: Create regional and national hubs or chapters of the WSIS Forum and IGF to address local issues and ensure that global discussions are informed by regional contexts.

Impact: Regional and national engagement will ensure that local perspectives and needs are incorporated into global discussions, making the platforms more relevant and actionable.

4. Enhance Capacity Building and Training

Approach: Provide training and capacity-building programs for stakeholders on how to effectively engage with and contribute to these platforms. Focus on areas such as policy development, digital literacy, and advocacy.

Impact: Strengthened capacity will enable more effective participation and contribution, enhancing the quality of discussions and outcomes.

5. Utilize Technology for Engagement and Accessibility

Approach: Leverage technology to facilitate remote participation, virtual meetings, and online collaboration tools. Ensure that the platforms are accessible to stakeholders with varying levels of digital access and skills.

Impact: Improved technological solutions will make it easier for a wider range of stakeholders to participate and engage with the platforms, regardless of geographical or logistical barriers.

6. Promote Transparency and Accountability

Approach: Increase transparency in the decision-making processes and outcomes of the WSIS Forum and IGF. Implement mechanisms for accountability, such as regular reporting and feedback mechanisms.

Impact: Greater transparency and accountability will build trust among stakeholders and ensure that the platforms are effectively addressing the issues they are designed to tackle.

7. Focus on Actionable Outcomes

Approach: Ensure that discussions and deliberations on the platforms lead to actionable outcomes, such as policy recommendations, best practices, or collaborative projects. Develop mechanisms to track and report on the implementation of these outcomes.

Impact: Actionable outcomes will enhance the practical impact of the platforms, demonstrating their value and effectiveness in addressing digital development and governance issues.

8. Foster Innovation and Adaptability

Approach: Encourage innovative approaches and solutions within the platforms, and adapt to emerging trends and challenges. Support pilot projects and experimentation to explore new ideas and models.

Impact: Innovation and adaptability will keep the platforms relevant and responsive to evolving digital landscapes and emerging issues.

9. Strengthen Funding and Resource Allocation

Approach: Secure sustainable funding and resources for the platforms to ensure their long-term viability and effectiveness. Explore diverse funding sources and partnerships to support their activities.

Impact: Adequate funding and resources will enable the platforms to operate effectively, support stakeholder engagement, and drive impactful initiatives.

10. Encourage Regular Review and Feedback

Approach: Implement.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Aligning the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future, including its Global Digital Compact, involves harmonizing their objectives, strategies, and actions to achieve shared goals. Here are strategies to ensure effective alignment:

1. Establish Clear Linkages and Shared Objectives

Approach: Identify and articulate the common objectives between the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact. Ensure that their goals, such as promoting digital inclusion, enhancing infrastructure, and fostering innovation, are clearly aligned.

Impact: Clear linkages will ensure that both frameworks are working towards the same outcomes, avoiding duplication and maximizing impact.

2. Develop Integrated Action Plans

Approach: Create joint action plans that incorporate the goals and initiatives of both the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact. Define specific actions, responsibilities, and timelines to ensure coordinated efforts.

Impact: Integrated action plans will streamline efforts and resources, ensuring that initiatives are complementary and supportive of shared goals.

3. Foster Multistakeholder Engagement

Approach: Engage a diverse range of stakeholders from governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations in both the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact. Facilitate dialogue and collaboration between these groups.

Impact: Multistakeholder engagement will ensure broad support and input, enhancing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of both frameworks.

4. Coordinate Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

Approach: Align national and international policies and regulations with the objectives of both the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact. Promote coherent policy frameworks that support digital development and governance.

Impact: Coordinated policies will create a supportive environment for implementing shared goals and addressing cross-cutting issues.

5. Implement Joint Monitoring and Evaluation

Approach: Develop a unified monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress on both the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact. Use common indicators and metrics to assess achievements and impact.

Impact: A joint monitoring framework will provide a comprehensive view of progress, identify gaps, and inform adjustments to ensure alignment with shared objectives.

6. Promote Innovation and Best Practices

Approach: Encourage the exchange of best practices and innovative solutions between the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact. Support pilot projects and collaborative initiatives that address common challenges.

Impact: Sharing best practices and promoting innovation will enhance the effectiveness of both frameworks and contribute to achieving their goals.

7. Support Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

Approach: Align capacity-building efforts with the priorities of both the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact. Provide training, resources, and knowledge-sharing platforms to support implementation.

Impact: Strengthened capacity and knowledge sharing will empower stakeholders to effectively contribute to shared goals and address digital development challenges.

8. Leverage Global and Regional Platforms

Approach: Utilize global and regional platforms, such as the WSIS Forum and regional digital forums, to promote the objectives of both frameworks. Facilitate discussions, workshops, and collaborative projects within these platforms.

Impact: Leveraging existing platforms will enhance visibility, coordination, and collaboration, supporting the achievement of shared goals.

9. Ensure Continuous Review and Adaptation

Approach: Implement mechanisms for regular review and adaptation of strategies and actions related to both the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact. Solicit feedback from stakeholders and adapt to emerging trends and challenges.

Impact: Continuous review and adaptation will ensure that both frameworks remain relevant and effective in achieving their.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

For the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025, ITU should consider the following key emerging digital trends and topics:

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning

Trend: AI and machine learning are rapidly advancing and being integrated into various sectors, including healthcare, finance, and education.

Considerations: Address ethical implications, promote responsible AI practices, and ensure equitable access to AI technologies. Develop frameworks for AI governance and transparency.

2. 5G and Beyond

Trend: The rollout of 5G networks is enabling faster data speeds, lower latency, and new applications such as smart cities and autonomous vehicles.

Considerations: Focus on addressing infrastructure gaps, ensuring universal access, and exploring the potential of 5G to drive economic and social development.

3. Internet of Things (IoT)

Trend: IoT is expanding with the proliferation of connected devices across various sectors, including agriculture, transportation, and urban management.

Considerations: Develop standards and protocols for interoperability, data privacy, and security. Address the challenges of managing large volumes of data generated by IoT devices.

4. Blockchain and Decentralized Technologies

Trend: Blockchain technology is being used for secure transactions, digital identities, and supply chain management.

Considerations: Explore the potential of blockchain for enhancing transparency and security while addressing regulatory and scalability challenges.

5. Digital Inclusion and Equity

Trend: Ensuring that all individuals, including marginalized and underserved communities, have access to digital technologies and skills.

Considerations: Develop strategies to bridge the digital divide, promote digital literacy, and ensure that digital transformation benefits all sectors of society.

6. Cybersecurity and Data Privacy

Trend: Increasing concerns about cybersecurity threats and data privacy as digital technologies become more pervasive.

Considerations: Strengthen global cooperation on cybersecurity, develop robust data protection frameworks, and promote best practices for securing digital infrastructures.

7. Green ICT and Sustainability

Trend: Growing emphasis on reducing the environmental impact of ICT and promoting sustainable practices in technology deployment.

Considerations: Support initiatives for energy-efficient technologies, promote the use of renewable energy in ICT infrastructure, and address the e-waste challenge.

8. Digital Health and Telemedicine

Trend: The rise of digital health solutions and telemedicine, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, is transforming healthcare delivery.

Considerations: Focus on expanding access to digital health services, ensuring interoperability of health data systems, and addressing privacy and security concerns.

9. Digital Sovereignty and Governance

Trend: Growing discussions on digital sovereignty, data localization, and national control over digital infrastructure.

Considerations: Explore frameworks for balancing national interests with global digital integration and promote international cooperation on digital governance.

10. Quantum Computing

Trend: Emerging quantum computing technologies have the potential to revolutionize data processing and encryption.

Considerations: Monitor developments in quantum computing, address potential implications for cybersecurity, and explore its applications and impacts on various sectors.

11. Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR)

Trend: AR and VR technologies are expanding in areas such as education, entertainment, and remote collaboration.

Considerations: Develop standards for AR/VR applications, address accessibility and usability issues, and explore the potential for these technologies to enhance learning and engagement.

12. Digital Literacy and Skills Development

Trend: The need for ongoing digital skills development to keep pace with technological advancements and ensure effective use of digital tools.

# Bangladesh | UNDRR and BDRCS, IFRC | International Organization

## Respondent

1. Organization name

UNDRR and BDRCS,IFRC

1. Organization type

International Organization

1. Organization country

Bangladesh

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

In Bangladesh, the achievements are social, economic and environmental I want to mention women empowerment and early warning systems.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

Connect between and among countries and advent new technologies.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Examine project/program successfulness

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Women empowerment: by using internet they can make decisions

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Standardization

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

No

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Align new technologies

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Align new technologies like blockchain, lot etc

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

By radio communication and standardization

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

AI, metaverse, cityverse etc

# Belgium | Global Forum for Media Development | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Global Forum for Media Development

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Belgium

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

As the largest global community for media development, media freedom, and journalism support, the Global Forum For Media Development GFMD believes that preserving the existing multistakeholder governance model, rooted in the human rights protection framework that fosters the enabling environment for freedom of expression, media freedom, and access to information, is a crucial building block of the open, decentralised, and accessible Information Society.

This inclusive, open and multistakeholder model for digital governance has been one of the key achievements of the WSIS implementation, in particular the establishment of the Internet Governance Forum as a platform for Civil Society engagement with the governments, internet governance bodies, tech sector and private actors. Despite the obstacles and caveats of global and multi-stakeholder cooperation, the WSIS paved the path for the multi-directional and multi-disciplinary internet governance process.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?
2. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

To sustain and strengthen the multistakeholder model it is necessary to ensure that all stakeholders are well resourced and have direct opportunities to contribute to the outcomes and decision-making processes. This requires clear mechanisms that ensure all stakeholders, from government representatives to grassroots organisations, have a real and measurable impact on the decisions that shape the global digital landscape. Adhering to principles such as the ones outlined by the NetMundial+10 can ensure that participation is not symbolic but effective and equitable.

Fostering transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in the process is key to addressing the power asymmetries that exist among different stakeholders, particularly between global minority and majority and between large corporate entities and smaller civil society groups. It is essential that these asymetries are actively addressed to ensure that all voices are not just heard but are truly reflected in decision-making processes. Special attention must be paid to under-represented groups who often lack the resources and support to engage fully in digital governance discussions.

In this context, funding and capacity-building support are critical. Targeted efforts to empower under-represented groups in their local/native languages will foster a more balanced and effective multistakeholder environment. We must ensure that financial and technical assistance is available to those who need it most, enabling them to engage substantively in the shaping of digital policies and standards.

Finally, the role of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) should be further strengthened as a key forum for collaboration. This can be achieved through securing permanent funding and establishing a clearer mandate to play a leading role in standard-setting and decision-making within the broader digital governance framework. The IGF’s unique position as a multistakeholder platform for dialogue and collaboration makes it an ideal vehicle for fostering inclusive and impactful engagement.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The increasingly complex landscape of internet governance presents a challenge for the implementation of the WSIS process. This complexity negatively impacts the involvement of key stakeholders with less technical expertise, financial resources, and other competing priorities.

1. Despite the centrality of media’s and journalism's role in the information ecosystem, there is still insufficient representation of civil society stakeholders working with the media and journalism sector in discussions around internet governance, especially from Global Majority Countries. This is mostly due to limited resources and expertise and a growing trend of financial constraints that are shrinking the whole civil society sector worldwide. Such trends impact the ability of organisations to effectively participate and contribute to the discussions and consultations and limit their ability to advocate for changes in the internet governance landscape, participate in key forums such as the IGF, and provide local expertise and evidence-based feedback in the implementation of processes of the WSIS.

2. While the WSIS principles emphasise human rights and information access, their implementation across national and regional contexts often lacks consistency. Civil society organisations advocating for media freedom and journalism support often face policy environments where journalists' safety and media freedom are undermined by state control, legal restrictions, or regulatory gaps.

3. The WSIS process emphasises multistakeholder approaches, but the unequal power dynamics between civil society and private actors or governments make it difficult for civil society to meaningfully collaborate with governments and private actors such as tech companies. There’s a need for stronger partnerships, more transparent processes, and capacity-building efforts to empower a diversity of civil society organisations to engage proactively in global governance discussions.

4. A lack of accountability mechanisms and harmonised indicators to monitor the implementation of the Action lines also undermines the effectiveness of civil society’s engagement in the process.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

The Global Forum on Media Development (GFMD) would like to highlight the significant achievements and impact of Action Line C9 – Media, particularly in relation to media freedom. Since the inception of the Information Society, the media have faced numerous challenges yet have sustained their essential role in providing citizens and netizens with accurate, verified, and diverse information — a cornerstone of any democratic society.

A variety of institutions, primarily Electronic Media Regulators, as well as Press Councils, Journalists' Unions, and regional and international media support bodies like UNESCO, have played a key role in fostering legislative and self-regulatory measures. These efforts have specifically addressed issues such as illegal content, misinformation and disinformation, and tech-based violence. Such interventions, alongside media-driven efforts, have contributed to the promotion of more ethical journalism, including the advancement of gender-sensitive and gender-mainstreaming approaches in reporting—key elements of inclusive and forward-thinking journalism.

The media sector has undeniably benefitted from the development of ICT, with varying degrees of success, enabling new models of media production, data collection, investigative journalism, and distribution mechanisms. However, these advancements are not without challenges, some of which are further discussed in our responses to Question 11.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

We strongly assert the continued relevance and importance of the WSIS principles and values, and in particular Principle 55 and its corresponding Action Line C9, which addresses the media sector from a multi-faceted perspective. These provisions have been instrumental in enabling the media and journalists to leverage Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and ensure the delivery of pertinent and timely information to the public. It is critical that Principle 55 is preserved, as it addresses fundamental media-related issues, including the right to freedom of expression, media independence, economic viability, diversity, and pluralism. It also highlights the essential role of both international and national stakeholders in promoting and safeguarding media freedom. The preservation and advancement of the Principle 55 and corresponding Action Line C9 are also crucial for the successful implementation of the Global Digital Compact, in particular the commitments 33(b)(c)(d).

Given the increasing concentration of power in the hands of major tech companies, which have exacerbated the economic challenges faced by traditional media outlets, this review process offers a timely opportunity to reflect on potential measures to mitigate this economic imbalance. Ensuring a level playing field across technological, economic, and societal dimensions should be a central consideration in any proposed changes.

To this end, we recommend the introduction of new safeguards that promote responsible media conduct in the context of an evolving digital landscape while safeguarding the core values of media independence. An updated Principle 55 could play a pivotal role in reinforcing diverse and resilient media and information ecosystem, in line with the Global Digital Compact, and enhance the safety of journalists, ensuring that the media sector remains resilient and capable of fulfilling its public service role in the future.

We propose to consider the following topics:

1. Foster Multi Stakeholder Internet Governance and Human Rights Based Approach: Preserve and strengthen existing forums for cooperation between non-state actors, including the media, civil society organizations (CSOs), tech companies, and state authorities.

2. Preserve and Refresh Action Line C9: Strengthen Action Line C9 by introducing new safeguards that protect media viability, safety, and independence and clear indicators to monitor its implementation.

3. Consider Media Perspectives Across Action Lines: Ensure that the media perspective is integrated into all relevant Action Lines and address any potential gaps or loopholes that may pose risk to media and journalism.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

The suggestions below highlight key priorities and emerging trends that extend beyond 2025, which we urge the Facilitators to consider in the review process. Additionally, we address further challenges and considerations under Question 11.

1. Digital and Internet Governance

Ensure active participation of the media - print, broadcast, online, community and investigative journalism organisations, and journalists – in the multistakeholder and collaborative digital governance process.

Priority: Strengthen Multi-stakeholder Governance to ensure digital governance remains collaborative and inclusive, involving governments, civil society, and media voices. Support and strengthen the IGF as a multi-stakeholder platform.

2. Media Regulation

Support the legislative and self/co-regulatory interventions that guarantee and reinforce freedom of expression, media viability, independence, and pluralism.

Priority: Advocate for national-level laws that guarantee media independence and plurality. Prevent misuse of regulatory reforms that restrict media freedom or capture the sector.

3. Media Independence and Press Freedom

Take measures to combat - in line with freedom of expression - illegal content. Ensure access to and fair dissemination of independent, fact- and science-based, accurate, and diverse information to counter misinformation and disinformation through safeguarding media independence.

Priority: Support press freedom and protection of journalists in alignment with SDG 16.10. Safeguard media independence and freedom of expression in digital spaces, while improving protections for journalists and their sources.

4. Journalist Safety and Legal Protections

Facilitate media and journalists cooperation globally to ensure knowledge sharing, use of the new technologies in a fair, transparent, accountable, and ethical manner, and protection of journalists in the digital space.

Priority: Facilitate spaces for cooperation between media professionals to exchange knowledge, and collaborate to improve journalists safety and legal protections, address threats of harassment, and ensure protection under the law.

5. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Promote an approach that fosters equality and dignity of all humans, and fair portrayal of diverse gender identities by the media.

Priority: Ensure that media initiatives prioritise human rights and ethical standards in digital spaces.

6. Media Sustainability

Invest in media and journalism support and ensure the sustainability of independent journalism as a global public good. Increase financial support and technical resources to address international imbalances in media infrastructure, human skills, and institutional capacity. Prioritise investment in initiatives that strengthen civic resilience to digital information manipulation and improve digital, media, and information literacy. Invest in resilient, safe, affordable, inclusive and interoperable digital public infrastructure, transparent, safe and accompanied by the human rights impact and risk assessments and secure digital systems and user-centred safeguards.

Priority: Reduce international imbalances in media resources, infrastructure, and technical skills. Ensure the sustainability of media organisations and encourage ICT tools to bridge the knowledge divide. Promote digital inclusivity and accessibility by building equitable access to the internet and digital tools globally. Encourage traditional media to help bridge knowledge gaps, particularly in rural areas, by facilitating the flow of cultural content.

Action Lines C3, C5, C6, C8, C10 and C11 – are in many ways relevant for the functioning of public good journalism and information integrity. It is essential that the review process considers how these bolster an enabling environment for the media and journalism and avoid solutions that may in any way pose threats to media and information ecosystems, access to and dissemination of fact-based, timely, independent information.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

To strengthen the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs and advance the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it’s essential to foster more effective collaboration and coordination within the diverse range of civil society actors and also among governments and international organisations. Given the shared vision of both frameworks—rooted in human rights and sustainable development—greater collaboration will avoid duplication of efforts and ensure that digital policies support broader development goals. The following three areas of action outline practical steps toward this goal:

1. Invest in strengthening the civic space by providing financial support to a diverse range of civil society organisations whose work aligns with the SDGs and/or the WSIS Action Lines.

2. Create spaces at local, regional, and global levels where both frameworks are equally discussed and foster collaboration within diverse organisations to enable more informed and cohesive implementation efforts. This could also lead to the development of more localised metrics to reflect specific national and regional contexts, enabling better tracking of progress and accountability.

3. Enhance the capacity of local and regional civil society organisations, as well as independent media and journalists, to effectively engage with both the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs. This can be achieved by creating platforms for knowledge sharing, where lessons learned, case studies, and best practices are regularly exchanged. Capacity-building efforts should focus on equipping these stakeholders to understand different processes, understand how to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the goals in their regions within their scope and expertise, and identify the different networks and forums in which they can participate to feed into the different processes.

4. In line with the commitments made in the Global Digital Compact, it is important to increase investment and funding towards the development of digital public goods and digital public infrastructure, especially in developing countries (SDG 17); as well as encourage the formation of partnerships that bring together Governments, the private sector, civil society, technical and academic communities and international and regional organisations to design, launch and support initiatives that leverage digital public goods and digital public infrastructure to advance solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 17).

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Increase funding and accessibility for participants from the Global Majority countries, fostering more collaborative partnerships between governments, civil society, private and technical sectors.

Preserve existing and introduce new forums for the facilitated discussion on internet governance-related issues that are multistakeholder driven and aligned with the human rights protection framework.

Introduce additional opportunities for the media voices to be heard and provide dedicated space to facilitate mutlistakholder and intersectorial discussions on media independence, sustainability, and the role of information integrity in the democratic society. For example, in many instances, there is a convergence of media needs and aspirations with various stakeholders including civil rights defenders, marginalised groups, and public institutions such as libraries and IT centres. There is the obvious gap in addressing many of these needs that, through inter-sectional cooperation, can be streamlined and ultimately addressed. Here, again, we stand at your disposal for further discussion on the practical and feasibility aspects for the inclusion of these proposed media-focused multistakeholder forums.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Aligning the WSIS process and the GDC involves building on human rights commitments, in particular commitment 33(b)(c)(d) - addressing broadly media and journalism values, while maintaining the decentralised, multistakeholder-driven, and human rights based structure of the WSIS. There should be a focus on preserving media freedom, ensuring the viability of independent journalism, and safeguarding the role of information in democratic societies. The GDC and Action Line 9 should be mutually reinforcing towards that same goal – preserving media independence, viability, and the safety of journalists.

To counter the challenges presented by the trends outlined in the following section, in particular the rise of authoritarianism, it is crucial that in aligning WSIS implementation with the commitments by states in the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact, special attention is given to the participation of civil society, ensuring a genuinely inclusive, multistakeholder approach, as outlined in the principles of the NetMundial+10 Declaration, in the implementation and monitoring of commitments under both the Pact and Global Digital Compact. The alignment of these frameworks strengthened by the multistakeholder model will help ensure that the global digital ecosystem remains human-centric, equitable, and focused on advancing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

As highlighted in Response 6, Action Line C9 has significantly contributed to the advancement of media and journalism within the Information Society and beyond. However, the revision process must take into account the following emerging trends and challenges, with appropriate measures aligned with international standards on freedom of expression and media freedom:

1. The rise of authoritarianism: Authoritarianism’s increasing influence has had a detrimental impact on the digital and media spheres, particularly in terms of media capture and the shrinking of media space. Additionally, authoritarian regimes are using digital technologies to control public discourse, suppress freedom of expression, and target journalists and human rights defenders. This trend must be addressed to safeguard media independence and freedom.

2. Gatekeeping power of Big Tech companies: The dominant position of major tech companies, which control media production, distribution, and advertising revenue, exacerbates the economic dependency of media outlets. This imbalance must be addressed to ensure the viability and independence of the media sector.

3. Information disorders: Significant forms of information disorders, such as election manipulation and smear campaigns, undermine trust in journalism and erode the media’s essential role as a watchdog. Addressing these issues is critical to restoring public confidence in the media.

4. Growing omnipresence of artificial intelligence (AI) in all forms of contents’ production. This creates an epistemological risk, where users cannot believe what they hear, see or read anymore while access to reliable and trusted information is most needed.

In particular, the following considerations should be incorporated by the ITU in the review process:

1. Equal access to data-driven technologies: Ensure that media organisations have equal access to emerging data-driven technologies, such as AI and large language models, in a manner that is secure, accountable, and conducive to journalistic integrity.

2. Protection of media independence and profession in Internet Governance: Any potential amendments to underlying internet governance frameworks should not jeopardise journalistic freedom or the essential role of the media. It is vital that such frameworks preserve the decentralisation, openness, and accessibility of the internet infrastructure, ensuring that media and information ecosystems continue to play a central role in facilitating access to and dissemination of fact-based information in a safe and enabling environment.

3. Protection of journalism in the era of surveillance capitalism: In light of the rise of surveillance capitalism, it is crucial to ensure that journalists are able to protect their sources, information, and confidentiality of their conduct. Safeguarding these elements is essential for the continued viability of investigative and independent journalism.

4. Enabling access to public-interest journalism during crises: In times of crisis—whether ecological, public health-related, humanitarian, or conflict-specific—it is imperative that access to public-interest journalism and reliable information is prioritised. This is essential to counter misinformation and ensure that the public has access to critical, fact-based information.

# Benin | DC DDHT | IGF DC DDHT

## Respondent

1. Organization name

DC DDHT

1. Organization type

IGF DC DDHT

1. Organization country

Benin

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

I believe that in the past 20 years, the WSIS process has made significant strides in fostering global multistakeholder engagement, bridging the digital divide, and advancing the WSIS Action Lines, which have guided efforts in areas like capacity building, ICT infrastructure, and e-government. The process has successfully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promoted internet governance, and adapted to emerging technologies. Additionally, WSIS has enhanced digital inclusion, supported capacity building, and provided a platform for ethical discussions on the use of ICTs, making substantial contributions to the development of the global Information Society.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

ITU has been a central force in the WSIS process, leading and coordinating key initiatives, including the WSIS Action Lines focused on ICT infrastructure, cybersecurity, and digital inclusion. ITU's contributions include providing capacity-building and technical assistance, developing global telecommunications standards, and promoting the alignment of WSIS with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through high-level forums, collaboration with global partners, and active support for Internet governance, ITU has played a crucial role in shaping the global Information Society and advancing ICTs as enablers of sustainable development.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

To sustain and further strengthen the WSIS process as a model of inclusive multistakeholder cooperation, I believe is crucial that we continue to innovate and bring in fresh perspectives. While the involvement of experts and key stakeholders is vital, we must also ensure that ordinary citizens feel connected to these global discussions. One way to achieve this is by establishing a Citizen Council within the WSIS framework. This council, which I strongly champion, would serve as an advisory body, representing the voices of the general public. By collecting and integrating citizens' feedback directly into the decision-making process, we can bridge the gap between high-level discussions and the real-world concerns of people across the globe. This would not only make the WSIS process more inclusive but also more reflective of the diverse needs and aspirations of society, ensuring that it remains relevant and impactful in the years to come.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Challenges in the WSIS implementation include addressing the digital divide, ensuring equal access to ICTs, and keeping pace with rapid technological changes, especially with the challenges AI is bringingin the balance. Additionally, the process is increasingly dominated by experts, leaving ordinary citizens disconnected. Establishing a Citizen Council could help overcome this by integrating public input into decision-making, making the WSIS process more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all stakeholders.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

C2 has been pivotal in expanding global ICT infrastructure, improving connectivity, and bridging the digital divide, especially in underserved regions. This has enabled millions more people to access the internet and digital services, laying the foundation for broader participation in the digital economy.

C4 has been crucial in empowering individuals and communities through education and skills development. By enhancing digital literacy, this Action Line has allowed more people to effectively use ICTs, leading to greater social inclusion and economic opportunities.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The enhancement of the implementation of WSIS principles and Action Lines in addressing new and emerging areas is important to foster greater flexibility and adaptability within the WSIS framework. It can be achieved by continuously updating Action Lines to reflect technological advancements such as AI, cybersecurity, and data governance. Moreover, creating mechanisms like the Citizen Council, which I advocate for, would ensure that diverse perspectives, including those of ordinary citizens, are integrated into discussions on these emerging issues.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

For the WSIS+20 Review of Action Lines, it's essential to focus on key milestones like the significant progress in global connectivity, advancements in digital literacy, and the increased role of ICTs in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, challenges such as persistent digital divides, cybersecurity threats, and the underrepresentation of ordinary citizens in decision-making processes need to be addressed.Emerging trends beyond 2025 include the rapid expansion of AI, the need for robust data governance frameworks, and the growing importance of digital rights. To adapt to these trends, I suggest incorporating a Citizen Council as part of the WSIS process. This council would ensure that citizens' voices are heard and integrated into the development and implementation of ICT policies, helping to maintain an inclusive and forward-looking approach in the WSIS Action Lines.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Maybe mapping action lines to SDG Targets to learly linking each WSIS Action Line to relevant SDG targets and ensuring that ICT projects contribute to these goals. But also monitor and Report the impact of WSIS initiatives on the SDGs and reporting progress transparently. In that perspective we should also set new measurable indicators to track contributions towards specific SDG targets.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

For further strengthening the multistakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and the IGF, integrating diverse perspectives and enhancing inclusivity are crucial. Establishing a Citizen Council within these platforms can play a pivotal role in this process.

For the WSIS Forum, the Citizen Council could provide direct input from ordinary citizens on digital development issues, ensuring that the concerns and needs of the general public are reflected in discussions and policy recommendations. This would help bridge the gap between high-level discussions and grassroots perspectives, making the Forum more inclusive and responsive to diverse stakeholder needs.

Like wise, for the IGF, The Citizen Council could offer a structured way to gather and incorporate public feedback into governance and policy debates. Engaging citizens in dialogue and decision-making, the IGF can become more representative of broader societal concerns, enhancing its role as a platform for effective and democratic internet governance.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

To make sure the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact work well together, we must make sure both the WSIS and the Global Digital Compact focus on the same goals, like making the internet safe and accessible for everyone. They should join forces to have people from both groups talk and plan together to avoid doing the same things twice and to get the best results. Finally, set up ways to see how well they are doing and if we are reaching goals. Finally, lsten to everyone including a ordinary citizens of the world to make sure their needs and ideas are included in both plans.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

AI advancements, cybersecurity threats, data privacy, digital inclusion, 5G technology, blockchain applications, evolving internet governance, and digital rights.

# Brazil | Data Privacy Brasil | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Data Privacy Brasil

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Brazil

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?
2. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?
3. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Although the WSIS process has persisted over the past twenty years, the multistakeholder model faces constant threats. In fact, this model is increasingly weakened in light of the growing importance that digital policies have taken on for nation-states, both domestically and in terms of international politics—favoring multilateral processes.

In this context, strengthening the operationalization of multistakeholderism is essential for processes like WSIS and others dealing with digital governance to be truly legitimate, inclusive, and representative. To this end, the guidelines from NetMundial+10 can help initiate a fairer and more participatory process. Furthermore, it is necessary for the IGF, the main forum for these discussions at the global level, to have a permanent mandate and regular funding sources, ensuring the continuity of a space that is vital for sustaining multistakeholder governance.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?
2. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?
3. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

The topics that are currently being highlighted in the digital agenda, in multilateral and multistakeholder processes, point to a need of updating the WSIS Action Lines. We suggest the following updates:

C4: include the promotion of decent work as part of the objectives, particularly considering the impact of emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, on conditions of work and its relation with the digital skills gaps;

C5 and C6: define data protection as an area that is separate from privacy because of the profound differences in conceptual terms. In order to build confidence and an enabling environment, governments should pursue data protection norms and not only privacy norms. Privacy and data protection are different political and legal areas, despite their connection;

C7: the environmental sustainability and risks of digital technologies should be acknowledged along with the opportunities they present for environmental action;

C11: enhancing cooperation on the inclusive global governance of AI and data should be stated as an objective, acknowledging the need for coordination of governance processes, such as the Global Digital Compact, and the alignment with the SDGs.

Besides these updates on the Action Lines, we consider it is necessary to integrate new facilitators, such as the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), in order to secure the protection of Human Rights throughout all the Action Lines. Also, it is crucial to emphasize multistakeholder collaboration, aligning with the NetMundial+10 guidelines, in their implementation throughout the WSIS+20 Review Process.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The Action Lines need to be updated on important gaps regarding the SDGs, such as the one identified on C7: the environmental sustainability and risks of digital technologies must be addressed, along with their opportunities for climate action. Emerging technologies, such as AI, offer both opportunities and great environmental costs, presenting threats to the preservation of natural resources.

Another point would be to invest in the update and communication on the WSIS Stocktaking Database, as a valuable tool to connect stakeholders working on similar projects and enhance cooperation for the achievement of the SDGs.

Finally, it would be important for States to commit to integrating the Action Lines into their national agendas as development and governance plans, aligning these goals with the SDGs.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

As highlighted by processes such as NetMundial+10 and the very purpose of the UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, there is an urgent need for greater coordination among different governance initiatives at both global and local levels. In this context, the WSIS Forum, with its focus on development, can deepen projects and progress related to the Action Lines through constant dialogue with local actors. Meanwhile, the IGF, with its stronger focus on policies and regulation, can summarize national and regional efforts to strengthen global governance dialogues.

By achieving greater synchronization between the outcomes of the WSIS Forum and those of national and regional IGFs, the Global IGF can guide best practices in policy-making and identify key challenges that require international community efforts. It is important to note that the IGF's scope pertains to public policies; thus, its multistakeholder character should be complemented by multilateralism, where effective state participation is essential.

The development projects discussed at the WSIS Forum—where the multistakeholder nature has been prominently demonstrated and proven effective over the past 20 years—can serve as an empirical foundation for the policy discussions at the IGF, creating a complementary relationship between these two spaces.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The year 2025 presents a significant opportunity for coordination and optimization of agendas through the WSIS+20 review process and the implementation of the GDC. ODET, in its role as coordinator of global digital governance, can map common goals and facilitate the implementation and achievement of objectives by the existing WSIS facilitators, such as the ITU and other UN agencies. The GDC can add to these facilitators with other entities already mentioned in the text, such as the OHCHR and the CSTD, to fulfill objectives and build upon the efforts and guidelines already established by these same actors.

It is crucial that all these processes are not only coordinated with one another but also consistently include the participation of non-state stakeholders. This enhances the multistakeholder tradition of WSIS, which has enabled its relatively successful journey over the past 20 years—a characteristic also recognized by the GDC, whose principles are well summarized and agreed upon in the NetMundial+10 Declaration.

Twenty years ago, the WSIS process recognized the role of the multistakeholder approach in ensuring meaningful and inclusive Internet governance, thus creating the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which has served as the main forum and hub for debates not only on Internet governance but also on digital governance in a broader sense. The 20 years of experience in being a space that brings together diverse stakeholders to deepen consensus on issues related to the information society enables the IGF to be the ideal and firmly established space to serve as a coordination and monitoring hub for the Global Digital Compact process.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Given that submarine cables are critical infrastructure for global Internet connectivity and resilience, as well as a major geopolitical asset with significant implications for digital sovereignty, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) should promote broader participation in its International Advisory Board for Submarine Cable Resilience, ensuring a truly multistakeholder approach to high-level discussions on submarine cables.

Capacity building is a crosscutting tool to better shape future telecommunication and ICT professionals, and individuals in general. In this sense, the ITU could make use of its educational channel, the ITU Academy, to foster capacity building to all interested parties. Additionally, It would be important for the ITU to foster the participation of civil society organizations, especially those based in the Global South, to develop courses and training on the ITU Academy, aiming to shed light on issues at the intersection of telecommunications, ICTs, and digital rights.

With the advancement of computational power, specially related to quantum computing, cybersecurity becomes even more relevant to guarantee the safety of countries and of critical infrastructures, such as the telecommunications and ICTs infrastructures, against cyber attacks. Therefore, there is a need to promote best practices and techniques related to cybersecurity among governments, public and private institutions, in order to maintain the online harmony and safety, as well as to guarantee the resilience of all communication infrastructures. This sharing of best practices can be supported by ITU-T Resolution 58, which focuses on the establishment of CIRTs, especially in countries of the Global South. CIRTs could function as a "knowledge hub" to promote the exchange of best practices across various sectors and between countries.

# Bulgaria | Ministry of Transport & Communications | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Ministry of Transport and Communications

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Bulgaria

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The WSIS established the multi-stakeholder approach in digital cooperation. WSIS was groundbreaking because it marked the first time that non-governmental stakeholders—worked together. The WSIS process has been crucial in driving the development of ICT infrastructure, especially in developing regions. It highlighted the need for affordable access to the internet and mobile services, with initiatives aimed at improving broadband connectivity and access in rural or underserved areas. This has led to a significant increase in mobile phone and internet penetration globally.

One of the cornerstones of the WSIS process is the multi-stakeholder approach, which involves not just governments, but also civil society, the private sector, and the academic community. This inclusive approach has become a model for international cooperation in many ICT-related policy debates, helping to ensure that the views of diverse stakeholders are heard in decision-making processes.

One of the most critical areas influenced by the WSIS process is the internet governance. The WSIS Tunis Agenda (2005) laid the groundwork for discussions on global internet governance, advocating for a multilateral, transparent, and inclusive approach. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which was established following the WSIS process, has become an essential platform for discussions on the governance of the internet and its evolution. In that context, it is of high importance to keep the multi-stakeholder nature of the internet governance, as stated many times from the member states as well as highlighted in the UN Global Digital Compact.

Looking ahead, the continued evolution of the digital landscape will likely see WSIS play an even more critical role in addressing emerging issues, advancing the SDGs, and ensuring that technology continues to be a force for inclusive, sustainable development.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

As one of the main UN agencies overseeing the WSIS process, ITU has been a central player in shaping the global framework for the development of ICT infrastructure. Moreover, the ITU plays a significant role in advancing universal and meaningful connectivity, and closing all digital divides. Additionally, the ITU in collaboration with other UN organizations co-hosts the annual WSIS Forum. This forum has become a pivotal platform for reviewing the WSIS Action Lines and fostering coordination among WSIS facilitators.

In line with its mandate, ITU continue its contribution to unlocking the full potential of digital technologies by further advancing the sustainable digital transformation and universal connectivity.

The implementation of the WSIS process over the past two decades has been a multi-dimensional effort with contributions from many sectors, ranging from international organizations and governments to private sector, civil society, technical communities and academic institutions. These stakeholders have helped achieve significant progress in areas like universal access to ICTs, digital inclusion, internet governance, and the integration of ICTs into national development agendas. Moving forward, the continued cooperation among these diverse actors will be essential in addressing emerging challenges and ensuring that the benefits of the information society are shared by all.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Due to its open, inclusive and participatory nature, we see the multi-stakeholder approach as fundamental for the global digital cooperation. Ensuring that the inclusive multi-stakeholder model of the WSIS process is sustained and further strengthened will require ongoing commitment, collaboration, and adaptation to new challenges in the digital landscape.

The success and sustainability of the WSIS process’s multi-stakeholder model depends on continuous engagement, transparent and inclusive governance, and a collaborative approach that evolves in line with emerging technological and societal challenges. By strengthening dialogue mechanisms, investing in capacity-building, ensuring diversity, and fostering cooperation across borders and sectors, the model can remain inclusive and impactful in the years ahead, supporting a truly global information society. That’s why we find important the outcome of the WSIS review to reaffirm the multi-stakeholder approach of the WSIS process and to recognize the IGF as the primary UN platform for multi-stakeholder discussions on digital issues and multi-stakeholder follow-up to the Global Digital Compact.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Despite the significant progress made in the implementation of the WSIS process over the past 20 years, several challenges remain that must be addressed to achieve the full potential of an inclusive, equitable Information Society. Below are some of the key remaining challenges:

4.1 Digital Divide and Unequal Access

One of the most persistent challenges is the digital divide, particularly between developed and developing countries, as well as between urban and rural areas within countries. Many regions still lack affordable and reliable broadband connectivity. Even in areas with access to the internet, speed, stability, and affordability often remain significant barriers. Despite growing awareness of the importance of gender equity in the digital realm, women remain underrepresented in tech entrepreneurship and ICT policy leadership roles, limiting their influence in shaping digital agendas and policies.

4.2 Internet

One of the foundational principles of the WSIS process was the multistakeholder approach to internet governance. However, there are still tensions in how to implement this model effectively, ensuring the participation of governments, private sector, technical communities and civil society organizations at a global scale. It is important to keep the general availability, security and interoperability of the Internet, and to avoid fragmentation of the open, secure, and free Internet. Moreover, we should work together to connect the 2.6 billion people in the world who still lack access to the Internet which would help achieving sustainable development that leaves no one behind.

4.3 Adapting to Technological Advancements

The rapid pace of technological change with innovations in new and emerging technologies poses regulatory challenges. Existing policies may not be agile enough to keep up with the complexity of these technologies. The use and misuse of digital technologies can have a negative impact on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Emerging technologies like AI may also have significant legal, social and ethical implications

 4.4 Sustainability of Digital Infrastructure

The growing demand for digital devices and infrastructure has led to concerns about electronic waste (e-waste) and the environmental impact of digital technologies. Many developing countries face challenges in managing e-waste, and there is an increasing need to promote the use of environmentally sustainable technologies. As digital services become more ubiquitous, ensuring that the ICT sector reduces its environmental footprint while continuing to meet demand is a critical challenge.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

The WSIS process includes 11 Action Lines, each playing a crucial role in fostering inclusive and effective digital cooperation and providing a framework for guiding the development of the Information Society. Over the past 20 years, certain action lines have had a particularly significant impact in shaping the global digital landscape. These action lines focus on key areas such as access, infrastructure, education, and content creation, all of which are foundational to achieving a more inclusive and equitable Information Society. The ongoing implementation of these action lines will be essential for overcoming the challenges that remain, ensuring that the digital divide is bridged, and that all individuals and communities are able to participate in the digital age.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

To effectively address emerging digital trends and challenges, the WSIS principles and action lines must remain flexible, inclusive, and forward-thinking. Enhancing existing action lines, integrating new frameworks for emerging technologies like AI and blockchain, addressing sustainability and cybersecurity concerns, and emphasizing regional and local adaptations will ensure that the WSIS process remains relevant and effective in addressing the opportunities and challenges of the future. Ensuring that the WSIS Action Lines reflect contemporary global challenges, such as emerging technologies and climate change, would contribute to their relevance and effectiveness. By maintaining a strong focus on digital inclusion and multi-stakeholder collaboration, WSIS can continue to play a crucial role in advancing a human-centered digital transformation that benefits all of society. In light of the risks of emerging technologies, the WSIS+20 review should include a human rights based approach, a clear gap in the WSIS Agenda.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

The WSIS+20 Review offers a critical opportunity to assess the progress made and adapt the action lines to meet the challenges of an increasingly digital, interconnected world. Key areas for focus policy beyond 2025 include addressing the rise of AI, blockchain, quantum computing, and IoT, as well as emerging challenges in cybersecurity, privacy, digital inclusion and human rights online. To ensure the long-term success of WSIS, it's essential to prioritize inclusive governance, capacity building, and sustainable digital transformation with a focus on both local and global contexts. By maintaining a focus on collaborative approaches and continuous adaptation to new realities, WSIS can remain at the forefront of the global digital transformation.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Given that digital technologies and the internet play a central role in advancing the SDGs, WSIS action lines can be a powerful tool in driving progress. Strengthening the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs is critical for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This requires application of a human-centric and human-rights based approach to the digital transformation, clear mapping of action lines to SDG targets, fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration, and creating synergies with the Global Digital Compact to ensure a shared vision for digital transformation while avoiding duplicating resources. The application of a human-centric, human rights-based and development-oriented approach to the digital transformation holds the potential of strengthening the alignment among WSIS Action Lines and SDGs towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

By promoting policy coherence, capacity building, and accountability, the WSIS framework can effectively contribute to the realization of the SDGs, making the digital future more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable. WSIS principles and SDGs can be more effectively realized through collaborative, multi-stakeholder approaches, policy alignment, and sustained focus on inclusive and sustainable digital transformation.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Strengthening multistakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and the IGF is crucial for advancing digital development and internet governance in a way that benefits all stakeholders. These platforms play a key role in shaping global digital policies and ensuring that digital transformation is inclusive, sustainable, and accountable. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) plays a significant role in the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as it serves as a multi-stakeholder platform that brings together governments, the private sector, civil society, technical communities, and international organizations to discuss and shape internet governancepolicies. The IGF is a central avenue for advancing the shared goals of ICT development, inclusive digital transformation, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As the primary global platform for multi-stakeholder discussions and consensus-building on internet/digital policy and cooperation, the IGF has an extensive global network and convening power, connecting actors with diverse perspectives from grass-roots to the highest political levels. The WSIS review should renew and strengthen the multi-stakeholder mandate of the Internet Governance Forum, including by ensuring a sustainable financial basis from the regular UN budget.

To further strengthen the WSIS Forum and the IGF as platforms for digital development and internet governance, it’s essential to focus on inclusive participation, synergizing development and governance agendas, and creating actionable outcomes. Fostering partnerships across sectors, engaging youth, and ensuring alignment with the SDGs will make these platforms more effective in shaping a sustainable and inclusive digital future. By continuously evolving and adapting to emerging challenges, both platforms can play a pivotal role in guiding the digital transformation in ways that benefit everyone.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Aligning the WSIS process, the Pact for the Future, and the Global Digital Compact is critical for achieving shared global goals of inclusive digital transformation and sustainable development. We consider the WSIS ecosystem the most logical overall framework for the implementation of the GDC. By harmonizing strategic objectives, setting shared milestones, strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration, and ensuring accountability , these frameworks can work synergistically to guide global digital cooperation, bridge the digital divide, and accelerate progress toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact can jointly promote digital innovation as a tool for sustainable development. By fostering cross-border collaborations, and technology sharing, these platforms can help scale up successful digital solutions to global challenges, particularly in sectors like healthcare, education, and environmental sustainability. The WSIS+20 review should integrate measures from the GDC follow up to maximize synergies, while reducing duplication of resources. The outcomes of the GDC should be assigned to the WSIS Action Lines to ensure their effective integration into the work of the different UN agencies.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

As the WSIS+20 review approaches and looking toward the future vision of digital development beyond 2025, the ITU will need to address several key emerging digital trends and topics that are rapidly reshaping the global digital landscape. These trends not only offer immense opportunities but also pose significant challenges for achieving an inclusive, sustainable, and ethical digital society. Here are the key emerging digital trends and topics that the ITU should consider:

Digital inclusion and universal access – the issue of digital inclusion remains at the forefront of the WSIS agenda, and addressing the digital divide between developed and developing countries and urban and rural areas must be prioritized. As digital technologies evolve, digital literacy becomes essential to ensure that all people can participate in the digital economy. ITU should prioritize the human-centric approach to new technologies, policies for education, capacity building, and skills development to equip individuals with the knowledge they need to thrive in a digital society.

Connectivity – Ensuring affordable, reliable and meaningful connectivity remains a priority. ITU should emphasize policies and initiatives that guarantee universal connectivity for marginalized groups, including women and young persons, and those in vulnerable situations, aligning this with the SDGs, especially SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Data privacy and security – with the rise of digital transformation, the security of networks, data, and devices becomes crucial. The WSIS+20 review should focus on global efforts to enhance cybersecurity frameworks and ensure data protection through a human-centric and human rights-based approach.

# Cameroon | HEP| Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Health and Environment Program (HEP)

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Cameroon

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

WSIS action lines by supporting the SDGS, Outcome documents related to the High-level segments.WSIS Forum 2016: Outcome Document. WSIS Forum 2016: High Level Track Outcomes and Executive Brief.WSIS Action Lines Supporting Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (2016).WSIS Stocktaking Report 2016.WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2016.WSIS Forum 2016 and SDG Matrix

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

Geneva Plan of action and organizing WSIS Forums with all the stakeholders by giving them the opportunity to share their view and strengthen their capacity.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

WE ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustainable and further strenthened by assessment within stakeholders and contributions for each of them or between them.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

To realize action plans by implementing them in the national level, also in the global level, Foster less developed countries to strengthen their capacities in implementing SDGs by increasing the education of women and girls and fight the poverty.

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## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

C3. Access to information and knowledge , because a lot of countries have access and knowledge to the information and communication technology.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

By asking the facilitators to elaboratee a manual on how to use the ict applications for all stakeholders

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Milestones: Formalize our information, sharing process.

Promoting cross-functional exchanges.

Show creativity with artificial intelligence

Challenges:

Education on artificial intelligence,

Transparency and elimination of fae news.

Cooperation between all stakeholders to build together a more sustainable world.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

By giving the opportunity to all stakeholders to share their knowledge.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

By organising events through zoom, and other platforms

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

By financing and developing of infrastructures at national levels , in particular, in Africa.Artificial intelligence in AFrica

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Supporting education on Artificial intelligence in Africa

# Canada | TCCM| Academia

## Respondent

1. Organization name

A Technical Community Coalition for Multistakeholderism (TCCM)

1. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

1. Organization country

Canada

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

This is a joint response by members of a Technical Community Coalition for Multistakeholderism (TCCM). TCCM was established in 2024 during the development of the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and in the lead-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20 Review. TCCM is made up of members of the Internet’s technical community: the companies, organizations, groups and actors whose day-to-day job is to operate the critical infrastructure and services at the heart of the Internet.

Please see Q11 for more about TCCM and the list of members endorsing this submission.

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The Internet is a key infrastructure enabling the development of societies, economies, communities and cultures all around the world. The Internet of today has been shaped into that vital infrastructure by its multi-stakeholder decision-making in its governance processes, which include the needs and priorities of all those who use it, who provide it and who operate it. This multistakeholder governance model is integral to the value the Internet offers people all around the world. The Internet and its governance model are fundamentally connected, and they are both a precious resource for the world. That is why WSIS acknowledged and endorsed it. We look forward to the WSIS+20 Review similarly recognising and endorsing the potential of the Internet as a force for human development, and the importance of its multistakeholder governance and decision-making processes to delivering that potential.

WSIS’s demand for a “people-centric, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information” is a powerful call for shaping technology in the interests of people, and this vision has stood the test of time. The processes developed under the aegis of WSIS, to the extent they further that vision, are vital to ongoing human development and potential, and must be nurtured and further developed.

From the perspective of TCCM, with its focus on Internet governance, the main achievement of the implementation of the WSIS process is the articulation of the principles of multistakeholder Internet governance in the Tunis Agenda. Multistakeholder Internet governance describes the process of stakeholders, including governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and the technical community, coming together on an equal footing to discuss aspects of, and make decisions about the Internet and to foster its ongoing evolution and expansion. The technological success of the Internet — the reason it works seamlessly across the globe — is the direct result of this multistakeholder approach, particularly to direction-setting and decision-making, and its use in various fora and initiatives.

We would highlight the creation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as the other major achievement of the implementation of the WSIS process. The IGF is the premier and enduring space for multistakeholder dialogue about the Internet, and its preservation and robust funding are crucial for ensuring inclusive and sustainable Internet governance.

The DNS Research Federation’s 2024 report on the IGF attests to some of the ways the IGF has created value and impact. Lasting direct impacts include the IGF being “a key driver in the growth of Internet Exchange Points (IXPs); serving as a catalyst for community connectivity; consolidating as a global ecosystem of knowledge-sharing; and nurturing the next generation of Global South leaders.” The report also sets out examples of the IGF’s indirect impact including having the necessary responsiveness and flexibility to reflect the issues of the day while also maintaining a focus on perennial issues (such as human rights and Internet access); paving the way for the successful conclusion of the transition of the IANA functions from one government's control to the stewardship of the global multistakeholder community; and shaping high-profile policy discussions, e.g. on online harms.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU continues to make important contributions toward implementing the WSIS process, in particular with regard to information-sharing and engagement with non-government stakeholders. We would also highlight the ITU's role in promoting affordable and accessible Internet access, in a world where the ITU estimates that 2.6 billion people, including 1.8 billion people in rural areas, remain offline.

We believe the ITU, as a multilateral body, can most effectively fulfil its mission of “connecting the world” by engaging with, promoting and supporting a diverse multistakeholder community working together, united in the desire to realise the positive transformative impact of digital technologies.

Although imperfect, the multistakeholder approach fosters a level of diversity, expertise, accountability and transparency that cannot be replicated in intergovernmental environments alone. It also recognises that challenges impacting our increasingly interdependent world cannot be adequately addressed in silos, by any one stakeholder group or led by nation-based political interests. The mobilisation of such a broad based multistakeholder community has been the greatest success that the ITU has contributed to in the implementation of the WSIS process.

We call on the ITU to continue to work with non-governmental stakeholders to cultivate a shared vision for the future of our digital world where the social and economic benefits of technology are realised, and to do so through its continued support of transparent, accountable, multistakeholder mechanisms.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The IGF has proven itself to be a vitally important process for dialogue and analysis of digital policy issues. However, there is significant room to further strengthen the IGF and to broaden its scope as the primary multistakeholder process for dialogue about digital policy issues. This should include a permanent mandate for the IGF, alongside a commitment to providing it with stable and secure funding, while rigorously maintaining its independence. We also need continued efforts to increase diverse participation from all stakeholders at the IGF. These steps will help ensure the IGF continues to play a central role, including as a key mechanism for the follow-up and implementation of the GDC, and meet its full potential.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The WSIS process has highlighted the reality that multistakeholder expertise is a critical component to harnessing the benefits of rapidly evolving technology. However, challenges remain. The lack of appropriate pathways that allow for WSIS outcomes, including IGF discussions, to influence policy development, is a key challenge. The result is that insights gathered under the WSIS and IGF banner comprise a huge resource, and yet are not fully captured, distilled, and then shared or utilised to their full potential.

The current voluntary funding model for the IGF, and its lack of a permanent mandate, places it in an inherently precarious position. It is, however, essential to ensure that addressing these challenges does not compromise the IGF’s independence. We are also concerned that the creation of new or expanded multilateral bodies, such as the Office of Digital and Emerging Technologies (ODET), raises a risk of redundancy given ODET’s wide scope and mandate, and threatens to weaken the crucial role of the IGF in meaningfully advancing the implementation of GDC commitments and the WSIS action lines.

Enabling the IGF to reach its full potential would reflect the WSIS process’s commitment to multistakeholderism, mitigate the costs and administration required for implementation, reflect the widespread support for the IGF from the multistakeholder community, and leverage the history and expertise housed in and around this and other existing processes.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

The following Action Lines have had a significant impact, with the technical community and private sector already playing a positive role in their delivery:

C2 Information and communication infrastructure: expanding infrastructure provides more people with reliable and affordable connectivity. There are many examples of positive government and private sector collaboration in this area.

C3 Access to information and knowledge: including enhancing opportunities for education, and reducing barriers to accessing information, particularly through the easier diffusion of such at lower cost than physical means allow.

C7 ICT applications (especially e-government, e-business, e-learning, e-health): the importance of this was demonstrated during COVID lockdowns: the digital transformation was accelerated, the Internet kept working and expanded to meet greater demand. However we also need to acknowledge the ongoing divide between developed and less developed nations, with not everyone enjoying the same access and benefits.

C8 Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity, local content: it's important that everyone can engage online in their own language. Internationalised Domain Names can help facilitate this, and work on promoting Universal Acceptance is taking place. There is still much work to do, but other writing scripts were not even possible at the first WSIS.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

A multistakeholder approach, in which all concerned can engage with these challenges on an equal basis, is key to enhancing our global capacity to implement the WSIS principles and their corresponding Action Lines. We highlight that a key benefit of the multistakeholder approach is its flexibility with regard to addressing new and emerging areas and technologies — bringing together key stakeholders from across government, civil society, academia, and the technical community, to develop effective solutions.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

A driver of innovation, progress and development, digital technologies touch all aspects of human life, and are a critical tool in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These transformative technologies should continue to be governed through collaboration across varied overlapping stakeholders and processes, involving the participation of distinct stakeholder groups especially in decision-making: governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and the technical community.

Stronger alignment toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda requires ensuring that all stakeholders are involved on an equal basis in discussions, deliberations, and decisions that seek to maximise digital opportunities and address digital risks and challenges. Mechanisms to better enable the participation of all stakeholders, particularly from developing countries, are also required to realize this aim.

An evolved and strengthened multistakeholder approach will enable effective, fit for purpose responses, based on relevant and targeted expertise responding to specific issues and challenges. We believe that this is the best path forward to ensure that digital technologies are accessible and available to all— and therefore remain a critical tool in achieving the SDGs.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

As noted previously, there is significant room to further strengthen multistakeholder processes such as the IGF and WSIS Forum, both to broaden their scope and to place them on a more solid, permanent footing. The IGF in particular requires a permanent mandate and a commitment to stable and secure long-term funding, while maintaining its independence. It also needs continued efforts to increase diverse participation from all stakeholders.

As articulated in the NETmundial 2014 Internet Governance Process Principles: “Overall, it is essential that these multistakeholder processes are strengthened so that we can build consensus around identifying and implementing effective solutions to the challenges we face. We need to ensure that all stakeholders can contribute effectively to such processes and see their contributions tangibly reflected in outcomes such as guidelines and recommendations.”

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The WSIS process and institutions are the most effective way to implement the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact. The IGF, in particular, has a central role in bringing together diverse stakeholders to ensure that such implementation is aligned to achieve shared goals. For example, the IGF could feature a programming track dedicated to alignment between interrelated processes such as WSIS and the GDC.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

We anticipate that emerging technologies, especially those related to artificial intelligence (AI), will play a significant role in the WSIS+20 review and future vision. As noted in the NETmundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement, such new technologies “present us with opportunities and challenges, impacting economic, political, and civic spheres.”

A key benefit of the multistakeholder approach is that it allows for the flexibility to address ever-evolving new technologies like AI and their implications.

Effective solutions must be developed via multistakeholder processes, providing open and inclusive bottom-up participation and transparent, consensus-based decision-making. Continued support for multistakeholder approaches ensures robust decision-making and a sustainable networked world.

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TCCM is made up of members of the Internet’s technical community: the companies, organizations, groups and actors whose day-to-day job is to operate the critical infrastructure and services at the heart of the Internet. TCCM members include domain name registries (e.g., NIC Costa Rica), top-level domain name regional groups (e.g., CENTR), domain name registrars (e.g., Blacknight), Regional and National Internet Registries (e.g., APNIC, JPNIC) and domain name registry service providers.

We are united in our support for strengthened multistakeholder Internet governance, which includes sharing approaches to Internet Governance by national and international decision-making Internet Governance bodies as well as using multi-stakeholder decision making processes to determine the shared principles, norms, and rules of Internet operations. TCCM doesn’t represent the entirety of the technical community, but we offer a shared voice from some of the key organizations behind the global operation of the Internet. For more information on TCCM, please visit: https://www.tccm.global/

The following TCCM members have endorsed this statement:

Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC)

Associação DNS.PT (.pt registry)

auDA, au Domain Administration Ltd

Blacknight Internet Solutions Ltd (Blacknight)

CIRA, Canadian Internet Registration Authority

Council of European National Top-Level Domain Registries (CENTR)

DENIC eG

Gauss Research Laboratory, Inc. (NICPR)

Identity Digital Inc.

Japan Network Information Center (JPNIC)

Japan Registry Services Co., Ltd. (JPRS)

Network Information Center Costa Rica (NIC Costa Rica)

Nominet UK

Norid

PIR, Public Interest Registry

Registry.si

Taiwan Network Information Center (TWNIC)

In response to Q16 of this submission form, please note that TCCM is a global initiative. In the absence of a 'global' option, the submitting member has selected their country of residence (Canada).

# Canada | Ocgrow Group | Private Sector

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Ocgrow Group

1. Organization type

Private Sector

1. Organization country

Canada

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Over the past 20 years, the WSIS process has significantly contributed to bridging the digital divide, fostering international cooperation for ICT development, and advancing digital inclusivity through capacity-building initiatives. It has played a crucial role in setting global frameworks for digital transformation, including ICT accessibility, cybersecurity, and broadband connectivity.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU has been instrumental in leading global coordination for ICT development, establishing technical standards, and fostering capacity-building efforts to promote inclusive connectivity. Its efforts have driven advancements in spectrum management, digital skills development, and policy frameworks to support smart and sustainable digital economies.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

To sustain and strengthen the inclusive multistakeholder model, it is essential to promote continuous collaboration among governments, private sector actors, academia, and civil society. Expanding digital literacy and ensuring equitable representation of marginalized voices in decision-making processes will foster a more inclusive and dynamic digital ecosystem.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Persistent challenges include closing the digital divide in underserved regions, addressing cybersecurity threats, and ensuring data privacy and protection. Additionally, the rapid pace of technological advancement necessitates continuous policy adaptation and global cooperation to maintain alignment with evolving digital needs.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

The "C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure" and "C7: ICT Applications" have had the most significant impact due to their role in fostering connectivity and developing practical digital solutions across industries. These initiatives have directly supported smart city developments and enhanced access to essential services in both urban and remote areas.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

To enhance implementation, WSIS principles must further integrate AI-driven technologies, autonomous systems, and public-private collaborations for digital transformation. Strengthening cross-regional knowledge sharing and capacity-building initiatives will also ensure inclusive progress and effective adoption of emerging technologies.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Key milestones should emphasize the adoption of smart city frameworks, AI governance, and green ICT solutions. Challenges include the digital divide, ethical concerns surrounding AI, and cybersecurity risks. Emerging trends such as Web3 technologies, digital twin applications, and metaverse-driven services should also be prioritized to ensure continued relevance and innovation

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Strengthening the alignment requires embedding digital transformation into SDG strategies, focusing on initiatives like "C7: ICT Applications" to promote education, health, and environmental sustainability. Cross-sector partnerships should be prioritized to leverage technological advancements for SDG-specific outcomes, while integrating AI, data analytics, and connectivity solutions to monitor and accelerate progress toward the 2030 Agenda. Additionally, enhancing digital literacy and inclusivity ensures no one is left behind.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Strengthening these platforms requires fostering more inclusive participation by involving underrepresented groups, including SMEs and civil society. Establishing regular thematic task forces and promoting actionable outcomes with measurable KPIs will ensure better collaboration. Enhanced partnerships between the WSIS Forum and IGF can drive holistic solutions that balance innovation with effective governance.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Alignment can be achieved by establishing a unified framework that integrates WSIS principles with the Pact for the Future objectives. This includes harmonizing policies on digital inclusivity, ethical AI, and sustainable digital infrastructure. Regular cross-platform dialogues and joint reporting mechanisms will help maintain consistency and promote shared accountability.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Key trends include AI governance, Web3 technologies, digital twins, the metaverse, and autonomous systems. Sustainable digital infrastructure, green ICT practices, and cybersecurity resilience must also be prioritized. The rapid evolution of quantum computing and its potential impact on global digital security should be closely monitored as well.

# Canada | Telecommunities Canada| End Users

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Telecommunities Canada

1. Organization type

End Users

1. Organization country

Canada

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

1.Advancing digital inclusion

The recent pandemic rapidly accelerated the use of ICTs and as a result, implementation of some WSIS outcomes. The world moved online for work, school and play. Small and under-resourced groups seamlessly pivoted to the Internet to connect internally and externally. This has positively affected and expanded the lives of communities and citizens around the world. It also changed urban/rural work scenarios which expanded economic opportunities in rural and remote areas, breathing new life into remote communities. The WSIS guidelines promoting equitable access to the Internet along with enabling infrastructure were instrumental in the acceleration and the adoption of ICTs around the world.

2. Establishing an early a baseline for the multistakeholder approach to Internet governance

The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society 2003 identified a multistakeholder model of governance for the Internet that has served as a foundation for ongoing work on Internet governance processes. This was a major achievement but 20 years on, it has become clear that the concept needs to evolve and be refined. The Internet Governance Forum and ICANN are engaged in this work and the Netmundial process has developed principles and guidelines toward improved implementation of multistakeholder governance models.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

Facilitating international dialogues including the WSIS summits in 2003 and 2005

Promoting international cooperation to improve connectivity in underserved and remote regions

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

1. Encourage multistakeholder governance processes that enable meaningful participation.

Relative power differences between and among stakeholder groups within a multistakeholder model must be addressed. Balancing the power between civil society/ enduser/ citizen groups vs. governments vs. the private sector will be the key to sustaining and the strengthening multistakeholder models in their various contexts.

2. Commit more resources to multistakeholder fora like the IGF and strengthen their voices in international relations discussions on Internet policy

As noted in the NETmundial+10 multistakeholder statement(May 2024): "To strengthen multistakeholder spaces for participation, it is necessary to improve mechanisms for building consensus and producing guidelines and recommendations in such a way that communities’ voices have an impact on multilateral and other decision-making processes, so that effective solutions to the challenges we face can be found and implemented."

https://netmundial.br/pdf/NETmundial10-MultistakeholderStatement-2024.pdf

3. Knowledge building to enable participation at the community level

More emphasis on community and community development in the next iteration of WSIS and more focus on this issue at the IGF level is necessary. Facilitating knowledge building to enable such participation is an essential element. We note that the IGF’s Dynamic Coalition on Community Connectivity (DC3) presented its report at the 2023 IGF meeting in Kyoto. It concluded that community owned broadband was essential to socio-economic development. We applaud this but look for a follow-up. How are these ideas moved forward out of IGF and into practice?

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

1. Erosion of trust is an overarching issue. We are just discovering the many ways information pathways can be abused – misinformation, disinformation, spam, Internet scams, deep fakes, etc. Originally bad actors were faking domain names to enable spams and scams. Now they are faking voices and circulating fake videos of unsuspecting people. The question is now “who do you trust, how do you trust, how do you verify what you can trust?” Within what was originally a very trusting internet infrastructure with all its positive potential, it has now become necessary to use every educational platform possible to teach users how to spot harmful content. To deal with this issue, digital and media literacy education must be a priority. Some threats, such as DNA abuse, might be addressed more vigorously by the technical community

2. Digital literacy and media literacy will continue to be issues whose challenges seem to be constantly outstripping society’s ability to address them. Without adequate knowledge, people are easily exploited. In a world of endlessly repeated misinformation and disinformation, citizens need much more knowledge and support about the negative aspects of the online world. We support the following WSIS priority as one of the ways of meeting this crucial need but much more is required:

 “22. Supporting providers of public access in the local communities such as libraries to help people access information resources they need and develop information literacy skills to improve their lives." (Priority areas to be addressed in the implementation of WSIS beyond 2015)

3. New jurisdictional issues, including extraplanetary developments, have arisen in the last 20 years. Satellite internet, now ubiquitous and on a very large scale, is still very costly. In addition, since satellites operate outside any national or international jurisdiction, there are no rules for decisions concerning who is served, how and with what. There is a valid concern about the ability of satellite owners to function as power brokers enabling and disabling connectivity at will. The fact that this is not already a top concern around the world points to the lack of capacity of our society to respond to such a substantive issue that affects everyone’s future around the globe.

4. The challenges of enabling meaningful participation in Internet governance by enduser and civil society stakeholders whose voices are often muted as they lack the resources to engage at the same level as government and private sector actors.

5. Maintaining openness at the technical level: Along with our commitment to collaboration and shared responsibility, we recognize the essential role of the technical community as guardians of TCP/IP and the invariant principles in Internet governance. An open, inclusive and secure digital ecosystem is essential to addressing emerging challenges.

6. Managing the roll-out of AI for social good: We do live in a digital age, yet don’t fully take into account the Internet’s importance to that definition. The Internet is the RNA that transcribes an AI’s capacity to learn and grounds the extended cognition of an individual’s mind in the maintenance of their humanity. The connections that inform extended consciousness, now and in the future, depend on sustaining the invariants that define what the Internet does. It connects for the purpose of transmitting bits. It is not involved in the content of the bits, or what the connected do with the bits when they get them. Its indifference is the guarantee of autonomy in how the endpoints use what connections provide. It merely amplifies interconnections and relational capacity. Ignoring the invariants risks threatening the autonomy of choice in connection that working together requires. Without the continuation of its governance as a common pool resource, the phase spaces where self-organizing individuals and artificial agents learn through experience are subject to enclosure.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Action line C1 -- The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

The internet is a global resource that must be managed for social good. These new technologies and their effects are so vast and and overarching, no single stakeholder group can handle the challenges alone. The WSIS Tunis Agenda led the way to establishing multistakeholder governance as a way forward in managing such a global resource.

As a result, multistakeholder governance principles are currently an accepted part of the Internet governance ecosystem as reflected at the Internet Governance Forum and ICANN.

Establishing this multistakeholder model was key to moving forward with ICTs for development.

Action line C3 and C4 -- Access to information and knowledge/ Capacity building

There has been an exponential increase in the amount of information available, which has irrevocably changed the way citizens engage socially and economically and can be an enabler of a broad range of human rights.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Action line C1. The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

We believe that adherence to the NETmundial+10 Internet Governance Process Principles would enhance Internet governance and enable issues to be addressed effectively when they appear. These principles state that processes must be:

● Multistakeholder

● Open, participative, consensus driven

● Transparent

● Accountable

● Inclusive and equitable

● Distributed

● Collaborative

● Enabling meaningful participation

● Access and low barriers

● Agility

https://netmundial.br/pdf/IGPP-NETMUNDIAL2014.pdf

We also support the expansion of the multistakeholder model to specifically include endusers as was done in the 2014 NETmundial Internet Governance process Principles: "Internet governance and digital policy processes should fully involve academia, civil society, government and international organizations, private sector, technical community and end users. The named parties are also acknowledged as stakeholders and this needs to be retained."

Action lines C3 and C4 -- Access to information and knowledge/ Capacity Building

Because ICTs have become so integral to social, political and economic life, they come with a corresponding need for citizens remain current as technologies evolve. There is a constant need for digital literacy programs at the community level. Access to digital technologies goes beyond providing the hard infrastructure. Skills are also required and should be part of any access package.

As indicated on Action line 3, there is also a disproportionate increase in incomplete, false, and misleading information as well as the overload of unverifiable information. However, there does not appear to be a commensurate increase in the availability, visibility, prominence, and engagement with verified information itself. As noted in our response to Question 4, this has led to an erosion of trust both in information and information providers. With the new deep fakes enabled through AI, this situation is poised to become a lot worse. Rebuilding trust in information providers and platforms, not to mention institutions, will be the challenge of the next few decades. Digital and media literacy education must be a priority. Some threats, such as varous forms of DNA abuse, might be addressed more vigorously by the technical community.

This issue is also addressed in Action line #10 - Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

We believe the upcoming WSIS+20 review must reaffirm the overarching importance of maintaining an open, secure and inclusive internet governed by the processes outlined in Netmundial Internet Governance Process Principles.

https://netmundial.br/pdf/IGPP-NETMUNDIAL2014.pdf

We encourage education and training programs to facilitate the effective use of new technologies at all levels, but especially in communities where it is accessible to endusers.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Reaffirm multistakeholder governance principles

Find ways to connect the local with the global through the support of community internet infrastructure and decision making processes.

Support education and training programs that empower citizens to use the internet for social good

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

We reiterate our belief that the NETmundial+10 Internet Governance Process Principles affirmed by Netmundial+20 (May 2024) offer valuable guidance towards strengthening multistakeholder platforms. These platforms must be:

● Multistakeholder

● Open, participative, consensus driven

● Transparent

● Accountable

● Inclusive and equitable

● Distributed

● Collaborative

● Enabling meaningful participation

● Access and low barriers

● Agility

https://netmundial.br/pdf/IGPP-NETMUNDIAL2014.pdf

We also agree with the NETmundial statements that advocate for more tangible outcomes from the Internet Governance Forum and that, following from the Tunis Agenda, these should be in the form of policy recommendations. In addition, the Internet Governance Forum should be strengthened and provided with more stable funding. As noted in the NETmundial+10 multistakeholder statement(May 2024):

"To strengthen multistakeholder spaces for participation, it is necessary to improve mechanisms for building consensus and producing guidelines and recommendations in such a way that communities’ voices have an impact on multilateral and other decision-making processes, so that effective solutions to the challenges we face can be found and implemented."

https://netmundial.br/pdf/NETmundial10-MultistakeholderStatement-2024.pdf

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

We believe that the WSIS process has served as a stable mechanism for promoting bottom-up multistakeholder Internet governance and this process should be strengthened and prioritized where needed. We are concerned about the potential duplication of fora, competing decision-making processes, New York vs.Geneva bureaucracies all adding to the difficulty of navigating the Internet governance ecosystem.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

1. Over the past 20 years, we suggest that the Information Society envisioned has actually moved away from a people-centered, inclusive, development-oriented society towards a corporate-centered profit-oriented society. The Information Society is still about people but, in the shift from people in a community context to people in a market context, we have allowed market values to drive human values, leaving out a broad spectrum of human values that exist in communities. There is an urgent need to move to a more balanced society in which communities represent the organizational capacity, identity and form that can countervail some of the impacts of market-driven policies.

2. Internet gatekeepers: A dwindling number of international Internet gatekeepers are a significant threat to community participation and the ability of people to fulfill their desires to create and share content. Youtube can arbitrarily put up and take down videos using opaque rules. Facebook, through the Internet.org initiative, offered free access to limited services in underdeveloped areas – leading human rights organizations to accuse Facebook of offering the world’s poorest people a “walled garden”. The ability of a platform like Facebook to make policy decisions like delinking traditional media as a retaliatory move against impending national legislation or making fact checking a community responsibility, clearly shows the power international gatekeepers have over information flow and their ability to control that flow. Although there are now some examples of individuals and groups moving away from the major private gatekeeper platforms and the problems they represent, there need to be many more alternatives, especially non-profit alternatives, available to users

3. Malicious use of ICTs: There are increasing attempts to use the Internet to conduct surveillance, engage in censorship and spread misinformation and propaganda. There is increasing evidence of interference with democratic elections. Cyberattacks, often ransomware attacks. are regularly hitting public institutions and private enterprises including hospitals and schools. There is an ever present danger that this kind of attack will soon be targeting essential infrastructure like electricity grid

4. Avoiding Internet fragmentation: An open and inclusive Internet can be splintered into increasingly smaller non-interoperative networks as different jurisdictions develop and enforce different rules. Maintaining openness, especially at the technical level, will require constant vigilance.

# Costa Rica | MoSITT | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Ministry of Science, Innovation, Technology and Telecommunications

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Costa Rica

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

• Promoting a more inclusive, people-centered information society.

• Strengthening the multi-stakeholder model in Internet governance by integrating civil society, government, the technical community, and academia.

• Establishing and sustaining dialogue platforms such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

• Expanding global connectivity and Internet access while aligning WSIS initiatives with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

• Developing and implementing regulatory frameworks and public policies to enhance digital infrastructure and close the digital divide.

• The multi-stakeholder governance model has enabled the Internet’sexpansion as a free and open space across much of the world. This approach fosters access to information and knowledge, ultimately improving people’s lives.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU has played a pivotal role in implementing the WSIS, leading and facilitating the process at the global level. It has driven the development of digital infrastructure, Internet access, and international cooperation in telecommunications. Additionally, it has fostered collaboration among key stakeholders—including civil society, government, the technical community, and academia—to promote equitable connectivity and digital capacitybuilding.

A core focus has been advancing a discussion model that ensures all stakeholders are heard, rather than solely reflecting government positions. Through consultations and mechanisms managed by ITU Council working groups, diverse voices contribute to shaping the future of digital governance. The ITU remains committed to making the Internet affordable and accessible to all, ensuring that people remain at the center of the digital transformation, with opportunities for information access and personal growth.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

To strengthen and sustain the Multi-Stakeholder Model, it is crucial to ensure the equitable participation of all sectors—civil society, government, the technical community, and academia—in decision-making processes. This requires:

• Maintaining open and accessible dialogue spaces

• Developing digital capabilities in underrepresented communities

• Enhancing transparency in Internet governance

Existing forums such as the IGF, WSIS, and the UN General Assembly in Geneva have proven effective and should be preserved.

Additionally, identifying sustainable financing mechanisms and efficient remote participation solutions is key to fostering global engagement. Financial constraints should not become a barrier to inclusion, ensuring that all voices are heard in shaping the future of the Internet.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

• Ensuring that the issues and agreements discussed at the summit shape national social policies, allowing benefits to reach all people equitably, accessibly, efficiently, and effectively.

• Addressing the persistence of the digital divide.

• Strengthening the security and resilience of the digital ecosystem, as well as data governance and privacy.

• Reducing inequalities in sectoral participation in governance processes and identifying necessary changes to address emerging global challenges.

• Expanding discussions around the WSIS process in spaces that encourage the inclusive participation of all communities within the Multi-Stakeholder Model.

• It is essential to streamline discussions within the UN by utilizing existing institutions, fostering collaboration, and optimizing resources to ensure efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts.

• Ensuring that the knowledge generated is accessible, clear, and easily understandable for those who are not deeply involved in these topics.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

C1 – The role of governments and all stakeholders in promoting ICTs for development

C11 – International and regional cooperation

Advancement in this area requires the active participation of all stakeholders.

C2 – Information and communication infrastructure

C3 – Access to information and knowledge

C4 – Capacity building

These action lines have been essential in expanding internet access, improving digital literacy, and strengthening global infrastructure.

C5 - Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

C7 - ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life

Building trust and security in ICT use is essential to protect individuals, institutions, and governments from cyber threats. At the same time, the continuous development of ICT applications expands access to egovernment, education, healthcare, commerce, and culture, fostering smart societies and improving lives.

To stay ahead of emerging trends, it is crucial to update and adapt action lines to address artificial intelligence, advanced cybersecurity, digital platform regulation, and data governance. Strengthening the enabling environment (C6) through updated regulatory frameworks and public policies will drive the effective evolution of the information society. Achieving this requires a flexible, dynamic approach that integrates new actors and technologies into the governance process.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

To effectively implement the WSIS principles and action lines, it is essential to ensure and promote a continued multistakeholder approach, enabling participation, open dialogue, and the exchange of knowledge and experiences.

Additionally, there must be flexibility and openness to address emerging areas and technologies, ensuring that the voices and perspectives of all stakeholders are heard, leading to the development of effective and affordable solutions that reach everyone and can be optimally adopted.

Finally, another way to enhance the implementation of the action lines is by establishing permanent mandates and ensuring the availability of resources to support their execution at the national level.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

It is important to strengthen the convergence between the WSIS Action Lines and new technological challenges, including ethical artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure resilience and data protection.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

• Establish Metrics for Progress: Develop specific indicators to track the advancement of both WSIS Action Lines and SDGs.

• Enhance Integration: Ensure greater alignment of digital policies with national sustainable development strategies.

• Strengthen International Cooperation: Foster effective global collaboration to drive inclusive and sustainable digital transformation.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

• Engaging Youth: Develop mechanisms to actively involve young people in digital governance and policy discussions.

• Leveraging Technology: Utilize technical solutions that ensure effective and meaningful participation in the process.

• Expanding Inclusion: Increase the involvement of non-traditional actors, establish sustainable mechanisms, foster synergies among stakeholders, and work towards common goals for an open, resilient, and stable network.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

• Establish Metrics for Progress: Develop specific indicators to effectively track progress.

• Foster Synergy: Promote alignment between initiatives through common objectives and integrated action plans.

• Strengthen the Multi-Stakeholder Model: Ensure its promotion and respect by maintaining a balance between technical, political, and social perspectives, guaranteeing inclusive representation where no sector is left behind.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) should integrate emerging technologies into the WSIS+20 review while ensuring that existing technologies and unresolved issues remain a priority, particularly those that have yet to reach their full potential or accessibility for all.

Key topics such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, telemedicine, smart cities, the Internet of Things, data governance, information integrity, and ethical considerations in technology development must continue to be addressed. Additionally, discussions on public discourse, democracy, and Internet fragmentation should remain central, particularly in examining the challenges and opportunities that arise from the adoption of these technologies across different sectors and countries.

The review process must also incorporate principles and flexibility to adapt to emerging technologies and their social, political, and economic implications over time. Lastly, technologies with transformative potential, including multifunctional robotics, energy-efficient innovations, and health-impacting advancements such as technocardiology and neurotechnology, should be considered within the WSIS+20 framework.

# Ecuador | MINTEL | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

MINISTERIO DE TELECOMUNICACIONES (MINTEL)

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Ecuador

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

In our knowledge, we think that the main milestones are:

1. Advancing in digital inclusion

2. Capacity building and knowledge sharing

3. Cybersecurity and Trust Building

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

In our knowledge, we think that the main milestones are:

1.Capacity Building and Human Empowerment

2.Facilitating WSIS forums

3.Fostering Cybersecurity and Trust

4.Encouraging Innovation and Standards Development

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Strengthening the Institutional Framework

Linking WSIS to Broader Global Agendas

Fostering Trust and Transparency

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Today i think we have this challenges:

Access Inequality: Many rural and underserved regions, especially in developing and least-developed countries, lack access to reliable and affordable broadband and ICT infrastructure.

Gender Gap: Women and girls face significant barriers to accessing and using ICTs in many parts of the world.

Geopolitical Tensions: Conflicts among nations regarding the governance of the internet, cybersecurity, and data sovereignty have slowed collaborative progress.

Digital Misinformation: The spread of disinformation and harmful content undermines trust in digital platforms and institutions.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Infrastructure is the backbone of digital transformation. Without robust and accessible ICT infrastructure, other Action Lines would struggle to achieve their objectives.

Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs

Strengthened collaboration among governments, international organizations, private sector actors, and civil society.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Expand Partnerships: Involve more stakeholders from emerging sectors like AI, blockchain, IoT, and quantum computing, alongside traditional actors such as governments and civil society.

Blockchain: Promote blockchain for transparency in governance, secure digital identity systems, and decentralized financial inclusion.

Global Standards: Develop international ethical guidelines and standards for emerging technologies to align with WSIS principles.

Big Data Analytics: Use big data to monitor progress on WSIS implementation and identify gaps in real-time.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Scale up digital upskilling programs, emphasizing advanced technologies like AI, cybersecurity, and blockchain

Enhance trust-building mechanisms to address the rise of misinformation, data breaches, and AI-related security issues.

Strengthen ICT’s role in addressing climate change, e-waste management, and environmental sustainability

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Strengthen collaboration among governments, private sector, civil society, and academia to implement ICT-driven solutions for SDGs.

Scale up efforts under C3 (Access to Information) and C2 (Infrastructure) to reduce the digital divide and ensure universal access to ICTs.

Encourage innovation in ICTs to address sustainability challenges, such as climate change, resource efficiency, and renewable energy.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Broaden stakeholder representation.

Capacity building initiatives

Prioritizing capacity building for developing countries

Promoting better coordination between the two platforms to address the interconnected nature of digital development and governance issues

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Map WSIS Action Lines directly to the objectives of the GDC to identify overlapping priorities, such as digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and trust.

Incorporate the GDC’s principles of global collaboration into WSIS frameworks, particularly in areas like data governance and the use of emerging technologies.

Promote global standards and best practices for data privacy, online safety, and ethical AI use.

Collaborate on drafting international agreements for ethical AI and data governance under the GDC framework.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Use AI can address global challenges, such as climate modeling and disaster management.

Develop global ethical guidelines for AI development and deployment.

Strengthen global trust in digital ecosystems to boost e-commerce, e-governance, and online services.

Expand global cooperation on cybersecurity capacity-building.

Develop robust regulatory and technical frameworks for securing digital systems.

# Ecuador | MINTEL | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

MINTEL

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Ecuador

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Los principales logros de la implementación del Proceso de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información (CMSI) en las últimas dos décadas incluyen una expansión significativa del acceso a Internet, la mejora de las habilidades digitales de las personas, la digitalización de servicios públicos, el crecimiento del comercio electrónico y la promoción de la innovación en tecnologías de la información y la comunicación. Estos avances han impulsado el desarrollo socioeconómico a nivel global, aunque persisten desafíos como la brecha digital y la seguridad cibernética, que requieren una atención continua por parte de gobiernos, empresas y sociedad civil.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

La Unión Internacional de Telecomunicaciones (UIT) ha desempeñado un papel crucial en la implementación del Proceso de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información (CMSI) durante los últimos 20 años. Ha contribuido significativamente a través de la estandarización de tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (TIC), la promoción de la conectividad global, la facilitación de la cooperación internacional, el desarrollo de políticas públicas basadas en evidencia y el apoyo a la innovación y el emprendimiento digital. La UIT ha sido un actor clave en la reducción de la brecha digital, la mejora de la calidad de vida y el impulso del desarrollo sostenible a través de las TIC.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

El Proceso de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información (CMSI) ha demostrado ser un modelo inclusivo y multiactor exitoso para la cooperación digital global. Para mantener y fortalecer este modelo, es esencial promover la participación activa de todos los actores relevantes, incluyendo gobiernos, sector privado, sociedad civil y academia. Se deben fortalecer los mecanismos de coordinación y colaboración entre estos actores, así como fomentar la transferencia de conocimiento y tecnología. Además, es necesario adaptar el CMSI a los desafíos y oportunidades emergentes, como la inteligencia artificial, el Internet de las Cosas y la ciberseguridad. Por último, es crucial garantizar la sostenibilidad financiera del proceso y asegurar su relevancia en la era digital.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

A pesar de los avances significativos logrados en la implementación del Proceso de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información (CMSI), persisten diversos desafíos. Entre ellos se encuentran la persistencia de la brecha digital, que limita el acceso a Internet y a las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (TIC) en muchas regiones del mundo, especialmente en países en desarrollo. Además, la seguridad cibernética sigue siendo una preocupación importante, ya que los ataques cibernéticos se vuelven cada vez más sofisticados y frecuentes. Otros desafíos incluyen la protección de la privacidad en línea, la gobernanza de Internet, la alfabetización digital y la adaptación de las políticas y regulaciones a la rápida evolución de las tecnologías. Superar estos obstáculos requiere de esfuerzos coordinados a nivel global, con la participación de gobiernos, sector privado, sociedad civil y academia.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Las líneas de acción del Proceso de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información (CMSI) que han tenido un impacto más significativo son aquellas relacionadas con la conectividad, el acceso universal y la creación de capacidades. La expansión de la infraestructura de telecomunicaciones y el aumento de la asequibilidad de Internet han sido fundamentales para conectar a más personas y cerrar la brecha digital. Además, las iniciativas enfocadas en desarrollar las habilidades digitales de las poblaciones, especialmente en los países en desarrollo, han empoderado a individuos y comunidades, permitiéndoles participar plenamente en la economía digital. Estas líneas de acción han sido clave para impulsar el desarrollo socioeconómico, facilitar la innovación y mejorar la calidad de vida de millones de personas en todo el mundo.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Para garantizar que los principios y líneas de acción del Proceso de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información (CMSI) sigan siendo relevantes en el contexto actual, es necesario adaptar su implementación a los nuevos desafíos y oportunidades. Esto implica fortalecer la cooperación internacional, fomentar la innovación y el emprendimiento digital, promover la inclusión digital, y abordar cuestiones éticas y de seguridad cibernética. Además, es crucial invertir en la formación y capacitación de las personas para que puedan aprovechar al máximo las nuevas tecnologías, así como en la infraestructura digital necesaria para conectar a todos. Al hacerlo, se puede asegurar que los beneficios de la sociedad de la información lleguen a todos, sin dejar a nadie atrás.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Para fortalecer la implementación del Proceso de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información (CMSI) más allá de 2025, es crucial considerar los siguientes aspectos:

Priorizar la conectividad asequible y universal: Expandir la infraestructura digital, reducir los costos de acceso a Internet y promover la neutralidad de la red.

Fomentar la innovación digital: Apoyar el desarrollo de nuevas tecnologías, como la inteligencia artificial y el Internet de las Cosas, y fomentar la colaboración entre sectores público y privado.

Empoderar a las personas a través de la alfabetización digital: Invertir en programas de educación y capacitación para desarrollar habilidades digitales y promover el uso responsable de las tecnologías.

Garantizar la seguridad cibernética: Fortalecer la cooperación internacional, compartir mejores prácticas y desarrollar políticas efectivas para proteger los sistemas y datos.

Promover la ética y los derechos humanos en el espacio digital: Desarrollar marcos éticos para el uso de las tecnologías, proteger la privacidad y garantizar la libertad de expresión.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Para fortalecer la alineación entre las Líneas de Acción del Proceso de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información (CMSI) y los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), es necesario promover la integración de las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (TIC) en las estrategias de implementación de los ODS. Esto implica fomentar la innovación digital para abordar desafíos sociales y ambientales, utilizar las TIC para mejorar la eficiencia y la transparencia en la gobernanza, y empoderar a las comunidades marginadas a través del acceso a la información y la educación digital. Además, es importante medir y evaluar el impacto de las TIC en el logro de los ODS, y ajustar las políticas y estrategias en consecuencia. Al hacerlo, se puede aprovechar el potencial de las TIC para acelerar el progreso hacia un futuro sostenible y equitativo.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Para fortalecer plataformas multiactor como el Foro de la CMSI y el Foro de Gobernanza de Internet (IGF), es necesario fomentar la participación inclusiva de todos los actores relevantes, incluyendo gobiernos, sector privado, sociedad civil y academia. Esto implica crear espacios de diálogo y colaboración, promover la transparencia y la rendición de cuentas, y desarrollar capacidades para participar en los procesos de toma de decisiones. Además, es importante adaptar estas plataformas a los desafíos y oportunidades emergentes, como la inteligencia artificial, la Internet de las Cosas y la ciberseguridad. Al hacerlo, se puede garantizar que estas plataformas sigan siendo relevantes y efectivas para abordar los desafíos y oportunidades de la era digital.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Para lograr una alineación efectiva entre la implementación del Proceso de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información (CMSI), el Pacto por el Futuro y su Compacto Digital Global, es esencial fortalecer la cooperación internacional, promover la innovación digital, y garantizar la inclusión digital. Esto implica compartir conocimientos y experiencias, establecer estándares comunes, y fomentar la inversión en infraestructura digital. Además, es crucial abordar los desafíos éticos y de seguridad cibernética, y asegurar que los beneficios de la digitalización se distribuyan equitativamente.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

La UIT debe prestar especial atención a tendencias como la inteligencia artificial, el Internet de las Cosas, las redes 5G y 6G, el blockchain y el metaverso en la revisión del WSIS+20 y su visión futura. Estas tecnologías disruptivas presentan tanto oportunidades como desafíos, como la necesidad de establecer marcos éticos, garantizar la privacidad y seguridad de los datos, y promover la inclusión digital. Al abordar estos temas, la UIT puede ayudar a garantizar que las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación sigan siendo una fuerza positiva para el desarrollo sostenible y el bienestar humano.

# Ecuador | MINTEL | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Ministerio de Telecomunicaciones y de la Sociedad de la Información

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Ecuador

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Publications of UN (DESA) about E-Government Development Index let us know how is our country and what can we must strength

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

In my job that is around e-government, hadn´t relationship with ITU, so I can´t see any contribution

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Holding not only world, but regional meetings. It could be realized in a lower time and could have better results

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Align efforts with regional/world organizations such IDB, World Bank. In our case, we dedicate many time to complete surveys and other iniciatives, but there must be a common point/site to have and share country information

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

All are important, although because of my job, I must choose e-government

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Sharing results and experiences more frecuently. Maybe there are many great experiencies that could be improved by emerging countries instead of developing strategies

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
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None

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

WSIS action lines should be more ambitious. SDG have a goal for 2030, but the plans for information society must see beyond 2030

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

with multi-language platform, creating spaces where our countries can show our results and best practices

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

I don´t know what´s Pact for the Future, so that could be one of the first strategies. There are so many iniciatives, studies, index and similar for the countries, there are many efforts that could be lost

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

ethical use of IA, blockchain, cybersecurity

# France | AFNIC | Academia

## Respondent

1. Organization name

AFNIC

1. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

1. Organization country

France

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

AFNIC would like to thanks the ITU and the Council Working Group on WSIS & SDGs for the work done and for holding a public open consultation.

In the last twenty years, since the WSIS, the digital transformation of society has been extensive.

The Internet has allowed millions of people to connect and to exchange ideas, laying the foundation stone for the common vision « where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge ».

AFNIC considers that major progress has been made in implementing a number of specific WSIS outcomes. Significant progress has been made toward digital inclusion. But results are mixed and uneven depending on the region of the world, 33% of the world is still unconnected, and inequalities are still patent. AFNIC as a public service concession is committed to an open internet that benefits everyone, promoting the French vision of a secure and stable internet open to innovation. Alongside, the AFNIC Foundation for Digital Solidarity which supports local initiatives to promote digital inclusion.

We strongly believe that implementing the WSIS outcomes has been facilitated by multi-stakeholder cooperation in both the development of internet technical standards and policy discussions. For that reason, AFNIC is involved in global Internet governance by actively playing a role in coordinating and representing the various French stakeholders within international bodies; and by contributing to the development of new internet standards and services.

The implementation of the multistakeholder model in the past 20 years has also demonstrated the importance of involving stakeholders in discussions on the governance and evolution of the Internet.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU within the framework of its mandate, has contributed to providing a platform for addressing issues raised by ICTs and raise awareness to key challenges pertaining to the deployment of new and emerging technologies.

The ITU also promotes cooperation toward building global connectivity.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

AFNIC strongly believe that implementing the WSIS outcomes has been facilitated by multi-stakeholder cooperation. Such a cooperation is playing a key role in both the development of internet technical standards and policy discussions.

The multistakeholder model requires active engagement and further commitment to enable inclusive and concrete outcomes. AFNIC is actively involved in the work carried out by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) with the aim of contributing to the development of policies and sharing good practice and expertise.

We also actively contribute to Standards Developing Organisations, first of which the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), as well as in ITU work, both in the French Delegation and as a Sector Member, to help shaping the future of the internet and Internet governance.

Promoting Culture and linguistic diversity on the Internet is also key to help bridge the digital divide and facilite the participation of the widest audience in their own languages and scripts, as well as accessing content in their native language.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Building a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information society is still a global challenge to be met in 2025, 20 years after the WSIS.

We strongly believe that one of the key challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes remains the digital divide and persistent difficulties to achieve meaningful access and participation in the information society.

Culture and linguistic diversity online need further commitment and work to allow for the emergence of a multilingual and diverse internet, as well as the development of local contents. Recalling paragraph 53 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles « The creation, dissemination and preservation of content in diverse languages and formats must be accorded high priority in building an inclusive Information Society The creation, dissemination and preservation of content in diverse languages and formats must be accorded high priority in building an inclusive Information Society », multilingualism is a key enabler and allows for better dialogue and promoting tolerance and collaboration.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?
2. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, as well as the need to continue working toward

Implementing the WSIS outcomes has been facilitated by leveraging the multistakeholder approach of governance. We believe that strengthening multistakeholder and diverse cooperation is essential if we are to find innovative and sustainable solutions to the emerging problems we face.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Regarding the inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.

Regarding WSIS Action Line C11 – International and Regional Cooperation, we would like to highlight the importance of multistakeholder partnerships and cooperation, including the technical community, academia, civil society, the private sector, IGO and governments, to address global challenges and build a sustainable future.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Strengthening multistakeholder platforms and initiatives should go hand to hand with leveraging and reinforcing existing initiatives and avoiding duplication of efforts.

We strongly believe that one of the key challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes remains the digital divide and persistent difficulties to achieve meaningful access and participation in the information society. Improving multilingualism and inclusivity of these initiatives and platforms (capacity building, diversity of backgrounds, cultural and linguistic diversity, etc) is also key to improving their impact and outcomes.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

A Comprehensive mapping of action lines and the global digital compact is a prerequisite to advance shared goals.

The Internet Governance Forum, including the network of National and regional initiatives, and the WSIS framework. offer a good and recognized platform for allowing multistakeholder cooperation and engagement and demonstrated its adaptability to the emergence of new issues.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Key topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025 could include meaningful connectivity and helping bridge the digital divide.

# France | AIPEA/AIPIA/AIRGPAIRDAM | International Organization

## Respondent

1. Organization name

ASSOCIATION AIPEA/AIPIA/AIRGPAIRDAM

1. Organization type

UN ENTITIES AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

1. Organization country

France

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

YES: UN ENTITIES AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

URL INSTITUTIONS :

https://oceanexpert.org/institution/20033

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

UN ENTITIES AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

MY URL PRO :

https://oceanliteracy.unesco.org/expert/prof-dr-lebeau-pemha-thina/

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

PRESIDENT CEO FOUNDER UN SCIENTIFIC ECONOMIC ENERGY SOCIAL MEDIA ENVIRONNEMENT LEGAL GROUP/EXPERTS PATRIMOINES INTERGOUVERNEMENTAL UN GROUP, INDÉPENDANT/EXPERT PROFESSOR OCEAN GLOBAL ACADEMY (UN, UNESCO, COI, IODE, OTGA)

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

THE BIODIVERDITY = CLIMATE CHANGE/ DEVELOPMENT DURABLE/TRADE

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

UN ENTITIES AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

UN ENTITIES AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

URL INSTITUTIONS :

https://oceanexpert.org/institution/20033

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

MY/OUR PARTICIPATION ALL IGF

2020/2021/2022/2023...

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

UN ENTITIES AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

THE INNOVATION RESEACH OF THE BIODIVERDITY = CLIMATE CHANGE/ TRADE/ ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT......

# France | International Chamber of Commerce | Private Sector

## Respondent

1. Organization name

International Chamber of Commerce

1. Organization type

Private Sector

1. Organization country

France

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Over the past two decades, WSIS (including the Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Action Lines) has guided efforts to create and sustain an open and inclusive Information Society. In collaboration with governments, civil society, businesses, the technical community and international organisations, the goal has been to unlock the full potential of ICTs, the Internet, and digital technologies and ensure that no one is left behind.Aligned with the WSIS Action Lines and the 2030 Agenda, the vision for a ‘’people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society’’ remains relevant amid the evolving landscape of technology with WSIS and its Action Lines proven to be agile and effective at engaging with the new and emerging issues that have developed since 2005.

Significant progress has been made in implementing WSIS outcomes, showcasing the catalytic power of ICTs, the Internet, and digital technologies in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Key advancements include:

1. expanding connectivity to covering 94% of the world's population;

2. deploying innovative digital solutions, services and products to expand access to education, healthcare, government services and financial services, expanding social and economic opportunities for everyone, everywhere and facilitating the green transition; and

3. increased application of the multistakeholder model across various levels of digital governance, illustrated for example through the steady growth in participation at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), and the global spread of its national and regional initiatives.

The private sector has been a pioneer and partner in driving this progress. Businesses invest in transformative digital infrastructure, meaningful connectivity, and accessible digital products and services, to bridge the digital divide and unlock green transition.

In addition, by harnessing the power of big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and machine learning, private companies extract valuable insights to promote inclusivity and sustainability. The transformative impact of these technologies permeates every facet of modern life, reshaping economies, industries, and societies on a global scale, and it is important to leverage AI to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

From the automation of routine tasks to the development of sophisticated algorithms capable of complex decision-making or creation of new content like music, video, text, audio or images, AI has emerged as a cornerstone of innovation. The ability to discover new insights in large data sets will drive new frontiers in science and is being leveraged to develop new treatments and medicines, as well as to help doctors and nurses improve patient care. AI can be a powerful accelerant for the scale and pace of sustainability solutions needed to address the climate crisis, for example, by helping to integrate new sources of renewable energy onto the grid, optimising energy and water consumption, anticipating hazardous weather events, and speeding up the discovery of low carbon building materials. Moreover, AI technologies have the potential to broaden personalised access to information and resources, bridging the digital divide and empowering individuals and communities worldwide. From online education platforms providing access to quality learning resources to AI-powered language translation tools breaking down language barriers, AI has accelerated the spread of knowledge and opportunities.

Last, but not least, through capacity-building programs, businesses equip individuals and communities with the necessary digital literacy and technical competencies, preparing them for success in the digital economy.

Business innovation, tied with the collective contributions of the multistakeholder community, are the designated vehicle towards an open and inclusive Information Society, and the only avenue that will unlock the the potential of ICTs and digital technologies

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

20 years ago, the WSIS process envisioned the development of a global, people-centred information society, where everyone can truly benefit from the enormous opportunities the Internet, information and communications technologies and digital transformation has to offer.

This was a vision not only for the governance of the Internet, but for harnessing its unique potential for inclusive and sustainable growth, helping populations everywhere to develop and thrive.

WSIS also made it clear that all stakeholders have a shared responsibility in shaping this inclusive information society, jointly, cooperating across all stakeholder groups, to find meaningful solutions to common challenges.

Governments alone cannot meet the investment needs and implementation challenges. The private sector has been a pioneer and a partner in bridging this gap.

To continue and upscale business investment an enabling policy environment is fundamental. The WSIS+20 process can help in clarifying what such an environment looks like.

It is important that policymakers understand how the private sector makes investment decisions, as well as how political and regulatory decisions impact the technical functioning of the infrastructure or service.

Ultimately, an enabling environment is one that stimulates the necessary investments in a way that results in a sustainable facility or service over time. That means a few things must be in place: a stable legal and regulatory environment, open markets and free flow of data across borders, a holistic, whole-of-government approach to policymaking and last, but probably most importantly: multistakeholder partnerships.

Close cooperation with business and other stakeholders is beneficial to ensure that implemented policies pave the way for them to maximize opportunities while addressing issues that are relevant locally and respecting local cultural and social norms.

An enabling environment facilitates public-private partnerships in the implementation of projects, but also considers the views of those required to implement policies from the first moments of policy-creation.

Its long history in contributing to the WSIS Process, its technical expertise and its convening power, make the ITU well-positioned to assess and understand the global policy landscape. It can also foster collaborative approaches among governments, industry, and other stakeholders to leverage the WSIS+20 review towards building enabling policy and regulatory environments that are holistic, interoperable and drive investment and innovation in the digital economy.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

As technologies continued to evolve, multistakeholder collaboration continues to bear fruit, fostering partnerships that enable populations to benefit from meaningful connectivity, through cutting-edge infrastructure, state-of-the-art digital services and capacity-building initiatives.

Despite this progress, recent developments continue to show that the multistakeholder approach is not embraced or considered by all, indicating continued challenges in extending the benefits to future generations. As we approach the WSIS+20 review and look ahead to the next chapter, it is crucial to maintain and leverage the important lessons learned and the decisions reached from the WSIS process.

It is through the collective action of all stakeholders that the WSIS vision will be reached, catalysing the attainment of global goals for social and economic development.

The IGF, a key outcome of the WSIS, has been a pioneering example and an enabler of bottom-up discussions among all stakeholders, allowing them to share their knowledge and expertise, thus inspiring the co-creation of interoperable policy approaches, that reap the benefits that the Internet and, more broadly, digital environment have to offer.

The unique convening role of the IGF is a central asset to be leveraged in addressing the implementation challenges of the WSIS outcomes going forward.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Despite significant progress, a critical challenge persists: 2.6 billion users remain unconnected. Inequalities in connectivity are closely correlated with location, economic opportunity, education, gender as well as social and cultural norms and governance approaches. These barriers could be:

• Financial – factors that impact public and private investment in connectivity, affect costs of developing, deploying or maintaining networks, or inhibit alternative business models to deliver connectivity.

• Technological – factors that limit the development or deployment of new technologies or pose barriers to investment in innovation, research and development that would enable connectivity, especially in remote and hard-to-reach areas.

• Regulatory – norms, policies, laws and regulations that limit the deployment of networks (especially through new and innovative technologies and methods), disincentivise investments, or inhibit the uptake and use of the Internet for certain segments of the population.

At the same time, persisting approaches that fuel restrictive policy and regulatory measures, deepen Internet fragmentation, showing that despite the 20-year progress marked since the WSIS process, the multistakeholder approach, as the key ingredient to implementing the WSIS vision, is not effectively used nor universally embraced.

WSIS set out tools to help reach the vision for people-centric, sustainable digitalisation: multistakeholder collaboration and enabling, interoperable policy environments. The private sector has been a key driver of investment and innovation, transforming the Internet from an information exchange network to the platform for sustainable development that we recognise it to be today. In order to reach their full potential, ICTs must be accessible, affordable, and relevant to the needs of everyone, everywhere. For this to work in practice, a few considerations must be in place:

• Policy frameworks should be built on stable legal and regulatory grounds, based on light-touch approaches, and consider the value of the entire communications and digital services ecosystem. They should encourage competition and the entry of new players into the ICT ecosystem to foster innovative products, services, and business models.

• When drafting policy frameworks, policymakers should consider the multi-layered nature of the digital ecosystem and take a holistic approach across economic, technical, socio-cultural, and over-arching governance factors.

• Data and cross-border data flows underpin every aspect of today’s global economy, supporting day-to-day business operations, facilitating the delivery of essential government services, and enabling international and multilateral cooperation. To sustain this development, policies should support the global movement of data built on trust, ensuring that users have adequate privacy, security, and IP protections. These protections should be implemented in a manner that is transparent, non-discriminatory, and not a disguised restriction on trade.

• Multistakeholder engagement is key for the development of informed policies leveraging expertise from the entire digital value chain, especially when considering new and emerging technologies. To be effectively implemented, governance frameworks need stakeholder input and buy-in that comes from grassroots, bottom-up approaches to ensure policies support responsible innovation and not unduly hamper it.

• Effective governance of AI requires international cooperation. A cohesive framework for such cooperation should prioritise convergence on governance standards to prevent fragmentation of the policy landscape. There needs to be an international interoperable approach that will enable industry standards, domestic regulation, and global governance to come together and reinforce one another. Policy frameworks must be rooted in democratic principles and designed to anticipate and address potential risks and challenges.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

All WSIS Action Lines have been instrumental in fostering significant progress toward a more inclusive and digitally connected world. Each Action Line plays a vital role in addressing the diverse challenges of the Information Society, contributing to sustainable development and innovation. At the same time, from the perspective of global business, certain Action Lines have had a particularly pronounced impact on enabling global trade, fostering innovation, and ensuring a secure and inclusive digital economy.

For example, Action Line C1 on the role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development has fostered multistakeholder collaboration, enabling governments, businesses, civil society and the technical community to work together to tackle key digital challenges. By including all stakeholders’ voices in shaping digital policies, C1 has laid the foundation for more coordinated and impactful initiatives.

A resilient and secure digital infrastructure is essential for global economic growth. Investments and efforts under Action Line C2 on information and communication infrastructure have helped in expanding broadband access and universal connectivity, enabling businesses to operate in emerging markets, foster digital inclusion, and drive economic development.

Cybersecurity is a cornerstone of the global digital economy, and the initiatives under Action Lince C5 on building confidence and security in the use of ICTs have been critical in building trust and resilience.

The emphasis of Action Line C6 on enabling environment to foster regulatory environments that encourage innovation and investment has been particularly impactful for global business. By promoting a harmonised approach to digital policy issues, this Action Line has significantly advanced the ease of doing business in a connected world.

While all WSIS Action Lines are essential, the ones highlighted above stand out due to their direct contribution to the priorities of global businesses: driving innovation, ensuring secure and resilient infrastructure, and promoting sustainable growth.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The relevance and applicability of WSIS outcomes to new and emerging areas highlight the enduring value of the Geneva Principles and Action Lines. To effectively address contemporary digital challenges, such as the global governance of data and AI, the constantly evolving cyber threats, and environmental impacts, the implementation of the existing Action Lines could be enhanced by:

1. Strengthening multistakeholder engagement: Opening up policymaking processes and broadening the participation of stakeholders, in particular from developing economies, ensures the inclusion of diverse perspectives. Fostering stronger partnerships between governments, businesses, civil society and the academic and technical communities helps develop practical, scalable, and innovative solutions to new and emerging issues.

2. Promoting the flexibility and adaptability of the Action Lines: The Action Lines have been thought out to be broad in scope, technology neutral and future-proof. This has been proven by their complementarity to the Sustainable Development Goals framework, by example, without the need for the development of new Action Lines. Discussions during the WSIS+20 review should highlight how the existing Action Lines can be applied to explicitly address new and emerging challenges, while maintaining their broad, technology neutral and future-proof nature.

3. Enhancing capacity building and knowledge sharing: Capacity-building initiatives related to existing Action Lines should be scaled up to equip stakeholders with the skills and knowledge necessary for their implementation in the face of new and emerging challenges. Multistakeholder collaboration and knowledge-sharing platforms, such as the IGF or the WSIS Forum should be strengthened, as they foster the exchange of successful models, tools, and policies from across regions and sectors, enabling rapid adoption of proven approaches.

4. Strengthening alignment between digital policy frameworks: The implementation framework set out by WSIS, including the structures such as the WSIS Forum, the IGF and the reporting mechanism through CSTD, is a well-functioning base for the implementation of the WSIS principles and Action Lines as well as other globally agreed goals, such as the ones set out by the Global Digital Compact. The implementation of the Global Digital Compact (GDC) would greatly benefit from close alignment with the WSIS framework.

Global business is ready to work alongside governments and other stakeholders within the WSIS framework to advance these enhancements, ensuring the Action Lines continue to serve as a cornerstone for addressing both current and future challenges. For example, as businesses are at the forefront of AI development and deployment, their partnership is vital:

• Business engagement ensures that AI technologies are designed, deployed and utilised in ways that align with ethical considerations, human rights, and the welfare of society.

• Business expertise is necessary to continuously shape implementation methods and help address practical challenges faced by organisations.

• Business support reinforces accountability of AI systems, fostering trust among stakeholders, including consumers, companies and governments, who rely on businesses to act in the best interests of society.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

In recent years, substantial progress has been made in implementing WSIS outcomes, aligning with the vision of an inclusive Information Society. ICTs, the Internet, and digital technologies have proven crucial for fostering innovation, competitiveness, and sustainable economic growth.

Recognised as a critical enabler of the SDGs, digitalisation has provided solutions across diverse sectors such as agriculture, energy, healthcare, manufacturing, and education. Business has been a long contributor in providing and deploying solutions, both in practical terms of delivering the infrastructure, applications, services and skills that make up our digital ecosystem. The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), as the world’s largest network of more than 45 million businesses in over 170 countries, draws on the experience and evidence of businesses of all sizes and sectors to provide examples of businesses driving sustainable development through digitalisation. Compiled in a case study repository, ICC assesses how digitalisation efforts driven by the private sector contribute to advancing the 2030 Agenda. (see: https://iccwbo.org/news-publications/icc-rules-guidelines/digitalisation-for-people-planet-and-prosperity/)

Multistakeholder collaboration is a pivotal enabler to this progress, particularly in developing the policy frameworks that allow for continued and inclusive digitalisation and in addressing the potential challenges that come with it.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Strengthening multistakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and IGF requires enhancing inclusivity, fostering public-private collaboration, and improving outreach and dissemination of their outcomes. These platforms should prioritise broader participation, particularly from underrepresented groups and regions, ensuring discussions reflect diverse perspectives.

Ensuring these platforms remain resilient and sustainable is essential, particularly through reliable funding mechanisms and efforts to reinforce their institutional capacity. Renewing the IGF’s mandate is a critical step to solidify its role as the premier platform for internet governance and digital policy discussions.

Efforts to enhance outreach are equally critical. Clearer communication and sharing of forum outcomes can help stakeholders, in particular decision-makers, better understand their relevance and apply recommendations at national and regional levels.

Improved synergies between the WSIS Forum and the IGF would be welcome in aligning efforts on shared priorities such as inclusion and capacity building in numerous areas such as connectivity, cybersecurity or emerging technologies.

Global business is committed to active participation and collaboration to ensure these forums remain impactful and continue advancing digital development worldwide.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The WSIS process provides a robust and well-functioning implementation framework that can serve as a foundation for the implementation of the Pact for the Future and the GDC. Structures such as the WSIS Forum, the IGF, and the reporting mechanism through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) offer established platforms for multistakeholder collaboration, monitoring progress, and fostering inclusive dialogue. By leveraging these mechanisms, the GDC’s principles and objectives can be aligned with the WSIS Action Lines to ensure cohesive and impactful implementation.

The alignment of these processes requires integrating the GDC’s priorities into the existing WSIS framework. This can be achieved by incorporating GDC-related discussions into the agendas of the WSIS Forum and IGF, enabling stakeholders to collaboratively address emerging challenges while building on the WSIS outcomes. Reporting structures through the CSTD can also be adapted to track progress on GDC commitments, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Global business is committed to working alongside governments and other stakeholders to strengthen these connections. By aligning the GDC’s implementation with the WSIS framework, we can achieve shared goals more efficiently, reinforcing digital development, fostering trust in the digital economy, and addressing future challenges in a coordinated and inclusive manner.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

The ITU plays a critical role in the WSIS+20 review by guiding the development of enabling policy environments that foster investment, innovation, and sustainable growth. The ITU’s expertise and convening power are vital in facilitating multistakeholder cooperation, ensuring that policies are holistic, interoperable, and aligned with the realities of the digital economy.

The WSIS+20 process should focus on creating stable legal and regulatory frameworks that encourage private sector investment while ensuring an open, free flow of data across borders. By prioritising public-private partnerships and a whole-of-government approach, the ITU can help ensure that policies are effective, locally relevant, and capable of supporting long-term, sustainable digital infrastructure and services.

# Germany | Youth Internet Governance Forum | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Youth Internet Governance Forum Germany

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Germany

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

One of the main achievements of the implementation of the WSIS process has been the establishment of the Internet Governance and its development into a key player in the Internet Governance Ecosystem. Furthermore WSIS has strengthened multistakeholder governance models in the digital realm successfully.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

ITU through its Council Working Group Internet and WSIS & SDGs provides important spaces for discussion and implementation of the WSIS process. However, ITU has served as an ambiguous role with successes and downsides.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Renewing the IGF’s mandate is imperative and should come with expanded autonomy and wider mandate to achieve the desired goals in the governance of the internet and digital technologies in today’s information society.

The role of the multistakeholder community should be recognized and given a central role in the WSIS+20 Review process.

New WSIS Action Lines should be initiated: cybersecurity, the protection of critical (Internet) infrastructure, youth, and AI and emerging technologies.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The implementation of the Global Digital Compact ahead of the WSIS+20 review process has already resulted in the creation of parallel structures. We demand that this situation is thoroughly reviewed by the WSIS+20 outcome document to avoid fragmentation of processes and mechanisms going ahead. The well-established structures in Geneva and New York should be leveraged and enhanced by the WSIS+20 outcome.

The remaining digital divide, issues in the protection of deep sea data cables in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and funding for the IGF remain a challenge in the implementation. Lastly, the inclusion of Youth in a meaningful way should be strengthened.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?
2. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

We emphasize the importance of including the opinions of young people, this should be done in line with the principle: Nothing about us, without us.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Governments, businesses and international organizations should ensure that the IGF receives better funding and can remain the central forum for the coordination of Internet governance. Improved financing can increase the inclusivity of the IGF and provide for a democratic and bottom-up structure. Everyone should consider how they can support the IGF, through financial or other means.

The IGF has proven itself for many years to be an excellent forum for discussions on governance in and around digital technologies. It has global structures, mechanisms, and a community in place to enhance the global governance of the internet.

The IGF's high convening power could be used to craft declarations and thus further increase the IGF's contribution to substantial Internet governance.

We reject any attempts to weaken the IGF as this severely undermines the multistakeholder governance model that has benefitted the world so far. Indeed, the multistakeholder Internet governance practice has brought us the Internet of today.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?
2. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Protecting the established connections which means deep-sea cables and satellites to ensure connectivity. A new WSIS Action Line on Cybersecurity and/or Infrastructure protection is necessary to further enhance compliance with existing international law protecting critical infrastructure

# Ghana | Child Online Africa | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Child Online Africa

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Ghana

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Enhanced access to ICT and communication technologies.

Strengthened partnerships and creation of frameworks and policy which sought to address the digital divides and emerging technologies.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

Facilitating a multistakeholder approach of the WSIS processes while implementing the outcomes.

Engaging stakeholders to review, input and engage around the processes.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Governments should create a structure which allow for the decision-making process to make way for children's voices to be heard.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Having all stakeholders to be on same page as far as processes are concern to implement the outcomes.

Building the quality data which reflects the true implementation of the outcomes.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Action Line 7 because my interest is in the enhancing the capacities and capability of children and young people.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Localizing the process a little further by developing materials to train facilitators in Children's rights in order for them to engage children extensively at the local level. Recommend to government to create local level structures which are safe to enable children to express themselves freely about their experiences.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

We must acknowledge that child online safety is now more critical than ever. At the beginning of the digital age, this issue was not as pronounced. Today, however, the risks are real, persistent, and evolving. We cannot afford to fold our arms or throw them in the air in despair. The stakes are too high, and the future of our children demands action, innovation and accountability.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

When global level process and frames are design to receive feeds from the local level while having the high level structure feedback the local level.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Implement comprehensive digital literacy initiatives in schools targeting children to ensure they understand and can engage with digital technologies effectively.

Be intentional to include or consult children in the decision making process.

Develop training processes tailored for children to equip them with skills to participate.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

1, Ensure children's voices are integrated in the discussion and decision-making process.

2. Promote digital literacy programs tailored for children to understand the societal implications which will go a long way to achieving the SDGs.

3. Address barriers to access: particularly for children and marginalized groups to equitable opportunities.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

AI & ML governance and ethics

Bridging the digital divides

Enhancing safety measures for children online to protect them from threats.

Promote resources which support children's education and development in digital environment.

Engage diverse stakeholders to ensure policies prioritize children's rights in the digital landscape.

# Indonesia | ICT Indonesia | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

ICT INDONESIA

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Indonesia

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

WSIS has been able to document digital ideas for all citizens of the world sufficiently, so that it can reduce the digital gap between developed and developing countries.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

WSIS is able to gather initiatives from various groups and from various countries without any discrimination. WSIS is also able to reduce the digital divide among the world's citizens.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

the need for ongoing cooperation from various stakeholders on earth and the need to facilitate internet access services for remote and underdeveloped areas

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The need to reduce the negative impacts of the development of internet technology, especially the rampant crime on the internet. I see this as quite important to immediately find solutions to these various problems.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

The impact of online crime needs to be resolved immediately because many poor countries are victims of online crime.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The need for implementation of multi-party cooperation, especially in newly developing regions, especially regarding program financing.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

the need for equal distribution of education that can catch up online for developing regions, especially assistance programs that can be accessed by all parties and are fair

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

As I explained above, cooperation with multiple parties will be able to solve various problems in this world.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

The WSIS Prize program is always relevant as a model for gaining widespread recognition, so that it can have an impact on all levels of society on this earth.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The need for mutual understanding by all stakeholders

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

the need to reduce the digital divide with technology grants for disadvantaged areas

# Ghana | Lahibali Theater Art | Private Sector

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Lahibali Theater Art

1. Organization type

Private Sector

1. Organization country

Ghana

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

WSIS process has play a major role in peace building, promoting cultural diversity, improving digitalization and many more.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU has worked inline with WSIS to make realize it goals globally.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

That can be achieve by constant engagement with relevant stakeholders.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

They are many challenges such as organization of summit, insufficient funding to support project across the globe etc

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Action Line 15: Cultural diversity and local content. My impact in this line is promoting sustainable peace through historic tourism, stage art, cultural music and dance.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The WSIS principles if will go a long way to help people understand the Action Lines more without or slightly ambiguity.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

In my point of view, I will say; I am okay with the Action Lines.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The 2030 agenda for can be achieve by collaborative work. Both sides has to work as one unit.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

It can be done by investing more into the project.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

This can be done by sharing information between the bodies and making decisions together.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Peace building, training and motivation of women in Digitalization.

# India | Indian Society of Artificial Intelligence and Law | Academia

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Indian Society of Artificial Intelligence and Law

1. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

1. Organization country

India

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The WSIS process has yielded remarkable achievements in transforming the global digital landscape over the past two decades. Most significantly, internet penetration has increased dramatically, growing from merely 12% in 2003 to approximately two-thirds of the global population today, with 5.4 billion people now online. This expansion has particularly benefited youth, with 80% of individuals aged 15-24 using the internet globally, though challenges remain in achieving gender equity with women's usage at 65%.

Beyond connectivity metrics, WSIS has institutionalised the multistakeholder approach to internet governance, creating collaborative platforms that bring together governments, private sector entities, technical communities, academia, and civil society. This framework has strengthened international cooperation and partnerships, particularly improving collaboration among governments and established internet governance bodies such as the Internet Engineering Task Force, Regional Internet Registries, and ICANN.

The alignment of WSIS Action Lines with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been particularly impactful, positioning ICTs as critical enablers for achieving the SDGs. This integration has highlighted digital technologies as cross-cutting enablers for all SDGs, effectively becoming what some have termed the "invisible 18th SDG".

From an Indian perspective, these achievements have provided a foundation for our nation's digital transformation initiatives, allowing us to develop inclusive frameworks that address our unique socioeconomic context while participating in global digital cooperation.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The International Telecommunication Union has played a pivotal role in shaping and implementing the WSIS process over the past twenty years. ITU's contributions have been multifaceted and comprehensive, beginning with its central role in organizing the foundational WSIS Summits in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005) that established the framework for the global Information Society.

ITU has served as the lead facilitator for several critical WSIS Action Lines, including information and communication infrastructure development, cybersecurity, and creating enabling environments for ICT growth. This leadership has ensured alignment between these action lines and broader global development agendas, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals.

In promoting connectivity and infrastructure development, ITU has spearheaded initiatives to expand global ICT infrastructure, with particular focus on underserved and remote regions through programs such as the Connect 2030 Agenda and Partners2Connect. The organization has also maintained the WSIS Stocktaking Database, providing a valuable repository of implementation examples and best practices from around the world.

ITU's governance structure, including its Council Working Group on WSIS&SDG, has provided consistent oversight and strategic direction for WSIS implementation. Additionally, its organization of the annual WSIS Forum has created an essential platform for multistakeholder dialogue and knowledge exchange, culminating in the recent WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event in May 2024 that marked two decades of progress.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The WSIS multistakeholder model represents a significant achievement in global digital cooperation. To sustain and strengthen this model, particularly from an Indian perspective that balances rapid technological advancement with inclusive development, we propose several approaches.

First, we must double down on digital inclusion in all its forms, ensuring the Global South remains central to these efforts. As AI and emerging technologies evolve, they risk widening global inequalities and deepening the digital divide. The Indian experience demonstrates that intentional policies promoting digital diversity are critical to dealing with algorithmic biases and adapting digital platforms to local and cultural specificities.

Second, we need more robust mechanisms to ensure that AI governance debates and frameworks are firmly anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. Technology governance cannot exist in isolation from development objectives, particularly in emerging economies where technology deployment directly impacts socioeconomic outcomes.

Third, we should implement targeted programs ensuring citizens have access to affordable smart devices and possess appropriate digital skills9. The EDISON Alliance approach of mobilising private and public sector leaders toward improving digital access to healthcare, education, and financial services offers a valuable model, having already benefited 784 million people through 320 initiatives across 127 countries.

Fourth, strengthening regional cooperation mechanisms would ensure diverse voices are heard in global digital governance. India's position as both a technology producer and a developing nation with significant rural populations gives us a unique perspective that can enrich the multistakeholder model with practical insights on balancing innovation with inclusion.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Despite significant progress, substantial challenges remain in implementing the WSIS vision. Most pressing is the persistence of multiple digital divides – spanning access to infrastructure, internet, devices, and tools, as well as disparities in digital skills, affordability, usage, and ownership.

These gaps risk leaving unconnected populations further behind, particularly as governments and partners increasingly employ digital technologies in development projects.

The integration of gender equality perspectives in WSIS strategies remains incomplete, requiring more focused efforts to ensure women's full participation in the digital economy. Similarly, youth participation in WSIS processes needs enhancement to ensure next-generation voices shape digital futures.

Accessibility barriers continue to exclude people with disabilities and marginalised communities, while affordable access remains elusive in many developing countries and LDCs. Environmental sustainability challenges are growing, particularly regarding e-waste management and the carbon footprint of digital infrastructure. From an Indian perspective, we observe that digital transformation is complex and often costly, requiring substantial investment in skills, culture, and technology, with returns potentially taking years to materialise.

This creates implementation challenges, particularly for resource-constrained settings.

Finally, enhanced cooperation in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet has not been fully successful, with limited progress on developing commonly agreed principles around Internet governance. As artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies reshape digital landscapes, addressing these governance gaps becomes increasingly urgent to ensure technology serves humanity's best interests.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

As the Indian Society of Artificial Intelligence and Law, we believe that Action Lines C2 (Information and Communication Infrastructure), C3 (Access to Information and Knowledge), C4 (Capacity Building), and C5 (Building Confidence and Security) have had the most transformative impact over the past two decades.

Action Line C2 has been foundational in expanding global connectivity, particularly in developing regions like India, where internet penetration has grown exponentially from the early WSIS days. This infrastructure development has enabled our digital transformation initiatives like Digital India and created the backbone for AI innovation ecosystems across our urban and rural landscapes.

Action Line C3 has democratized access to information, which aligns with our principle of knowledge equity. In India, this has manifested through initiatives that make legal information and AI resources accessible to marginalized communities, supporting our commitment to bridging knowledge asymmetries in emerging technology governance.

Action Line C4 on Capacity Building has been crucial in developing human capital equipped to navigate the digital economy. This aligns with our principle of interdisciplinary competence building, where we've worked to ensure legal professionals understand AI technologies and technologists comprehend legal and ethical frameworks.

Action Line C5 has established trust frameworks essential for AI adoption. This resonates with our principle of responsible innovation, where we advocate for security-by-design approaches that protect digital rights while enabling technological advancement.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

To enhance WSIS principles for emerging technologies like AI, we recommend several approaches aligned with our organizational principles:

First, integrate AI governance frameworks directly into Action Line implementation strategies. The principles of multistakeholderism that underpin WSIS must be applied specifically to AI governance, ensuring diverse voices—particularly from the Global South—shape these frameworks. This reflects our principle of inclusive governance, where we advocate for representation of marginalized communities in AI policy development.

Second, establish dedicated capacity building programs focused on emerging technologies. Action Line C4 should be expanded to include specialized training on AI ethics, algorithmic accountability, and technical literacy for policymakers. This supports our principle of interdisciplinary competence building, where we work to develop expertise at the intersection of technology and law.

Third, develop context-specific regulatory sandboxes under Action Line C6 (Enabling Environment) that allow for policy experimentation with emerging technologies while maintaining appropriate safeguards. This aligns with our principle of adaptive regulation, where we advocate for governance frameworks that evolve alongside technological development.

Fourth, strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration mechanisms that connect AI innovators with traditional sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and education. This supports our principle of responsible innovation, ensuring AI development addresses real societal needs rather than technology for its own sake.

Finally, enhance Action Line C11 (International Cooperation) to facilitate knowledge sharing on AI governance between developed and developing nations, supporting our principle of global cooperation with local contextualisation.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Building on the WSIS+20 Review prepared by Action Line facilitators, we offer the following suggestions aligned with our organizational principles:

For key milestones beyond 2025, we recommend establishing quantifiable targets for AI literacy and governance capacity across member states. This supports our principle of measurable progress, where we advocate for evidence-based assessment of technology policy impacts.

We identify several emerging challenges: First, the growing algorithmic divide, where advanced AI systems remain concentrated in a few countries, threatening to create new forms of digital colonialism. Second, the tension between data localization for sovereignty and the need for cross-border data flows for innovation. Third, the environmental impact of AI infrastructure, which requires dedicated sustainability frameworks. These challenges reflect our principle of holistic impact assessment, where we consider the multidimensional effects of technology.

For emerging trends, we highlight the rise of generative AI and its implications for copyright, content authenticity, and labor markets; the growing importance of federated learning approaches that may help address data sovereignty concerns; and the potential of AI to support climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. These trends align with our principle of future-oriented analysis, where we work to anticipate technological developments and their governance implications.

We suggest enhancing the Action Lines by establishing dedicated working groups on AI ethics and governance within the WSIS framework, creating regional centers of excellence for AI policy development that reflect diverse cultural and legal traditions, and developing standardized impact assessment methodologies for AI systems deployed in public services.

These suggestions reflect our commitment to ensuring that WSIS remains relevant and effective in addressing the complex challenges of emerging technologies while promoting inclusive and sustainable development.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The alignment between WSIS Action Lines and SDGs can be strengthened through several key approaches to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

First, promoting inclusive and open governance frameworks is essential. Upholding multistakeholder, inclusive governance ensures that ICT policies remain equitable and development-oriented, directly supporting SDG 16's goals of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions.

Building resilient ICT infrastructure remains critical, particularly expanding IPv6 deployment and affordable connectivity. This supports SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 17 (Partnerships), with priority given to infrastructure development in developing countries and underserved regions to reduce the digital divide.

The effective participation of all stakeholders—governments, businesses, civil society, and the technical community—is vital in strengthening this alignment. The multistakeholder model ensures that diverse perspectives are incorporated into policy development, making outcomes more acceptable and effective.

Concrete steps toward universal Internet access are fundamental, achievable through initiatives promoting infrastructure development and establishing Internet exchange points (IXPs) in developing countries.

The preservation of human rights, both online and offline, must be prioritised as a foundational principle supporting WSIS outcomes and progression toward an inclusive Information Society. This aligns with the UN General Assembly resolution highlighting that progress brought by ICT should be measured not only in economic terms but also in terms of human rights and freedoms.

Finally, collaborative regulation and policies are needed, moving away from vertical approaches that operate in silos. This cross-sectoral collaboration will ensure that ICTs effectively serve as enablers for all aspects of sustainable development, creating a clear and direct link between the WSIS aim of harnessing ICTs for development goals and the broader 2030 Agenda.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

To strengthen these multistakeholder platforms, ISAIL recommends several approaches aligned with our principles of inclusive governance and adaptive regulation:

First, establish permanent mandates with predictable funding models. The IGF particularly needs a transition from voluntary contributions to a more sustainable financial foundation, as noted in the MAG's "Vision of the IGF beyond 2024".

Second, implement the São Paulo Guidelines from NETmundial+10, which provide valuable process steps for both multilateral and multistakeholder governance mechanisms. These guidelines reinforce inclusive participation while emphasizing transparent procedures.

Third, enhance meaningful participation from underrepresented stakeholders through targeted capacity building programs and financial support mechanisms. This aligns with our principle of knowledge equity, ensuring diverse voices shape digital governance.

Fourth, strengthen the synergy between the WSIS Forum's development focus and the IGF's governance emphasis by creating formal coordination mechanisms and shared work programs3. This would prevent duplication while leveraging the complementary strengths of each platform.

Fifth, respect and integrate the expertise of technical bodies like IETF, ICANN, and Regional Internet Registries in these platforms. Their operational knowledge is essential for grounding policy discussions in technical reality.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Alignment between these frameworks requires strategic integration that preserves the strengths of each while creating coherent implementation pathways:

The evolved IGF can serve as a monitoring and review platform for both WSIS Action Lines and the Global Digital Compact implementation. This creates a unified accountability mechanism while maintaining the multistakeholder approach that has been central to WSIS success.

We should leverage existing WSIS mechanisms rather than creating parallel structures for the Global Digital Compact implementation. This prevents fragmentation of digital governance efforts and builds on two decades of institutional knowledge.

The alignment should emphasise the cross-cutting nature of digital technologies as enablers for sustainable development, positioning them as what has been termed the "invisible 18th SDG". This framing helps integrate digital policy with broader development objectives.

These alignment efforts should maintain the decentralised implementation structure created by WSIS while incorporating new priorities from the Pact for the Future. This balance respects established processes while allowing for evolution.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

The WSIS+20 review must address several critical emerging trends that will shape digital governance beyond 2025:

Artificial intelligence governance frameworks must be more prominently anchored in the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. This requires developing AI ethics guidelines that specifically address development contexts and ensure AI deployment supports rather than undermines sustainable development goals.

Digital diversity must be prioritised as essential for addressing algorithmic biases and adapting AI platforms to local and cultural specificities. This aligns with our principle of contextual innovation, where we advocate for technology development that respects diverse cultural contexts.

The concept of digital public goods should be central to future frameworks, particularly for managing data, information, and knowledge in ways that accelerate SDG achievement. This supports our principle of digital commons, where we promote open access to knowledge resources.

Technical standardisation processes must be better integrated with broader digital policy dynamics. Standards development should involve diverse stakeholders to ensure technologies serve global public interest rather than narrow commercial or geopolitical objectives.

Environmental sustainability of digital infrastructure must be addressed, including e-waste management and the carbon footprint of emerging technologies like AI. This reflects our principle of sustainable innovation, where we advocate for technology development that respects planetary boundaries.

# India | SatCom Industry Association| International Organization

## Respondent

1. Organization name

SatCom Industry Association (SIA-India)

1. Organization type

International Organization

1. Organization country

India

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Over the past 20 years, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process has significantly contributed to global digital development. It has expanded internet access, particularly in developing countries, and integrated ICTs into key sectors like education, health, and governance. Efforts to promote digital inclusion have benefited marginalized communities, and the development of international policies on internet governance, cybersecurity, and data protection has been a key outcome. WSIS has fostered collaboration between governments, the private sector, and civil society, driving progress in areas such as digital literacy, gender equality, and cybersecurity. The alignment of WSIS goals with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has strengthened its impact on global development, while also focusing on emerging technologies like AI and IoT to support innovation and economic growth.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has played a pivotal role in advancing the WSIS process by leading and coordinating its implementation. ITU has driven global connectivity efforts, particularly by expanding telecommunications infrastructure in developing countries, and has promoted digital inclusion through capacity-building programs, especially for marginalized communities. It has strengthened global cybersecurity through initiatives like the Global Cybersecurity Agenda and contributed to internet governance by fostering dialogue among key stakeholders. ITU has also set global standards for ICTs, managed radio spectrum, and facilitated the adoption of emerging technologies such as AI and IoT. Moreover, ITU has aligned its efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring that ICTs contribute to global development, innovation, and inclusion.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

To sustain and further strengthen the inclusive multistakeholder model of the WSIS process, it is essential to maintain open and transparent dialogue between all key actors—governments, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations. This requires fostering ongoing collaboration, encouraging diverse perspectives, and ensuring that all voices, especially those from underrepresented groups, are heard in policy-making processes. Additionally, adapting to emerging digital challenges, such as cybersecurity threats and the rise of new technologies like AI, will require continuous capacity-building and the development of agile regulatory frameworks. By promoting equitable access to digital resources and aligning efforts with global development goals like the SDGs, the WSIS process can remain relevant and impactful in shaping an inclusive digital future.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Despite significant progress, several challenges remain in the implementation of the WSIS process. The global digital divide persists, with many regions, particularly in low-income countries, still lacking affordable internet access and adequate ICT infrastructure. Digital literacy gaps and unequal access to digital resources continue to hinder full inclusion, particularly among marginalized groups such as women, rural populations, and persons with disabilities. Cybersecurity threats, data privacy concerns, and the rapid evolution of emerging technologies like AI and blockchain also pose challenges, requiring new policies and international cooperation. Additionally, maintaining the multistakeholder approach and ensuring that the voices of developing nations and underserved communities are effectively represented in global digital governance remain ongoing issues. Addressing these challenges is crucial for fully realizing the potential of the WSIS process.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Several WSIS Action Lines have had a particularly significant impact, notably C2 (Information and Communication Infrastructure) and C7 (ICT Applications in Key Sectors). Action Line C2 has been critical in expanding global connectivity, especially in developing countries, by fostering investment in ICT infrastructure, including broadband networks, which is the foundation for digital inclusion. Meanwhile, C7, which focuses on ICT applications in areas like e-government, e-health, and e-education, has revolutionized public service delivery by improving access to essential services, enhancing transparency, and empowering communities through digital tools. Additionally, C5 (Building Confidence and Security in ICTs) has been vital in addressing growing cybersecurity concerns, ensuring digital trust and safety. These Action Lines have collectively helped bridge the digital divide, strengthen governance, and promote sustainable development through the transformative power of ICTs.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

To enhance the implementation of WSIS principles and Action Lines in addressing new and emerging areas, it is crucial to integrate more agile, forward-looking approaches into the existing framework. This can be done by expanding the scope of key Action Lines to include emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT), ensuring that they are harnessed responsibly and inclusively for development. Strengthening collaboration between stakeholders—particularly technology innovators, policy-makers, and civil society—will help bridge the knowledge gap and foster solutions to complex challenges such as cybersecurity and data privacy. Additionally, continuous capacity-building and digital literacy initiatives must evolve to keep pace with these advancements, ensuring that all populations are empowered to participate in and benefit from the digital economy. Aligning these efforts with the SDGs will ensure that WSIS outcomes remain relevant and adaptable to the rapidly changing digital landscape.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

The WSIS+20 Review highlights key milestones, challenges, and emerging trends related to the WSIS Action Lines beyond 2025. Key milestones include the ongoing expansion of global ICT infrastructure and the role of WSIS in achieving the SDGs. Challenges include bridging the digital divide, addressing cybersecurity, and managing new technologies like AI. Emerging trends focus on the increasing importance of digital inclusion, data governance, and sustainability in shaping global ICT policies. Continued multistakeholder collaboration is essential to drive future progress.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

To strengthen alignment between WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs, it is vital to ensure that ICT initiatives directly address SDG targets across various sectors such as health, education, and economic growth. This can be achieved by incorporating specific SDG indicators into WSIS implementation strategies, fostering partnerships that prioritize sustainable digital development, and promoting inclusive access to ICTs for marginalized groups. Additionally, leveraging emerging technologies like AI and IoT to solve global challenges while ensuring digital inclusion will enhance the impact of WSIS in advancing the 2030 Agenda.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

To further strengthen multistakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and the IGF, it's crucial to enhance their inclusivity and effectiveness by broadening participation and fostering more dynamic engagement among diverse stakeholders. This can be achieved by implementing mechanisms for continuous dialogue beyond annual meetings, incorporating feedback loops to address emerging issues in real-time, and leveraging digital tools to facilitate more interactive and collaborative sessions. Additionally, ensuring equitable representation from various regions, sectors, and communities will help in addressing a wider array of perspectives and concerns. Strengthening these platforms also involves prioritizing actionable outcomes and clear follow-up processes to translate discussions into tangible advancements in digital development and governance.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Aligning the implementation of the WSIS process with the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact involves integrating their shared objectives and leveraging their complementary frameworks to drive comprehensive digital advancement. This alignment can be achieved by ensuring that the strategic priorities and action plans of the WSIS process reflect the goals of the Pact and the Compact, fostering a unified approach to digital inclusion, security, and innovation. Collaborative mechanisms should be established to coordinate efforts and share best practices across initiatives, while regular monitoring and reporting can ensure that progress is tracked and adjusted as needed. By harmonizing policies and activities, stakeholders can effectively address global digital challenges and seize opportunities for sustainable development.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

In the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025, the ITU should focus on several key emerging digital trends and topics. These include the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence and machine learning, which are reshaping industries and creating new opportunities and challenges in data privacy and ethics. The proliferation of 5G and the upcoming 6G technologies will significantly impact connectivity and digital infrastructure, necessitating strategies to address spectrum management and digital divide issues. Additionally, the rise of blockchain and decentralized technologies offers both transformative potential and regulatory challenges. The growing emphasis on cybersecurity and resilience in the face of increasing cyber threats and geopolitical tensions will also be critical. Lastly, addressing the digital divide and promoting digital inclusion to ensure equitable access and participation in the digital economy remains a fundamental concern.

# India | IT for Change | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

The submission is prepared by IT for Change, and endorsed by Research ICT Africa, Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia, World Association for Christian Communication, FIAN International, Third World Network, Institute for Consumers Protection,

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

India

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

WSIS envisions a "people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented information society" utilizing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for sustainable growth. Rapid technological changes have significantly altered today's information society. We stand at the frontier of next-generation network-data technologies that have infinitely widened the scope of Internet-related public policy issues far beyond what was on the agenda at Tunis in 2005. Yet the WSIS vision remains enduring and relevant today.

- With respect to progress, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) data indicates that the number of people worldwide not connected to the Internet decreased to an estimated 2.6 billion people in 2023. 67% of the world's population is now online. According to early estimates, growth in Internet connectivity remains the strongest in low-income countries (17% over the last year)(http://tinyurl.com/3w6sycp2) The diffusion of connectivity notwithstanding, the challenge today is to move from connectivity to a digital agency and empowerment paradigm for all. Being connected has not always meant advancement and well-being. It has in fact resulted in greater vulnerability and exploitation for marginalized social groups. There is hence a cautionary tale here about the numbers with respect to access.

- Progress has been made at the national levels to integrate ICT in governance, welfare delivery, and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (http://tinyurl.com/2r6bp2vf). In recent times, there has been an increasing push to platformize critical services, such as access to welfare services, healthcare, and digital payments, by leveraging massive amounts of data collected from citizens. Digital Public Infrastructures (DPI) are an example of this drive, which was given a major push at the G20 summit held in India(http://tinyurl.com/4bzwsybs, http://tinyurl.com/2xnptxf9, https://tinyurl.com/5ypz7zda). The platformization of governance has, however, not been a singular story of success, often creating challenges like exclusion and increased vulnerability for marginalized groups who are sometimes coerced into these systems.

- The push for digital human rights has gained momentum, with national and regional regimes emerging to protect rights to internet and data access, to be forgotten, etc. Regulatory efforts increasingly address safety, security, privacy, and data protection, with international guidelines on states' human rights obligations. However, there is no international human right to internet access, and national/regional frameworks for rights in the digital society remain fragmented and evolving. The intersection of digital contexts with economic, social, and cultural rights is often overlooked, leading to misrecognition of injustices. A huge gap persists in the right to development and global economic justice due to anachronistic international economic law—including tax, intellectual property, and trade—alongside the lack of international competition law, which leads to an unfair platform economy. Additionally, weaponization of technology for war in global digital value chains is a serious concern.

- Importance of ethics in the use of ICTs is now well-recognized in the discourse across various sectors and regions, leading to collaborative efforts between multiple stakeholders, including governments, civil society, private sector entities, and academic institutions such as the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI (http://tinyurl.com/n635m7yv). There is an urgent need for public deliberation around the ethics surrounding our digital condition and for translating ethical principles and considerations into policy and legal frameworks for global to local action. Ethics and rights are two interrelated aspects and bold steps to ground digital societies in feminist constitutional values – equality, dignity, solidarity – are necessary for individual freedom and societal and planetary wellbeing.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

As the lead facilitator in coordinating the multistakeholder implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action and as the facilitator of several critical action lines like C2 (information and communication infrastructure), C4 (Capacity Building), C5 (Building confidence and security in ITU use), and C6 (Enabling environment), the ITU has taken significant steps for the implementation of the WSIS process:

- ITU has played a crucial role in standard-setting in the international standardization of ICTs. ITU standards have a considerable influence on the way in which new technology is developed and applied in the world. ITU has undertaken a strategic mapping of its standardization activities to the UN SDGs, highlighting how its technical standards directly support the WSIS objectives. Further, the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) plays a vital role in implementing WSIS outcomes by developing international standards that advance ICTs.

- ITU’s initiatives like Connect2Recover, Cybersecurity Readiness Programs, and Green Digital Action, contribute to enhancing global connectivity and cybersecurity, and advancing sustainable digital transformation (https://tinyurl.com/mun6bb6u; https://tinyurl.com/yzd33msc; https://tinyurl.com/nhttz2nt). Connect2Recover aims to bridge the digital divide by improving connectivity in underserved regions, thus ensuring equitable access to ICTs. Cybersecurity Readiness Programs prioritize the development of robust cybersecurity frameworks in developing nations, mitigating risks and fostering a secure digital environment. Furthermore, the ITU's Green Digital Action promotes sustainable ICT practices, aligning with environmental goals and building confidence in the long-term use of technology.

- ITU has dedicated work tracks to improve women’s and girls’ skills and access to technology and facilitate female leadership in the sector. The EQUALS Global Partnership, a multi-stakeholder initiative dedicated to promoting gender equality in the digital technology sector that ITU co-founded contributes to closing the global gender digital divide by promoting awareness, building political commitment, leveraging resources and knowledge, and conducting evidence-based research (https://tinyurl.com/38rh4t36). ITU’s collaborative initiative, ‘WSIS-Beijing+30 Common Action Agenda for Bridging the Gender Digital Divide’, is also an important step towards establishing a common action agenda that addresses the digital gender gap by building on the WSIS Action Lines and the commitments of the Beijing Declaration. This will be a vital opportunity to assess the new and emerging challenges to gender equality in the information environment in the digital age (https://tinyurl.com/2ywjuhkn).

- The ‘AI for good’ platform established by ITU in 2017 is recognized as the UN’s leading platform advancing trustworthy AI for sustainable development and brings together governments, academia, industry, civil society, and UN agencies to ensure AI benefits humanity. The platform has supported numerous global initiatives on AI such as the Global Initiatives on AI and Data Commons, AI for Health, Resilience to Natural Hazards through AI Solutions, AI and Multimedia authenticity standards collaboration, AI for Road Safety, etc (https://aiforgood.itu.int/).

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The “enhanced cooperation” proposal in the Tunis Agenda recognizes that governments, “on an equal footing” need to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet. Appropriate institutional processes for enhanced cooperation have been elusive in the international digital arena, with aborted attempts to arrive at a consensus.

Unfortunately, given the huge asymmetries in power among actors and the relative exclusion of large constituencies of people’s movements (food sovereignty, climate justice, indigenous people, workers unions from the global South) from digital policy debates, multistakeholderism has achieved very little on the realignment of values for the common good and people’s power. A technical, check-box approach to stakeholder cooperation has reduced the performance of politics to the proliferation of narratives, privileging the elite and eluding ideas of justice. The power of dominant actors has remained unchallenged in these arrangements, as recognized by the NetMundial+10 Statement (https://tinyurl.com/mvs8mcfj), especially since there is no international baseline for digital constitutionalism (http://tinyurl.com/54xy66dm).This has led to fragmented digital governance with diverse, sector-specific approaches (albeit necessary and useful) that allow powerful entities to consolidate their influence through forum shopping (http://tinyurl.com/5ejbkbfx). What is worrisome is that under the circumstances, stakeholder interests are not amenable to be negotiated towards global justice.

Evidence suggests that multistakeholderism has eroded state sovereignty as non-state actors claim equal standing in global governance, have no accountability to states and opt out of agreements, take over governance roles in weak states, or bypass states entirely to govern new technologies and industries independently (https://tinyurl.com/ye26mbnz).

Without grounding in structural justice, global digital policy processes risk serving dominant interests. The Global Digital Compact’s approach also assumes that convening institutions, states, and non-state actors will automatically yield a public-interest consensus on issues like data and AI governance. For any multistakeholder dialogue in the proposed International Scientific Panel on AI and the CSTD-led dedicated working group on data governance to be meaningful, the framework and terms of reference of these bodies should correspond to the inviolability of human rights, democratic integrity, and ecological well-being – acknowledging systemic injustices in the digital sphere. This alone can meet the test of the WSIS Declaration of Principles, leading to equitable and inclusive global digital governance.

Ultimately, states need to be held to account for the rule of law and democratic accountability. Hence, intergovernmental processes are in the medium-term evolution of contemporary institutions for the digital moment. This calls for systematic deliberation, and consensus-building on binding global data and AI principles and norms (which cannot be separated from discussions on internet governance), through processes that privilege people’s democratic right to participation. AI governance needs a global public good approach (https://tinyurl.com/56hr4b9k), with necessary rules for global data solidarity and people’s data sovereignty at national and sub-national levels. This process is not just about balancing interests. It demands commitment from states within the multilateral framework for the establishment of a democratic framework that prioritizes global justice. Guardrails are needed to both prevent capture by political and economic elite and ensure inclusivity of diverse constituencies, especially from the majority world in this process. States should work towards international data solidarity along with other stakeholders in their respective roles and responsibilities, putting voices of the most marginalized at the center.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

- Monopolization of the internet and digital marketplaces by a few Big Tech platforms and powerful countries: The internethas become a centralized marketplace run by large and powerful US and Chinese platform companies (http://tinyurl.com/54aahjar). Big Tech controls the platformized internet’s infrastructure, disregarding market fairness and transparency to the detriment of workers, consumers, and smaller digital players. Nvidia’s near-monopoly on advanced AI chips and the resultant unprecedented supply shortage of high-end GPUs, and the US’s attempt to control the AI chips circulation through differential export rules exemplify the winner-takes-all dynamic shaping the digital economy (https://tinyurl.com/yckmzvkh, https://tinyurl.com/yc5a5dt6).

- Lack of public finance for infrastructure and development in the South: Post Addis Ababa, development financing has been driven by blended finance and multistakeholder partnerships, favoring a market-first approach to digital infrastructure.This has deepened debt crises, strengthened Big Tech’s dominance, and reinforced data-extractive models while neglecting localized alternatives (https://tinyurl.com/4ecth97p, https://tinyurl.com/mw399vwp). Meanwhile, ODA remains absent from infrastructure funding, with Development Assistance Committee countries contributing just 0.37% of GNI in 2023—half the target (https://tinyurl.com/nsk2n3md ). Urgent action is needed to allocate ODA for non-market digital infrastructure under the ‘STI for SDGs’ strategy, with clear targets and tracking. Proposals like a Global AI Fund, a Digital Development Tax, and financial transaction tax should be explored for public financing (https://tinyurl.com/mw399vwp).

- Inadequate and inequitable data and AI governance frameworks: Data governance suffers from a huge democratic deficit. Big Tech companies have captured the conversation on data governance through lobbying (http://tinyurl.com/ymhvu3x9, http://tinyurl.com/u977zwnd).The enclosure of data as trade secrets also prevents algorithmic scrutiny in digital value chains and undercuts public authorities’ ability to govern digital infrastructure in public interest.

- New challenges raised by emerging technology: The AI paradigm is slowly but surely cementing its presence in what may be seen as mundane economic activities like hiring, work allocation, wage payment etc. AI’s harms - such as the Robodebt case in Australia (http://tinyurl.com/566tsk7n), amplification of gender-based violence (https://tinyurl.com/267zzrna), perpetuation of discrimination and prejudice against marginalized groups, erasure of traditional knowledge and egregious harms to the environment - call for measures that go beyond mere representational equity.

- International economic law benefitting the powerful: International regimes on trade, intellectual property, taxation, and financialization are skewed against developing countries, and push a neoliberal agenda that benefits economically powerful countries. For eg, trade agreements and trade secret claims are used by powerful countries to thwart state efforts to govern AI systems effectively (https://tinyurl.com/msh5y93f). Further, base erosion and profit-shifting practices of transnational digital corporations deprive Global South nations of much-needed fiscal revenue (https://tinyurl.com/36d2a8p8).

- The huge environmental consequences of digitalization – consumption of natural resources, energy usage, and e-waste disposal – and its disproportionate impact on poor and marginalized communities also pose a great challenge to the implementation of WSIS outcomes.

- Meaningful connectivity: A large part of the world remains unconnected, and does not have access to a “safe, satisfying, enriching and productive online experience at affordable cost”. This limits access to information, education and work, but also access to welfare and entitlements, deepening inequality.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

We have addressed this in Question 1. We wish to add that impacts need to be seen with reference to global justice.

- As the digital phenomenon evolves, it is essential to center people’s empowerment and agency. Platform, data and AI technologies require sector-specific governance frameworks that go beyond broad, market-driven approaches. While emerging guidelines on various aspects of the digital such as digital platform regulation and AI (https://tinyurl.com/2cr9apfp, https://tinyurl.com/3eu423zr) are a step in the right direction, relying on a technicalized notion of consent in the market is insufficient to ensure real human rights protections.

- To address this, we need to move beyond liberal internationalism and embrace a whole-of-society approach to digital ecosystems to tackle structural injustices. Efforts should focus on redefining social and economic justice, ensuring that technologies serve the collective good and promote equity and rights. Ultimately, digital development must prioritize inclusivity and human dignity, ensuring that technology's potential is realized in a way that benefits all members of society.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

- Public financing for public digital infrastructures in developing countries: Building foundational platforms, data and AI infrastructural capability is crucial to secure the digital future of developing countries. Creating and sustaining digital innovation ecosystems requires investment in local digital infrastructure, public financing, public-community partnerships, and a well-governed private sector(http://tinyurl.com/3zh9kva7).

- Platform models based on collective ownership: Informal economy workers need support to reclaim their civil-political and economic rights in the platform economy. Alternative business models challenging Big Tech’s dominance are crucial - for eg, platform cooperatives, built on cooperative ownership, democratic governance, and solidarity. Public investment is essential to sustain them, with institutional backing for financial, legal, and technological support(http://tinyurl.com/365cjzyv).

- Need for alternatives to centralized, attention-driven model: Alternative models built on interoperability, plurality, cooperativism, and sustainability, offer significant potential for user empowerment and digital rights protection (https://tinyurl.com/5n8a5pk8, https://tinyurl.com/ykwhv2dm, https://tinyurl.com/yeust9mf).

- Governing data as a commons resource: The economic benefits of data flows are uneven, with many countries paying high costs for digital products built on their own data. Data should be declared a common heritage of humanity as it is continually co-generated through socio-environmental interactions. A fair and just international regime for data includes recognition of community sovereignty over data, indigenous data sovereignty and protection of traditional knowledge from Big Tech appropriation(https://tinyurl.com/4ufrbkxw).

- Human-rights-based governance frameworks for AI and emerging technologies: AI regulation should address structural imbalances and rein in Big Tech dominance; need to shift from risk reduction to strong institutional frameworks for audit and enforcement; protection and promotion of civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights, especially for marginalized groups and people; recognize and affirm the equivalence of different knowledge systems; legitimize role for public authorities and democratic governance mechanisms; and program sustainability considerations in AI(http://tinyurl.com/54jysr5b). Multilateral rules should ensure AI accountability and protect everyone's right to freedom from harm.

- New class of worker rights and accountability of platform labor companies: As platformization of work becomes the norm, the focus should expand beyond gig workers' rights to broader worker protections in the digital context, with an emphasis on algorithmic management. Updating legal frameworks to establish new worker rights such as the right to disconnect, social security, and data access is crucial (http://tinyurl.com/hp5yn2k2, http://tinyurl.com/e95wnkbp, http://tinyurl.com/47kkdn45). Supply chain due diligence should ensure disclosure responsibilities for platform labor companies.

- Mitigate the environmental impact of digitalization: Respect for planetary boundaries should be an abiding principle. Initiatives on digital sobriety, low-tech, and circular economy (https://tinyurl.com/h47keb3x, http://tinyurl.com/bddmzmyv, http://tinyurl.com/d8nxvwa). Sustainability efforts must not be tokenistic, ensuring real impact while preserving digital benefits for marginalized communities and less developed nations.

- A new gender deal for WSIS+ 20:There is an urgent need to build an Information Society founded on feminist principles of equity, equality, inclusion, fairness, solidarity, and justice.This requires tackling online misogyny and TFGBV, transforming gender norms online, holding platforms accountable, and promoting women's digital rights and participation in the tech sector. To address these issues, adding a new WSIS action line on gender is long overdue.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

The WSIS Action lines should incorporate emerging priorities listed below:

Action Line C1: Common standards for digital public goods that emphasize democratic ownership and control, and transparent, and accountable governance of digital public infrastructure.

Action Line C2: Universal access to meaningful connectivity and steps to dismantle the walled gardens of private platform services, address fragmentation of network standards, and foster the development of multiple and diverse technologies.

Action Line C3: Measures to protect media pluralism and diversity, tackling head on the risks to democratic integrity, especially hate speech, cyber-violence, and misinformation, stemming from algorithms gone rogue.

Action Line C4: Critical and transformative digital education, civic literacy for the age of algorithmified public life, and investment in human development for empowered participation of all in the global AI economy.

Action Line C5: Global agreement to end the militarization and weaponization of cybertechnologies and AI.

Action Line C6: An integrated approach that recognizes continuities between internet related public policy and data and AI governance.

Action Line C7: A strong ‘data for development’ agenda that explores appropriate and rule-based data sharing at global, regional and national levels to achieve the SDGs.

Action Line C8: Governance frameworks for generative AI development to protect the knowledge sovereignty of indigenous communities and to ensure an open science and innovation culture that benefits all of humanity.

Action Line C9: Promote the right to communicate in social media and immersive internet environments.

Action Line C10: Benchmarks and guidelines on digital human rights at the multilateral level.

Action Line C11: Removal of barriers to effective international cooperation on data and AI – specifically, the lack of flexibilities in IP regimes in AI value chains; constraining clauses in digital trade agreements; stifling of digital industrial policy choices of developing countries in the data economy; and lack of compute power in the majority world.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

To ensure that current technological developments support and improve human development indicators and meet the goals of SDGs, such development must account for sovereignty and autonomy of developing nations and peoples, enable their participation in a meaningful way that is not subverted by overarching corporate agenda of profit-making and extractivism. To be able to do that, it is important to hold corporations accountable, and ensure that their deep pockets and lobbying tactics do not result in anti-democratic and unjust international policies. A truly democratic multilateral process that includes the standpoints of the most marginalized in governance mechanisms will ensure that SDGs can be achieved in their letter and spirit within the technological paradigm.

Further, bridging infrastructural and innovation gaps is crucial for SDG achievement. Hence, governments and multilateral systems should prioritize universal connectivity and digital public goods to foster public innovation ecosystems. To realise this, ODA should be earmarked to support non-market mechanisms for digital infrastructure as part of the ‘STI for SDGs’ strategy, with concrete targets and domain-specific aid coordination and tracking. The Digital Development Tax, proposed by the UNSG as a mandatory contribution from transnational platform companies who have profited from the internet to close the connectivity gap, and the global financial transactions tax proposed by civil society groups are other options to consider (https://tinyurl.com/mucr5yrw, https://tinyurl.com/ckx4299m).

Crucially, digital transformation is about the generation of public value (https://tinyurl.com/yxkyezfe). This requires new imaginaries for the production, roll out and governance of platform, data and AI technologies to ensure there is no erosion of public value. The success of any alignment between the WSIS vision and the SDGs lies entirely in if and how such public value is created and maximized. Emerging scholarship on digital transformation speaks to the need for new, decentralized, public models (https://tinyurl.com/3htba7nm)

The upcoming CSW also marked the 30th year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This provides a unique juncture to integrate the participation of women and girls in all their diversity in the tech paradigm at all levels in ways that enhance their agency and empowerment.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

The WSIS recommended operationalization of the multistakeholderism principle through the establishment of two mechanisms: (a) the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), an annual forum for multistakeholder policy dialogue; and (b) the initiation of a process of ‘enhanced cooperation’ by the UN Secretary-General. While the enhanced cooperation framework remains a non-starter, the IGF has been a mixed bag. Without any oversight function, and constituted as a neutral and non-binding process, it acts as a space for multistakeholder dialogue, but lacks the legitimate mechanisms for generating mandates on cross-cutting internet-related public policy issues.

Going forward we recommend the below actions -

(i) On the WSIS forum

- The WSIS forum should serve as an important platform to track progress in the implementation of the GDC including the processes initiated under it on data and AI, with the effective participation of civil society actors. It is essential to ensure that the targets and commitments under the WSIS action lines are aligned with and contribute to the achievement of SDGs. In the 21st century, the digital divide is increasingly a data divide, shaping who has access to information, resources, and opportunities. Meaningful development requires intentional goal-setting on technology to advance human rights, enhance well-being, and support planetary flourishing.

(ii) On the IGF

- Enhance democratic deliberation and promote genuine bottom-up participation:The WSIS principle of democratic multistakeholderism needs to be interpreted as a route to promote public interest outcomes. Multistakeholder dialogues should go beyond mere aggregation of interests to enable meaningful participation of a plurality of voices. Institutional mechanisms that mediate competing interests and produce public interest outcomes through transparent and accountable processes should be established. Further, stakeholder groups need to be clear about their respective composition, the interests they represent, to ensure balanced representation of stakeholders and adherence to democratic principles.

- Adopt the Net Mundial+10 principles: The 13 principles from the Net Mundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement serve as a foundational framework for multistakeholderism. It emphasizes informed, participatory, and transparent engagement, and being mindful of the diverse roles of and inherent power asymmetries among stakeholders.

- Recognize and address power asymmetries through creative formats: Multistakeholder processes and groupings should acknowledge that asymmetries in power will persist and consciously design processes that account for these disparities. Dialogic processes must go beyond a checkbox approach to multistakeholderism. People’s movements and civil society that challenge political and economic hegemony need spaces where they can safely and confidently speak up. Selection of proposals for the IGF annual event needs to be more flexible and creative to accommodate the realpolitik of dissent, diversity and real disruption, which is much more than “rainbow multistakeholderism”.

- Renew the IGF mandate for inclusive participation: The IGF mandate should be revitalized to serve as a truly inclusive platform for knowledge sharing, dialogue, and debate on digital governance. It must actively engage diverse disciplines, stakeholder groups, and regions. The IGF’s role in policy dialogue requires dedicated funding to ensure representational diversity and support the inclusion of stakeholders from developing countries and underrepresented communities.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Aligning the implementation of the WSIS process with the Pact for the Future and GDC can be achieved by integrating the GDC's principles into the established WSIS framework. The WSIS process offers a clear implementation structure through the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda, which outline specific actions and identify key stakeholders necessary for building an inclusive information society. By embedding the GDC's visionary principles within this framework, we can leverage WSIS's decentralized, multistakeholder approach to foster cohesive and inclusive digital policy-making. This integration ensures that the GDC's objectives are realized through actionable strategies, enhancing global digital cooperation and advancing shared goals (https://www.apc.org/node/40497).

There is a need to develop a Comprehensive GDC Implementation Roadmap - a clear and actionable roadmap that defines roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms for all stakeholders. The WSIS stocktaking platform should be leveraged to monitor GDC-related actions and ensure better alignment between WSIS and GDC processes.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

1. A just and equitable data governance regime based on human rights

- Ensure all governments participate on an equal footing in shaping global digital and data governance. A multilateral, people-centered approach is vital to prevent corporate capture of the Internet, data, and AI technologies.

- Uphold democratic participation and maximization of the common good as the foundation of multistakeholderism in digital policy.

- Recognize data as a common heritage of humanity.

2. Refining the human rights framework to account for data rights

- Recognize that a new class or typology of rights at the intersection of digitalization and traditional human rights discourse is vital to protect political, social, and economic freedoms in the current conjuncture. These include but are not restricted to, the right to privacy and decisional autonomy, the right to data access, the right to explanation, the right to be forgotten, the right to be represented (or not) in digital systems, the right to participate in decisions about data innovations, protection against all forms of data discrimination including unfair denial of citizen entitlements, and workersʼ data rights in algorithmic workplaces.

- Ensure both state and non-state actors are accountable for upholding these rights

- Address risks to marginalized groups arising from data use, ensuring accountability and inclusion.

3. Improved taxation structures to meet the challenges of the digital economy:

- Reform international financial institutions and their mandates to support digital industrialization in the Global South.

- Create fairer digital societies by eradicating tax havens. Reform of the international taxation regime is urgently needed to end base erosion and profit shifting practices of transnational digital corporations and enable Global South nations to generate necessary fiscal revenue for social infrastructure.

4. Digital public infrastructures created by and for the Global South

- Ensure that the creation of digital public goods/infrastructures at the global and national levels is backed by robust safeguards to protect privacy and personal data, enhance autonomy, and promote equitable benefit sharing.

- Establish public financing and ODA for the development of digital infrastructural capabilities in the Global South.

5. A responsible and responsive AI paradigm, which is translated into effective regulatory frameworks

- Introduce mandatory human rights risk assessments for AI at all stages.

- Support the development of human rights-based policy frameworks to regulate AI and ensure accountability.

- Decentralize AI innovation, create public financing mechanisms for democratizing AI, and govern AI as a global public utility.

6. An International economic regime that serves all

- Oppose digital trade rules that hinder nation-states from enforcing transparency and accountability on AI service providers

- Enable reforms to Intellectual Property regimes, including through the introduction of new licensing systems to recognize the contributions of communities in the development of generative AI.

7. Digitalization pathways that respect planetary boundaries.

- Underscore the need to respect planetary boundaries and ecological well-being as a central principle in digital innovation systems.

- Develop policies and standards to eliminate ecological harms in digital value chains, and encourage environmentally-friendly digital services and innovation.

# India | UNWFP | International Organization

## Respondent

1. Organization name

United Nations World Food Programme

1. Organization type

International Organization

1. Organization country

India

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Received the Nobel peace prize 2020 for contributing innovative ideologies of the blockchain technologies and the digital financial services in partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme.

Received the Blue Planet Prize 2024 for contributing as a Member of the IPBES community platform channel.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

Contributing innovative ideologies of the themes and priorities of the digital financial services, blockchain technologies and the implementation of the sustainable development goals including the zero hunger roles and responsibilities.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The core concepts of the telecommunication 5G technologies could be prominent and essential due to the tasks assignment and activities on the subject areas and the research areas of telecommunication 5G standards and the implementation framework services.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Awareness generation mechanisms on the subject areas and the conceptual framework of the digital technologies and the telecommunication 5G technologies among the vulnerable populations in the society.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Knowledge building and knowledge enabling mechanisms for the prospect of the communities in the society who would be utilising the facilities available via the telecommunication 5G technologies.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Via enhanced features of the deployment of the telecommunication 5G technologies further to make available these services to more remote locations in the countries.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

The work in progress on the subject areas and the conceptual framework of the digital technologies and the telecommunication 6G technologies which aims to contribute to the objective of enabling the features of mitigating the gaps and challenges of the telecommunication 5G technologies is of utmost importance and necessary.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

This alignment could be achieved via the creation of new innovative ideologies research articles and products solutions based on the subject areas and the conceptual framework of the digital technologies and the telecommunication 5G technologies in a multiple sectors approach and building new transformation initiatives.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Via the building on the core principles of the model of the partnership activities of the multiple platforms and channels.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Via the patterns of the implementation framework services.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Digital technologies and the financial inclusion including the subject areas and the conceptual framework of the cybersecurity and the building on the new innovative ideas for the objective of enabling the features of handling fraudulent activities on the platform channel of the implemented product solutions of the digital financial services and the information and communication technologies.

# India | UNWFP | International Organization

## Respondent

1. Organization name

United Nations World Food Programme

1. Organization type

International Organization

1. Organization country

India

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Creation of new digital technologies and the telecommunication 5G technologies and ITU - T standards in the ITU standardization sector.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

Creation of new innovative ideologies and the conceptual framework of the digital technologies and the telecommunication 5G technologies. That defines the roadmap to the creation of new usecases definition on the subject areas and the conceptual framework of the latest frontiers of technologies.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Cybersecurity mechanisms and ensuring a regulated and trustworthy mechanisms for the innovation financing initiatives.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Not applicable

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Skills development and innovative ideas creation

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Ensuring the implementation of the digital technologies and the Transition to the telecommunication 6G technologies

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Creation of new innovative ideas based on the subject areas and the conceptual framework of the telecommunication 6G technologies

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Knowledge enabling initiatives

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Collaboration initiatives

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Awareness generation mechanisms

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Quantum foundation initiatives and remote sensing technologies standardization efforts

# India | intgovforum.org [undp.org](http://www.undp.org) | International Organization

## Respondent

1. Organization name

www.intgovforum.org www.royal.uk www.undp.org

1. Organization type

International Organization

1. Organization country

India

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

LORD RAVINDER KUMAR SHARMA CEO UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT FOR INTERNET GPVERNANCE FORUM(IGF) VILLA LE BOCAGE PALAIS DES NATIONS CH 1211 GENEVA 10 SWITZELAND AND LORD RAVINDER KUMAR SHARMA UNDP AND BRITISH COUNCIL C/O PO BOX 118 GPO BUILDING SHIMLA CITY PINCODE 171001 HP INDIA AND LORD RAVINDER KUMAR SHARMA BIRTHPLACE VILLAGE AND PO TUNNUHATTI DISTT CHAMBA PINCODE 176301 HP INDIA

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

THE KING SOLOMON POST

 OM SHANTI OM (LET THERE BE

 PEACE IN THIS WORLD)

THIS IS SWISS/FRENCH/DUTCH/INDIAN/ UNITED NATIONS /BRITISH INTERNATIONAL DISPATCH ISSUED FROM THE WORLD SECRETARIAT/DESK OF LORD RAVINDER KUMAR SHARMA THE ROYAL CROWN RA UNCODE THE SUN GODD THE SUPREME POWER/THE HEAD OF STATES/THE ALIEN KING from outer space)/REXMUNDI/THE MASTER MASON CODE IS LAUADEO/THE HEAD SUPREME COUNCIL OF EU@UN(uk)/I.E.F-IN/THE CHAIRMAN-UNESCO AND WORLD BANK(IMF)

 HOSANNAH FILIO DAVID

 HOSANNAH TO THE SON OF DAVID

 FRENCH(ARCADIAN)ROYAL LINE

MESSAGE STARTS:-

I AM THE FIRST BREEZE BLOWING IN THE DARK OCEAN OF ETERNITY I AM THE FIRST SUNRISE I AM THE FIRST GLIMMER OF LIGHT A WHITE FEATHER BLOWING IN THE DAWN WIND I AM RA I AM THE BEGINNING OF ALL THE THINGS I SHALL LIVE FOREVER I SHALL NEVER PERISH .

 FROM THE HOUSE OF LIFE EGYPT

 THE BOOK OF BREATHINGS

"Hail to the mysteries jealously guarded by RA.

 May the doors OF vast HEAVENS open before me .

May my past PRESENT and future life be glorious!

 Verily I am powerful for I have completed the cycle of metamorphoses.

I who speak I know OF hidden THINGS

I can traverse THE UNIVERSE and take possession of my CELESTIAL HERITAGE, knowledge and an abundance of wealth and power, open the doors of it to me aasI wish to receive it.

I claim THE THRONE OF HEAVENS as my BIRTHRIGHT

 What has once been mine SHALL be mine again"

Is there any WHO would challenge me???

I AM DIVINE LORD RAVINDER KUMAR SHARMA THE MASTER OF TEN THOUSAND CHARIOTS

 GODD OF WISDOM

 THE BOOK OF WISDOM

 LORD OF ALL HEAVENS

 LORD OF ALL WORLDS

 MESSAGE ENDS

FEAR ME O YE ENEMIES OF EGYPT AND THIS WORLD

LORD RAVINDER KUMAR SHARMA

BIRTHPLACE

VILLAGE AND PO TUNNUHATTI

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UNDP AND BRITISH COUNCIL

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1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

www.intgovforum.org

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF FUNDS UNDER AN URGENT INTERNATIONAL PRIORITY A CODE ONE AND PAYMENT CODE 2AA OF UN PROTOCOL AND UNITED NATIONS (PRIVILEDES AND IMMUNITIES) ACT 1947 WHICH IS APPLICABLE TO THE STATE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH IN THE UNION TERRITORY OF INDIA

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Xxx

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Yes

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

ALREADY GIVEN

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

E Governance www.intgovforum.org

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Xxxx

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Xxx

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Xxxx

# Ireland | Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Ireland

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The information Society landscape of 2003/2005 is arguably unrecognisable to today’s vista. WSIS was agreed in a pre-social media world, when the scale and pace of mis/dis-information was unanticipated and cyber security was low on most agenda. At the time of the first WSIS forum, less than 12% of the global population were online; today 68% of the global population, or 5.5 billion people are internet users.

The Internet has become the fabric upon which many of the globe’s economies, services and communities rely. A successful, unfragmented, resilient, shared global resource can never be assumed nor taken for granted. The success of this tool, that we have collectively and globally enjoyed to date, must be attributed to its multi-stakeholder governance model which has endured since the adoption of the Tunis agenda. The Internet of today is the product of Academics, the Technical Community, Civil Society, the Private Sector and Nation States, working in concert towards a shared vision of an open and secure Internet. No one stakeholder group could have achieved these heights working alone. The coming decades will present new opportunities and challenges for the Internet and Ireland is confident that it will be through a continued and strengthened multi-stakeholder approach that we can address these to the greatest benefit of the global population.

One manifestation of the multi-stakeholder model is the IGF. This forum, notwithstanding its untapped potential, has provided an inclusive arena for dialogue and sharing. Deliberate efforts must continue to invite more perspectives and voices to this community and ensure full, equal and meaningful participation of all stakeholders.

With the integration of ICT into our social and economic lives; cyber security has become ever more significant and necessary. Cyber security has increasingly been recognised and managed as a strategic risk for businesses and State bodies. Recognising the increasing centrality of effective cyber security for a positive digital transformation we have seen Cyber Security grow as a priority with many States increasing investment in cyber security capacity, expertise, and infrastructure. This is observed alongside a growing, and increasingly complex, and comprehensive regulatory ecosystem.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

There have been seismic changes in consumer technologies, open standards and architecture in the last two decades. The pace of change has been extraordinary with the internet now entirely integrated in our lives; yet the principles espoused on day one of WSIS are as valid today.

The technological leaps have been accompanied by vast attitudinal changes; the internet is no longer considered a niche tool with applications confined to academia, today it is almost universally recognised that secure, high quality, universal digital connectivity is central to realising economic, social and environmental opportunities.

The ITU has played and continues to play a vital role in highlighting the potential of this technological advancement, not only in terms of bridging the digital divide within and between countries, an ambition that is ever present in the ITU mission, but also as a lever to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goal.

Ireland steadfastly supports the ITU’s endeavours, including through various development cooperation projects.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

We must ensure that if policies have a global impact, those affected must be empowered to participate in the decisions that affect them. Ireland welcomes efforts to date to encourage civil society to be part of the WSIS +20 review and calls for the continued inclusion of a diverse range of voices in this debate around future digital cooperation.

Ireland ultimately believes that the transformative power of emerging technologies has the potential to deliver sustainable and inclusive development and to create opportunities for global wellbeing, peace and prosperity. In an ever-changing world, it is essential that we work together to strengthen digital cooperation and to ensure that human rights, both online and offline, are at the core of everything we do.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The challenges have evolved and developed alongside the technology over the past two decades.

While 2.6 billion people, or close to a third of the global population, remain unconnected we cannot abandon the goal of universal access and participation. People in many developing countries, least developed countries, women, minority groups, people with disabilities and, people with lower income are often the least connected.

The digital divide will continue to grow as new technologies emerge and develop. We must ensure that we think of this divide not only in terms of the connected and unconnected but to also consider the capacity divide and an infrastructure divide. The importance of collaboration between Governments and industry to bridge these divides cannot be overlooked. Ireland’s Digital Connectivity Strategy, which primarily focuses on enabling the physical telecommunication infrastructure and services delivering digital connectivity, was developed in consultation with wider industry to ensure the appropriate enablers are established.

The line between a person’s life online and off is becoming less pronounced with the evolution and iterations of digital technology. This calls for recognition, protection, and application of human rights both online and offline. The technologies developed in the last 20 years have played important roles, enabling people to access and realise their human rights; they have also resulted in negative impacts on human rights and the entrenching and exacerbation of existing inequalities and digital divides, both within and between countries.

The changes we’ve seen in the last two decades have been immense; we’re likely to see a similar leaps in the coming two decades as we see developments in AI, 6G Networks, quantum computing, biotechnologies and immersive technologies develop further. The potential positives must be recognised alongside potential risks. To offer an example, AI technologies may be dimmed if biases and inequalities are baked into the models and if there isn’t genuine inclusion in the design and oversight of AI. Ireland believes that the proportionate, risk-based approach the EU has taken in the EU AI Act is the right one, which will protect fundamental rights.

In an ever-changing world, it is essential that we rise to meet the opportunities and challenges posed by digital technologies, and work together to ensure that human rights, both online and offline, are at the core of our everything we do.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Ireland remains confident that any vision for our Information Society will achieve greatest results when arrived at through a multi-stakeholder approach. The multi-stakeholder model shares responsibility and credit for the internet and ICT world we have today. With the proliferation of automation and AI it will be more important than ever to ensure the voices of Private industry are heard alongside the voices of civil society; that academics are at the table alongside Governments; that the technical community can innovate with an understanding of the end users and communities for which they are creating. It is for this reason that the safeguarding of the multi-stakeholder approach should be prioritised to achieve the WSIS outcomes and any future WSIS objectives.

Action line C1, which recognises the necessary cooperation and partnership needed between governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development, has had a significant impact on both global and local internet governance. It has helped to ensure a connected, open, and efficient internet. The IGF, as well as national and regional IGFs, has acted as a valuable forum for meaningful dialogue on important policy and technical questions.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

In a world where technology is transforming lives on a daily basis, it is vital that we anchor this change in sound and effective governance, developing and deepening a human rights-based approach so as to minimize harms and maximise benefits.

Looking at technological innovations more widely: if properly managed, they can help provide alternative paths to development and contribute to delivering the promise of a better, safe, sustainable, and inclusive future. In particular, advances in technology are making it easier to capture essential data with which to inform policy making, and to create new data which can be harnessed for sustainable development. It is important that we support the creation of environments that harness this creativity and innovation.

The challenge is to foster this transformation in a just and inclusive way, with a human rights-based and ethical approach. This includes the need to overcome gender disparities in the use and focus of technological innovation. The digital divide, whether between global regions, urban and rural areas, gender and age groups needs to be addressed on many levels, not just in terms of access, but in terms of skills and awareness of technology.

Crucially, we must ensure that if policies have a global impact, those affected must be empowered to participate in the decisions that affect them. Ireland welcomes efforts to date to encourage civil society to be part of the process and calls for the continued inclusion of a diverse range of voices in this debate around future digital cooperation. The multi-stakeholder model to internet governance has been a critical tool in addressing the challenges outlined above.

We see that global AI governance is needed in order to balance the emerging risk while leveraging the many technological possibilities to harness AI for the common good. We are active participants in global discussions on how to ensure an ethical and human rights-based approach to AI, including through our work at the OECD and membership of the European Union as well as at the Council of Europe, in the UN system though the ITU and UNESCO and at human rights and disarmament discussions in Geneva.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Ireland will continue to work with the Irish Internet Community and stakeholders along with fellow EU member states to determine any necessary inputs.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Anchoring the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact in human-centric and human rights-based principles that comply with international law, in particular human rights law will facilitate the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs, thereby strengthening the potential to achieving the 2030 agenda.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

The common, agreed, goals of the WSIS outcomes allowed for enhanced cooperation resulting in collective and cumulative efforts to bridge the digital divide and to the safeguarding of the multi-stakeholder approach to internet governance.

As a multistakeholder platform, the WSIS Forum is well placed to focus, advance and spotlight digital development and its impacts upon the global community. There is a need to recognise the potential for digital development to bridge or deepen the digital divide. Ireland fully appreciates that digital infrastructure is a pre-requisite to ensuring the delivery of social dividends, including ensuring that at risk groups are not left behind in this accelerating transition, and can fully embrace digital opportunities. Universal, high quality digital connectivity is vital to achieving balanced, sustainable development. Recognising the potential risks of allowing digital divide to grow between Ireland’s regions, particularly a rural-urban divide, Ireland committed to covering all Irish households and businesses by a Gigabit network no later than 2028.

The strides made in Ireland to provide universal access to an open, free, accessible and secure Internet, need to be seen globally in order for WSIS vision of a people -centred, inclusive and development – oriented Information Society to be truly realised. The digital divides we see, be it between rural and urban, between developed and developing or between genders, will only be closed through concerted and deliberate efforts. We must act to ensure the exponential growth in technology is not mirrored in a growing digital divide.

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has provided a fulcrum point for Academics, the Technical Community, Civil Society, the Private Sector and Governments to assemble and discuss Internet Governance and adjacent topics. This offers an, otherwise much limited, opportunity for these disparate groups to speak to and hear from one another on an equitable basis. As a direct outcome of the WSIS, the commitment to the vision of a “people - centred, inclusive and development - oriented Information Society” is apparent throughout the IGF agenda and discussions.

While digital development is also a necessary part of the IGF’s remit, given how important it is in attaining a stable, free, inclusive, global, interoperable, reliable, secure, and green Internet, we look forward to the discussions on the IGF’s primary role and more effective functioning during the WSIS+20 Review.

In internet governance fora, it is important that distinct space is maintained for discussion and exploration of the core protocols of the internet, the preservation of the internet’s infrastructure and its associated protocols as a general purpose, open platform for innovation; as well as the applications that are build on top of it. Digital development and governance questions around internet applications, such as AI, may require different considerations than those that would have been traditionally associated with internet governance.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

As noted in Ireland’s statement on the Informal consultations on the Global Digital Compact, in February 2024, in a world where technology is transforming lives on a daily basis, it is vital that we anchor this change in sound and effective governance, developing and deepening a human rights-based approach so as to minimize harms and maximise benefits.

We believe that AI, for example, has the potential to help us address many of the most pressing societal and economic challenges if developed and deployed in a trustworthy way. We recall here the importance of the OECD Principles on Artificial Intelligence and UNESCO’s Ethics of AI recommendations. AI can also aid in our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Looking at technological innovations more widely: if properly managed, they can help provide alternative paths to development and contribute to delivering the promise of a better, safe, sustainable, and inclusive future. In particular, advances in technology are making it easier to capture essential data with which to inform policy making, and to create new data which can be harnessed for sustainable development. It is important that we support the creation of environments that harness this creativity and innovation.

The challenge is to foster this transformation in a just and inclusive way, with a human rights-based and ethical approach. This includes the need to overcome gender disparities in the use and focus of technological innovation. The digital divide, whether between global regions, urban and rural areas, gender and age groups needs to be addressed on many levels, not just in terms of access, but in terms of skills and awareness of technology.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Emerging technologies are transforming the way humans interact with each other and the world.

While the potential benefits of the digital transformation are immense, so too are the potential human rights challenges. It is therefore important that we foster technological transformation in an inclusive way, with a human rights-based and ethical approach which ensures that people are at the centre, emphasising fairness, transparency and building public trust as well as minimising harms and maximising benefits.

For the past few years, Ireland has taken a very active role in global discussions on how to ensure an ethical and human rights-based approach to digital technologies.

Ireland’s approach to the digital transformation is guided by the EU’s human-centric, values-based approach, as set out in the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles, which underpins the Digital Decade, the EU’s framework for the digital transformation across four key areas: business, government, infrastructure, and skills.

Behind this position are two core principles:

1. Human Rights apply equally online and offline; and

2. New and emerging / digital technologies should be used as means of enhancing and protecting human rights, rather than facilitating human rights violations or abuses.

As a part of this, bridging the global digital divide through human rights-based digital transitions will be essential. Efforts should be made to close digital divides, whether between global regions, urban and rural areas, gender and age groups. It is critical that all people, regardless of age, ethnic or social origin, disability, geographical location, sexual orientation and gender identity or any other status or condition can benefit from the digital transformation.

This needs to be addressed on many levels, not just in terms of access, but in terms of skills and awareness of technology. This can be done by facilitating technological transfer, by providing appropriate infrastructure, and by strengthening regulation.

The 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provided us all with a valuable opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the universality, indivisibility and interrelatedness of all human rights. In an ever-changing world, is essential that we rise to meet the opportunities and challenges posed by digital technologies, and work together to ensure that human rights, both online and offline, are at the core of everything we do.

In addition to our work at the EU and Council of Europe on Artificial Intelligence, we also participate in fora such as the OECD, UNESCO and the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence.

# Italy | Eurovisioni | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Eurovisioni

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Italy

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

WIDER THE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET:

In the past 20 years the majority of the world population got a connection to the Internet. Of course this is not only due to WSIS process, but for sure this process has contributed.

MULTISTAKEHOLDERS' DIALOGUE:

Especially within IGF, but also in the "WSIS follow up" the voice of all the stakeholders has been heard. During these years different stakeholders' that before were not talking to the others and were working in siloes, have learned to know each other and have established trusted relations.

IMPACT OF WSIS ACTION LINES AND OF INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE IGF:

Both processes of the IGF and of the WSIS follow up have built along these years concrete actions and have enhanced the level of the reflections on the various problems related to Internet Governance.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

ITU -through a number of initiatives- has actively contributed to make the Internet more accessible (Broadband Commission, Giganet project, Universal and Meaningful Connectivity project, Partner2Connect Digital Coalition); has created initiatives to support the decision-making processes of the LDC's governments about connectivity, access to internet, use of the spectrum; has launched the initiative "A.I. for good", that has grown till to become a reference point for many start up and governments. More in general the WSIS follow up process has become over the years a true community that gathers every year -around many appointments - to identify the best practices, to awards the most promising initiatives, to support projects, to provide statistics and data about the progresses of the digitalization of the countries of the world.

So in synthesis, the main contributions have been:

1) Promoting universal and meaningful access,

2) Promoting global connectivity,

3) Promoting the multistakeholder dialogue and cooperation

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The UNGA session in 2025 that will have to discuss about WSIS +20 and decide about its future, would have to take some simple decisions in order to strengthen this multistakeholder model:

1) transform IGF and WSIS follow up into a permanent process, because these first 20 years have proven its indispensability and valuable contribution;

2) go beyond the current anomaly of financing the whole WSIS process through voluntary contributions and bring it inside the current normal budget of the UN system. Voluntary contributions from non-state actors would have to finance specific activities and implementations of the projects identified within the process;

3) Amend the Tunis Agenda, in order to attribute both to IGF and WSIS follow up, a specific role in the implementation of the Global Digital Compact approved last September in New York. In particular IGF and WSIS follow up processes could play the role to include the non-state actors in the GDC implementation.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

1. its precarity (extra UN funding) and the impossibility to plan over the long term (periodical renewals of the mandate);

2. the risk of remaining "talking shops", with scarce possibilities to produce concrete impacts on the decision-making process about Internet Governance;

3. the lack of direct links with the UN SG (that -on the contrary- was the direct "owner" of the IGF process within the first mandate);

4. these risks of remain disconnected by the main decision-making processes within the UN are now amplified by the Global Digital Compact approval. If WSIS follow up will not have a specific and relevant role in its implementation, will face a concrete risk of definitive marginalization.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

С2. Information and communication infrastructure & C4. Capacity building

Both have seen a lot of successful initiatives launched in the frame of the WSIS follow up (see previous answers)

C6. Enabling environment

ITU and UNESCO have both done many remarkable initiatives in this field, especially to provide tools to LDC's governments to progress in the digitalization.

C7. E-government

UNDESA programme of e-government is a recognized leading initiative to promote the democratization of the Internet across the society and communities.

C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

UNESCO has done a remarkable work in this area, for instance with the guidelines for the use of A.I.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

To address these topics effectively, the multistakeholder model of Internet

governance should continue to be leveraged, with a focus on improving its

effectiveness in fostering timely responses and identifying sustainable solutions. This involves streamlining decision-making processes, ensuring diverse stakeholder participation, and fostering inclusivity to represent a broad range of perspectives.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Unfortunately some other action lines that were also very relevant, are still dragging and would need a re-boost through the WSIS+20 debate. These are in our view:

C7. E-environment

C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content and C9. Media

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Digitalization is an inevitable process through which all the world will have to pass sooner or later. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development needs to integrate as soon as possible and as much as possible the digital tools and processes, in order to accelerate the rhythms and to achieve the goals within the given deadlines (or with the minimum possible delays).

If this will not happen, most of the goals will not be achieved within 2030 and not even beyond.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

WSIS follow up and IGF processes needs to be integrated and harmonized in order to obtain the maximum of synergies, within a clear sharing of duties and mandate.

The implementation of the GDC has to be attributed to the renewed IGF and WSIS in order to ensure the multistakeholder voice in the process.

Duplication with new structures or initiatives in the frame of GDC implementation needs to be absolutely avoided.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

UN GA needs to profit of the contemporaneity of the WSIS+20 renewal process and of the structuration of the GDC implementation process and tightly associate both. Within a renewed permanent mandate IGF and WSIS could assure most of the implementation of GDC process, adding to it the absolutely needed multistakeholder dimension.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

There is a big lack in the WSIS action line that absolutely needs to be integrated: it is the prevention of natural and human-provoked disasters. It's a field where digital tools and skills (A.I. , quantum computing, etc.) could provide a decisive impact. The past data and the forecasts unanimously indicate that Disasters will increase in number, magnitude and frequency in all regions of the world. Digitalization could provide remedies and even solutions to that. EW4All initiative is a key example of what could be done and achieved. why is not yet within WSIS action lines ?

# Malaysia| Ministry of Communications | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Ministry of Communications

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Malaysia

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The WSIS process has driven transformative progress in digital connectivity, policy development, and capacity building globally, providing a robust foundation for continued advancements in achieving an equitable and inclusive information society. The 11 WSIS Action Lines have guided global efforts to be in line with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in areas such as ICT infrastructure development, access to information, capacity building, and cybersecurity. Through the WSIS Stocktaking and Prizes over 14,000 ICT-related projects were documented, showcasing innovative solutions that leverage technology for development. The WSIS Prizes have recognized outstanding contributions, encouraging the replication of successful initiatives worldwide, including from Malaysia.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU's primary contribution to the implementation of the WSIS process is offering platforms for showcasing achievements and facilitating discussions. Additionally, the ITU is responsible in establishing and coordinating WSIS Action Lines that guide nations in aligning with the SDGs and working toward shared objectives.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Providing resources to support underrepresented groups, especially from developing countries, so they can actively take part in WSIS-related activities.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Digital divide, affordability of ICT services, cybersecurity and trust issues, policy and regulatory gaps, lack of digital skills, financial constraint and ethical challenges around AI and some emerging technologies.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the backbone of the information society, enabling connectivity and digital access. Investments in broadband networks, mobile connectivity, and satellite technology have significantly reduced the digital divide in many regions.

C4: Capacity Building

Addresses digital literacy and skills gaps, ensuring people can effectively use ICTs for personal, professional, and societal benefits. Programs focused on skill development enable marginalized groups to access new opportunities.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Expanding multistakeholder engagement and investing in capacity building are essential to effectively address the complexities of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT). Multistakeholder engagement ensures that diverse perspectives, including governments, private sectors, civil society, academia, and end-users, are incorporated into the decision-making process. Investing in capacity building complements multistakeholder engagement by equipping individuals and institutions with the skills needed to leverage and regulate emerging technologies effectively. Tailored training programs should focus on both foundational digital literacy and advanced technical skills for policymakers, entrepreneurs, and technical professionals.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

To effectively address emerging trends beyond 2025, it is imperative to strengthen the WSIS Action Lines approach. This can be achieved by updating policy and regulatory frameworks to encompass new technologies, fostering multistakeholder engagement to ensure inclusive decision-making, investing in capacity-building initiatives that focus on emerging technological skills, and enhancing digital infrastructure to support advanced technologies.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

To strengthen the alignment between WSIS Action Lines and SDGs, a unified framework should be developed, such as expanding the WSIS-SDG Matrix to include emerging technologies like AI and IoT. This approach ensures that ICT projects directly contribute to sustainable development goals. Enhancing multistakeholder collaboration is equally critical, with partnerships between governments, private sectors, and civil society fostering co-designed initiatives to support the SDGs.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

To further strengthen the WSIS Forum and IGF as effective multistakeholder platforms, collaborative strategies can be implemented. For instance, joint initiatives or working groups can be established to align WSIS’s digital development goals with IGF’s governance discussions, fostering cross-linkages between their objectives.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Aligning the WSIS process with the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact (GDC) ensures a unified approach to leveraging ICT for sustainable development, digital inclusion, and governance. Both initiatives prioritize universal connectivity and digital inclusion. Multistakeholder collaboration can be strengthened through joint platforms like WSIS Forums and GDC dialogues, enabling governments, private sectors, and civil society to co-design digital policies.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

The WSIS+20 Review and future vision beyond 2025 must address emerging digital trends such as artificial intelligence (AI), IoT, blockchain, 5G/6G, cybersecurity, and digital inclusion to ensure a sustainable and inclusive digital ecosystem. Key priorities include establishing ethical frameworks for AI and IoT, promoting secure and interoperable technologies, bridging the digital divide, fostering green ICT practices, and addressing challenges like digital sovereignty, data privacy, and skills gaps.

# Mauritius | AFRINIC| Regional Internet Registry s

## Respondent

1. Organization name

African Network Information Centre (AFRINIC) Ltd

1. Organization type

Regional Internet Registry

1. Organization country

Mauritius

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Over the last 20 years, we've seen significant advancements in various sectors.

One of the most notable improvements is the surge in global internet connectivity. Internet penetration

rates have soared, especially in Africa, thanks to the widespread adoption of mobile technology, more affordable broadband access, and the development of critical internet infrastructures across the continent.

AFRINIC, the Internet Registry for Africa, has been instrumental to this progress. In the last decade,

AFRINIC has allocated over 100 million IPv4 addresses to more than 2,200 operators and institutions in

Africa, both private and public. This effort has helped connect over 500 million people in Africa, bringing a

greater number of individuals into the digital community and supporting the WSIS vision of a more inclusive digital world.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

ITU successfully serves as the lead facilitator and coordinator of the WSIS process, ensuring consistent progress and alignment with the original goals set at the Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005) phases of WSIS. ITU partners with key international organizations (e.g., UNESCO, UNDP, and WIPO) to ensure a coordinated approach toward WSIS goals.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Fostering greater inclusivity requires actively engaging underrepresented groups, including developing countries, Regional Internet Registries, youth, women, and persons with disabilities, while providing capacity-building resources and ensuring accessible digital platforms for meaningful participation.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Despite the significant progress recorded over the 20 years, challenges like digital literacy, and digital

divide (especially in remote and underserved regions) persist.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

AFRINIC, as the Regional Internet Registry (RIR) for Africa, plays a pivotal role in advancing digital infrastructure and connectivity, aligning closely with specific WSIS Action Lines. Here are the Action Lines that have had the most significant impact and why:

1. C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure

Impact: AFRINIC supports the development of critical Internet infrastructure by allocating and managing Internet number resources (IP addresses and ASN) across Africa. This directly contributes to enhancing regional connectivity. By promoting IPv6 deployment, AFRINIC addresses the global challenge of IPv4 exhaustion, ensuring sustainable Internet growth and access in Africa.

Why Significant: Infrastructure is the backbone of digital transformation, and AFRINIC's efforts in managing and optimizing resources ensure that Africa is prepared for the demands of a growing digital society.

2. C3: Access to Information and Knowledge

Impact: AFRINIC promotes open access to Internet infrastructure, encouraging knowledge sharing among stakeholders through training programs, workshops, and forums like the Africa Internet Summit (AIS). It supports efforts to bridge the digital divide by advocating for affordable Internet access and fostering community-driven Internet development initiatives.

Why Significant: Equitable access to information is essential for empowering communities, and AFRINIC's activities support these objectives by enabling widespread connectivity.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

1. Incorporate New Topics into Action Lines: Expand the scope of WSIS Action Lines to explicitly address areas like artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, big data, quantum computing, and the metaverse.

2. Engage New Stakeholders: Actively involve stakeholders from emerging tech industries, start-ups, and innovation hubs to bring fresh perspectives and expertise.

3. International & Continental Cooperation: Strengthen partnerships with global institutions like the UN, ITU, and regional organisations, Internet organisations to mobilise resources and expertise.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

1. Strengthening alignment between WSIS Action Lines and SDGs: it is crucial to evaluate the impact of current projects (2025–2030) and develop a dynamic framework for continuous alignment post-2030. Challenges include limited coordination and insufficient integration of emerging technologies like AI and IoT.

Trends such as AI for Good and Green ICT, and Internet Routing Security offer opportunities to optimise resource management, secure Internet Infrastructure, enhance healthcare, and minimize ICT’s environmental footprint.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

To strengthen the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the following strategies can be implemented:

1. Leverage technologies like AI, IoT, and big data to address complex challenges such as poverty, climate change, and health disparities.

2. Promote innovative ICT solutions for SDG-specific goals, such as AI-powered healthcare systems (SDG 3) or IoT-based agriculture for food security (SDG 2).

3. Expand affordable ICT infrastructure to underserved regions, closing the digital divide between urban and rural areas.

4. Focus on empowering ICT user groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities, to ensure equitable participation in the digital economy.

5. Provide training and resources to equip stakeholders with skills to implement effective, SDG-aligned WSIS projects

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

We can strengthen the WSIS Forum and IGF by promoting diverse stakeholder participation including the Regional Internet Registries (AFRINIC, RIPE-NCC, APNIC, LACNIC, ARIN), integrating emerging technology discussions, and aligning outcomes with global priorities like the SDGs.

Moreover, we should foster actionable partnerships, enhance capacity-building initiatives, and ensure inclusive, transparent decision-making.

Regular impact assessments and clear follow-up mechanisms can further bolster their roles in digital development and governance.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Aligning the WSIS process with the Pact for the Future and Global Digital Compact requires integrating inclusive digital policies, fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration, and prioritizing digital equality. Concrete actions include promoting universal connectivity, advancing cybersecurity standards, leveraging ICTs for SDGs, ensuring ethical AI governance, and harmonizing regional and continental frameworks to drive global sustainable digital transformation.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Key emerging digital trends for ITU in the WSIS+20 review should include AI governance, metaverse development, IPv6 Deployment, 6G deployment, quantum computing, blockchain, and green ICTs. The focus should also encompass digital inclusion, cybersecurity, ethical data usage, and leveraging technologies for climate resilience, education, and healthcare to shape a sustainable, equitable digital future.

# Netherlands | RIPE NCC | Academia

## Respondent

1. Organization name

RIPE NCC

1. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

1. Organization country

Netherlands

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Main Achievements of the WSIS Process in the Past 20 Years:

- Advancement of the Information Society: The WSIS process has established a shared vision for the global Information Society, emphasising the role of ICTs in fostering sustainable development.

- Creation of Multistakeholder Platforms: WSIS has institutionalised the multistakeholder approach to Internet governance, encouraging collaboration between governments, the private sector, the technical community, academics and civil society. Platforms like the IGF have emerged as key spaces for dialogue on global Internet governance issues.

- Focus on ICT for Sustainable Development: The alignment of WSIS Action Lines with the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has highlighted ICTs as critical enablers for achieving the SDGs.

-Strengthening Partnerships: The WSIS process has improved international collaboration and partnerships. It has strengthened the cooperation among governments and the established bodies responsible for Internet standards and policy development, such as the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), Regional Internet Registries (RIRs), and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

- Facilitating Global Dialogues and Summits: The ITU played a central role in organising the WSIS Summits in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005), which laid the foundation for the global Information Society framework.

- Coordination of WSIS Action Lines: ITU has led the coordination and implementation of several WSIS Action Lines, including ICT infrastructure development, capacity building, cybersecurity, and access to information. Through its leadership, ITU has ensured the alignment of these action lines with broader global development agendas, such as the SDGs.

- Promoting Connectivity and Infrastructure Development: ITU has spearheaded initiatives to expand global ICT infrastructure, particularly in underserved and remote regions. Programs such as Connect 2030 Agenda and Partners2Connect have focused on fostering universal, affordable, and sustainable access to ICTs.

- Encouraging Multistakeholder Collaboration: ITU has facilitated partnerships between member states and private sector members, ensuring inclusive participation in the WSIS process and beyond.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Ensuring the Sustainability and Strengthening of the WSIS Multistakeholder Model could be sustained by:

- Encourage Multilateral and Multistakeholder Cooperation: Balance multilateral initiatives with multistakeholder approaches, ensuring that both work in tandem rather than as competing frameworks.

- Strengthen collaboration between governments and existing Internet standards and policy development bodies, such as ICANN, IETF, and RIRs: This cooperation ensures a cohesive and coordinated approach to Internet governance and policy development, leveraging these established organisations' technical and operational expertise.

- Build stronger synergies between WSIS and the IGF, ensuring alignment and avoiding duplication of efforts.

- Foster Inclusive Participation: Use digital platforms and tools to facilitate remote participation, ensuring stakeholders, especially those from remote or underserved areas, can actively contribute. Develop multilingual platforms and materials to bridge language barriers in discussions and documentation.

- Enhance Capacity Building Efforts: Scale up training programs and initiatives to equip stakeholders with knowledge of emerging technologies and their governance implications.

- Promote Transparency and Accountability: Maintain open and transparent decision-making processes, with clear reporting mechanisms for WSIS initiatives.

- Ensure Funding and Resource Availability: Secure sustainable funding models to support WSIS activities and enable participation from underfunded stakeholders. Encourage public-private partnerships to mobilise resources and expertise.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The WSIS process has been instrumental in shaping the global Information Society, yet significant challenges remain in its implementation, particularly as the Internet continues to evolve as a global network of networks. This interconnected system relies on open standards, unique registration services, and governance structures such as the IETF, RIRs and ICANN. These bodies develop protocols, policies, and frameworks to ensure interoperability, accountability, and stability. However, several barriers threaten this ecosystem:

- Geopolitical Tensions and Fragmentation Risks: Geopolitical conflicts and diverging national interests jeopardise global cooperation. Risks of Internet fragmentation and competing digital sovereignty agendas challenge the open and inclusive nature of the Internet. Mandate overreach and overly prescriptive regulations exacerbate these risks.

- Lack of Multistakeholder Engagement: Despite progress, the WSIS process often struggles to fully integrate the private sector, civil society, academia, and technical communities into decision-making processes. Inclusive multistakeholder governance is essential to address diverse global challenges.

- Funding and Resource Constraints: Limited financial resources and technical capacity, particularly in developing regions, hinder progress in implementing WSIS Action Lines.

- Regulatory and Policy Gaps: Technological advancements outpace regulatory frameworks. The absence of harmonised global policies undermines interoperability, creates inefficiencies, and complicates collaboration across regions, threatening the Internet's foundational role as a global enabler.

- Digital Literacy and Skills Gap: A substantial portion of the global population lacks the skills necessary to effectively participate in the digital era.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Action Line C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure

This action line has played a pivotal role in expanding global ICT infrastructure, enabling greater connectivity and access to the Internet, particularly in developing regions.

Investments in broadband networks and mobile connectivity have significantly bridged the digital divide, fostering economic growth and inclusion.

Action Line C3: Access to Information and Knowledge

Efforts under this action line have democratised access to information, making it easier for individuals and communities to benefit from digital resources.

Open access initiatives and ICT-enabled public services have empowered communities to participate in the knowledge economy.

Action Line C4: Capacity Building

Focus on training, education, and skill development has strengthened the ability of individuals, especially in underserved regions, to leverage ICTs effectively.

Action Line C11: International and Regional Cooperation

This action line has facilitated collaboration and partnership among stakeholders at all levels to address national, regional and global ICT challenges.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Enhancing the Implementation of WSIS Principles and Action Lines for New and Emerging Areas:

- Facilitate Continuous Dialogue on Emerging Trends: Use the WSIS Forum as a dynamic space to discuss emerging technologies and their implications, fostering proactive responses to technological evolution. Encourage sharing of best practices, lessons learned, and innovative approaches among stakeholders.

- Bolster Capacity Building for Emerging Technologies: Expand Action Line C4 (Capacity Building) to focus on education and training programs. Equip policymakers, developers, and users with the skills needed to manage and deploy emerging technologies effectively.

- Encourage Policy Innovation and Harmonisation: Strengthen Action Line C6 (Enabling Environment) by developing flexible, forward-looking policy and regulatory frameworks to address the unique challenges of emerging technologies. Support global and regional harmonisation of policies to ensure coherence and reduce regulatory fragmentation.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

The WSIS+20 Review represents a critical juncture to reaffirm the foundational principles of an open, inclusive, and secure Internet. By recognising the essential role of community-driven technical governance, accelerating IPv6 deployment for enhancing connectivity, closing the digital divide, and preparing for tomorrow’s technologies, we can ensure the Internet continues to serve as a catalyst for innovation, growth, and empowerment for everyone.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The alignment between WSIS Action Lines and SDGs can drive sustainable progress toward the 2030 Agenda:

- Promoting Inclusive and Open Governance (C1): Upholding multistakeholder, inclusive governance frameworks ensures that ICT policies remain equitable and development-oriented. This supports SDG 16’s goals of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions.

- Building Resilient ICT Infrastructure (C2): Expanding IPv6 deployment and affordable connectivity remains essential for achieving SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 17 (Partnerships). Prioritising infrastructure in developing countries and underserved regions ensures equitable access and reduces the digital divide.

- Enhancing Capacity Building (C4): Comprehensive training and education programs empower communities with technical skills, supporting SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Targeted capacity building in emerging technologies like IPv6, AI, and IoT fosters sustainable development and local expertise.

- Promoting Cybersecurity and Trust (C5): Advancing secure routing and Internet, trusted digital environments, and strong cybersecurity frameworks aligns with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Secure networks are fundamental to digital inclusion and the sustainable Internet.

- Fostering Regional and Global Cooperation (C11): Strengthening partnerships between the different multistakeholder groups ensures progress toward SDG 17. National, regional and international Platforms such as the NRIs, MENOG, IGF and WSIS Forum exemplify effective collaboration in addressing shared development goals.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

To ensure platforms like the WSIS Forum and IGF effectively address digital development and governance challenges, it is crucial to adopt strategies that build inclusivity, foster synergy, and enhance collaboration, while respecting and recognising the unique role of Internet organisations such as the IETF, ICANN, and Regional Internet Registries (RIRs):

- Enhance Inclusivity and Diversity: Multistakeholder platforms must actively involve underrepresented groups, including women, youth, marginalized communities, and stakeholders from LDCs. Providing financial and logistical support, such as travel grants and advanced remote participation tools, ensures equal access and diverse representation. This inclusivity strengthens the legitimacy and effectiveness of decision-making processes.

- Promote Synergy Between WSIS Forum and IGF: Linking the WSIS Forum’s focus on digital development with the IGF’s emphasis on Internet governance and policy issues fosters stronger collaboration.

- Respect and Recognise the Unique Role of Internet Bodies:

Strengthening these platforms requires acknowledging the critical roles played by bodies like the IETF, ICANN, and RIRs. Their expertise in developing standards, ensuring unique resource allocation, and creating governance frameworks must be integrated into discussions. Multistakeholder platforms should amplify the voice of these technical communities and align efforts to preserve the Internet’s openness, stability, and resilience.

- Enhance Collaboration Between UN Platforms: Building stronger linkages between the WSIS Forum, IGF, and UN agencies like ITU, UNESCO, and UNDP can align digital development and governance priorities. Mechanisms for cross-platform collaboration and information sharing can enrich discussions, avoid duplication, and create a unified approach to addressing global digital challenges.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Aligning the WSIS process with the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact offers an opportunity to unify efforts toward shared goals of inclusivity, sustainability, and responsible digital transformation. Both frameworks emphasise bridging the digital divide, equitable access, global cooperation, collaborative governance and ethical use of technology, making their alignment natural and impactful.

A key area of convergence is inclusivity. Both prioritise bridging the digital divide by expanding connectivity, enhancing digital skills, and promoting gender equality in ICT access. Coordinated efforts can amplify impact and ensure marginalised communities benefit from digital opportunities.

Internet governance provides another point of synergy. The WSIS process complements the Compact’s call for multistakeholder Internet governance. Integrating WSIS mechanisms, such as the IGF and regional dialogues, into the Compact’s implementation can create inclusive, representative policies.

Respect and recognition for the unique role of bodies such as the IETF, ICANN, and the Regional Internet Registries, which develop protocols, establish policies, provide technical operational support, and create frameworks to ensure coordination, accountability, and the robust functioning of the Internet, are essential. These entities underpin the Internet’s open and interoperable nature, making their involvement central to the success of both frameworks.

By fostering alignment through these shared priorities and recognising the critical contributions of Internet bodies, the WSIS process and the Compact can drive a unified, inclusive, and sustainable digital future.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

The WSIS+20 review and future vision must address key challenges and opportunities to ensure an open, inclusive, and secure Internet. Key priorities include strengthening Internet infrastructure resilience, emphasising IPv6 adoption, routing security, and equitable connectivity to bridge the digital divide. ITU plays a critical role in driving these priorities to support connecting the remaining 2.6 billion unconnected.

Ensuring that means of communication remain unaffected by domestic political disputes, international conflicts, or wars is paramount. This includes safeguarding the provision and registration of Internet numbering resources, ensuring operational continuity and the resilience of global Internet infrastructure. ITU’s involvement in advocating for these principles reinforces its commitment to an open and interoperable Internet.

Preserving the open, borderless nature of the Internet while balancing national sovereignty and global interoperability remains a pressing challenge. ITU can provide a platform for dialogue and collaboration, supporting member states in aligning their policies with the technical community’s expertise to uphold global interoperability and inclusivity.

By fostering multistakeholder collaboration, ITU can enhance alignment between the efforts of governments, technical communities, and other stakeholders. Through its leadership, ITU can ensure that WSIS+20 advances a secure, inclusive, and sustainable Internet for all. RIPE NCC stands ready to contribute its expertise to these shared goals, ensuring the Internet remains a vital resource for global development and innovation.

# Nigeria | Paradigm Initiative | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Paradigm Initiative

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Nigeria

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The main achievements include the establishment of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the alignment of the WSIS Action lines with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the demonstration of how the multistakeholder approach works. The WSIS process led to the establishment of the Working Group on Internet Governance–the precursor to the Internet Governance Forum–established by the UN Secretary-General in 2004. With a mandate set out in paragraphs 72-78 of the Tunis Agenda, the IGF held its first meeting in Athens in 2006. To date, the IGF has been a cornerstone for discussing global Internet policy and governance, fostering collaboration among governments, civil society, the private sector, the technical community and other stakeholders. The IGF has facilitated discussions on critical issues such as digital rights, cybersecurity, and access to information, helping to shape policies that reflect diverse stakeholder perspectives. The IGF mandate led to the creation of more than 155 National and Regional Initiatives across all continents, and this has led to diverse cooperation and action on digital rights and inclusion. The IGF established a Leadership Panel which developed the Internet We Want framework, setting bold targets of achieving a whole and open, universal and inclusive, free-flowing and trustworthy, safe and secure, and rights-respecting Internet.

The Geneva Plan of Action developed 11 Action Lines to address access to information, capacity building, and Information and Communication Technologies for development. Over the years, the WSIS Action Lines have provided a framework for countries to develop national strategies and initiatives that align with global goals, promoting digital inclusion and sustainable development. Most recently, the ideals of WSIS regarding a multistakeholder approach for including diverse perspectives in the internet governance Agenda were realised during the negotiation of the Pact of the Future, which includes the Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations. WSIS action line C1 on the role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development was fulfilled as the Pact and its annexures were adopted by 193 world leaders.

The ideals of WSIS emphasise a multistakeholder approach to governance, encouraging collaboration among governments, private sector actors, civil society organizations, and technical communities. This multistakeholder approach to Internet governance is a tangible output of the WSIS process, and would be valuable to carry forward, lending sustained life and strength to the Internet Governance Forum. Resultantly, platforms such as the IGF and Net Mundial were created. The IGF was created as a multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue on Internet governance issues, as mandated by the Tunis Agenda. Net Mundial was created as a platform for advancing discussions pertaining to the further implementation of multistakeholder practices in the digital world. The multistakeholder framework has led to more inclusive decision-making processes and has fostered partnerships that enhance the effectiveness of ICT initiatives across different sectors.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU has served as a lead facilitator, along with the United Nations Educational and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for the multistakeholder implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action. This includes facilitating Action Lines focused on critical areas such as Information and communication infrastructure, capacity building, building confidence and security in the use of ICTs and enabling environment. The ITU has also played a co-facilitator role on action lines which include ethical dimensions of the information society, access to information and knowledge, ICT applications and international and regional cooperation.

The ITU initiated and maintains the WSIS Stocktaking platform, which serves as a global repository for documenting ICT-driven sustainable development projects and best practices. Currently, it comprises over 13,500 entries aligned with WSIS Action Lines and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ITU produces annual reports detailing its contributions to WSIS outcomes, providing insights into ongoing initiatives and progress made in various sectors related to ICT .

The ITU co-organises the WSIS Forum, which is recognised as the largest annual gathering of stakeholders focused on ICT for development. This forum facilitates discussions on implementing WSIS Action Lines and advancing sustainable development through technology. The forum is held in collaboration with United Nations agencies, ensuring that diverse perspectives are included in discussions about digital cooperation and governance.

The ITU coordinates efforts among UN agencies to align WSIS implementation activities with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This includes facilitating collaboration between organisations to maximise joint efforts while avoiding duplication. The ITU actively engages with governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector to promote an inclusive approach to ICT governance and development.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

To ensure the multistakeholder model is sustained, continuous and inclusive engagement and dialogue must be sustained by establishing platforms for dialogue among governments, civil society, the private sector, and technical communities, including marginalised communities and developing countries. For instance, the upcoming WSIS+20 High-Level Event in 2025 will provide a formal platform for stakeholders to discuss achievements and challenges since the Geneva Plan of Action, facilitating continuous engagement. Support for the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) hinges on the continued WSIS process and ensuring that the IGF is strengthened through tangible support, enabling participation of Global South communities, whose voices are important in setting the agenda for digital cooperation.

To strengthen the inclusive multistakeholder model, existing structures such as the NetMundial and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) need to be supported, adequate resources provided and new challenges such as Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies, cybersecurity, and data protection addressed.

To strengthen the WSIS platform, open reporting and transparency where stakeholders can share their contributions and outcomes is needed. In addition, platforms for stakeholders to give feedback on policies and initiatives are needed to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making processes.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

There is a persistent digital divide, particularly between developed and developing countries and within countries. Access to technology and the internet remains uneven, with marginalised communities often lacking connectivity and digital skills. Paradigm Initiative’s 2023 Londa report documents that in countries such as Namibia, the fund has remained dormant as telecommunications operators resist compliance through legal action. The report documents that the fund should support persons with disabilities, improve network connection around the country, including for schools and clinics. However in the 2023/24 financial year, the fund did not come into effect, worsening the digital divide.

In the Central African Republic, the electronic communications development committee was supposed to set up an office called Service in charge of consumer protection and management of the universal service) but by the end of 2023, this was not done. As a result, the USF is not yet in a position to collect the telecommunications operators’ contributions (2% of their turnover).

This divide exacerbates inequalities in accessing information and services, hindering efforts to create an inclusive information society. Globally it is estimated that at least 2, 6 billion people are unconnected. In South Asia, 1.1 billion people are not using the internet, Findings of the Mobile Gender Gap Report revealed that in South Asia, women are 58 percent less likely than men to use mobile internet and rural populations are 45 percent less likely to use mobile internet than urban populations.

Human rights concerns are a major challenge facing the implementation of the WSIS process. Violations of the rights to privacy, access to information and freedom of expression are prominent and negatively affect ICT governance. The emergence of new technologies, such as AI and surveillance tools, has deepened the challenges.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Action Line C1 on the Role of Public Governance Authorities and All Stakeholders in Promoting ICTs for Development has had a more significant impact as it has emphasized the importance of governance and multistakeholder approaches in ICT, encouraging collaboration between governments, civil society, and the private sector. As a result, frameworks such as the GDC have been developed.

Action Line C10 on Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society has been impactful as it has promoted inclusive governance. It emphasises the ethical implications of ICT deployment, including issues related to privacy, data protection, and digital rights. Action Line C10 has fostered discussions on ethics in the use of technology and encouraged stakeholders to consider human rights implications when developing and implementing ICT policies.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

1.Integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into the WSIS framework is crucial for enhancing digital inclusion. AI has the potential to exclude cultural and societal heritages if not properly managed, highlighting the need for WSIS mechanisms to address the implications of emerging technologies on digital inclusion actively

2.The rise of cloud computing and big data analysis presents both opportunities and challenges. WSIS should focus on creating guidelines that facilitate the ethical use of these technologies while ensuring they contribute positively to economic growth and social equity.

3.Developing comprehensive frameworks that link WSIS Action Lines with economic policies will help address the digital divide, particularly in less developed regions where internet access remains limited

4.Ensuring that marginalised groups, including people with disabilities and indigenous communities, are included in digital initiatives is essential for sustainable development. This requires targeted policies that address their specific needs within the digital landscape

5.Emphasising a holistic approach to governance incorporating diverse stakeholder perspectives can enhance the effectiveness of WSIS implementation. This includes fostering dialogue among governments, private sectors, civil society, and academia to create inclusive policies

6.The unpredictable nature of technological advancements necessitates a flexible approach to WSIS implementation strategies. Short-term goals should be adaptable to meet changing circumstances while ensuring continuous monitoring of progress across all Action Lines

7.Conducting regular reviews of WSIS outcomes will help identify gaps in implementation and allow for timely updates to strategies based on emerging trends in technology and society

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Key Milestones

1.The WSIS+20 Review should begin with a comprehensive evaluation of the achievements and shortcomings in implementing the Action Lines over the past two decades. This includes identifying successful initiatives that can be replicated globally, particularly in digital inclusion and governance.

2.Aligning WSIS outcomes with global frameworks such as the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be a significant milestone. This alignment is crucial for fostering a cohesive digital transformation approach that addresses local and global challenges.

3.The ongoing engagement of diverse stakeholders—governments, civil society, the private sector, and academia—will be essential in shaping the future of WSIS Action Lines. Ensuring that all voices are heard will help create a more inclusive digital environment.

Challenges

1.One of the most pressing challenges remains bridging the digital divide, particularly in developing regions. Policymakers must develop common reporting frameworks to monitor progress effectively and ensure that digital transformation efforts reach underserved populations.

2. The rapid evolution of technologies such as AI, cybersecurity threats, and data privacy concerns presents challenges that require updates to existing Action Lines. For instance, revising Action Line C5 on confidence and security to address new threats is critical.

3. Balancing calls for specific updates to Action Lines while maintaining a technologically neutral stance poses a challenge. Stakeholders must navigate differing visions for digital governance without alienating any group.

Emerging Trends Beyond 2025

1.As AI continues to permeate various sectors, there will be an increasing emphasis on ethical standards for its development and deployment. This includes addressing biases in AI systems and ensuring they contribute positively to society.

There is a growing recognition of the importance of digital public goods and infrastructure in achieving equitable access to technology. Future discussions may expand Action Line C7 to encompass these elements more explicitly.

A trend towards embedding international human rights standards within digital policies is anticipated. This includes enhancing coordination with UN human rights bodies to ensure digital transformations respect fundamental rights.

Integrating WSIS outcomes with the SDGs will remain a focal point, ensuring that digital advancements contribute to broader sustainability objectives while addressing social inequalities.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

1.Utilize the WSIS-SDG Matrix

Mapping and Analysis: The WSIS-SDG Matrix, developed by UN WSIS Action Line Facilitators, serves as a critical tool for mapping and analysing the connections between each WSIS Action Line and the 17 SDGs. Regular updates and enhancements can ensure that this matrix reflects current challenges and opportunities, providing stakeholders with a clear reference for integrating ICTs into their development strategies.

2.Foster Multistakeholder Collaboration

Engage Diverse Stakeholders: Encouraging participation from various sectors—including governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector—can enhance collaborative efforts. Platforms like the WSIS Forum can facilitate discussions that bring together these stakeholders to share best practices and innovative solutions for aligning WSIS initiatives with SDG targets.

3.Integrate ICTs into National Development Plans

Policy Integration: Countries should be encouraged to incorporate ICT strategies into their national development plans, ensuring that WSIS Action Lines are explicitly linked to national SDG implementation efforts. This integration will help localise global goals and make them more relevant to specific contexts.

4.Strengthen Capacity Building Initiatives

Training and Resources: Building local capacities is essential for effective implementation. Providing training programs for ICT professionals and communities can empower them to leverage technology in ways that support both WSIS Action Lines and SDGs. This includes focusing on skills development in digital literacy, cybersecurity, and data management.

5.Monitor Progress and Share Best Practices

Evaluation Frameworks: Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks will allow stakeholders to assess progress towards aligning WSIS Action Lines with SDGs. Regular reporting on outcomes can highlight successes, challenges, and improvement areas. Sharing best practices through case studies or success stories will inspire further action.

6.Address Emerging Challenges

Adaptation to New Trends: Continuous adaptation of WSIS Action Lines is necessary to address contemporary global challenges such as climate change, digital divides, and rapid technological advancements. Updating these lines to reflect current realities will ensure their relevance in achieving the SDGs.

7.Promote Awareness and Advocacy

Awareness Campaigns: Raising awareness about the interlinkages between WSIS Action Lines and SDGs among various stakeholders can foster a more outstanding commitment to their implementation. Advocacy efforts should emphasise the role of ICTs in achieving sustainable development outcomes

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

1.Establish Clear Objectives and Shared Vision

Define Common Goals: Articulated objectives that resonate with all stakeholders can foster a sense of ownership and commitment. This involves identifying shared priorities for digital development and governance ensuring that all voices are represented in the goal-setting process.

Develop a Collaborative Framework: Establishing a framework that outlines participants' roles, responsibilities, and expectations can facilitate smoother interactions and decision-making processes within these platforms.

Promote primacy of IGF with regards multistakeholderism in Internet Governance. This includes ensuring that WSIS processes remain separate and not subsumed by the Global Digital Compact.

2.Enhance Inclusivity and Representation

Broaden Stakeholder Engagement: To ensure comprehensive representation, actively involve diverse groups, including marginalised communities, youth, and underrepresented sectors. This can be achieved through targeted outreach efforts and capacity-building initiatives that empower these groups to participate meaningfully.

Create Neutral Spaces: Platforms should serve as neutral grounds where stakeholders feel comfortable expressing their views without fear of bias or retribution. This can enhance trust and collaborative spirit among participants.

3.Foster Continuous Learning and Adaptation

Implement Feedback Mechanisms: Regular feedback loops can help assess the effectiveness of discussions and initiatives, allowing for adjustments based on stakeholder input. Encouraging periodic self-reflection among participants can also enhance learning opportunities.

Encourage Innovation: Platforms should promote innovative approaches to problem-solving by sharing best practices and lessons learned from various contexts. This could involve organising workshops or forums on emerging digital governance and development trends.

4.Strengthen Coordination and Communication

Develop Clear Communication Strategies: Effective communication channels are vital for disseminating information, sharing updates, and facilitating stakeholder dialogue. Establishing a centralised platform for sharing resources and outcomes can streamline communication efforts.

Integrate Multi-Stakeholder Processes: Aligning the operations of the WSIS Forum with other relevant platforms (like the IGF) can create synergies that enhance overall effectiveness. This could involve joint sessions or collaborative projects that leverage the strengths of both platforms.

5.Build Capacity for Engagement

Invest in Capacity Building: Providing training and resources to stakeholders can empower them to engage more effectively in discussions. This includes developing skills related to negotiation, policy advocacy, and technical knowledge relevant to digital governance.

Facilitate Knowledge Sharing: Creating opportunities for stakeholders to share experiences and insights can foster a culture of collaboration. This could involve establishing mentorship programs or peer-learning networks within the platforms.

6.Monitor Progress and Impact

Establish Evaluation Frameworks: Implementing systems to monitor progress towards shared goals is crucial for accountability. Regular evaluations help identify successes and areas for improvement, ensuring that the platforms remain responsive to stakeholder needs.

Highlight Success Stories: Sharing success stories from collaborative efforts can inspire further participation and investment in multistakeholder initiatives. Recognising contributions through awards or public acknowledgement can motivate stakeholders to engage actively.

By focusing on these strategies, multi-stakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and IGF can be strengthened as effective venues for fostering digital development and addressing governance challenges in an increasingly interconnected world

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

1.Strengthening Coordination Mechanisms

Utilise Existing Frameworks: The WSIS process provides a well-established framework for digital cooperation. Leveraging existing mechanisms, such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and regional initiatives, can ensure that efforts under the GDC are effectively integrated with WSIS objectives.

Enhance UNGIS Role: The United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) should be empowered to coordinate efforts across UN agencies, ensuring that ICT-related initiatives align with both WSIS and GDC goals. This includes fostering synergies to maximise impact and avoid duplication of efforts.

2.Fostering Multistakeholder Engagement

Inclusive Dialogue: Engaging a diverse range of stakeholders—governments, civil society, the private sector, and academia—is essential for creating a shared vision. The GDC emphasizes a multistakeholder approach, which aligns with WSIS principles of inclusivity and participation.

Local and Regional Initiatives: Encouraging local and regional initiatives to reflect WSIS Action Lines while aligning with GDC commitments can enhance grassroots engagement and ensure that digital transformation efforts are contextually relevant.

3 Addressing Emerging Digital Trends

Focus on Ethical Digital Transformation: Addressing ethical considerations in digital governance is crucial as technologies evolve. This includes ensuring responsible AI use, data privacy, and cybersecurity measures aligning with WSIS principles and GDC commitments.

Promote Digital Public Goods: The GDC highlights the importance of digital public infrastructure. Aligning this focus with WSIS Action Lines can foster innovation and collaboration in developing open-source tools that benefit all stakeholders.

4.Continuous Review and Adaptation

WSIS+20 Review as a Catalyst: The upcoming WSIS+20 review presents an opportunity to reassess priorities and adapt strategies based on lessons learned from past implementations. This review should identify gaps in current frameworks and propose actionable steps for future alignment.

Feedback Mechanisms: Establishing feedback loops among stakeholders will facilitate ongoing dialogue about challenges and successes in implementing both WSIS processes and GDC commitments.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

In the context of the WSIS+20 Review and future vision beyond 2025, several key emerging digital trends and topics should be considered by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). These trends reflect the evolving landscape of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their implications for sustainable development and digital governance.

Key Emerging Digital Trends

1.Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning

The integration of AI into various sectors is reshaping how digital services are delivered. Discussions around ethical AI, algorithm biases, and the need for responsible AI governance are paramount. Ensuring that AI technologies align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be critical for promoting inclusive growth and addressing inequalities.

2.Digital Inclusion and Connectivity:

Approximately 2.6 billion people remain offline, highlighting the urgent need for initiatives aimed at universal connectivity. To ensure equitable access to technology and information, strategies must focus on bridging the digital divide, particularly in underserved regions.

3.Cybersecurity and Trust:

As digital infrastructures become more complex, enhancing cybersecurity measures is essential to building trust among users. This includes developing robust frameworks for data privacy and protection against increasingly sophisticated cyber threats.

4.Digital Public Goods:

Digital public goods are gaining traction as a means of effectively managing data, information, and knowledge. This trend emphasises the importance of creating open-source tools and resources that can be utilised globally to foster innovation and collaboration.

5. Sustainable Digital Transformation:

There is a growing recognition of the need for sustainable practices in digital transformation efforts. This involves integrating environmental considerations into ICT strategies to minimise ecological impacts while promoting economic growth.

6.Multistakeholder Collaboration:

Effective governance of digital technologies requires collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including governments, private sectors, civil society, and academia. The WSIS processes should facilitate these interactions to create inclusive policies that reflect various perspectives.

Challenges to Address

-Regulatory Frameworks: Adapting existing regulatory frameworks to accommodate new technologies while ensuring they remain flexible to address future developments poses a significant challenge.

-Cultural Sensitivity in Digital Solutions: Ensuring that digital solutions are culturally appropriate and accessible to diverse populations is essential for fostering digital diversity.

-Monitoring Progress: Establishing common reporting frameworks to track progress on digital initiatives will help stakeholders measure outcomes effectively and align efforts with WSIS Action Lines.

Future Vision Beyond 2025

The ITU should focus on creating a roadmap that incorporates these emerging trends into actionable strategies for the WSIS+20 Review. This includes:

-Promoting initiatives that enhance digital literacy and skills training to empower individuals in navigating the digital landscape.

-Advocating for policies that ensure equitable access to technology while addressing data privacy and security issues.

-Encouraging innovative partnerships between public and private sectors to drive investment in digital infrastructure, particularly in developing regions.

By addressing these key trends, challenges, and future visions, the ITU can play a pivotal role in shaping a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient information society as part of the WSIS+20 Review process

# Pakistan | Child protection Unit Buner | UN System

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

1. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

1. Organization country

United States

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is pleased to respond to the call for inputs on the WSIS+20 review by the ITU Council Working Group on WSIS&SDGS. As a Sector Member of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector or ITU-D, we support the ITU’s commitment to digital inclusion and collaborate jointly with the ITU on activities such as promoting meaningful connectivity and capacity building.

The main achievements of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years:

Digital inclusivity and multilingualism: A vast majority of the world’s population are non-native English speakers. Digital inclusion enables people to use the Internet in their native language allowing them to fully realize the Internet’s full potential and benefits. Significant progress has been made toward multilingualism and digital inclusivity. Collaboration within the ICANN community has led to the delegation of 151 Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) supporting 37 languages across 23 scripts, and established rules for 26 commonly used scripts, spanning over 350 languages.

Multistakeholder model: Over the past 20 years, the WSIS process has achieved significant milestones, including the successful implementation of the multistakeholder model of Internet governance, which continues to drive the Internet’s development and it remains central to achieving the WSIS outcomes beyond 2025.

Over half of the world’s population is online: Internet access has expanded significantly over the past two decades, with two-thirds of the global population now online, underscoring the Internet's vital role as an enabler for the achievement of the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.

Spurred new innovations and technologies: The digital transformation enabled by Internet technologies has impacted various sectors, such as healthcare, education, finance, and government - fostering innovation, new livelihoods, and services. Efforts to create a more inclusive digital landscape have supported meaningful connectivity such as through multilingualism and IDNs, while enhanced security and privacy measures have bolstered trust in the digital ecosystem

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

Promoting global connectivity:

The ITU facilitates cooperation that has been instrumental for the growth and development of the telecommunications infrastructure, which serves as the backbone for communications, including the Internet. Additionally, the ITU develops technical telecommunication standards that have enabled interoperability and global connectivity of telecommunication systems.

Promoting universal and meaningful access:

Facilitates the exchange of best practices and experiences among ITU members to cultivate a strong enabling environment that promotes universal and meaningful Internet access. Over the past two decades, ITU Telecommunication Development Sector’s Study Group reports have captured members' best practices and experiences, advancing local and national digital connectivity. The ITU Council Working Group on International Internet-related Public Policy Issues (CWG-Internet) maintains a consultation repository of multistakeholder best practices and experiences on capacity building, digital inclusion, and an enabling environment.

The WSIS framework recognizes that multistakeholder collaboration is necessary for building an information society and advancing digital transformation. The ITU has fostered multistakeholder collaboration through efforts such as the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition to promote universal and meaningful access. For example, ICANN joined the ITU Partner2Connect Digital Coalition to provide capacity development support to African country code top-level domain (ccTLD) registries to prepare them for competition in the domain industry, which can spur their economic growth.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The WSIS process has demonstrated the power of global digital cooperation through its inclusive multistakeholder model over the past two decades. To preserve the model and ensure its sustainability and growth, it is crucial to protect its inclusivity by broadening representation to include all voices, especially from low- and middle-income countries. Furthermore, efforts should also focus on improving perceived weaknesses of the multistakeholder model, such as lengthy decision-making process and integrating it into other frameworks to highlight its ability to coexist with alternative approaches rather than compete with them. Sustaining the multistakeholder model requires garnering support for existing multistakeholder spaces such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs) that have generated practical ideas to address Internet policy related issues.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Despite its successes, the WSIS process faces several ongoing challenges in its implementation. Geopolitical tensions remain a significant barrier, as competing national interests can hinder consensus and global cooperation on digital policies. Additionally, the enactment of rules and regulations without a thorough understanding of their technical implications can result in unintended consequences, such as Internet fragmentation or creating inefficiencies in digital systems.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

WSIS Action Line C1 recognized that all stakeholders, not only governments, play a role in advancing ICTs development. Multistakeholder collaboration remains an important driver for ICTs development, fostering partnerships, investments, facilitating knowledge sharing and capacity building, and providing innovative and alternative ICTs connectivity approaches.

WSIS Action Lines C1, C2, C3, C6, C8, which are focused on development and the widespread adoption of ICTs have profoundly shaped the modern digital landscape. The integration of ICTs has also driven digital inclusion, connecting rural, remote, and underserved communities, empowering individuals with new skills and tools for participation in the global digital economy. These impacts underscore the transformative power of ICTs as a cornerstone of the WSIS process.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The relevance and applicability of WSIS outcomes to new and emerging areas highlight the importance of enhancing the implementation of its principles and Action Lines. To address these topics effectively, the multistakeholder model of Internet governance should continue to be leveraged, with a focus on improving its effectiveness in fostering timely responses and identifying sustainable solutions. This involves streamlining decision-making processes, ensuring diverse stakeholder participation, and fostering inclusivity to represent a broad range of perspectives.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

On WSIS Action Line C11 - International and Regional Collaboration may not be limited to government-to-government collaborations, as nongovernment stakeholders could share implementable insights and solutions. In addition, formalizing how to bring in the multistakeholder collaboration within the structure of the multilateral processes could help improve predictability in the long-run.

On WSIS Action Line C5 - as the U.N. will continue to be a critical fora for cyber discussions, it is important for it to embrace multistakeholder participation to ensure the availability of technical expertise when dealing with cyber-related issues.

For WSIS Action Line C11, enhancing international and regional collaboration should go beyond government-to-government engagements. Nongovernmental stakeholders, including the technical community, private sector, academia, and civil society, bring valuable insights and innovative solutions that can be effectively implemented. Formalizing mechanisms to integrate multistakeholder collaboration within multilateral processes would improve predictability and coherence in addressing global digital challenges.

Under WSIS Action Line C5, the U.N. will remain a vital platform for discussions on cybersecurity. To enhance its effectiveness, the U.N. should embrace multistakeholder participation, ensuring that technical expertise is readily available to inform decisions on complex Internet-related issues. This inclusive approach would strengthen global efforts to promote cybersecurity and trust in the digital ecosystem. By fostering broader collaboration and expertise, the WSIS Action Lines can remain relevant and impactful in addressing emerging trends and challenges.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Existing multistakeholder platforms should be leveraged to cover new issues, instead of creating competing platforms. Maximize on the experience and expertise of diverse stakeholder groups in these platforms. In addition, processes should be established to channel outcomes and learning points from these platforms, so that the information may be taken into consideration by policymaking processes.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

WSIS, and its related platforms like the IGF, have been designed to be broad enough to accommodate future digital developments. As such, the key elements of the Pact of the Future and the Global Digital Compact should be mapped against WSIS action lines and be aligned. Duplicating processes will widen the digital divide as stakeholders, including governments, are increasingly struggling to keep up with various workstreams due to limited resources.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Keeping in mind the ITU’s relevant co-facilitator roles on some of the WSIS action lines, inclusion and meaningful connectivity should continue to be focus areas for the WSIS+20 review and beyond 2025. The WSIS+20 review provides an opportunity to celebrate the progress made over the past two decades in closing the digital divide. However, more work needs to be done to close the gap even further and bring the 2.6 billion people who are still unconnected online. We need to stop reinventing the wheel and instead reinvigorate our efforts and energies in proven multistakeholder processes and approaches.

# Paraguay | AlSur consortium | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

AlSur consortium

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Paraguay

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

WSIS has resulted in at least two major contributions.

The first one is the creation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Fund through the Tunis Agenda and the operationalization of the multi-stakeholder participation model in this sector. The IGF, along with the establishment of national IGFs, has served as a space to bring together multiple stakeholders with diverse perspectives and interests to discuss the most relevant issues concerning the future of the internet and other technologies that connect to or interact with it.

The creation of national IGFs in Latin American countries has fostered a diverse ecosystem of actors whose collaboration sometimes extends beyond the IGFs. Additionally, it has helped highlight public policy needs related to digital technologies in national regulatory agendas. Undoubtedly, while these spaces can still be improved, their existence has democratized debates, brought visibility to critical issues on local digital agendas influenced by global discussions, and facilitated the emergence of interest groups in internet governance that might not have developed without such spaces.

The second major achievement has been the commitment to advancing gender mainstreaming in digital technologies, including AI, and promoting gender equity, although progress in this area has been limited. We believe that reinforcing this agenda in the continuation of WSIS is essential, ensuring that this pillar is strengthened in an operational and coordinated manner aligned with the SDGs.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU has been instrumental in initiating and maintaining the WSIS Stocktaking Platform, a database that centralizes information on key projects and initiatives related to sustainable technologies and best practices in their development, as well as documenting and monitoring their progress in relation to the SDGs and WSIS Action Lines.

Additionally, in practice, it has led or co-led key initiatives alongside WSIS, such as:

The WSIS Forum: Gender-Focused Discussions

WSIS Prizes

Furthermore, in partnership with other UN-led agencies such as UN Women, the ITU has led initiatives that highlight the gender perspective in discussions on digital technologies, including:

EQUALS Global Partnership

Girls in ICT Day

Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

On this point, we will make three comments:

First. The WSIS mandate should reaffirm and emphasize the importance of maintaining the multi-stakeholder approach and highlighting the benefits of this model in the governance of technologies such as the internet. It is also worth integrating the reflections that emerged from NETMundial+10, where operational guidelines were designed to enhance multi-stakeholder participation—particularly for those who require greater representation and visibility. This is especially relevant for actors from Latin America and diverse communities, whose participation in forums such as the IGF is often restricted due to various factors—operational, financial, geographical, and even bureaucratic or visa-related-.

Second. It is critical to align the WSIS agenda with that of other multi-stakeholder forums connected with digital matters, especially the Internet. This would help avoid the duplication of efforts by participants across different spaces and prevent exhaustion due to the multitude of concurrent governance initiatives for digital technologies that remain uncoordinated, special attention should be paid to the articulation with the Global Digital Compact implementation.

Third. The IGF should be recognized as a permanent global governance forum, given its value and contributions over the past 20 years. However, it is equally important to ensure that people remain at the center of the IGF and that this global annual event aligns not only with the human rights agenda but also with geographies that uphold it. For instance, it is crucial to critically assess the implications of hosting the IGF in countries with authoritarian regimes or those that openly repress, sanction, or punish certain identities and social groups deemed politically transgressive. Additionally, censorship policies and restrictive migration regulations in such contexts can hinder the participation of stakeholders who seek to engage in these forums.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Civil society organizations from Latin America, in particular, face various obstacles to participating in WSIS processes, including the IGF.

On one hand, many organizations in Latin America are currently experiencing a shrinking civic space that threatens their existence and antagonizes their work. This puts their ability to participate in international forums at risk due to concerns over physical security or the potential revocation of their legal status, which in turn endangers their funding and the possibility of attending events abroad.

Another obstacle is the lack of sustained and diverse funding opportunities aimed at increasing our presence in WSIS-related forums. The funding limitations of these organizations have always been a major concern, and the withdrawal of certain critical cooperation funds has undeniably increased the funding problem for these organizations in the future. Lack of funding affects our ability to participate and finance our work, it is crucial that WSIS provide specific support mechanisms that enable in-person meaningful participation processes for all stakeholders.

Additionally, a persistent challenge lies in the underrepresentation of certain social groups and interests in WSIS and IGF discussions. For instance, ethnic and racialized groups remain underrepresented, as do discussions on the cultural preservation of their traditions through technology. Similarly, the environmental impact of certain technologies—particularly those linked to extractive practices that threaten both natural resources and the survival of affected communities—receives insufficient attention in these spaces.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Action Line C5. Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs.

We believe this is a critical action line that should not only be preserved but also strengthened—not just to build greater and better capacities among decision-makers but also to enhance digital literacy efforts. These efforts should go beyond the traditional "proper use of technology" approach and embrace more critical perspectives that highlight, for instance, the impact of the gender gap in the ICT sector, the environmental effects of certain technologies and their consumption of natural resources, and the human rights risks associated with new and emerging technologies, among other issues.

Action Line C3. Access to information and knowledge.

It will be essential for this action line to address the importance of data access for researchers, as well as the development of data governance standards and, more broadly, data governance as applied to AI. Additionally, it is crucial to strengthen an agenda that has been sidelined in WSIS and IGF spaces—one that focuses on access to knowledge. There is an urgent need to revitalize discussions on the impact of AI on knowledge accessibility and the commons, for example.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?
2. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

A couple of ideas are:

1. Mapping WSIS Action Lines to SDGs More Effectively

Each WSIS Action Line (e.g., access to information, ICT infrastructure, cybersecurity) should be explicitly linked to relevant SDG targets. For example: WSIS goals on “closing the digital divide” should be directly integrated into “SDG strategies on poverty reduction (SDG 1), gender equality (SDG 5), and quality education (SDG 4)”.

2. Improving Impact Measurement

- Aligning WSIS implementation metrics with SDG indicators can improve tracking of ICT contributions to sustainable development.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?
2. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

This is one of the main challenges for international digital governance, there is a need to create a cohesive global digital governance framework that ensures inclusive, secure, and sustainable digital transformation. Some ideas are:

1. Policy and Strategic Alignment

See WSIS as a Foundational Framework with its Action Lines (e.g., digital inclusion, cybersecurity, ICT infrastructure, capacity building) providing a well-established framework that the GDC and the Pact for the Future should build upon. The GDC is seen as a Modernization Effort updating the WSIS goals by addressing emerging issues such as AI governance, platform regulation, data privacy, and digital human rights. Finally the Pact for the Future acts as a Political Commitment that provides high-level political endorsement and seeks some accountability mechanisms to mobilize resources and ensure implementation.

2. One of the main challenges in this process is to Strengthen the Multistakeholder Collaboration

Both WSIS and GDC Emphasize Multistakeholder Participation. While WSIS pioneered a multi-stakeholder approach, involving governments, private sector, civil society, and technical experts. GDC builds on this stating that it will ensure greater engagement from underrepresented groups and aligning digital policies with broader \*\*sustainable development goals (SDGs). However, many barriers remain for this promise to be concreted, while some has already been explained further in this document in relation to IGF, the GDC future will bring others, as it’s design is leading to a centralized governance model.

Decisions to concentrate GDC governance in New York reflect the intention to consolidate a more centralized and intergovernmental model of digital governance, integrating it into the multilateral structure of the UN rather than keeping it distributed across multiple existing forums and bodies, such as the Internet Governance Forum and other regional initiatives. Since WSIS 20 years ago, global discussions on the digital future have taken place in UN venues and multi-stakeholder forums, ensuring the active participation of a diversity of actors, including states, civil society organizations and other stakeholders. Changing it could weaken the rights-based approach and the diversity of voices in digital governance processes, by limiting participation and debate to a more closed institutional space with less representation of the actors traditionally involved in these issues. This concentration of power in a single geographic location favors the interests of the most influential actors with the greatest geopolitical and economic clout, reinforcing the possibility that large corporations and states with greater diplomatic capacity will dominate decisions about the future of the Internet and global technology. To ensure a truly multistakeholder, equitable and transparent approach, it is essential that digital governance does not remain subordinated to a single office in New York, but that it maintains open spaces in different regions of the world and establishes effective mechanisms that allow the real participation of all voices, especially those that have been historically excluded from the debate.

3. Coordinated Implementation and Monitoring

The WSIS+20 Review (2025) should be seen as a Key Milestone to assess progress and gaps that should be aligning efforts with GDC implementation timelines, harmonizing Action Plans so that the WSIS Action Lines and GDC goals can be mapped to ensure coherence in global and national digital policies.

One key action could be to implement common Indicators & Reporting Mechanisms. Developing shared metrics and accountability frameworks will help monitor the impact of both WSIS and GDC initiatives.

4. Addressing Digital Divides and Global Challenges

WSIS and GDC both aim to achieve universal digital inclusion, ensuring that developing countries, marginalized communities, and women have equal access to digital opportunities, ensur

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

The following is a non-exhaustive list of topics that we can suggest:

Information Integrity & media literacy;

Inclusion, Meaningful Connectivity and Tackling Tech Divide;

Tackling surveillance from the public and private sectors;

Cross-cutting analysis on the sustainability and the impact of technology on the environment

Tech accountability

Gender gap

Ethics vs Human Rights in the regulatory landscape of emerging technologies (such as AI) or how to read the ethics language from the Human Rights language of principles such as the precautionary principle or the “do no harm”

Human Rights Impact Assessment for emerging technologies

# Peru | Asociación Civil Mujeres en Política y al Poder | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Asociación Civil Mujeres en Política y al Poder

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Peru

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Los principales logros de la implementación del proceso de la CMSI en los últimos 20 años, organizada por la ONU, fueron las dos fases de Ginebra 2003 y Túnez 2005, que reunió a 175 países con el único objetivo de construir una sociedad de Información centrada en las personas, inclusiva y orientada al desarrollo., quien lideró dicho acto la UIT con el objetivo que la CMSI, desarrollar un marco global .

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

LA UIT es un socio clave del Proceso de la CMSI que realiza un informe exhaustivo, bajo el contexto de la CMSI que se lleva anualmente donde enfocan las principales iniciativas y actividades de la CMSI, la UIT ha desempeñado un papel fundamental en la aplicación y seguimiento de la CMSI.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

La participación de múltiples partes interesadas como los gobiernos, sector privado, sociedad Civil, como instituciones internacionales y regionales con miras a la construcción de la sociedad de información y evaluación de progresos alcanzados de modo inclusivo, para seguir manteniéndose y fortaleciéndose, deben incluir la "participación ciudadana" como ente rector colaborativo porque es ahí donde se encuentran las necesidades, que las múltiples partes pueden resolver y fortalecerse.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Si el logro es alcanzar la construcción de la Sociedad de información con ciertos desafíos en la implementación del proceso de CMSI, se debe que algunos gobiernos de diferentes países que conforman, no actúan de manera homogénea, así como empresas privadas, velan por sus intereses que ocasionan barreras u obstáculos. lo que esto podría debilitar la sociedad de información para la creación de empleos y por ende la calidad de vida de los seres humanos y riqueza, etc.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

C3. Acceso a la información y al conocimiento a Las TIC

Items que se ha cumplido donde todo el mundo tiene acceso a la información por ende el conocimiento en las personas, organizaciones, comunidades tal como propusieron en la cumbre 2003 y 2005.

 C4. Creación de capacidades

Con el propósito de lograr la enseñanza universal mediante el aprendizaje continuo tanto en el sector educativo como en las aptitudes de los profesionales.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

La implementación de los principios de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Sociedad de la Información (CMSI) se puede mejorar de varias maneras, entre ellas:

-Los principios de la CMSI pueden mejorar el acceso de la información mediante el laboratorio de proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje.

-Difusión masiva de los principios de la gobernanza de internet, asi como fomentar la investigación de la sociedad de información, y la implementación de centros comunitarios.

Para mejorar las líneas de acción realizar un replanteo del plan de acción de manera regular, para su efectividad y eficiencia. Asi como realizar mediciones para identificar lo relevante como desafío.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Las líneas de Acción de la CMSI hacia los ODS para el desarrollo sostenible que han desarrollado los facilitadores, dichas lineas de accion (ONU), Considero que C3 y C4 son piezas claves para el desarrollo humano, por ende debe incluirse un actor principal “La participación Ciudadana” que encaja en cada línea de acción para el desarrollo sostenible

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Para fortalecer la alineación entre las Líneas de Acción de la CMSI y los ODS, debe ser el trabajo de alianzas estratégicas de los diferentes actores sociales que pueden lograr , mantener, mejorar las líneas de acción de la CMSI y puede lograrse a traves de cooperación internacional, asi como promoviendo el servicio del voluntariado.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

La mejor manera de fortalecer a todas las partes interesadas cuyo propósito es la sociedad de Información y conocimiento, es la unificación de las partes mencionadas, si bien hay ciertas diferencias en tiempos y actividades, pero persiguen un solo objetivo, que pueden fortalecerse el futuro digital.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Alineación de la implementación del Pacto para el Futuro, el Pacto Digital Mundial y la CMSI, para lograr objetivos compartidos donde se entiende para mejorar el mundo y la calidad humana, es mediante las políticas de gobernanza y protección de derechos humanos.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

La UIT debe considerar en la revisión de la CMSI+20 políticas de las tecnologías emergentes como las 5G IA, ciudades digitales, IOT, ciberseguridad, etc con el único propósito de un consenso global y salvaguarda del futuro digital.

# Russia | RCC | International Organization

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications

1. Organization type

International Organization

1. Organization country

Russian Federation

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

In 20 years, society has changed significantly, the introduction of new technologies and the transition to digital have made significant progress in the task of “Connecting the world”. The number of Internet users has increased approximately 7.5 times, opening a window to the world for 5.4 billion people. Digitalization, as a result of the development of new ICTs, has penetrated all spheres of society at the international, state, regional, local and individual levels, having a significant impact on sustainable development. Widespread access to information and knowledge, the continuous introduction of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, cloud computing, blockchain, broadband wireless access technologies that enable communication anywhere in the world have made it possible to involve not only large businesses, but also medium and small enterprises, as well as individual entrepreneurs, in the production process in industry, agriculture, education, health care and ecology, business and finance, and in the dissemination of information, including mass information.

The use of modern ICTs is developing particularly dynamically in the activities of government and administrative bodies – federal, regional and local, including in the provision of public and municipal services, as well as in the financial sector, including online payments.

The growing importance of information technology in all aspects of society has raised awareness of the role of regulation in shaping digital development for the common good.

Almost all countries and regions have adopted digital development strategies and are making the transition to a digital economy. Large businesses in various countries are developing and implementing socially significant programmes and projects that contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Significant efforts have been and are being made in the vast majority of countries to meet the global indicators for growth in ICT connectivity and access to the use of ICTs within the framework of the implementation of the objectives of the Geneva Plan of Action.

ICTs are developing within a framework that includes technical standards and international norms, national government policies, including laws and regulations governing areas such as consumer rights, employment rights, education, health care, and the rights to freedom of thought and expression.

Thus, the necessary springboard and opportunities have been created for building “a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society”, cutting-edge technologies have been developed and implemented, and the will and desire of the entire world community and of all stakeholders in the WSIS process, are needed to achieve the goals and objectives set.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the crucial role of ICTs in the life of modern society, making it possible to continue all processes in the field of production, consumption, education and provision of essential public and social services to all segments of the population, including the vulnerable.

Infrastructure is central in achieving the goal of digital inclusion, and the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda will depend on increasing access to ICTs.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

ITU is the initiator of the WSIS Summit. The Summit emphasized that the core competences of the ITU in the fields of ICTs are of crucial importance for building the Information Society and entrusted ITU, in addition to acting as the Facilitator of Action Lines C2 (Information and communication infrastructure) and C5 (Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs) as the sole coordinator and partner for virtually all other Action Lines, to maintain the WSIS Stocktaking database. Since the Summit, ITU has initiated and co-sponsored a number of important projects such as the WSIS Forum, Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, P2C, GIGA, COP, Summit of the Future, and others. At the request of other UN organisations, ITU has taken over the role of Lead Facilitator of Action Lines C3 (Access to information and knowledge) and C4 (Capacity building).

ITU has maintained a recognized leadership role in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, primarily its Geneva phase, closely contacts with other participants in the WSIS process, is the permanent Vice-Chair of the UNGIS, and has repeatedly chaired the UNGIS.

In preparation for the first phase of WSIS, ITU established a working group to prepare for the Summit and then to follow up on the implementation of its outcomes (This group was led by representatives of the RCC (CA of Russia) for two decades, until the autumn of 2022).

In order to monitor the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, the meeting of Lead Facilitators for the WSIS Action Lines, held since 2006, was transformed in 2009 at the initiative of ITU, supported by the UNGIS, into a wider format – the WSIS Forum, which over the years of its existence has occupied a crucial niche in the process of searching for innovations in the ICT field that are most conducive to sustainable development. It is still held today, and it is the ITU that supports its work, developing and filling the agenda of the annual event with an increasing number of topical issues.

In addition, 10 years after Tunisia phase, at the WSIS+10 High-Level Event coordinated by ITU the implementation of the WSIS outcomes was reviewed: ITU organised and managed the WSIS+10 Multistakeholder Preparatory Platform, where two documents were prepared – the WSIS+10 Statement on implementation of WSIS outcomes and the WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015. The first document is an analysis of what has been achieved in 10 years (what has been done, what problems have arisen, what new challenges have been encountered), the second one is a list of what needs to be implemented and how beyond 2015.

Today, ITU is the lead facilitator in the implementation of key WSIS Action Lines for an increasingly digitalised world: C2 (Information and communication infrastructure), C4 (Capacity Building), C5 (Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs) and C6 (Enabling environment), as well as a co-facilitator of a number of other important WSIS Action Lines.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?
2. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

One of the most important outcomes of the WSIS process is the establishment of a definition of Internet governance that includes multistakeholder participation. These stakeholders include governments, international intergovernmental organisations, private sector, technical community, and civil society, including selected expert communities. After 20 years of using the multistakeholder model, it can be concluded that there is a vital need for evolution and tuning of the model. Today we are witnessing a crisis of the multistakeholder model of Internet governance, which does not guarantee that this model will be sustained and further strengthened:

a) Over the past 20 years, the “respective roles” of many stakeholders have not been identified in accordance with the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, which creates uncertainty, duplication and chaos in the process of managing the Internet, and above all the critical resources of the public core;

b) the role of States is artificially reduced, there are no practical mechanisms for their participation in Internet governance at the international level;

c) the dominance of pro-Western governmental and civil society organisations, think tanks, academic institutions from developed country groups, and other thematic institutions, including in platforms devoted to the problems of developing countries, continues, creating the appearance of diversity of opinion and promoting their desired Internet governance narratives;

d) there is still no international legal framework concerning Internet governance, despite the declaration in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society on the need to implement “shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet.” Not only are there no such norms, rules and procedures developed and adopted, but there is not even a prospect of their preparation;

e) There is no work on the internationalisation of Internet governance system.

In this regard, we would like to stress the relevance of the principle contained in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society that governments, on an equal footing, should carry out their roles and responsibilities, in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet. Unfortunately, that principle has not been put into practice.

It is critically important to organise Internet governance in the form of an open democratic process that is based on universally recognised principles and norms of international law, oriented towards the needs of people, protection of their rights and freedoms, including ensuring personal information security. The system of governance of global critical infrastructure must be equitable, neutral and immune to geopolitical challenges. The current multistakeholder Internet governance system does not fulfil these requirements.

Taking the above into consideration, it seems appropriate to implement a number of initiatives to address the current crisis of the multistakeholder model in order to ensure that the multistakeholder model is sustained and strengthened.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

While all of the WSIS Action Lines, as well as the Geneva Plan of Action, have remained relevant for almost a quarter of a century, it should not be overlooked that the challenges of the present – primarily the COVID-19 pandemic – have demonstrated the inherent importance of efforts under Action Line C2. Thus, humanity has realized that infrastructure is not just the basis for achieving the goal of digital inclusion for all inhabitants of the planet, providing a window to the world, it is the very foundation of life in the new environment – from life support to the only basis for the transfer of knowledge and the preservation of social ties.

At the same time, the implementation of efforts under Action Line C2 lays the foundation for the implementation of the rest of the Geneva Plan of Action. Without infrastructure connectivity and provision, talking about all the other Action Lines is meaningless in modern society.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

While the two core WSIS outcome documents remain fully relevant, much more needs to be done in their implementation and achieving the goals and objectives of the WSIS process that is based on them. The following are essential:

•Implementation of all outcomes of the Summit and UNGA Res. A/70/125, including those regardig the sovereign rights and obligations of States with respect to international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet.

•Support of the complementary nature of the WSIS and SDG processes, as well as the GDC, in line with the WSIS-SDG-GDC Matrix, expanding and enhancing the effective use of ICTs to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the GDC objectives.

•Full implementation of the WSIS ALs, taking into account the proposals contained in Section II “Further enhancing of Action Lines” of the WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS beyond 2015 to support the achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

•Continuation of the WSIS process, with a particular focus on practical actions to internationalize Internet governance, as well as the leading role of governments in high-level policy issues.

•Development, through the WSIS process and further endorsement, of a legal framework for Internet governance, especially for critical public core resources.

•“Connect the Unconnected”, to work together through public-private partnerships and civil society to achieve affordable Internet connectivity for the remaining one-third of the world's population and increase their digital literacy.

•Digital transformation and widespread transition to a digital economy. Assisting developing countries in this process. Removing discriminatory barriers to the introduction of the latest technologies. Ensuring information security, widespread fight against cybercrime, protection of personal data and privacy.

•A high-level agreement on the rules of the “digital movement” is needed, perhaps the process of implementing the GDC could play this role.

•Continuation of holding of the annual WSIS Forum and IGF beyond 2025.

•Continuation of the exchange of best practices in the implementation of ICT- projects (WSIS Prizes).

•Development and widespread introduction of digital literacy, especially among the younger generation and elderly citizens, including the concept of personal information security, teaching “digital hygiene”.

•Fulfilment of commitments to pay particular attention to the special needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups of society and to ensure their inclusion in Internet governance processes on an equitable basis.

•Reducing the digital divide by, inter alia, providing tangible support to developing countries in terms of financing ICT development and applications, affordable technology transfer and digital literacy.

•Convening a Working Group on Internet and Global Digital Platforms Governance under the UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies for the purpose of:

-developing a common understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, including governments, existing international organizations and policy forums, as well as the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries;

-identifying public policy issues related to Internet governance and developing proposals for the preparation of internationally recognized UN-level regulatory standards for Internet governance;

-developing a working definition of global digital platforms, studying and proposing basic principles for their regulation at the highest international level, including issues of personal data privacy, and, if necessary, preparing proposals for internationally recognized UN-level regulatory standards for the governance of global digital platforms.

Such a working group, if established, would operate from the Office and would reporto and advise the Secretary-General on the above-mentioned issues. The group should include representatives of States, private sector, the technical community and civil society.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Before talking about prospects, the review should provide a detailed analysis of achievements and challenges for each Action Line and each target set out in the WSIS Outcome Documents, the WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS beyond 2015 and UNGA Resolution 70/125, as, for example, in the Sustainable Development Goals Report of UN Secretary-General.

It is advisable for the WSIS Action Line facilitators to prepare proposals for updating them, taking into account the emergence of new technologies and new tasks set by the SDGs and the GDC. Such proposals should be posted on the relevant websites for each action line in advance, organizing a platform for exchange of views before the CSTD session and the WSIS Forum in 2025.

This review lacks a critical element – an agreed understanding of what needs to be done so that the WSIS Action Lines process can demonstrate increasing achievements. It is obvious that in order to form such a section, efforts should be made to immediately organize a discussion with a clearly defined modality, whose output should be a formally agreed document on the basis of which the work will be carried out. The CSTD session and the WSIS+20 2025 Forum seem to be events during which such a document could be agreed upon. Such a document could also be included in the outcome document of the UNGA’s overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of WSIS outcomes.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

In a general sense, the key here is to support the complementary nature of the WSIS and SDG processes according to the WSIS-SDG Matrix, to expand and enhance the effective use of ICTs to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the approaches mentioned in point 3 above are relevant here. Currently, as a result of the Future Summit, this matrix has been expanded to take into account the objectives of the GDC.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

It would be advisable to focus these formats with a wider audience than at the decision-making level to their original mandates, which determine their agendas. For example, the WSIS Forum should review the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action on an annual basis through discussions on achievements, shortcomings, identified problems and promising approaches in the implementation of each Action Line. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) discussions should provide a basis for informed decision-making on Internet-related issues within the framework of the Tunis phase of the Summit. At the same time, it is important that the output documents of such events should be not be informational but analytical – they should demonstrate an annual “snapshot” of progress on the implementation of the output documents of the relevant stages of the Summit, contain proposals and recommendations, in close connection with the WSIS-SDG-GDC Matrix, and their content should be taken into account in the work of the relevant UN organizations when making decisions.

The IGF was initiated by the United Nations in 2006 as a platform for equitable dialogue among all stakeholders on Internet governance issues. However, the mandate of the IGF is not to produce outcome documents containing recommendations, proposals or action plans for the United Nations. Every year it becomes a place to discuss the most topical issues of the digital future and to unite efforts to create an inclusive and sustainable digital ecosystem, but only in a discussion format. It seems appropriate to include in the mandate of the IGF the preparation of recommendations, draft action plans on specific areas for the United Nations and proposals on practical mechanisms of action for Internet governance at the international level.

Besides, it is important that these formats be organized under common schemes and agendas at the regional level, with the results presented at the global level, so that the outputs of the global events are as reasonable and fair as possible in terms of representing the views of developed and developing countries.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Coherence should be the key principle in the implementation of such processes. It seems necessary to abandon the tendency to adopt documents similar to existing ones, but of a declaratory nature, and to focus on the implementation of already agreed documents, while clearly harmonizing the efforts of their secretariats and avoiding duplication of efforts. It is necessary to consider the feasibility of establishing a new UN office for the GDC and the possibility of using the experience of the ITU secretariat on WSIS issues, supporting it with both authority and financial and human resources for the implementation of the recently adopted GDC, which is similar in substance to the WSIS outcome documents. This will allow achieving a synergistic effect in their implementation. Such an approach will strengthen the work on implementation of the WSIS outcomes and reduce the likelihood of duplication of efforts in the framework of implementation of the GDC provisions. In practice, the expanded WSIS-SDG-GDC Matrix could serve as a basis for launching such work.

An important aspect here is to increase the level of coordination of efforts between the New York and Geneva headquarters in initiating and implementing global processes. It is also important to note the need for a more active position of the ITU General Secretariat in raising awareness of the global audience, especially the audience of the events taking place in New York, about the WSIS process its close linkage with the process of achieving the SDGs, as set out in the relevant UNGA Resolution and other important elements of the related discussion taking place in Geneva.

The UNGIS should play a significant role in this process.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Technologies such as big data, cloud computing, the Internet of Things, broadband communications systems, especially mobile communications (5G and beyond), quantum and bio-technologies, augmented and virtual reality, 3D printing, wireless power transfer, blockchain and other digital financial instruments, smart communities, cities and homes, and of course AI and robotics, and in the future the neuroweb, will have a decisive influence on future progress in human development.

The introduction of modern technologies into all spheres of life affects the development paths of the state, business, civil society and the individual. E-government and financial institutions, health and education, agriculture, climate change and disaster management, etc., mean the transition to “digital rails”. Digitalization has become one of the key trends in the development of the largest corporations, necessary to effectively meet the challenges of the new times. Smart homes will become quotidian and affordable, making everyday life much easier and freeing up personal time. It will be possible to create and provide the necessary conditions for human development. Particular attention should be paid to the younger generation, eliminating gender inequality and providing assistance and support for vulnerable populations, including the special needs of persons with disabilities and older persons. All this should be taken into account when preparing the Vision for WSIS Beyond 2025 and updating, where necessary, the relevant Action Lines, taking into account the SDGs and the GDС.

# South Africa | DoCDT | Government

**Implementation of the WSIS Process**

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The WSIS Process, endorsed by UN General Assembly Resolution 56/183 on December 21, 2001, comprised two phases. The first phase occurred in Geneva from December 10 to 12, 2003, focusing on establishing a foundation for an Information Society, resulting in the adoption of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Geneva Plan of Action. The second phase took place in Tunis from November 16 to 18, 2005, aimed at implementing the Geneva Plan of Action and addressing Internet governance and financing mechanisms, culminating in the adoption of the Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

The United Nations Group on Information Society (UNGIS), endorsed in 2006 by UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), is an inter-agency mechanism established to coordinate policy issues related to the WSIS outcomes. It aims to enhance the implementation of WSIS goals and advance global information society policies by fostering collaboration among various UN bodies. UNGIS focuses on creating a cohesive approach to improve information and knowledge societies and addresses emerging challenges in the field of information and communication technologies.

In preparation for the WSIS+20 review, a collaborative process involving all UN agencies, including ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD, UN DESA, UN CSTD, and the UN Regional Commissions has been established. Regular meetings are organized to facilitate discussions and planning, reflecting a joint and dedicated approach to the WSIS+20 review. This has adeptly united multiple United Nations agencies, thereby facilitating the establishment of the United Nations Group on Information Society (UNGIS) framework for collaboration. The Action Lines remain relevant and serve to provide a comprehensive framework for advancing digital progress in the future. Furthermore, the process has demonstrated adaptability, evolving over time to ensure alignment with new and emerging technologies.

The WSIS process has effectively facilitated global digital cooperation by successfully implementing the multistakeholder model, as exemplified by the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the WSIS Forum. These platforms foster an inclusive and equitable environment for all stakeholders to systematically engage in discussions about technology's evolution and its implications from various perspectives.

1. What are ITU's main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

Following ITU Council Resolution 1282, the ITU has an ongoing role in WSIS implementation, specifically as the sole facilitator for several WSIS Action Lines, including C2 (Information and Communication Infrastructure), C4 (Capacity Building), C5 (Building Confidence in ICTs), and C6 (Enabling Environment). Roadmaps have been developed to guide ITU's activities related to these Action Lines.

The annual WSIS Forum, hosted by the ITU and co-organized with UNESCO, UNDP, and UNCTAD, embodies the spirit of multi-stakeholder collaboration and inclusiveness. For the past 20 years, it has provided a powerful platform for vibrant discussions on the WSIS process and Action Lines implementation, gathering vital input for the WSIS Review process, reported at UN CSTD annual sessions. The Forum’s innovative discussions inspire diverse stakeholders, meeting their evolving expectations and shaping a brighter future.

ITU activities, such as the WSIS Project Prizes, the WSIS Stocktaking database, and the Partnership for Measuring ICT for Development, are crucial for implementing the WSIS outcomes.

The ITU Council Working Group on World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (CWG-WSIS&SDG), currently chaired by South Africa, has demonstrated its effectiveness as a mechanism for enabling Member States to provide input regarding the ITU's role in implementing the WSIS outcomes and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The organizations responsible for implementing the WSIS process must operate within their defined mandates while fostering collaboration to ensure the effective implementation of the WSIS Action Lines. It is essential for these organizations to systematically monitor and evaluate the progress of these implementations, utilizing key performance indicators to assess their impact and effectiveness.

In addition, as they navigate the complexities of the digital landscape, these organizations should carefully consider the implications of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things, on the execution of WSIS Action Lines beyond the year 2025. This foresight is crucial for adapting strategies that align with technological advancements.

Furthermore, these organisations should be cognisant of the broader context of the Global Digital Impact and the SDGs 2030. This entails integrating their efforts with global initiatives aimed at achieving inclusive and sustainable development, ensuring that the benefits of technology are equitably distributed across all sectors of society. By fostering such an approach, organizations will be better positioned to address the challenges and opportunities that arise in the evolving digital world.

1. What are the **challenges** that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Two decades after the launch of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process, an alarming 2.6 billion individuals—approximately one-third of the global population—remain without internet access. This stark statistic highlights the urgent need to bridge the persistent digital divide that separates communities and nations. As we witness rapid technological advancements, particularly in the realm of Artificial Intelligence, it becomes increasingly vital to address not just the digital divide but also to prevent the emergence of an AI divide that could exacerbate inequalities.

The high costs associated with communication, including the expensive prices of data, smartphones, and other digital devices, along with inadequate levels of information and communication technology (ICT) skills in certain populations, continue to create significant barriers to accessing and using digital technology. These financial obstacles often lead to a digital divide, where individuals and communities lack the means to purchase necessary devices, while others may struggle to effectively engage with technology due to insufficient training or understanding of how to use these tools. As a result, many potential users are unable to fully participate in the digital economy or benefit from the myriad of online resources and services available.

As we look beyond 2025, the audit of the WSIS Action Lines conducted by various facilitators should guide the future work that remains. Additionally, the WSIS process must ensure that its objectives align with the goals outlined in the Global Digital Compact. Additionally, it must incorporate the principles set out by SDG 2030 to foster inclusive and equitable digital development. By prioritizing these initiatives, we can strive towards a future where every individual, regardless of geographic or socioeconomic status, has access to the digital tools and technologies essential for participation in the digital economy.

**WSIS Action Lines**

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

**WSIS Action Lines, including C2 (Information and Communication Infrastructure), C6 (Enabling Environment)**

The Republic of South Africa successfully concluded the highly anticipated **IMT spectrum auction** in March 2022, marking a significant milestone in the country's telecommunications landscape. The auction generated over R14.4 billion for the national treasury, reflecting both the value of the spectrum and the growing demand for enhanced communication services.

This newly auctioned spectrum is expected to play a crucial role in increasing overall spectrum capacity, which is vital for accommodating the rising data consumption driven by smartphone usage and digital services. In addition, the expanded spectrum availability will contribute to lowering communication costs for consumers and businesses alike, fostering greater accessibility to telecommunication services.

Importantly, the deployment of this spectrum will enable network operators to extend their coverage to underserved rural and remote areas, bridging the digital divide and promoting greater social and economic inclusion. Alongside this expansion, improvements in network quality are anticipated, ensuring a more reliable service for users.

Furthermore, the introduction of this spectrum will stimulate competition among network providers, which can lead to innovative offerings and better pricing for consumers. The auction has also paved the way for the deployment of 5G technology, allowing operators to enhance their service offerings with faster speeds, lower latency, and improved capacity to support the growing number of connected devices. This development positions South Africa to embrace the ongoing global digital transformation.

South Africa's approach to digital transformation is demonstrated through various policies within the ICT and related sectors; a few are mentioned below.

The South African government published the **National Data and Cloud Policy**, 2024. This policy aims to efficiently manage and utilize data through cloud computing technologies. It is aligned with the government’s digital transformation agenda and is intended to catalyze the development of a data-driven ecosystem in the country. The policy aims to improve government service delivery and promote socio-economic development by encouraging data-driven decision-making and supporting the digital economy. Key principles include accelerating digital infrastructure rollout (to ensure fast, secure and reliable broadband connectivity), ensuring data privacy and security, promoting open data and data interoperability, and adopting a cloud-first approach.

It is important to recognize the potential of AI technologies to support the contribution of telecommunications and ICTs to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In our approach, guided by the **Presidential Commission on the 4th Industrial Revolution (PC4IR) report**, we view AI as a technology that will advance our social and economic prosperity. In 2022, the Republic of South Africa established an **Artificial Intelligence (AI) institute** to harness AI skills and research capabilities. The South African government published the **draft National Artificial Intelligence Policy Framework, 2024** for comments. The Policy seeks to guide the responsible and ethical development, deployment, and utilisation of AI across all sectors of society.

The **ICT and Digital Economy Masterplan for South Africa, 2021** provides a blueprint for developing a national priority of digital empowerment with the vision for all South Africans to be digitally empowered. This will enable them to create and participate in tech-enabled opportunities that promote inclusiveness, employment, and economic transformation across our cities, towns, and provinces. The critical enablers include digital inclusion, workforce skills, responsive governance, innovation, competitiveness, and government digitalization.

Our efforts to bridge the digital divide are gaining ground as Census 2022 revealed an upward trend in internet access. Approximately 79 percent of the country has some form of internet access while the number of households without internet access decreased from 64,8 percent in 2011 to 21,1percent in 2022. Phase 1 of SA Connect connected 970 government facilities, which include schools and healthcare facilities

**C4 (Capacity Building)**

The **Electronic Communications Act, 2005** offers a minimum 50% discount on Internet service levies for private and public learning institutions. The **Broadband SA Connect Policy, 2013** prioritizes schools and colleges for broadband connectivity to stimulate demand. Meanwhile, the **National Digital and Future Skills Strategy, 2020** sets a framework for developing digital skills and encourages collaboration among various stakeholders, including government, businesses, and civil society, to advance ICT use in education.

**National Digital and Future Skills Strategy**

The strategy provides a roadmap for priority digital skills action points: Identification, categorisation and guidelines for collectively building a comprehensive range of digital skills, set out as strategy elements, driven either by DCDT directly or in conjunction with other stakeholders and structures. The Strategy further provides a roadmap for stakeholder collaboration: Identification of key action points to facilitate stakeholder collaboration across government, with state agencies and government-appointed committees, with organised business and labour, with academia, scientific organisations and civil society

**C5 (Building Confidence in ICTs)**

In 2018, South Africa developed the **National Cyber Security Strategy** to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of ICT infrastructure amidst evolving cyber threats like electronic fraud and data theft. The strategy emphasizes balancing security risks with comprehensive national cybersecurity plans for economic growth and national security. It is built on four pillars: (a) Defend, (b) Deter, (c) Develop, and (d) Cooperate. The strategy's objectives include:

1. Securing internet and telecommunications from hijacking.
2. Strengthening critical infrastructure against cyber threats.
3. Implementing multi-level security measures for connected devices.
4. Embedding cybersecurity in technology products and services.
5. Securing government networks and services for public trust.
6. Ensuring organizations manage cyber risks.

Additional interventions promoting ICT confidence and security include:

1. The **Electronic Communications and Transactions Act 2002**, which focuses on the protection of critical data.
2. The **South African Cybersecurity Policy Framework, 2015**, which aims to create a secure cyber environment and establish a cybersecurity hub for collaboration among government, industry, and civil society.

The **National Data and Cloud Policy, 2024** recognizes the need to enable digital capacity and create a secure cyber environment. This environment will protect companies and citizens from cyber threats and foster a digital trust environment that will encourage and support investments required to build a strong and sustainable digital economy.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

As we navigate the intricate landscape of the digital world, the WSIS process must take into account the significant implications of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things. These technologies are reshaping how we communicate and share information and significantly influencing the execution and effectiveness of WSIS Action Lines beyond the year 2025. Understanding the potential benefits and challenges posed by these advancements is crucial for developing adaptive strategies.

By proactively addressing these innovations, the WSIS process can ensure its frameworks and initiatives remain relevant and impactful in an ever-evolving digital era. This strategic foresight is essential for effectively responding to the demands of a rapidly changing technological landscape.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators?

As we look beyond 2025, it is imperative that the audit of the WSIS Action Lines, conducted by diverse facilitators, serve as a foundational guide for our future endeavours. This audit should evaluate past achievements and identify areas for improvement and innovation. Furthermore, the WSIS process must align its objectives with the goals set forth in the Global Digital Compact, ensuring a cohesive strategy that addresses pressing global challenges.

In addition to aligning with the Global Digital Compact, the WSIS initiative must also consider emerging technological trends, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things, which are shaping the digital landscape. Incorporating the principles articulated by SDG 2030 is crucial in this context. These principles emphasize the importance of fostering inclusive and equitable digital development, which is essential for the sustainable growth of the digital economy.

By prioritizing initiatives that enhance digital access and literacy, we can work towards a future where every individual, regardless of their geographic location or socioeconomic background, is empowered with the digital tools and technologies necessary for meaningful participation in the digital economy. This commitment to inclusivity will not only help bridge the digital divide but also promote innovation and collaboration on a global scale, paving the way for a more equitable and prosperous digital future for all.

**WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs**

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The WSIS Action Lines should be strategically aligned with the SDGs by establishing robust and effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms. A WSIS Action Lines-SDGs matrix will serve as an invaluable tool in facilitating this alignment. It will enable stakeholders to systematically track progress and identify areas for improvement in both WSIS and sustainable development initiatives.

The implementation of the WSIS outcomes will foster digital transformation, promote the development of the digital economy, and help achieve the SDGs.

Moreover, implementing the outcomes of the WSIS is essential for promoting comprehensive digital transformation. This initiative will not only nurture the development of the digital economy but will also play a critical role in achieving the SDGs. By prioritizing digital literacy, enhancing infrastructure, and encouraging innovation, we can build a more sustainable and resilient future where technology serves as a catalyst for social and economic advancement.

**Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025**

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

The United Nations Internet Governance Forum (IGF) aims to bring together individuals from diverse stakeholder groups to discuss digital public policy. IGF serves to inform and inspire those who hold policymaking power in both the public and private sectors and does not produce negotiated outcomes.

The ITU Council Resolution 1336 regarding the Council Working Group on International Internet-Related Public Policy Issues (CWG-Internet) states that the group's terms of reference include identifying, studying, and developing issues related to international Internet-related public policy. This includes the topics outlined in Council Resolution 1305 (2009).

We believe that the organizations responsible for implementing the WSIS process should operate within their defined mandates while promoting collaboration to ensure the effective execution of the WSIS Action Lines. The ITU, as an intergovernmental body, should identify, study, and develop matters related to public policy issues concerning the international Internet as per the above Council Resolution.

As stated in the NETmundial+10’s Sao Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines, continuous improvement is necessary in applying the multistakeholder approach. This improvement is required in both multilateral and multistakeholder forums

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The WSIS process must ensure that its objectives are aligned with the goals outlined in the Pact of the Future and the Global Digital Compact. The WSIS Action Lines should strategically connect with the Global Digital Compact and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by establishing robust and effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms. A matrix that integrates WSIS Action Lines, the Global Digital Compact, and the SDGs will be an invaluable tool for facilitating this alignment. It will enable stakeholders to systematically track progress and identify areas needing improvement in WSIS, GDC, and sustainable development initiatives. This approach will help realize the GDC’s goals of creating a forward-looking global framework designed to tackle the complexities and inequalities of the digital age, with a strong emphasis on closing the digital divide.

Leveraging the existing framework for implementation through the United Nations Group on Information Society (UNGIS) and the WSIS Forum should be considered instead of establishing an additional coordination system for the GDC.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

In light of the rapidly evolving technological landscape—characterized by advancements in IoT, OTTs, Big Data, AI, 5G, 6G, and the Metaverse—it is essential for the ITU to consider these emerging digital trends during the WSIS+20 review and in future revisions beyond 2025. As we navigate the complexities of the digital world, the WSIS process must account for the significant implications these trends hold. They are reshaping how we communicate and share information while also impacting the execution and effectiveness of WSIS Action Lines in the years to come.

Understanding both the potential benefits and challenges of these advancements is crucial for developing adaptive strategies. By proactively addressing these innovations, the WSIS process can ensure its frameworks and initiatives remain relevant and impactful in an ever-evolving digital landscape. This strategic foresight is vital for effectively responding to the demands presented by this rapidly changing environment. Given the rapidly evolving technological landscape, including advancements in IoT, OTTs, Big Data, AI, 5G, 6G, and the Metaverse, it is crucial for the ITU to consider these trends in the WSIS+20 review and future revisions after 2025. The WSIS process must address the implications of these developments, as they are reshaping communication and influencing the effectiveness of WSIS Action Lines.

Recognizing both the benefits and challenges of these advancements is essential for creating adaptive strategies. By doing so, the WSIS can maintain relevance and impact in an ever-changing digital environment, ensuring effective responses to emerging technological demands.

**Organisation:** Department of Communications and Digital Technologies

**Organisation type:** Government

**Organisation Country:** Republic of South Africa

# South Africa | iAPC | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

iAssociation for Progressive Communications

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

South Africa

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Awareness

WSIS came at a critical time. A relatively small number of countries/governments and entities from other stakeholder groups were aware of, and engaged in, the potential of communications technologies to support development. Few predicted that a digitally (we used the term ‘electronic’ at the time’) interconnected world would have profound impact on social and economic and political processes. Even though digital equality between and within countries has not been achieve, if not for the WSIS, the chances are that these gaps would be even wider, and the economic power that has accompanied digital development would be even more concentrated and unevenly distributed.

Increased connectivity

Significant progress has been made in expanding global connectivity. The number of internet users worldwide has surged, with the broadband infrastructure expanding into more remote and underserved areas, however, more than half the world’s population still does not have access and in Africa penetration is currently below 40%. Since 2015 a key achievement is the rise of community networks: The rise of community-driven networks and availability of licenses for community networks and other local access providers have helped bridge the gap where traditional market-based solutions have failed to reach, especially in rural and low-income areas. This is also mentioned below in post-WSIS opportunities.

Engagement

Public participation in digital policy development has definitely increased, even if unevenly, through the multistakeholder approach. That does not mean that participation is sufficient and that there are not affected communities that are not still excluded. WSIS legitimised collaboration between different stakeholders. It broadened the focus on ‘public private partnerships’ which emerged so strongly from the telecoms and strengthened civil society’s claim on being a decision-maker and implementer. However, the multistakeholder approach has also contributed to, even if only partially, to big tech companies capture of the WSIS narrative. This is particularly evident through how mobile operators convinced policy-makers that their services provide the ultimate solution to bridging access gaps. The MS approach also legitimated the misguided notion that self-regulation by global internet companies is sufficient to protect the public interest.

Linked to awareness, engagement and increased connectivity are:

 • Locally led innovation and content creation: While it has challenged main stream media sustainability, convergence of dissemination platforms and use of social media invigorated local media in many instances. In spite of very limited public sector support local content including in languages other than English has grown substantially. In many parts of the world media such as radio was made more sustainable by being able to stream over the internet. The down side of this is in places where poor communities cannot afford data and transition away from free-to-air broadcasting resulted in less rather than more access to content.

 • Mobile apps: These range from problematic to not very useful to very useful such as, for example, mobile money apps in contexts characterised by financial exclusion. Not enough apps are developed specifically for and by users in the global South, but enough are to have made it easier for people who rely on smartphones to access the internet to gain value from it.

 • Digital rights analysis and the digital rights movement: Since 2015 what started as a small group of mainly global North civil society organisations has grown into a massive global movement working for digital rights.

E-Government services: A growing number of governments have adopted digital platforms for public service delivery, improving transparency, reducing corruption, and enhancing service efficiency, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

Action line facilitation as well as playing a lead role in facilitating collaboration with other Action Line facilitators.

Convening and growing the WSIS Forum. The event can be strengthened in many ways, but it is extremely use in bringing together governments, and regulators together with other stakeholders.

The Partnership on measuring ICT for development.

Multiple policies and regulations were updated or changed (and ITU digital divide resolutions), public consultations, and training workshops. Increased openness to innovative approaches such as dynamic spectrum management and local access solutions such as community networks.

Direct interaction with UN / ITU member states around WSIS action lines.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Continually improve it and evolve it.

Apply it consistently at national level and global level.

Draw on the NETmundial +10 guidelines on applying the model effectively.

View the MS model as a means to more inclusive governance rather than an end in itself. It is a way of making governance more accountable and inclusive. But policy processes have to be evaluated based on the their effectiveness and accountability, whether they are being implemented and whether they make a positive difference in achieving digital inclusion and equality, and promoting human rights. Just because a policy process is multistakeholder it does not mean it is effective or "just".

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Lack of vision and awareness from governments

Many governments, particularly from developing countries, were either unaware of the importance of ICT for development or were hesitant to embrace it due to concerns about its broader implications for social and political change. As a result, there was a delay in the adoption of ICT policies and initiatives that would expand access to ICTs, limiting the progress of digital development and resulting only elites gaining access and benefit.

Insufficient alignment between WSIS and the SDGs

Market fundamentalist and supply-driven approaches

Efforts were often focused primarily on the physical rollout of infrastructure, such as internet access and telecommunications networks. This approach was consolidated by the market-driven telecoms liberalisation and the resulting “capture” of the narrative discussed below and did not address the essential human and institutional capacity needed to integrate and utilise these technologies effectively, nor did it prioritise the creation of useful content and services that could benefit local communities. It underestimated the need for public sector investment and oversight and partnerships with local community, assuming that private sector investment was adequate to bridge the digital ‘divides’.

Regulatory ambivalence and ambiguity

Whether to regulate and if so how, and by whom. Regulating the development and roll out of digital products and services in a manner that protect and strengthens human rights has been and will continue to be a challenge. There has been a shift from no regulation to fragmented regulation without clear principles such as, for example, applying the precautionary principle to digital products and services as has been the case in other sectors such as the pharmaceutical industry.

Neglect of digital inequality and increased inequality resulting from the “digital equality paradox”

Digital inequality, both within and between countries, was not sufficiently addressed. The assumption was that it would disappear as with increased mobile telephony and internet penetration. International and national development agencies as well as governments underestimated the relationship between pre-existing social and economic inequality and the so-called “digital divide”. As a result, many underserved and vulnerable populations were left without the means to access and benefit from ICTs.

Insufficient investment in financial mechanisms/support

The implementation of the WSIS vision often faced budgetary constraints, with inadequate funding for necessary infrastructure, capacity-building initiatives, and the creation of sustainable digital ecosystems, including access to electricity. This lack of resources has multiple causes including: the fact that WSIS outcomes did not include adequate financial mechanisms, mainly as a result of donor countries not wanting to make additional financial commitments; the lingering impact of structural adjustment, a trend in development aid which discouraged global South governments reliant on aid from investing in public sector infrastructure and services; the debt burden, which, after the period of debt forgiveness early in the century just grew into its current ‘crisis’ proportions.

Persistent digital skills gap between the global North and South

Weak implementation and conceptualisation of digital literacy and capacity building is a major problem. A holistic approach to building human capacity is vital to demand-side strengthening. However, in spite of a large amount of rhetoric on digital literacy few governments have rolled out integrated approaches to building the range digital, media, information and financial literacy people need to benefit from ICTs in ways that are safe and secure and that empower them in the face of emerging challenges such as mis and dis information.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

C1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

There is so much more awareness of what can be done to promote the use of ICTs for development across the board.

C2. Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for the Information Society - even though the gaps are huge there is much more infrastructure. It is just not distributed equitably.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Strengthen existing initiatives

Update the actionline framework

Closer collaboration between the IGF and the WSIS Forum

Avoid duplication and distraction resulting from the Global Digital Compact approach

Continue to focus on the role of governments and of multistakeholder collaboration at national level

Evolve the principles of participation by taking seriously collaboration with, and debate with, civil society. Civil society should not be an after thought.

Keep the focus on human rights and people-centered development that characterised the WSIS. We should be talking about people cooperation for digitally enabled development. Not about "digital" cooperation. Emphaise people and society.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

• Expansion of digital connectivity: New technologies such as more robust WiFi, mobile broadband and satellite internet (e.g., Starlink) are making high-speed internet more accessible, even in remote or rural locations. Improved infrastructure not only boosts internet connectivity but also enables more reliable communication, which is essential for everything from education and healthcare to business and governance.

 • Awareness of the gender digital divide: This was mentioned during WSIS, prioritised by during the 2015 10-year review, and continues to be a challenge. The opportunity is that there is more awareness of this challenge and a better understanding of how it relates to existing inequalities between men and women related to income, levels of education and social norms. There is also a larger body of individuals and organisations with expertise in addressing this challenge.

 • Solar energy and the green transition: Solar energy, combined with more affordable solar-powered devices, is revolutionizing access to ICTs in areas with unreliable or no access to the electric grid. Solar-powered internet hubs, mobile phones, and e-learning platforms are allowing people in remote locations to access education, healthcare, and financial services, all powered by renewable energy. This shift not only promotes digital inclusion but also contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

 • Empowering local communities: A key opportunity since WSIS has been the rise of community-led initiatives to build digital infrastructure and services. Rather than relying solely on large multinational companies, many local communities have taken charge of building their own networks, creating community wireless networks, and running digital platforms that address local needs. For example, community networks in rural areas often provide affordable internet and mobile services, helping bridge the digital divide. These approaches have been supported by non-governmental organizations, development agencies, and local governments.

 • Participatory (digital) development: Community-driven approaches allow for more inclusive, context-specific solutions. These initiatives empower local populations to actively shape their digital environments, fostering more sustainable, culturally appropriate, and responsive systems. They also create greater social cohesion and local ownership over technology, improving the effectiveness of digital programs.

 • Efforts to introduce fairer taxation of big tech companies: These efforts, within the UN and through the OECD are absolutely vital and should be a key discussion point in WSIS and GDJ follow up and implementation.

Challenges

 • Climate change and environmental sustainability

 • Concentration of power in telecom and internet industries

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Integrate follow up and implementation of the Global Digital Compact and WSIS.

Do not duplicate efforts of WSIS which has fully embraced the SDGs. This is true for the IGF as well.

Use WSIS as a 'digital' track inside the SDG process.

Convene the SDG's STI Forum (Science and Technology and Innovation) alongside the WSIS Forum and the IGF rather than as a separate process

Create a new "major group" in ECOSOC for non-state actors focused on digitalisation development and rights.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Closer collaboration between these processes and events.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Strengthen rather than duplicate mechanisms and processes that strive to achieve the SDGs and the WSIS vision;

Use the GDC to update and complement this vision by integrating GDC implementation into existing processes, specifically the next phase of the WSIS by using the WSIS review to make concrete recommendations on how this integration and non-duplication can be achieved;

Affirm the need to continue to commit to the multistakeholder approach and evolve it in such a manner that it strengthens collaboration between stakeholders as well as their collective and stakeholder-specific accountability for promoting and protecting human rights and commitment to the SDGs, and the WSIS and GDC principles;

Merge the WSIS Forum and the STI Forum as processes and meetings that focus on digitalisation in enabling the SDGs; and

Recognise that the IGF has evolved into the world’s foremost and most inclusive forum for dialogue on not only internet, but also broader digital governance, and establish it as a permanent forum as well as ensure that it has the resources needed to strengthen its capacity and reach.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

To some extent we have covered this already:

Achieving meaningful connectivity through innovative financing mechanisms to support the sustainability of local access solutions like small businesses and community networks to connect the billions who do not have meaningful connectivity.

The centrality and complexity of data governance

The impact of climate change

Corporate accountability

Centering human rights in efforts to respond to "harm"s such as harmful speech online, mis/dis information, cyber crime and insecurity

Creating digital public goods

Gender divide

The 'digital' cold war between Europe the US and China.

The lingering digital divide.. it remains the primary challenge

Digital literacy and capacity - we are still just scratching the surface of this in most of the global South

Strengthening existing initiatives like the WSIS Forum, the IGF and the work of the CSTD, UNESCO and UNCTAD in the various areas they specialise in rather - digital economy is a priority.

# South Africa | Joint submission | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Joint submission: Association for Progressive Communications; AUDRI; Derechos Digitales; Equality Now; Pollicy; Women at the Table; Women’s Rights Online

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

South Africa

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

An important vision within the WSIS Framework has been the commitment to gender mainstreaming, yet this remains largely unfulfilled. Although the WSIS Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005) Summits emphasized the role of ICTs—including new and emerging technologies such as AI—in promoting gender equality, insufficient measurable progress has been made. This underscores the urgent need for a dedicated gender pillar alongside more targeted, data-driven, and enforceable mainstreaming efforts.

Key achievements include:

- WSIS Declaration of Principles: Acknowledged the need for an inclusive information society in which women and men have equal access to ICTs.

- WSIS Plan of Action: Included explicit but broad goals to bridge the digital gender divide.

Despite these formal commitments, actual implementation has lagged, indicating that gender-specific strategies, robust monitoring, and sustained investment are necessary to realize the WSIS vision on gender equality.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU has played a central role in incorporating gender perspectives throughout the WSIS process, particularly through data collection, initiatives to promote women in tech leadership, and annual WSIS Forums. While these efforts are commendable, they must go beyond merely counting women’s participation and instead assess qualitative impact: to what extent have women and girls advanced their rights, achieved meaningful leadership roles, and shaped technological ecosystems?

Some noteworthy ITU-led or co-led WSIS-related initiatives include:

=> WSIS Forum: Gender-Focused Discussions

Annual sessions on women in governance, STEM, and online safety, which should further expand to address women’s access to the emerging digital economy, AI governance, and content creation.

=> WSIS Prizes: “ICTs for Gender Equality” Category

Recognizing projects that empower women digitally. This prize category should be further leveraged to encourage more innovative, scalable interventions.

=> Key Partnerships and Initiatives

- EQUALS Global Partnership (with UN Women, GSMA, etc.): Focused on access, digital skills, leadership, and research for women.

- Girls in ICT Day: Encourages early interest in STEM careers, which must be complemented by lifelong support in advanced STEM pathways to ensure retention and advancement.

- Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme: Aims to elevate women in cybersecurity leadership, but must be expanded and integrated with broader digital governance roles.

- Co-Lead Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality: Tackles digital access, digital ecosystems, innovation, and technology-facilitated GBV (tfGBV).

=> Data Collection Efforts

ITU disaggregates ICT data by gender under WSIS frameworks (e.g., Information Society Reports), offering a unique global perspective. This data collection must now evolve to include comprehensive indicators (e.g., long-term STEM pipeline data, representation in AI leadership, frequency/severity of tfGBV, women’s roles in tech governance) to guide more precise policy interventions.

Finally, ITU supports governments with developing gender-responsive national ICT policies, addressing areas like AI regulation, digital finance, and e-government services. While this is crucial, systemic barriers remain formidable. A more integrated, well-funded strategy and dedicated accountability frameworks are essential to accelerate tangible progress.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

To sustain and strengthen this model, the WSIS community must systematically:

- Address the persistent underrepresentation of women in digital governance and policy-making (e.g., cybersecurity, AI regulation, internet policy). Barriers include gender gaps in STEM from primary school onward, narrow conceptions of expertise, and structural obstacles in the workplace.

- Adopt a more inclusive, intersectional approach that also accounts for historically marginalized groups (e.g., gender non-conforming individuals, racial minorities, people with disabilities).

- Institute specific targets and metrics for participation. Purely “counting women in the room” is insufficient; representation must translate into influential leadership roles, with measurable outcomes for policy and innovation.

Studies suggest that women currently hold only 26% of global cybersecurity and tech policy leadership roles (World Economic Forum, 2023), and merely 15% of authors of leading AI research papers are women (Stanford AI Index, 2023). This gender gap leads to narrower perspectives in governance, weaker policies, and missed economic gains—estimates indicate that closing gender gaps in tech could add over $1 trillion to global GDP (McKinsey, 2023).

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Despite notable gains, daunting challenges persist:

1. Persistent Digital Gender Divide

- Women remain disproportionately offline, especially in low- and middle-income countries. In 2023, 259 million fewer women than men had internet access (ITU).

- Affordability remains a barrier for those with lower incomes or who face broader economic marginalization.

2. Gender Gaps in STEM and Digital Skills

- Women constitute only 35% of STEM students worldwide (UNESCO, 2023).

- In AI-related fields, only 22% of professionals are women (Stanford AI Index, 2023).

3. Underrepresentation in Digital Governance

- Women hold less than 20% of global ICT ministerial roles.

- Policy bodies often lack explicit gender equity goals, and action is typically piecemeal or insufficiently funded.

4. Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)

- Online abuse, harassment, doxxing, and deepfake misuse disproportionately harm women.

- Many cybersecurity frameworks lack robust gender-responsive protections.

5. Weak Enforcement and Accountability

- Many WSIS-aligned initiatives on paper do not have the robust monitoring or enforcement mechanisms required to effect real change.

- Gender-responsive ICT policy funding remains inadequate, hampering large-scale implementation.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Each WSIS Action Line has carried some reference to gender, yet effective impact depends on the depth of their gender integration. In particular:

- Action Line C1 (Role of Governments & Stakeholders): Encourages gender-responsive ICT strategies, but follow-through is inconsistent across national policies.

- Action Line C4 (Capacity Building): Provides a platform for women’s digital literacy and STEM education; has spurred some growth but needs consistent, long-term investment.

- Action Line C5 (Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs): Critical for addressing tfGBV and cybersecurity threats that disproportionately affect women, yet remains under-implemented in many national frameworks.

- Action Line C11 (International & Regional Cooperation): Promotes synergy among stakeholders, including ITU and UN Women. These partnerships can be catalytic but must move beyond pilot projects to scaled, sustainable initiatives.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

While gender is recognized as a cross-cutting issue across the Action Lines, enforcement mechanisms and dedicated resources are often lacking. The WSIS+10 Outcome Document (2014) reiterated that gender equality should be mainstreamed, yet implementation gaps persist. Enhancing the impact requires:

- Elevating Gender to a Standalone Pillar: Complement cross-cutting mainstreaming with a dedicated action line or explicit pillar focusing on gender, backed by dedicated funding and accountability structures.

- Robust Monitoring & Evaluation: Incorporate gender-disaggregated indicators into every action line, with periodic reporting and review to assess progress.

- Stronger Financing Mechanisms: Align existing funding channels or create new streams specifically for gender-responsive ICT initiatives.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

A standalone WSIS Action Line on gender is crucial. Such an action line would unify, coordinate, and strengthen the accountability of all measures aimed at closing the digital gender divide. It should:

- Promote measurable goals and benchmarks to guide WSIS+20 and beyond.

- Ensure consistent, reliable funding and embed accountability measures that track national-level implementation.

- Incorporate best practices on technology-facilitated GBV, digital leadership, AI ethics, and emerging data and tech governance.

- Draw on the recommendations from CSW67 Agreed Conclusions and the upcoming Beijing+30 Action Agenda.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

To accelerate progress towards the SDGs, especially SDG 5 (Gender Equality), alignment between WSIS and the 2030 Agenda should:

- Mandate Gender-Specific Indicators: Incorporate metrics on women’s ICT participation, AI leadership, tfGBV incidents, and policy responsiveness.

- Institutionalize Gender Impact Assessments: Require comprehensive reviews of any new ICT-related policies to ensure they do not inadvertently exacerbate gender inequalities.

- Enhance Funding Mechanisms: Provide grants, loans, or blended finance for initiatives aimed at women’s digital empowerment, ideally administered through a dedicated WSIS or UN trust fund.

- Combat Technology-Facilitated GBV: Develop global guidelines and national-level commitments to address online abuse, deeply aligned with SDG 5.2 (eliminate all forms of violence against women).

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

To establish the WSIS Forum and IGF as truly gender-responsive spaces, the following measures are proposed:

- Ensure Gender Parity in Key Structures: Panels, working groups, MAG (Multistakeholder Advisory Group) membership, etc.

- Integrate Gender Across All Discussions: Avoid siloing “women’s issues” by weaving gender analysis into mainstream debates on AI governance, data privacy, cybersecurity, and emerging technologies.

- Address Technology-Facilitated GBV: Make tfGBV a standing agenda item, support deeper research and data collection, and share best practices for policy and enforcement.

- Provide Financial Support: Establish a “Gender Fund” to facilitate participation from women, youth, and historically marginalized groups, especially from developing regions.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The WSIS process, Pact for the Future, and Global Digital Compact share broad aims of inclusive, equitable digital development. For alignment, it is essential to:

- Harmonize Gender Objectives: Define common gender-related targets and indicators across these frameworks, and create joint reporting mechanisms that reduce duplication and maximize impact.

- Strengthen Multi-Institutional Cooperation: Forge stronger linkages among ITU, UN Women, UNESCO, and other agencies to unify gender initiatives, thereby avoiding fragmented programs and small-scale pilots.

- Institutionalize Gender-Responsive Principles: Reflect gender equality explicitly in foundational documents, meeting agendas, and programmatic budgets.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Several emerging trends demand urgent attention through a gender lens:

1. Gender Bias in AI & Other New/Emerging Technologies

- AI systems trained on biased datasets systematically disadvantage women (e.g., AI hiring tools).

- Women represent only ~12% of AI researchers globally; fewer than 6% of AI/tech patents list women inventors (WIPO, 2022).

2. Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (tfGBV)

- Harassment, doxxing, deepfake abuse, and other forms of online violence disproportionately affect women.

- National cybersecurity strategies must incorporate gender-responsive protections.

3. Persistent Gender Gaps in Digital Entrepreneurship

- Women-led startups receive only 2% of global venture capital funding (World Economic Forum, 2023).

- Public and private investments in women-led innovation, including cooperative models, should be prioritized.

4. Gender-Responsive Governance and Policy

- Of 138 countries assessed by the Global Index for Responsible AI, only 24 reference gender in their AI frameworks, and even fewer provide concrete methodologies for implementing these commitments.

- Mainstreaming gender in ICT master plans remains inconsistent, weakening broader digital inclusion efforts.

By addressing these challenges comprehensively, the ITU and broader WSIS community can transform the digital landscape into one that truly reflects and supports the needs, expertise, and aspirations of all women and girls worldwide.

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IN SUMMARY, while WSIS has laid an important foundation for gender equality in the digital sphere, new and emerging digital technologies, combined with persistent structural barriers, demand a renewed and reinforced strategy. A standalone action line on gender, integrated across all WSIS processes, combined with greater accountability, funding, and robust data-driven policies, will be pivotal to ensuring the next phase of WSIS fully delivers on its promises for women and girls everywhere.

# Spain | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona | Academia

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

1. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

1. Organization country

Spain

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The WSIS-20 Forum High-Level Event 2024 proved the enormous progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS process. From an academic perspective, I would like to highlight two main achievements: a) the possibility to connect with stakeholders from various fields (academia, government, private sector, technical community, civil society) and address a wide array of issues on ICT at different levels, as a necessary first step for future action, and b) the focus on a people-centric and inclusive Information Society, which is aligned with our current research interests and vision. Especially remarkable is the effort made to align the WSIS and the SDG process.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

ITU has contributed extensively to the WSIS process. I would like to stress two highlights in which we have been involved as an academic partner and which have had an impact both on our research and on the promotion of ICT accessibility: on the one hand, the WSIS Forum, a multi-stakeholder event that gives visibility to the WSIS process; on the other hand, the WSIS Project Prize, which has allowed us not only to give visibility to a funded European project but to network with other key international projects in ICT.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

I would suggest facilitating the presence of stakeholders such as academia who may be more used to take part in academic and scientific activities. A good example is the Academic Roundtable that took place in the 2024 WSIS Forum in Geneva.

There is a current strong interest in knowledge transfer and valorisation in different fields, with policies at national and international level (see EU valorisation policy). Active contribution to the WSIS process could be promoted as a valuable asset not only for scientific dissemination but also for knowledge transfer and valorisation, especially in fields such as Social Sciences and Humanities, beyond traditional systems of knowledge transfer and valorisation. Researchers can develop evidence that can provide high-quality insights in multiple forms such as policy briefs or white papers.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

New technological trends emerge, such as the development of virtual worlds, smart cities or artificial intelligence. WSIS needs to evolve, as it has already done in the last years, to incorporate these new technological developments keeping in mind the need to leave no-one behind and to work towards a sustainable society.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

A necessary first step for ICT to have an impact is that all users, regardless of any characteristic (age, gender, location, disability, culture, language, race, etc.) can access ICT. This implies not only having ubiquitous connectivity but also interfaces and tools that are accessible and easy-to-use by persons diverse needs. In this regard, Action Lines C2 (Information and Communication Infrastructure), C3 (Access to Information and Knowledge is critical), WSIS Action Line 5 (Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICT), WSIS Action Line 8 (Cultural and Linguistic Diversity) and WSIS Action Line 10 (Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society) provide an adequate framework to fully develop the other Action lines, more focused on specific areas such as e-learning, e-government, e-business, e-health, e-employment, e-environment, e-agriculture, e-science, and media.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Standardisation in different areas can be a powerful tool to advance WSIS action lines. WSIS action lines could be useful when developing future gap analysis in standardization together with SDG.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Overall, our academic institution greatly values that linguistic and cultural diversity as well as accessibility for persons with diverse needs is prioritized in most of the Action Lines (please notice that in some of the lines the document is not available right now). We would like to make one additional suggestion:

C7E-Government: accessibility should not be understood only as connectivity or access to infrastructure but accessibility for diverse users (persons with disabilities, persons who may struggle reading or understanding content). In this regard, accessibility should be enhanced, making clear communication the default model to empower citizens.

Another critical aspect is the visibility and sustainability of many initiatives that are developed along the previous lines.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The WSIS-SDG Matrix is a powerful tool to strengthen the impact of ICTs for sustainable development and provides a clear relationship between WSIS Action Lines and SDGs, with a rationale/clarification of each relationship that has been established. The role of Action Line Facilitators is crucial in ensuring the living document is updated and the relationship is disseminated clearly in accessible content like videos. Unfortunately the videos on the website (https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/sdg/) are not available right now and this is an aspect that could be revisited.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

From an academic perspective, it would be beneficial to keep networking and discussing activities among academics, as done in the last WSIS Forum, but also make sure to include stakeholders from different profiles in the different sessions, to allow for interaction and complementary perspectives.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

From the perspective of an academic partner with a long track in standardization but a more recent track in WSIS participation, there is the need for a clear way to navigate the multiple initiatives that are taking place and also to avoid duplicative processes, as involvement in these activities requires time, funding and effort. Establishing connections among different relevant documents can prove challenging and a clear roadmap for newcomers would be very welcome.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Some central topics to be considered include: artificial intelligence and data management, virtual worlds, citiverses, and blockchain. However, the most relevant topic from our perspective is the need to develop and implement technologies that are accessible and sustainable. Technologies need to consider the needs of diverse users, including people with disabilities and people with different languages and cultural backgrounds.

# Switzerland | CyberPeace Institute | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

CyberPeace Institute

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Switzerland

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The CyberPeace Institute protects the most vulnerable in cyberspace. We deliver cybersecurity assistance and hold all actors accountable for ensuring peace in cyberspace by exposing the human harm caused by cyberattacks and disinformation. We advocate against the unacceptable use of artificial intelligence to threaten international peace and security, while promoting the responsible development and use of AI.

With this response, the CyberPeace Institute aims to share our insights on the work of the International Telecommunication Union in the WSIS+20 review, related to the WSIS Action Lines.

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From the perspective of the CyberPeace Institute, the main achievements of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years are:

1- The 2003 Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action, which set forth commitments and practices for the promotion of sustainable development, affirmed that “in building the information society, we shall pay particular attention to the special needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups of society.” With the CyberPeace Institute’s work in protecting the most vulnerable in our digital society, this key point in the action plan’s implementation is vital. More than 1 billion people across the world receive vital support and services from NGOs. With the Beyond 125 Action Plan of the CyberPeace Institute we are working actively around the world to safeguard these organizations. The WSIS Plan of Action and the Beyond 125 Action plan are key initiatives to safeguard our digital future.

2- WSIS+20 Action Line C10, "Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society," highlights the risks associated with the increasing use of AI. With its call to ensure the responsible use of AI, the 2021 UNESCO Recommendation marked a vital milestone in the journey toward the responsible deployment of AI. AI must be an equitable opportunity for underserved organizations globally. We investigate how AI acts as a double-edged sword in cyberspace: it can be a tool for defenders or a weapon for threat actors. Including the responsible use of AI in the WSIS Action Lines is a key achievement.

3- The establishment of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) stands as one of the key achievements of the WSIS. By creating the IGF, WSIS has provided a vital platform for inclusive discussions on public policy issues related to the use of ICTs, ensuring that all stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to shaping the future of the digital landscape.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has played a pivotal role in advancing the implementation of the WSIS process. The CyberPeace Institute highlights the following key contributions:

1- As the UN’s specialized agency for ICTs, the ITU is instrumental in fostering international cooperation to achieve the goals of WSIS. By ensuring multi stakeholder participation in the WSIS review process, the ITU plays a crucial role in facilitating discussions on the WSIS Action Lines, promoting inclusive dialogue and collaboration across sectors.

2 - The Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), developed by the ITU has served as a vital benchmarking tool to assess countries' cybersecurity readiness and resilience. By evaluating national policies, legal frameworks, technical measures, capacity building, and international cooperation, the GCI provides a comprehensive ranking that highlights strengths and areas for improvement in global cybersecurity.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

One way to sustain and strengthen the WSIS multi-stakeholder model would be to re-institutionalise the multi-stakeholder approach along the modalities of the WSIS +10 Multistakeholder Preparatory Platform (MPP). The MMP provided an open forum where different stakeholders could engage in meaningful dialogue, propose policy recommendations, and influence ITU discussions on emerging digital challenges.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

One of the key challenges remaining in the implementation of the WSIS process is ensuring transparency in how stakeholder input is collected, used, and responded to. While the WSIS process has made significant strides in fostering a multistakeholder approach, there is still a need for greater clarity and accountability in how the contributions of diverse stakeholders—particularly non-profit organizations like cybersecurity NGOs—are integrated into decision-making.

Stakeholders invest a lot of time and resources in preparing inputs, but without clear indication of how their recommendations shape discussions and policies, it can feel as though their voices are not being fully valued or acted upon. This lack of feedback loops undermines trust in the process and can lead to disengagement from key contributors who might feel their input is disregarded or ignored. To address these challenges, the WSIS process needs to prioritize transparency mechanisms.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Action Line C10 on the Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society represents a critical step forward in integrating AI into discussions on building a safe and secure digital environment. The rapid advancement of AI has created an urgent need to identify and address the risks associated with its use.

Since 2021, this Action Line, in collaboration with UNESCO, has played a key role in shaping global AI ethics. The UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, adopted by all 193 UNESCO member states, marks a major milestone in establishing principles for the responsible and ethical development of AI. The inclusion of AI in multilateral discussions, particularly regarding its responsible use by states, demonstrates the significant impact of this Action Line in shaping a more secure and ethical digital future. With the CyberPeace Institute launch of the CyberPeace Tracer we are Leveraging AI to Expose Cyberattacks and Disinformation

Impacting Civil Society. This platform tracks cyberattacks, vulnerabilities, and threats - raising awareness, supporting global efforts to secure civil society, and helping organizations stay ahead of risks. Initiatives like this build on the responsible use of AI in our digital world.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

A multistakeholder approach is essential to ensuring the responsible use of AI, allowing civil society actors and academia to contribute meaningfully to its implementation. These organizations provide critical insights that enhance the effectiveness of WSIS Action Lines, helping to shape ethical and sustainable AI policies.

Bringing together collaborators from diverse sectors not only strengthens multi stakeholder engagement within the WSIS framework but also advances the ITU’s mission of developing effective, inclusive, and globally coordinated solutions for the digital age.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

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## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Bridging these gaps requires a concerted effort to enhance cyber capacity building. Strengthening digital resilience through training, policy development, and access to cybersecurity resources—while ensuring inclusion across all affected sectors—is crucial for advancing the SDGs through the WSIS Action Lines.

With the CyberPeace Builders, we are actively contributing to this effort by protecting nonprofits from cyber threats. Through our cybersecurity matchmaking program, we connect corporate volunteers with nonprofits at scale, aiming to safeguard 1 million organizations by 2035. This initiative underscores the vital role of collaboration in securing the SDGs and ensuring that humanitarian and development efforts remain resilient in the digital age.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

As previously mentioned, to further strengthen multi stakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and IGF, it is crucial to enhance transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in their decision-making processes. Establishing clearer mechanisms for incorporating stakeholder input into actionable policies would increase trust and engagement.

Additionally, strengthening coordination between these platforms and other UN-led digital initiatives—such as the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on ICTs, the Global Digital Compact, and cybersecurity-related discussions within the UN Security Council—would ensure that governance and policy debates remain coherent and aligned with global digital development efforts.

Integrating more structured and continuous dialogue between civil society, academia, private sector actors, and governments would reinforce these platforms' role in shaping digital policies that are inclusive and responsive to evolving threats and opportunities in cyberspace.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The WSIS process, the Pact for the Future, and the Global Digital Compact share a common goal of fostering a secure, inclusive, and sustainable digital society. To align their implementation, a more integrated approach should be adopted, ensuring that discussions and initiatives across these frameworks reinforce rather than duplicate efforts.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Given the rapid and unprecedented impact of emerging technologies and digital trends, the WSIS+20 review must address the topics of artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing as they relate to the WSIS Action Lines in order to ensure equitable access, digital resilience, and responsible innovation.

Open-source AI offers significant opportunities for innovation and accessibility, particularly for non-profits and marginalized communities that lack the resources to invest in proprietary solutions. By facilitating an open dialogue on this particular trend, the WSIS+20 can help expand AI-driven solutions in education, healthcare, cybersecurity, and humanitarian aid, ensuring that emergent technological advancements serve the WSIS Action Lines, the UN SDGs and the public interest as a whole.

However, open-source AI also presents numerous cybersecurity risks, including AI-powered phishing, deep fake fraud, and malware generation; it simultaneously lowers the barrier for entry and enhances the operations of malicious actors. This is an urgent but frequently neglected facet of the global discussion on AI which directly affects Action Line 5 and thus would greatly benefit from widespread consideration during the WSIS+20 review.

The emergence of quantum computing represents another key trend which must be considered in the WSIS+20 review. Without proactive measures, quantum capabilities could widen the digital security gap, disproportionately affecting NGOs, activists, and small organizations that rely on strong encryption for protection. This particular topic is becoming increasingly important and yet, overshadowed by AI, lacking the same levels of institutional oversight at the international level. This urgent issue must be considered by the ITU in the WSIS+20 review and become a fixed feature in the broader vision beyond 2025.

# Switzerland | GlobalAI Association | Other

## Respondent

1. Organization name

GlobalAI Association

1. Organization type

Other

1. Organization country

Switzerland

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

WSIS established a global digital agenda through 11 Action Lines that guide ICT policies and international cooperation—for example, Tunisia's ICT policies based on the Tunis Agenda serve as benchmarks. Notably, many foundational WSIS events were hosted in Geneva, reinforcing its role as a center for digital dialogue and innovation.

• Multistakeholder Engagement:

The process successfully integrated governments, private sectors, civil society, and technical communities. Kenya's active role—as seen in its participation and later co-facilitation of WSIS+20 modalities—illustrates this inclusive approach, further complemented by Geneva's tradition of hosting inclusive international meetings.

• Digital Infrastructure Expansion:

Significant investments in broadband and mobile networks have been achieved in countries like South Korea and Japan, where high-speed connectivity serves as a global model, while Geneva's own advanced digital public services offer a practical example of infrastructure-driven transformation.

• Policy and Regulatory Advances:

WSIS outcomes have influenced robust digital rights and cybersecurity frameworks. Estonia's e-government services, including its e-residency program, stand as a leading example, and Geneva's longstanding e-governance platforms continue to demonstrate how digital policies can transform public service delivery.

• Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing:

Global forums such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)—often hosted in Geneva—have continuously enhanced ICT skills and digital literacy worldwide.

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1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

ITU has co-organized high-level events (e.g., the 2024 WSIS+20 Forum in Geneva) that have brought together diverse stakeholders to review progress and chart future directions. Geneva's role as a neutral international hub further enhances the effectiveness of these events.

• Technical Standardization:

ITU has been pivotal in developing global standards for broadband, mobile communications, and interoperability. South Korea's successful rollout of high-speed mobile networks partly reflects ITU's influence, a process bolstered by Geneva's digital infrastructure and expertise in e-governance.

• Policy Guidance and Capacity Building:

ITU has provided critical technical assistance and policy recommendations—such as those offered to Kenya—to help nations adopt best practices for digital inclusion and sustainable development. Geneva's experience with digital public administration also informs these efforts.

• Promoting Digital Inclusion:

Through initiatives aimed at reducing the digital divide, ITU has supported projects in Africa and other regions, ensuring that expanding ICT infrastructure benefits even underserved communities. Geneva's longstanding commitment to digital innovation supports this global mission.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

• Institutionalize Regular Dialogue:

Permanent platforms like the IGF and WSIS Forum must continue to operate transparently. Geneva's proven track record in hosting multistakeholder meetings exemplifies how regular, neutral dialogue can be maintained.

• Broaden Participation:

Special attention should be given to underrepresented groups. Targeted programs in Rwanda and Kenya provide financial and technical support to local civil society and small enterprises, a model that Geneva's inclusive digital initiatives also promote.

• Ongoing Capacity Building:

Invest in training programs—similar to those in Finland—that improve digital literacy and empower stakeholders to engage effectively in policy debates. Geneva's own e-governance practices serve as a practical benchmark for such capacity-building efforts.

• Enhanced Accountability:

Develop clear performance indicators (like the EU's Digital Economy and Society Index) to monitor progress and ensure that all voices are represented in decision-making—a practice supported by Geneva's transparent digital administration.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

While countries such as South Korea have advanced, many developing regions—especially in Sub-Saharan Africa—continue to struggle with limited ICT access and digital literacy. Geneva's high connectivity contrasts sharply with these regions, highlighting the gap that remains.

• Governance Tensions:

An ongoing debate exists between maintaining a multistakeholder model and shifting toward state-centric control, with examples from Russia and China. Geneva's open, inclusive approach serves as a counterpoint to more restrictive models.

• Rapid Technological Evolution:

The fast pace of innovation (e.g., AI, IoT) requires continuous updates to regulatory frameworks and capacity-building efforts, posing a constant challenge to policymakers—a challenge that Geneva's continuous digital evolution helps illustrate.

• Cybersecurity and Data Privacy:

As cyber threats grow, robust international cooperation is needed. The European Union's GDPR serves as a strong model, yet many countries still lack comparable frameworks—a gap that Geneva's digital standards aim to address.

• Fragmented Global Standards:

Diverse national regulations can hinder interoperability and the seamless global operation of ICT systems. Geneva's role as an international meeting point often helps mediate and harmonize such differences.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

This line underpins all digital activities. South Korea and Japan's advanced broadband and mobile networks have driven transformation, while Geneva's own e-governance and digital infrastructure serve as a local example of these principles in action.

• C3 – Access to Information and Knowledge:

Initiatives in Brazil and Tunisia have empowered citizens by enhancing digital content access, and Geneva's public digital services further demonstrate the benefits of broad access to information.

• C4 – Capacity Building:

Investments in digital skills and ICT training in Finland and Kenya have improved digital readiness; Geneva's longstanding experience in providing efficient e-government services is a model of effective capacity building.

• C7 – ICT Applications:

This line has fostered innovations in e-governance, e-health, and e-learning. Estonia's e-residency and digital public services are prime examples, and Geneva's own sophisticated digital public administration underscores the impact of this Action Line.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Revise policies periodically to include emerging technologies (e.g., AI, blockchain, IoT), as done in the EU digital strategy. Geneva's continuous evolution in e-governance provides a useful model for regular policy updates.

• Incorporate New Metrics:

Develop indicators that capture emerging issues like cybersecurity and digital sustainability—mirroring approaches used in OECD's Global Digital Index—an approach that could draw on Geneva's performance metrics in digital service delivery.

• Public-Private Partnerships:

Promote partnerships akin to Dubai's "Smart Dubai" initiative, which leverages private innovation and public policy to enhance digital services; Geneva's multistakeholder environment also supports such partnerships.

• Strengthen International Collaboration:

Enhance coordination among international bodies to ensure WSIS principles adapt to new trends, building on successful multinational projects supported by ITU and Geneva's collaborative networks.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Identify and celebrate achievements such as South Korea's broadband expansion and Estonia's e-governance, while also highlighting milestones from Geneva's ongoing digital transformation in public administration.

• Address Emerging Trends:

Incorporate issues like AI ethics, IoT deployment, and blockchain in future action lines, with pilot projects in Japan, Switzerland, and lessons from Geneva's digital evolution providing valuable insights.

• Expand Stakeholder Engagement:

Ensure consultations include grassroots organizations and local communities in developing countries, as seen in Kenya, and also engage Geneva-based experts and civil society.

• Enhance Intersectoral Linkages:

Foster collaborations that link digital transformation with broader socio-economic development, drawing on public-private partnerships in India and examples from Geneva's integrated digital policies.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Use shared metrics—similar to those in the Global Knowledge Index—to track ICT's impact on SDG areas (education, health, economic growth), with Geneva's efficient public service delivery offering a useful case study.

• Ensure Policy Coherence:

Foster cooperation among UN bodies, taking cues from the EU's integrated digital policies, to ensure digital initiatives support SDG targets; Geneva's model of transparent governance can serve as a benchmark.

• Mobilize Resources:

Secure dedicated funding for ICT initiatives in under-resourced areas—following models like World Bank programs in Africa—and incorporate lessons from Geneva's funding strategies for digital infrastructure.

• Establish Knowledge Sharing Platforms:

Create platforms for disseminating best practices, such as UNESCO's e-learning initiatives, while also leveraging Geneva's extensive experience in digital public administration.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

• Increase Inclusivity:

Provide targeted support to ensure that voices from marginalized regions (e.g., rural Africa, small island states) are heard, drawing on Rwanda's ICT capacity-building programs and Geneva's proven history of hosting inclusive international dialogues.

• Enhance Transparency and Accountability:

Adopt clear reporting and evaluation mechanisms—modeled on the EU's Digital Economy and Society Index—to monitor progress and ensure accountability, as exemplified by Geneva's public digital administration.

• Continuous Capacity Building:

Invest in digital literacy and policy training programs similar to Finland's model to empower all participants, taking inspiration from Geneva's extensive experience in e-governance training initiatives.

• Leverage Advanced Digital Tools:

Utilize state-of-the-art collaboration platforms to facilitate real-time dialogue and feedback, ensuring these forums remain dynamic and adaptive—just as Geneva's digital platforms continuously evolve.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Develop joint guidelines that integrate WSIS outcomes with the Global Digital Compact's objectives—drawing inspiration from Finland's cohesive digital strategy and Geneva's successful e-government frameworks.

• Coordinated Monitoring and Evaluation:

Create joint monitoring systems that consolidate data from various agencies, similar to the OECD's integrated approach in tracking digital transformation, with Geneva's digital performance data serving as an example.

• Foster Cross-Institutional Dialogue:

Encourage regular interactions between key stakeholders from governments, international bodies, and industry—illustrated by Kenya's role in WSIS+20 facilitation and Geneva's history of hosting multistakeholder conferences.

• Inclusive Goal Setting:

Engage a wide range of stakeholders in establishing common targets, ensuring that digital policies are responsive and adaptable to both local and global needs, as demonstrated by Geneva's collaborative policy development.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Develop ethical guidelines and robust regulation frameworks—drawing on emerging EU models—to ensure transparent and responsible AI, with insights from Geneva's digital innovation practices.

• Cybersecurity and Data Privacy:

Strengthen international cybersecurity protocols and harmonize data privacy standards, taking cues from frameworks like the GDPR, with Geneva's advanced digital security practices serving as a model.

• Next-Generation Networks (5G/6G):

Evaluate the impact of advanced networks on digital inclusion, as demonstrated by South Korea and Finland, and consider how Geneva's role as an international hub facilitates rapid network deployment.

• Internet of Things (IoT):

Consider the challenges and opportunities of IoT in smart city applications and industrial automation, with Japan's innovations providing valuable examples, complemented by Geneva's growing smart-city projects.

• Blockchain and Decentralized Technologies:

Explore blockchain's potential for enhancing transparency and trust in digital transactions, drawing from pilot projects in Estonia and Switzerland and lessons learned from Geneva's digital governance.

• Sustainable and Inclusive ICT:

Focus on policies that ensure digital transformation is environmentally sustainable and inclusive, as demonstrated by initiatives like Smart Dubai, while Geneva's commitment to public service and sustainable practices offers additional insights.

• Ethical Digital Transformation:

Promote policies that address digital literacy and equitable ICT access to ensure technological advancements contribute to broader socio-economic development, informed by best practices from Geneva's digital public administration.

# Switzerland | Swiss OFCOM | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Swiss OFCOM

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Switzerland

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Since Switzerland hosted the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in 2003, the WSIS process has contributed notably to shaping the global digital landscape.

Over two decades, WSIS outcomes have driven global collaboration across sectors, supported digital inclusion, and helped set international standards that adapt to technological advancements. The WSIS framework which is centered on transparency, inclusivity, and collaboration continues to guide multistakeholder cooperation in today’s fast-evolving digital landscape. WSIS mechanisms succeed in addressing the impact of emerging technologies like AI or a changed media ecosystem clearly reflected by the increased debates in the IGF and the WSIS Forum of these developments.

Further, did WSIS increased the awareness that inclusion is much more than simple access to infrastructure. It has shown that digital technologies and services must be affordable and meaningful by providing users with digital tools to advance their well-being and prosperity as well as to exercise their fundamental rights.

A significant outcome of the 2005 WSIS Tunis Agenda was the creation of the UN IGF. As central pillar in the implementation of WSIS outcomes, it exemplifies the multistakeholder approach to foster inclusive dialogue and cooperation on internet governance. It is uniquely placed to identify emerging topics, bringing key issues to the forefront and placing them on the global agenda, harnessing the wide-range of inputs and opinions from its multistakeholder community. The UN IGF has also shown its ability to constantly evolve in a bottom-up and needs-based fashion, and to adapt to the growing relevance of digital governance matters. In this sense, the IGF has introduced a number of improvements during recent years, such as the issuance of annual IGF “Messages”, starting with the IGF held in Geneva in 2017, the establishment of a parliamentary track with the Berlin IGF in 2019, the strengthening of intersessional work by developing Best Practice Fora and introducing Policy Networks since 2021, and finally by establishing the UN IGF Leadership Panel, as a connector between the multistakeholder community and decision-makers worldwide, in 2022.

Such work by the IGF is crucial to constantly evolving the field work under the diverse WSIS Action Lines, which in turn are considered every year during the WSIS-Forum, with their work and other relevant developments being subject to review and consideration by the CSTD in its annual reporting to ECOSOC and UNGA.

A very concrete achievement is as well the growing network of National and Regional IGF initiatives, which are independent from the global IGF but act in accordance with the main principles of the global. The Swiss Internet Governance Forum (Swiss IGF), for example, has contributed to the sharing of WSIS goals, adapting them to the specific needs and context of Switzerland. The Swiss IGF is distinguished by an approach in which all stakeholder groups are invited to discuss the future challenges and opportunities of digitization on equal terms and jointly seek solutions to social or regulatory issues. Likewise, it is relevant to mention the work done by the at the regional levels like APrIGF, Arab IGF, African IGF and EuroDIG. In Europe the EuroDIG to encourage discussion and exchange in an informal and independent manner on the issues of internet governance between the players concerned throughout Europe. The fact that there are over 150 national, regional, and youth IGF initiatives today highlights the growing demand and commitment for multistakeholder platforms.

The WSIS forum organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD, in close collaboration with all WSIS Action Line co-/facilitators and other UN organizations is another successful example. The WSIS forum brings together engaged experts and decision-makers from all over the world. Furthermore, it offers a great multistakeholder platform to discuss emergin

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

ITU played a pivotal role in order to deliver on the WSIS commitments and in fostering international cooperation.

The WSIS process provides a framework for the ICT ecosystem through the WSIS Action Lines and the WSIS-SDG Matrix to align WSIS efforts with the SDGs. ITU's commitment to the 2030 Agenda is integrated in the ITU Strategic Plan 2024-2027, which also facilitates progress towards implementing the WSIS Action Lines. With strategic goals that focus on the universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation, ITU has made a concerted effort to highlight the role that ICTs play in achieving the SDGs and implementing the WSIS Action Lines.

Role as Lead Facilitator and WSIS Action Lines Coordinator: ITU has served as the lead facilitator for implementing and coordinating WSIS outcomes, ensuring collaboration across various stakeholders, including governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations.

Annual Multi-Stakeholder Forum: The WSIS Forum, organized by ITU since 2009, has become a key global platform for discussing policies, strategies, and projects related to ICTs for development. This includes WSIS Prizes, recognizing outstanding projects that advance WSIS goals and foster ICT-driven development.

Alignment with SDGs: ITU has ensured that WSIS objectives complement the United Nations 2030 Agenda, demonstrating the transformative role of ICTs in sustainable development.

Global Connectivity: A significant increase in internet access, particularly in developing countries, reflecting ITU's efforts to bridge the digital divide and to close gender, age, and accessibility gaps in ICT use, aligning closely with WSIS’s vision of inclusive development.

The annual WSIS Forum is a global multistakeholder platform facilitating the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines for advancing sustainable development. Organized by ITU, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in close collaboration with all WSIS Action Line co-/facilitators and other UN organizations, the WSIS Forum since 2009 has been bringing together a multistakeholder community. Ahead of the UNGA’s twenty-year review of WSIS at the end of 2025, the WSIS Forum 2025 will serve as a platform for multistakeholder exchanges and catalysts for action, taking stock of achievements, key trends, and challenges since the 2003 Geneva Plan of Action. It will also be a unique occasion for the international community to assess opportunities for continued global digital cooperation towards a forward-looking and reinvigorated shared vision and inform UNGA about these opportunities.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The WSIS process has pioneered the multistakeholder approach in global ICT policy discussions, incorporating the perspectives of governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations. Switzerland believes that this collaborative framework has been instrumental in developing inclusive global ICT strategies that address diverse needs and priorities.

The Sao Paulo Guidelines, adopted at the Netmundial+10 conference, provide valuable reference points for guiding these efforts. They emphasize that multistakeholder processes should empower stakeholders by equipping them with the necessary information, resources, and skills to participate effectively. Furthermore, these processes must strive to treat all stakeholders fairly and equitably, taking into account their unique needs, capacities, and vulnerabilities. Capacity-building efforts are particularly crucial, as they enhance the understanding and skills of stakeholders, especially those from developing countries and underrepresented communities. By adhering to these principles, we can foster a truly inclusive and equitable digital future. These principles should be applied to existing groups but be taken into consideration for future groups. In the process of the creation of new groups the process steps provide a step-by-step guidance for an open and inclusive multistakeholder process. From scope the issue (1) and Identify stakeholders (2), to ensure equitable participation (5), to finally monitor and adapt (12).

Multistakeholder models, such as the UN IGF, which are prepared with the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) under the consultation of all stakeholders and enhanced through intersessional work, provide a strong foundation for building inclusive and collaborative initiatives. While these models already offer a solid basis, the twelve process steps outlined in the SPMG could also be taken into account to further strengthen the approach. Integrating them into existing and future initiatives, such as Dynamic Coalitions, Best Practice Forums, and Policy Networks, would help enhance their contributions and promote greater inclusivity. These steps can be particularly useful for Policy Networks when preparing and developing “IGF Recommendations” as envisioned in §72 of the Tunis Agenda.

By considering these twelve process steps in the preparation of IGF events, we can ensure that the process remains open and inclusive. But it is not only about the UN IGF but about the broader WSIS architecture, which should also focus on making processes more inclusive. SMPG can help as well in preparation of WSIS +20 event to make sure all voices are heard. Further do strengthening the establishment of regional and national IGFs also plays a significant role in ensuring that multistakeholder engagement happens at all levels.

Incorporating efforts to improve inclusivity will help solidify the multistakeholder model and increase the impact of these initiatives, both within the IGF framework and beyond the broader WSIS architecture.

Multistakeholder mechanisms emanating from WSIS – the IGF and the WSIS Forum – have stood the test of time and adapted their focus to reflect the fast-evolving digital space and the opportunities and challenges associated with both ‘old’ and ‘new’ digital technologies.

The anniversary year of WSIS in 2025 will provide the context for further improving our approaches to digital cooperation while relying on rich experience and wisdom gathered since 2005. The time has come to think boldly and widely about a “WSIS Plus”, a strengthened and further developed inclusive framework for digital governance and cooperation which will be fit-for-purpose and serve us well as we enter an era of fast and uncertain AI and digital developments.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

WSIS process has achieved notable advancements, challenges in its implementation remain. One notable aspect is the ongoing presence of digital divides. Variations in access to technology affect individuals and communities across different socioeconomic levels, influencing both connectivity and digital literacy. As a result, many individuals may not have the necessary skills to fully engage in the digital environment.

Additionally, the increasing threats to cybersecurity are an important consideration. As digital infrastructures expand, the vulnerability of systems and users also increases. To address these risks, it is essential to implement proactive security measures that promote trust and cooperation among all stakeholders.

Moreover, balancing the protection of user rights with the promotion of technological innovation presents a noteworthy challenge, given the differing priorities of various sectors. Coordinating the diverse interests of governments, the private sector, civil society, and technical communities necessitates a careful balance and ongoing global collaboration. While such coordination is crucial for navigating the complexities of digital governance, it also presents practical considerations.

The current geopolitical landscape, characterized by crises and tensions, introduces additional challenges. Digital technologies, once regarded with optimism, are increasingly approached with skepticism. In this context, fostering trust among stakeholders is more essential than ever. The WSIS+20 review presents a significant opportunity to reaffirm our dedication to a people-centered digital future that promotes inclusive multistakeholder solutions to the complex challenges we face. Achieving success in this initiative will require creativity, innovative thinking, and a resolute commitment to building upon the robust foundations of the WSIS process, while avoiding inefficient duplications and ensuring that all voices are represented in the global digital governance framework.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure: In 2005, when WSIS concluded, there were 972 million people online. According to the ITU, there are now approximately 67 per cent of the world’s population, or 5.4 billion people, connected. The 17-fold growth of the number of internet users between 2005 and 2024 has been spectacular. Initiatives like GIGA (connecting schools globally) and the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development – both supported by Switzerland - have accelerated progress.

C3: Access to Information and Knowledge: Access to infrastructure alone is not sufficient, because ultimately, it is the information and content – especially local content - made accessible by ICTs that matter to the people. Without quality information and content, the possibilities of ICTs might not be optimally utilized.

C4: Capacity Building: To reap the benefits of ICT, you also need to know how to use it appropriately.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

For nearly two decades, the WSIS process has significantly contributed to promoting connectivity and fostering an inclusive, development-oriented Information Society. As we look ahead, there is an opportunity to build a comprehensive digital development agenda through collaborative efforts with all stakeholders. This includes updating and modernizing the WSIS Action Lines to align with the SDGs and maintaining their relevance to the challenges presented by the digital age.

We should propose modifications and updates to the existing Action Lines rather than introducing new ones or deleting existing ones. The original Action Lines were agreed in 2003. Some of the language is old-fashioned and some of them do not take account of new developments. But the Action Line headings remain broadly comprehensive. Opening up the debate to new Action Lines could lead to a “free-for-all”, with everyone calling for an Action Lines on their favourite hot topic of the moment. Instead, we should argue that the very broad span of the existing Action Lines are flexible enough to encompass the new challenges we face, but propose expanding and updating them.

We should support the formal inclusion of some new topics within existing Action Lines and new UN facilitators. The WSIS process is dynamic, bottom-up and flexible and many new topics have already been incorporated into it. The WSIS Forum, for example, is already discussing AI, human rights, the metaverse, misinformation, digital transformation, platform regulation and many other topics that did not exist in 2005. This WSIS review is an opportunity to recognise this formally (bearing in mind it is already happening) and consider whether the facilitator roles of UN agencies should also be updated. For example:

1. Action Line 4 “Capacity Building” could be formally modified to include ideas around digital public goods

2. Action Line 7 on “ICT Applications” uses rather old-fashioned language and could cover a more holistic approach to digital transformation; its reference to environmental issues could be significantly expanded

3. Action Line 9 “Media” is currently rather short and focused on broadcast and print media, but could be formally expanded to include disinformation, social media platforms and algorithms

4. Action Line C10 on the “Ethical dimensions of the Information Society” could be formally expanded to recognise the fact that it is already discussing issues such as online safety, hate speech, freedom of expression, gender equality and the relationship between human rights and digital standards. OHCHR and UN Women could be added as a new Action Line Facilitators and the Action Line could be re-titled.

5. Action Line 11 “International and Regional Cooperation” is also rather short and could be expanded to fully develop the role of the UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) and the role of the Office of the Technology Envoy of the Secretary General

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

In 2003-2005, WSIS key outcomes were drafted in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) shaped a new societal context for digital growth. Although there is no specific SDG on digital matters, digital technologies have a cross-cutting dimension: they can serve as an enabler for achieving all SDGs, effectively becoming (as they are sometimes called) the ‘invisible,18th SDG’. Over the years, we have seen digital technologies used in areas such as sustainable agriculture, accessible healthcare systems, education, and more. The relevance of digital technologies will continue to increase with the pressure to accelerate progress in implementing SDGs. The interplay between digital and the environment remains of particular importance: while relying on technology to accelerate development and growth, the world also needs more concerted and consistent efforts to protect the environment meaningfully and sustainably for current and future generations. Using the Geneva Plan of Action and its action lines framework, the WSIS community has mapped and continuously strengthened the linkages between WSIS and SDG processes in fostering faster progress towards addressing global challenges and ensuring a more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable digital society and economy

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

In the coming years, WSIS mechanisms should address the following to encourage even greater participation:

- Identifying and mitigating risks of miscommunication among diverse professional, national, and cultural communities as AI developments extend policy debates beyond traditional digital/internet spaces.

- Dealing with possible power asymmetries between, as well as within, different stakeholder groups.

- Continuing to assist stakeholders to participate meaningfully given their respective needs, capabilities, realities, and vulnerabilities.

- Avoid creating too many AI and digital governance processes and initiatives. The growing number of initiatives and processes could have a detrimental effect on policy inclusion and quality of policy deliberation. In particular, governance inflation would impact actors from small and developing countries who do not have the financial and human resources to participate meaningfully in a high number of digital processes. The WSIS Forum and the IGF could play critical roles as convergence points that simplify access to diverse policy spaces and processes.

Member States should consider the linkage between the GDC and WSIS+20 review process and leverage WSIS, including the Forum, as a suitable mechanism to support the GDC follow-up and implementation, building upon existing processes.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The WSIS and the GDC should ideally be synergized to avoid duplication of efforts. The WSIS process has been instrumental in shaping digital governance, and its outcomes are periodically evaluated, with the next major review WSIS+20 planned for 2025. The GDC, on the other hand, is a newer initiative aimed at outlining shared principles for a secure digital future.

Existing structures, including the WSIS Forum and AI for Good Global Summit, as well as the IGF, should be the basis to further implementing the WSIS vision, but also that they should be further strengthened and leveraged through the Global Digital Compact and in support of its implementation.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

The rapid digitalization and globalization of economies are reducing national policy flexibility, highlighting the need for robust global frameworks to manage these shifts. The growing complexity of digital issues, coupled with an increasing number of institutions involved in addressing them, requires more coordination, which puts additional pressure on all stakeholders. Geopolitical developments, are also making it more challenging to navigate the global digital governance landscape effectively. To address these challenges with limited resources, it is essential to focus on building knowledge and anticipating future trends, forging strong partnerships both nationally and internationally, and developing creative solutions that deliver win-win outcomes for all parties involved. The ITU’s role in fostering multistakeholder cooperation must be strengthened, ensuring that underrepresented communities and developing countries have a meaningful voice in shaping the digital future.

The WSIS+20 review offers a crucial opportunity to modernize and adapt our global digital governance frameworks. With the ITU at the forefront, we must work together to create innovative, people-centered solutions that ensure digital technologies are harnessed to benefit all of humanity.

The terminological trinity of digital content - data, information and knowledge - has changed substantially since 2005. In the Tunis Agenda, information was referred to 12 times and knowledge 9 times. Data was not mentioned at all in 2003 and 2005, but it dominates the digital policy language today. AI-driven services use data as well as information and knowledge from books, videos and other forms of content to create new content in ways that are often not transparent. Therefore, WSIS mechanisms should revitalise the relevance of the concepts of data, information and knowledge to ensure transparent, fair, and inclusive AI developments. The concept of digital public goods (DPGs) is central for managing data, information, and knowledge and accelerating realisation of SDGs.

Additionally, the WSIS+20 review presents a valuable opportunity to strengthen the IGF and enhance its role in facilitating international multistakeholder cooperation. The IGF can reinforce its commitment to inclusive participation by encouraging diverse and representative engagement from all regions and sectors. It is important that stakeholder input is not only sought but also actively integrated into decision-making processes, ensuring that their contributions are effectively reflected in the outcomes.

Global digital cooperation mechanisms should maintain the formula of ‘variable governance geometry’ of being close enough to foster a framework for digital growth and far enough to leave space for the innovation and creativity that underpins digitalisation. The main challenge will be getting this formula right for the AI era, where numerous delicate trade-offs need to be struck between opportunities and risks triggered by AI.

# Togo | Ministry of Human Rights | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Ministry of Human Rights, Citizenship Training and Relations with Institutions of the Republic of Togo

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

Togo

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), launched in two phases (Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005), marked a milestone in Internet governance and the development of the information society on a global scale. The main results of its implementation over the last 20 years are:

1. Advances in connectivity and digital inclusion

- Expansion of Internet access, particularly in developing countries.

- Development of telecommunications infrastructure and high-speed networks.

- Initiatives to reduce the digital divide, with a focus on marginalized and rural populations.

2. Promotion of human rights and Internet governance principles

- Recognition of Internet access as a fundamental right.

- Strengthening freedom of expression and the protection of personal data.

- Development of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue.

3. Development of regulatory frameworks and digital policies

- Development and adoption of national strategies for the information society.

- Implementation of policies on cybersecurity and the protection of personal data.

- Harmonization of regulations at the international level.

4. Integration of digital technology in sustainable development (SDG 2030)

- Digital technology as a lever to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Initiatives in digital education, e-health and e-government.

- Innovative solutions for resilience to crises (e.g. COVID-19).

5. Evolution of partnerships and international cooperation

- Strengthened collaboration between governments, the private sector, international organizations and civil society.

- Creation of financing programs for digital development.

- Strengthening training and technology skills transfer initiatives.

Despite these advances, challenges persist, particularly in terms of digital inequalities, cybersecurity, data governance and digital sovereignty. WSIS+20 thus represents an opportunity to rethink and strengthen the digital transformation in favor of a more inclusive, ethical and sustainable information society.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

ITU’s major contributions to the implementation of the WSIS process over the past 20 years

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), as the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs), has played a central role in the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Its major contributions over the past two decades include:

1. Developing Internet infrastructure and access

- Promoting the expansion of broadband and mobile networks, particularly in developing countries.

- Supporting satellite and fibre optic technologies to improve global connectivity.

- Launching initiatives to bridge the digital divide, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

2. ICT standardization and regulation

- Developing technical standards to ensure the interoperability and security of digital infrastructures.

- Supporting States in harmonizing telecommunications policies and regulatory frameworks.

- Developing radio frequency management strategies to ensure effective connectivity.

3. Cybersecurity and data protection

- Establishing the Global Cybersecurity Framework (GCA) to help countries protect themselves against cyber threats.

- Promoting data protection and privacy policies internationally.

- Strengthening the capacities of States in digital resilience and the fight against cybercrime.

4. Digital inclusion and skills development

- Launching digital skills training programs for women, youth and people with disabilities.

- Developing initiatives to accelerate access to the Internet for schools and hospitals.

- Supporting digital innovations for education, health and sustainable development.

5. Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of WSIS

- Organizing annual WSIS forums to assess progress and set new strategic directions.

- Production of reports and indicators on the evolution of the information society, through studies and databases.

- Encouragement of multi-stakeholder dialogue between governments, the private sector, international organizations and civil society.

Thanks to these contributions, the ITU has helped to structure and guide the WSIS process, facilitating international cooperation and supporting States towards an inclusive, sustainable and secure digital transformation.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Strengthening the multi-stakeholder and inclusive model of the WSIS process

The WSIS process has demonstrated the importance of global digital cooperation involving governments, the private sector, international organizations, civil society and academia. To ensure its sustainability and effectiveness, several actions must be implemented:

1. Strengthen inclusiveness and participation of underrepresented actors

- Encourage a more balanced representation of developing countries, including LDCs (Least Developed Countries) and small island economies.

- Increase the involvement of women, youth, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities in discussions and decisions on digital governance.

- Develop accessible online participation mechanisms to enable active contribution from all stakeholders.

2. Consolidate digital governance and multi-stakeholder dialogue

- Maintain and strengthen platforms such as the WSIS Forum and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to ensure inclusive and transparent dialogue.

- Improve coordination between institutions involved in Internet and digital governance (ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD, ICANN, etc.).

- Encourage flexible and adaptive governance modes, taking into account the rapid evolution of technologies and societal challenges.

3. Adapt the WSIS process to new technological realities

- Fully integrate emerging themes such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, digital sovereignty and environmental sustainability.

- Develop ethical and regulatory standards for responsible and inclusive use of new technologies.

- Strengthen cooperation on issues of cybersecurity, data protection and the fight against disinformation.

4. Support financing and technology transfer

- Increase international financing mechanisms for the development of digital infrastructure and inclusive initiatives.

- Promote knowledge and technology sharing between advanced and developing countries.

- Encourage public-private partnerships to accelerate digital transformation while respecting the principles of equity and accessibility.

5. Ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation of the WSIS process

- Establish performance and progress indicators to measure the impact of WSIS initiatives.

- Organize periodic reviews involving all stakeholders to adjust strategies according to emerging challenges.

- Promote transparency and the dissemination of good practices to encourage effective cooperation aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By maintaining strong commitment from all stakeholders, adapting WSIS structures to technological developments and strengthening international cooperation, we can ensure a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable future for the information society.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Persistent Challenges in Implementing the WSIS Process

Despite the significant progress made by the WSIS process over the past 20 years, several challenges remain, hampering the achievement of a truly inclusive and sustainable information society. These challenges concern several dimensions:

1. The persistence of the digital divide

- Inequalities in access to the Internet: Although connectivity has progressed, millions of people, particularly in rural areas and in developing countries, remain deprived of stable and affordable access to the Internet.

- High cost of digital infrastructure: The implementation of broadband networks and satellite solutions requires significant investments that some countries cannot afford.

- Disparities in digital skills: The gap between those who master digital tools and those who are excluded limits full participation in the information society.

2. Global digital governance and lack of effective coordination

- Fragmentation of regulations: The absence of a unified global regulatory framework for Internet and digital technology governance creates divergences between countries and regions.

- Conflicts of interest between actors: Divergences between governments, large technology companies and civil society complicate joint decision-making on Internet and data governance.

- Lack of inclusion in decision-making processes: Some countries and marginalized groups struggle to make their voices heard in international bodies dealing with digital issues.

3. Cybersecurity and data protection

- Increase in cyberattacks: Cybersecurity has become a major issue with the rise of cyber threats (hacking, disinformation, attacks on critical infrastructure).

- Lack of harmonized data protection regulations: Disparities between national legal frameworks (e.g. GDPR in Europe, lack of strict standards elsewhere) make it difficult to protect personal data on a global scale.

- Disinformation and manipulation of information: The rise of fake news and digital propaganda threatens democratic stability and trust in institutions.

4. Sustainable development and the environmental impact of digital technology

- Growing digital pollution: The carbon footprint of ICT, including data centers and cryptocurrencies, poses an environmental challenge.

- Electronic waste: The increase in the production of digital devices leads to an accumulation of electronic waste, often poorly managed.

- Lack of integration of digital technology into sustainable development strategies: The use of digital technology for the ecological transition remains underexploited in some countries.

5. Financing and implementing WSIS commitments

- Lack of resources for developing countries: Many states do not have sufficient funding to deploy inclusive digital infrastructures.

- Dependence on large technology companies: The dominant role of digital multinationals raises questions about the balance of power and control of strategic infrastructures.

- Insufficient monitoring of WSIS objectives: The absence of clear indicators and an effective monitoring mechanism complicates the assessment of real progress made.

To overcome these challenges, the WSIS process must be strengthened through more inclusive international cooperation, harmonization of regulations, promotion of digital skills and increased financing of infrastructures. Digital transformation must also be aligned with ethical principles, human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure an equitable and sustainable information society.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

WSIS Action Lines That Had the Most Impact and Their Reasons

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) defined several action lines to structure the global digital transformation. Some of them had a particularly significant impact due to their role in reducing the digital divide, digital governance and sustainable development. Here are the most significant action lines and the reasons for their influence:

1. C1 – The role of governments and all stakeholders in promoting ICT for development

Impact: Establishment of strategic and regulatory frameworks that promote digital development

- Governments have adopted national digital strategies, aligned with the WSIS objectives.

- Establishment of public-private partnerships to accelerate access to ICT.

- Integration of ICT into public policies for education, health and administration.

Why?

The engagement of governments and private actors has enabled a faster deployment of digital infrastructure, while ensuring effective coordination of initiatives.

2. C2 – Information and communication infrastructure

Impact: Expansion of Internet access and development of digital infrastructure

- Increased Internet coverage, particularly in developing countries.

- Deployment of mobile and satellite networks to cover rural areas.

- Increased access to affordable technologies through subsidy policies and universal access funds.

Why?

A strong infrastructure is the backbone of an inclusive and connected digital society. Without access to the Internet and ICTs, digital transformation would be impossible.

3. C3 – Access to information and knowledge

Impact: Democratization of knowledge and information

- Establishment of digital libraries and open platforms for learning and research. - Increase in the number of open educational resources (OER) and e-learning programs.

- Facilitated access to government data through Open Data initiatives.

Why?

Access to knowledge is a key factor in economic and social development, reducing inequalities of opportunity between populations.

4. C5 – Strengthening trust and security in the use of ICT

Impact: Improved cybersecurity and data protection

- Creation of legislative frameworks to protect privacy and personal data.

- Adoption of strategies to combat cybercrime.

- Promotion of good cybersecurity practices among citizens and businesses.

Why?

Without security and trust, the adoption of ICT would have been hampered by the fear of cyber threats and breaches of privacy.

5. C7 – ICT applications for development (e-government, e-education, e-health, e-business, e-environment, e-agriculture, e-science)

Impact: Transformation of public services and improvement of quality of life

- Development of e-government services, facilitating citizens’ access to administrative services.

- Implementation of e-health platforms to improve telemedicine and medical records management.

- Acceleration of e-commerce, supporting SMEs and entrepreneurs in emerging economies.

Why?

These applications have directly improved people’s daily lives by facilitating access to essential services and stimulating innovation.

These lines of action have had a major impact because they have structured the digital transformation on a global scale. They have improved connectivity, strengthened security, increased digital inclusion and stimulated innovation.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Improving the implementation of WSIS principles and action lines to address new and emerging challenges

WSIS has contributed significantly to establishing a global framework for integrating digital technologies into human and economic development. However, with the emergence of new technologies and global challenges, it is essential to readjust and strengthen the application of WSIS principles and action lines to respond more effectively to these issues. Here are some ways to improve this implementation:

1. Integrate new emerging technologies into action lines

Example: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, 5G, Internet of Things (IoT)

- Relevant action line: C1 (Role of governments and stakeholders)

- Suggested improvement: Adapt existing action lines to include specific principles and standards regarding AI ethics, data governance, privacy protection and securing systems.

- Encourage public policies that frame the development of emerging technologies while ensuring the protection of citizens' fundamental rights.

- Develop international standards to ensure transparency, fairness and inclusiveness in the use of technologies such as AI and blockchain.

2. Strengthen multi-stakeholder governance for global issues

Example: Internet Governance, Cybersecurity, Digital Sovereignty

- Relevant action line: C5 (Strengthening trust and security)

- Suggested improvement: Promote more inclusive and balanced governance in the regulation of global technologies (e.g. cybersecurity, data management).

- Accelerate the process of international cooperation on issues such as global cybersecurity and the fight against cyber threats.

- Ensure equal participation of developing countries in decision-making forums on Internet governance to avoid the disproportionate influence of major technological powers.

3. Prioritize digital inclusion and bridging the digital divide

Example: Digital accessibility in rural and underrepresented areas

- Relevant action line: C2 (Information and communication infrastructure)

- Suggested improvement: Intensify investments in digital infrastructure in developing countries to reduce inequalities in access to technologies.

- Develop public-private partnerships to make technologies affordable and accessible to vulnerable populations.

- Introduce digital education and training programs to help youth, women and marginalized communities participate actively in the information society.

4. Encourage a sustainable and ethical approach to the environmental impact of digital technology

Example: Ecological impact of ICT, E-waste management

- Relevant action line: C7 (ICT applications for development)

- Suggested improvement: Integrate sustainability principles into the development of ICT and the digital society.

- Promote green technologies and sustainable energy solutions to reduce the carbon footprint of data centers, network infrastructure, and electronic devices.

- Create e-waste management policies and encourage the circular economy in the digital industry.

5. Adopt more rigorous data governance to ensure fundamental rights

Example: Personal data protection, Open data governance

- Relevant action line: C5 (Strengthening trust and security)

- Suggested improvement: Strengthen the implementation of international regulations on personal data protection and data governance.

- Encourage States to adopt data protection laws inspired by the GDPR to strengthen transparency and ensure user control over their data.

- Establish mechanisms to manage data ownership, especially in developing countries where large companies often collect data without transparency or adequate compensation.

To meet new challenges, the WSIS process must not only adapt to emerging technologies, but also strengthen its multi-stakeholder governance, integrate sustainability principles and promote inclusive and ethical policies in the use of digital technologies.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Here are some suggestions and contributions for the WSIS+20 review, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025:

1. Strengthening universal and inclusive access to ICTs

- Accelerate universal connectivity to bridge the digital divide, especially in rural and marginalized areas.

- Strengthen sustainable digital infrastructure, with particular attention to renewable energy.

- Develop financing and international cooperation programs to support developing countries.

2. Digital governance and regulation

- Promote a more flexible and harmonized regulatory framework to ensure equitable access to technologies.

- Encourage cooperation between States, the private sector and civil society in Internet governance.

- Establish transparency and accountability mechanisms to regulate the use of ICTs.

3. Digital security and data protection

- Strengthen cybersecurity by promoting common standards for the protection of digital infrastructures.

- Develop strategies to combat disinformation, cybercrime and emerging threats.

- Promote stricter laws and regulations on the protection of personal data.

4. Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies

- Encourage the integration of AI and emerging technologies (blockchain, IoT, 5G, etc.) in public and private services.

- Strengthen ethics and governance around the responsible use of AI, in particular to avoid algorithmic bias.

- Establish mechanisms for assessing the social and environmental impact of new technologies.

5. Digital education and skills development

- Integrate digital education into school and university curricula to prepare future generations.

- Promote continuing education initiatives for the inclusion of workers in the digital economy.

- Encourage the development of educational content in multiple languages, adapted to local contexts.

6. Sustainable development and green ICT

- Promote eco-responsible digital solutions to reduce the carbon footprint of ICT infrastructures.

- Encourage the adoption of circular practices in the management of electronic waste.

- Develop digital sobriety policies for a more responsible use of technological resources.

7. Citizen participation and digital inclusion

- Encourage the involvement of citizens in the design and implementation of digital policies.

- Strengthen diversity and inclusion, by ensuring equitable access to ICT for women, young people and people with disabilities.

- Establish open data initiatives to improve transparency and innovation in public governance.

These suggestions can feed into discussions on the revision of WSIS+20 and promote a more equitable, secure and sustainable digital transformation.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

To strengthen the alignment between the WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) action lines and the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, several strategies can be put in place:

1. Mapping the intersections between the action lines and the SDGs: A detailed analysis of the WSIS action lines and the SDGs should be carried out to identify synergies and areas where joint efforts can be deployed. This would allow for a better understanding of how each action line can contribute to achieving specific goals and vice versa, thus ensuring a more coherent and integrated approach.

2. Integrating ICTs into SDG policy design: Information and communication technologies (ICTs) play a key role in achieving the SDGs, particularly in areas such as education, health, poverty reduction and gender equality. It is therefore essential to integrate the use of ICTs into national and global policies related to the SDGs, with a focus on their potential to accelerate the implementation of these goals.

3. Capacity building and digital skills development: Education and training for digital citizenship are crucial to enable all stakeholders to actively participate in the digital society. Improving digital skills, particularly in rural areas and among vulnerable groups, will contribute to inclusiveness and equal opportunities in achieving the SDGs.

4. Multi-stakeholder collaboration: Strengthened cooperation between governments, businesses, civil society, international organizations and the technology sector is essential. This collaboration would allow for the sharing of resources, knowledge and good practices to ensure that the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs complement each other.

5. Strengthened monitoring and evaluation: A clear monitoring mechanism and regular assessment of the impact of initiatives related to the WSIS Action Lines on the SDGs should be put in place. This will allow monitoring progress and adjusting strategies based on observed results, to ensure greater effectiveness in achieving the goals.

6. Awareness-raising and engagement of local stakeholders: It is also important to raise awareness among local stakeholders, including communities, of the links between the WSIS action lines and the SDGs, in order to encourage them to adopt practices and technologies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

By implementing these actions, the alignment between the WSIS action lines and the SDGs will be strengthened, thus contributing to sustainable and inclusive development on a global scale.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

To further strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum (World Summit on the Information Society) as a platform for digital development and the IGF (Internet Governance Forum) as a platform for governance and policy issues, several actions can be taken:

1. Strengthen inclusive participation: One of the key strengths of multi-stakeholder platforms is their ability to bring together a diversity of actors – governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community and academia, among others. To enhance this diversity, it is important to encourage broader participation, including from developing countries, marginalized communities and young leaders. This would help ensure that decisions taken at the forums represent a broader range of perspectives and respond to global needs.

2. Broaden the scope of platforms: Beyond traditional ICT and Internet governance topics, it is important to broaden discussions to include emerging themes such as the impact of emerging technologies (artificial intelligence, blockchain, etc.), cybersecurity, data protection, and digital inclusivity. By facilitating debates on increasingly complex issues, these forums could play a catalytic role in defining global frameworks for digital regulation and sustainable development.

3. Strengthen cooperation between multilateral and local actors: For multi-stakeholder platforms to be truly effective, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between global and local actors. Digital development and Internet governance must respond to the specific needs of different regions and communities. By encouraging stronger partnerships between local authorities, local businesses, and international organizations, the forums will be able to better address local realities while remaining aligned with global objectives.

4. Strengthening dialogue and governance mechanisms: It is crucial to strengthen the capacity for dialogue between stakeholders at forums to ensure more inclusive and transparent decision-making. This could translate into the establishment of regular working groups, open consultations and online collaborative platforms that allow for constant monitoring of commitments made at forums.

5. Supporting innovation and research: Multi-stakeholder platforms could also play a key role in promoting research and innovation in digital governance. By facilitating collaborations between researchers, developers and policymakers, they could be a catalyst for the development of more effective digital policies that are responsive to contemporary challenges.

6. Accelerating the implementation of concrete solutions: Forums must go beyond mere discussion and engage in the implementation of concrete solutions, particularly for developing countries. This could include establishing pilot projects, providing technical and financial resources for local initiatives, and facilitating an enabling environment for innovation, including in the areas of digital education and health.

7. Measuring impact and relevance: It is essential to establish robust mechanisms to assess the impact of the discussions and decisions taken in the forums. This would ensure that these platforms remain relevant to the rapidly changing digital landscape and that they effectively contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and good Internet governance.

By strengthening multi-stakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum and the IGF, these initiatives can play a central role in shaping global digital policies and Internet governance, while ensuring inclusiveness, sustainability and equity in digital development.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

To align the implementation of the WSIS process, the Compact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact to achieve common goals, several strategic approaches can be adopted:

1. Alignment of objectives and priorities: It is essential to map the objectives of each process to identify areas of convergence and complementarity. By aligning the priorities of the different compacts and processes with the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), it can be ensured that all actions undertaken are coherent and contribute to common overall goals. This would also help to avoid overlaps and maximize the impact of initiatives.

2. Creation of an integrated governance framework: Establish a governance structure that brings together stakeholders from the three processes (WSIS, Compact for the Future and Global Digital Compact) to ensure smooth coordination and collective decision-making. This governance could include multi-stakeholder working groups for each key objective, to monitor progress, address common challenges, and share best practices.

3. Strengthening cooperation among stakeholders: The WSIS, Compact for the Future, and Global Digital Compact processes involve a variety of stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, technical and academic communities. It is crucial to strengthen cooperation mechanisms among these actors, including through the creation of regional partnerships, ongoing dialogue forums, and multi-stakeholder events to facilitate the exchange of ideas, solutions, and resources.

4. Sharing data and best practices: In order to ensure effective implementation, it is important to establish mechanisms for sharing data and best practices among the WSIS, Compact for the Future, and Global Digital Compact initiatives. Digital platforms for collaboration could be set up to centralize relevant information, tools and experiences, thus promoting transparency and collective learning.

5. Common monitoring and evaluation: An integrated monitoring and evaluation framework should be created to measure the impact of actions undertaken under these three processes. This would include common performance indicators, to ensure that objectives are achieved in a coordinated manner. Regular feedback mechanisms should be put in place to adjust strategies based on observed results and technological and social developments.

6. Strengthening inclusiveness and digital equity: Harmonization of processes should also ensure that the dimension of digital inclusiveness is at the heart of each compact. This implies ensuring equitable access to technologies, connectivity and digital skills, in particular for developing countries, women and marginalized populations. Specific initiatives should be put in place to overcome barriers to digital inclusion and encourage inclusive digital growth globally.

7. Mobilization of financial and technical resources: To ensure harmonized implementation, it is essential to mobilize joint financial and technical resources, particularly to support projects in developing countries. Innovative financing mechanisms, such as the Sustainable Digital Transformation Investment Funds, could be created to support joint initiatives, ensuring that collective efforts are backed by a solid resource base.

8. Joint awareness-raising and advocacy: To ensure that the objectives of the three processes are well understood and supported globally, joint awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns are essential. This would include communication efforts to inform governments, businesses and the public of the benefits of a harmonized approach to digital development and Internet governance.

By aligning the processes of the WSIS, the Compact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact, it becomes possible to create a common vision and coordinated action that will achieve shared goals, including the promotion of an inclusive, sustainable and equitable digital society on a global scale.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

As part of the WSIS+20 review and the future vision beyond 2025, ITU (International Telecommunication Union) is expected to focus on several emerging digital trends and issues that are critical to sustainable development and global digital governance. Key among these are:

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Ethics

AI continues to transform the way societies interact, operate and evolve. However, it also raises major concerns regarding ethics, data privacy, equity and inclusiveness. ITU should explore how countries and private stakeholders can collaborate to establish global standards and regulatory frameworks for the ethical and responsible use of AI, while ensuring that the benefits of AI are shared equitably.

2. Digital Transformation for Sustainable Development

Digitalization has a central role in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs. ITU should consider how to strengthen the use of digital technologies to achieve specific SDG targets, including in the areas of education, health, governance, social inclusion and the environment. Particular attention should be paid to the digital infrastructure needed to support these initiatives, particularly in developing countries.

3. Cybersecurity and Internet governance

Cybersecurity is a fundamental issue as societies become increasingly digital. ITU should play an active role in promoting comprehensive cybersecurity mechanisms and digital resilience. This includes developing international protocols and standards, as well as encouraging cooperation between states and businesses to protect critical infrastructure and ensure user safety.

4. Digital inclusion and the digital divide

Although digital technologies are growing rapidly, the digital divide remains a reality for millions of people, particularly in rural areas, developing countries and among marginalized groups. ITU should deepen discussions on bridging this divide, addressing access to digital infrastructure, improving digital skills and reducing access inequalities, including by ensuring affordable access to the Internet and devices.

5. Internet of Things (IoT) and the impact on public policies

The IoT is growing exponentially, with implications for smart city management, health, transport, agriculture and other sectors. ITU should assess the impact of IoT on public policies, particularly on data governance, security and privacy management. The role of the IoT in creating sustainable and smart solutions for cities and communities could also be a major point of discussion.

6. Data protection and privacy

With the digitalization of society, the protection of personal data and privacy are becoming critical issues. ITU is expected to facilitate discussions on creating global standards for the collection, storage and processing of personal data, ensuring that individuals can control their information while enabling a trusted and secure digital environment.

These emerging trends and issues are at the heart of the global digital transformation and will have a major impact on society, the economy and global governance. ITU, within the framework of WSIS+20, should play a catalytic role in facilitating international cooperation, defining common guidelines and supporting sustainable digital innovation to ensure that the benefits of digitalization are shared inclusively and equitably.

# United Kingdom | Anglia Ruskin University | Academia

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Anglia Ruskin University

1. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

1. Organization country

United Kingdom

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Bridging the Digital Divide: WSIS has played a pivotal role in promoting universal access to ICTs, particularly in underserved regions. Initiatives like affordable internet access, community connectivity projects, and ICT capacity-building have significantly reduced disparities.

Policy and Governance Frameworks: The WSIS process has led to the creation of frameworks addressing critical issues such as internet governance, cybersecurity, and digital inclusion. This includes the establishment of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): By aligning ICT initiatives with the SDGs, WSIS has demonstrated how technology can be a key enabler in areas like education, healthcare, agriculture, and climate action.

Promoting Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: WSIS has fostered partnerships among governments, private sector, academia, and civil society, enhancing collective efforts to leverage ICTs for development.

Raising Awareness on Emerging Technologies: Over the past two decades, WSIS has highlighted the transformative potential of technologies like AI, IoT, and big data, while addressing associated risks and ethical considerations.

Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing: Through its events, toolkits, and resources, WSIS has empowered nations to build local capacities, ensuring sustainable ICT ecosystems and informed policy-making.

Empowering Marginalized Communities: WSIS has championed digital inclusion by focusing on gender equality, youth empowerment, and access for persons with disabilities, ensuring no one is left behind.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

Leadership in the WSIS Process: ITU co-organized the WSIS Summits in 2003 (Geneva) and 2005 (Tunis), laying the foundation for global discussions on ICT for development. It has since continued to coordinate and monitor progress on WSIS Action Lines.

Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue: ITU has created platforms such as the annual WSIS Forum, which brings together diverse stakeholders to exchange best practices, review progress, and discuss challenges in using ICTs for sustainable development.

Development of ICT Infrastructure: ITU has spearheaded initiatives to expand telecommunications infrastructure globally, particularly in developing countries. Projects like the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development highlight ITU’s role in bridging the digital divide.

Standardization and Innovation: As a global standards body, ITU has developed technical standards that ensure interoperability and innovation in telecommunications, including mobile networks, satellite systems, and internet protocols.

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance: ITU has provided training, policy guidance, and technical support to member states, enabling them to adopt ICT strategies aligned with WSIS goals and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Monitoring and Reporting: Through tools like the ITU ICT Development Index (IDI) and the Measuring Digital Development reports, ITU has tracked global progress in ICT access, usage, and skills, providing critical data for evidence-based decision-making.

Focus on Inclusion: ITU has prioritized initiatives to connect underserved communities, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and rural populations, through targeted programs and partnerships.

Advancing Emerging Technologies: ITU has played a pivotal role in exploring the potential of technologies such as 5G, AI, and IoT, while addressing issues like cybersecurity, data privacy, and digital rights.

Strengthening International Collaboration: ITU has facilitated collaboration between governments, the private sector, and international organizations, ensuring a unified approach to leveraging ICTs for sustainable development

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Promoting Meaningful Participation: Ensure all stakeholders—governments, private sector, civil society, academia, and marginalized groups—have equal opportunities to contribute. This involves proactive outreach, capacity building, and resources to support underrepresented voices.

Encouraging Regional and Local Engagement: Establish and empower regional and national WSIS processes to address local priorities while aligning with global objectives. Localized initiatives can provide context-specific solutions and amplify grassroots participation.

Avoiding Duplication of Functions: Duplication of efforts arising from insufficient alignment between WSIS and other initiatives, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global Digital Compact (GDC), and WSIS+20, must be addressed. The SDGs recognized ICTs as critical enablers of sustainable development but did not sufficiently dovetail with WSIS implementation and monitoring. Similarly, the lack of country-based reporting on WSIS implementation has constrained effective follow-up. Moving forward, the WSIS+20 process must harmonize with the GDC follow-up and strengthen existing mechanisms, such as those presented by the IGF, the WSIS Forum, and the work of UNESCO, ITU, UNDP, and CSTD.

Strengthening Transparency and Accountability: Maintain open and transparent mechanisms for decision-making and reporting. Regular evaluations of WSIS-related activities and clear communication of outcomes will foster trust and inclusivity.

Integrating Emerging Technologies: Incorporate discussions on emerging technologies like AI, blockchain, and quantum computing to address their challenges and opportunities. This will ensure that the WSIS process remains relevant and forward-looking.

Enhancing Collaboration Across Sectors: Encourage cross-sector partnerships to leverage diverse expertise and resources. For example, joint initiatives between governments and technology companies can drive innovation while ensuring ethical standards.

Prioritizing Digital Inclusion: Commit to reducing the digital divide by focusing on affordable access, digital literacy, and capacity building for disadvantaged communities. Inclusive participation requires addressing inequalities in access and representation.

Aligning with Global Development Agendas: Strengthen the connection between the WSIS process and the SDGs to demonstrate its value in addressing global challenges like climate change, poverty, and health.

Investing in Capacity Building: Regularly provide training, funding, and resources to build the capacity of stakeholders, particularly in developing countries, ensuring that all participants can engage effectively.

Fostering Innovation and Flexibility: Adapt the WSIS process to evolving technological and social contexts by integrating new ideas, addressing emerging risks, and remaining agile in its governance structures.

Promoting Youth Engagement: Actively involve young people as drivers of digital innovation and sustainability. Programs that focus on youth leadership in ICT can ensure the WSIS process is carried forward by future generations.

Establishing Clear Metrics for Success: Define measurable goals for the WSIS process, regularly assess progress, and make necessary adjustments. Data-driven decision-making will enhance accountability and outcomes.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

- Digital Divide: Unequal access to ICTs remains a major challenge, particularly for marginalized groups, rural communities, and developing nations. Factors such as affordability, lack of infrastructure, and limited digital literacy exacerbate this divide.

- Alignment with Global Frameworks: Insufficient alignment between the WSIS process and other global initiatives, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Digital Compact (GDC), has led to fragmented efforts. A lack of country-based reporting mechanisms for WSIS implementation further hampers effective monitoring and integration.

- Evolving Technological Landscape: Rapid advancements in emerging technologies such as AI, IoT, and blockchain pose both opportunities and risks. Ensuring that the WSIS process remains relevant and addresses challenges such as ethical considerations, data privacy, and cybersecurity is critical.

- Regulatory Gaps and Fragmentation: Disparities in regulatory frameworks across countries hinder the seamless implementation of global ICT initiatives. Harmonizing policies while respecting national sovereignty remains a delicate balance.

- Insufficient Funding and Resources: Many countries, particularly in the Global South, face financial and resource constraints in implementing WSIS action lines, limiting their ability to develop robust ICT ecosystems.

- Digital Inclusion: Gender inequality, limited opportunities for persons with disabilities, and lack of youth representation continue to challenge inclusive participation in the digital space.

- Digital Sovereignty and Geopolitical Tensions: Increasing geopolitical tensions over technology governance and digital sovereignty challenge international collaboration, potentially leading to a fragmented internet.

- Sustainability Concerns: The environmental impact of ICTs, including e-waste and the energy demands of data centers and digital infrastructure, requires urgent attention to ensure that digital development aligns with sustainable practices.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

C1: The Role of Public Governance Authorities and All Stakeholders in the Promotion of ICTs for Development

Impact: This Action Line has been instrumental in fostering multistakeholder collaboration, which is at the heart of the WSIS process. Governments, private sector actors, civil society, and international organizations have partnered to develop and implement ICT policies, enhancing inclusivity and shared ownership.

Why Significant: By emphasizing governance and stakeholder engagement, C1 has facilitated the creation of robust frameworks for ICT-driven sustainable development at national and international levels.

C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure

Impact: Expanding ICT infrastructure, including broadband connectivity, mobile networks, and satellite systems, has been transformative in bridging the digital divide and enabling access to information and services in underserved regions.

Why Significant: Infrastructure is the backbone of digital development. Progress under C2 has been critical for fostering connectivity, enabling economic opportunities, and supporting social inclusion, particularly in developing countries.

C3: Access to Information and Knowledge

Impact: This Action Line has improved access to information and knowledge through digital platforms, open educational resources, and public access initiatives.

Why Significant: Access to knowledge empowers individuals and communities, promoting education, innovation, and participation in the digital economy.

C7: ICT Applications in Key Sectors (E-Government, E-Business, E-Learning, E-Health, E-Employment, E-Environment, E-Agriculture, and E-Science)

Impact: ICT applications have revolutionized service delivery in critical sectors. For instance, e-health has expanded access to healthcare in remote areas, while e-learning has democratized education through online platforms.

Why Significant: These applications directly contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing challenges in health, education, employment, and environmental sustainability.

C4: Capacity Building

Impact: Investments in capacity building have equipped individuals, particularly in developing countries, with the skills needed to engage in the digital economy and leverage ICTs effectively.

Why Significant: Capacity building ensures sustainability by enabling local communities to create, adapt, and utilize ICT solutions independently.

C5: Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs

Impact: Efforts under this Action Line have strengthened cybersecurity frameworks and promoted trust in digital technologies through global cooperation and awareness campaigns.

Why Significant: Building trust in ICTs is fundamental for their widespread adoption and safe use, particularly in an era of increasing cyber threats.

C8: Cultural Diversity and Identity, Linguistic Diversity, and Local Content

Impact: Promoting cultural and linguistic diversity online has preserved local identities and enabled greater representation in the digital space.

Why Significant: Local content creation empowers communities to share their stories and knowledge, fostering inclusivity and enriching global digital ecosystems.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

1. Establishing Clear Governance Frameworks for Emerging Topics

a. How: Develop guidelines and frameworks under the WSIS principles to govern areas such as AI ethics, data privacy, digital sovereignty, and cybersecurity.

b. Why: Clear and globally accepted governance frameworks are essential for addressing the ethical, legal, and social implications of emerging technologies.

2. Enhancing Digital Inclusion

a. How: Prioritize policies and initiatives that ensure equitable access to emerging technologies, particularly for marginalized groups and underserved regions.

b. Why: Emerging technologies can exacerbate existing inequalities if access and opportunities are not distributed fairly.

3. Promoting Capacity Building and Skills Development

a. How: Expand capacity-building initiatives to equip individuals and institutions with the skills needed to understand, deploy, and manage emerging technologies responsibly.

b. Why: Building human capital ensures sustainable engagement with new technologies and supports innovation at the local level.

4. Integrating Environmental Sustainability

a. How: Embed sustainability principles into Action Lines by addressing the environmental impact of ICTs, such as e-waste management and the energy efficiency of data centers.

b. Why: Ensuring the environmental sustainability of digital development is crucial for achieving broader global goals.

5. Leveraging Regional and Local Expertise

a. How: Empower regional and local stakeholders to tailor WSIS principles to their specific contexts, ensuring that solutions are contextually relevant and practical.

b. Why: Localized approaches increase the effectiveness and adoption of WSIS-related initiatives.

6. Facilitating Policy Coherence Across Global Initiatives

a. How: Harmonize the WSIS process with other global frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Digital Compact (GDC), to avoid duplication and enhance impact.

b. Why: Policy coherence ensures efficient use of resources and a unified approach to global digital development.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Key Milestones

1. Integration with the SDGs and Global Digital Compact (GDC):

o Milestones should include harmonizing WSIS Action Lines with the SDGs and GDC to ensure cohesive global efforts on digital transformation and sustainable development.

o Establishing measurable outcomes for digital inclusion, infrastructure expansion, and cybersecurity by 2030.

2. Expanding ICT Access:

o Targets for universal access to broadband, particularly in underserved regions, should be set, with mid-term reviews to assess progress.

o Focus on ensuring affordable internet access for all by 2030.

3. Strengthening Multistakeholder Governance:

o Milestones should include improved participation frameworks for marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, to ensure equity and representation.

4. Advancements in Emerging Technologies:

o Establish milestones to address the governance of AI, IoT, and other emerging technologies, focusing on ethics, inclusivity, and sustainability.

5. Sustainability Integration:

o Commit to milestones that promote the environmentally responsible use of ICTs, such as reducing e-waste and ensuring energy-efficient digital infrastructure.

Challenges

1. Digital Divide:

o Persistent disparities in ICT access and affordability require a focused effort to bridge the gap between developed and developing nations.

o Challenges in scaling infrastructure to remote and underserved areas remain significant.

2. Policy Coherence:

o Misalignment between WSIS Action Lines and other global initiatives such as the SDGs and the GDC could lead to inefficiencies and duplication of efforts.

3. Cybersecurity and Trust:

o Growing threats to cybersecurity, data privacy, and misinformation present barriers to the safe adoption of ICTs.

4. Resource Constraints:

o Financial and technical resource limitations, particularly in the Global South, impede progress in achieving WSIS Action Lines.

5. Adapting to Rapid Technological Change:

o The fast pace of technological advancements challenges existing frameworks, requiring constant updates to policies and action plans.

Emerging Trends Beyond 2025

1. AI and Automation:

o Governance and ethical considerations around AI development and deployment must become a central focus of WSIS Action Lines.

2. Digital Sovereignty and Fragmentation:

o Increasing focus on national digital sovereignty risks fragmenting the global digital ecosystem, requiring WSIS to promote international collaboration.

3. Climate and ICTs:

o The intersection of ICTs and climate change, including using technology for climate monitoring and mitigation, will become increasingly relevant.

Suggestions for WSIS+20 Review Process

1. Enhanced Monitoring and Reporting:

o Develop robust, harmonized mechanisms for countries to report progress on WSIS Action Lines, ensuring accountability and transparency.

2. Greater Focus on Inclusion:

o Establish dedicated programs to support digital literacy and ICT access for marginalized groups, ensuring no one is left behind.

3. Strengthening Partnerships:

o Encourage deeper collaboration with private sector and academia to harness resources and innovation for WSIS goals.

4. Flexible Frameworks for Emerging Issues:

o Create adaptable action lines that can quickly incorporate new trends, ensuring the WSIS process remains relevant.

5. Showcasing Best Practices:

o Highlight successful case studies of WSIS Action Line implementations to inspire replication and scaling.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

1. Establish Clear Linkages Between Action Lines and SDGs

• How: Map each WSIS Action Line explicitly to specific SDGs and their targets, identifying where ICTs can have the most significant impact (e.g., Action Line C7 on ICT applications for education directly supports SDG 4: Quality Education).

• Why: Clear linkages will help stakeholders prioritize ICT initiatives that contribute directly to achieving SDG targets, ensuring a cohesive and purpose-driven approach.

2. Foster Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

• How: Encourage collaboration among governments, international organizations, private sector actors, civil society, and academia to implement joint projects aligned with both WSIS Action Lines and SDGs.

• Why: Partnerships bring diverse expertise, resources, and perspectives, ensuring ICT solutions are inclusive, scalable, and impactful.

3. Strengthen Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms

• How: Develop harmonized frameworks that track progress on WSIS Action Lines and SDG indicators simultaneously, enabling integrated reporting.

• Why: Shared monitoring tools will provide a clearer picture of how ICT initiatives contribute to sustainable development, allowing for better coordination and accountability.

4. Address the Digital Divide

• How: Prioritize initiatives under Action Line C2 (Information and Communication Infrastructure) and C4 (Capacity Building) to expand access to ICTs and digital literacy in underserved regions and communities.

• Why: Reducing the digital divide is essential for achieving SDGs related to education, healthcare, gender equality, and economic growth.

5. Integrate Environmental Sustainability

• How: Ensure that WSIS initiatives incorporate sustainability principles, such as energy-efficient ICT infrastructure, e-waste management, and climate monitoring technologies.

• Why: Aligning ICT development with environmental goals will support SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

6. Enhance Localized Implementation

• How: Support the localization of WSIS Action Lines to address region-specific challenges and opportunities, ensuring alignment with national SDG strategies.

• Why: Localized approaches allow for context-specific solutions that are more effective and sustainable.

7. Promote ICT-Driven Innovation in Key Sectors

• How: Leverage ICT applications (Action Line C7) to drive innovation in healthcare, agriculture, education, and governance, addressing multiple SDGs simultaneously.

• Why: ICT innovations have the potential to revolutionize service delivery, enhance efficiency, and improve outcomes in critical development areas.

8. Build Capacity for Emerging Technologies

• How: Expand capacity-building programs (Action Line C4) to equip stakeholders with the skills to harness emerging technologies like AI, IoT, and big data for SDG achievement.

• Why: Emerging technologies can provide transformative solutions for development challenges, from smart agriculture to precision healthcare.

9. Facilitate Policy Coherence

• How: Align national ICT strategies with SDG implementation plans, ensuring that policies developed under WSIS Action Lines support broader development goals.

• Why: Policy coherence minimizes duplication of efforts and optimizes resource allocation for maximum impact.

10. Raise Awareness of ICTs as Enablers of SDGs

• How: Conduct awareness campaigns and forums to showcase the role of ICTs in achieving SDGs, highlighting best practices and success stories from WSIS implementations.

• Why: Greater awareness can drive political will, investment, and community support for ICT-driven development initiatives.

11. Active Engagement in the Post-2030 Agenda

• How: WSIS must actively participate in shaping the post-2030 development agenda by convening discussions on ICT priorities, defining the next generation of development goals, and ensuring that ICTs remain central to global strategies.

• Why: As the 2030 Agenda approaches its conclusion, WSIS has a cr

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Enhance stakeholder representation by actively encouraging the participation of underrepresented groups, including stakeholders from developing countries, indigenous communities, women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Inclusive representation ensures that the perspectives and needs of all groups are considered, making the platforms more equitable and effective.

Strengthen cross-sector collaboration by fostering partnerships among governments, private sector entities, civil society, academia, and technical experts through joint projects, co-hosted events, and collaborative initiatives. Collaboration across sectors brings diverse expertise and resources to address complex challenges in digital development and internet governance.

Promote clear differentiation of roles by defining the distinct yet complementary roles of the WSIS Forum and the IGF, with WSIS focusing on digital development and capacity building, and IGF addressing governance and policy issues. A clear division of responsibilities minimizes overlap and enhances the effectiveness of both platforms.

Invest in capacity building by providing training, funding, and technical resources to support stakeholders, particularly from developing countries, to actively participate in and contribute to discussions. Empowering stakeholders with knowledge and resources strengthens their ability to engage meaningfully in global dialogues.

Leverage technology for greater accessibility by utilizing digital tools such as hybrid event formats, multilingual support, and real-time translation services to make the platforms more accessible. Technology enables broader participation, particularly from remote regions and those who cannot attend in person.

Develop measurable outcomes by introducing mechanisms to track the progress and impact of discussions and recommendations made at the WSIS Forum and IGF. Clear outcomes and follow-up actions enhance accountability and demonstrate the value of these platforms.

Focus on emerging issues by regularly updating the agendas of both platforms to include discussions on emerging technologies (e.g., AI, blockchain, quantum computing) and their implications for society. Addressing cutting-edge issues ensures the platforms remain relevant and forward-looking.

Strengthen policy coherence by coordinating discussions between the WSIS Forum and IGF to align outcomes with global initiatives like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Digital Compact (GDC). Policy coherence avoids duplication of efforts and enhances the collective impact of these platforms.

Expand outreach and awareness by increasing the visibility of the platforms through targeted outreach campaigns, partnerships with media outlets, and public engagement activities. Greater awareness encourages broader participation and enhances the global impact of WSIS and IGF initiatives.

Foster a culture of collaboration by promoting an open and inclusive culture that values dialogue, trust, and shared goals among diverse stakeholders. A collaborative environment enhances the effectiveness of multistakeholder governance and development efforts.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Establish a shared vision by defining common priorities and goals across the WSIS process and the GDC. This includes emphasizing universal connectivity, digital inclusion, ethical governance of emerging technologies, and the sustainable use of ICTs. A shared vision ensures coherence and synergy in their respective approaches.

Develop a unified monitoring framework that tracks progress across both the WSIS Action Lines and GDC commitments. This includes integrating indicators for digital development and governance to enable consistent evaluation and reporting. Harmonized metrics will enhance accountability and facilitate cross-initiative learning.

Encourage multi-stakeholder participation by strengthening platforms such as the WSIS Forum and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to act as convening spaces for discussions on both WSIS and GDC priorities. Involving diverse stakeholders ensures a balanced approach that incorporates the perspectives of governments, civil society, the private sector, and academia.

Leverage existing mechanisms such as the WSIS Action Lines and related initiatives under UNESCO, ITU, UNDP, and other UN bodies to support the implementation of the GDC. This avoids duplication of efforts and maximizes the use of established structures and expertise.

Focus on bridging the digital divide by coordinating efforts to expand access to ICTs in underserved regions, ensuring affordability, and building digital literacy. Both the WSIS process and the GDC prioritize reducing inequalities, making this a critical area for alignment.

Prioritize governance of emerging technologies by developing shared principles and frameworks for responsible AI, data privacy, cybersecurity, and digital sovereignty. Aligning policies in these areas will ensure coherence in addressing technological opportunities and risks.

Promote sustainable development by embedding environmental considerations into ICT strategies under both WSIS and GDC initiatives. This includes addressing e-waste, energy-efficient infrastructure, and the role of ICTs in combating climate change, aligning with the goals of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Strengthen the role of regional and national actors by encouraging the localization of WSIS and GDC priorities. Supporting countries in adapting global frameworks to their specific contexts will improve implementation and foster ownership of shared goals.

Enhance resource mobilization by aligning funding strategies for digital development and governance. Pooling financial and technical resources from international organizations, development agencies, and private sector partners will ensure efficient use of resources.

Foster knowledge sharing and best practices by creating joint platforms for showcasing successful initiatives and innovative approaches in implementing WSIS and GDC commitments. This will encourage replication and scaling of effective solutions.

Prepare for the post-2030 agenda by ensuring that the WSIS process and GDC serve as complementary foundations for setting the next generation of development goals. Coordinating their visions for the future will sustain momentum and address evolving global challenges.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Maintain Long-Term Thinking

The WSIS+20 process should adopt a forward-looking and holistic approach to emerging technologies, ensuring that discussions on AI do not overshadow other crucial areas such as IoT, quantum computing, blockchain, and extended reality (XR). By considering a broad spectrum of digital advancements, ITU can better prepare for the interconnected and rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Foster Balanced Attention Across Technologies

Emerging technologies often interact and amplify each other’s potential. For instance, AI relies on advancements in data governance and connectivity, while IoT, 5G, and edge computing shape the ecosystem in which AI operates. A future-oriented strategy should ensure equitable focus across these interconnected domains.

Apply Ethical and Inclusive Frameworks Across All Technologies

Ethical considerations and inclusive governance frameworks should guide the development and deployment of all emerging technologies, not just AI. This includes addressing challenges such as digital inclusion, privacy, security, and the environmental impact of ICTs.

Enable Adaptive and Agile Policies

ITU should promote policies that remain flexible and responsive to the dynamic nature of technological advancements. Long-term thinking ensures that policies are robust yet adaptable to accommodate future breakthroughs and challenges.

Invest in Research Beyond AI

While AI offers immense potential, investments in research and development should encompass a wider range of technologies, such as quantum computing, which could redefine cybersecurity and computation, and sustainable ICT practices that address the climate crisis.

Align with the Broader Development Agenda

The WSIS+20 process should emphasize how emerging technologies collectively contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This includes harnessing technologies like IoT for precision agriculture, blockchain for transparent governance, and satellite-based connectivity for bridging the digital divide.

# United Kingdom | Global Partners Digital | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Global Partners Digital

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

United Kingdom

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

One of the principal achievements of the WSIS is its commitment to a people-centric, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, use and share information to fully promote sustainable development and improve their quality of life. We understand the people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society as one which is respectful of human rights, promotes gender equality and empowers vulnerable and marginalised groups including minority groups. It is also a society where ICTs contribute to sustainable socio-economic development including through open, inclusive and transparent governance structures.

The original WSIS vision produced in 2003 was firm in its commitment to human rights, anchoring the Action Plan in the values and obligations of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This vision was further supported during the WSIS+10 review process, with the Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+10 Outcome Document) adopted in 2015 recognising that “the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online”. This is reflected in other processes within the UN, for example, UN General Assembly resolutions in 2013 and 2014 on the right to privacy in the digital age. This recognition that human rights apply online and offline is a key achievement of WSIS, although, as discussed below, this has not always been realised in implementation.

Another key success and achievement of the WSIS process and outcomes is its strong commitment to the multistakeholder approach in Internet governance. The Tunis Agenda, in particular, recognises the roles played by different stakeholders in implementing the Action Lines and in shaping conversations about digital and public policy issues. This approach has become a foundational principle for digital technology governance discussions and underpins the work of global forums like the IETF and ICANN. The participation of all stakeholders is a prerequisite and enabler of people–centred digital development. In particular, civil society plays a key role in discussions on governance of digital technologies by bringing underrepresented perspectives and human rights expertise to inform discussions and raise awareness of the impacts on at-risk groups.

This multistakeholder approach has helped to maintain the global, open, and interoperable nature of the Internet, which is a key enabler of human rights in the digital age. Threats to the open, interoperable and global internet are likely to impact a broad range of rights, including but not limited to creating and sharing information, freedom of expression, freedom of association, peaceful assembly, and privacy.

Finally, the establishment of the IGF as the principal multistakeholder forum on Internet and digital policy issues is a central achievement. The IGF has provided an effective forum for multistakeholder dialogue on Internet governance and digital public policy issues and to further evolve and put into practice multistakeholder approaches. Through the establishment of the IGF, the WSIS has helped to create an open, inclusive space to discuss the governance of digital technologies, with stakeholders throughout the ecosystem having the opportunity to shape conversations on an equal footing. Additionally, the creation of over 100 national and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs) has established a robust mechanism to bring issues from the grassroots into international discussions and attracted participants from around the globe. While the IGF has a number of issues in implementation – discussed in more detail below – it has become the principal forum for multistakeholder and multidisciplinary dialogue on Internet-related public policy related issues.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?
2. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

A key achievement of the WSIS process is its strong commitment to the multistakeholder approach in Internet governance, reflected in the Tunis Agenda and in the decentralised structure created to implement the WSIS outcomes. This approach has helped to maintain the global, open, and interoperable nature of the Internet, which is a key enabler of human rights in the digital age and of people-centric sustainable development.

First, our experience in the digital policy field indicates the need to further evolve and strengthen the operationalisation of multistakeholder approaches in both multistakeholder and multilateral processes relating to the governance of the Internet and digital technologies. The NETmundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement, negotiated and agreed through a multistakeholder process, provides a set of guidelines and related process steps (“São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines”) in Internet governance and digital policy processes at the international, regional and national levels. It reinforces the benefits of approaches to governance which allow for inclusive and democratic participation of all stakeholders, and highlights the need to ensure transparent and accessible procedures, funding and capacity building to support participation from a diversity of stakeholders. These Principles demonstrate the evolution of thinking about how multistakeholderism can be integrated within multilateral processes and in international public policy discussions. relating to the Internet and digital technologies. The next phase of the WSIS should prioritise working to evolve and ensure the application of multistakeholder approaches in practice in multilateral and multistakeholder processes. In our response to question nine, we recommend how this could be achieved through a dedicated IGF track, and through the IGF playing an enhanced role as the custodian of the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines.

All agencies and institutions participating in the WSIS+20 review should affirm their commitment to the multistakeholder approach and further evolve it in a manner that strengthens collaboration among stakeholders and enables them to fulfil their diverse roles. These roles include raising awareness of the impacts on at-risk communities, contributing human rights expertise and research to policy deliberations, and monitoring compliance with international human rights standards and SDG commitments.

Second, the next phase of the WSIS should ensure a permanent and strengthened IGF mandate, with a renewed focus on ensuring people-centered and inclusive development. As one of the principal institutional outcomes of the WSIS, the IGF has evolved into the primary venue for multistakeholder dialogue on public policy matters related to the Internet. However, it faces continued challenges, these include the need for sustainable financial resources to fulfil its mandate; better cohesion between the IGF’s intersessional work streams and outcomes at the global level; more diverse representation, particularly of underrepresented countries and marginalised communities; and improved procedures to guarantee principles of openness, inclusivity, transparency and accountability. The need for strengthened procedures is particularly relevant to the selection of host countries for the global IGF to ensure that the IGF through its procedures and activities does not undermine the effective participation of stakeholders or result in the exclusion of structurally marginalised groups.

In its next phase, the WSIS should consider how the IGF can be strengthened as a vehicle for people-centred and inclusive discussions of the Internet and digital policy issues. We provide further recommendations for how to achieve this in response to questions 9 and 10.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Technology and society has evolved significantly since the original WSIS process. These developments have resulted in new opportunities as well as challenges to ensuring the people-centric and development-oriented information society envisaged by the WSIS.

First, there is an increasingly complex environment governing digital technologies. The WSIS process is taking place alongside other multilateral processes on digital cooperation – including the new Office on Digital and Emerging Technologies, Summit of the Future (SOTF), the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and the entities emanating from it, NETmundial+10, and the Open-Ended Working Group on ICTs (OEWG on ICTs). The WSIS process stands out for its people-centric approach, multistakeholder approach to Internet governance, and decentralised approach to implementation, and consideration should be given to how other digital technology governance initiatives like the GDC can be operationalised through the WSIS implementation structure.

A second, related challenge, concerns the need to strengthen and further operationalise multistakeholder approaches. As a landmark document, the Tunis Agenda recognises the roles played by different stakeholders in implementing the Action Lines and in shaping conversations about digital and public policy issues. However, further work is required to evolve multistakeholder principles and ensure their application in specific multilateral and multistakeholder initiatives.

For example, the IGF has been held in locations characterised by a lack of rule of law and failure to guarantee the rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly, and expression, and where the participation of all stakeholders is not guaranteed. This has limited the participation of stakeholders from the human rights community, structurally marginalised groups and affected communities, and effected the legitimacy of decision-making as these actors play a critical role in bringing underrepresented perspectives, raising awareness of the impacts on at-risk groups, contributing human rights expertise, and monitoring compliance with human rights standards. This oversight and representation is essential to ensure continuous review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes by UN agencies and institutions from the perspective of human rights, as well as to monitor activities by governments to ensure compliance with their obligations under international human rights law. This points to the need to evolve multistakeholder approaches in a manner that is sensitive to the needs and interests of these stakeholders to facilitate their participation and increase the evidence basis for and legitimacy of decision-making.

In a context where discussions of technology governance are increasingly migrating to more closed spaces, it is vital that existing multistakeholder venues like the IGF and the WSIS Forum continue to adapt their processes to ensure more meaningful input by stakeholders. It is similarly important that intergovernmental processes like the WSIS+20 review continue to find ways to adapt and integrate multistakeholder approaches within multilateral processes. Mechanisms for doing so are further explored in response to questions 9 and 10.

A third challenge relates to the need to ensure the harmonisation of the WSIS framework with the international human rights law framework, and to facilitate enhanced coordination with the UN human rights mechanisms, especially the OHCHR. Since WSIS+10, threats to human rights - particularly free expression, access to information and privacy - have increased rather than decreased. The free flow of information is being impeded by laws and policies which limit access and connectivity, limiting connectivity and access, and scaling the potential for increased state control and surveillance digital technologies. This trend underscores the need for an explicitly human rights-based approach to implementing the WSIS outcomes and achieving the SDGs.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?
2. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Our experience actively engaging with the WSIS demonstrates that the following operational and substantive aspects should be prioritised in the next phase of the WSIS to effectively address new and emerging areas.

While it is appropriate that the WSIS Action Lines remain technologically neutral, the WSIS framework should be adapted to ensure greater alignment with the international human rights framework and the progressive interpretation and application of that framework to respond to new and emerging technologies. This adaptation to the WSIS framework could be reflected in the WSIS+20 review outcome document and in other implementing instruments.

There is value in enriching and evolving the WSIS framework by making references to the wide body of interpretive work by the UN human rights mechanisms to understand the connections between human rights and sustainable development, and to apply human rights-based approaches. For example, related to Action Line C10 - Ethical dimensions of the Information Society, there is value in referring to the extensive work by the OHCHR, the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, and the UN Special Procedures mandate-holders, among others, to ensure a rights-based approach to AI governance (see, for example: UN General Assembly resolution A/78/L.49).

In this regard, the Global Digital Compact (GDC) contains useful guidance which should be incorporated to strengthen and enrich the WSIS framework. For example, references to the need for digital technology companies and developers to respect international human rights and principles, including through the application of human rights due diligence and impact assessments throughout the technology life cycle (paragraph 23(b)) should be added to the updated WSIS framework. In addition, the recognition that all stakeholders must identify and mitigate risks posed by emerging technologies, and “ensure human oversight of technology in ways that advance sustainable development and the full enjoyment of human rights” (paragraph 3) should be reflected in the next phase of the WSIS.

This increased attention to the international human rights framework and guidance to respond to new and emerging threats should be complemented by enhanced normative coordination with the UN human rights mechanisms. Agencies charged with the implementation of the action lines should ensure a human rights-based approach to their application and to review the progress in achieving them. At the institutional level, this requires ensuring greater coordination and coherence with the UN human rights bodies, in particular the OHCHR. This enhanced coordination with OHCHR could take the form of the digital human rights advisory service envisaged by the GDC (paragraph 24), and be supported by additional financial resources.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

We appreciate the work the Action Line facilitators have put into considering the evolving context for the Action Lines and see the documents as a good basis to guide conversation. Considering the challenges experienced in implementation, the evolving context, and future opportunities, we believe the existing action lines are crafted in a technologically neutral manner which is adaptive to both technological and societal changes. However, as discussed above there is an opportunity for the outcome document or accompanying implementing instruments to express greater alignment with the international human rights framework and the progressive interpretation and application of that framework. This should be reflected throughout any documents which are prepared in advance of the review process to guide conversations but is particularly relevant to the report for Action Line 10.

The review of the Action Lines must consider how they have contributed to the enjoyment of human rights, and we particularly appreciated the reference to the successes in advancing recognition of the right to information made in the document referring to Action Line C3. Reference should be made to the extensive body of work which exists to analyse the human rights impacts of digital technologies, as well as concrete tools for measuring and mitigating human rights impacts, as this body of work will be useful and relevant to the review.

There are a few cross-cutting themes that the facilitators have referenced across these different reports which warrant highlighting. Several of the documents prepared by the facilitators (for example those on Action Lines C1 & C2) reference the difficulty of achieving coordination across stakeholders when implementing the Action Lines. It’s important that the WSIS process itself doesn’t exacerbate this difficulty by making meaningful engagement for stakeholders of all kinds, but particularly Global Majority civil society, more difficult. Including the stakeholders who are involved in implementation in the review process itself will help to create buy-in and commitment to any outcome documents. Practically, this could take the form of publishing a roadmap to provide clarity on the process; providing opportunities for stakeholders to input on a recurring basis throughout the process; publishing inputs online; and providing opportunities for both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to take part in consultations so that different stakeholders have the opportunity to hear and respond to one another’s’ inputs.

Likewise, both AI and security of digital technologies are referenced as topics of increasing importance for the context of the review across several of the documents referred to in the question above. Here, as well, we call for greater coordination and coherence between the different areas where these topics are addressed within the UN system. For example, for the security of ICTs we suggest that any documents prepared to aid the review must draw on and contextualise the extensive work within the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and Open-ended Working Group (OEWG), including with respect to the application of international law in cyberspace, particularly the UN Charter, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. For AI, there is a wealth of work happening to ensure that AI is governed in a rights-respecting manner within the UN and beyond, including upcoming work which may happen through the International Scientific Panel on AI and Global Dialogue on AI Governance. The ambition must be to avoid duplication and create confusion and this is best achieved by reinforcing existing work and benefiting from the existing implementation structures provided by the WSIS as a mechanism.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

As recognised in the Global Digital Compact, the acceleration of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will likely depend on digital technologies. While the WSIS process began before the SDGs, the WSIS Action Lines and their implementation has become the primary process at the UN which can help achieve sustainable development in and through information and communications technologies. As such, the WSIS Action Lines are a key mechanism to be leveraged for the achievement of the SDGs.

Technology and society has evolved significantly since the original WSIS process. Digital technologies are now ubiquitous and pervade most aspects of our lives, which means they are essential for the enjoyment of human rights; enabling individuals to digitally assemble, express themselves and access information. The original WSIS vision produced in 2003 was likewise firm in its commitment to human rights, anchoring the Action Plan in the values and obligations of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The SDGs are grounded in international human rights, and, if they are achieved, the SDGs will help to "realize the human rights of all". This illustrates that there is already a clear normative alignment between these two frameworks and the international human rights framework which could be better expressed and leveraged during the WSIS+20 review process.

However, as discussed in answer to previous questions, there is an opportunity to better align the WSIS Action Lines with the international human rights framework through the application of concrete tools and greater coordination and coherence with the UN human rights bodies, in particular the OHCHR. This will not only help to achieve the WSIS vision of a people-centric, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, but will also allow for clearer alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs. Given the momentum behind the SDGs, and the significant resources dedicated to their integration in national development plans, greater alignment between these two frameworks, underpinned by a human rights approach, provides the opportunity to better embed the WSIS Action Lines in national digital and development strategies.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Through our engagement with the WSIS for over a decade, we have committed extensive resources and expertise to the IGF as a principal forum for governance and policy issues. It is the commitment of many diverse stakeholders that has enabled the IGF to become a primary venue for multistakeholder dialogue on public policy matters related to the Internet. However, as earlier noted, it faces continued challenges, which risk hindering it from facilitating meaningful dialogue on governance and policy issues. We advise that the WSIS+20 review commits to the establishment of a permanent IGF mandate, supported by adequate resourcing and more transparent and accessible procedures.

A permanent IGF mandate, supported by adequate resourcing and more transparent and accessible procedures, would provide a long-term, stable forum for discussion of digital policy topics in an inclusive and multistakeholder manner. A permanent mandate will ensure that the IGF as a multistakeholder structure is safeguarded, while allowing additional time for the community to consider how its model may be further refined.

It is also necessary to review the IGF’s policies and procedures from a human rights perspective to ensure that principles of openness, inclusivity, transparency and accountability are upheld. For example, it is necessary to ensure that host country selection for the global IGF is founded upon an open, community-involved selection process, based on human rights considerations, in adherence with principles of openness, accountability and inclusivity.

Additional work is also needed to consider how the IGF can be strengthened as a vehicle for people-centred and inclusive discussions of the Internet and digital policy issues. For example, an IGF track dedicated to strengthening and operationalising multistakeholder approaches in multilateral and multistakeholder processes would provide vital learning to support the further evolution and operationalisation of multistakeholder approaches. The IGF is uniquely placed to fulfil this role and to benefit from existing guidance on applying multistakeholder principles, including the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines and Global Partners Digital’s framework on operationalising the multistakeholder principles (see: https://www.gp-digital.org/publication/multistakeholder-framework/). As part of this effort, specific attention should be paid to understanding the interests and needs of affected communities to facilitate their greater participation and increasing the evidence basis and legitimacy of policy outcomes.

In addition, the IGF should prioritise highlighting existing tools and frameworks designed to help companies assess and mitigate human rights risks associated with their technologies. This track should emphasise the need to move from theoretical discussions to practical implementation, providing a space for sessions that address specific mechanisms, such as human rights due diligence and impact assessments. This track should actively engage human rights organisations and defenders from around the world, particularly those based in Global Majority countries, who bring evidence-based insights and on-the-ground experience. Drawing on the work of National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs) would further enhance the track by incorporating local perspectives and community-level concerns. Additionally, collaboration with the OHCHR could provide valuable guidance and expertise and could highlight their valuable work providing an advisory service to companies.

We welcome that the WSIS Forum in 2024 facilitated an open consultation process to shape the agenda, demonstrating an openness which is a key characteristic of a multistakeholder approach. However, the Forum would benefit from ensuring more institutional or formal opportunities for stakeholders to to provide input directly tied to the WSIS, and specifically opportunities to shape the review and monitoring of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The value of the WSIS lies in its commitment to a people-centric and development-oriented information society, establishing the multistakeholder model of Internet governance, and decentralised structure which translates an implementation framework in country-level actions. The Compact’s value lies in its statement of principles and objectives, anchored in international human rights law. We believe that the implementation of the GDC must be integrated into the next phase of the WSIS to draw on and bring together their complementary strengths. As signatories of the cross community stakeholder statement, we support its recommendations for how the GDC and the WSIS can be implemented in a complementary and mutually reinforcing manner.

A key benefit of this integration would be to allow member states to continue to explicitly link the WSIS framework to the SDGs and benefit from the enhanced normative focus of the GDC. The Global Digital Compact reflects the evolution in the interpretation and application of international human rights law to the governance of digital technologies, positively referencing the need for digital technology companies and developers to respect international human rights and principles, including through the application of human rights due diligence and impact assessments throughout the technology life cycle (paragraph 23(b)), and acknowledging OHCHR’s ongoing efforts to provide, through an advisory service on human rights in the digital space, expert advice and practical guidance on human rights and technology issues (paragraph 24).

Both the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact (GDC) would be strengthened by greater coordination and coherence, including with the UN human rights bodies. Both processes should be supported by the creation of a common track to monitor WSIS and GDC implementation and adherence to states’ international human rights law obligations.

One concrete way to ensure increased coordination between the WSIS and the outcomes of the Summit of the Future is for the IGF to play a key role in monitoring and overseeing the implementation of the GDC. This could be achieved through a multistakeholder IGF track, dedicated to monitoring human rights compliance with GDC implementation. As recognised by the Compact, the IGF is “the primary multi-stakeholder platform for discussion of Internet governance issues” making it uniquely positioned to collate holistic, bottom-up evidence from different stakeholder communities and assess trends from different regions on the Compact’s implementation. More specifically, the presence of the human rights community within the IGF will fulfil a vital monitoring function, making recommendations on states’ adherence to their obligations under international human rights law, as reiterated by the Compact. Such a track would support stakeholders to fulfil their responsibility as laid out by the WSIS outcomes, could help to ensure closer coordination between UN agencies and institutions, and foster enhanced normative harmonisation with international human rights standards.

The GDC implementation track should be designed to facilitate dialogue among different stakeholder communities and with relevant UN institutional actors. It should also take into account best practices by other UN processes responsible for monitoring global-level outcomes to ensure it is designed to facilitate meaningful stakeholder engagement and leverages the IGF’s intersessional work and national and regional IGFs. It should also be an opportunity to enlarge the participation of stakeholders in the key milestones of GDC implementation, by providing relevant information on the development of the institutions and processes emanating from the GDC and upcoming opportunities to engage and shape their outcomes.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Over the past decade, we have witnessed shrinking civic space and a steady decline in Internet freedom, marked by censorship, network and information ecosystem disruptions, internet fragmentation and the misuse of cybersecurity and cybercrime frameworks to target human rights defenders. These trends are compounded by a greater consolidation of market actors at the infrastructure and application layer, fast technological changes - particularly relating to faster, more sophisticated and seamless collection and processing of data underlying AI, internet of things (IoT), biometric and neuro technologies - and greater use of digital technologies across public and private sectors.

Where the original WSIS focused on digitising society and increasing connectivity, the WSIS+20 should focus on the qualitative benefits of digitisation to improve society. Ongoing trends and new developments could either amplify existing inequalities or help to address them and achieve the SDGs. To do the latter, they must be deployed in line with international human rights standards and be governed by inclusive frameworks that are contextualised and tailored to local contexts and needs. Respect for human rights and multistakeholder engagement contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and it will be important to recognise the links between capacity building, development and human rights.

The global digital technology ecosystem remains markedly unequal, with a third of the world still lacking meaningful access to the Internet. At the same time, the contributions of technology to areas such as education, healthcare, and government services are only likely to accelerate. The WSIS commitment to ensuring that everyone can benefit from digital technologies must guide any discussions on the governance of the internet and digital technologies more broadly. Models of governance which focus on enforcing economic or geopolitical dominance or greater sovereign control over digital technology components and infrastructure must be analysed in light of this commitment to inclusive access and the impact on human rights. As authors and signatories of the civil society joint submission to this consultation (submitted alongside our individual contribution), we support the recommendations made for how digital trends and topics should be considered in the next phase of the WSIS, including the recommendation for increased emphasis and investment in rights-based and holistic capacity building for policymakers to ensure the creation of an enabling policy environment, in line with Action Line C6. We must ensure the WSIS+20 review process contributes to global understanding of the impact of laws, policies and standards on the different layers of the internet and contributes to ensuring that such frameworks do not undermine human rights and inadvertently exacerbate digital divides or the ability of all countries to take advantage of the development potential of ICTs.

# United Kingdom | IGF DC | Part of IGF

## Respondent

1. Organization name

IGF DC Data Driven Health Technologies

1. Organization type

Part of IGF

1. Organization country

United Kingdom

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Universal Access to the internet and the services that can be provided with it.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

An excellent venue for discussion, collaboration, information sharing, education, building consensus and standards, innovation.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The annual meetings and intersessional work has been excellent, please keep going

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The proliferation of types and manners of use of the internet are growing. Not hearing about a key feature on time is a risk. E,g, developments in quantum internet

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

I think they have all made a contribution. Only together is it holistic development.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

One also has to have out of box vision to a comodate and expand on existing concepts. Requires inclusive discussions with ethics

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Cost of access is still an issue. I think fair cost effective access and security, should be considered for each Action line in itself.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

I think the existing frame work is the starting pinpoint but it should be reviewed and updafe every 5 years if deemed necessary

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Give all the proposals a virtual space to convene. Don't make onsite presence a requirement. This leads to an opportunity for public innovation.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

A matrix should be developed or a spider diagram

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Secure cost effective access for All.

How can satellites deepen access for All

Sophistication of small mobile devices

Powering the internet, electricity

# United Kingdom | University of London | Academia

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Royal Holloway, University of London

1. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

1. Organization country

United Kingdom

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Bringing together different UN agencies to agree on shared responsibilities and collaboration for delivering on the 2003 and 2005 WSIS commitments.

Involving governments, the private secotor and civil society in these discussions has also been valuable, especially in the past. Now there are many other forums for such discussions (largely reflecting political and Political agendas), and I feel that this duplication of effort is unfortunate.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

(1) Ensuring (together with other lead UN agencies) that the WSIS process has continued - this is quite an achievement

(2) Bringing some technical expertise to the WSIS discussions

(3) Creating an enjoyable atmosphere in which these discussions can take place.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

This depends much on the use of terminology. Sensu strictu "multistakeholder" means many stakeholders, and not as it is commonly used which is to refer to work with governments, private sector and civil society (I see universities now as part of the private sector). Such work is better referred to as "multi-sector" - combining the three sectors. Multistakeholder could refer to many stakeholders from one or two sectors - often reflecting the dominance of the private sector and governments.

My feeling is that there has actually not been enough real "multi-sector" collaboration in recent years in WSIS. This year, for example, there were rather few companies involved in WSIS - largely beacause they were focusing on the AI for Good event at the end of the week.

Civil society and some governmetns have also very much focused on the IGF - which was only ever designed as a talking shop.

Another problem is that different entities tend to talk about multistakehodlerism, but all have their own slightly different - and competing - definitions. Yet they all refer to THE Multstakeholder model - for which there is actually no such single thing! WE NEED TO HAVE A FUNDAMENTAL RETHINK OF THIS MODEL - because it has not served the interests of the poorest and most marignalised.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

(1) Competition between the WSIS process and other "multistakeholder" gatherings suich as ICANN, NETmundial and the IGF - this has been exacerbated by the UN SG's Summit of the Future and the GDC, which will not make any sibnstantial difference to the failure of the SDGs.

(2) Loss of institutional energy as other competing agendas icnersingly dominate the stage

(3) Competition between UN agencies (I often think that the CEB coukld haev played a much stronger role in digital co-operation

(4) The changing global geopolitical arena, in which China is now the dominant global power, the USA a failed state, the BRICS rising in importance - we have not yet sufficiently come to grips with this, and the implications for the WSIS process (could also note incresed warfare globally and the efforts of Arab states to incsrease their power in this arena)

(5) This is all linked to the need for fundamental reform in the UN system.

WSIS could have been a greater success if the key players had committed to it wholeheartedly, instead of pursuing their own specific and separate agendas. That having been said, WSIS has been a very important annual occasion, and it is important that it is continued, albeit in a revised format

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

1) The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

3) Access to information and knowledge

4) Capacity building

6) Enabling environment

7) ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life

Sadly, not enough emphasis has been placed on inclusion and the many harms caused by use of digital tech

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

It is remarkable how long-lasting the WSIS Action lines have been. They all remain relevant today, althugh the balance between them has evolved. The nmost pressing needs are (1) to reduce the inequalities and (2) reduce the environmental harms, both caused by the design, production and use of digital tech

We have to streamline the process, reduce competition, and focus wholeheartedly in bring together the many actors. As long as there are competing UN agendas (such as the role of the Office of the UN SG's Tech Envoy, and the IGF) everything will be diluted. We need to work together to determine exactly what the UN can and should do with respect to digital. This was not achieved by the GDC.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

This is a usefuil framework, but the material on "beyond 25" is very much in bullet point format. Most of this is in accord with currently accepted norms. Some general thoughts:

(1) Needs throughout to emphasise who should be doing what - this is a central challenge. What is the UN system best suited to, and has the capacity to, deliver?

(2) There is insufficient emphasis on the inequalities and harms caused by the design and use of digital tech, and too much on en suring that it can be liberated to devliver economic growth.

(3) Acvtion line 7 needs to be more holistic and comprehensive.

More broadly, we need to sart thinking NOW about what will replace the SDGs, and how the WSIS process might support this. The documents are heavily backward looking and insufficiently constructive about the future.

None of the action lines sufficiently go into EQUITY (and reducing inequalities) - just as insufficient global attention is paid on SDG 10.

Perhaps the time has come to reconsider the Action Lines (although many are good) and think how they coiuld be reconfigured to be fit for purpose in the future.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

It is time to recognise that the SDGs have already failed, and plan for a completely new global agenda. The Summit of the Future might have been an opportunity for this, but it merely hiughlighted the current failures of the UN Secretariat and its agendas (despite the obvious diplomatic plaudits). There are many good people wihtin the UN system - they need to be liberated to do good.

It is therefore already too late to consider how the Action Lines can be better aligned with the SDGs. With the exception of SDG10 there is already quite good alignment and a matrix for the alignment already exists https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/sdg/. There is no point expending time and resources on reinventing the wheel.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

There is far too much overlap already between the WSIS process and the IGF - and indeed with other global/regional events where the same people spend time discussing the same issues and reach the same conclusions! Historically, and in brief, it is important to remember that the IGF was originally created largely as a palliative for civil society, who felt left out of the public-private emphasis of the original WSIS meetings. The IGF was also created primarly to be a talking-shop with little or no real power (I see little point in mere talking shops that do not necessarily deliver anything). Some (so-called like minded governments) saw the IGF as a vehicle for achieving their dominance in terms of core principles around governence issues - these are not globally accepted (see earlier comments about global geopolitics)

In an ideal world, there should probably be a single streamlined global body within the UN focusing on digital - preferably under the auspices of the CEB (and led by the main UN actors in the WSIS process such as the current leads ITU, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO) rather than the UN Secetary General's office (which has clearly shown it does not have the capacity to deliver anything really new in digital). This will need to idenitfy a few clear things that the UN can do well in the context of "digital", and then set about delivering them. The UN's prime constituents are governments - and this should be the core focus. Certainly the private sector and civil society must be involved, nbut the UN system should above all be about create government level agreements. It cannot do everything. There are already countless private sector and civil society global/regional events on digital. These can feed in to teh UN discussions but should not dominate the essentiual governmetnal role that the UN was designed for.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

I see little point in this. The GDC will make little real difference, and the reality is that with only 6 years to go digital will have little real impact on speeding up delivery of the SDGs. We need to realise this and act in the light of it.

Of course, UN agencies have to be seen to try to combine the WSIS process (and IGF) with the GDC, but this could easily be done by a small working group in a mater of days mapping out the linkages (and gaps) between the Action Lines, SDGs, and GDC claims. This could provide a basis for moving forward, but if we have set out on the wrong path we will still not get to a place where the world's poorest adn most marginalised can really benefit from their use of digital tech

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

(1) Negative impact of digital tech on the environment

(2) Use of digital tech in warfare

(3) Our cyborg future.

Note that AI is not the game changer that people think it is; it is more of the same. It merely continues the basic principles that have underlain the development of computers, Internet/Web, mobiles, IoT, blockchain, AI.... As evidence, it is remarkable how little change it makes to the fundamental meaing of most UN policy documents and countless presentations at UN meetings if you interchange the words "blockchain" (the hype of only a short while ago) with "AI". Try doing that with "cyborgs" to get a sense of the future (past).

We need to address the really fundamental issues determining our digital futures, rather than being caught up in technological determinism.

# United Kingdom | APC | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Submitted by ARTICLE 19, Association for Progressive Communications (APC), Data Privacy Brasil, Derechos Digitales, Global Partners Digital (GPD), ICNL, Paradigm Initiative (PIN), Research ICT Africa, and The Wikimedia Foundation.

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

United Kingdom

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Key highlights include the establishment of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the alignment of the WSIS Action lines with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the demonstration of how the multistakeholder approach works. The WSIS process led to the establishment of the Working Group on Internet Governance–the precursor to the Internet Governance Forum–established by the UN Secretary-General in 2004. With a mandate set out in paragraphs 72-78 of the Tunis Agenda, the IGF held its first meeting in Athens in 2006. Notably the IGF has enabled a forum for discussing global Internet policy and governance, fostering collaboration among governments, civil society, the private sector, the technical community and other stakeholders. The IGF has facilitated discussions on critical issues such as digital rights, cybersecurity, and access to information, helping to shape policies that reflect diverse stakeholder perspectives. The IGF mandate led to the creation of more than 155 National and Regional Initiatives across all continents, and this has led to diverse cooperation and action on digital rights and inclusion. The IGF established a Leadership Panel which developed the Internet We Want framework, setting bold targets of achieving a whole and open, universal and inclusive, free-flowing and trustworthy, safe and secure, and rights-respecting Internet.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU has served as a lead facilitator, along with the United Nations Educational and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for the multistakeholder implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action. This includes facilitating Action Lines focused on critical areas such as Information and communication infrastructure, capacity building, building confidence and security in the use of ICTs and enabling environment. The ITU has also played a co-facilitator role on action lines which include ethical dimensions of the information society, access to information and knowledge, ICT applications and international and regional cooperation.

The ITU initiated and maintains the WSIS Stocktaking platform, which serves as a global repository for documenting ICT-driven sustainable development projects and best practices. Currently, it comprises over 13,500 entries aligned with WSIS Action Lines and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ITU produces annual reports detailing its contributions to WSIS outcomes, providing insights into ongoing initiatives and progress made in various sectors related to ICT.

The ITU co-organises the WSIS Forum, which is recognised as the largest annual gathering of stakeholders focused on ICT for development. This forum facilitates discussions on implementing WSIS Action Lines and advancing sustainable development through technology. The forum is held in collaboration with United Nations agencies, ensuring that diverse perspectives are included in discussions about digital cooperation and governance.

The ITU coordinates efforts among UN agencies to align WSIS implementation activities with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This includes facilitating collaboration between organisations to maximise joint efforts while avoiding duplication. The ITU actively engages with governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector to promote an inclusive approach to ICT governance and development.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

A key achievement of the WSIS process is its strong commitment to the multistakeholder approach in Internet governance, reflected in the Tunis Agenda, the decentralised structure created to implement the WSIS outcomes, and the creation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). This approach has helped to maintain the global, open, and interoperable nature of the Internet, which is a key enabler of human rights in the digital age and of people-centric sustainable development.

Our collective experience in the digital policy field indicates the need to further evolve and strengthen the operationalisation of multistakeholder approaches in both multistakeholder and multilateral processes relating to the governance of the Internet and digital technologies.

We make two principal recommendations:

First, we recommend that the WSIS community prioritises the further evolution and operationalisation of multistakeholder approaches. The NETmundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement: Strengthening Internet governance and digital policy, known as the “São Paulo Guidelines”, provides a set of guidelines and process steps that are of value to both multilateral and multistakeholder digital governance processes. It reinforces the benefits of approaches to governance which allow for inclusive and democratic participation of all stakeholders, and highlights the need to ensure transparent and accessible procedures, funding and capacity building to support participation from a diversity of stakeholders.

All agencies and institutions participating in the WSIS+20 review should affirm their commitment to the multistakeholder approach and further evolve it in a manner that strengthens collaboration among stakeholders and enables them to fulfil their diverse roles. These roles include raising awareness of the impacts on at-risk communities, contributing human rights expertise and research to policy deliberations, and monitoring compliance with international human rights standards and SDG commitments.

Second, we urge the WSIS+20 review commits to strengthen the IGF and ensure a people-centric permanent mandate. As one of the principal institutional outcomes of the WSIS, the IGF has evolved into a primary venue for multi stakeholder dialogue on public policy matters related to the Internet. However, it has faced challenges, including the need to ensure more sustainable financial resources to fulfil its mandate; better cohesion between the IGF’s intersessional work streams and outcomes at the global level; more diverse representation, particularly of under-represented countries and marginalised communities; and improved procedures to guarantee principles of openness, inclusivity, transparency and accountability. The selection of host countries for the global IGF is especially relevant to ensure that the IGF through its procedures and activities does not undermine the effective participation of stakeholders or result in the exclusion of structurally marginalised groups.

The WSIS+20 review should commit to the establishment of a permanent IGF mandate, supported by adequate resourcing and more transparent and accessible procedures. A permanent IGF would provide a long-term, stable forum for discussion of digital policy topics in an inclusive and multistakeholder manner. A permanent mandate will ensure that the IGF as a multistakeholder structure is safeguarded, while allowing additional time for the community to consider how its model may be refined.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

We face both operational and structural challenges. On the operational side, for instance, we believe it is necessary to strengthen the funding of processes such as the global IGF as well as regional IGFs; increase and diversify the various meetings that take place among multiple stakeholders; make participation processes more transparent and meaningful, especially for civil society organizations that, in different countries worldwide, face conditions that undermine the defense of civic space both online and offline. Additionally, one of the challenges we have already highlighted in this contribution is ensuring the permanence of the IGF as a forum for dialogue and debate among stakeholders, particularly at a time when multilateralism and multistakeholderism may be weakened by the fragmentation of global consensus processes.

On the structural side, we understand that it is essential to efficiently address the articulation of WSIS with other regional and global governance processes so that it is neither subsumed nor diluted by other processes or mandates. There is also the challenge of maintaining WSIS as a relevant forum for internet governance, ensuring that the internet remains a democratizing, free, interoperable, and inclusive technology. Moreover, it is crucial to continue ensuring that WSIS and its various stakeholder engagement processes align with democratic values.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?
2. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The WSIS Action Lines provide a useful and encompassing framework to collectively identify and address emerging trends in the digital sphere towards ensuring the benefit of society and people. To enhance the implementation of the WSIS principles and Action Lines and ensure they effectively address emerging topics, it will be important for the next phase of the WSIS to account for the following trends:

C2 information and communication infrastructure - include infrastructure for artificial intelligence as posing both opportunities and risks for the achievement of an inclusive information society for 2025 and beyond.

C3 access to information and knowledge - include researcher access to data, data standards for AI, and address access to information through emphasizing connectivity.

C4 capacity building - continue to address capacities needed for new technologies across regions and languages.

C5 Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs - ensure efforts to enhance security support human rights as opposed to undermining them.

C6 enabling environment - ensure digital public infrastructure is rights respecting and addresses the negative implications of market concentration.

C10 ethical dimensions of the information society - ensure approaches to AI are grounded in human rights and supported by ethical frameworks. AI governance needs to include human rights impact assessment rather than assuming its benefits, as captured by the narrative of AI for good. A proportionate approach means discussing AI governance not only deployed but also the conditions in which it should not be deployed.

C11 international and regional cooperation - focus on multi-stakeholder approaches that embody the principles of multistakeholderism as articulated in the São Paulo Guidelines.

Across Action Lines it will be important to focus on facilitating multi-stakeholder collaboration and dialogue between governments, civil society, private sector, academia and the technical community when finding solutions. Continuing to adopt crowdsourced working methods and the Open Consultation Process will ensure relevant emerging trends are considered and addressed.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

The twenty-year review should update the WSIS framework to reflect these emerging trends beyond 2025:

C1 Promotion of ICTs for development - the development of rights respecting ecosystems to ensure that development efforts support human rights. This includes the development and effective implementation of data protection and privacy legislation as well as ensuring that laws and regulations on the use of technology, in areas such as surveillance, are in line with international human rights law, including with the principles of legitimacy, necessity, proportionality, legality and non-discrimination.

C2 Information and communication infrastructure - include infrastructure for artificial intelligence as posing both opportunities and risks for the achievement of an inclusive information society for 2025 and beyond. Address potential governmental mandates in the context of AI that can undermine the right to freedom of expression, right to privacy and other human rights.

C3 Access to information and knowledge - include researcher access to data, data standards for AI, and address access to information through emphasizing connectivity.

C4 Capacity building - continue to address capacities needed for new technologies across regions and languages.

C5 Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs - ensure efforts to enhance security support human rights as opposed to undermining them.

C6 enabling environment - ensure digital public infrastructure is rights respecting and addresses the negative implications of market concentration.

C7 ICT applications - address geopolitical dimensions of access to data, infrastructure, and compute for AI.

C9 Media - address the negative implications of the lack of diversity of business models and market concentration and encourage rights-respecting approaches to platform governance to enhance media plurality and promote freedom of expression and access to information.

C10 Ethical dimensions of the information society - ensure approaches to AI are grounded in human rights and supported by ethical frameworks.

C11 International and regional cooperation - focus on multi-stakeholder approaches that embody the principles of multistakeholderism as articulated in the São Paulo Guidelines.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

We think there are four strategic pillars where the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs can be mutually strengthened.

First, it is urgent to strengthen the harmonization and alignment of public policies so that WSIS Action Lines can, for instance, be included in national digital agendas or development plans. Additionally, these Action Lines should be complemented by implementation metrics which are localized to reflect specific contexts, giving them greater relevance and impact.

Second, it is worth improving efforts in collaboration, dialogue, and exchange between the various forums where progress on the SDG agenda or the WSIS Action Lines is discussed. This would enable cross-referencing of updates on the implementation of goals set in both frameworks, fostering more coordinated and informed progress.

Third and relatedly, both the WSIS framework and the SDGs are grounded in international human rights law. The original WSIS vision produced in 2003 is anchored in the values and obligations of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the SDGs are derived from and refer to international human rights law. The next phase of the WSIS and SDG implementation should ensure greater cohesion with the international human rights framework and enhanced coordination and with the UN human rights mechanisms, including the OHCHR, to ensure that their respective agendas can be achieved.

Fourth, advancing actions to strengthen digital literacy and close the digital divide—while ensuring meaningful internet access—is critical. This contributes directly to reducing inequality and supports the broader achievement of both WSIS and SDG objectives.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

As diverse organisations and individuals, we have committed extensive resources and expertise to the IGF as a principal forum for governance and policy issues.

The WSIS+20 review should commit to the establishment of a permanent IGF mandate, supported by adequate resourcing and more transparent and accessible procedures. A permanent IGF would provide a long-term, stable forum for discussion of digital policy topics in an inclusive and multistakeholder manner. As noted in the cross-community stakeholder statement: “in practical terms, it is essential to look for ways to build on the current model of financing the IGF through voluntary contributions, ensuring a more predictable financial basis for the future evolution and sustainability of the IGF ecosystem.” (From the IGF’s Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) “Vision of the IGF beyond 2024”, released in late 2024).”

It is also necessary to review the IGF’s policies and procedures from a human rights perspective to ensure that principles of openness, inclusivity, transparency and accountability are upheld. For example, it is necessary to ensure that host country selection for the global IGF is founded upon an open, community-involved selection process, based on human rights considerations.

Additional work is also needed to consider how the IGF can be strengthened as a vehicle for people-centric and inclusive discussions of the Internet and digital policy issues. For example, a dedicated IGF track could be established focused on strengthening and implementing multistakeholder approaches in both multilateral and multistakeholder digital policy processes. Specific attention should be paid to understanding the interests and needs of affected communities to facilitate their greater participation.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The year 2025 presents a significant opportunity for coordination and optimization of agendas through the WSIS+20 review process and the implementation of the GDC. On one hand, ODET, in its role as coordinator of global digital governance, can map common goals and facilitate the implementation and achievement of objectives by the existing WSIS facilitators, such as the ITU and other UN agencies. The GDC can add to these facilitators with other entities already mentioned in the text, such as the OHCHR and the CSTD, to fulfill objectives and build upon the efforts and guidelines already established by these same actors. The WSIS framework should evolve and be enriched by the GDC principles and commitments which are anchored in human rights and recommend the application of rights-based approaches, such as human rights due diligence and impact assessments. On the other hand, the GDC can benefit from the decentralised implementation structure created by the WSIS, which has prioritised the engagement of different stakeholders and has worked to translate an international framework into national-level actions.

It is crucial that all these processes are not only coordinated with one another but also consistently include the participation of non-state stakeholders. This enhances the multistakeholder tradition of WSIS, which has enabled its relatively successful journey over the past 20 years — a characteristic also recognized by the GDC, whose principles are well summarized and agreed upon in the NetMundial+10 Declaration.

Twenty years ago, the WSIS process recognized the role of the multistakeholder approach in ensuring meaningful and inclusive Internet governance, thus creating the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which has served as the main forum and hub for debates not only on Internet governance but also on digital governance in a broader sense. The 20 years of experience in being a space that brings together diverse stakeholders to deepen consensus on issues related to the information society enables the IGF to be the ideal and firmly established space to serve as a coordination and monitoring hub for the Global Digital Compact process.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Conflict: The conflicts of the 21st century have hindered sustainable development, leading to health crises, food and clean water scarcity, and the deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure. Recently, internet access has come under increasing threat during conflict, with bad actors targeting the technical layers and physical infrastructure of the internet through covert sabotage of undersea cables, cyberattacks, or with conventional weapons. In addition to constituting a war crime when committed in the context of armed conflict, the blanket degradation of civilian internet access leads to setbacks in the advancement of the WSIS action lines and should be highlighted as a major obstacle to global digital development.

Regulation of the Digital Environment: Governments have sought new ways to regulate the digital economy and mitigate harms online. Some of these efforts have aligned with the principles of legality, legitimacy, and proportionality, but in many other instances, new laws have sought to control the digital environment in contravention of international human rights law and norms. These laws have increased in number and complexity since the last WSIS review, with a trend towards data localization; content restrictions; legal authorizations to disrupt internet traffic; mandatory registration of platforms, creators, devices, and users; and data collection and retention requirements. To ensure that laws are rights-based, grounded in a technical understanding of the internet and how such laws impact the different layers of the internet, and developed through multistakeholder participation, the WSIS community should ensure that there is an increased emphasis and investment in rights-based, holistic capacity building for policymakers in the next phase of the WSIS, to ensure the creation of an enabling policy environment for ICTs which contributes to sustainable development and promotes human rights, in line with Action Line C6.

Privacy Rights: Data, particularly personal data, now has immeasurable value in the global economy, with the datafication of major industries, the worldwide increase in internet and social media usage, and the proliferation of “smart” products and services (i.e., the internet of things). While the benefits of the digital economy have propelled some advances in the WSIS Action Lines, the risks to privacy rights have simultaneously increased. Many governments have responded by passing Data Protection Laws and inserting personal data provisions in cross-border trade agreements, but the challenge has outweighed these responses. Meanwhile, governments themselves exploit the current environment by collecting and storing communications data without adhering to their obligations under human rights law. The ITU should evaluate the successes and shortcomings of current privacy rights frameworks, and acknowledge the risks to sustainable development to prevent invasive surveillance practices.

Digital Divides: Advancements in health, education, and agriculture are set to increase precipitously in the next 10 years. The use of artificial intelligence to improve evidence-based care, the expansion of health services through the use of virtual consultations, and tech-based innovations in surgical operations and organ transplants have already revolutionized the healthcare industry and will continue to do so in the next 10 years. While these advancements are commendable, they have been limited to the most developed countries. The success of the WSIS Action Lines depends on the ability of all nations to leverage the potential of ICTs, including in rural and marginalized communities. Without concerted action and investments, as well as inclusive and participatory approaches to development, the digital divide challenge will only grow by the time of the WSIS+35 review.

# United Kingdom | UK Government | Government

## Respondent

1. Organization name

UK Government

1. Organization type

Government

1. Organization country

United Kingdom

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The WSIS has a great record of achievement over the last 20 years. It has established a framework for multistakeholder collaboration through the engagement of governments and other stakeholders, the work of Action Line facilitators and the UN Internet Governance Forum. It has created an adaptable global ecosystem for sharing knowledge and best practice and it has driven capacity building around the world.

The WSIS process has raised awareness of the challenges faced by stakeholders in developing countries and it has driven forward multistakeholder action to connect the unconnected. Only 17% of people had access to the Internet in 2005. That figure is now 67%. There is still an urgent need still to connect the unconnected. The WSIS+20 review is an opportunity for all WSIS stakeholders to recognise what stakeholders have achieved together, learn lessons about what works and renew our commitment to go further.

WSIS and its Action Lines have proven to be agile and effective at engaging with the new and emerging issues that have developed since 2005, such as the emergence of social media and new technologies such as AI and virtual reality.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ITU has made critically important contributions to the WSIS process. It has supported valuable work across the Action Lines that it facilitates. It plays a vital role in UNGIS, supporting coordination across UN agencies, and it has supported the growth and development of the WSIS Forum as a key platform to accelerate progress across all the Action Lines. The ITU has unique relationships with governments and regulators across the world and it is well-placed to convene and support partnerships between governments and other stakeholders to implement the WSIS Action Lines.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The multistakeholder approach is critical to the success of the WSIS process. We need to bring together the expertise, the perspectives and the capacity of all stakeholders if we are to implement the WSIS Action Lines and bridge the digital divide. Forums such as the UN IGF and the WSIS Forum should continue to be open to and inclusive of all stakeholders.

Foundational principles of the multistakeholder approach such as openness, inclusivity, transparency and accountability remain our best means to achieve progress on the WSIS action lines.

It is essential that the WSIS+20 review process includes the full meaningful participation of stakeholders at every stage in order to ensure that the outcome is effective and has ‘real world’ impact. Inputs from the technical community, industry, civil society and academia are vital to informing the evidence base for the WSIS+20 review as well as for its future implementation.

We welcome initiatives by the ITU to build development partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders. The Partnership2Connect Digital Coalition is a good example of this and we hope this multi-stakeholder approach to capacity building and development can be expanded in future. This approach helps ensures that development work is fully informed and aligned and that we are all maximising the effectiveness of our collective resources.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

There is more work to do across all the Action Lines.

There remains an urgent need to connect one third of the world which is still unconnected. This will require sustained multi-stakeholder action, creating enabling environments for investment, promoting infrastructure and capacity building and looking at innovative, community-led models.

And as some issues are being addressed, new challenges and opportunities emerge. The development of virtual reality platforms, for example, or artificial intelligence applications offers great opportunities for economic and social development and it is important that no country is left behind in taking advantage of these opportunities. They also bring new challenges that need to be addressed through multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnership.

The gender digital divide remains a continuing challenge. 70 per cent of men are using the Internet, compared with 65 per cent of women. This means that globally, there were 244 million more men than women using the Internet in 2023. Action Line C3 focuses on Access to Information and Knowledge, but not enough attention has been paid to the barriers faced by women and girls.

Action Line 9 on Media is critically important but there remain significant challenges here, which were highlighted in the WSIS+10 review, for example in terms of the protection of journalists and independent media. The WSIS process also needs to take account of the issues such as Internet shutdowns and the damaging impacts they can have.

The environmental impact of information and communication technologies also remains a challenge. The use of ICTs can make our impact on the environment more sustainable. But Action Line C7 E-Environment does not fully address the global carbon footprint of ICTs. This is currently estimated to be 4 -10% and greater than the aviation industry and much more attention is needed in this area.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

All of the Action Lines have had an impact. We would highlight in particular work on infrastructure, access to information, capacity building, confidence and security, ICT applications and cultural and linguistic diversity, which have all been critical areas over the last twenty years. While many challenges remain, we should recognise the positive impact that the WSIS Action Lines have had and continue to have, and are primed to have on new and emerging challenges.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The twenty-year review is an opportunity to ensure that the WSIS process is up to date and fit for the future. The WSIS process must address opportunities and challenges around topics which have grown in significance since 2005. These include the development of social media, the rise of disinformation, virtual reality technologies, the use of artificial intelligence technologies, the protection of human rights online, the independence and plurality of the media and the protection of journalists, bridging the gender digital divide, digital transformation and the environmental impact of information and communication technologies.

One of the great strengths of the Action Lines is the way that they focus not on specific technologies themselves, but on the social and economic impacts of technology. The Action Lines are still relevant today because they are “technology neutral” and therefore adaptable to emerging technologies. It is important that they remain so, particularly in times of rapid technological change.

We do not see a need for new Action Lines. Instead, we must use the existing Action Lines to address effectively the new issues that we face. When we think about AI, for example, we need to think about it in terms of capacity building, applications, linguistic diversity, ethical dimensions and so forth – and these are the WSIS Action Lines. The Action Lines give us a comprehensive and durable framework which addresses each of these aspects.

The WSIS review should also consider how to improve implementation, for example by updating and strengthening the role of UNGIS, ensuring that the initiatives coming from the Global Digital Compact are joined up with the WSIS process and that the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies is able to work alongside the WSIS Action Line facilitators to support delivery across the UN family.

Finally, we hope that UN OHCHR and UN Women will play an active role in the WSIS process going forward. UN OHCHR has played a key role in addressing issues of human rights and digital technology. UN Women did not exist in 2005 ago and we hope their engagement and expertise can help us address the gender digital divide.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

We value the work of UN Action Line facilitators in reporting on WSIS implementation and hope that it will continue. In particular we look forward to the report by CSTD that will be published later this year, which we hope will serve as a strong evidence base for the review.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The WSIS+10 outcome document said that the WSIS+20 should be an input into the review of the Sustainable Development Goals. Information and Communication technologies have huge potential to help deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and they now deserve a higher profile in the Sustainable Development Agenda. We should use the opportunity of the WSIS+20 review to make the case for the potential of digital technology to drive sustainable development. We should take every opportunity to reach out to stakeholders in the development community, particularly in forums such as the WSIS Forum and the ITU Council Working Group, and ensure that UNDP and UNCTAD are able to play a full role.

We hope WSIS Action Line facilitators will play an active role in the review of the SDGs. The work done by the ITU to map WSIS Action Lines against the SDGs has been valuable and could perhaps be expanded, with case studies and other evidence and with clearer presentation, to act as a resource for briefing and advocacy.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

The IGF mandate includes digital development issues, facilitating the exchange of information and best practice, advising on ways to accelerate affordable connectivity and contributing to capacity building. Recent research by the DNS Research Foundation in Oxford, UK (https://dnsrf.org/blog/net-effects--an-evidence-led-exploration-of-igf-impact/index.html) has demonstrated the impact of the IGF, for example in driving the growth of Internet Exchange Points in Africa, nurturing the next generation of “Global South” leaders and promoting action to address online harms. It has become a global ecosystem for knowledge sharing.

The IGF has proved to be a uniquely valuable, diverse and bottom-up platform for bringing together stakeholders from across the world to discuss common issues, share best practice and shape discourse on key activities that all stakeholders, including States can take forward to address pressing digital public policy issues. It has developed and grown into an essential platform for multistakeholder dialogue, with the development of over 155 national and regional IGF initiatives around the world.

The WSIS+20 review should provide a permanent mandate for the UN IGF given its critically important global role. The IGF should continue to strengthen and improve its organisation, for example by ensuring it has clearer outcomes, a more focused agenda and greater representation from developing countries. The IGF secretariat should be strengthened, including more sustainable funding, and could benefit further from higher UN accountability. It may be necessary to consider reforms to the IGF’s Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group.

The WSIS Forum has grown into a significant forum for digital development. One of the great strengths of the WSIS Forum is that it has strong participation by governments, regulators and UN organisations, particularly from developing countries. We encourage the ITU to facilitate the participation of other stakeholder groups with the WSIS Forum so that the private sector, civil society and the technical community are centralised and are able to actively participate in digital development issues and devising solutions for the future.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The WSIS has a proven, well-established process for implementation and reporting coordinated across a wide range of UN agencies. We should ensure that the initiatives and global commitments in the Global Digital Compact are included within the WSIS process in order to maximise their impact and promote alignment across the UN system, bringing together the work of the IGF, the ITU and other UN agencies. The Tech Envoy and ODET can play an important role here, supporting efforts to strengthen UNGIS and supporting UN agencies to promote partnership and alignment around shared goals.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

The ITU should ensure that the Action Lines it facilitates continue to address the new opportunities and challenges that have emerged since 2005 and it should continue to focus on the critical goal to connect the unconnected. It should also consider the role it can play to ensure the Sustainable Development Agenda takes full account of the potential of information and communication technologies, to strengthen delivery across the UN family and to build and support effective multi-stakeholder partnerships.

# United States | The App Association | International Organization

## Respondent

1. Organization name

ACT | The App Association

1. Organization type

International Organization

1. Organization country

United States

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

We believe the WSIS process has been generally successful in building an inclusive and development-oriented Information Society where everyone can create and share information. However, we believe there is important progress still to be made in including Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The WSIS process has evolved to become more inclusive, integrating emerging technologies and digital issues, fostering greater multi-stakeholder collaboration, and aligning more closely with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through its Action Lines. By leveraging online platforms for engagement and knowledge sharing—introducing innovations like verbatim reporting and virtual meetings, now standard in international diplomacy—WSIS has strengthened its global impact. Additionally, it played a key role in establishing the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as a central platform for internet governance discussions under UN auspices.

Key Improvements in the WSIS Process:

- Broader Participation: WSIS has expanded stakeholder engagement, incorporating governments, civil society, private sector, academia, and regional organizations, leading to a richer exchange of perspectives and solutions.

- Focus on Digital Issues: Adapting to the evolving digital landscape, WSIS now addresses key challenges such as cybersecurity, digital inclusion, and the impact of emerging technologies on development.

- Alignment with SDGs: By integrating its Action Lines with the UN's SDGs, WSIS has emphasized the critical role of ICTs in achieving sustainable development.

- Enhanced Online Engagement: The WSIS Forum actively uses online platforms for global participation, knowledge sharing, and virtual meetings—especially crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Innovations in Diplomacy: WSIS pioneered the use of verbatim reporting, promoting transparency and accountability in online discussions.

- Creation of IGF: One of WSIS's most significant achievements is the establishment of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), a dedicated space for discussions on internet governance.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The WSIS process has made significant progress in fostering global digital cooperation, but there are several ways it could be further improved:

1. Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

- Greater Inclusivity: Expand participation from underrepresented groups, such as smaller developing nations.

- Youth Involvement: Create more initiatives to involve young leaders and digital entrepreneurs in shaping the future of ICT policies.

- MSME/Private Sector Integration: Encourage deeper involvement from MSMEs and startups to bridge the gap between policy discussions and real-world innovation.

- Take ill-intentioned nations who seek to commandeer WSIS to substantiate their anti-democratic goals to task.

2. Enhancing Policy Implementation and Impact Measurement

- Stronger Link to Policy Action: Move beyond discussions to more concrete policy recommendations and frameworks that member states can implement.

- Impact Assessment Mechanisms: Develop better tracking and evaluation systems to measure the effectiveness of WSIS Action Lines in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs).

- Country-Specific Support: Offer tailored guidance and capacity-building programs to help nations implement WSIS outcomes effectively.

3. Expanding Focus on Emerging Technologies

- AI, Blockchain, and Quantum Computing: Address the impact of cutting-edge technologies on governance, digital inclusion, and human rights.

- Ethical and Regulatory Frameworks: Promote guidelines for responsible AI, data privacy, and cybersecurity that balance innovation with ethical considerations.

4. Improving Digital Inclusion and Connectivity

- Closing the Digital Divide: Strengthen efforts to ensure affordable internet access and digital literacy programs, particularly in rural and underserved regions.

5. Strengthening Online Engagement and Collaboration

- Hybrid & Decentralized Forums: Expand WSIS events with more hybrid models, allowing wider participation beyond Geneva-based meetings.

- Real-Time Collaboration Platforms: Use advanced digital tools for real-time policymaking, consultations, and knowledge sharing among stakeholders.

6. Enhancing Synergies with Other Global Initiatives

- Closer UN Collaboration: Strengthen links between WSIS and other UN bodies like the Internet

- Governance Forum (IGF), UNDP, and ITU to avoid duplication and enhance effectiveness.

- Public-Private Partnerships: Facilitate partnerships between governments, businesses, and NGOs to accelerate digital transformation and sustainable development.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Despite the progress made by the WSIS process, several challenges remain in its implementation:

1. Bridging the Digital Divide

- Unequal Access to ICTs: Many developing countries, particularly in rural and remote areas, still lack adequate internet infrastructure, electricity, and affordable connectivity.

- Affordability Issues: High costs of devices, data, and internet services remain a barrier, especially for low-income populations.

- Limited Digital Literacy: Even where access exists, gaps in digital skills and literacy prevent many from fully participating in the digital economy.

2. Lack of Effective Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

- Government-Led Approach Dominance: In some regions, governments dominate decision-making, limiting meaningful engagement from civil society, academia, and the private sector.

- Coordination Challenges: There is a need for better coordination between global, regional, and national-level WSIS-related initiatives to avoid duplication and inefficiencies.

- Private Sector Engagement: While some large tech companies are involved, many startups and MSMEs struggle to have a voice in global digital policymaking.

3. Cybersecurity and Trust Issues

- Rising Cyber Threats: The increase in cyberattacks, data breaches, and misinformation undermines trust in digital systems and services.

- Lack of Strong Cyber Policies: Many countries lack comprehensive cybersecurity strategies, and there is no universal agreement on global cybersecurity norms.

- Privacy and Data Protection Concerns: The absence of unified international regulations on data protection creates fragmentation and risks for users.

4. Policy and Regulatory Gaps

- Slow Adaptation to Emerging Technologies: Regulatory frameworks often lag behind the rapid development of AI, blockchain, and other emerging technologies.

- Fragmentation of Internet Governance: Different global initiatives on digital governance sometimes overlap or conflict, making it harder to implement cohesive policies.

5. Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- Weak Integration with National Development Plans: Some countries struggle to incorporate WSIS Action Lines into their national ICT and development strategies.

- Monitoring and Impact Assessment Challenges: There is no standardized global framework to measure how effectively WSIS-related activities contribute to the SDGs.

6. Digital Rights and Ethical Concerns

- Censorship and Internet Freedom Issues: Some governments use digital policies to restrict free speech and control information flow. These attempts should be combatted by WSIS.

- Ethical AI and Bias in Technology: WSIS needs to address growing concerns around AI ethics, digital discrimination, and biases in automated decision-making.

7. Limited Financial and Technical Resources

- Funding Constraints: Many developing nations lack the financial and technical capacity to fully implement WSIS recommendations.

- Dependence on Donor Support: Overreliance on external funding can make initiatives unsustainable in the long run; and can also appear as though the process is being dominated.

8. Adapting to Post-Pandemic Digital Realities

- Sustaining Virtual Engagement: While COVID-19 accelerated digital adoption, there is a need to ensure that online participation remains inclusive and effective.

- Balancing Hybrid Models: Future WSIS forums and events must balance physical and virtual participation to maximize inclusivity.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Several WSIS Action Lines have significantly impacted MSMEs by fostering digital inclusion, access to ICTs, and creating enabling environments for entrepreneurship. The most impactful action lines for MSMEs include:

1. C3 – Access to Information and Knowledge

- Provides small businesses with greater access to online information, digital tools, and open knowledge resources.

- Promotes open data initiatives and e-learning platforms, which help MSMEs gain technical and business skills at low or no cost.

- Enables access to cloud computing and digital resources, reducing operational costs for small enterprises.

2. C4 – Capacity Building

- Strengthens digital literacy and entrepreneurial skills for MSMEs, particularly in developing economies.

- Supports training programs, online workshops, and ICT skills development that help businesses adopt digital technologies.

- Encourages local innovation by improving technical expertise among entrepreneurs and small business employees.

3. C5 – Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs

- Enhances cybersecurity awareness and promotes secure online transactions, essential for MSMEs engaging in e-commerce.

- Provides guidance on data protection, digital identity, and online fraud prevention, ensuring small businesses can operate safely in digital markets.

- Encourages governments to develop MSME-friendly regulations that balance security with ease of doing business online.

4. C6 – Enabling Environment

- Focuses on policy and regulatory frameworks that support small business growth in the digital economy.

- Encourages simplified business registration and access to e-government services, reducing bureaucratic barriers for startups.

- Supports the development of inclusive financial ecosystems, such as mobile banking and digital payments, which are crucial for MSMEs, especially in developing regions.

5. C7 – ICT Applications: Benefits in All Aspects of Life (E-Business)

- Promotes e-commerce, digital payments, and online marketplaces, allowing MSMEs to expand their customer base.

- Encourages the development of affordable ICT solutions tailored for small businesses, such as digital accounting tools, CRM platforms, and automation software.

- Supports initiatives that integrate small businesses into global value chains through digital trade.

6. C8 – Cultural Diversity and Identity, Linguistic Diversity, and Local Content

- Encourages SMBs to create and sell local digital content, including e-books, media, and educational materials.

- Supports the localization of software and digital services, making ICTs more accessible for non-English-speaking entrepreneurs.

- Helps small businesses in creative industries, such as digital marketing, design, and content creation, reach wider audiences.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

To enhance the implementation of WSIS principles and Action Lines in addressing new and emerging areas to support MSMEs, the following strategies can be adopted:

1. Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

- Expand Stakeholder Participation: Ensure more inclusive engagement by involving emerging technology experts, startups, youth, and grassroots organizations.

- Public-Private Partnerships: Encourage stronger collaboration with the private sector, particularly tech companies and AI developers, to implement digital solutions effectively.

- Regional and Sectoral Coordination: Develop tailored approaches for different regions and industries to align WSIS outcomes with local needs.

2. Updating WSIS Action Lines to Reflect Emerging Technologies

- Integrate AI, Blockchain, and Quantum Computing: Establish dedicated initiatives under WSIS Action Lines to address AI ethics, decentralized governance, and advanced digital security.

- Strengthen Cybersecurity & Data Protection (C5 - Building Confidence in ICTs): Update frameworks to tackle cyber threats, digital identity protection, and misinformation challenges in the AI era.

- Enhance Digital Economy Support (C7 - E-Business): Promote digital payment solutions, e-commerce platforms, and fintech innovations to support MSMEs and the global digital economy.

3. Improving Policy Implementation and Regulatory Agility

- Adaptive Policy Frameworks: Introduce flexible, forward-looking policies that can quickly adapt to new digital challenges.

- Stronger Link to Global Digital Governance: Ensure WSIS principles align with broader initiatives like the UN’s Global Digital Compact and IGF’s digital policy discussions.

- Enhanced Policy Monitoring and Impact Measurement: Develop standardized metrics to assess how WSIS Action Lines contribute to emerging digital policy needs.

4. Expanding Digital Inclusion and Bridging the Digital Divide

- Support for Digital Literacy & AI Readiness (C4 - Capacity Building): Scale up programs to train individuals and businesses on AI, cybersecurity, and digital transformation.

- Improving Connectivity & ICT Infrastructure (C2 - Information and Communication Infrastructure): Promote investments in 5G, satellite internet, and community networks to ensure global access to emerging technologies.

- Encouraging Local Content & Linguistic Diversity (C8 - Cultural and Linguistic Diversity): Enable AI-driven translations and digital content creation tools to support diverse communities.

5. Leveraging Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development

- Align with UN SDGs (C6 - Enabling Environment): Strengthen WSIS contributions to climate action, smart cities, and sustainable development through emerging digital solutions.

- Enhancing E-Government & Digital Services (C7 - E-Government): Support the use of AI-powered public services, e-health solutions, and digital ID systems for improved governance.

6. Enhancing Online and Hybrid Engagement in WSIS Processes

- Interactive & Real-Time Consultations: Use AI-powered chatbots, digital twins, and immersive technologies for real-time WSIS discussions.

- More Inclusive Hybrid WSIS Forums: Ensure ongoing digital accessibility through virtual and hybrid meetings to engage participants worldwide.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

To ensure the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines effectively MSMEs beyond 2025, the review process should focus on key milestones, challenges, and emerging trends while implementing targeted improvements:

1. Key Milestones to Strengthen SMB Support

- 2025–2030: Digital Infrastructure & Connectivity Expansion

-- Prioritize investments in broadband access, 5G, and satellite internet to ensure SMBs in remote and underserved areas can compete in the digital economy.

-- Strengthen public-private partnerships to drive affordable digital access.

2026–2032: AI, Blockchain, and Emerging Tech Adoption

-- Promote AI-driven business tools, blockchain for secure transactions, and fintech solutions tailored for SMBs.

-- Support regulatory sandboxes that allow startups to experiment with new tech under controlled environments.

- 2030–2035: Digital Trade & Cross-Border E-Commerce Enablement

-- Simplify international trade policies and payment systems to help SMBs scale globally.

-- Introduce harmonized digital regulations to enable seamless cross-border e-commerce.

2. Addressing Key Challenges for SMBs

- Challenge 1: Digital Divide & Infrastructure Gaps

-- Solution: Align WSIS Action Line C2 (ICT Infrastructure) with SMB-friendly affordable broadband policies and digital inclusion programs.

- Challenge 2: Limited Access to Finance & Digital Payments

-- Solution: Expand C7 (E-Business) to include stronger support for fintech solutions, mobile banking, and microfinancing tailored for SMBs.

- Challenge 3: Cybersecurity & Digital Trust

-- Solution: Strengthen C5 (Building Confidence & Security) by providing SMB-focused cybersecurity toolkits, digital ID protections, and anti-fraud initiatives.

- Challenge 4: Regulatory Barriers & Compliance Complexity

-- Solution: Enhance C6 (Enabling Environment) with simplified licensing, tax incentives, and standardized digital policies for small enterprises.

3. Leveraging Emerging Trends to Benefit SMBs

- Trend 1: AI-Powered Business Solutions

-- Encourage AI-driven customer service, supply chain automation, and digital marketing tools for SMBs.

- Trend 2: E-Commerce Growth & Cross-Border Trade

-- Expand digital trade agreements under WSIS to ensure small businesses can sell internationally with minimal friction.

- Trend 3: The Rise of Web3 & Decentralized Economies

-- Educate SMBs on leveraging blockchain, smart contracts, and decentralized finance (DeFi) solutions.

- Trend 4: Green ICT & Sustainable Digital Practices

-- Align SMB support with eco-friendly ICT initiatives, promoting energy-efficient digital tools and green supply chains.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

To enhance the impact of WSIS Action Lines in achieving the UN’s 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the alignment must be strengthened through targeted integration, policy coherence, and innovative digital solutions. Below are key strategies for improvement:

1. Embedding WSIS Action Lines in National and Regional SDG Strategies

- Integrate WSIS principles into national digital transformation policies to ensure ICTs directly contribute to SDG targets.

- Strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration among governments, private sector, and civil society to align WSIS Action Lines with country-specific SDG priorities.

- Develop digital SDG monitoring frameworks using WSIS indicators to track how ICTs support sustainable development.

2. Strengthening ICT Infrastructure for Universal Connectivity (C2 → SDG 9 & 10)

- Challenge: Many regions still lack affordable, high-speed internet access.

✅ Solution:

-- Expand broadband infrastructure, 5G, and satellite connectivity to close the digital divide.

Promote public-private partnerships (PPPs) to invest in ICT for underserved areas.

Encourage universal access policies to ensure marginalized communities benefit from digital opportunities.

3. Enhancing Digital Inclusion and Capacity Building (C4 → SDG 4, 8 & 10)

- Challenge: Limited access to digital literacy and skills development.

-- Scale up digital education initiatives to equip youth and workers with future-ready skills.

-- Strengthen TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) programs focused on ICT, AI, and digital entrepreneurship.

-- Support women and marginalized groups in tech training to promote gender equity in the digital economy.

4. Strengthening Cybersecurity and Data Protection (C5 → SDG 16)

- Challenge: Rising cyber threats, misinformation, and lack of global cybersecurity standards.

-- Develop WSIS-aligned global cybersecurity frameworks for secure digital services.

-- Promote data protection policies to enhance digital trust and safeguard human rights.

-- Establish public awareness campaigns on misinformation and digital literacy.

5. Leveraging ICT for Climate Action (C7 → SDG 13, 7 & 15)

- Challenge: ICT carbon footprint and lack of sustainable tech policies.

-- Promote green ICT policies such as energy-efficient data centers and eco-friendly digital solutions.

-- Leverage AI and IoT for climate monitoring, smart agriculture, and disaster resilience.

-- Encourage digital circular economy initiatives (e-waste recycling, sustainable manufacturing).

6. Enabling Digital Financial Inclusion (C6 & C7 → SDG 1, 8 & 10)

- Challenge: Limited access to banking and financial services in underserved regions.

-- Expand mobile banking and fintech solutions for low-income populations.

-- Promote blockchain for transparent financial transactions and digital identity verification.

-- Strengthen regulatory support for SMEs and startups in the digital economy.

7. Scaling E-Government and Digital Public Services (C7 → SDG 16 & 17)

- Challenge: Many developing nations lack robust digital governance structures.

-- Encourage AI-driven public services for improved efficiency and accessibility.

-- Implement open government data initiatives for transparency and accountability.

-- Develop cross-border e-government solutions to facilitate global digital cooperation

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

To reinforce the WSIS Forum as a leading platform for digital development and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as a key policy and governance space, the following strategies can be implemented:

1. Enhancing Inclusivity and Global Participation

🔹 Expand Access to Underserved Communities:

Provide funding mechanisms (e.g., travel grants, digital participation stipends) for developing countries, youth, and marginalized groups.

Increase language accessibility (real-time AI translations, multilingual content) to reach diverse stakeholders.

🔹 Strengthen Private Sector & SME Engagement:

Encourage startups, SMEs, and tech innovators to contribute solutions to WSIS/IGF discussions.

Develop business-focused tracks on AI, cybersecurity, e-commerce, and digital finance.

🔹 Deepen Civil Society & Grassroots Participation:

Partner with local organizations to host regional consultations and WSIS/IGF satellite events.

Use crowdsourced policymaking tools to gather insights from diverse communities.

2. Improving the Impact and Follow-Up of Forum Outcomes

🔹 Institutionalize a Stronger Link Between WSIS & IGF

Ensure outcomes from WSIS are fed into IGF discussions on governance and vice versa.

Create joint policy reports summarizing key decisions and recommendations.

🔹 Strengthen Implementation of Forum Recommendations

Introduce tracking mechanisms to measure progress on WSIS & IGF policy recommendations.

Align outcomes with the UN’s Global Digital Compact and SDG 2030 Agenda.

🔹 Establish Regional & National Action Plans

Encourage regional IGFs and WSIS hubs to localize digital development strategies.

Develop multi-year digital transformation roadmaps aligned with WSIS & IGF principles.

3. Leveraging Emerging Technologies for Engagement & Innovation

🔹 Use AI & Blockchain for Transparent, Inclusive Decision-Making

Implement AI-driven analytics to synthesize stakeholder inputs.

Explore blockchain-based voting or consensus mechanisms for IGF policy debates.

🔹 Create a Permanent Virtual Engagement Platform

Establish a year-round WSIS/IGF online hub with AI-powered discussions, real-time updates, and networking opportunities.

Integrate immersive tech (AR/VR metaverse spaces) for interactive global participation.

🔹 Enhance Real-Time Digital Participation

Expand verbatim AI-generated reporting for greater transparency.

Develop interactive polling, Q&A sessions, and live digital town halls.

4. Strengthening Private-Public Partnerships for Policy & Innovation

🔹 Encourage Cross-Sector Collaboration on Digital Policy

Establish policy innovation labs under IGF to test regulatory frameworks for AI, cybersecurity, and digital finance.

Develop public-private task forces to address digital inclusion, connectivity, and emerging tech challenges.

🔹 Align WSIS & IGF with Industry-Led Digital Initiatives

Ensure synergy with initiatives like the G20 Digital Economy Task Force, UN Digital Cooperation Roadmap, and Global Digital Compact.

Partner with tech firms, financial institutions, and academic institutions to drive digital innovation.

5. Strengthening the Role of WSIS & IGF in Global Digital Governance

🔹 Position IGF as the Key UN Platform for Internet Governance

Establish a clearer policy advisory role within the UN system.

Strengthen IGF’s impact on digital rights, cybersecurity norms, and AI governance.

🔹 Expand WSIS to Address New Digital Challenges

Incorporate tracks on AI ethics, data sovereignty, decentralized internet models, and digital resilience.

Align WSIS Action Lines with new global tech challenges like misinformation, digital labor rights, and cross-border data flows.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

To ensure a cohesive digital development strategy, the WSIS process, the UN’s Pact for the Future, and the Global Digital Compact (GDC) should be aligned through policy integration, collaborative governance, and technological innovation. Below are key strategies to achieve shared goals across these initiatives:

1. Aligning WSIS Action Lines with the Global Digital Compact’s Priorities

🔹 Universal Connectivity (C2 → GDC’s “Connecting All People” Goal)

Expand broadband infrastructure, particularly in developing regions, through public-private partnerships (PPPs).

Encourage affordable and inclusive internet access policies, leveraging WSIS experience in digital inclusion.

🔹 Digital Public Goods & Data Governance (C7 → GDC’s “Open, Free, and Secure Digital Space” Goal)

Promote open-source solutions and data-sharing frameworks to ensure inclusive access to knowledge.

Strengthen data governance and privacy standards by aligning WSIS cybersecurity (C5) with GDC digital rights frameworks.

🔹 AI, Emerging Tech, and Sustainable Digital Transformation (C3, C7 → GDC’s “AI and Digital Trust” Goal)

Develop AI ethics guidelines under WSIS to contribute to GDC discussions on responsible AI governance.

Align WSIS sustainability policies (C7 ICT applications) with the Pact for the Future’s climate goals, ensuring digital development supports green ICT.

2. Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Governance for Implementation

🔹 Integrate WSIS Forum and IGF into the Global Digital Compact Process

Position WSIS Forum as the digital development platform supporting GDC implementation.

Establish formal linkages between WSIS and IGF to ensure digital governance policies are discussed in multi-stakeholder settings.

🔹 Expand Regional and National WSIS Initiatives

Implement regional and local WSIS Action Line hubs to align with country-specific Pact for the Future priorities.

Create national digital transformation roadmaps based on WSIS and GDC frameworks.

🔹 Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Engage tech companies, financial institutions, and civil society in co-developing digital policies under WSIS and GDC.

Promote digital trade and cross-border collaboration through aligned regulatory frameworks.

3. Leveraging WSIS for Digital Capacity Building & SDG Acceleration

🔹 Enhance Digital Literacy & Inclusion (C4 → SDG 4, GDC’s Digital Inclusion Priority)

Expand WSIS digital education programs to train youth and underserved communities in emerging tech skills.

Promote capacity-building initiatives for policymakers to align digital policies with the Pact for the Future.

🔹 Address Cybersecurity & Digital Trust (C5 → GDC’s Security & Human Rights Focus)

Strengthen WSIS cyber policies to align with global cybersecurity frameworks under GDC.

Support digital human rights protections by integrating WSIS governance discussions with UN-led digital rights initiatives.

🔹 Foster Sustainable Digital Transformation (C7 → SDG 13, Pact for the Future’s Climate Commitments)

Align WSIS ICT applications for climate resilience with Pact for the Future sustainability targets.

Promote energy-efficient data centers, AI-driven climate monitoring, and green ICT.

4. Establishing a Joint Monitoring & Accountability Framework

🔹 Develop a Unified Digital Policy Dashboard

Create a joint WSIS-GDC tracking system to measure progress on universal connectivity, digital rights, AI ethics, and sustainability.

Encourage real-time data-sharing and transparency in digital policy progress.

🔹 Institutionalize WSIS-GDC Annual Reporting

Ensure WSIS outcomes directly feed into GDC progress reports.

Align WSIS digital development initiatives with UN 2030 SDG reviews.

🔹 Leverage AI & Big Data for Policy Impact Measurement

Use AI-driven analytics to assess digital transformation progress.

Develop blockchain-based transparency tools for tracking digital commitments.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

As the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) prepares for the WSIS+20 Review, several emerging digital trends must be considered to shape the future vision beyond 2025. These trends will impact global digital development, governance, and sustainability, requiring policy adaptation and strategic action.

1. AI, Automation & the Future of Work

🔹 Trend: The rapid evolution of Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, and automation is transforming industries, education, and labor markets.

✅ WSIS+20 Considerations:

AI governance and ethics frameworks to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability.

Workforce upskilling programs to prepare for AI-driven economies.

AI for SDGs, including climate monitoring, digital healthcare, and disaster resilience.

2. Universal & Inclusive Digital Connectivity

🔹 Trend: Bridging the digital divide remains critical, with 5G, 6G, and satellite internet expanding access.

✅ WSIS+20 Considerations:

Strengthening universal broadband access, especially in rural and underserved regions.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) to finance large-scale digital infrastructure projects.

Policies for affordable internet and digital inclusion, ensuring marginalized communities benefit.

3. Cybersecurity, Digital Trust & Data Governance

🔹 Trend: The rise of cyber threats, misinformation, and deepfakes is challenging global security and trust.

✅ WSIS+20 Considerations:

Global cybersecurity cooperation and capacity-building programs.

Regulatory frameworks for data privacy, AI-generated content, and misinformation mitigation.

Ethical AI standards to combat algorithmic bias and data misuse.

4. The Rise of the Metaverse & Extended Reality (XR)

🔹 Trend: Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and the Metaverse are creating new opportunities for education, healthcare, and remote work.

✅ WSIS+20 Considerations:

Digital rights and governance for virtual environments to prevent exclusion, harassment, and misinformation.

Metaverse applications for education, e-governance, and immersive collaboration.

Sustainability concerns, including the environmental impact of data-intensive metaverse applications.

5. Blockchain, Web3 & Digital Financial Inclusion

🔹 Trend: Decentralized finance (DeFi), central bank digital currencies (CBDCs), and blockchain-based identity solutions are reshaping financial services.

✅ WSIS+20 Considerations:

Policy frameworks for blockchain governance, identity verification, and secure transactions.

Expanding digital financial services for SMEs and the unbanked.

Ethical concerns around decentralized governance models.

6. Quantum Computing & Next-Gen Networks

🔹 Trend: Quantum computing will revolutionize problem-solving but also pose risks to current encryption methods.

✅ WSIS+20 Considerations:

Developing post-quantum cybersecurity standards.

Exploring applications of quantum tech for sustainability and medical research.

Regulatory discussions on responsible quantum research and deployment.

7. Sustainability & Green ICT for Climate Action

🔹 Trend: The carbon footprint of digital technologies is rising, necessitating sustainable solutions.

✅ WSIS+20 Considerations:

Energy-efficient data centers, AI-powered climate monitoring, and sustainable e-waste management.

Green ICT regulations and carbon-neutral digital policies.

Digital solutions for smart agriculture, clean energy, and disaster resilience.

8. Human Rights in the Digital Age

🔹 Trend: Surveillance concerns, online freedom, and digital authoritarianism require stronger governance.

✅ WSIS+20 Considerations:

Aligning WSIS Action Lines with human rights frameworks.

Ensuring fair access to digital platforms and protecting freedom of expression.

Safeguarding against digital exclusion and discrimination.

# United States | Digital Democracy Now | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Digital Democracy Now [formerly Virtual Activism]

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

United States

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

1- Increased Awareness re connectivity and the importance of ICT

2- Empowering Communities with Access to Knowledge.

3- helped with economic growth through E-Commerce

4- encouraged innovation

5- linked ICT to sustainable development

6- keeping up with developing technologies

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

providing a multi-stakeholder approach.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Through enhanced transparency and accountability and continuing in inviting an all-inclusive and diversified audience.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Cybersecurity threats continue to be the number 1 challenge. The problem of the digital divide is a close second. The ethical consideration and implementation is also problematic.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Action Line 8: Building the Information Society: The Human Dimension, because it is a human rights issue.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?
2. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Not at the moment, thank you.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Through multi-stakeholder partnerships

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?
2. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?
3. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

The ethics of using ICTs in wars and in surveillance.

# United States | Internet Infrastructure Coalition | Private Sector

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Internet Infrastructure Coalition

1. Organization type

Private Sector

1. Organization country

United States

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The Internet Infrastructure Coalition (i2Coalition) represents businesses that provide essential services for the Internet’s global infrastructure. Our members have played a critical role in the ongoing evolution of the Information Society, as guided by the WSIS Geneva Declaration of Principles. We have been instrumental in advancing the technologies that expand access to the Information Society for people worldwide while also ensuring the Internet remains open, secure, and inclusive.

A “people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented Information Society” is best achieved through the participation of a broad ecosystem, bringing together governments, businesses, technologists, civil society, and the voices of Internet users. The risks of fragmentation in the digital space increase when decisions are made in isolation, without the involvement of all stakeholders. The i2Coalition is committed to preserving a multi-stakeholder model that ensures decisions are made collaboratively and transparently, safeguarding the Internet as a global resource.

Reflecting on 20 years since the WSIS process began, we have witnessed tremendous growth in Internet-driven innovation across sectors. However, there are significant challenges ahead, particularly as the speed of innovation outpaces regulatory frameworks, and as governments sometimes move to regulate the Internet without consulting critical stakeholders. The i2Coalition supports the development of emerging Internet technologies and services and believes that multi-stakeholder collaboration is vital to addressing risks like fragmentation. We are dedicated to working with our partners to ensure the future of the Internet remains open, secure, and accessible to all.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The Internet Infrastructure Coalition (i2Coalition) acknowledges the International Telecommunication Union’s (ITU) crucial role in advancing the WSIS goals, particularly in partnership with key organizations like UNESCO, UNCTAD, and UNDP. One of its main contributions is the ITU’s work on coordinating the WSIS Action Lines and aligning them with the broader global development agenda. We recognize the ongoing work aligning WSIS goals with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing sustainability, inclusion, innovation, and digital collaboration.

As advocates of the Internet infrastructure sector, the i2Coalition strongly supports the emphasis WSIS places on the involvement of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) across all industries. We agree that broad ICT engagement is vital for achieving the sustainable development goals of the Information Society.

Internet infrastructure is at the heart of the digital economy and serves as a foundation for the global exchange of information and innovation. Our sector works towards a goal where all individuals, businesses, and governments—especially in emerging economies and rural areas—have the connectivity they need to participate in the Information Society.

Connectivity is essential to the goals of affordability, accessibility, and inclusivity, and the i2Coalition members are dedicated to supporting sustainable Internet infrastructure that drives economic growth and prosperity.

In this context, it is critical that all stakeholders, including the Internet infrastructure sector, maintain open communication on how sustainable development goals can be achieved and continue to collaborate to enhance the global reach of the Information Society.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The WSIS process has demonstrated the power of global digital cooperation over the past two decades. To ensure the ongoing success of this inclusive multi-stakeholder model, it is crucial that we continue to foster open collaboration between all sectors involved in Internet governance. This model has been foundational in addressing the complex challenges facing the digital landscape.

The United Nations Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is one of the most significant outcomes of the WSIS process, serving as a key forum where stakeholders—including governments, businesses, the technical community, academia, and civil society—can come together to share insights, address common challenges, and work toward achieving sustainability goals. The i2Coalition strongly supports the continuation of the IGF as a platform for dialogue and collaboration, allowing stakeholders to exchange best practices on an equal footing.

We believe that preserving the IGF’s role as an inclusive, consultative body is essential to maintaining the openness and flexibility of Internet governance. While there is no formal push to transform it into a global decision-making body, it is important to remain vigilant in ensuring that any future evolution of the IGF does not inadvertently undermine the multi-stakeholder approach. This model has been highly effective in fostering innovation, maintaining the security of the Internet, and ensuring its continued growth as a tool for global development.

The i2Coalition is committed to supporting initiatives like the IGF that empower all stakeholders to engage in shaping the future of the Internet while ensuring that decisions are made through broad-based, inclusive cooperation. The i2Coalition proposes creating better linkages between the WSIS Forum and the IGF forum to strengthen digital cooperation and the inclusive multistakeholder model.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The Internet Infrastructure Coalition (i2Coalition) recognizes the significant challenges that remain in the ongoing implementation of the WSIS Action Lines, including regulatory gaps, disparities in digital literacy skills, and the unequal pace of technology adoption between the Global North and South. Addressing these issues is essential to ensuring that the WSIS process remains effective in fostering a truly inclusive and sustainable digital future.

One growing concern in this landscape is “Internet fragmentation.” While there is no universally agreed-upon definition of this term, we are particularly focused on the technical aspects of fragmentation that could disrupt the core infrastructure of the Internet. Specifically, fragmentation poses a threat to the full interoperability of network systems, the seamless exchange of data, and the consistent functioning of the Internet across all endpoints.

The i2Coalition believes that the WSIS outcomes, when fully realized, can address concerns related to Internet fragmentation by reinforcing the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance. The multi-stakeholder approach ensures that diverse voices, including those from the technical community, governments, and civil society, contribute to the development of best practices. Though some critics may be frustrated by the pace or outcomes of multi-stakeholder processes, we believe that the Internet is best served when governance avoids sudden shifts and considers the input of all relevant stakeholders.

We strongly advocate for WSIS outcomes that reaffirm and strengthen the multi-stakeholder model as the foundation of Internet governance. The issue of Internet fragmentation is particularly important to the i2Coalition’s members, and we welcome the discussions happening at venues like the United Nations (UN) IGF’s Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation. These discussions are critical to addressing the intended and unintended impacts of technical, policy, legal, and regulatory actions on the Internet’s core features—specifically, its openness, interconnection, and interoperability.

Global forums like the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) also play a crucial role in achieving consensus on technical standards, ensuring that both businesses and consumers benefit from a secure and interoperable global Internet. Furthermore, the i2Coalition believes that ICANN’s multi-stakeholder model has been a proven and effective mechanism for maintaining the security, stability, and resilience of the Internet’s Domain Name System (DNS). This model successfully meets the needs and expectations of the global community while preserving the openness and integrity of the Internet.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

The Internet Infrastructure Coalition (i2Coalition) believes that the WSIS Action Lines were significant not only as specific targets but, more importantly, as guiding principles for where efforts needed to be focused and progress made. While challenges remain—with only 17% of the Action Lines fully achieved over the past 20 years—their continued attention through the various WSIS forums underscores the commitment of the Internet community to ensuring these goals are not overlooked. The Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Commitment have served as key roadmaps, guiding the work of governments and stakeholders across a wide range of dimensions.

One of the most impactful aspects of the Tunis Agenda has been the recognition of the Internet as a foundational element of the Information Society’s infrastructure. In particular, the i2Coalition acknowledges ICANN as a prime example of how the technical community, alongside other stakeholders, has come together to manage the Internet’s critical resources. ICANN’s structure and its ability to reform and adapt over the past two decades have been vital in shaping technical and public policies that preserve the Internet's integrity and stability.

The work undertaken by ICANN, along with international organizations responsible for developing Internet-related technical standards, has played a crucial role in maintaining the unity and security of the Domain Name System (DNS). This effort has helped prevent fragmentation and ensured that the Internet remains a cohesive and accessible global network. In the i2Coalition’s view, the continued integrity of the DNS is central to maintaining “one Internet” for all users, a key goal of the WSIS process.

Another significant outcome has been the formation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). Last year the UNGA adopted the Pact of the Future, recognising the IGF as the primary platform for discussion of Internet governance issues. (see Global Digital Compact, Art 28 - Annex to the Pact of the Future).

Over the last 20 years the IGF made huge contributions to WSIS Action Line C11 on international and regional cooperation. Over the years, the IGF has fostered critical multi-stakeholder discussions and shaped policies that promote an open, secure, and inclusive Internet. A major testament to its impact is the proliferation of over 174 national, regional, and youth IGF initiatives—including 111 national IGFs, 24 regional and sub-regional IGFs, and 40 youth IGFs. This growing ecosystem of governance dialogues underscores the global commitment to collaborative Internet policy development and ensures that diverse voices are represented in shaping the digital future.

Taken together, these developments demonstrate that WSIS Action Lines have provided a strong foundation for sustainable progress, and their continued refinement and implementation will be essential for addressing emerging challenges in Internet governance and digital inclusion.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The i2Coalition recognizes the continued relevance of the WSIS Action Lines, particularly in addressing emerging challenges such as closing the digital divide and supporting sustainable digital growth. To enhance their implementation, it is essential to focus on fostering a secure, interoperable Internet that prioritizes connectivity, affordability, and equitable access for underserved regions.

One concrete way to strengthen implementation is by expanding work on Action Line C4 (Capacity Building) to prioritize training and education on emerging technologies such as AI, machine learning, and IoT. The WSIS Forum and the IGF can serve as key platforms for scaling capacity-building efforts, ensuring that new and emerging technologies are developed and deployed in ways that uphold the integrity, security, and inclusiveness of the global Internet.

Strengthened collaboration among governments, technical experts, civil society, and private sector stakeholders will ensure that WSIS principles remain adaptable to new challenges while maintaining alignment with global sustainable development goals.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

The WSIS Action Lines remain as relevant today as they were 20 years ago.

On milestones, ICANN has made a significant contribution to Action Line C8 by enabling greater linguistic diversity and local content through the implementation of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs). This has been a critical step in making the Internet more accessible to non-Latin script users and supporting multilingualism online.

Regarding challenges, significant progress has been made under Action Lines C2 and C3, connecting billions of people to the Internet since 2003. However, 2.6 billion people remain offline, underscoring the need for continued and collaborative efforts from all stakeholders. No single entity can bridge this gap alone, and a renewed focus on digital inclusion is essential.

To further strengthen the alignment between WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is important to ensure that gender considerations are more prominently reflected in existing frameworks, particularly in alignment with SDG 5 (Gender Equality). While the WSIS Action Lines remain as relevant today as they were 20 years ago, in hindsight, there are opportunities to enhance them by more explicitly addressing gender disparities in digital access and participation, as well as the impact of emerging technologies on inclusion and equity.

Looking beyond 2025, emerging trends should be expanded to include Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Quantum technologies, as these advancements will play a defining role in shaping the future of digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and global connectivity. However, we need to ensure that the WSIS Action Lines remain "technology neutral" and prioritize the impacts of technology.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The Internet Infrastructure Coalition (i2Coalition) believes that strengthening the alignment between WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is critical for the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At a high level, policymakers must prioritize the preservation of human rights, both online and offline, as a foundational principle to support the WSIS outcomes and the progression toward an inclusive Information Society. Key to this is ensuring that concrete steps are taken to enable universal Internet access, which can be achieved through initiatives that promote infrastructure development and the provisioning of Internet exchange points (IXPs) in developing countries.

An inclusive approach to Internet governance is also essential in strengthening the alignment between WSIS Action Lines and SDGs. The multi-stakeholder model ensures that all relevant parties—including governments, businesses, civil society, and the technical community—are involved in policy development. This process helps ensure that outcomes are acceptable to the entire Internet ecosystem and avoid unintended consequences, such as technical fragmentation, that could harm the network’s global interoperability.

The i2Coalition believes that current trends in technology will play a significant role in advancing human development, closing the digital divide, and achieving the 17 SDGs. The internationalization of the Internet continues to drive economic growth, with Internet-based technologies supporting a globally interoperable network that fosters innovation on both local and global scales. Emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be key drivers in achieving goals like climate action, the development of smart, sustainable cities, and the expansion of affordable and clean energy solutions.

To achieve these goals, the i2Coalition strongly advocates for the continued use of the multi-stakeholder model, which facilitates collaboration and consensus on both technical evolutions and public policy. As we move toward 2030, cooperation among stakeholders has never been more critical in ensuring that the Internet remains a tool for sustainable development and human advancement.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

Strengthening multistakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and IGF is essential to ensuring inclusive, effective, and sustainable Internet governance. The i2Coalition supports enhancing collaboration and synergy between these platforms, ensuring that discussions remain relevant to the evolving digital landscape.

A concrete way to improve alignment is by establishing stronger linkages between the IGF and the WSIS Forum, such as incorporating insights from the IGF’s annual report into WSIS Action Lines and discussions. This would help streamline priorities, avoid duplication, and reinforce global digital policy efforts.

Additionally, fostering greater inclusivity remains critical. Expanding regional engagement and capacity-building initiatives—particularly for underrepresented stakeholders and emerging economies—will help ensure that multistakeholder governance reflects diverse perspectives and needs.

As new challenges such as AI governance, cybersecurity, and digital inclusion take center stage, ensuring that WSIS and IGF remain agile, impactful, and truly representative will be key to their continued success in shaping the future of the global Internet.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Alignment between the WSIS process, the Pact for the Future, and the Global Digital Compact is essential to effectively advancing shared goals for an open, secure, and inclusive Internet. This presents an opportunity to leverage existing WSIS mechanisms, such as the IGF, in the Compact’s implementation.

An evolved IGF can serve as a platform to review and monitor both WSIS Action Lines and the Global Digital Compact’s implementation, ensuring continuity, accountability, and multistakeholder engagement in shaping digital policies. By integrating these processes, we can foster greater coherence and collaboration in global Internet governance efforts.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

From the perspective of the Internet Infrastructure Coalition (i2Coalition), several key emerging digital trends and technologies are reshaping the landscape of the Internet and must be considered by the ITU in the WSIS+20 review and beyond 2025.

First, the widespread adoption of wireless Internet access, through both Wi-Fi and cellular technologies, has been a driving force in Internet development over the last two decades. The evolution of cellular networks, from 3G to 4G and 5G, with 6G on the horizon, has enabled more people than ever to access the Internet through smartphones and other devices. This increase in connectivity, coupled with advances in processing power, has led to the generalization of IP-based communications, such as Voice over IP (VoIP), instant messaging, video communications, and the explosion of social networks. More recently, cloud computing has further transformed the way we interact with the Internet, providing new platforms for collaboration, storage, and service delivery.

Several technological and engineering breakthroughs have played a critical role in these advancements. Encryption technologies have been key in preserving privacy and personal data, while initiatives such as domain name security (e.g., DNS Security Extensions or DNSSEC) and IP address certification have contributed to a more secure Internet ecosystem. Efforts to secure the Domain Name System (DNS), including actions taken by ICANN and country code TLD (ccTLD) managers to sign both the DNS root and top-level domains (TLDs), along with protocols like Secure Border Gateway Protocol (BGP), have all contributed to making the Internet more resilient and trustworthy.

The trend toward ‘internationalization’ is another major development to consider. Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), as defined by the IETF, and efforts like ICANN’s Universal Acceptance program are facilitating multilingualism online, enabling non-ASCII users to engage with the Internet in their native languages. This process has been essential in ensuring that the Internet is truly global and accessible to all.

It’s important to note that many of these advancements have been made through incremental improvements, maintaining backward compatibility with minimal disruption to existing technologies and infrastructure. This approach has allowed the Internet to grow steadily while preserving the stability and security of the systems in place.

Looking beyond 2025, the i2Coalition emphasizes the importance of continuing to focus on these foundational technologies while also preparing for new challenges and opportunities in areas such as 6G networks, AI-driven innovations, and the increasing demand for privacy and security in the digital age. By building on the success of past efforts and ensuring a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach, we can continue to advance toward a more inclusive and sustainable Internet.

# United States | ISPCP | Academia

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Internet Service Providers and Connectivity Providers (ISPCP) Constituency of ICANN

1. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

1. Organization country

United States

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The ICANN Internet Service and Connectivity Provider Constituency (ISPCP) represents businesses that provide much of the world’s Internet connectivity and, in that capacity, have been witness to the continued evolution of the Information Society, as envisaged by the WSIS Geneva Declaration of Principles. Our members have been active participants in not only the advancement of technology that has aided in the broadening of the Information Society but also the important work to broaden access to the Information Society to all people in all areas of the globe.

The "people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society" is best supported by an entire ecosystem of players and is at its most effective when supported by multistakeholder decisions made up of the voices of not just governments, but businesses, technologists, civil society, and the voices of Internet users. Risks of fragmentation that drive us away from this vision tend to come out of environments not driven by a true multistakeholder process but by governments who may seek minimal advice from these other essential stakeholders.

Over the 20 years since WSIS, we have been party to developments of all kinds and have seen the vision of the envisioned Information Society realized in some instances and at risk in plenty of others. The Internet has become such a fundamental part of all of our lives that, as a general resource, it is itself the largest global platform for innovation and growth. The ISPCP supports innovation and the development of emerging services, including those that are taking place at the edge of the network. We will continue our support of multistakeholder groups in identifying those emerging services that have the potential to cause technical internet fragmentation so that we can work together on solutions that ensure the ongoing security and interoperability of the global Internet.

Concrete Examples of WSIS-Driven Projects or Developments:

 1. Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

Impact: A WSIS outcome fostering multistakeholder collaboration on Internet governance.

Relevance: Promotes inclusive decision-making.

 2. Connect 2030 Agenda

Impact: ITU-led initiative accelerating ICT-driven SDG progress.

Relevance: Supports global connectivity, especially in underserved areas.

 3. ITU Broadband Commission

Impact: Advocates broadband as a key SDG enabler, shaping policies and funding.

Relevance: Advances digital inclusion and infrastructure expansion.

 4. E-Waste & ICT Sustainability

Impact: ITU initiatives addressing environmental sustainability in ICTs.

Relevance: Aligns ICT development with sustainability goals.

 5. Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA)

Impact: Strengthens international cyber cooperation and resilience.

Relevance: Enhances trust and security in ICTs.

 6. ICT Measurement & Data Initiatives

Impact: Standardized data collection for ICT-driven development policies.

Relevance: Ensures measurable progress and informed decision-making.

 7. ITU Digital Skills Toolkit

Impact: Guides digital literacy programs worldwide.

Relevance: Reduces the digital divide through skill-building.

 8. Multilingualism & IDNs

Impact: Enables Internet access for non-English speakers.

Relevance: Promotes inclusivity and cultural diversity.

 9. Community Network Initiatives

Impact: Grassroots projects expanding Internet access in underserved regions.

Relevance: Supports equitable digital connectivity.

 10. Digital Innovation Hubs (UNESCO)

Impact: Boosts digital creativity and entrepreneurship in developing economies.

Relevance: Drives innovation and economic growth.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

The ISPCP acknowledges the ITU’s significant contribution towards WSIS outcomes as it has worked diligently toward its vision alongside groups such as UNESCO, UNCTAD, and UNDP. We acknowledge the work being done to align WSIS goals with the implementation of the 2030 sustainable development goals based on the specific goals of sustainability, inclusion, innovation, and digital collaboration.

As representatives of the Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) sector, the ISPCP supports the WSIS goal of highlighting the importance of ICT involvement in all sectors and acknowledges that this is a prerequisite to meeting the sustainable development goals of the Information Society.

ICTs are facilitators in all e-strategies and provide resources that open the doors for individuals to create and participate in the Information Society’s sustainability development goals, especially for emerging economies. ICTs are intrinsically involved for users everywhere, especially those living in rural areas that require access to the Internet. Connectivity is key for enabling the continued building of the Information Society, and the ICTs understand their role in ensuring affordability, equitability, and universality. ICTs understand the importance of connectivity to benefit the economic growth of countries.

In this context, it is important for ICTs to communicate with all other stakeholders about how sustainable development goals should be advanced.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The United Nations Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has been a positive result of WSIS as a key multistakeholder forum for sharing views and collaboration with other stakeholders, including government, business, the technical community, academia, and civil society on common issues, including sustainability goals. The ISPCP supports the continuation of the IGF as a multistakeholder forum for parties to come together to establish best practices, and strongly opposes efforts to transform it into a global decision-making body on internet governance issues.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The ISPCP recognizes and shares the concern expressed by many that there are a number of geopolitical activities driving the potential for “Internet fragmentation”, a term for which there is currently no commonly agreed-upon global definition. With this lack of a global definition in mind, the ISPCP is most concerned about technical aspects of Internet fragmentation that could have an impact on the underlying infrastructure that impede the ability of network systems to be fully interoperable and exchange data packets, and of the internet to function consistently at all end-points.

We believe that the WSIS outcomes at their best would aid in addressing concerns related to Internet fragmentation through its ongoing support of the multistakeholder process for internet governance. It is notable that the loudest voices opposing the multistakeholder approach often express disappointment in the timing or outcome of the best practices adopted and decisions-making process. In contrast, our view is that the Internet is best served when governance processes avoid sharp changes and reflect the views of the entire multistakeholder community.

Accordingly, we strongly support a WSIS outcome that reaffirms the multistakeholder process for Internet governance.

ISPs have an interest in the Internet fragmentation issues being debated in venues such as the Policy Network on Internet fragmentation (Policy Network) at the United Nations (UN) IGF. The IGF is a positive example of a multistakeholder process resulting from the WSIS forum. The Policy Network is raising awareness of the intended and unintended effects of technical, policy, legal, and regulatory actions on the basic features of the Internet as an open, interconnected and interoperable network of networks. These discussions are contributing to global discussions focused on providing clarity on the diverse perceptions of what may be the cause of fragmentation, including those related to the technical concerns of ISPs.

To ensure that the IGF continues to play this essential role, its long-term funding stability must remain a priority. The IGF is currently funded on a voluntary basis through ITU contributions, which raises concerns about predictability and sustainability. While some view this model as appropriate for maintaining the IGF’s role within the ecosystem, others worry that uncertain funding could weaken the IGF’s ability to provide a neutral and effective space for multistakeholder discussions. Ensuring a stable and sustainable financial foundation for the IGF will be key to its continued success in addressing Internet fragmentation and broader governance challenges.

Convergence of views on technical topics also takes place in globally accepted internet standards development bodies, including the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). ISP’s and consumers alike benefit from a secure and interoperable global internet. We believe that ICANN’s multistakeholder model has proved itself to be an effective means to maintain the security, stability, and resilience of the Internet DNS and meets the needs and expectations of global customers and partners of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) services while maintaining the openness of the global Internet.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

The ISPCP believes the WSIS outcomes were notable not only as targets to be met but perhaps more importantly as directions where effort was to be made and progress necessary. In that spirit, the very fact that those outcomes were taken over by the various WSIS forums that were convened since WSIS has marked the intention of the Internet community to not let these outcomes go unheeded. The Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Commitment across its numerous dimensions served as roadmaps for a number of governments and stakeholders, both individually and collectively through the various organizations involved.

Regarding the technical Governance of the Internet as part of the Tunis agenda and acknowledging the Internet as a major element of the infrastructure of the Information Society, the ISPCP recognizes ICANN as an organization that has embodied the ability of the technical community, and that of all stakeholders to come together, to define technical and public policies for the management of the Internet resources, as well as a structure that has been able to review and reform itself structurally over these 20 years to fulfill this mission. After 20 years and despite numerous challenges, its actions since WSIS along with those taken by the international organizations in charge of development of Internet-related technical standards and relevant policies, has helped maintain the integrity of the Internet and avoid fragmentation of the Domain Name System (DNS), which in the ISPCP’s view remains central to maintaining “one Internet for all Internet users”.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The ISPCP recognizes the continued relevance of the WSIS Action Lines, particularly in addressing emerging challenges such as closing the digital divide and supporting sustainable digital growth. To enhance their implementation, it is essential to focus on fostering a secure, interoperable Internet that prioritizes connectivity, affordability, and equitable access for underserved regions. As the foundation of global communication and innovation, ISPs and connectivity providers emphasize the importance of the multistakeholder model in ensuring that technological advancements—such as AI, machine learning, and IoT—are developed and deployed in ways that preserve the integrity and inclusiveness of the global Internet. Strengthened collaboration among governments, technical experts, civil society, and private sector stakeholders will ensure WSIS principles adapt effectively to new challenges while maintaining alignment with global sustainable development goals.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

The ISPCP highlights critical challenges within the WSIS+20 Action Lines, including infrastructure and funding constraints, fragmented regulatory approaches, and the persistent digital divide, particularly in underserved and rural areas. These obstacles hinder the equitable development of a robust and interoperable Internet. For ISPs and connectivity providers, addressing these issues is paramount to ensuring universal access, strengthening cybersecurity, and promoting trust in digital systems.

Emerging trends, such as AI, 5G and the upcoming 6G, and IoT, present significant opportunities but also demand careful consideration of their technical and societal impacts. ISPs remain committed to advancing digital inclusion and ensuring that new technologies align with the principles of the multistakeholder model, supporting a secure, sustainable, and globally connected Internet. Strengthening collaboration among all stakeholders, alongside adaptable policies and strategies, is essential to overcoming challenges and achieving the shared goals of WSIS beyond 2025.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

At a high level, policymakers that prioritize preservation of human rights for individuals, whether they are online or offline, will support the WSIS outcomes and progress towards the Information Society. With this in mind, we encourage policymakers to continue to take concrete steps that enable Internet access for all individuals through initiatives that support connectivity such as infrastructure growth and internet exchange point provisioning.

An inclusive approach to Internet governance ensures that the relevant parties whose work and views are critical to achieving the WSIS goals are considered as critical to ensure the policy outcome is acceptable by the members of the entire Internet ecosystem through a multistakeholder consensus-driven process. This approach is foundational to produce policy outcomes that preserve interoperability and end to end connectivity for the end-users, and avoid outcomes that, intentionally or unintentionally, result in a technical fragmentation of the Internet.

The ISPCP believes current trends in technology can have a significant impact on the progress toward human development, the reduction of digital divide and the achievement of the 17 UN SDGs. Internationalization of the Internet as a driver for economic growth will help progress a number of these goals, and Internet-based technologies will continue to support a globally interoperable network where everyone accessing the network may innovate for the benefit of their local community and beyond. Continued deployment of specific technologies related to the Internet of Things or Artificial Intelligence will play a role in achieving goals such as Climate actions, smart sustainable cities and communities, and affordable and clean energy. The need for a strong model of cooperation such as the multistakeholder model has never been more critical to develop commonly-agreeable technical evolutions and public policies.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

To strengthen multistakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and IGF, the ISPCP emphasizes the need to prioritize topics relevant to ISPs and connectivity providers, such as AI governance, digital inclusion, and the technical and policy challenges of sustaining a secure, interoperable Internet. Regular updates to the agenda that reflect these emerging trends will ensure continued relevance.

Fostering broader participation, particularly from underserved regions and underrepresented groups, is essential to addressing global digital challenges equitably. Enhanced regional engagement and capacity-building initiatives will empower stakeholders to contribute meaningfully. Improved synergies between the WSIS Forum and IGF, alongside mechanisms for evaluating their impact, will solidify their roles as effective forums for collaboration and governance. For ISPs, maintaining a focus on inclusivity and alignment with the multistakeholder model is critical to supporting a resilient and open Internet in the face of rapid technological evolution. Referencing the NETmundial 2014 Internet Governance Process Principles may serve as a valuable framework for reinforcing stakeholder engagement and accountability in these platforms.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The ISPCP underscores the importance of aligning the WSIS process, the Pact for the Future, and the Global Digital Compact to achieve shared goals, particularly in fostering an open, secure, and inclusive Internet. For ISPs and connectivity providers, the focus should remain on ensuring robust network infrastructure, advancing digital inclusion, and preserving the multistakeholder model of governance.

Key strategies include harmonizing objectives across these frameworks to create a unified vision for digital development, fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and prioritizing capacity-building initiatives that address the digital divide. Aligning policies to support ethical AI, cybersecurity, and sustainable ICT development is vital to mitigating fragmentation risks and ensuring interoperability. Regular monitoring and evaluation will ensure progress remains transparent and adaptable, enabling these platforms to drive meaningful outcomes for the global Internet community.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Key emerging digital trends include the widespread adoption of wireless Internet access and the continuous evolution of cellular technologies (3G, 4G, 5G, and the upcoming 6G). These advancements, combined with privacy-preserving technologies such as encryption and secure protocols like DNSSEC and BGP, are essential to maintaining a secure and interoperable Internet. Efforts to promote Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Universal Acceptance have further enhanced accessibility, enabling a multilingual Internet that bridges digital divides.

From a broader perspective, the generalization of wireless Internet access—whether through Wi-Fi or cellular networks—and the incremental introduction of successive generations of cellular technologies (3G, 4G, 5G, and soon 6G) have been instrumental in Internet growth over the past two decades. Similarly, the rise of smartphones, coupled with increasing computational power, has enabled widespread adoption of IP-based communications, such as VoIP, instant messaging, and video conferencing. These developments have fueled the growth of social networks and more recently facilitated the emergence of cloud architectures and platforms.

Critical breakthroughs in technology and engineering have underpinned these advances. Technologies that preserve privacy and personal data, such as encryption, have played a vital role. Similarly, initiatives like DNSSEC and secure Border Gateway Protocols (BGP) have strengthened the Internet’s security while maintaining its ecosystem’s steady growth. Notably, actions to sign the DNS root and Top-Level Domains (TLDs), led by ICANN and country code TLD managers, have bolstered trust in the Domain Name System.

Internationalization technologies, such as Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) as defined by the IETF, and the Universal Acceptance program championed by ICANN, have significantly advanced multilingualism on the Internet. These efforts ensure that users who do not rely on ASCII characters can access and benefit from the Internet.

It is important to note that these advances have been achieved through incremental improvements with backward compatibility, minimizing disruptions to existing technologies and infrastructure. This steady, inclusive approach has enabled sustainable growth while maintaining the Internet’s core principles of openness, interoperability, and global connectivity.

# United States | Internet Society | Academia

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Internet Society

1. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

1. Organization country

United States

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

The last two decades have seen significant efforts by all stakeholders to implement WSIS Action Lines. This collaborative work resulted in tremendous growth in connectivity and facilitated a remarkable evolution of information and communication technologies, especially the Internet, which has become a critical enabler for sustainable development.

In 2005, only 16 percent of people worldwide, about 1 billion, were online. In the last twenty years, Internet use has grown significantly. In 2024, around 68 percent of the global population—5.5 billion people—were online, according to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). This growth means that 4.5 billion more people are now connected, an increase of 52 percentage points.

The Internet has become an indispensable resource for information, communication, and human connection. It has fueled extraordinary economic growth and catalyzed social progress, enabling more and more individuals, communities, and people to achieve their full potential in promoting sustainable development and improving quality of life.

This extraordinary evolution was possible thanks to all stakeholders being involved in making the changes happen. Governments have adopted policies that favor the development of the Internet and Internet applications; the private sector has invested trillions of dollars in the infrastructure required; the technical community has been continually innovating over these years, ensuring our digital lives are mediated by secure, fast, generative, and interoperable Internet technology; civil society has consistently called for better access at global and local levels; academia and research communities have come up with solutions to allow more people to get connected in the last two decades.

The multistakeholder approach, enshrined in the Tunis Agenda and reaffirmed in the WSIS+10 review outcomes, has been vital to making the Internet a success. It opened the Internet governance ecosystem to all stakeholders and facilitated cooperation among governments, businesses, civil society, and the technical community, multiplying multistakeholder partnerships to implement the WSIS Action Lines.

The WSIS Plan of Action, which used the Millennium Development Goals as a foundation, later informed the transition to Sustainable Development Goals. In the same way, the successes and lessons learned from implementing WSIS Action Lines in the past twenty years could be instrumental in reviewing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and serve as a basis for establishing the targets and goals beyond 2030.

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

ITU’s main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS process include various operational and policy tasks, such as roles of the lead facilitator in coordinating the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action, facilitator of Action Lines C2, C4, C5, and C6, and co-facilitator of other Action lines, one of the coordinators of the WSIS Stocktaking process, and the host and co-organizer of the annual WSIS Forum.

We recognize that the ITU sectors, along with many other stakeholders, have directed their efforts into constructive work on developing connectivity by working on relevant standardization processes within ITU’s mandate on ICT/Telecommunications, spectrum management and allocation, development, and other issues in the ITU remit. Yet we would like to highlight that more efforts and collaboration are needed to bring connectivity to a third of the world, which remains unconnected. We strongly believe that this is where the next ITU contributions should be directed.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

The multistakeholder model is central to the WSIS process because the ambitious aim of building a people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented Information Society can never be achieved by any stakeholder alone. This model has grown from the Internet’s own DNA and is what allows it to thrive, enabling new stakeholders, previously not involved, to be included and contribute their share to finding solutions to addressing new and evolving challenges.

To sustain and strengthen the multistakeholder model, there is a need to clearly reiterate the commitment to it in the WSIS+20 review. We strongly urge all the stakeholders to make a confirmation of this commitment the main priority in the WSIS+20 review process. The lessons from the WSIS implementation over the last two decades clearly show that no significant progress would have been possible without the joint collaborative efforts of all stakeholders.

Furthermore, the global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and its network of National and Regional IGF initiatives are crucial elements of the open multistakeholder ecosystem. As a multistakeholder platform, the IGF provides a unique opportunity for governments, businesses, civil society, and the technical community to share experiences and best practices. This exchange contributes to informing decision-making in their local communities and serves as the foundation for local and regional projects with concrete and sustained impact, such as diverse examples of community-centered connectivity solutions. Re-confirming the IGF mandate and extending it permanently, along with securing sustainable funding, should be an integral part of the commitment to the multistakeholder approach to the implementation of the WSIS outcomes.

We strongly urge against any proposals to establish new, alternative processes in addition to the IGF. Very few stakeholders, if any, have the resources and the ability to follow and contribute to multiple duplicative tracks. Thus, any alternative processes will significantly undermine multistakeholder collaboration and participation. Furthermore, the IGF should not become an avenue to sideline non-governmental stakeholders when governments negotiate at other non-inclusive forums. The IGF should be strengthened as an open, inclusive platform, while any other multilateral negotiation processes should become open, transparent, and inclusive.

We recognize that the multistakeholder model itself must evolve to keep pace with the evolution of technology and the changing geopolitical landscape. It also has to address its own challenges, such as improving its decision-making processes, removing barriers to participation, and working on greater transparency and accountability of its own mechanisms. As the model has matured in the last two decades, these issues are well-known to the multistakeholder community, which is making significant efforts to solve them. We want to highlight this work on improvement from within the ecosystem, especially the guidelines and process steps for multistakeholder collaboration, consensus-building and decision-making, provided in the NetMundial+10 outcome document, as evidence of the health and maturity of the model.

Lastly, we would like to emphasize the importance of the principles and recommendations for strengthening Internet governance and digital policy processes outlined in the NetMundial+10 outcomes, especially those aiming at improvement of multistakeholder participation in multilateral fora. Internet Society suggests that NetMundial+10 guidelines should be used to improve the WSIS implementation and ensure transparency, accountability, and stakeholder inclusion in the WSIS+20 review process.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Despite the considerable successes in implementing the WSIS outcomes, obstacles still exist in achieving global Internet connectivity. The WSIS target “to ensure that more than half the world’s inhabitants have access to ICTs within their reach” was accomplished, as more than 60% of the world’s population has access to the Internet. Yet this number doesn’t show the high disparities between countries and regions that lie beneath the headline figure and doesn’t reflect how widely the progress in global connectivity varies.

This uneven development creates different digital and economic divides, which have multifaceted impacts. Accelerating technological innovation and the digitization of essential services like healthcare and education broadens inequalities, leaving women, girls, and people in low-income countries at a disadvantage. The growing divides reduce the potential to support the implementation of WSIS outcomes, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Alongside the challenges of incomplete and uneven connectivity highlighted above, significant new threats exist to the open Internet and to what we call the Internet’s ‘critical properties’—the foundational pillars underpinning its growth and adaptability (https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/internet-impact-assessment-toolkit/). Some of these threats pose a serious risk to the Internet as we know it today and its future, including but not limited to Internet shutdowns and fragmentation.

Internet shutdowns are a major concern, as they have become an increasingly common tactic for governments to restrict connectivity at national and sub-national levels, often primarily for political reasons. According to the Internet Society’s Pulse platform (https://pulse.internetsociety.org/shutdowns), there were 136 Internet shutdowns in the past twelve months, with nine incidents ongoing at the time of writing. The Internet Society believes Internet shutdowns harm societies, economies, and the technical infrastructure of the global digital economy. Internet shutdowns constitute a significant risk for many businesses and investors, including those building infrastructure or developing services.

Another challenge is the trend of Internet fragmentation, where the Internet is carved up along political, economic, and technological boundaries in a fundamental contradiction to the original principles of the globally connected Internet, where data flows freely and securely across the world. A growing number of government and corporate decisions around the world have the potential to adversely impact the open and interoperable global Internet, often with unintended consequences. The Internet Society is gravely concerned about this trend and continues to work with its community of stakeholders worldwide to support sustaining the single, globally interoperable, open Internet.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

While we believe that all Action Lines are extremely important for achieving the WSIS goals of building an Information Society, several of them are foundational. Firstly, the WSIS Action Line C2 “Information and Communication Infrastructure” provides the basis for growing, developing, and sustaining connectivity and access and empowering communities to create their own solutions.

Building this global connectivity and bridging existing and emerging digital divides would not be possible without stakeholders working together. Therefore, the WSIS Action Line C1 — “The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development” — is crucial for the implementation of Action Line C2 and any other WSIS outcomes, with the multistakeholder model being a key to achieving the WSIS goals. As an indispensable element of this model, the Internet Governance Forum has become the main platform for reinforcing cooperation by reducing barriers between different stakeholder groups and facilitating dialogue and exchange of information on all levels: global, regional, national, and local.

Additionally, Action Lines C4, “Capacity building,” and C5, “Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs,” are instrumental to achieving global connectivity that enriches people’s lives. The importance of capacity building cannot be overestimated in relation to the Actions Lines C1 and C2 and to the implementation of any other aspects of WSIS outcomes. Similarly, confidence and security in the use of ICTs are essential: it is impossible to reap the benefits of global connectivity without enhancing the security of the networks and systems and providing a safe online experience for users. The latter includes equipping individuals and communities with the necessary skills in online safety.

Ultimately, we would like to highlight that the Actions Lines are interrelated in their ability to encourage the global community to take the WSIS outcome implementation efforts. One of the examples to illustrate the cross-cutting nature of the WSIS Action Lines is the Tanzania Digital Inclusion Project (TADIP) of the Internet Society Tanzania chapter. Initiated in 2020, the TADIP aims to close the digital divide in Tanzania by connecting the unconnected and underserved citizens in rural and urban centers and training women and girls in STEM. While the project won the WSIS Prize 2024 in Action Line C3, “Access to information and knowledge,” these efforts clearly pertain to other WSIS Action Lines that concern connectivity, infrastructure, capacity building, and the role of stakeholder cooperation.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

The question doesn’t specify the meaning of “new and emerging areas.” As the survey later inquires specifically about the WSIS and emerging processes, such as the GDC, our answer to this question assumes that the wording refers to new and emerging technologies and related challenges and opportunities for WSIS implementation.

Over the years, innovation and technological evolution have enabled and facilitated the work of the multistakeholder community on the implementation of WSIS outcomes. This includes the evolution of wireless mobile technology, the development of fiber cable technology, and the progress made by the device manufacturing industry, all contributing to faster, more affordable connectivity. More recently, developments in satellite industries, such as the evolution of low-earth orbit (LEO) satellites, have brought more opportunities to connect the unconnected.

At the same time, due to uneven progress in growing connectivity, technological developments, especially when essential services such as healthcare and education are becoming digitized, create new and broaden existing digital divides. These divides could be bridged only if we make implementation of WSIS commitments related to connectivity one of the utmost priorities. The technological evolution can facilitate these efforts, as it has already done for the last twenty years. Yet it is our firm belief that technology is a tool. We should examine any particular new and emerging technology through the lens of the WSIS’s main goal and focus on employing the benefits of technological developments to connect those who are not yet connected and move towards universal connectivity.

New and emerging areas also place particular importance on the multistakeholder model. All the successes in the implementation of WSIS represent examples of stakeholder cooperation. The ability of the WSIS Action lines to address new issues strongly depends on the multistakeholder model of governance, which has already proven effective in solving various technology-related challenges.

As we all work collaboratively towards implementing the WSIS commitments to build global connectivity and connect the unconnected, it is also crucial to understand that the open, globally connected, secure and trustworthy Internet is the greatest enabler for development and innovation. Therefore, no matter the method of delivering connectivity—wires, wireless, mobile, or satellite—the networks must incorporate and preserve what has made the Internet evolve into an essential global tool and a whole new space for innovation, growth, and transformation.

The Internet Society identified the critical properties that define the Internet Way of Networking and underpin the growth and adaptability of the Internet. Specific technologies and business models may come and go, but the Internet Way of Networking has been a constant foundation for the success of the Internet from the beginning (https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2020/internet-impact-assessment-toolkit/critical-properties-of-the-internet/). Only by protecting these properties together with the multistakeholder model of Internet Governance can we ensure that tomorrow’s Internet remains innovative and sustainable and continues enabling economic and technological development around the globe.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

After reviewing the slide decks prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators, we note that this work might warrant a more detailed discussion and input from the global multistakeholder community beyond the scope of this questionnaire. In our answer, we will focus on what we consider the most important concerning the Action Lines pertaining to connectivity and development. This contribution does not represent Internet Society’s final and comprehensive position on the review of WSIS Action Lines. While providing comments only on the most crucial areas for improvement in this ongoing work in the context of the ITU CWG WSIS & SDGs consultation, we look forward to further contributing to the discussion in a more detailed way.

We have the following suggestions for the slide decks referenced in the question:

The slide deck for Action Line C1 mentions the multistakeholder model only in the context of key milestones and achievements but is silent on this model being crucial to the trends and opportunities beyond 2025. We firmly believe that this model is key to addressing the challenges outlined in the presentation and should be highlighted as a central element of opportunities and the way forward. This would also provide consistency with how the trends and opportunities are reviewed by other Action Line facilitators: for example, the role of the multistakeholder model is already emphasized in the analysis of opportunities in Action Line 4.

As Action Line C1 refers to stakeholder cooperation, we believe that the review of “trends and opportunities,” which considers only technological developments or economic shifts, should also focus on the opportunities for improvement of stakeholder coordination. In this context, we strongly suggest including the reference to the NetMundial+10 outcome document, which provides valuable input for the improvement of multilateral processes and multistakeholder mechanisms.

The review of Action Line C2 highlights a number of technological developments, such as LEO and 5G/6G networks, and emphasizes the role of security, partnerships, and capacity building. However, one important aspect is not addressed: some populations are currently offline and will continue to be so in the future unless we build new connectivity models, such as community-centered solutions, including community networks. We suggest mentioning these solutions explicitly as a future opportunity to foster connectivity. As the initiatives to build community-centered solutions are also crucial in the context of capacity building, this aspect might also be added to the review of the opportunities in Action Line C4.

The slide deck on Action Line C5 highlights in the opportunities section that the “UN remains critical fora for cyber discussions as well as technical collaboration.” While we agree that the discussions at the UN are crucial, we would like to highlight the importance of other fora, especially those relying on multistakeholder efforts. The same section calls for “enhanced private sector engagement” without mentioning the efforts of other stakeholders.

Yet there are various examples of efforts towards implementing this Action Line, which illustrate the multistakeholder collaboration in action. For instance, the Mutually Agreed Norms for Routing Security (MANRS) initiative, is a global, community-driven initiative to improve the security and resilience of the Internet’s global routing system that uses the Border Gateway Protocol (BGP). A decade after its establishment in 2014, MANRS has grown from nine original operators to a community of more than 1,000 participants.

We, therefore, suggest that the review of Action Line 5 better recognizes the multistakeholder nature of efforts to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs. This aspect could be clearly highlighted by mentioning a variety of fora and efforts in addition to the UN efforts and by emphasizing the role of the technical community, civil society, and academia.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

For the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, it is crucial to close the current and emerging digital divides. Therefore, the efforts should be directed at better aligning the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs that aim to bridge digital divides and build connectivity. In this context, we recommend enhancing the alignment between the most impactful WSIS Action Lines focusing on connectivity and capacity building, and relevant SDGs, in particular:

- WSIS Action Line C1: The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in promoting ICTs for development and SGD 17 (Partnership for the goals) to facilitate multistakeholder partnerships for implementing WSIS Action Lines related to sustainable development.

- WSIS Action Line C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure and SGDs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) to increase the synergy between the efforts to grow sustainable connectivity and support innovation, infrastructure development, and economic growth.

- WSIS Action Lines C3: Access to Information and knowledge, C4 “Capacity building” and SDG 4 (Quality Education) to ensure inclusivity and equity in quality education and to facilitate opportunities for lifelong learning.

- WSIS Action Line C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs is a cross-cutting issue crucial to many SDGs. In particular, we suggest enhancing its alignment with SDGs 4 (Quality education), 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and 17 (Partnership for the goals).

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

As we highlighted in our previous answers, the IGF has become an indispensable element of the Internet governance ecosystem because as a unique platform for various stakeholders to exchange experiences and practices and inform various efforts in their local communities. This platform has proven its ability to evolve, build mechanisms for intersessional work, and incorporate discussions related to new challenges. We strongly call for the WSIS+20 review to reconfirm the IGF mandate and make it permanent. This should be complemented by sustained funding of the IGF. Furthermore, the current IGF mechanisms could be leveraged to serve as a vehicle for the implementation of the Global Digital Compact to avoid duplicative efforts and provide alignment between the WSIS and GDC implementation.

Regarding the WSIS Forum, we commend its role as a multistakeholder convener to share best practices and knowledge and foster partnerships in the WSIS implementation. While we recognize that there are new and emerging topics that might be relevant to the WSIS Forum and that the agenda has input from various stakeholders, we firmly believe that maintaining focus on connectivity and bridging digital divides is essential to strengthening the role of the Forum. We suggest that the WSIS Forum puts in the center of its agenda the WSIS Action Lines related to connectivity and development, in particular, Action Lines C2 (Information and communication infrastructure), C4 (Capacity Building), C5 (Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs) to foster multistakeholder efforts in these areas.

We would also like to encourage increasing the interaction among the WSIS Forum participants by enabling conducive formats, such as roundtables or unconference formats, in which an opening statement would be allowed, but agile dialogue would be strongly promoted. Lastly, a balance between the duration of the segments and the number of speakers in the session would enhance the ability of the Forum to facilitate multistakeholder discussions and further evolve as a platform for dialogue.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

The Global Digital Compact already recognizes the need to “build on the processes and forums emanating from the World Summit on the Information Society” to advance its implementation. Some GDC objectives and commitments, especially those related to connectivity, are directly relevant to the current WSIS Action Lines and the work already undertaken during the WSIS implementation. The GDC should build on the lessons learned from twenty years of the implementation of WSIS, especially those related to multistakeholder collaboration. The WSIS-related multistakeholder efforts on growing connectivity and bridging digital divides are a perfect example to recognize that the ambitious aims of the GDC cannot be implemented by any stakeholder alone and also a showcase of the best practices in collaboration.

Duplicating efforts hinder the meaningful participation of all stakeholders, including governments from developing countries with limited resources to engage. To avoid this duplication, it is necessary to analyze the current WSIS Action Lines to find where the ongoing work already relates to the GDC. Where necessary and appropriate, there might be a need to carefully update the Action Lines to accommodate the GDC implementation. The United Nations, in the Resolution A/RES/79/194 of 19 December 2024, already recognized the need for coordinating efforts and requested the Commission on Science and Technology to consider how the WSIS follow-up and implementation can contribute further to the implementation of the Global Digital Compact. We strongly believe that identifying the synergies between WSIS and GDC implementation must be a multistakeholder effort, which offers an invaluable opportunity to put into practice the guidelines provided in the NETmundial+10 Outcome Document.

We call for the implementation of the Global Digital Compact to be multistakeholder, transparent, and inclusive. It should fully leverage existing mechanisms such as the CSTD, WSIS Forum, and the IGF to avoid duplicative efforts that would divert resources for international and multistakeholder cooperation.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

As we highlighted in our previous answers, we strongly believe that technology is a means to achieve the main goal of the WSIS: to build a people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented Information Society. While looking at emerging digital trends and technologies is important, the WSIS process should focus on people and how the Internet improves their lives, because each day without Internet access is a day of lost opportunity. In this regard, as long as a third of the world population is still not connected, building capacity to provide and sustain meaningful connectivity should be the priority. In the context of WSIS, the topics related to emerging technology should always focus on relevant action lines, especially those related to connectivity and sustainable development, be it growing the connectivity or closing emerging digital divides that new technology creates.

The Internet is an essential global tool and a space for innovation, growth, and transformation. It will continue delivering on its promise to improve the lives of people, communities, and society as a whole as long as we ensure even connectivity and access to the Internet and preserve its critical properties and the model of its governance. Any future vision of WSIS should rely on the ability of all stakeholders to work collaboratively in the Internet Governance ecosystem to address emerging challenges and take new opportunities. By protecting the Internet and its governance model, we can make sure that the WSIS of tomorrow will remain people-centered and inclusive while continuing to enable sustainable economic and technological development around the globe.

# Zambia | Common Cause Zambia | Civil Society

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Common Cause Zambia

1. Organization type

Civil Society

1. Organization country

Zambia

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?

Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the implementation also contributed to digital inclusion which contributed to more vulnerable groups getting ICT empowerment. WSIS created a platform for multi-stakeholderism which facilitated actors such as government, corporates, CSOs to engage during the forums. WSIS contributed to innovation, research and provides an M & E pushing for more to be done including implementation of SDGs

1. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?

support through organizing the WSIS, promoting infrastructure and connectivity and standardization of ICTs

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

By giving the WSIS a chance to continue existing and widening its scope to bring more players on board

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

Interoperability, unequal access to ICTs (rural and urban divide, developed and developing countries), cyber threats (insecurity), privacy cyber crimes, data breaches and cyber attacks

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Geneva Action plan it laid the foundation for everything that ICT globally and then all subsequestion action lines contributed to what we hope for in the digital world

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Through awareness, multistakeholderism and inclusivity

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

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## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

MORE PRESSURE NEEDS TO BE APPLIED IN ORDER TO GET THE SDG IMPLEMENTATION SCALED U[P

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

TAKING IT TO LOWER STRUCTURES AND LEVELS OF GOVERNANCE

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

simplifying the process and pack to byte size pieces that allow for more inclusion towards shared goals

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?

Artificial Intelligence Futures

# Zimbabwe | Inturistic Pvt Ltd | Private Sector

## Respondent

1. Organization name

Inturistic Pvt Ltd

1. Organization type

Private Sector

1. Organization country

Zimbabwe

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

1. What are the **main achievements** of the implementation of the WSIS process in the past 20 years?
2. Digital Inclusion: In an attempt to close the digital divide, marginalized groups like the elderly, young people, and those living in rural areas have had better access to ICTs. Digital literacy initiatives, community networks, and focused policies to guarantee fair access have all been implemented.
3. Engagement of Multi-Stakeholders: International organizations, the private sector, governments, and civil society have all collaborated more since the WSIS process began. In ICT development, this multi-stakeholder approach has promoted varied viewpoints and shared responsibilities, resulting in more inclusive and thorough solutions.
4. Support for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The WSIS process has integrated ICTs into the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, promoting their use in areas such as education, health, and economic growth. This alignment has helped to leverage technology for achieving broader developmental objectives.
5. What are ITUs main contributions towards the implementation of the WSIS Process in 20 Years?
6. Initiatives for Global Connectivity: Through programs that encourage the development of infrastructure and telecommunications investment, the ITU has taken the lead in efforts to increase internet access worldwide, especially in underserved areas.
7. Multi-Stakeholder Participation

In order to work together to address opportunities and challenges in the ICT landscape, the ITU has facilitated multi-stakeholder partnerships and dialogues that have brought together governments, the commercial sector, and civil society.

1. Creation of Policy Frameworks: In order to help member states better align their strategies with WSIS principles and improve their regulatory environments, the ITU has made best practices and guidelines available to them for the development of national ICT policies.
2. Supporting of SDGs: The ITU is promoting the use of ICTs to accomplish sustainable development goals in a variety of sectors by aligning its programs with the SDGs, which strengthens the role of technology in global development.
3. Promotion of Emerging Technologies

The ITU has held talks about new technologies, giving interested parties a forum to investigate the ramifications and promote creativity in fields like cybersecurity and artificial intelligence.

1. The WSIS process stands as a strong example of global digital cooperation in action for over two decades now. How can we ensure that this inclusive multistakeholder model is sustained and further strengthened?

Continuous engagement. To sustain and strengthen the WSIS inclusive multistakeholder model, continuous engagement among all stakeholders—governments, private sector, civil society, and academia—is essential. Regular dialogues and collaborative forums foster transparency, build trust, and facilitate the sharing of best practices. This ongoing interaction ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, helping to address emerging challenges and adapt strategies effectively. By maintaining an open line of communication, stakeholders can work together to innovate and enhance the impact of the WSIS process, ensuring it remains relevant and inclusive for all.

1. What are the challenges that remain in the implementation of the WSIS process?

The digital gap remains a major challenge in the WSIS process, marked by significant disparities in internet access and digital literacy, especially in rural and underserved areas. Many individuals lack reliable connectivity and the skills needed to use digital technologies effectively. This inequality restricts participation in the digital economy and access to essential services like education and healthcare. To overcome this challenge, targeted initiatives must focus on improving infrastructure, providing affordable access, and enhancing digital literacy, ensuring that all individuals can benefit from the opportunities of the information society.

## WSIS Action Lines

1. Which specific Action Lines have had the most significant impact, and why?

Action Line C1: The Role of Governments and All Stakeholders in the Promotion of ICTs for Development. This Action Line highlights the importance of collaboration among governments, the private sector, and civil society. By fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships, it has led to comprehensive policies that enhance ICT development and ensure that diverse perspectives are included in decision-making, ultimately driving inclusive digital growth.

Action Line C3: Access to Information and Knowledge. Focusing on equitable access to information, this Action Line emphasizes the importance of libraries, open access initiatives, and knowledge-sharing platforms. It has significantly impacted education and lifelong learning by ensuring that more individuals can access valuable resources, thus empowering communities and enhancing opportunities for personal and professional development.

Action Line C7: E-Government. This Action Line promotes the use of digital technologies in public service delivery, making government services more accessible and transparent. By enhancing citizen engagement and trust in government, e-government initiatives have improved governance and accountability, allowing for more efficient and responsive public administration.

1. Considering that the WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, how can the implementation of the WSIS principles and corresponding WSIS Action Lines be enhanced to effectively address these topics?

Adaptation of Policies. Regularly review and update policies to ensure they align with the dynamic nature of technology. This involves creating flexible frameworks that can incorporate emerging technologies like AI and blockchain into existing Action Lines, ensuring relevance and effectiveness in addressing current challenges.

Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration. Enhance collaboration among a diverse range of stakeholders, including tech companies, civil society, and academia. By fostering partnerships and engaging various sectors in discussions and initiatives, the WSIS process can leverage different perspectives and resources to tackle emerging issues collectively.

Focus on Inclusivity. Prioritize the inclusion of marginalized and underserved communities in discussions about new technologies. This includes targeted outreach and the promotion of local content that reflects cultural contexts, ensuring that all voices are heard and that the benefits of digital advancements are equitably shared.

1. Have you any suggestions and inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, highlighting key milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025 prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators. <https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Home/About#actionLines>

Strengthening digital inclusion is a critical focus for the WSIS+20 Review Action Lines, aiming to ensure that all individuals, particularly marginalized and underserved communities, have equitable access to information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Key Aspects:

Milestone: Establish measurable targets for increasing internet access in remote and low- income areas. This could involve initiatives to improve infrastructure, such as expanding broadband coverage and providing affordable internet services.

Challenge: Overcoming barriers such as high costs, lack of infrastructure, and insufficient digital literacy. Many underserved communities face systemic obstacles that inhibit their ability to access and use technology effectively.

Emerging Trends: The rise of community-driven initiatives, such as local internet service providers and digital literacy programs, has shown promise in bridging the digital gap. These grassroots efforts can empower communities and foster local solutions tailored to specific needs.

Impact: By prioritizing digital inclusion, the WSIS process can enhance economic opportunities, improve access to education and health services, and promote social equity. Ensuring that everyone can participate in the digital economy is essential for building a truly inclusive information society.

## WSIS Action Line for advancing the SDGs

1. How can the alignment between the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs be strengthened towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Integrated Framework Development: Develop a comprehensive WSIS-SDG Matrix that explicitly links each WSIS Action Line to specific SDGs. This framework will highlight how initiatives under each Action Line contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda. By providing a clear roadmap, stakeholders can better understand their roles and responsibilities, facilitating coordinated efforts toward common goals.

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: Encourage collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations.

Establishing partnerships for joint initiatives allows for resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and pooling of expertise. Multi-stakeholder dialogues can enhance understanding of how ICT can address various development challenges, thereby promoting collective action towards the SDGs.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Create specific indicators to measure the impact of WSIS initiatives on the SDGs. Regular monitoring and evaluation will provide data-driven insights into progress and effectiveness. This approach enables stakeholders to identify successes and areas needing improvement, ensuring that strategies remain responsive to evolving needs and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development goals.

By focusing on these strategies, the alignment between WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs can be significantly enhanced, promoting a more integrated and effective approach to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

## Future Vision and WSIS beyond 2025

1. How can we further strengthen multistakeholder platforms such as the WSIS Forum as the platform for digital development and IGF as the platform for governance and policy issues?

To further strengthen multistakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) for digital development and governance, consider the following strategies:

Enhancing Participation and Inclusivity: Broaden the scope of participation by actively engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, including marginalized communities, youth, and local organizations. Implement outreach programs to raise awareness and encourage involvement in discussions. By ensuring that all voices are represented, these platforms can address a wider array of perspectives and needs, leading to more comprehensive and effective outcomes.

Facilitating Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building: Organize workshops, training sessions, and webinars focused on sharing best practices and innovative solutions in digital development and governance. Create resources that stakeholders can access to enhance their understanding of ICT issues and policies. By building capacity across different sectors, these platforms can empower participants to contribute more effectively to discussions and initiatives.

Fostering Collaborative Projects: Encourage the development of collaborative projects that leverage the strengths of various stakeholders to tackle specific challenges in digital development and governance. By focusing on joint initiatives, platforms can create tangible impacts and demonstrate the value of multistakeholder collaboration. This approach can also facilitate the pooling of resources and expertise, making efforts more efficient and impactful.

By implementing these strategies, the WSIS Forum and IGF can be further strengthened as vital platforms for advancing digital development and addressing governance and policy issues effectively.

1. How can the implementation of the WSIS process and the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact be aligned to achieve shared goals?

Shared Vision and Objectives.

To align the implementation of the WSIS process with the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact, establishing a shared vision and common objectives is crucial. This involves identifying overlapping goals, such as promoting digital inclusion, enhancing connectivity, and ensuring sustainable development. By articulating a unified framework, stakeholders can collaborate more effectively, ensuring that their efforts are coherent and directed towards the same ends. A shared vision fosters cooperation among diverse participants, governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations leading to more integrated strategies and maximizing impact in addressing global digital challenges. This alignment not only strengthens individual initiatives but also enhances overall progress towards achieving a more inclusive and sustainable digital future.

1. What are the key emerging digital trends and topics to be considered by ITU in the WSIS+20 review and future vision beyond 2025?
2. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning. AI technologies are transforming industries and services, enabling efficiencies and innovations. Addressing ethical implications, governance frameworks, and equitable access to AI tools is crucial for responsible use.
3. Cybersecurity and Data Privacy. As digital transformation accelerates, the need for robust cybersecurity measures and data protection becomes critical. Developing international norms and frameworks to enhance security and build trust in digital systems is essential.
4. Digital Inclusion and Equity. Bridging the digital divide remains a priority. Strategies must focus on improving access to technology and digital literacy, particularly for marginalized communities, to ensure equitable participation in the digital economy.
5. 5G and Next-Generation Connectivity. The rollout of 5G networks promises to revolutionize connectivity and enable new applications. Strategies should address infrastructure challenges and ensure that benefits reach all communities.

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