ITU CWG WSIS&SDG Call for Inputs on the WSIS+20 Review: Response

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Respondent

1. Organization name

DC DDHT

2. Organization type

IGF DC DDHT

3. Organization country

Benin

Implementation of the WSIS Process

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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

11. 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

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.