

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

Response 58 – 30/01/2025 22:37

## Respondent

1. Organization name

A Technical Community Coalition for Multistakeholderism (TCCM)

2. Organization type

Academia / Technical Community

3. Organization country

Canada

## Implementation of the WSIS Process

4. 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.

5. 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.

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?

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.

7. 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

8. 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.

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?

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.

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>

## 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?

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

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?

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.”

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?

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.

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?

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).