

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

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## Respondent

1. Organization name

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

2. Organization type

International Organization

3. Organization country

Bangladesh

## 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 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.

5. 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.

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 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.

7. 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

8. 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.

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, 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.

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>

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

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 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

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 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.

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 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.

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?

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.

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**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.

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**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.

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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.