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

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Respondent

1. Organization name

   SatCom Industry Association (SIA-India)

2. Organization type

   International Organization

3. Organization country

   India

Implementation of the WSIS Process

4. 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.

5. 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.

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 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.

7. 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

8. 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.

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?

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.

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

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

11. 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

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?

> 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.

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?

> 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.

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?

> 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.