

ITU's Contribution to the Implementation and Follow-up of the WSIS Outcomes and its Role in Achieving the SDGs

WSIS+20 Report: Building a digital future for all

This report is organized into three main sections to provide a comprehensive understanding of the WSIS+20 process.

Section I: The *Executive Summary* highlights the key findings and takeaways at a glance.

Section II: The *WSIS+20 Overview* offers a concise, yet informative outline of the main themes and critical points discussed.

Section III: *Detailed Report* delves deeper into the analysis, providing in-depth information, and supporting evidence for a thorough understanding of the report.

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Section I: Executive summary

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) started in response to the rise of digital technologies as a decisive element in global social and economic development.

Proposed by Tunisia at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference held in Minneapolis in 1998 and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2001, the original two-phase summit established a global vision for the Information Society, highlighting the need to bridge digital divides and help drive overall socio-economic development.

The Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted in 2003 highlighted the imperative of digital for development, including infrastructure, capacity building, and cybersecurity for all. The Tunis Agenda in 2005 reaffirmed the Geneva principles and established the annual Internet Governance Forum as a multistakeholder consultation mechanism.

The [WSIS+10 Review](#) in 2015 highlighted connectivity growth and persistent digital inclusion challenges, aligning WSIS outcomes with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promoting ICT as cross-cutting enablers for social, economic, cultural and environmental development.

Now, the upcoming overall WSIS+20 Review by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2025 provides a fresh occasion to assess progress, identify new challenges, and strengthen collaboration to build a digital future for all.

ITU's facilitation role

ITU has been at the forefront of the WSIS process from the outset, serving as secretariat for the two-phase summit in 2003 and 2005, subsequently implementing WSIS Action Lines, and continuing to vigorously promote development-oriented, people-centred digital transformation globally.

ITU has ensured broad multistakeholder engagement and effective implementation, keeping the WSIS process moving forward amid a continually evolving technology and policy landscape.

For over 20 years, the organization's governing bodies have provided vital strategic direction and consistently supported the WSIS aims of global digital cooperation and sustainable development. The annual WSIS Forum organized by ITU since 2009 drives ongoing dialogue and collaboration, as well as regular review of the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines.

The WSIS Stocktaking database maintained by ITU collects information on their initiatives and best practices in the database with a multi-criteria database for trends, projects, alignment, reports, and agile integration. The WSIS Stocktaking Database, maintained by ITU, is a platform that collects information on over 19 000 ICT-related projects and best practices worldwide, supporting sustainable development through trends analysis, alignment, reporting, and agile integration.

ITU collaborates closely with its fellow UN agencies, as well as with a wide array of public- and private-sector partners, on digital standards and capacity building. ITU initiatives, such as the WSIS Prizes and Partner2Connect Digital Coalition also exemplify collaborative spirit cultivated through WSIS.

Why WSIS matters now

The WSIS process, now entering its third decade, remains vital to advance digital development and leverage technologies for the good of everyone.

Digital solutions have become key to eradicate poverty, improve education and healthcare, protect the environment, and accelerate progress on all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. Yet severe

disparities remain between different regions, countries and people in terms digital connectivity, affordability and engagement.

ITU-led projects implementing WSIS Action Lines continue to advance connectivity and digital transformation, especially for rural and underserved areas.

The Global Digital Compact (GDC) adopted at the UN Summit of the Future in 2024 reinforces WSIS principles, emphasizing universal connectivity, digital inclusion, and multistakeholder collaboration.

WSIS remains the vital global framework for inclusive digital development aimed at building a better future for all.

Beyond 2025

In the dawning age of advanced mobile networks, satellite constellations, artificial intelligence and quantum computing, the robust UN-mandated cooperation platform represented by WSIS continues to bring together diverse stakeholders to address some of the greatest challenges of our time.

The reports of the Chairs of the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2024 and 2025 notably underline the need for WSIS to continue beyond 2025 as a proven mechanism for cooperation to address connectivity, digital development and wider human development challenges.¹

By reflecting on the past and setting out a vision for the future, ITU reaffirms its role as a global leader in building a digital future for all.

¹[WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025 Chair's Summary](#)

Key takeaways

- What is WSIS?
 - A global UN process to harness digital technologies for sustainable development.
 - First proposed in 1998 at ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis, United States, with major summits in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005).
 - Aims to bridge the digital divide and promote inclusive access to information and communication technologies (ICTs).
- Why it matters?
 - Digital tools are essential for achieving the internationally agreed development goals.
 - WSIS promotes universal connectivity, digital inclusion, and responsible use of technology.
 - Despite progress, many regions still lack affordable and reliable digital access.
- Key components
 - WSIS Action Lines: A framework of 11 focus areas related to ICTs, including infrastructure, capacity building, cybersecurity, and enabling environment.
 - WSIS Forum: Annual global event for stakeholders to share ideas and shape digital policy. Over 50 000 multistakeholder participants on-site and virtual.
 - WSIS Stocktaking: A database of over 19 000 ICT projects worldwide with over 2 million registered users.
 - WSIS Prizes: Annual awards recognizing impactful digital development projects. 252 winners and 720 champions recognized to date.
- ITU's Role
 - ITU convenes and facilitates the WSIS implementation.
 - Coordinates global efforts, hosts the WSIS Forum, and supports digital skills training and infrastructure development.
 - Works with UN agencies, governments, international organizations, private sector, technical community, academia, and civil society.
- Achievements
 - Internet use grew from 16% in 2005 to 68% in 2024.
 - Major progress in cybersecurity, e-services, and digital inclusion.
 - The number of mobile-cellular subscriptions worldwide has surpassed 9 billion.
 - The ITU Academy has provided training to over 45 000 learners globally.
 - ITU's Digital Transformation Centres have reached over 77 000 participants in the first half of 2024, of whom 55% were women.
 - ITU's Global Cybersecurity Agenda offers a comprehensive framework for promoting cybersecurity worldwide.

- The ITU-UNICEF Giga initiative aims to connect every school to the Internet.
- Looking Ahead (WSIS+20 and Beyond)
 - The WSIS+20 Review in 2025 will assess 20 years of progress and set future goals.
 - Focus areas: universal and meaningful connectivity, capacity building and digital skills, cybersecurity, emerging technologies, digital cooperation, and sustainable use of technology.
 - The importance of integrating the implementation of the Global Digital Compact commitments into the WSIS architecture in order to avoid duplications and ensure a cohesive and consistent approach to digital cooperation.

Section II: WSIS+20 Report: Building a digital future for all - Overview

For 20 years, ITU has been at the forefront of driving the WSIS process. ITU promotes inclusive, development-oriented, and people-centred digital transformation globally. Furthermore, in its capacity as the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies the organization has played a key role in implementing the WSIS Action Lines and ensuring that ICTs benefit people everywhere.

The original two-phase summit in 2003 and 2005 established an enduring, dynamic, inclusive and sustainable global vision for information and knowledge societies. Following the [Geneva phase](#) in 2003, the [Tunis phase](#) in 2005 highlighted the need to bridge digital divides and leverage technologies for development.

ITU was instrumental in organizing and facilitating both WSIS phases, collaborating with UN agencies, governments, the private sector, the technical community, academia, civil society and international organizations to create a robust framework for action.

The Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda highlighted 11 Action Lines aimed at fostering digital inclusion and leveraging ICTs for sustainable development. ITU played a leadership role in coordinating these efforts, particularly in areas such as ICT infrastructure (C2), capacity building (C4), cybersecurity (C5), and enabling environment (C6). These efforts have since evolved into a global multistakeholder movement, with ITU as a central pillar of coordination and implementation.

Over the past two decades, ITU has consistently demonstrated its commitment to advancing the WSIS vision through a range of initiatives, programmes, and partnerships:

1. **Facilitation of WSIS Action Lines:** ITU has facilitated key Action Lines, including C2, C4, C5, and C6, aligning their implementation with globally agreed development priorities. For example, under Action Line C2, ITU has driven the expansion of global broadband infrastructure, bringing connectivity to underserved regions and bridging the digital divide.
2. **Annual WSIS Forum:** ITU has convened the WSIS Forum annually since 2009, providing a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders. The forum has become a cornerstone event for shaping the global digital agenda, fostering partnerships, and advancing innovative ICT solutions.
3. **WSIS Stocktaking and Prizes:** ITU launched the WSIS Stocktaking database in 2004 to document and share successful ICT projects worldwide. More than 19 000 entries were collected and shared as of 2025. The WSIS Prizes, introduced in 2012, recognize outstanding contributions to the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs. This initiative celebrates best practices and promotes replicable solutions.
4. **United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) and Global Digital Cooperation:** ITU has spearheaded multistakeholder cooperation, working with UN agencies through mechanisms such as UNGIS. This collaboration ensures that digital transformation efforts are coordinated and aligned with global development priorities. ITU serves as the permanent secretariat of UNGIS, coordinating efforts among UN agencies to implement WSIS outcomes, and holds a rotational chair position.
5. **Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development:** ITU serves as the secretariat for the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, where it is a member of the Steering Committee, ensuring that global efforts are coordinated, standards are maintained, and the effectiveness of ICT strategies in implementing the WSIS Action Lines is evaluated, helping countries track their digital transformation progress.

- 5 **Emerging Technologies and AI for Good:** The WSIS framework has withstood the test of time, and the principles contained in the WSIS Outcome documents have demonstrated flexibility to be applicable over the past two decades to new and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum information technologies. This is why the WSIS Forum has included strategic discussions on emerging technologies from the beginning. Moreover, initiatives like the AI for Good reflect ITU's proactive approach to leveraging new technologies for development. It aims at identifying trustworthy AI applications, building skills and standards, and advancing cooperation on AI.

Despite steady digital growth over the past two decades, challenges persist. Digital and development priorities have continued building on [WSIS Action Lines](#) and associated ITU-led initiatives.

As the WSIS+20 High-Level Event in 2025 approaches, ITU remains committed to evaluating the progress made and identifying opportunities to strengthen the WSIS framework, considering the GDC and other international initiatives to ensure that digital transformation is inclusive, sustainable, and resilient.

The WSIS+20 Review offers a key moment to shape robust global digital cooperation beyond 2025.

This report delves deeper into ITU's achievements, challenges, and lessons learned over two decades of WSIS implementation. By reflecting on the past and setting a vision for the future, ITU reaffirms its role as a global leader in building a digital future for all.

a. Two decades of digital cooperation

In the late 1990s, the rapid advancement of ICTs presented both opportunities and challenges. Ensuring equitable access to the Internet and its associated applications became crucial to prevent anyone from being left behind in the burgeoning "Information Society." In response, Tunisia proposed the concept of WSIS at the [ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in 1998](#), leading to the adoption of Resolution 73 (Minneapolis, 1998) by ITU Member States to organize the summit series.

The United Nations General Assembly endorsed the WSIS mechanism in 2001 ([A/RES/56/183](#)), paving the way for the historic two-phase summit held in Geneva in 2003 and Tunis in 2005.

As the [secretariat](#) for both phases, ITU shaped the WSIS vision that has guided multistakeholder consultations on global technology issues ever since. ITU remains instrumental in facilitating the WSIS Process, emphasizing multistakeholder collaboration and documenting progress through the [WSIS Stocktaking Database](#) and annual reports.

The Geneva phase focused on developing a shared vision for the emerging information and knowledge societies, resulting in the [Geneva Declaration of Principles](#) and the [Geneva Plan of Action](#). Two years later, the Tunis phase aimed to bridge the digital divide and promote ICTs for development, resulting in the [Tunis Commitment](#) and [Tunis Agenda for the Information Society](#). This second phase reaffirmed principles from Geneva and the 11 WSIS Action Lines and established the annual [Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\)](#) as an ongoing multistakeholder mechanism.

Since 2006, ITU together with other WSIS Action Line facilitators, began hosting a series of annual WSIS follow-up meetings. These gatherings evolved into the [WSIS Forum](#) in 2009, hosted by ITU and co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, and UNCTAD, establishing a unique global platform for multistakeholder dialogue, knowledge sharing, and partnership building. Over the years, the WSIS Forum has become the world's largest annual meeting of the ICT- and digital-for-development community, bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders and reinforcing its significance as a key mechanism for shaping global digital cooperation.

The [WSIS+10 Review](#) (2015) marked a decade since the original summit phases. The comprehensive progress review highlighted achievements such as increased global connectivity and enhanced international cooperation. But it also identifying ongoing challenges like the persistent digital divide. Crucially, the WSIS+10 review produced the new Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015, which stressed the need to align WSIS outcomes with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensure ICTs would help advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The forthcoming **WSIS+20 Overall Review** by the UN General Assembly in 2025 will assess progress at the 20-year mark and identify new challenges and opportunities in the evolving information and societies. ITU, together with other UN agencies, is coordinating the preparatory process, collaborating with Member States and key stakeholders to ensure findings and recommendations from the review process feed into global digital governance discussions and remain well-aligned with key development frameworks.

A multistakeholder platform

From the outset, WSIS has highlighted the significance of involving diverse stakeholders to ensure effective and inclusive technology initiatives. Major stakeholder categories in WSIS discussions include governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, international organizations (including UN agencies), academic institutions, and technical organizations.

ITU has been crucial to bring all these stakeholders together. Its [unique membership](#), bringing together 194 Member States and over 1 000 companies, universities, research institutes, and other organizations, represents convening power that is unmatched in the UN system. ITU's network of more than 20 000 professionals facilitates timely policy and technology discussions, engaging experts and leaders across the global digital ecosystem.

The WSIS process relies on the active participation of multiple stakeholders:

- **Governments** shape digital policies for inclusive development, create national digital strategies, and implement regulatory frameworks to foster innovation and protect consumers.
- **The private sector** drives innovation and investment in the digital economy, partnering with ITU and other stakeholders to develop new technologies and expand digital infrastructure.
- **Civil society organizations** advocate for digital inclusion and bridge the digital gap, ensuring the voices of marginalized communities are heard.
- **International organizations** facilitate global and regional digital cooperation, supporting the development of international standards and promoting best practices.
- **Academic institutions** advance research and knowledge on digital transformation, shaping policies and strategies for digital development.
- **Technical organizations** enable the deployment of digital infrastructure, ensuring technologies are reliable, secure, and accessible.

Together, these stakeholders contribute to the shared goal of leveraging technology for development and ensuring the benefits of digital technologies are accessible to all.

Leveraging technology for sustainable development

Digital technologies can substantially accelerate progress towards globally agreed goals. The [WSIS-SDG Matrix](#), designed by the UN lead facilitators of WSIS Action Lines, provides a clear framework for assessing the impact of technology on development and identifying areas for further action. For example, [Action Line C2 \(Information and Communication Infrastructure\)](#) aligns closely with UN Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), ITU's key focus area.

Initiatives by ITU and its partners demonstrate the critical need for digital solutions to improve education, healthcare, economic growth, and environmental sustainability.

Since 2016, the WSIS Stocktaking database has been collecting and reporting on how digital projects are helping reach global goals, and through [WSIS Prizes](#) recognizing outstanding projects and initiatives.

Geneva Plan of Action: Where we are now

The Geneva Plan of Action aimed to shape an inclusive Information Society by leveraging technologies to bridge the digital divide and promote sustainable development. Over the past two decades, significant progress has been made in various areas, including connectivity, digital infrastructure, capacity building, cybersecurity, digital inclusion, and e-services.

Enhanced connectivity: Global connectivity has grown dramatically since the adoption of the Geneva Plan of Action. Internet usage has surged from 16% in 2005 to 68% by the end of 2024. This growth has been driven by the expansion of broadband infrastructure, the proliferation of mobile technologies, and initiatives to make Internet access more affordable and accessible. The number of mobile-cellular subscriptions worldwide has surpassed 9 billion, indicating near-ubiquitous mobile connectivity.²

Infrastructure development: Significant advancements include the expansion of broadband networks, the establishment of Internet Exchange Points (IXPs), and the enhancement of satellite connectivity. These efforts have improved Internet connectivity, reduced costs, and extended access to remote and underserved areas.

Capacity building and digital skills development: People and institutions need help building up their capacity for effective tech use. The [ITU Academy](#) has provided training to over 45 000 learners from countries worldwide, covering topics such as future fixed and mobile broadband Internet, the Internet of Things (IoT), big data and AI, as well as last-mile connectivity, digital infrastructure, radio spectrum management, cybersecurity, and AI governance. Initiatives like the [EQUALS Global Partnership](#) and [Her CyberTracks](#) have empowered thousands of women and girls through digital skills training, promoting gender equality across the global tech sector. Moreover, the [Digital Transformation Centres](#) have provided training to underserved and remote communities, with over 77 000 (55% female) course participants reached through this initiative in the first half of 2024.³

Promotion of cybersecurity: Ensuring a safe and secure digital environment is a critical aspect of expanding meaningful connectivity. ITU's [Global Cybersecurity Agenda \(GCA\)](#) offers a comprehensive framework for promoting cybersecurity and building confidence in digital technologies. ITU has developed international cybersecurity standards, helps countries establish national and regional [Computer Incident Response Teams](#) (CIRTs) and national cybersecurity strategies, organized cyberdrills, launched the [ITU Global Cybersecurity Index](#), and promotes awareness and policies to protect children online.

Digital inclusion and accessibility: In line with the Geneva Plan of Action and its call for global digital inclusion, ITU has implemented numerous projects aimed at providing access to technology for [underserved and marginalized communities](#). International standards have helped make digital products and services accessible to all individuals, regardless of ability.

² [Measuring digital development: Facts and Figures 2024](#).

³ *Ibid.*

E-services: [Electronic applications](#) have significantly enhanced public administration, healthcare, education, and business. E-government services have improved the efficiency and transparency of public administration, while telemedicine initiatives have provided remote healthcare services to underserved communities.

International and regional cooperation: Fostering international and regional cooperation has been a cornerstone of the Geneva Plan of Action. ITU has collaborated with a wide range of international and regional organizations to advance the WSIS outcomes and promote technology for development.

Overall, the Geneva Plan of Action has led to significant progress in various areas, reflecting the collective efforts of all stakeholders, facilitated by ongoing coordination through the WSIS mechanism.

Updating and evolving

The WSIS process has evolved significantly over the years, particularly in its alignment with global digital development priorities and emerging multilateral frameworks. Anchored in a multistakeholder model, the WSIS process and its Action Lines have continuously adapted to emerging technology trends and development priorities, reflecting its unique ability to stay relevant in a fast-changing digital world. Today, as the WSIS+20 milestone approaches and the outlook beyond 2025 is considered, this adaptability becomes even more critical.

Advances in cloud computing, AI, robotics, and space technologies offer new opportunities for innovation and development. ITU's work in standardization and policy development is critical to enhance WSIS discussions in this regard, ensuring that these technologies are deployed responsibly and ethically. [Standardization \(ITU-T\) Study Groups](#) are active in developing international standards for emerging technologies and promoting interoperability and security in AI, 5G, IoT, quantum, and other fields. ITU's work in the Radiocommunication Sector ([ITU-R](#)) continues to match the constant evolution of modern communications, including the identification of additional spectrum for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT). The Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) helps countries keep up with rapid technology and regulatory changes.

The annual WSIS Forum has become a venue for in-depth discussions on AI ethics and governance frameworks, as well as cooperation and coordination on AI development and deployment. Leveraging the [UN Inter-Agency Working Group on AI \(IAWG-AI\)](#) and other UN partners, ITU coordinates inputs and prepares the annual UN Activities on AI report. Initiatives such as [AI for Good](#) further exemplify how WSIS-aligned action delivers on the promise of using digital technologies to tackle global challenges—from education and healthcare to climate action and inclusive economic growth.

The [WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024](#) covered a wide range of topics, including emerging technologies, digital inclusion, digital governance processes, digital health, universal connectivity, sustainable digital transformation, cybersecurity, digital public infrastructure, and many more, in light of the UN Summit of the Future, the Global Digital Compact (GDC), and the upcoming WSIS+20 review. The outcomes of the 2024 event highlight the WSIS process as an existing and proven framework—including through the WSIS Action Lines, the WSIS Forum, WSIS Stocktaking—for implementing global digital commitments and driving progress in a coordinated, inclusive, and impactful manner.

As the lead facilitator of several WSIS Action Lines, and convener of WSIS Forum, WSIS Stocktaking, and WSIS Prizes, ITU has been at the forefront of implementing WSIS outcomes and driving global digital development. Now, more than ever, ITU, ITU Member States, ITU membership, and stakeholders are called upon to renew and reinforce their commitment to the WSIS process. By doing so, it can be ensured that digital technologies remain a force for good—accelerating development, reducing inequalities, and building a digital future that truly benefits all.

b. ITU's facilitation role

ITU's leadership in the WSIS process continues to ensure broad stakeholder engagement and effective implementation. ITU hosts the annual WSIS Forum, maintains the WSIS Stocktaking Database, and mobilizes growing public-private commitments to invest in connectivity for everyone, everywhere. ITU works closely with UN and other partners to promote sustainable digital transformation for all, including through mechanisms like the [UNGIS](#) and the [Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development](#).

From the outset, ITU has ensured broad and dynamic stakeholder engagement and effective implementation of WSIS initiatives. ITU governing bodies, such as the Plenipotentiary Conference, the Council, and the [Council Working Group on WSIS & SDGs](#), provide strategic direction to support the WSIS vision of digital cooperation and sustainable development. Comprehensive WSIS engagement reflects ITU's role as the go-to UN agency for digital technologies.

[ITU's Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes](#) is a series of reports on the ITU annual activities in context of WSIS carried out by the Union. Reports provide detailed information on the key WSIS related initiatives and activities carried out by ITU's three sectors (Standardization, Radiocommunication and the Development Sector) and the General Secretariat. The Report provides updates on the tasks carried out by the ITU at the policy and operational level, covering all assigned mandates with reference to the WSIS Process, in particular:

- Lead facilitator (along with UNESCO and UNDP) in coordinating the multistakeholder implementation of the *Geneva Plan of Action*.
- Facilitator of Action Lines C2 (Information and communication infrastructure), C4 (Capacity Building), and C5 (Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs); upon the UNDP's request the ITU accepted to play the role of the Facilitator of Action Line C6 (Enabling environment).
- Co-facilitator of Action Lines C1, C3, C7, C8 and C11; and partner for Action Line C9.
- Rotating Chair and secretariat of UNGIS.
- Steering Committee member and secretariat of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development.
- Overseer of the WSIS Stocktaking Process.
- Initiator and convenor of the WSIS Prizes.
- Implementer of other WSIS outcomes.

The annual reports are considered official submissions from ITU for different internal and external WSIS process-related meetings like the ITU Council, Council Working Group on WSIS and SDGs, and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) on the activities implemented during the respective year with reference to the WSIS implementation and follow-up.

Annual ITU contributions to WSIS implementation:

- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2024](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2023](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2022](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2021](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2020](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2019](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2018](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2017](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2016](#)

- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2015](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2014](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2013](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2012](#)
- [ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes 2011](#)

Inter-sectoral implementation within ITU

Within the ITU, the effective coordination of ITU's strategies and activities in relation to WSIS has been ensured by the **ITU's Task Force on WSIS&SDG** that is chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, to ensure cohesive coordination across its sectors in implementing the WSIS outcomes. This Task Force plays a pivotal role in strengthening the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, facilitating inter-agency collaboration, and guiding ITU's contributions to the WSIS process.

The ITU Sectors—**Development (ITU-D)**, **Standardization (ITU-T)**, and **Radiocommunication (ITU-R)**, and the **General Secretariat (GS)**—implement the WSIS outcomes through the execution of sector-specific mandates and the adoption of WSIS-related resolutions. These include through their respective resolutions: WTDC Resolution [30 \(Rev. Kigali, 2022\)](#); WTSA Resolution [75 \(Rev. Geneva, 2022\)](#); WRC Resolution [61-2 \(Modified 2019\)](#). Each Sector contributes uniquely: ITU-D focuses on capacity building and promoting ICT access in underserved regions, aligning with Action Lines such as C2 (Information and communication infrastructure), C4 (Capacity building) and C6 (Enabling environment); ITU-T develops global standards that underpin ICT infrastructure and services, supporting Action Lines like C5 (Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs); and ITU-R manages the global radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits, essential for connectivity and aligned with Action Line C2.

These efforts are further supported by the work of **ITU Study Groups**, which produce technical recommendations, toolkits, and best practices that operationalize WSIS principles across Sectors. The full scope of these implementation activities is documented annually in the [ITU's Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes report series](#), which provides detailed accounts of initiatives led by the three sectors and the General Secretariat, ensuring transparency and alignment with WSIS vision and targets.

Advancing the WSIS Action Lines

The WSIS Action Lines serve as a comprehensive framework for leveraging technologies to achieve sustainable development. ITU helps advance all of them, directly facilitating cooperation on connectivity, digital literacy, cybersecurity, and the enabling environment for tech growth, and co-facilitating or serving as a key partner in other UN initiatives driving people-centred technology for development.

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

ITU, as a key co-facilitator, together with UNDESA as lead facilitator, collaborates with governments, private sector entities, civil society organizations, and international bodies to create policies and frameworks that support digital inclusion and innovation.

C2: Information and communication infrastructure:

ITU, as lead facilitator for this action line, provides technical support, develops international standards, and promotes best practices for infrastructure deployment.

C3: Access to information and knowledge:

ITU, as a key co-facilitator, together with UNESCO as lead facilitator, implements initiatives that promote digital literacy and provide access to technologies for underserved and marginalized communities.

C4: Capacity building:

ITU, as lead facilitator for this action line, offers a wide range of courses, workshops, and ITU Academy training programmes to enhance digital skills and knowledge.

C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs:

ITU, as lead facilitator for this action line, maintains the Global Cybersecurity Agenda, a comprehensive framework for international cooperation on cybersecurity.

C6: Enabling environment:

ITU, as lead facilitator for this action line, provides guidance on regulatory frameworks, promotes international cooperation, and supports the development of policies that encourage investment in tech infrastructure.

C7: ICT applications:

ITU as key co-facilitator supports the development and implementation of tech applications in various sectors, including e-government (together with UNDESA as lead facilitator), e-health (together with WHO as lead facilitator), e-learning (together with UNESCO as lead facilitator), e-business (together with UNCTAD as lead facilitator), e-agriculture (together with FAO as lead facilitator), e-environment (together with UNEP as lead facilitator), e-employment (together with ILO as lead facilitator), and e-science (together with UNESCO as lead facilitator).

C8: Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content:

ITU, as key co-facilitator, supports the creation of multilingual digital content, collaborates with UNESCO, as lead facilitator, to preserve cultural heritage through digitization, and provides technical assistance for local content development.

C9: Media:

ITU, as key co-facilitator, together with UNESCO as lead facilitator, provides technical assistance for community radio and digital broadcasting, supports media development in developing countries, and offers training programmes for media professionals.

C10: Ethical dimensions of the Information Society:

ITU, together with UNESCO as lead facilitator, develops ethical guidelines and standards for tech use, including data privacy, cybersecurity, and the ethical use of AI.

C11: International and regional cooperation:

ITU, as a key co-facilitator, together with UNDESA as lead facilitator, collaborates with a wide range of international and regional organizations to advance WSIS outcomes and promote tech for development.

These contributions underscore ITU's commitment to leveraging digital technologies for the good of everyone worldwide.

WSIS Action Line Roadmaps on C2, C4, C5 and C6

[WSIS Action Line Roadmaps](#) outline the steps needed to achieve the goals of each action line, serving as a guide for stakeholders to align their efforts with the overall WSIS objectives. These roadmaps are regularly updated to reflect new developments and emerging priorities in the broad areas of **Information and Communication Infrastructure (C2)**, **Capacity Building (C4)**, **Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs (C5)**, and **Enabling Environment (C6)**.

- [Update of WSIS Action Line Roadmaps \(2023\)](#)
- [Update of WSIS Action Line Roadmaps \(2019\)](#)
- [Update of WSIS Action Line Roadmaps \(2017\)](#)
- [Update of WSIS Action Line Roadmaps \(2016\)](#)

Challenges Across WSIS Action Lines

Across the 11 WSIS Action Lines, a recurring challenge is the persistent digital divide, which manifests in unequal access to infrastructure, connectivity, digital tools, and skills—particularly affecting rural populations, women, and marginalized communities. Many countries face infrastructure and capacity gaps, limiting their ability to implement and scale ICT initiatives. The lack of harmonized policies and regulatory frameworks further complicates efforts, especially in areas like e-government, e-business, and international cooperation. Additionally, resource constraints—both financial and human—hinder the sustainability and scalability of digital transformation efforts, particularly in developing countries.

Another major challenge is the rapid pace of technological change, which outpaces the ability of institutions to adapt, regulate, and build capacity. Emerging technologies such as AI, IoT, and big data introduce ethical, privacy, and security concerns, especially in sectors like e-health, e-employment, and media. Moreover, cultural, linguistic, and content-related challenges—such as the discoverability of local content and support for multilingualism—highlight the need for inclusive and context-sensitive approaches. These challenges underscore the importance of collaborative, well-resourced, and forward-looking strategies to ensure that ICTs contribute meaningfully to sustainable development.

WSIS Forum

The annual WSIS Forum, hosted by ITU since 2009 and co-organized with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in collaboration with over 40 UN entities, serves as a multistakeholder platform for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing, producing actionable policy recommendations and fostering collaborative initiatives. The forum has become a cornerstone of the WSIS process, bringing together the WSIS multistakeholder community.

Known for its inclusive and participatory approach, the forum facilitates exchanges of ideas, experience, and solutions, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered in the formulation of digital policies and strategies.

Each annual edition features high-level policy sessions, thematic workshops, and interactive discussions that address pressing issues in the global tech sector. Annual themes reflect emerging trends and challenges, allowing stakeholders to stay informed and adapt with technology and policy trends.

WSIS Forum highlights (2009–2025)

Every year, the WSIS Forum produces actionable policy recommendations, valuable case studies and best practices, and enhanced partnerships and initiatives addressing specific challenges in the tech sector. Ongoing priorities include the push for last-mile connectivity, digital literacy, affordable access, and meaningful digital opportunities for everyone, particularly in underserved and marginalized communities. The annual forum also enhances cooperation on robust cybersecurity frameworks and digital infrastructure and data protection.

Year	Participants	Key Topics & Tracks	Main Achievements	Technological Evolution & WSIS Action Lines
2025	11,000+ onsite and online (in conjunction with the AI for Good Global Summit), including: 59 ministers and deputies, 56 heads of regulatory authorities, more than 60 UN representatives.	WSIS+20 Review; WSIS+20 and its alignment with global digital cooperation; global collaboration; digital inclusion; leveraging technology for development	Chair: H.E. Mr. Solly Malatsi, Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies of South Africa • Chair's Summary • Keynote Address by H.E. Mr. Alar Karis, President, Republic of Estonia • The United Nations High-Level Leaders' Dialogue • 13 Leaders TalkX sessions • 50 exhibition spaces • WSIS Action Lines Facilitators Meeting • WSIS+20 Overall Review multistakeholder consultation with co-facilitators • Charting the Path Forward for the WSIS+20 Review: A conversation with the WSIS+20 Co-Facilitators	Artificial Intelligence Governance and Generative AI; Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI); Cybersecurity and Digital Trust; 5G and Next-Generation Connectivity; Space Technologies for Development; Smart Sustainable Cities; Digital Public Goods and Open Innovation; Youth and Gender in Emerging Tech; Parliamentary Engagement in Digital Governance

Year	Participants	Key Topics & Tracks	Main Achievements	Technological Evolution & WSIS Action Lines
2024	4 000+ onsite and online, including: 80+ ministers, deputies, and heads of regulatory authorities.	WSIS+20 Review; WSIS+20 and its alignment with Global digital cooperation; Universal Connectivity; Sustainable Digital Transformation; Digital Public Infrastructure	Chair: H.E. Mr Albert Rösti, Federal Councillor, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy, and Communications (DETEC), Switzerland • Chair's Summary • WSIS Healthy Ageing Innovation Prize 2024 • WSIS Digital Service Design Prize 2024 • Women in GovTech Challenge • The Academic Roundtable • Wellbeing Sessions • Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in ICT	Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI); digital trust; AI governance; Virtual Reality (VR) and the Metaverse; Quantum Technologies; Generative AI
2023	2 700+ onsite	Digital Governance, Cooperation, Innovation	Chair: H.E. Dr. Emilija Stojmenova Duh, Minister of Digital Transformation, Republic of Slovenia 250+ sessions; new cooperation models; WSIS+20 momentum	Digital partnerships, AI policy, digital trust, governance frameworks
2022	1 000+ physical participants, 3 000+ remote participants	Metaverse, Indigenous Languages, Accessibility	Chair: H.E. Professor Isa Ali Ibrahim (Pantami), Minister, Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, Nigeria 250+ sessions; focus on inclusion and innovation	AI, IoT, Blockchain, 5G Networks, Metaverse

Year	Participants	Key Topics & Tracks	Main Achievements	Technological Evolution & WSIS Action Lines
2021	50 000+ (virtual)	Recovery, Digital Economy, Resilience; Ageing Better with ICTs; promoting women's empowerment through ICTs; ICTs and Youth; ICTs and Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and Specific Needs; Cybersecurity; ICTs for Well-being and Happiness	Chair: H.E. Mr Maxim Parshin, Deputy Minister, Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media, Russian Federation. WSIS Forum 2021 Hackathon – Ageing Better with ICTs: ITU, Global Coalition on Aging (GCOA), and other stakeholders like WHO, UN DESA, etc; WSIS Healthy Ageing Innovation Prize; The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response - ICT Case; WSIS TalkX Launched	AI, Big Data & Data Analytics; 5G Networks; Connected devices across sectors for better monitoring and automation (e.g., in agriculture, elder care, and disaster response); Enabled scalable and flexible ICT solutions; immersive education, training simulations, and health therapy; Assistive Technologies
2020	15 000+ (virtual)	COVID-19 Response, Older Persons and Ageing, Digital Inclusion	Chair: H.E. Mr Gustavo Montalvo Minister of the Presidency Dominican Republic Fully virtual forum; Launched the first ever ICTs and Older Persons track. • UNDESA has launched United Nations E-Government Survey 2020. • Strengthened the engagement with ITU Study Groups in line with the WSIS Process • Ministerial Round Table participants committed to bridging the digital	Remote work/learning, e-health, digital resilience

Year	Participants	Key Topics & Tracks	Main Achievements	Technological Evolution & WSIS Action Lines
			divide and connecting the unconnected. ITU and University of Geneva collaborated for the virtual Hackathon through the Open Seventeen Summer Challenge.	
2019	3 000+ participants (on-site and remote)	AI, Blockchain, 5G, Innovation	Chair: H.E. Mr Mustafa Jabbar, Minister, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, Bangladesh. 10th Anniversary WSIS Forum; ITU, UNESCO and University of Geneva organized the Hackathon, Hacking Solutions for Lifelong Learning and Livelihoods.	Emerging tech integration; innovation ecosystems
2018	2 500+ physical 1 000+ remote 500 + high-level representatives 85+ ministers and deputies	Inclusion, Accessibility, Gender, Youth	Chair: H.E Eng. Majed Sultan Al Mesmar, Deputy Director General, Telecommunication Sector, Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, United Arab Emirates Launch of the WSIS Forum 2018 Agenda mobile application developed by the University of West Indies and ITU. Ministerial Round Table participants emphasized the importance of the	Digital equity, accessible ICT, youth empowerment

Year	Participants	Key Topics & Tracks	Main Achievements	Technological Evolution & WSIS Action Lines
			WSIS Action Lines framework as a key UN framework for work on the information and knowledge societies, and reiterated that many national digital agendas were built upon it ITU and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization organized the Hack Against Hunger	
2017	2 500+ physical 1 000+ remote 500 + high-level representatives 85+ ministers and deputies	Digital Divide & Connectivity; Cybersecurity & Data Protection; Digital Economy & Innovation; E-Government & Digital Governance; Capacity Building & Digital Literacy	Chair: H.E. Mr Jean Philbert Nsengimana Minister of Youth and ICT Rwanda ITU, WHO and IEEE organized first Hackathon held at WSIS Forum on the issue of e health. Hack for Health ILO and ITU launched a campaign to train 5 million young people globally by 2030. The 'Digital Skills for Decent Jobs Campaign' Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development launched a Task Group on ICT for SDGs, Launch of the Global E-waste Statistics Partnership	Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning; Quantum Computing; Internet of Things (IoT); E-commerce;
2016	1 800+ 500 + high-level representatives 85+ ministers and deputies	Digital Economy, Innovation, Hackathon	Chair: Ambassador Daniel A. Sepulveda, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, United States of America	5G Technology, Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, Big Data & Data Analytics,

Year	Participants	Key Topics & Tracks	Main Achievements	Technological Evolution & WSIS Action Lines
			TEDx Geneva Event; First Hackathon Launched eHealth Data Policy (ITU and IEEE)	Cybersecurity & Data Privacy, Cloud Computing, Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR).
2015	1 800+ participants 60+ ministers and deputies	Linking WSIS Action Lines to specific SDGs to demonstrate measurable progress; cybersecurity, and data protection, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), and Big Data, and their impact on development; Capacity Building, Multistakeholder Collaboration	WSIS Action line and SDG matrix was launched	Impact of technologies like AI, IoT, cloud computing, and big data; Broadband Expansion; E-Government and E-Services; digital skills; universal access to information and knowledge through ICT tools and platforms.
2014	2 000+ participants 100+ high-levels, including ministers and deputies	WSIS+10 High-Level Event, Action Lines Review	Chair: WSIS+10 Outcome Documents endorsed	Mobile/cloud integration; post-2015 dev agenda
2013	1 800+ participants 60 Ministers and Deputies, Ambassadors, CEOs and Civil Society leaders	WSIS+10 Process, ICT and SDGs, Cybersecurity and Trust, Innovation, connecting underserved populations	WSIS+10 Review launched; WSIS+10 Statement on Implementation, Strengthened Partnerships, Focus on Capacity Building, WSIS+10 Visioning Challenge:	SDG foresight, data for development, mobile broadband, cloud computing, and big data on global development.
2012	1 300 onsite; 2 000+ remote 35 Ministers and Deputies, Ambassadors, CEOs	Women empowerment in Digital; Rio+20 linkage; Stocktaking updated, smart cities	Forum introduced the WSIS Project Prizes , recognizing 18 outstanding initiatives that advanced the WSIS	E-gov focus, gender technology, gap addressed

Year	Participants	Key Topics & Tracks	Main Achievements	Technological Evolution & WSIS Action Lines
	and Civil Society leaders		Action Lines; Ministerial Round Table (MRT)	
2011	1 150 onsite; 1 000 remote 20+ ministers and Deputies, Ambassadors, CEOs and Civil Society leaders 80+ members of parliament	Ubiquitous Connectivity, Cloud Computing, Convergence of Services, Green ICT, Cybersecurity and Privacy	Youth Working Group; WTISD awards; Parliamentary Forum	Essential infrastructure, Cybersecurity Frameworks, open, effective, and forward-looking policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks, partnership to promote ICT for development.
2010	1 500+	Cybersecurity, Broadband infrastructure, E-Waste, ICT for Disaster management	Youth Forum; First WSIS monitoring report	Early cyber policy; broadband inclusion
2009	1 200	Cluster of WSIS Related events launched as the WSIS Forum	First WSIS Forum; 35+ sessions, 6 high-level panels	WSIS Targets 2015; ICT access and policy foundations, Highlighting the importance of WSIS as a convening platform for all stakeholders engaged in advancing digital development.

WSIS Stocktaking Database

The [WSIS Stocktaking Database](#) is an essential component of the WSIS framework, aimed at documenting and sharing information on tech-related initiatives and projects worldwide. Maintained by ITU, the Database has grown into an international repository with over 19 000 entries, providing valuable insights into digital development trends and best practices.

Key aspects of the WSIS stocktaking process include:

- **Comprehensive coverage** – with a diverse array of projects, from large-scale national initiatives to community-based efforts, ensuring a broad representation of tech activities globally.
- **Categorization by WSIS Action Lines, global goals, target groups, stakeholder types, regional representation** – highlighting project alignment with specific goals and priorities, covering different regions, target groups and stakeholder types.
- **Accessibility and emerging technology** – with publicly accessible data encouraging the replication of successful initiatives and helping to promote global knowledge sharing.
- **Reporting** – annual global and regional reports are being prepared and published, including special reports on AI, Covid-19, e-Health, e-Agriculture, and other initiatives.
- **Visualization** – the WSIS Photo Contest collects the photos of making impact on the ground and showcasing them through WSIS related events and virtual platforms, with many organizations benefiting from this visualization.

WSIS Stocktaking Reports

Global Reports

2025	• WSIS Stocktaking 2025 Global Report • WSIS Stocktaking: Success Stories 2025 • WSIS Stocktaking+20 Report (zero draft)
2024	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2024 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2024 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Special Report — The Republic of Korea's ICT Journey
2023	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2023 (Draft) • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2023 (Draft)
2022	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2022 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2022
2021	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2021 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2021
2020	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2020 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2020
2019	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2019 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2019
2018	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2018 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2018
2017	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2017 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2017
2016	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2016 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2016
2015	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2015 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2015
2014	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2014 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2014
2013	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2013

	• WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2013
2012	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2012 • WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2012
2010	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2010
2008	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2008
2005	• WSIS Stocktaking Report 2005

Regional reports:

2021-2022

- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in Africa 2021-2022](#)
- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in the Americas 2021-2022](#)
- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in Arab States 2021-2022](#)
- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in Asia and Pacific 2021-2022](#)
- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in Commonwealth of Independent States 2021-2022](#)
- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in Europe 2021-2022](#)

2014-2016

- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in Africa 2014-2016](#)
- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in the Americas 2014-2016](#)
- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in Arab States 2014-2016](#)
- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in Asia and Pacific 2014-2016](#)
- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in Commonwealth of Independent States 2014-2016](#)
- [WSIS Regional Stocktaking Report in Europe 2014-2016](#)

WSIS Prizes

The [WSIS Prizes](#) contest, launched in 2012, is an integral part of the WSIS stocktaking process, recognizing excellence in implementing exemplary tech projects and initiatives. The annual prizes, with over 9 000 projects and initiatives submitted for consideration to date, engaged hundreds of thousands of stakeholders through online voting and helped advance projects reaching millions of people.

By recognizing and celebrating best practices, the contest encourages stakeholders to learn from successful projects and replicate their models. The chance to showcase transformative tech solutions makes the WSIS Prizes a vital component to further tech for sustainable development.

WSIS Prizes contests year by year:

- [WSIS Prizes 2025](#): The submission phase ran from 3 October to 14 March 2025, collecting 973 projects implementing WSIS Action Lines. The contest continues to attract a diverse array of participants, including governments, private sector entities, civil society, and academia.
- [WSIS Prizes 2024](#): Surpassing 1 220 submissions, the 2024 edition reflected sustained global interest in leveraging ICTs for development. The WSIS Stocktaking database, introduced in 2004, surpassed 18 000 entries, acting as a key reference for data-driven policies and replicable digital innovation.

- [WSIS Prizes 2023](#): Receiving 940 submissions across 18 categories, the 2023 edition showcased a wide array of ICT projects. The contest highlighted the importance of digital solutions in addressing global challenges and advancing sustainable development.
- [WSIS Prizes 2022](#): With 1009 received submissions, the contest emphasized the role of emerging technologies, including AI, in advancing the digital economy.
- [WSIS Prizes 2021](#): Achieving a record with 1,264 submissions, the 2021 contest demonstrated significant global participation. The WSIS Stocktaking database, introduced in 2004, surpassed 15 000 entries, serving as a valuable resource for evidence-based policy and replicable ICT solutions.
- [WSIS Prizes 2020](#): With 826 submissions, the 2020 contest reflected sustained interest in the programme. This growth underscored the expanding reach and impact of the WSIS Prizes in promoting ICTs for development.
- [WSIS Prizes 2019](#): Garnering 1 021 submissions, the 2019 edition marked a 55% increase since 2018. The awards continued to recognize outstanding ICT projects contributing to progress towards the SDGs.
- [WSIS Prizes 2018](#): Collecting 685 submissions with 492 projects nominated, the 2018 edition indicated growing recognition of the awards. The contest maintained its commitment to inclusivity, encouraging participation from diverse regions and stakeholder groups. Regionally, submissions came from Africa (14.1%), the Americas (12.9%), the Arab region (22.4%), Asia and the Pacific (25.3%), the CIS (11.8%), Europe (12.1%), and international projects (1.4%).
- [WSIS Prizes 2017](#): With 332 projects submitted, the highest number since the initiative's inception, with over 1.1 million votes cast. The 345 nominated projects represented a wide range of stakeholders, including governments (41.7%), businesses (22.4%), civil society (16.1%), international organizations (6.3%), and others (13.5%).
- [WSIS Prizes 2016](#): With the newly proposed process, including community engagement through the online voting, 309 projects were nominated and over 245 000 stakeholders participated in the online voting process, reflecting the growing importance of ICTs in national development strategies.
- [WSIS Prizes 2015](#): With 297 submissions received, the contest doubled in size compared to the previous year, marking a significant step forward in global recognition and importance.
- [WSIS Prizes 2014](#): With 135 received submissions, the contest continued to grow and maintained its role in promoting ICT solutions for development. The contest continued to encourage participation from various regions and stakeholder groups, with the significant increase of submissions coming from non-government entities.
- [WSIS Prizes 2013](#): With 250 submissions received, the contest continued to highlight innovative ICT initiatives and help promote the need to share good ICT practices and promote the best practices worldwide. The award recognized projects that demonstrated excellence in leveraging ICTs for sustainable development.
- [WSIS Prizes 2012](#): With 159 received submissions, eighteen winners were announced, recognizing excellence in ICT projects aligned with WSIS goals. The inaugural edition set the foundation for the annual recognition of impactful ICT initiatives worldwide.

WSIS Special Prizes recognize outstanding digital solutions aligned with emerging global priorities. The WSIS Healthy Ageing Innovation Prize, launched in 2021 in support of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, highlights impactful ICT solutions that enhance the lives and well-being of older persons, promoting inclusion and accessibility in the digital age. The WSIS Digital Service Design Prize, introduced in 2023 in collaboration with the GovStack alliance, celebrates innovative, user-centred digital public services that demonstrate excellence in design, delivery, and scalability—contributing to more inclusive and effective digital governance worldwide.

Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development

In 2004, ITU and partners launched an international, multistakeholder initiative [Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development](#) to improve the availability and quality of tech data and indicators, particularly in developing countries, in response to requests through WSIS to monitor progress in the emerging global information society.

Key aims of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development are:

- **Enhancing data quality and comparability** – establishing internationally agreed methodologies and standards for tech statistics, ensuring compatibility of data from different countries.
- **Capacity building** – organizing workshops and training programmes to help countries improve their data collection and dissemination on digital technologies.
- **Promoting data use** – promoting tech data to enable policymaking and development planning based on accurate and up-to-date information.

The initial 11-member partnership has grown to encompass 14 regional and international organizations. It is coordinated by a steering committee (currently ITU, UNCTAD, and UN DESA), elected every three years.

ITU, for its part, collects key statistics on connectivity, infrastructure, and individual and household digital access globally. It also provides technical assistance to enhance the capacity of national statistical offices and offers online training on measuring digital development.

The partnership presented its latest report at the 55th Session of the UN Statistical Commission at the end of February 2024, with an overview of work since 2022 and updates on how tech indicators align with global development goals and targets.

United Nations Group on the Information Society

UNGIS plays a critical role in coordinating digital initiatives across UN agencies, ensuring a unified approach to digital development. Established in 2006, UNGIS fosters collaboration and partnerships among UN Chief Executives Board (CEB) members to achieve WSIS objectives. ITU, as the permanent secretariat of UNGIS, has been instrumental in organizing joint thematic activities, meetings, open consultations, and events. UNGIS's impact on the WSIS process underscores the importance of a coordinated effort to address global ICT challenges and promote sustainable development.

Regional implementation

At the regional level, ITU collaborates closely with UN Regional Commissions—including ECA (Africa), ESCWA (Arab States), ESCAP (Asia-Pacific), ECLAC (Latin America and the Caribbean), and UNECE (Europe)—to support the regional implementation of the WSIS outcomes and Action Lines. This collaboration is vital to ensure that the WSIS process is grounded in regional priorities, contexts, and challenges. Each year the regional commissions report on their actions at the annual WSIS-Regional Commissions meeting held at the WSIS Forum.

In follow up to the UNGA Resolution A/70/125 that invites the regional commissions to continue their work in implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society Action Lines and their contribution to the reviews thereof, including through regional reviews, the regional commissions in collaboration with ITU, UNESCO and UNDP, organizes regional WSIS implementation workshops. The objectives of these workshops are:

- Building regional capacity on the WSIS Implementation process and its alignment with 2030 Agenda
- Building awareness on the enabling role of ICTs in sustainable development towards programming of future UNDAFs
- Contributing as regional formal submission to the WSIS Forum Open Consultation Process bringing the regional emerging trends, challenges and opportunities to the global dialogue on WSIS implementation
- Regional reporting on projects to the WSIS Stocktaking
- Identification of possible projects for submission to the WSIS Prize competition
- Regional inputs to the WSIS Action Line facilitation process

With ITU's six regional offices around the world providing technical assistance, capacity-building support, and on advancing tech for the good of all. Key aspects of this cooperation include:

- **Regional WSIS reviews and forums:** ITU supports and co-organizes regional WSIS review meetings and digital development forums convened by the UN Regional Commissions. These events assess progress, identify gaps, and promote regional coordination on digital policy aligned with the WSIS Action Lines.
- **Data collection and stocktaking:** ITU works with Regional Commissions to feed regional data and success stories into the WSIS Stocktaking Platform and WSIS Prizes, helping surface local innovations and best practices that contribute to global knowledge sharing.
- **Input to the global WSIS Forum:** Regional outcomes and inputs gathered through regional WSIS-related activities are often integrated into the annual WSIS Forum in Geneva, ensuring regional voices influence global digital development dialogue.
- **Capacity building and policy support:** ITU supports capacity building and technical cooperation activities at the regional level in alignment with WSIS Action Lines—especially in areas like broadband development, cybersecurity, e-government, and digital inclusion.

Interconnections and synergies

Collaborative efforts across other multistakeholder platforms enhance the impact of WSIS initiatives. Ongoing WSIS engagement heightens the interconnections and synergies among all these initiatives, reflecting the collaborative spirit that continues driving global digital development. For example:

- The **Internet Governance Forum** is a key platform bringing together stakeholders from various sectors for public policy discussions on Internet governance. It is closely aligned with WSIS in promoting an inclusive and sustainable digital future through policy development, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building.
- The **AI for Good** initiative, organized by ITU with partners across the UN, aligns AI innovation with sustainable development. AI for Good highlights responsible AI solutions, helps build skills and set standards, and advances key discussions on global AI governance.
- The **ITU-UNESCO Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development**, which has tracked expansion and helped identify gaps in broadband access since 2010.
- The **United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC)** initiative helps innovative cities worldwide achieve sustainable digital transformation for their citizens.
- Initiatives like **Giga**, **Partner2Connect**, and **SDG Digital** also bring stakeholders together to connect everyone, everywhere.

ITU's contribution to the Internet-related policy and governance

The [Council Working Group on International Internet-related Public Policy Issues \(CWG-Internet\)](#) comprising ITU Member States with open consultation among all stakeholders, was established in 2010, in accordance with Resolutions 102 and 140 of the 2010 Plenipotentiary Conference. Previously established as an integral part of CWG-WSIS, this dedicated group now meets regularly to identify study and develop matters related to international Internet-related public policy issues. The group has held over 15 [open multistakeholder consultations](#) on a variety of international Internet-related public policy issues such as expanding Internet connectivity, OTTs and new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs. The annual reports by the Chair of the Group to Council are available [here](#).

The ITU has contributed to [Internet policy and governance](#), including IGF, by promoting international cooperation, setting standards, and fostering dialogue on issues such as accessibility, cybersecurity, and infrastructure, in line with the WSIS mandate to bridge the digital divide and advance global digital inclusion.

c. Beyond 2025

In the years ahead, the WSIS mechanism can help ensure that everyone has access to affordable and reliable Internet services; promote digital literacy and skills, especially in underserved and marginalized communities; help countries enhance cybersecurity measures to build trust in digital technologies; and boost digital technologies to achieve environmental sustainability and other global goals.

An active and proven mechanism

The WSIS platform remains a potent tool for shaping the global digital landscape, particularly in parallel with the new expression of familiar WSIS priorities in the recently adopted Global Digital Compact. The flexible and adaptive WSIS process can keep identifying opportunities and addressing new digital challenges. Through ongoing collaboration and innovation, WSIS will ensure that tech contributes effectively to sustainable development and that no one is left behind in the digital age.

WSIS represents an **existing, effective, and evolving** framework to leverage technology for sustainable development. Since its inception, WSIS has provided a comprehensive platform for addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age. Inclusive collaboration among all stakeholders ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more effective and sustainable technology initiatives.

The WSIS framework is not static; it evolves to meet emerging challenges and harness new opportunities. Over the years, WSIS has adapted to AI, IoT, and 5G networks. With continuously updated strategies and action plans, the WSIS process remains relevant and effective in promoting digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and sustainable development for all.

The **Global Digital Compact**, adopted along with the Pact for the Future at the UN Summit of the Future in 2024, aligns closely with WSIS principles. Both frameworks emphasize the importance of universal connectivity, digital inclusion, and multistakeholder collaboration as shown in the [UNGIS - WSIS Process and 2030 Agenda – GDC Matrix](#). This matrix presents a mapping of UN-led initiatives mapped against the GDC objectives, WSIS Action Lines and SDGs.

As WSIS moves beyond 2025, it will continue to support the implementation of the Global Digital Compact, ensuring that digital transformation efforts are coordinated and aligned with global priorities.

The **WSIS+20 Review** in late 2025 allows for a comprehensive assessment of outcomes thus far. The review will involve contributions from all stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, private sector entities, and civil society, aimed at identifying successes, challenges, and areas for improvement to ensure that WSIS continues to drive meaningful digital transformation.

Key focus areas for the WSIS+20 Review include:

- **Universal and meaningful connectivity:** Assessing progress in expanding connectivity infrastructure for all and bridging the global digital divide.
- **Capacity building and digital skills:** Evaluating initiatives aimed at promoting capacity building and digital skills, ensuring that everyone has access to digital technologies.
- **Cybersecurity:** Reviewing efforts to enhance cybersecurity and build trust in digital technologies.
- **Emerging technologies:** Addressing opportunities and challenges of emerging technologies for digital development.
- **Digital cooperation:** Strengthening partnerships and coordinating global efforts.
- **Sustainable use of technology:** Analysing the impact of tech on global goals.

The review is expected to highlight best practices and successful projects, providing valuable insights for future initiatives. By learning from past experiences, WSIS can refine its strategies and continue to drive digital development effectively.

Future direction and recommendations

Collaboration, innovation, and strategic planning remain crucial to fulfil the WSIS vision of a connected and inclusive digital future.

Based on instructions by ITU's membership and consultations through multistakeholder platforms like the WSIS Forum and IGF, key priorities for the years ahead may include:

1. Strengthening multistakeholder engagement:

- Emphasizing the importance of inclusive and participatory approaches to ensure diverse perspectives are considered in digital policy-making.
- Encouraging collaboration among governments, private sector entities, technical community, academia, civil society organizations, and international organizations to address global tech challenges.

2. Enhancing connectivity and digital inclusion:

- Prioritizing efforts to bridge the digital divide by expanding broadband access and promoting digital literacy.
- Supporting initiatives that provide affordable and meaningful digital opportunities for underserved and marginalized communities.

3. Promoting innovation and emerging technologies:

- Fostering innovation in areas such as AI, blockchain, and IoT to drive sustainable development.
- Developing frameworks and standards to ensure the responsible and ethical use of emerging technologies.

4. Strengthening cybersecurity and data protection:

- Enhancing global cooperation to create robust cybersecurity frameworks and protect digital infrastructure and data.
- Promoting best practices and capacity-building initiatives to improve cybersecurity resilience.

5. Supporting sustainable global development:

- Aligning WSIS initiatives with global goals to ensure that digital technologies contribute effectively to sustainable development.
- Encouraging the integration of digital technologies into national development strategies and policies.

As digital transformation accelerates, the WSIS process remains a vital, future-proof mechanism for advancing inclusive digital development. WSIS offers a practical, multistakeholder framework that bridges policy and implementation across all regions and sectors. ITU aims to keep playing a central role in turning digital ambition into global impact—through technical expertise, trusted partnerships, and a strong convening mandate.

Looking ahead, WSIS—with the leadership of ITU and partners—is poised to continue guiding global efforts to close the digital divide, promote meaningful connectivity, and ensure that emerging technologies serve people, prosperity, and the planet.

Section III: WSIS+20 Report: Building a digital future for all - detailed report

Part 1: How it all started

As digital technologies began transforming societies and economies around the world, it became clear that global cooperation was needed to address both the opportunities and challenges of this evolving landscape. Recognizing the growing digital divide and the need for inclusive, coordinated responses, the international community came together under the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Equitable access for everyone to the Internet, along with the growing array of associated applications, became paramount to ensure the burgeoning “Information Society” would leave no one behind. Countries worldwide, therefore, welcomed the concept of WSIS proposed by Tunisia at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference in 1998, with ITU Member States adopting a resolution to start organizing the new summit series.⁴

The United Nations General Assembly endorsed the WSIS mechanism in 2001,⁵ paving the way for the historic two-phase summit, held in Geneva in 2003⁶ and Tunis in 2005.⁷ Those initial conferences focused primarily on infrastructure, capacity building, and cybersecurity.

ITU served the secretariat for both phases, helping shape the WSIS vision that has guided multistakeholder consultations on global digital technology issues ever since.

WSIS milestones

Geneva Phase (2003): The Geneva phase focused on developing a shared vision for the information society and establishing a framework for action. Key outcomes included the Geneva Declaration of Principles, which outlined the fundamental principles for building an inclusive information society, and the Geneva Plan of Action.

Tunis Phase (2005): Building on the outcomes of the Geneva phase, the Tunis phase aimed to further develop and implement the action plan, with a focus on bridging the digital divide and promoting ICTs for development. The Tunis Commitment reaffirmed the principles and goals established in Geneva, while the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society provided a comprehensive framework for the implementation of WSIS outcomes, including mechanisms for follow-up and review. It also established the IGF as a multistakeholder platform for dialogue on Internet governance issues.

WSIS+10 Review (2015): Marking a decade since the original summit phases, this comprehensive 10-year progress review highlighted achievements such as increased global connectivity and enhanced international cooperation. But it also identifying ongoing challenges like the persistent digital divide. Crucially, the WSIS+10 Review produced the new Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015, which stressed the need to align WSIS outcomes with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted the same year, and ensure ICTs would help advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

WSIS+20 Review (2025): The forthcoming WSIS+20 Review will assess progress since the Geneva Plan of Action and identify new challenges and opportunities in the evolving information and societies. ITU, together with other UN agencies, is coordinating the preparatory process, collaborating with Member States and key stakeholders to ensure findings and recommendations from the review process feed

⁴ ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution 73 (Minneapolis, 1998).

⁵ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 56/183, 2001.

⁶ Held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 10 to 12 December 2003.

⁷ Held in Tunis, Tunisia, from 16 to 18 November 2005.

into global digital governance discussions and remain well-aligned with key development frameworks and global goals.

A multistakeholder platform

WSIS has prioritized multistakeholder collaboration from the beginning, recognizing that inclusive dialogue leads to more effective and sustainable digital development. Key stakeholders include governments, the private sector, civil society, international and UN organizations, academia, and technical bodies. ITU has played a central role in convening these diverse actors. With 194 Member States and over 1 000 entities spanning industry, academia, and international organizations, ITU offers unique convening power within the UN system. Its global network of over 20 000 professionals enables timely, expert-driven discussions shaping the digital landscape.

The WSIS process is a collaborative effort that relies on the active participation of multiple stakeholders. Governments shape digital policies, the private sector drives innovation and investment, civil society advocates for inclusion, international organizations facilitate cooperation, academia advances knowledge, and technical organizations enable infrastructure deployment. Together, these stakeholders contribute to the shared goal of leveraging ICTs for sustainable development and ensuring that the benefits of digital technologies are accessible to all individuals and communities.

WSIS remains a unique multistakeholder platform that brings together diverse actors to collaborate on leveraging ICTs for sustainable development. Each stakeholder group plays a crucial role in the WSIS process, contributing their expertise, resources, and perspectives to drive digital transformation and bridge the digital divide. This section highlights the contributions of various stakeholders to the WSIS process.

Government: Shaping digital policies for inclusive development

Governments are pivotal in shaping digital policies that promote inclusive development. Through the WSIS process, governments collaborate to create policies that bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to technology. National digital strategies, often developed with guidance from ITU, are instrumental in driving these efforts.

For example, Rwanda’s “Smart Rwanda Master Plan” aims to transform the country into a knowledge-based economy by leveraging ICTs. Governments also play a key role in implementing regulatory frameworks that foster innovation, protect consumers, and promote fair competition in the ICT sector.

Private sector: Driving innovation and investment

The private sector is a driving force behind innovation and investment in the digital economy. Companies partner with ITU and other stakeholders to develop new technologies, expand digital infrastructure, and create digital solutions that address global challenges. Initiatives like the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition exemplify these collaborative efforts, mobilizing commitments from various stakeholders to enhance connectivity and digital inclusion, particularly in underserved regions. The private sector’s investment in research and development, as well as its ability to scale technological solutions, is critical for advancing the goals of WSIS.

Another example of a public and private partnership is the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development – a high-level platform that examines the most pertinent issues relating to global broadband connectivity and develops consensus-driven policy recommendations for achieving its [7 Advocacy Targets](#), calling for innovative investment models to bring together private and public stakeholders to deliver meaningful access and content to those most in need.

More recently, ITU has also launched the International Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience in partnership with the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC), comprising 40 leaders and experts from the public and private sectors, with the aim of promoting dialogue and collaboration on potential ways and means to improve the resilience of this vital infrastructure that powers global communications and the digital economy.

Civil Society: Advocating for digital inclusion and bridging the digital divide

Civil society organizations play a vital role in advocating for digital inclusion and bridging the digital gap. Their involvement in the WSIS process ensures that the voices of marginalized and underserved communities are heard and addressed. Programmes such as Girls in ICT Day highlight the importance of gender equality in the digital space, encouraging girls and young women to pursue careers in ICT. Civil society organizations also work on the ground to implement digital literacy programmes, provide access to ICTs, and promote digital rights and freedoms.

International organizations: Facilitating global and regional digital cooperation

International organizations, including UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), and UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), facilitate global and regional digital cooperation. Their collaborative efforts with ITU have been instrumental in advancing the WSIS agenda.

For instance, the Broadband Commission led by ITU and UNESCO provides valuable insights into global broadband deployment and its impact on sustainable development. The Broadband Commission leverages multistakeholder engagement and collective expertise to advocate for meaningful, safe, secure, and sustainable broadband communications services as a foundational element to advance the 2030 Agenda.

Another example is the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination High-Level Committee on Programmes (CEB-HLCP) Inter-Agency Working Group on AI (IAWG-AI), co-chaired by ITU and UNESCO, that leads a comprehensive coordination effort across almost 50 UN entities and has developed key initiatives like the UN System-wide Ethical Principles for AI.

International organizations also support the development of international standards, promote best practices, and provide technical assistance to countries in implementing digital initiatives. ITU, through ITU-R, specializes in facilitating international collaboration to ensure the rational, equitable, efficient and economical use of the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits.

Academia: Advancing knowledge and research on digital transformation

Academic institutions contribute to the WSIS process by advancing research and knowledge on digital transformation. Their insights help shape policies and strategies that drive sustainable digital development. Research initiatives supported by ITU provide valuable data and analysis on emerging digital trends. Academia also plays a crucial role in developing digital skills and fostering innovation through education and training programmes.

Technical organizations: Enabling digital infrastructure deployment

Technical organizations are essential for enabling the deployment of digital infrastructure. Their expertise ensures that the technologies developed are reliable, secure, and accessible to all. ITU's standardization work, which includes developing technical standards for ICTs, is critical in this regard.

ITU-T Study Groups bring together experts from around the world to develop standards that ensure interoperability and security in ICT systems. Technical organizations also provide technical support

and capacity-building services to countries, helping them develop and maintain robust ICT infrastructure.

ITU-R Study Groups develop the technical bases for decisions taken at [World Radiocommunication Conferences](#) and develop global standards (Recommendations), Reports and Handbooks on radiocommunication matters which enable digital infrastructure deployment. More than 5 000 specialists, from administrations, the telecommunications industry as a whole and academic organizations throughout the world, participate in the work of the Study Groups on topics such as efficient management and use of the spectrum/orbit resource, radio systems characteristics and performance, spectrum monitoring and emergency radiocommunications for public protection and disaster relief.

Leveraging technology for development goals

ITU leverages digital solutions to advance education, healthcare, economic growth, and sustainability. Key initiatives include the AI for Good Global Summit, AI for Disaster Response, and AI for Health. The Giga initiative aims to connect all schools to the Internet by 2030. The WSIS-SDG Matrix maps ICT contributions to global development, highlighting significant impacts on industry, innovation, infrastructure, and partnerships for the goals.

Technology accelerating development progress

Technology is a powerful enabler for social and economic development. Digital technologies can accelerate progress on 70 per cent of SDG targets, according to research by ITU and UNDP [\[1\]](#).

ITU has been at the forefront of leveraging digital solutions to accelerate progress. By harnessing the potential of technologies, ITU initiatives have driven significant advancements in education, healthcare, economic growth, and environmental sustainability.

One notable ITU-led initiative is [AI for Good](#), which brings together experts from various fields to develop artificial intelligence (AI) solutions that address global challenges. ITU is also closely involved in initiatives to utilize AI to predict and manage natural disasters, save lives and reduce economic losses [\[2\]](#) and to improve healthcare delivery and outcomes, particularly in underserved regions. It aims at identifying trustworthy AI applications, building skills and standards, and advancing AI governance for sustainable development.

[Giga](#), a joint initiative between ITU and UNICEF, aims to connect every school to the Internet by 2030. Giga projects aim to give students access to digital learning resources, enhancing education and promoting digital inclusion. By helping to expand broadband infrastructure and connect remote areas, Giga supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure).

The ITU-led Partner2Connect Digital Coalition has mobilized commitments from the public and private sectors to enhance connectivity and digital inclusion, particularly in underserved regions.

The Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, led by ITU and UNESCO since its inception in 2010, has pioneered and produced knowledge products with a proven model for collaborative and consensus-driven outcomes achieved by multistakeholder engagement, incorporating SDG 17 (Partnerships) in practice. For the last 15 years, the Broadband Commission has advocated for universal broadband access as a key driver of sustainable development, with the annual flagship “State of Broadband” report offering valuable insights into global broadband deployment and its impact on the SDGs.

SDG Digital events organized by ITU and UNDP during the United Nations General Assembly in New York in 2023 and 2024 further exemplified how digital technologies can lay the groundwork for a more sustainable, inclusive, and responsible future. The events, bringing together leaders from government, civil society, the private sector, youth, and academia, encouraged exploration of the trends, risks, and opportunities presented by the rapid expansion of digital and emerging technologies around the globe. The second edition of SDG Digital formed part of the Action Days preceding the UN Summit of the Future.

Implementing the WSIS-SDG Matrix

The UNGA overall review on the implementation of WSIS resulted in a UNGA Resolution [A/70/125](#) that was adopted on 16 December 2015. The resolution provides guidance on the implementation of the WSIS Outcomes till 2025. It calls for close alignment between the WSIS process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (para.5) and requests all stakeholders to integrate ICTs into their approaches to implementing the Goals, and request UN entities facilitating WSIS Action Lines to review their reporting and work plans to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda, (para.12).

To that end, at the WSIS Forum 2015, the [WSIS-SDG Matrix](#), developed by the UN Action line Facilitators, clearly shows the linkage between each Action line and the 17 SDGs and provides rationale for each. This matrix provides a clear framework for assessing the impact of ICTs on sustainable development and identifying areas for further action. By aligning WSIS initiatives with the SDGs, the matrix helps stakeholders understand how digital technologies can drive progress towards global development goals.

The latest evaluation of the WSIS-SDG Matrix highlights significant contributions to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 17 (Partnerships). For instance, initiatives under Action Line C2 (Information and Communication Infrastructure) have expanded broadband access, particularly in underserved regions, supporting economic growth and innovation. Similarly, Action Line C5 (Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs) has enhanced cybersecurity measures, fostering a secure digital environment that promotes trust and cooperation.

Highlighting digital solutions for SDG

The WSIS Stocktaking platform has documented over 19 000 ICT-related projects since its inception. One notable project is the “Digital Transformation Centres” initiative, which aims to enhance digital skills in developing countries. Supported by ITU, this initiative has established training centres in various regions, providing essential digital literacy and skills training to underserved communities.

The WSIS Prizes recognize outstanding contributions to the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs. In 2024, the “E-Health for All” project won the WSIS Prize for its innovative approach to delivering healthcare services through digital platforms. This project has improved access to healthcare in remote areas by leveraging telemedicine and mobile health applications.

Other ITU projects and initiatives also put tech solutions for sustainable development at the forefront. Since 2023, [SDG Digital GameChangers](#) awards have highlighted innovative digital solutions that are helping drive sustainable development. BDT4Impact platform provide also showcases successful projects, shares best practices, and highlight the impact of digital technologies on sustainable development.

By leveraging technology and fostering collaboration, ITU and its partners are driving progress towards global goals. These initiatives demonstrate the critical role of digital solutions in achieving the SDGs and building a more inclusive, sustainable future for all.

- [1] [Leveraging tech to achieve the global goals - ITU](#)
 - [2] [Report- Fast forward progress: leveraging tech to achieve the ... - ITU](#)
 - [3] [Connect 2030 – An agenda to connect all to a better world - ITU](#)
 - [4] [WSIS+20 report draft + reporting](#)
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Geneva Plan of Action: Where we are now

The Geneva Plan of Action, established during the first phase of WSIS in 2003, set out to shape an inclusive Information Society by leveraging ICTs to bridge the digital divide and promote sustainable development. Over two decades, significant progress has been achieved in terms of connectivity, digital infrastructure, capacity building, and cybersecurity.

Increased digital inclusion, enhanced international cooperation, and the growing prevalence of e-services reflect the collective efforts of governments, international organizations, the private sector, and civil society, facilitated by ongoing coordination through the WSIS mechanism.

Key objectives outlined in the Geneva Plan of Action in 2003 include enhancing connectivity, infrastructure, digital skills and capacity, cybersecurity, and digital inclusion and accessibility, as well as e-services and international digital cooperation.

Enhanced connectivity

Global connectivity has grown dramatically since the first phase of WSIS and the adoption of the Geneva Action Plan. Internet usage has surged from 16% in 2005 to 68% by the end of 2024. This growth has been driven by the expansion of broadband infrastructure, the proliferation of mobile technologies, and initiatives to make Internet access more affordable and accessible. The number of mobile-cellular subscriptions worldwide has surpassed 9 billion, indicating near-ubiquitous mobile connectivity. ITU continues to work actively on development of technical standards for IP networks, next-generation networks and future Internet.

Infrastructure development

Significant advancements include the expansion of broadband networks, the establishment of Internet Exchange Points (IXPs), and the enhancement of satellite connectivity. These efforts have improved Internet connectivity, reduced costs, and extended access to remote and underserved areas.

Capacity building and digital skills development

Building the capacity of individuals and institutions to effectively use ICTs has been a key focus. The ITU Academy has provided training to over 45 000 learners from all Member States, covering topics such as future fixed and mobile broadband Internet, key aspects and governance of IoT, big data and AI, and last-mile Internet connectivity; spectrum management, cybersecurity, and infrastructure.

Initiatives like the EQUALS Global Partnership and Her Cyber Tracks have empowered thousands of women and girls through digital skills training, promoting gender equality in the ICT sector. Moreover, the Digital Transformation Centres (DTC) Initiative has provided training to underserved and remote communities. In the first half of 2024, over 77 000 (55% female) course participants were reached through this initiative.

ITU is working with several countries through [Cyber for Good](#) providing free access to tools, training, and services. The AI Skills Coalition spearheaded under ITU's AI for Good Impact Initiative aims to serve as an UN-leading global, open, trusted and inclusive platform for AI education and capacity building.

Projects have been implemented successfully on Internet broadband wireless connectivity to provide free or low-cost digital access for schools and hospitals, and for underserved populations in rural and remote areas in selected countries. Trainings/courses are being organized on all forms of IoT connectivity, including information security and privacy, and technical assistance is being provided on IPv6.

Promotion of cybersecurity

Ensuring a safe and secure digital environment is a critical aspect of expanding meaningful connectivity. ITU's Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) offers a comprehensive framework for promoting cybersecurity and building confidence in digital technologies. As the lead facilitator for Action Line C5, ITU has developed international cybersecurity standards, helps countries national and regional Computer Incident Response Teams (CIRTs) and establish national cybersecurity strategies, organized cyberdrills, launched the [ITU Global Cybersecurity Index](#), and promotes awareness and policies to protect children online.

Digital inclusion and accessibility

In line with the Geneva Plan of Action and its call for global digital inclusion. ITU has implemented numerous projects aimed at providing access to ICTs for underserved and marginalized communities. International standards have helped make ICT products and services accessible to all individuals, regardless of ability.

E-services

Electronic applications have significantly enhanced public administration, healthcare, education, and business. E-government services have improved the efficiency and transparency of public administration, while telemedicine initiatives have provided remote healthcare services to underserved communities.

International and regional cooperation

Fostering international and regional cooperation has been a cornerstone of the Geneva Plan of Action. ITU has collaborated with a wide range of international and regional organizations to advance the WSIS outcomes and promote ICT for development.

Progress on indicative targets under the Geneva Plan of Action since 2003 (information reflected in the table is a work in progress)

Target	2003 baseline	2024 status: progress made in 20 years	Remaining challenges
1. connect villages with ICTs and establish community access points	16% of the world population has access to ICTs [1] 1.5 billion users of mobile broadband	68% of world population, 5.5 billion people are online. 9billion+ users of mobile broadband 90% of rural population has access to a 3G mobile network or higher.	2.6 billion people are offline, of whom, 1.8 billion live in rural areas, compared to 800 million in urban areas. 10% of rural population without access to a 3G mobile network or higher, in 2024 [1]

Target	2003 baseline	2024 status: progress made in 20 years	Remaining challenges
2. connect universities, colleges, secondary schools and primary schools with ICTs	Lack of global data.	40% of primary, 50% of lower secondary and 65% of upper secondary schools were connected to the Internet in 2023 [2] 280 000+ schools mapped with connected status, across 49 countries, according to Giga [3]	Lack of connectivity data for 65% of schools across 143 countries [3]
3. connect scientific and research centres with ICTs	Lack of global data.	Lack of global data.	Developing countries still lack affordable, high-speed internet for research centres.
4. connect public libraries, cultural centres, museums, post offices, and archives with ICTs	Lack of global data.	369 000+ libraries with Internet access, (International Federation of Library Associations). [4] 100 000 post offices connected (UPU) [5]	87% of libraries still offline [4]. 550 000 post offices remain unconnected. Data lacking for low-income countries.
5. connect health centres and hospitals with ICTs	Lack of global data.	An increase in the use of Electronic Health Records, mainly in developed countries. Telemedicine services have expanded, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.	Significant disparities exist between developed and developing countries, as well as between urban and rural hospitals within the same country.
6. connect all local and central government departments and establish websites and email addresses	Lack of global data.	Approximately 98% of countries offer e-government services and most have implemented some level of digital government functionality. [6] Most countries are enhancing their online platforms, with the majority providing well-developed national portals that offer organizational charts, government structure details, key officials' information, and links to ministerial and local government websites. In 2024, Between 76 and 83% of countries have national e-	Despite significant progress in digital government development, the E-Government Digital Index (EGDI) by UNDESA averages for the African region, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS remain below the global average, underscoring the need for targeted efforts to bridge existing gaps. [6]

Target	2003 baseline	2024 status: progress made in 20 years	Remaining challenges
		government strategies, policies or legislation relating to cybersecurity, data privacy, data protection, digital identity, and the right of citizens to access government information. [6]	
7. adapt all primary and secondary school curricula to meet the challenges of the Information Society	Lack of global data.	Globally, over 54% of countries have digital skill standards for school curricula. [2] Primary and secondary school curricula evolved to integrate digital literacy, coding, and critical thinking skills into curricula, driven by increased internet access, and the increase of affordability of digital devices. The Covid-19 pandemic saw a massive and rapid expansion of online learning platforms and their growth.	Teachers seek safeguards against student distraction; some parents worry about screen addiction, privacy and bullying, in addition to the risks of deepening social inequalities among marginalized communities.[2]
8. ensure that all of the world's population have access to television and radio services	Lack of global data		Traditional radio services remain critical in rural and underserved areas, while internet-based streaming radio continues to grow in urban areas.
9. encourage the development of content and to put in place technical conditions in order to facilitate the presence and use of all world languages on the Internet	Dominance of English Languages and a few other major languages on the internet.	There are 400+ languages fully accessible online, out of the 7000 languages that are in use in 2024 [8]	

Target	2003 baseline	2024 status: progress made in 20 years	Remaining challenges
10. ensure that more than half the world's inhabitants have access to ICTs within their reach	16% of the world population has access to ICTs [1]	68% of world population, 5.5 billion people are online. 96% of the global population is now covered by a mobile broadband network that enables Internet access [1]	2.6 billion people are offline. In rural areas of low-income countries, nearly 30 % the population does not have the possibility of connecting to the Internet Digital Gender Divide is narrowing, 65% of women are using the Internets, yet there are 189 million more men than women using the Internet in 2024.[1]

[1] [Measuring digital development – Facts and Figures 2024, ITU](#)

[2] [The State of Broadband 2024, Broadband Commission](#)

[3] [Giga Maps](#)

[4] [International Federation of Library Associations \(IFLA\)](#)

[5] [Connect.Post, UPU](#)

[6] [UN E-Government Survey 2024, UNDESA](#)

[7] [Measuring Linguistic Diversity on the Internet, UNESCO](#)

[8] www.UNESCO.org/

Existing, effective and evolving framework

The WSIS process has evolved continuously amid rapidly advancing tech and a changing global digital landscape. In the second decade of WSIS, alignment with the 2030 Agenda has strengthened cooperation on tech for sustainable development.

Notably, the WSIS Forum continued in an online format through the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, WSIS discussions have kept embracing the growing array digital technologies and explored new policy questions. These include delving into the challenges prompted by AI.

The alignment of WSIS initiatives with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is crucial for maximizing the impact of digital technologies in driving global development. The WSIS-SDG Matrix serves as a framework for this alignment, mapping the contributions of WSIS Action Lines to specific Sustainable Development Goals. For example, Action Line C2 (Information and Communication Infrastructure) supports SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), while Action Line C4 (Capacity Building) aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education). This matrix helps stakeholders identify areas of synergy and opportunities for collaboration, ensuring that digital initiatives contribute effectively to the achievement of the SDGs.

Evolving with technologies

The implications of advancements in cloud computing, AI, robotics, and space technologies are profound, offering new opportunities for innovation and development. ITU's work in standardization and policy development is critical to enhance WSIS discussions in this regard, ensuring that these technologies are deployed responsibly and ethically. ITU-T Study Groups are active in developing international standards for emerging technologies and promoting interoperability and security

promoting interoperability and security in AI, 5G, IoT, quantum and other fields. ITU-R's work in radiocommunication standardization continues to match the constant evolution of modern communications, including the identification of additional spectrum for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT).

Tackling cybersecurity challenges

The ICT landscape has changed drastically over the past 20 years, with ICTs now underpinning every sector of society, and the bulk of critical infrastructure. Innovative ICT technologies, such as cloud computing, software-defined networking (SDN), network function virtualization (NFV), 5G, Big Data, AI, etc., blur market and geographic boundaries, making the cybersecurity ecosystem increasingly dynamic and complex.

New technologies and commercial actors can cause exposure to new vulnerabilities and threats, particularly as the private sector's focus on performance, market share, and costs is often prioritized over investments in security in the design stage. A number of issues pose significant challenges when dealing with such technologies, such as finding a way to reduce and master the number of vulnerabilities by ensuring security by design (as products continue to be vulnerable right from the design phase itself), enhancing confidence in products and services through their lifecycles by accreditation schemes, protocols and standards, and legitimate use of user generated data while protecting user privacy.

Standardization and periodic certification/accreditation processes could help reduce the number and impact of vulnerabilities by contributing towards developing a culture of security by design, in turn building trust and confidence in such technologies. However, security standardization, i.e. developing technical and procedural measures for security, remains a moving target because this necessitates tech-advanced industry, tech-savvy regulators and capable enforcement bodies, where applicable.

Further, lack of skills and expertise in the technical, legal, organizational and human dimensions of cybersecurity can also adversely affect vital national infrastructure. Many ICT end-users currently either may not fully understand cybersecurity issues or have the necessary skills or tools to best protect their data, privacy, and assets, with the more vulnerable users, including women and children, being particularly at risk. To build skills, competences, and measures that will contribute to achieving an effective cybersecurity culture remains a crucial challenge.

ITU's Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) provides a framework for international cooperation to address the growing challenges of cybersecurity. The GCA was also reviewed in 2022 with the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference noting the Guidelines for utilization of the GCA [1]. Through technical standards, CIRTs, cyberdrills, capacity development, and extensive partnerships, ITU has been working to strengthen confidence in the use of digital technologies. For instance, the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) is a key tool in assessing the cybersecurity commitments of countries worldwide, providing a comprehensive assessment of national cybersecurity frameworks. The latest GCI report shows significant progress in global cybersecurity efforts, with many countries enhancing their legal, technical, and organizational measures.

Exploring AI cooperation and coordination

The rapid evolution of AI presents both opportunities and challenges. WSIS has become a venue for in-depth discussions on AI ethics and governance frameworks, as well as cooperation and coordination on AI development and deployment. Leveraging the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on AI (IAWG-AI) members and AI for Good UN partners, ITU coordinates inputs and prepares the annual UN Activities on AI report, an interactive directory. In the [latest version](#) released during the 2024 AI for Good Global Summit, 408 AI projects from 47 agencies are reported, covering all 17 SDGs with outputs mainly in

software tools and reports, focusing on topics like human rights, ethics, and justice; environment; agriculture; health; education; gender; and telecommunications, and involving collaborations with the UN system, Member States, academia, and the private sector.

Part 2: ITU driving WSIS achievements

The International Telecommunication Union has facilitated the WSIS process from the outset, ensuring broad, dynamic stakeholder engagement and effective implementation. Governing bodies such as the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, the ITU Council, and the Council Working Group on WSIS & SDGs provide strategic direction for ITU to support the WSIS vision of digital cooperation and sustainable development.

The organization has led UN engagement on WSIS Action Lines C2 (*information and communication infrastructure*), C4 (*capacity building*), C5 (*building confidence and security in the use of information and communication technologies*), and C6 (*enabling environment*), as well as contributing actively on several other WSIS Action Lines.

The annual WSIS Forum, hosted by ITU since 2009, offers a multistakeholder platform for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing that produces actionable policy recommendations, highlights best practices, and fosters collaborative initiatives.

ITU maintains the WSIS Stocktaking Database, documenting over 19 000 ICT-related projects that are helping to advance sustainable development, and introduced the WSIS Prizes to recognize excellence in implementing such projects.

In addition, prominent ITU-led initiatives like the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition exemplify the collaborative spirit fostered by WSIS from the earliest years of global digital cooperation. ITU also advances the WSIS aim of sustainable digital development through joint initiatives with fellow UN agencies such as UNESCO, UNDP and UNICEF. ITU-UNESCO Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development is a stellar example of a such cooperation, as a unique multistakeholder high-level platform of the most influential ICT advocates that serves as the public-private partnership fostering digital cooperation and developing actionable recommendations for achieving universal connectivity.

Together with a growing array of partners across the public and private sectors, ITU aims to leverage digital technologies for the good of everyone worldwide.

ITU-driven achievements

From the beginning, ITU has been instrumental in driving and supporting WSIS initiatives, ensuring the process remains dynamic and effective. Furthermore, the organization has facilitated key WSIS Action Lines, primarily enhancing connectivity in underserved regions, focusing on digital literacy and training, implementing cybersecurity measures, and developing policies to support digital growth.

Other key elements include the comprehensive reporting and contributions through annual reports such as the ITU's contributions to WSIS, the WSIS Action Line Roadmaps, the contributions by UNGIS, and the multistakeholder WSIS Forum outcomes.

ITU has been instrumental in coordinating with diverse stakeholders, keeping the WSIS process dynamic and effective. This broad involvement in WSIS implementation reflects ITU's status as the leading UN agency in the field of digital technologies.

Governance and resolutions

The Vision of ITU, as defined in the ITU Strategic Plans for 2020-2023 and 2024-2027, is “an information society, empowered by the interconnected world, where telecommunication/information and communication technologies enable and accelerate social, economic and environmentally sustainable growth and development for everyone”, in line with the [WSIS Outcome Documents](#). The Strategic Goals of the Union (Growth, Inclusiveness, Sustainability, Innovation and Partnership) support ITU’s role in facilitating progress towards the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ITU’s governing bodies, including the [Council Working Group on WSIS&SDGs \(CWG-WSIS&SDG\)](#), the [ITU Council](#), and the [Plenipotentiary Conference \(PP\)](#) (Resolutions [140 \(Rev. Bucharest, 2022\)](#), [172 \(Rev. Guadalajara, 2010\)](#), [Resolution 71 \(Rev. Bucharest 2022\)](#)), oversee the implementation of WSIS outcomes. These bodies ensure continuous dialogue on WSIS follow-up activities, provide strategic direction, and align ITU’s activities with the overall WSIS framework. Key UN resolutions, such as UNGA [Resolution 70/125](#) and UN ECOSOC [Resolution E/RES/2024/13](#), reinforce ITU’s leadership in WSIS implementation^{[1][2]}.

Resolutions [140 \(Rev. Bucharest, 2022\)](#), [172 \(Rev. Guadalajara, 2010\)](#), [Resolution 71 \(Rev. Bucharest 2022\)](#) The ITU Council Resolutions [1332 \(Modified 2024\)](#), [1334 \(Modified 2023\)](#) further shape and govern the implementation of WSIS outcomes, as mandated by ITU PP, UNGA, and ECOSOC resolutions, while the ITU sectors contribute to the implementation of the WSIS outcomes through their respective resolutions: WTDC Resolutions [30 \(Rev. Kigali, 2022\)](#); WTSA Resolutions [75 \(Rev. Geneva, 2022\)](#); WRC Resolutions [61-2 \(Modified 2019\)](#).

ITU Sectoral Implementation of WSIS Outcomes

Over the past 20 years, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has played a pivotal role in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), serving as a lead facilitator for several WSIS Action Lines and as a steward of global digital development. Through its three sectors—ITU-D (Development), ITU-T (Standardization), and ITU-R (Radiocommunication)—the ITU has translated WSIS commitments into concrete actions, policies, and standards that have shaped the global digital landscape.

2005–2015: Foundations and the WSIS+10 Review The first decade of WSIS implementation was marked by foundational work across all ITU sectors, as documented in the [WSIS+10 Report: ITU’s Ten-Year Contribution to the WSIS Implementation and Follow-up](#). This period focused on building the institutional and technical groundwork for inclusive digital development and enhancing global connectivity.

2015–2025: Deepening Implementation and Strategic Alignment

ITU-D (Development Sector) WTDC [Resolution 30 \(Rev. Kigali, 2022\)](#) reaffirms ITU-D’s role in implementing WSIS outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The resolution emphasizes digital inclusion, capacity building, and creating enabling environments for ICT growth. Flagship initiatives such as Connect2Recover, Giga, and Smart Villages have been instrumental in enhancing digital resilience and bridging the digital divide, particularly in underserved regions.

ITU-T (Standardization Sector) [WTSA Resolution 75 \(Rev. Geneva, 2022\)](#) underscores ITU-T’s commitment to developing global standards that support WSIS Action Lines, particularly C5. The resolution highlights the importance of standardizing emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and quantum communication. ITU-T’s work ensures that digital

transformation is secure, interoperable, and inclusive, contributing to global efforts in ICT development.

ITU-R (Radiocommunication Sector) WRC-23, held in Dubai, updated the global regulatory framework for spectrum and satellite orbit management. The [Final Acts of WRC-23](#) introduced revisions and new resolutions critical for enabling 5G/6G, satellite broadband, and emergency communications—key elements of WSIS Action Line C2. These updates guarantee equitable access to spectrum resources, promoting next-generation networks and advancing global connectivity.

Two Decades of Impact and a Vision Beyond 2025 From 2005 to 2025, ITU has demonstrated sustained leadership in advancing the WSIS vision. Through sector-specific mandates and resolutions, the Union has operationalized the WSIS Action Lines, adapted to technological evolution, and fostered inclusive digital development. As the global community prepares for the WSIS+20 High-Level Event in 2025, and the UNGA's WSIS+20 overall review on 16-17 December 2025, ITU's sectoral contributions remain crucial in shaping a people-centered, inclusive, and sustainable Information Society.

Facilitating 11 WSIS Action Lines

ITU's facilitation of the WSIS Action Lines underscores its commitment to leveraging ICTs for sustainable development. Through its leadership and collaborative efforts, ITU has made significant progress in advancing the goals of the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda, ensuring that digital technologies benefit all individuals and communities.

WSIS Action Lines serve as a comprehensive framework for advancing digital development and leveraging ICTs to achieve the SDGs. ITU plays a pivotal role in facilitating these Action Lines, driving initiatives that promote connectivity, digital literacy, cybersecurity, and an enabling environment for ICT growth. This section outlines the 11 WSIS Action Lines and highlights ITU's contributions to their implementation.

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

Public governance authorities and stakeholders play a crucial role in promoting ICTs for development. ITU collaborates with governments, private sector entities, civil society organizations, and international bodies to create policies and frameworks that support digital inclusion and innovation. Key initiatives include public-private partnerships, policy advocacy, and capacity-building programmes that empower stakeholders to leverage ICTs for sustainable development.

C2: Information and communication infrastructure

Developing robust ICT infrastructure is essential for bridging the digital divide and ensuring universal access to digital services. ITU provides technical support, develops international standards, and promotes best practices for infrastructure deployment. Notable initiatives include the Giga project, which aims to connect every school to the Internet, and support for IXPs to enhance local Internet traffic exchange. The ITU-UNESCO Broadband Commission has developed thought leadership focused on the use of broadband connectivity to accelerate progress toward achieving the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

C3: Access to information and knowledge

Ensuring access to information and knowledge is fundamental for digital inclusion. ITU implements initiatives that promote digital literacy and provide access to ICTs for underserved and marginalized communities. The WSIS Forum and other knowledge-sharing platforms facilitate the exchange of best practices and successful projects, enabling stakeholders to learn from each other's experiences.

C4: Capacity building

Building the capacity of individuals and institutions to effectively use ICTs is a key focus of ITU's efforts. The ITU Academy offers a wide range of courses, workshops, and training programmes to enhance digital skills and knowledge. Specialized training programmes and [ITU Academy Training Centres](#) provide high-quality training services tailored to regional needs, empowering communities to thrive in the digital age.

The AI Skills Coalition, part of ITU's AI for Good Impact Initiative, provides an open, trusted and inclusive platform for AI education and capacity building globally. World and Regional Radiocommunication Seminars and Workshops are conducted as part of the ITU-R capacity building programme. These seminars and workshops include training on spectrum management, ITU Radio Regulations and related ICT tools.

C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

Promoting a safe and secure digital environment is critical for building trust in ICTs. ITU's Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) provides a comprehensive framework for international cooperation on cybersecurity. Through technical standards, CIRTs, cyberdrills, capacity development, and extensive partnerships, ITU has been working to strengthen confidence in the use of digital technologies. The Child Online Protection initiative raises awareness about online risks and promotes safe digital practices.

C6: Enabling environment

Creating an enabling environment involves developing policies and regulations that support ICT growth. ITU provides guidance on regulatory frameworks, promotes international cooperation, and supports the development of policies that encourage investment in ICT infrastructure. The Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) and digital regulation training programmes help regulators create effective regulatory environments. The Broadband Commission has also contributed to this WSIS Action Line, by developing more than 70 collaborative [policy recommendations](#) and considerations for achieving universal connectivity including strategies, policies and regulation to enable broadband adoption and incentivise infrastructure investments.

Recommendation ITU-R M.2160[1] is one example which describes a framework and overall objectives for the development of the terrestrial component of International Mobile Telecommunications for 2030 and beyond (IMT-2030). Mobile services are expected to continue to better serve the needs of the networked society, for both developed and developing countries in the future. In this Recommendation, the framework of the development of IMT-2030, including a broad variety of capabilities associated with envisaged usage scenarios, is described. Furthermore, the Recommendation addresses the objectives for the development of IMT-2030, which includes further enhancement and evolution of existing IMT. This represents significant progress in the development and implementation of globally accepted standards for mobile systems using 6G. All the previous mobile telecommunication generations – analogue cellular (1G), digital cellular (2G), IMT 2000 (3G), IMT Advanced (4G), and IMT 2020 (5G) – were also standardized through ITU.

C7: ICT applications

ICT applications in various sectors, including e-government, e-health, e-learning, e-business, e-agriculture, e-environment, and e-science, enhance the quality of life and promote sustainable development. ITU supports the development and implementation of these applications, providing technical assistance and promoting best practices. Initiatives such as telemedicine and e-learning platforms improve access to essential services and opportunities.

C8: Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

Promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in the digital space is essential for ensuring that ICTs are relevant and accessible to diverse populations. ITU supports the creation of multilingual digital content, collaborates with UNESCO to preserve cultural heritage through digitization, and provides technical assistance for local content development.

C9: Media

Strengthening media infrastructure and promoting freedom of expression are key components of ITU's efforts. ITU provides technical assistance for community radio and digital broadcasting, supports media development in developing countries, and offers training programmes for media professionals to enhance their digital skills.

C10: Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

Developing ethical guidelines and standards for ICT use is crucial for promoting responsible digital behaviour. ITU's initiatives include guidelines on data privacy, cybersecurity, and the ethical use of AI and other emerging technologies. Awareness campaigns and educational programmes promote digital citizenship and online safety.

C11: International and regional cooperation

Fostering international and regional cooperation is essential for addressing global ICT challenges. ITU collaborates with a wide range of international and regional organizations to advance WSIS outcomes and promote ICT for development. Partnerships with UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD, and other UN agencies enhance the effectiveness of ICT initiatives and promote the sharing of best practices.

ITU's four key action lines

ITU is the lead facilitator for critical WSIS Action Lines, essential for the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda. These Action Lines address key areas such as infrastructure development, capacity building, cybersecurity, and regulatory environments.

Specifically, ITU leads:

1. **Action Line C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure:** Focuses on developing telecommunication/ICT infrastructure to bridge the digital divide and ensure universal access to ICTs.
2. **Action Line C4: Capacity Building:** Aims to enhance the capacity of individuals and institutions to effectively use ICTs.
3. **Action Line C5: Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs:** Addresses the need for a secure and trustworthy digital environment.
4. **Action Line C6: Enabling Environment:** Focuses on creating a conducive policy and regulatory environment for ICT development.

Additionally, ITU serves as a co-facilitator and partner for other WSIS Action Lines, collaborating with various stakeholders to promote ICT development. This extensive involvement underscores ITU's comprehensive role in advancing the WSIS framework.

The annual WSIS Forum hosted by ITU since 2009 brings together a diverse community of stakeholders, including governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations, to engage in dialogue, share knowledge, and collaborate on ICT for development.

[C2: Information and communication infrastructure](#)

The development of robust information and communication infrastructure is essential for bridging the digital divide and ensuring universal access to digital technologies.

ITU has focused, as the lead facilitator for Action Line C2, on:

- **Technical support and standards development** – helping ITU Member States develop and implement modern, secure, accessible, and affordable ICT infrastructure. ITU also develops international standards that ensure interoperability and quality of ICT services. The ITU Radiocommunication Sector specializes in facilitating international collaboration to ensure the rational, equitable, efficient and economical use of the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits.
- **Infrastructure deployment initiatives** – particularly in underserved and rural areas. For example, the Giga initiative, launched in partnership with UNICEF, aims to connect every school to the Internet, providing students with access to digital learning resources and opportunities.
- **Support for Internet Exchange Points (IXPs)** – crucial for improving Internet connectivity and reducing costs. IXPs facilitate the exchange of Internet traffic locally, enhancing the efficiency and performance of Internet services.
- **Connectivity infrastructure mapping, analysis, and visualisation** – mapping existing connectivity infrastructure, analysing gaps, and visualising network coverage to guide investment and policy decisions. This ensures targeted and sustainable deployment of ICT infrastructure to bridge the digital divide.
- **Technical support on emerging technologies** – helping develop and implement modern, secure, accessible, and affordable ICT infrastructure. It also develops to ensure interoperability, quality of service, and the adoption of emerging technologies such as 5G, AI-driven networks, and quantum communications to meet the Member States digital transformation objectives.
- **Infrastructure deployment initiatives** – leading efforts to expand ICT infrastructure, particularly in underserved and rural areas. For example, supports the Giga initiative, launched in partnership with UNICEF, that aims to connect every school to the Internet, providing students with access to digital learning resources and opportunities.
- **Spectrum management and space communications** – coordinating spectrum allocation and management to optimise radiofrequency use. ITU has developed spectrum management toolkits (i.e., SMS4DC, HCM4A), to help Member States harmonise spectrum use and reduce interference. ITU particularly helps maintain connectivity in emergency situations, supports life-saving humanitarian and emergency response operations, and supports landlocked countries with satellite communication solutions, as well as helping to build orbital capacities.
- **Broadcasting support** – providing guidance on modernising broadcasting infrastructure to support digital transformation in the media sector.
- **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** – facilitating capacity-building initiatives, organizing workshops to raise awareness, and fostering cooperation among governments, industry, and technical communities to address challenges in DPI implementation and support global digital transformation and inclusion.
- **Broadband connectivity** – with the ITU-UNESCO Broadband Commission advocating for meaningful, safe, secure, and sustainable broadband communications services in every country as key to accelerating progress towards national and international development targets.

Challenges in implementing the Action Line C2:

- **Resource and Funding Constraints:** Developing and maintaining information and communication infrastructure requires substantial resource and financial investment. Securing adequate and sustainable funding for these initiatives can be a major challenge.
- **Data:** Ensuring that stakeholders have access to timely and relevant data is crucial for informed decision-making and effective planning. However, disparities in data availability and quality can impede efforts to develop and maintain robust ICT infrastructure.
- **Coordination and Collaboration:** Effectively engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, including government entities, private sector players, and civil society, presents challenges due to differing priorities and interests.
- **Digital Divide:** A primary goal of this action line is to enhance access to information and communication infrastructure. However, the existing digital divide remains a significant barrier.
- **Sustainability:** Ensuring that information and communication infrastructure initiatives are sustainable in the long term is a critical challenge. This requires ongoing support, maintenance, and continuous capacity building to keep the infrastructure relevant and effective.
- **Privacy and Security Concerns:** The expansion of information and communication infrastructure raises significant issues related to data privacy and security. It is vital to implement measures that ensure responsible and ethical use of these technologies.

C4: Capacity building

Building the capacity of individuals and institutions to effectively use ICTs is crucial for fostering digital literacy and skills development.

As the lead facilitator for Action Line C4, ITU has implemented various programmes, notably including:

- **ITU Academy** – ITU’s primary platform for capacity building and training in the field of ICTs. It offers a wide range of courses, workshops, and training programmes to enhance the skills and knowledge of ICT professionals, policymakers, and other stakeholders. At the end of 2024, the ITU Academy user base engages was over 62,000 learners from all Member States[\[3\]](#).
- **Specialized training programmes** – offered by ITU on topics such as spectrum management, cybersecurity, quality of service, and digital skills. These programmes are designed to address the specific needs of different target groups and ensure that they have the necessary skills to thrive in the digital economy. The ITU Radiocommunication Bureau (BR) organizes world seminars on spectrum management every two years, as well as regional seminars aimed at addressing the particular needs of developing countries. One of the objectives of the Radiocommunication Bureau is to hold regional seminars in a way to equitably cover all ITU Regions.
- **ITU Academy Training Centres** – established in various regions to provide high-quality training and capacity-building services. These centres collaborate with local institutions and experts to deliver training programmes that are relevant to the regional context.
- The [Digital Transformation Centres Initiative](#) – launched as a partnership between ITU and Cisco in 2019. The aim of the Initiative is to provide basic and intermediate digital skills training to underserved communities where DTCs operate. By 2024, the initiative had established 14 centres in different countries and regions, providing training to thousands of participants[\[4\]](#). Over 390 000 course participants, 54% female, have completed training since the start of the initiative.
- The [AI Skills Coalition](#) – spearheaded by ITU’s AI for Good Impact Initiative to serve as the UN’s leading global, open, trusted and inclusive platform for AI education and capacity building.

Challenges in implementing the Action Line C4:

- Limited resources: Insufficient ICT infrastructure (access to connectivity, devices) can impede effective capacity development initiatives. Lack of sufficient funds to carry out comprehensive capacity building programmes is a challenge to ensuring sustainability and scalability of such initiatives.
- Persisting digital divide and digital skills gap: Unequal access to digital technologies, especially in areas which are difficult to reach, exacerbates the digital skills gap within underserved communities, which are at risk of being left further behind.
- Policy and regulation: The lack of coordination and alignment of policies at national level could lead to inconsistencies in implementing global capacity development programmes.
- Adaptability to a fast-paced technological landscape: The rapid evolution of technology can render capacity development efforts obsolete if they do not keep pace with the latest technological developments. Therefore, it is crucial to continually adapt to emerging technologies and the changing needs.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Lack of standardized M&E systems to accurately measure the impact of capacity building programmes, particularly the long-term benefits of capacity building interventions in enabling socio-economic development and citizen empowerment.

C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

Ensuring the security and reliability is crucial to build trust in digital technologies. As the lead facilitator for Action Line C5, ITU has implemented:

The **Global Cybersecurity Agenda** – a framework for promoting cybersecurity and building confidence in the use of ICTs. It addresses the growing challenges of cybersecurity and aims to build trust in digital technologies. The GCA was also reviewed in 2022 with the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference noting the Guidelines for utilization of the GCA. ITU develops international cybersecurity standards, promotes national cybersecurity strategies, and supports initiatives to protect children online.

Child Online Protection – an initiative to protect children from online risks and promote safe and responsible use of the Internet. It includes guidelines, training programmes, and awareness campaigns to educate children, parents, and educators about online safety. ITU has been implementing the project “Creating a safe and empowering cyber environment for children,” pursuant to the agreement signed with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This has involved the launch and implementation of various online self-paced training courses for all relevant stakeholders on ITU Academy. In mid-2023 ITU is set to launch two interactive solutions designed to help equip children and young people to become responsible digital citizens – a webapp and an online game.

Legal measures – carried out through the Development Sector (ITU-D) to assist ITU Member States in understanding the legal aspects of cybersecurity. Assistance on the legal aspects of cybersecurity is provided through ITU’s [Cybercrime Legislation Resources](#) as part of ITU-D Priority 5 under the Kigali Action Plan and taking into account ITU-D Question 3/2. ITU collaborates closely with partners such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Technical and procedural measures

- [ITU-T Study Groups](#) 5, 11, 13, 16, 17 and 20 focus on developing security standards (see [catalogue of ITU-T Recommendations](#)) across a wide range of issues, from circular economies, cloud computing and trust in technologies to electromagnetic security, quantum key distribution networks, signalling procedures and protocols, and specific applications like JPEG 2000 and oneM2M.
- Several ITU-T focus groups, referenced on [this page](#), are also exploring the trust aspect of various emerging technologies.

- The ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) has established clear security principles for IMT (3G, 4G and 5G) networks. It has also issued Recommendations on security issues in network management architecture for digital satellite systems and performance enhancements of transmission control protocol over satellite networks (see [here](#)). Information on Futuristic mobile technologies – “IMT for 2020 and beyond” can be found [here](#).

Institutional readiness

- Since 2012, ITU has been collaborating with Member States, partners, and global organizations to strengthen cybersecurity by creating national and regional Computer Incident Response Teams (CIRTs). Additionally, ITU conducts CIRT Maturity Assessments to further enhance CIRT capabilities. So far, ITU has assisted 84 countries by evaluating their cybersecurity readiness, leading to the establishment or improvement of National CIRTs. ITU has implemented 21 CIRT-related projects and is currently working on three more.
- ITU continues to actively collaborate with the FIRST community to enhance the Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) Service Framework and revise training materials for capacity-building in managing national CIRT operations.
- As of May 2024, ITU has organized over 42 international, regional, or national [CyberDrills](#) (including 3 Global CyberDrills), involving more than 140 countries and 2,500 professionals across all six ITU regions. The first-ever in-person global CyberDrill is planned in April 2024, hosted by the Cybersecurity Council of the United Arab Emirates.

Capacity building

- Regional cybersecurity forums have been organized for all ITU regions to build capacity. Following WTDC 2022, work on Question 3/2 continues ([Securing information and communication networks: Best practices for developing a culture of cybersecurity](#)).
- ITU has built on the [Second edition of The Guide to Developing a National Cybersecurity Strategy \(NCS\)](#), published in 2021 in collaboration with over 20 international partners, and is working with several countries and territories to advance their cybersecurity strategies through in-person table top exercises and Action Plan assessments in collaboration with the United Kingdom. ITU, in conjunction with stakeholders, plans to begin the process of updating The Guide to Developing a National Cybersecurity Strategy in 2025.
- Through the [ITU Academy](#), and the ITU Centres of Excellence and Academy Training Centres, ITU continues to deliver training activities and workshops in various areas of the cybersecurity domain.
- As part of cyber skills development efforts, ITU has completed several editions of the [Women in Cyber Mentorship Programme](#).
- ITU is working with several countries through [Cyber for Good](#), supported by the Republic of Korea, providing free access to tools, trainings, and services through five ITU-D Sector Members, including NCS assessments, cyber vulnerability monitoring tools, and cyber skills trainings.

- ITU worked with OAS to develop a systems approach to cybersecurity education and continues developing in-country workshops and helping countries take next steps in using the framework.
- ITU collaborated with the Kingdom of Sweden, Microsoft, and Global Forum for Cybersecurity Expertise (GFCE) on developing a Compendium on Mainstreaming Cybersecurity in Development.
- ITU's Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) highlights and assesses the cybersecurity commitments of countries worldwide. The latest GCI report highlights significant progress in global cybersecurity efforts, with many countries enhancing their legal, technical, and organizational measures.

International cooperation on cybersecurity

- ITU is enhancing relationships and [partnerships](#) with various regional/international organizations and initiatives, including OAS, ENISA, INTERPOL, ECOWAS, the World Bank, FIRST, the GFCE, and regional CSIRT/CERT associations, such as AP CERT, AFRICA CERT, and OIC CERT, with an aim to avoid unnecessary duplication and identify areas for collaboration.
- Pursuant to [Decision 630 \(Council 2023\)](#), ITU is developing an [informational resource](#) to help Member States build their cybersecurity and cyber resilience capacity, and has invited Member States and other stakeholders to contribute best practices, resources and related information for this purpose.
- ITU has continued to engage with stakeholders in Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of ICTs (OWEG), providing inputs into its capacity development mapping exercise, understanding current cybersecurity needs based on the Global Cybersecurity Index, and showcasing the impact of the HerCyberTracks initiative.
- ITU is collaborating with Member States to deliver its work, notably the Czech Republic, Germany, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Kingdom.

Challenges in implementing the Action Line C5

- Timely and sufficient resource mobilization: ensuring that adequate resources—financial, technical, and human—are mobilized in a timely manner to support cybersecurity initiatives remains a persistent challenge.
- Stakeholder participation: engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, including governments, private sector, civil society, and international organizations, is essential but often difficult due to varying priorities and capacities.
- Evolving needs and capacities: the rapid evolution of technology and threat landscapes requires continuous adaptation. Many stakeholders struggle to keep pace with these changes, leading to gaps in cybersecurity readiness and resilience.

[C6: Enabling environment](#)

Creating a conducive policy and regulatory environment is essential for promoting digital growth and innovation.

As the lead facilitator for Action Line C6, ITU has focused on:

- **Policy and Regulatory Guidance** – helping countries adopt regulatory frameworks and policies that promote ICT development. This includes best practices for fostering competition, ensuring universal access, and encouraging investment in ICT infrastructure.
- [Global Symposium for Regulators](#) – an annual event organized by ITU that brings together regulators from around the world to discuss policy and regulatory issues related to ICTs. The symposium provides a platform for sharing experiences, discussing challenges, and exploring solutions.
- [Digital Regulation Platform and Training](#) – to help regulators develop the skills and knowledge needed to create effective regulatory environments. These programmes cover topics such as spectrum management, competition policy, and consumer protection.
- [ITU World Radiocommunication Seminars](#) – organized every two years by the Radiocommunication Bureau to provide training and assistance to Member States in spectrum management and ITU radiocommunications activities.
- [ITU Regional Radiocommunication Seminars](#) – organized in conjunction with Member States to provide training and assistance in relation to spectrum management and ITU radiocommunications activities.

The ITU-led Partner2Connect Digital Coalition has also mobilized commitments to build skills, strengthen regulations, and ensure digital inclusion.

The ITU-UNESCO Broadband Commission is pioneering and leading knowledge products on ICTs and SDGs and has a proven model for collaborative and consensus-driven outcomes achieved by multistakeholder membership, including:

- Over 35 Working Group outcomes on digital development with some 300+ collaboratively developed recommendations issued. These recommended actions are addressed to each group of digital ecosystem stakeholders.
- 14 editions of the Annual State of Broadband Reports that analyze global connectivity challenges and successes, and track progress toward achieving its [7 Advocacy Targets](#) with more than 70 unique recommendations and conclusions developed by consensus by its members spanning different categories like policy and regulations, funding and investment, environmental/social and governance issues, entrepreneurship and inclusion.

Challenges in implementing Action Line C6

- **Policy and regulatory reform:** change is needed in ICT policy and regulation frameworks to create an inclusive and conducive enabling environment. This requires developing a common language based on consultation and evidence, reframing and operationalizing policy agendas, and continuously upgrading skills.
- **Breaking silos in collaborative regulation:** one of the main challenges at national and regional levels is overcoming silos and insularity. Effective collaborative regulation demands bringing together diverse expertise and enforcement mechanisms to level the playing field across borders.
- **Investment-friendly frameworks:** while governments could collaborate more closely on regulatory and economic incentives, the key is to establish investment-friendly policy and regulatory frameworks. These should support digital transformation across all industries and sectors, encouraging industry investment in ICT to enhance affordable access and reduce inequalities.

Helping advance other WSIS Action Lines

ITU's role as a co-facilitator and partner in various WSIS Action Lines underscores its commitment to leveraging technologies for sustainable development. Through impactful projects and collaboration, ITU has helped drive progress on the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda, advancing digital technologies for the benefit of all people and communities worldwide.

Beyond its four key Action Lines, ITU serves as co-facilitator or key partner on seven more of the WSIS Action Lines. This section highlights ITU's contributions to these Action Lines and showcases stories from the ground that illustrate the impact of these initiatives.

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

ITU collaborates with public governance authorities and stakeholders to promote the role of ICTs in development. This includes advocating for policies that support digital inclusion, innovation, and the use of ICTs to achieve the SDGs. Public-private partnerships and policy advocacy are key components of ITU's efforts in this area.

Story from the ground: In collaboration with local governments, ITU supported the development of national digital strategies that prioritize ICT infrastructure and digital literacy. For example, the "Smart Rwanda Master Plan" aims to transform Rwanda into a knowledge-based economy by leveraging ICTs, with a focus on digital skills training and e-government services.

C3: Access to information and knowledge

Ensuring access to information and knowledge is fundamental for digital inclusion. ITU implements initiatives that promote digital literacy and provide access to ICTs for underserved and marginalized communities. Knowledge-sharing platforms, such as the WSIS Forum, facilitate the exchange of best practices and successful projects.

Story from the ground: The "Digital Transformation Centres" initiative, supported by ITU, has established training centres in various regions to enhance digital skills in developing countries. These centres provide essential digital literacy and skills training to underserved communities, empowering individuals to participate in the digital economy.

C7: ICT applications

ICT applications in various sectors, including e-government, e-health, e-learning, e-business, e-agriculture, e-environment, and e-science, enhance the quality of life and promote sustainable development. ITU supports the development and implementation of these applications, providing technical assistance and promoting best practices.

Story from the ground: The "E-Health for All" project, which won the WSIS Prize in 2024, leverages telemedicine and mobile health applications to improve access to healthcare in remote areas. This project has significantly enhanced healthcare delivery by providing remote consultations and health monitoring services.

C8: Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

Promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in the digital space is essential for ensuring that ICTs are relevant and accessible to diverse populations. ITU supports the creation of multilingual digital content, collaborates with UNESCO to preserve cultural heritage through digitization, and provides technical assistance for local content development.

Story from the ground: ITU's collaboration with UNESCO on the "Digital Heritage Preservation" project has led to the digitization of cultural artifacts and the creation of online repositories. This initiative helps preserve cultural heritage and makes it accessible to a global audience, promoting cultural diversity and identity.

C9: Media

Strengthening media infrastructure and promoting freedom of expression are key components of ITU's efforts. ITU provides technical assistance for community radio and digital broadcasting, supports media development in developing countries, and offers training programmes for media professionals to enhance their digital skills.

Since 2024, the ITU has been actively enhancing media development and capacity building, particularly in developing countries, through training programmes and workshops aimed at improving media literacy and skills. Additionally, the ITU has been advocating for freedom of expression and the protection of journalists by collaborating with other organizations to create a safer environment for media professionals.

To promote digital inclusion, the ITU has launched several initiatives ensuring that marginalised communities have access to media and information, including projects aimed at bridging the digital divide. Furthermore, the ITU has been promoting Media and Information Literacy (MIL) to help individuals critically evaluate and use information from various media sources, developing educational materials and conducting awareness campaigns. Lastly, the ITU has been supporting community media initiatives to ensure diverse voices are heard, providing technical assistance and funding for community radio and television stations.

Story from the ground: In partnership with local media organizations, ITU has established community radio stations in rural areas, providing a platform for local voices and promoting access to information. These stations play a crucial role in disseminating information on health, education, and community development.

C10: Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

Developing ethical guidelines and standards for ICT use is crucial for promoting responsible digital behaviour. ITU's initiatives include guidelines on data privacy, cybersecurity, and the ethical use of AI and other emerging technologies. Awareness campaigns and educational programmes promote digital citizenship and online safety.

ITU's Child Online Protection initiative, for instance, has implemented awareness campaigns and training programmes to educate children, parents, and educators about online safety. These efforts have reached millions of children worldwide, promoting safe and responsible use of ICTs.

The rise of AI has added fresh urgency to tech-related ethics discussions. AI Governance Day, organized by ITU as part of the WSIS+20 and AI for Good conferences in May 2024, brought together policy makers (including many from developing countries) to consider the crucial shift from principles and practice for responsible AI.

C11: International and regional cooperation

Fostering international and regional cooperation is essential for addressing global ICT challenges. ITU collaborates with a wide range of international and regional organizations to advance WSIS outcomes and promote ICT for development. Partnerships with UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD, and other UN agencies also enhance the effectiveness of ICT initiatives and promote the sharing of best practices.

The Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development – a high-level multistakeholder partnership led by ITU and UNESCO – has fostered digital cooperation, developing actionable recommendations for achieving universal connectivity, and mobilizing efforts to bring the life-changing benefits of digital transformation to everyone.

Study groups across ITU have helped advance the WSIS process. Standardization (ITU-T) and Radiocommunication (ITU-R) study groups bring together experts from around the world to help coordinate services and harmonize standards, while Development (ITU-D) study groups focus on enabling meaningful connectivity and advancing sustainable digital transformation.

WSIS Forum

The annual WSIS Forum, hosted by ITU since 2009 and co-organized with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in collaboration with over 40 UN entities, serves as a multistakeholder platform for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing. It produces actionable policy recommendations and fosters collaborative initiatives. The Forum has become a cornerstone of the WSIS process, bringing together the WSIS multistakeholder community.

Over the past 15 years, the WSIS Forum has grown into the world's leading multistakeholder platform for digital development, engaging a truly global community. With participation from over 160 countries, the Forum has welcomed more than 50 000 stakeholders—both onsite and virtually—including representatives from governments, the private sector, civil society, academia, and international organizations.

The annual WSIS Forum, known for its inclusive and participatory approach, serves as a cornerstone of the WSIS process by promoting digital development through dialogue, collaboration, and the sharing of best practices among a diverse array of stakeholders, including governments, private sector entities, civil society organizations, international organizations, and academia. Each edition features high-level policy sessions, thematic workshops, and interactive discussions addressing pressing issues in the global tech sector. With annual themes reflecting emerging trends and challenges, the Forum ensures that diverse perspectives are considered in formulating digital policies and strategies, enabling stakeholders to stay informed and adapt to technology and policy advancements.

Key outcomes each year have included:

- **Policy recommendations:** The forum generates actionable policy recommendations that guide stakeholders in implementing effective digital strategies. These recommendations are based on the insights and experiences shared by participants during the sessions.
- **Best practices and case studies:** The forum highlights successful projects and initiatives that demonstrate the transformative power of ICTs. These best practices and case studies serve as valuable resources for stakeholders looking to replicate and scale successful models.
- **Collaborative initiatives:** The forum fosters the creation of collaborative initiatives and partnerships that address specific challenges in the ICT sector. These initiatives leverage the strengths and resources of multiple stakeholders to achieve common goals.

Since its inception in 2009, the WSIS Forum has evolved from a post-summit implementation platform into the world's leading multistakeholder venue for digital development. The inaugural Forum in 2009 marked the transition from the WSIS Summit phase to an annual process, emphasizing inclusive implementation and the building of information societies. In 2010 and 2011, the Forum focused on the role of ICTs in development and their catalytic potential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. By 2012, sustainability emerged as a central theme, with sessions exploring ICTs in disaster management and environmental protection. The 2013 edition emphasized digital literacy, multilingualism, and cultural diversity, laying the groundwork for the landmark WSIS+10 High-Level Event in 2014. This special gathering reviewed a decade of WSIS progress and set the vision for the future. In 2015, the Forum aligned itself with the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), introducing the WSIS-SDG Matrix to map Action Lines to global development targets. The subsequent years—2016 through 2018—deepened this alignment, showcasing ICT solutions for education, health, gender equality, and digital infrastructure.

From 2019 onward, the WSIS Forum sharpened its focus on inclusive digital transformation and international cooperation. The 2019 edition emphasized the role of ICTs in accelerating SDG implementation, while the 2020 Forum, held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighted the critical role of digital technologies in crisis response and resilience. In 2021, the Forum addressed post-pandemic recovery, emphasizing digital equity and resilient infrastructure. The 2022 and 2023 editions built on this momentum, focusing on well-being, inclusion, innovation, and digital trust. The WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event in 2024 served as a preparatory platform for the 20-year review, emphasizing the next phase of accelerated cooperation. Looking ahead, the WSIS+20 High-Level Event in 2025 will celebrate two decades of the WSIS process, assess global progress, and chart a renewed path for inclusive digital development in alignment with the evolving global digital agenda.

It is important to recognize that each WSIS Forum has been far more than a single theme or headline. Every edition has featured a rich mosaic of sessions, formats, and stakeholder engagements—from high-level policy dialogues and ministerial roundtables to grassroots innovation showcases, hackathons, and youth-led initiatives. With hundreds of sessions annually, participation from thousands of stakeholders across 160+ countries, and the involvement of over 40 UN agencies, the Forum has addressed a vast spectrum of issues: from AI ethics and digital accessibility to indigenous knowledge systems, cybersecurity, and digital public infrastructure. The Forum's strength lies in its adaptability and inclusiveness, ensuring that emerging topics are addressed in real time and that no voice is left unheard. While summaries often highlight selected themes, they cannot fully capture the breadth, diversity, and depth of the WSIS Forum's contributions to global digital development.

WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024

The WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024 provided a platform for stakeholders to discuss progress, share best practices, and develop actionable outcomes.

Key takeaways from 2024 event include:

Actionable outcomes: The event aimed at guiding future WSIS initiatives, particularly as technologies and policy priorities continue evolving rapidly.

Ministerial perspectives: Ministerial Roundtables provided high-level perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in the digital landscape, with discussions informing policy development and strategic planning.

Chairs' summary: Summary by conference chair captured key points from high-level discussions, providing a valuable resource for stakeholders to understand progress to date and the next steps in the WSIS process. [WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024: Chair's Summary](#)

The WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2024 was co-hosted by ITU and the Swiss Confederation, and co-organized with UNESCO, UNDP, and UNCTAD. The event took place from 27 to 31 May 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland, with sessions from Monday to Wednesday at the International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG) and on Thursday and Friday at ITU Headquarters.

Ahead of the United Nations General Assembly's twenty-year review of WSIS, the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event served as a platform for multistakeholder exchanges and a catalyst for action. It took stock of achievements, key trends, and challenges since the 2003 Geneva Plan of Action. This event was an occasion for the international community to assess opportunities for global digital cooperation and to join forces towards a forward-looking, reinvigorated shared vision, informing the UNGA's WSIS+20 Overall Review.

The High-Level Event gathered over 4,000 participants onsite and online, including nearly 80 ministers, deputies, and heads of regulatory authorities. With representation from 160 countries, the event featured more than 500 high-level participants engaging in around 200 sessions with over 100 speakers.

The five-day event brought together multistakeholder participants, including government, the private sector, academia, the technical community, and civil society. It covered a wide range of topics, including emerging technologies, WSIS+20, digital inclusion, digital governance processes, the Global Digital Compact, the Summit of the Future, digital health, universal connectivity, sustainable digital transformation, cybersecurity, digital public infrastructure, and many more.

The WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2024 was chaired by H.E. Mr Albert Rösti, Federal Councillor, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy, and Communications (DETEC), Switzerland. In the closing ceremony, the Chair of the WSIS+20 Forum presented the Chair's Summary, encapsulated the discussions from the Chair's perspective, highlighting key insights and future directions emerging from the Event.

WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024: Outcome documents

- [WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024: Chair's Summary](#)
- [WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024: Outcome Document](#)
- [WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024: High-Level Outcomes and Executive Brief](#)
- [WSIS Stocktaking Report 2024](#)
- [WSIS Stocktaking Success Stories 2024](#)

WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025

The ITU 2024 session of the Council, through its [Resolution 1332](#) on the role of ITU in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, resolved that the WSIS Forum 2025 should be branded as the [WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025](#).

The WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025 ("the Event"), co-hosted by ITU and the Swiss Confederation, and co-organized with UNESCO, UNDP, and UNCTAD, took place from 7 to 11 July 2025 at Palexpo, Geneva, alongside the AI for Good Global Summit, leveraging the synergies between these two events to provide complementary perspectives on topics related to emerging technologies and digital for development. This landmark event commemorated two decades of progress since the launch of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), providing a global platform to assess digital transformation, reinforce commitments, and shape a renewed multistakeholder vision for the future.

Key Takeaways from the 2025 Event

The Event reaffirmed WSIS as the UN's implementation framework for building inclusive, human-centered information societies. Discussions contributed directly to the upcoming WSIS+20 Overall Review by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2025, helping shape a renewed roadmap for the next phase of global digital cooperation.

The Ministerial Roundtable, featuring 59 ministers and deputies, addressed national digital priorities, emerging technologies, and the future of WSIS beyond 2025. Ministers emphasized avoiding duplication and strengthening the WSIS architecture as the foundation for global digital policy.

The Event was chaired by H.E. Mr. Solly Malatsi, Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies of South Africa, who presented the [Chair's Summary](#) at the closing session. The summary captured major insights from the week and called for enhanced progress-tracking mechanisms, the establishment of clear targets under the WSIS Action Lines, and continued use of WSIS as the central multistakeholder platform. The Chair emphasized the continued relevance of WSIS in addressing global digital divides, fostering innovation, and promoting inclusive governance. He called for WSIS to remain the cornerstone of digital development, grounded in multistakeholder dialogue, human rights, and sustainability.

WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025: [Highlights](#)

Together, both the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025 and this year's AI for Good Global Summit welcomed over 11,000 participants from 169 countries onsite, with many more joining virtually. The Event featured close to 250 sessions throughout the week, including high-level dialogues, Leaders TalkX sessions, interactive sessions, knowledge cafés, exhibitions, ministerial and regulators roundtables, the WSIS+20 celebrations, and more than 1,000 speakers. The diverse participant base included ministers, regulators, over 60 UN representatives, parliamentarians, CEOs, civil society leaders, youth, and academia.

A keynote address was delivered by H.E. Mr. Alar Karis, President of the Republic of Estonia. High-level statements from UN leaders reaffirmed their commitment to digital cooperation, including during the United Nations High-Level Leaders' Dialogue and through interventions by heads of UN agencies and international organizations such as the ITU, UNDRR, WTO, UNICC, UNITAR, UNJSPF, UNRISD, WMO, ILO, UNESCO, UNIDO, ICRC, UNHCR, FAO, OHCHR, OECD, OHCHR, WMO, UNITAR and the World Bank.

As part of the WSIS Stocktaking process and WSIS Prizes 2025, 19 winning projects were recognized for their excellence in implementing the WSIS Action Lines, with 71 Champions honoured as runners-up and 270 Nominees celebrated. The exhibition space featured more than 50 booths showcasing digital innovations from UN agencies, WSIS partners, and general exhibitors. The WSIS Photo Contest 2025 attracted 246 submissions, with 10 winners awarded.

Youth engagement remained strong, with over 300 youth participating across the Youth Special Track. WSIS Knowledge Café sessions provided a platform for focused dialogue on youth, multistakeholderism, storytelling, and envisioning WSIS beyond 2025.

The WSIS+20 [Ministerial Roundtable](#) provided a platform for national digital strategies and challenges to be discussed, while the Regulators Roundtable brought together over 50 regulators to explore agile and inclusive regulatory approaches in line with Action Line C6. The WSIS Action Line Facilitation Meetings marked 20 years of Action Line implementation and served to shape future directions.

The United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) reaffirmed its coordination role in enhancing policy coherence within the UN system. UNCTAD assumed the Chair for 2025–2026, taking

over from UNESCO. Topics discussed included UNGIS' input to the WSIS+20 Elements Paper, contributions to the High-Level Political Forum 2025, and preparations for its 20th anniversary in 2026.

The WSIS+20 Review Co-Facilitators, H.E. Mr. Ekitela Lokaale, Permanent Representative of Kenya to UN in New York, and H.E. Ms. Suela Janina, Permanent Representative of Albania to UN in New York, actively engaged with stakeholders through dedicated consultations during the Event, ahead of the UNGA Review. A high-level dialogue organized by ITU and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) emphasized the importance of engaging parliaments in digital governance, setting the stage for further collaboration through a dedicated Parliamentary Track.

WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025 outcome documents:

- [WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025: Chair's Summary](#)
- [WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025: Outcome Document](#)
- [WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025: High-Level Outcomes and Executive Brief](#)
- [High-Level Track Facilitators Leaders TalkX Session Summaries](#)
- [Session Summaries](#)
- [WSIS Stocktaking 2025 Global Report](#)
- [WSIS Stocktaking: Success Stories 2025](#)
- [WSIS Stocktaking+20 Report \(zero draft\)](#)

The road to 2030 and beyond

The WSIS Forum can continue to serve as a catalyst for innovation, collaboration, and policy development in years to come. Priorities going forward include the push for last-mile connectivity, digital literacy, affordable access, and meaningful digital opportunities for everyone, particularly in underserved and marginalized communities.

The WSIS Forum can also support further cooperation to create robust cybersecurity frameworks and protect digital infrastructure and data. Dialogue and collaboration through the WSIS process remain a vital asset in building a digital future for all.

WSIS Stocktaking

ITU tracks tech initiatives worldwide and recognizes those making breakthroughs for sustainable development.

In accordance with the Tunis Agenda, ITU maintains the WSIS Stocktaking database, which compiles information on ICT-related initiatives and projects. The WSIS Stocktaking process has grown into an international repository of over 19 000 entries, providing valuable insights into ICT development trends and best practices.

Complementing the database, the annual WSIS Prizes contest, launched in 2012, recognizes excellence in the implementation of ICT projects that further the goals of the WSIS process.

About the database

The WSIS Stocktaking database is a valuable resource for documenting and sharing digital projects and initiatives, as well as assessing them in relation to WSIS Action Lines. Thus, the database promotes cooperation, investment, and knowledge sharing, while the documented initiatives demonstrate the

transformative power of ICTs in various sectors and highlight the importance of continued efforts to leverage digital technologies for sustainable development.

Developed and maintained by ITU, this comprehensive repository provides valuable insights into the progress made in implementing the WSIS Action Lines and highlights successful projects that contribute to global digital development.

Since its inception in 2004, the WSIS Stocktaking database has grown to cover a wide range of ICT-related initiatives. The over 19 000 entries are categorized according to the 11 WSIS Action Lines and the 17 SDGs, providing a clear framework for assessing the impact of ICTs on sustainable development.

The WSIS Stocktaking Database provides:

- **Comprehensive coverage:** The database includes a diverse array of projects, from large-scale national initiatives to community-based efforts. This comprehensive coverage ensures that the database reflects the full spectrum of ICT activities globally.
- **Categorization by Action Lines and SDGs:** Projects are categorized according to the WSIS Action Lines and SDGs, making it easy to identify initiatives that align with specific goals and priorities.
- **Accessibility and transparency:** The database is publicly accessible, allowing stakeholders to explore and learn from the documented projects. This transparency promotes knowledge sharing and encourages the replication of successful initiatives.

The database documents a wide range of projects in various sectors, including education, healthcare, agriculture, and governance.

WSIS Prizes – Recognizing and celebrating best practices

The WSIS Prizes contest, launched in 2012, is an integral part of the WSIS Stocktaking process. It recognizes excellence in the implementation of ICT projects and initiatives that further the goals of the WSIS process. With over 9 000 submitted projects and initiatives, the WSIS Prizes have attracted hundreds of thousands of stakeholders through its submission and online voting phases, reaching millions of people through the promotion of its outcomes and celebrations of winners and champions. The prizes highlight successful projects that have made significant contributions to the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs, promoting the replication of best practices.

Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development

The Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development is an international, multistakeholder initiative that was launched in 2004 to improve the availability and quality of ICT data and indicators, particularly in developing countries. The initiative is a direct response to the request made by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to produce official statistics to monitor the information society.

The partnership has guided policy makers in producing ICT statistics that are crucial to informed decision-making, including through the identification of a core list of ICT indicators and methodologies to collect these indicators. The partnership helps developing countries collect ICT statistics, particularly through capacity-building and hands-on training for national statistical offices and collects and disseminates information society statistics.

Its membership has grown from originally 11, to today 14 regional and international organizations. Partnership work is coordinated by a Steering Committee, which is elected every three years. ITU, UNCTAD, and UN DESA form the current Steering Committee.

The group presented its [“Report of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technology for Development”](#) at the 55th Session of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) that was held in New York from 27 February to 1 March 2024. In this report, the Partnership provides an

overview of the work it has undertaken since the last report in 2022 and considers the role of ICT indicators in monitoring development goals and targets.

Key objectives of the partnership include:

- Enhancing data quality and comparability: The partnership focuses on developing internationally agreed methodologies and standards for ICT statistics. This ensures that data collected from different countries are comparable and reliable, facilitating meaningful analysis and benchmarking.
- Capacity building: The partnership organizes capacity-building workshops and training programmes to empower countries to improve their ICT data collection and dissemination practices. These initiatives help build the technical skills and knowledge needed to produce high-quality ICT statistics.
- Promoting data use: By promoting the use of ICT data in policy-making and development planning, the partnership helps ensure that decisions are based on accurate and up-to-date information. This enhances the effectiveness of ICT initiatives and supports sustainable development goals.

How ITU bolsters the partnership

ITU is an active member of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, has led several of the partnership's Task Groups and has been a Steering Committee member from the beginning.

From the core list of indicators identified by the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, ITU is responsible for collecting the infrastructure and access indicators, as well as the indicators on access to and use of ICTs by households and individuals. To improve data availability and comparability, ITU works closely with its Member States, particularly the ministries in charge of telecommunication, regulatory agencies, and national statistical offices. ITU provides technical assistance to enhance the capacity of national statistical offices.

ITU offers also the online training on [Measuring digital development: Telecommunication/ICT indicators](#) hosted on the ITU Academy. The training aims to strengthen the capacity of countries to produce ICT indicators and statistics according to international standards and methodologies. It presents the main groups of telecommunication/ICT indicators collected and the different questionnaires as well as the definition and methodologies of the indicators following the ITU Handbook for the collection of administrative data on telecommunications/ICT. Examples provided address data gaps and challenges faced by countries and suggests possible solutions.

Other key resources by ITU's ICT Data and Analytics

- [ICT statistics home page](#)
- [ITU DataHub](#)
- [Statistics](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [Definitions, standards and methodology](#)
- [Events](#)
- [International cooperation](#)
- [Capacity development](#)
- [Big data for measuring the information society](#)
- [Expert groups](#)
- [ICT prices](#)

- [ICT facts and figures](#)
- [ICT development index \(IDI\)](#)
- [ITU's ICT SDG indicators](#)
- [Universal and meaningful connectivity targets](#)

Other key elements

Regular reporting, conference cycles, and awareness-raising prizes all highlight ITU's comprehensive approach to advancing the WSIS process and promoting sustainable digital development. Through annual reports, Action Line roadmaps, the coordination efforts of UNGIS, and regional implementation, ITU continues to drive progress in global ICT development and support the achievement of the SDGs.

Annual report on ITU's contribution to the implementation of the WSIS outcomes

The annual report on ITU's contribution to WSIS implementation provides a comprehensive overview of the organization's efforts and achievements in advancing the WSIS process, including initiatives, projects, and partnerships to promote digital inclusion, enhance connectivity, and support sustainable development.

The 2023 report, for instance, details ITU's efforts in expanding broadband access, promoting digital literacy, and advancing cybersecurity measures. It serves as a valuable resource for stakeholders to understand the impact of ITU's work and plan their own initiatives accordingly.

WSIS Action Line roadmaps on C2, C4, C5, C6

WSIS Action Line Roadmaps outline the steps needed to achieve the goals of each action line, serving as a guide for stakeholders to align their efforts with the overall WSIS objectives. These roadmaps are regularly updated to reflect new developments and emerging priorities in the broad areas of Information and Communication Infrastructure (C2), Capacity Building (C4), Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs (C5), and Enabling Environment (C6).

UNGIS role and impact

The United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) plays a critical role in coordinating digital initiatives across UN agencies, ensuring a unified approach to digital development. Established in 2006, UNGIS fosters collaboration and partnerships among UN Chief Executives Board (CEB) members to achieve WSIS objectives. ITU, as the permanent secretariat of UNGIS, has been instrumental in organizing joint thematic activities, meetings, open consultations, and events. UNGIS's impact on the WSIS process underscores the importance of a coordinated effort to address global ICT challenges and promote sustainable development.

Regional Implementation

ITU maintains six regional offices and collaborates closely with UN Regional Commissions, and Regional Telecommunication Organizations. ITU regional offices provide crucial support in advancing WSIS priorities at the regional, national or local level. These offices provide technical assistance, capacity-building support, and policy guidance to Member States in advancing tech for the good of all.

Interconnections and synergies

Interactions between WSIS and other multistakeholder platforms exemplify the collaborative spirit that drives global digital development. Initiatives like IGF, AI for Good, and others complement the impact of WSIS in advancing digital technologies as part of a sustainable and inclusive future for all. WSIS is a vital multistakeholder platform, fostering global digital cooperation and development.

This section explores these interconnections and highlights the collaborative efforts that enhance the impact of WSIS initiatives.

Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

The IGF is a key platform for public policy discussions pertaining to the Internet. It brings together stakeholders from governments, the private sector, civil society, and academia to discuss and address Internet governance issues. The IGF, as a result of WSIS process, shares a common goal of promoting an inclusive and sustainable digital future. Their collaboration is evident in several areas:

- **Policy development:** Both platforms contribute to the development of policies that promote Internet access, security, and governance. The IGF's discussions on Internet governance complement WSIS's broader digital development goals, ensuring that Internet policies are aligned with global digital cooperation efforts.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** The IGF's multistakeholder approach aligns with WSIS's principles of inclusivity and collaboration. By engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, both platforms ensure that various perspectives are considered in shaping the digital landscape.
- **Capacity building:** The IGF and WSIS jointly support capacity-building initiatives that enhance stakeholders' understanding of Internet governance and digital policies. These efforts empower communities to actively participate in the digital economy and governance processes.

AI for Good

AI for Good is the leading UN platform on artificial intelligence (AI) for sustainable development guided by [Resolution 214 \(Bucharest, 2022\)](#) of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, and amplified by [Resolution 78/265](#) and [Resolution 78/311](#) of the UN General Assembly. Focused on identifying trustworthy AI applications, building skills and standards, and advancing AI governance for sustainable development, the platform is organized by ITU in partnership with over 40 UN Sister Agencies and co-convened with the Government of Switzerland. With demand for AI activities growing significantly, ITU is adapting its programmes to meet global needs.

- **AI standards development and exchange:** In its pursuit of universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation, ITU has developed standards for utilizing AI in 5G and future networks, multimedia innovation, assessing and improving the quality of digital services, and improving energy efficiency, to name just a few examples. These efforts are amplified by close collaboration with other standards bodies and UN partners, supporting the development and publication of a comprehensive suite of standards across a variety of domains. The world's first International AI Standards Summit took place at ITU-T WTSA-24. Co-organized with ISO and IEC, this summit convened experts and stakeholders from global standards bodies to address the growing demand for accelerating standards development for responsible, safe, and inclusive AI. The 2025 International AI Standards Summit will take place on 2-3 December 2025, in Seoul, Republic of Korea.
- **Support for AI deployment and capacity development:** ITU is working to equip countries around the world with the knowledge and tools necessary to take advantage of AI, with the aim of ensuring that the benefits of AI are globally accessible and equitable. AI for Good is piloting projects that use AI to transform AI for Good webinars into capacity building events. ITU hosted its first regional AI for Good event – AI for Good Impact India – alongside WTSA-24 in New Delhi at the request of the Indian government. The AI for Good Impact Africa is set to take place in October 2025 during the AI Africa Expo, in partnership with the G20 secretariat. The AI Skills Coalition, meanwhile, provides a global, open, trusted and inclusive platform for AI education and capacity building.

- **AI governance, policy, and regulatory-related work:** The first [AI Governance Day](#), themed “From Principles to Implementation”, was held on 29 May 2024 as part of the 2024 AI for Good Global Summit. The event brought together participants from around the world. This included high-level government representatives, including ministers, policymakers, researchers, and technologists from both developed and developing countries. The event’s multistakeholder composition aligned with ITU’s mission to provide an inclusive, neutral, and globally representative platform for AI. The day was marked by vibrant discussions and collaborations aimed at transforming AI governance principles into actionable frameworks.
- **Supporting UN system-wide coordination on AI:** The UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination High-Level Committee on Programmes (CEB-HLCP) Inter-Agency Working Group on AI (IAWG-AI), co-chaired by ITU and UNESCO, leads a comprehensive coordination effort across almost 50 UN entities and has developed key initiatives like the UN System-wide Ethical Principles for AI. In addition, leveraging the IAWG-AI members and AI for Good UN partners, ITU coordinates inputs and prepares the annual UN Activities on AI report, an interactive directory. In the latest version released during the 2024 AI for Good Global Summit, 408 AI projects from 47 agencies are reported, covering all 17 SDGs with outputs mainly in software tools and reports, focusing on topics like human rights, ethics, and justice; environment; agriculture; health; education; gender; and telecommunications, and involving collaborations with the UN system, Member States, academia, and the private sector.
- **Multistakeholder collaboration via AI for Good:** The AI for Good platform has become a powerful tool for fostering public-private partnerships, facilitating knowledge exchange, and assisting developing countries in achieving sustainable development through the practical application of high-potential AI use cases. Through ITU’s AI for Good initiatives –such as AI start-up and robotics competitions, machine learning challenges, and the ITU Journal– a repository of AI knowledge and applications is being amassed. This foundation will enable the establishment and contribution to a wealth of knowledge driving sustainable development aligned with the SDGs. The AI for Good Impact Initiative plays a crucial role in mobilizing the necessary resources to broaden AI applications globally, ensuring equitable progress across all SDGs and regions. Notably, the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event and the AI for Good Global Summit were held in the same week, from 27 to 31 May 2024, in Geneva, Switzerland. This scheduling allowed diverse stakeholder communities to leverage the opportunities offered by both platforms. The concurrent scheduling of these events facilitated a comprehensive dialogue on the integration of AI into development strategies, emphasizing the importance of multistakeholder collaboration in harnessing emerging technologies for sustainable development.

Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development

The Broadband Commission led by ITU and UNESCO has set [7 Advocacy Targets for 2025](#) that assess progress in broadband access and identify remaining gaps. They reflect ambitious and aspirational goals and function as a policy and programmatic guide for national and international action in broadband development and for achieving universal connectivity. The Broadband Commission tracks progress on those targets in its annual flagship [State of Broadband Reports](#). Utilizing a variety of data source (including ITU data and statistics), progress is estimated on these goals and multistakeholder policy recommendations are developed to suggest how to achieve and advance them.

The Broadband Commission’s Working Groups also address themes related to these targets to provide more in-depth analysis and detailed recommendations for all stakeholders.

- Advocacy Target 1: Make broadband policy universal
- Advocacy Target 2: Make broadband more affordable

- Advocacy Target 3: Get everyone online
- Advocacy Target 4: Promote Digital skills development
- Advocacy Target 5: Increase use of digital financial services
- Advocacy Target 6: Get MSMEs online
- Advocacy Target 7: Bridge the gender digital divide

The [7 Advocacy Targets](#) are set to expire by the end of 2025. Despite substantive progress in some areas, the Broadband Commission's targets have still not been achieved. Target 2 for mobile broadband affordability is close to being achieved, and Target 7 for gender equality in access to broadband has been achieved for some countries, although not globally.

- There has been progress in Target 1, but Plans have become more comprehensive and extend beyond broadband and connectivity into Digital Agenda.
- Target 2 is close to being achieved for mobile broadband affordability, but not for fixed broadband.
- There has been strong progress in access to the Internet, but Internet access is often concentrated in urban areas and is far from universal. The age digital divide is now a divide prevalent in many high-income countries.
- There are promising new applications in digital financial services, but data are old and outdated
- There has been some progress in digital skills (Target 4) and getting MSMEs online (Target 6), but problems with data availability make these targets difficult to measure.
- Target 7 for gender equality in access to broadband has been achieved by some countries, although not globally.

Measurement of global advocacy targets would benefit from greater clarity and scope. The Broadband Commission has called for efforts to collect and publish granular, reliable and gender disaggregated data related to infrastructure deployments as well as Internet adoption and use in accordance with international guidelines and standards.

UN Virtual Worlds Day

UN Virtual Worlds Day, co-organized by ITU and 12 UN agencies, brings together governments, cities, and innovators to explore how AI-powered virtual worlds can empower communities and tackle global challenges.

The Global Initiative on Virtual Worlds and AI, launched by ITU, Digital Dubai, and UNICC, brings together stakeholders to explore the opportunities and challenges of emerging technologies like AI and the metaverse. It fosters discussions on governance, interoperability, and inclusivity, ensuring that virtual worlds contribute to sustainable development and digital inclusion. It aligns with WSIS Action Lines on access to information and knowledge (C3), capacity building (C4), and ethical dimensions of the Information Society (C10), promoting responsible and inclusive technological advancements.

United for Smart Sustainable Cities

The United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative, coordinated by ITU, UNEP, and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), supported by 19 UN agencies, provides a global platform

to support cities in their digital transformation. It develops policy guidelines, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to help cities become smarter, more sustainable, aligning with the WSIS Action Lines related to ICT applications (C7), enabling environment (C6), and capacity building (C4). U4SSC directly contributes to SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by fostering digital innovation in urban areas.

Other examples

Other ITU-driven initiatives also contribute to the collaborative ecosystem that supports WSIS's mission.

ITU's own Network of Women and other initiatives where ITU is closely involved, such as International Geneva Gender Champions and EQUALS, aim to work with all stakeholders for gender digital inclusion.

Part 3: Why WSIS matters now

WSIS remains a vital framework for advancing digital development and leveraging digital technologies for sustainable development. From the start, a key goal has been to bridge the digital divide, ensuring equitable access to technologies regardless of geographical location, gender, socio-economic status, or ability.

Despite impressive progress, severe disparities persist in digital access and usage around the world today. Yet ITU-led projects in support of WSIS Action Lines continue advancing connectivity and digital inclusion for all.

Today, digital technologies are essential to eradicate poverty, improve education and healthcare, protect our environment, and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. WSIS provides a valuable framework to ensure technologies help build a better future for humanity.

WSIS continues bringing together governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, international organizations, and academia to address complex digital development challenges. This robust, inclusive, and established consultation platform, therefore, remains crucial amid the rise of AI, the IoT, 5G mobile networks, and unprecedented satellite coverage.

The Global Digital Compact adopted at the UN Summit of the Future in 2024 reinforces long-standing WSIS principles. The new compact, just like WSIS, emphasizes universal connectivity, digital inclusion, and multistakeholder collaboration. (*Refer to the UNGIS matrix above*)

WSIS, in turn, can drive on-the-ground implementation of these worthy aims, further strengthening the drive to build a digital future for all.

An active and proven mechanism

The WSIS platform remains a potent tool for shaping the global digital landscape, particularly in parallel with the new expression of familiar WSIS priorities in the Global Digital Compact. The framework will remain flexible and adaptive, capable of addressing new challenges and seizing emerging opportunities. Through ongoing collaboration and innovation, WSIS will ensure that digital technologies contribute effectively to sustainable development and that no one is left behind in the digital age.

Existing, effective, and evolving

The process stemming from the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) offers a robust framework for leveraging ICTs to drive sustainable development. Since its inception, WSIS has provided a comprehensive platform for addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the

digital age. This framework is built on a foundation of multistakeholder collaboration, involving governments, private sector entities, civil society organizations, international organizations, and academia. This inclusive approach ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more effective and sustainable ICT initiatives.

The WSIS framework is not static; it evolves to meet emerging challenges and harness new opportunities. Over the years, WSIS has adapted to technological advancements such as AI, the Internet of Things (IoT), and 5G networks. By continuously updating its strategies and action plans, WSIS remains relevant and effective in promoting digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and sustainable development.

WSIS+10 Review Process

In 2005, the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (paragraph 111) called upon the UNGA to conduct an overall review in 2015 of the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS. This process, known as the WSIS+10 Review, was convened to assess the progress made in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and provide the WSIS vision beyond 2015.

The UNGA [Resolution 68/302](#) (adopted in July 2014) set out the modalities for the WSIS+10 Review process. It called for a High-Level Meeting to be held in December 2015, preceded by an intergovernmental preparatory process that also takes into account inputs from all relevant stakeholders. In line with this resolution, the President of the General Assembly appointed H.E. Mr Jānis Mažeiks, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia and H.E. Ms Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates as co-facilitators for the WSIS+10 Review process. The review led to the adoption of Resolution [A/RES/70/125](#), which reaffirmed the commitment of all stakeholders to the WSIS process, highlighted the WSIS Action Lines as a core framework for digital development, and aligned the WSIS process with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ahead of the UNGA review, the [WSIS+10 High-Level Event](#), co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD, and UNDP, took place from 10 to 13 June 2014, with pre-events on 9 June in Geneva. The event was designed to review the progress made in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes under the mandates of participating agencies, and to take stock of achievements in the last 10 years based on reports of WSIS Stakeholders, including those submitted by countries, Action Line Facilitators, and other stakeholders.

The outcomes of this High-Level Event were two consensus documents developed through a comprehensive [Multistakeholder Preparatory Platform \(MPP\)](#):

- [WSIS+10 Statement on the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes](#)
- [WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015](#)

Preparation for the Overall Review of the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes: WSIS+20 and Beyond 2025

[Resolution 70/125](#) requests the General Assembly to hold a high-level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2025 (referred to as “WSIS+20”), involving the input and participation of all stakeholders, including in the preparatory process, to take stock of progress on the outcomes of the World Summit and identify both areas of continued focus and challenges. It also recommends that the outcome of the high-level meeting be considered as an input into the review process for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The WSIS+20 will provide an opportunity to reflect and discuss the evolution of the WSIS implementation process.

WSIS+20 roadmaps

- [*World Summit on the Information Society \(WSIS\)+20: WSIS Beyond 2025: WSIS+20 Roadmap*](#); elaborates the ITU Secretary-General's roadmap on the role of ITU in the WSIS+20 Review process and its preparations. It outlines ITU's leadership in engaging stakeholders, assessing progress, and aligning WSIS Action Lines with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The roadmap emphasizes comprehensive preparations, including detailing activities, events, and reporting mechanisms, all aimed at informing the UN General Assembly Overall Review in 2025. Through collaborative efforts, it identifies priorities for advancing digital development beyond 2025 while fostering global partnerships and dialogue.
- [*Report by the Director General on implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society \(WSIS\) outcomes*](#), elaborates UNESCO's roadmap towards the WSIS+20 review.
- [*CSTD Roadmap for the WSIS+20 Review United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*](#).

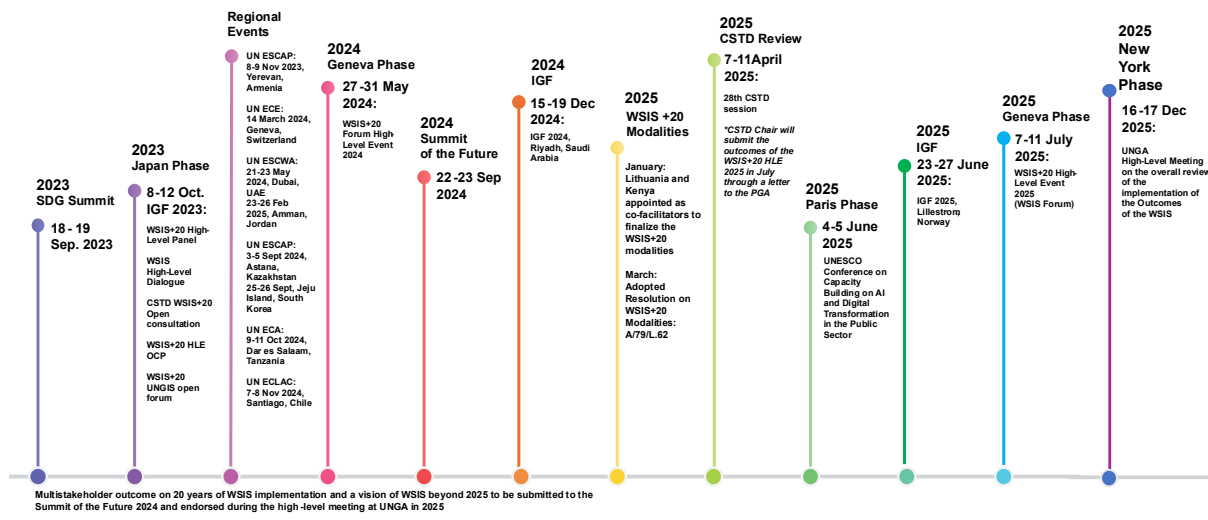
At the [*WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024*](#), several multistakeholder dialogues and discussions were held to discuss on the preliminary steps towards the WSIS+20 review process. The sessions were included as part of the [*Digital Governance Processes: WSIS, GDC/ Summit of the Future Special Track*](#). These sessions concluded with key takeaways emphasizing the need to avoid duplication of efforts while acknowledging existing mechanisms and recognizing the substantial work that lies ahead. Stakeholders reaffirmed the value of the multistakeholder framework and highlighted the key elements of the WSIS process, such as the WSIS Forum, IGF, UNGIS, the WSIS Stocktaking platform, etc.

The WSIS Forum 2025, branded as the [*WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025*](#), will commemorate two decades of the WSIS Process by celebrating its achievements and identifying the opportunities and challenges in implementing the WSIS Action Lines. The event is scheduled to take place from 7 to 11 July 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland.

WSIS+20 Joint Preparatory Process

Towards the WSIS+20 overall review, a joint WSIS+20 preparatory process has been established, involving key UN entities including ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD, UN DESA, CSTD, with support by UN Regional Commissions. This coordinated effort has facilitated the identification of key milestones leading to the overall WSIS+20 Review. Regular meetings are held to support collaborative planning and dialogue, reflecting our shared commitment to the joint WSIS+20 preparatory process. Please refer to the timeline below for further details.

WSIS+20 Review Joint Preparatory Process



WSIS+20 modalities

In January 2025, the President of UNGA appointed H.E. Mr Erastus Lokaale, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya and H.E. Mr Rytis Paulauskas, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania, as co-facilitators for intergovernmental consultations to finalize the modalities for the overall review by the General Assembly of the implementation of WSIS outcomes ([letter dated 20 January 2025](#)).

The resolution on ICT for sustainable development ([A/RES/79/194](#)) outlines that the modalities are to be finalised by the end of March 2025.

On 4 February 2025, the co-facilitators presented a timeline of the intergovernmental consultations of the modalities for the overall review by the General Assembly of the implementation of WSIS outcomes and circulated the zero draft of the modalities to be presented on 14 February 2025 in ECOSOC Chamber (see information [here](#)).

The Modalities Resolution ([A/RES/79/277](#)), adopted in March 2025, decides to convene a high-level meeting of the General Assembly, at the highest possible level, on 16 and 17 December 2025, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

On 23 April 2025, the President of UNGA has appointed H.E. Mr Ekitela Lokaale, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations, and H.E. Ms Suela Janina, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations, as co-facilitators to lead the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Information Society.

WSIS+20 Action Lines milestones, challenges and emerging trends beyond 2025

The WSIS Action Lines serve as a key framework for advancing progress towards the achievement of SDGs. The WSIS Action Lines cover eleven areas of focus with technology serving as a key enabler for sustainable development. The ITU, together with other WSIS Action Line facilitators from UN agencies, has prepared presentations highlighting key milestones, challenges, and emerging trends beyond 2025. The presentations are available [here](#).

ITU's call for inputs on the WSIS+20 Review

In accordance with ITU Council Resolution 1332, ITU has launched a [call for inputs on WSIS+20 review](#). Members and other stakeholders are invited by the Chair of the CWG-WSIS&SDG to contribute their views on the work of the ITU in the WSIS+20 review, including ideas related to the review of the WSIS Action Lines.

This process, facilitated through an online form and physical meetings, aims to gather insights into the achievements and challenges of the WSIS process, its alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its adaptation to emerging trends. Out of 97 submissions, 62 were published upon consent: [CWG-WSIS&SDG Call for Inputs on the WSIS+20 Review Responses](#).

The WSIS+20 ITU call for Inputs side events during the IGF 2025 and WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025 will continue this dialogue on the WSIS+20 review with all stakeholders.

The summary of this Call for Input will be submitted by the Chair of the Council Working Group on WSIS and SDG to the WSIS+20 overall review by UNGA. In addition, the ITU Secretary-General is invited to consider the outcomes of this Call for Input when submitting the ITU SGs WSIS+20 Report to the WSIS+20 overall review, as outlined in the [ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution 140 \(Rev. Bucharest, 2022\)](#).

20-Year Reports on the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes

WSIS Forum in 2025, branded as the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025, will facilitate multistakeholder dialogue and drive action by assessing achievements, key trends, and challenges since the 2003 Geneva Plan of Action. It will also provide a crucial platform for the international community to build on the outcomes of the Summit of the Future and strengthen global digital cooperation for a renewed, forward-looking vision. Ahead of the UNGA twenty-year review, the event will provide an opportunity to review the progress made in the implementation of the WSIS Outcomes under the mandates of participating agencies and to take stock of the achievements made in the last 20 years based on reports of WSIS Stakeholders, including those submitted by ITU Member States and other stakeholders.

All WSIS Stakeholders and ITU Member States are encouraged to submit 20-Year Reports on the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes based on the corresponding templates below:

- [Country 20-Year reporting template](#)
- [WSIS Stakeholder 20-Year reporting template](#)

Alignment with other UN digital cooperation processes

On 22 September 2024, Member States adopted the Pact for the Future, which includes the GDC. In [paragraph 71](#), the GDC requests the Secretary-General to provide a Compact implementation map for consideration by Governments and other stakeholders. As per paragraph 71, the [GDC Implementation Map](#) reflects the contributions of the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders, and will be included in the Secretary-General's report on the progress made in implementing and following up on the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, at both regional and international levels, ahead of the WSIS+20 review. The GDC and the WSIS+20 review are closely aligned in their

shared objective of advancing global digital cooperation and addressing the evolving challenges of the digital age.

The 28th session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) was held from 7 to 11 April 2025. The session focused on reviewing progress in the implementation of, and follow-up to, the outcomes of WSIS at both regional and international levels, with particular emphasis on the WSIS+20 review. During the session, the Commission adopted a *resolution on the assessment of progress in implementing and following up on the WSIS outcomes*, based on ECOSOC resolution [E/RES/2024/13](#).

WSIS+20 Review: Evaluating WSIS outcomes to date

As we approach the 20th anniversary of WSIS, it is crucial to evaluate the outcomes achieved so far. The WSIS+20 Review, scheduled for 16-17 December 2025, will provide a comprehensive assessment of the progress made in implementing WSIS outcomes. This review will involve contributions from all stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, private sector entities, and civil society. The goal is to identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement, ensuring that WSIS continues to drive meaningful digital transformation.

The review will also highlight best practices and successful projects, providing valuable insights for future initiatives. By learning from past experiences, WSIS can refine its strategies and continue to drive digital development effectively.

Future digital cooperation

WSIS remains a vital framework for advancing digital development. The process stemming from the original two-phase summit in 2003 and 2005 remains a cornerstone in the global effort to harness the power of technologies for sustainable development. Its ongoing relevance is underscored by its ability to adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities, ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital age.

Beyond 2025, WSIS can continue to drive global digital cooperation and development, ensuring that digital transformation efforts are coordinated and aligned with global priorities.

Key priorities for WSIS beyond 2025 include:

- **Universal connectivity:** Expanding ICT infrastructure to ensure that everyone has access to affordable and reliable Internet services.
- **Digital inclusion:** Promoting digital literacy and skills development, particularly for underserved and marginalized communities.
- **Cybersecurity:** Enhancing cybersecurity measures to build trust in digital technologies.
- **Sustainable development:** Leveraging ICTs to achieve the SDGs and promote environmental sustainability.

GDC adopted at the Summit of the Future in 2024, aligns closely with WSIS principles. Both frameworks emphasize the importance of universal connectivity, digital inclusion, and multistakeholder collaboration.

With several similarities shared with the GDC priorities, the WSIS process will continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the global digital landscape. The framework will remain flexible and adaptive, capable of addressing new challenges and seizing emerging opportunities. Through ongoing collaboration and innovation, WSIS will ensure that digital technologies contribute effectively to sustainable development and that no one is left behind in the digital age.

Bridging digital divides

WSIS remains key to bridge the digital divide, promote sustainable development, enhance global connectivity, and more.

One of the primary goals of WSIS has been to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their geographical location, socioeconomic status, or gender, has access to ICTs. Despite significant progress, disparities in ICT access and usage persist, particularly in rural and underserved areas. WSIS initiatives continue to play a crucial role in addressing these disparities by promoting policies and projects that enhance connectivity and digital inclusion.

ICTs are vital for sustainable development. They enable innovative solutions to global challenges such as poverty, education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability. WSIS provides a framework for leveraging ICTs to advance the SDGs, ensuring that digital technologies contribute effectively to sustainable development. The WSIS-SDG Matrix, for example, maps the contributions of WSIS Action Lines to specific SDGs, demonstrating the interconnectedness of digital development and sustainable progress.

Global connectivity has seen remarkable growth since the inception of WSIS. Internet usage has increased dramatically, with mobile and broadband technologies reaching billions of people worldwide. However, the goal of universal connectivity is yet to be fully realized. WSIS continues to drive efforts to expand ICT infrastructure, particularly in remote and underserved regions, through initiatives like the GIGA project, which aims to connect every school to the Internet.

Fostering multistakeholder collaboration

WSIS has established a robust multistakeholder platform that brings together governments, private sector entities, civil society organizations, international organizations, and academia. This inclusive approach is essential for addressing the complex challenges of digital development. By fostering collaboration and dialogue among diverse stakeholders, WSIS ensures that ICT initiatives are comprehensive, inclusive, and effective.

Global digital cooperation remains essential going forward.

Addressing emerging technologies

The rapid advancement of technologies such as AI, the IoT, and 5G networks presents both opportunities and challenges. WSIS provides a platform for discussing and addressing the implications of these emerging technologies. It promotes the development of ethical guidelines, regulatory frameworks, and best practices to ensure that new technologies are used responsibly and benefit all of society.

Promoting cybersecurity and trust

Growing digital integration into all aspects of life requires countries and organizations worldwide to ensure cybersecurity and build trust in digital systems. WSIS initiatives, such as the Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) and the Child Online Protection (COP) program, play a vital role in promoting cybersecurity awareness, developing international standards, and supporting national cybersecurity strategies.

Supporting digital literacy and skills development

Digital literacy and skills are essential for individuals to effectively use ICTs and participate in the digital economy. WSIS emphasizes the importance of capacity building and education, providing training programmes and resources through platforms like the ITU Academy and the Digital Transformation

Centres. These efforts are crucial for empowering individuals and communities, particularly in developing countries, to harness the benefits of digital technologies.

Ensuring environmental sustainability

The environmental impact of ICTs is an emerging concern that WSIS addresses through initiatives promoting sustainable ICT practices. This includes developing energy-efficient technologies, managing electronic waste, and advocating for the use of renewable energy sources. By integrating environmental considerations into digital development, WSIS contributes to a more sustainable and resilient future.

Addressing global challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical role of ICTs in maintaining societal functions during crises. From enabling remote work and education to facilitating access to healthcare and essential services, digital technologies proved indispensable. However, the pandemic also exposed significant digital divides, emphasizing the urgent need for global digital cooperation. WSIS is more important than ever in addressing these challenges, as it provides a platform for stakeholders to collaborate on bridging the digital divide and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Promoting digital inclusion

Digital inclusion is a core principle of WSIS. The process emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status, gender, or abilities, can benefit from digital technologies. Programmes such as the EQUALS Global Partnership work to bridge the gender digital divide by providing digital skills training, mentorship, and networking opportunities for women and girls. Similarly, initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy and skills development are crucial for empowering individuals and communities to participate in the digital economy.

Moving forward

As a third decade of WSIS begins, this process has become more important than ever. The rapid advancement of technology and the increasing reliance on digital solutions for everyday life underscore the need for a robust, inclusive, and collaborative digital framework. WSIS provides this framework, guiding international efforts to harness the power of technology for sustainable development.

Looking towards the future, the WSIS process will remain a vital mechanism for ensuring that digital technologies contribute effectively to global development goals and that no one is left behind.

Insights from the Summit of the Future

The Summit of the Future, held in September 2024, provided a critical platform for discussing the future of global digital cooperation. Key insights from the summit emphasized the need for inclusive digital policies, the importance of leveraging emerging technologies, and the role of multistakeholder collaboration in achieving sustainable development goals. Discussions highlighted the transformative potential of AI, space technologies, and digital innovation in driving sustainable development and addressing global challenges^[1]. The summit underscored the necessity of creating governance frameworks that ensure the ethical and responsible use of these technologies, aligning with the broader goals of the WSIS process.

Beyond 2025, WSIS and digital development will be guided by insights from the Summit of the Future, the objectives of the Global Digital Compact, and the vision of building the digital future for all. By maintaining a people-oriented, development-oriented, and inclusive approach, and by strengthening

existing WSIS structures in complementarity to GDC implementation, the WSIS process can continue to drive sustainable digital development and ensure that the benefits of digital technologies are accessible to all individuals and communities.

The GDC's objectives include closing digital divides, expanding inclusion in the digital economy, fostering a safe and secure digital space, and advancing responsible data governance^[2]. By aligning with the GDC, WSIS initiatives can leverage broader support and resources to achieve their objectives. The GDC emphasizes the need for universal connectivity, digital inclusion, and the ethical use of technology, ensuring that digital development efforts contribute effectively to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Enhanced vision for the future

The WSIS vision for 2025 and beyond is central topic when discussing maintaining a people-oriented, development-oriented, and inclusive approach to digital development. This vision will guide the WSIS process in the coming years, ensuring that digital technologies benefit everyone, particularly marginalized and underserved communities.

- **People-centred:** The WSIS process would continue to prioritize the needs and aspirations of individuals, ensuring that digital technologies are accessible and beneficial to all. This includes promoting digital literacy, enhancing digital skills, and ensuring that everyone can participate in the digital economy.
- **Development-oriented:** WSIS initiatives would focus on leveraging digital technologies to drive sustainable development. This involves aligning digital development efforts with the SDGs, promoting innovation, and fostering economic growth.
- **Inclusive multistakeholder:** Inclusivity would remain a core principle of the WSIS process. Efforts would be made to bridge the digital divide, promote gender equality, and ensure that digital technologies are accessible to all, regardless of their socio-economic status, gender, or abilities.

The WSIS Forum, the WSIS Stocktaking database and UNGIS can also strengthen the implementation of the GDC.

The GDC, like WSIS, promoting a cohesive approach to digital development and enhancing multistakeholder cooperation. The compact's priorities align with the goals of WSIS, ensuring that digital initiatives are inclusive, sustainable, and aligned with global development objectives. By fostering collaboration among governments, private sector entities, civil society organizations, and international organizations, the GDC strengthens the multistakeholder model that is central to the WSIS process.

The GDC also emphasizes the importance of ethical considerations in the development and deployment of digital technologies. This includes ensuring data privacy, promoting cybersecurity, and addressing the ethical implications of emerging technologies such as AI and IoT. By aligning with the GDC, WSIS initiatives can leverage broader support and resources to address these challenges and opportunities effectively.

The way forward

The continuation of the WSIS process beyond 2025 is essential to bridge the digital divide, advance sustainable development, enhance the quality of global connectivity, promote digital literacy and skills, ensure cybersecurity and data privacy, foster innovation, promote multistakeholder collaboration, address environmental sustainability, support global governance, and leverage digital technologies for inclusive growth. By continuing to support the WSIS process, the UN system and countries around the world can build a digital future that benefits everyone.

ITU has been at the forefront of implementing WSIS outcomes, driving global digital development progress.

Reiterating the WSIS+20 vision

The WSIS+20 vision emphasizes a people-oriented, development-oriented, and inclusive approach to digital development. This vision aims to ensure that digital technologies benefit everyone, particularly marginalized and underserved communities. By focusing on inclusivity and sustainability, the WSIS+20 vision will guide the WSIS process beyond 2025, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals and leveraging ICTs to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Call to action for ITU Member States and stakeholders

Looking beyond 2025, ITU Member States and stakeholders must continue supporting and advancing the WSIS process. This collective effort is crucial to enrich the overall process and ensure that digital technologies accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

Ensuring technology accelerates SDG progress

Technology is a powerful tool for achieving the SDGs. WSIS initiatives demonstrate how digital solutions can accelerate progress on various goals, from education and healthcare to economic growth and environmental sustainability. Projects like AI for Good showcase the potential of technology to address global challenges and drive sustainable development.

By continuing to support and advance the WSIS process, ITU Member States and stakeholders can build a digital future that benefits everyone. Together, digital technologies can be leveraged to achieve the SDGs and create a more inclusive and sustainable world.

ITU and WSIS Activities delivering GDC objectives

The WSIS Process and its elements like the WSIS Action Lines, WSIS Forum and UNGIS provide an existing framework for implementing the commitment of the Pact towards leveraging science, technology, and innovation for the benefit of people and the planet, focusing on enhancing capacities in developing countries. These efforts will ensure that these advancements promote human rights and improve gender equality, positively impacting the lives of women and girls. They also aim to respect and integrate Indigenous and traditional knowledge. Additionally, they support international cooperation in science, technology, and innovation to create a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

The WSIS Process and the Pact of the Future share several key similarities:

- 1.Focus on Inclusivity:** Both emphasize the importance of creating an inclusive society where all individuals, regardless of their background, have access to technology and its benefits.
- 2.Addressing the Digital Divide:** Both initiatives aim to bridge the gap between developed and developing countries regarding access to information and communication technologies.
- 3.Promotion of International Cooperation:** Both documents highlight the need for collaboration among governments, private sectors, and civil society to harness technology for sustainable development.
- 4.Alignment with Sustainable Development:** They both align with the overarching goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizing the role of technology in achieving these goals.
- 5.Capacity Building:** Both initiatives stress the importance of strengthening the capacities of countries, particularly developing ones, to effectively utilize technology and innovation.

ITU and WSIS activities delivering the Global Digital Compact (GDC) Objectives

 GDC Objectives	1. Closing digital divide	2. Expanding inclusion	3. Fostering safe, digital space	4. Advancing responsible, interoperable data governance	5. Enhancing international governance of AI
 ITU Activities	ITU manages radio spectrum, develops international standards, provides policy & regulatory guidance and implements projects to connect the world Read more →	ITU has many initiatives to widen access to digital services, including training and centres for underserved communities Read more →	ITU develops ICT security standards & helps Member States set up national centres and cyber-drills to enhance readiness. ITU produces the Global Cybersecurity Index Read more →	ITU is the leading agency for ICT statistics, including the ICT Development Index. ITU also produces standards to promote data interoperability as well as quantum communications Read more →	ITU produces many standards on AI and since 2017, has convened the AI for Good Summit. ITU also has standards collaboration on AI watermarking, multimedia authenticity and deepfake detection Read more →
 World Summit on the Information Society	Action Line C2: ICT infrastructure 	Action Line C4: Capacity Building 	Action Line C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs 	Action Line C3: Access to information 	Actions Line C6: Enabling Environment 

6. **Human Rights Consideration:** Both documents advocate for the protection and promotion of human rights in the context of technology, ensuring that advancements do not exacerbate existing inequalities.
7. **Innovation and Knowledge Sharing:** They emphasize the need for fostering innovation and the sharing of knowledge and best practices among countries to enhance technological development.
8. **Ethical Use of Technology:** Both underscore the importance of ensuring that science, technology, and innovation are used ethically and responsibly to benefit all.

References

[CWG-WSIS&SDG website](#); UNGA Resolutions [A/RES/70/125](#), [A/RES/70/1](#), [A/RES/77/150](#), [A/RES/71/212](#), [A/RES/70/299](#), [A/RES/73/218](#) and Report [A/70/684](#); UN ECOSOC Resolution [E/RES/2025/18](#); PP Resolutions [140 \(Rev. Bucharest, 2022\)](#), [172 \(Guadalajara, 2010\)](#) and [71 \(Rev. Bucharest, 2022\)](#); Council Resolutions [1332 \(Modified 2024\)](#) and [1334 \(Modified 2023\)](#); WTDC Resolution [30 \(Rev. Kigali, 2022\)](#); WTS Resolution [75 \(Rev. Geneva, 2022\)](#); RA Resolution [ITU-R 61-3 \(Rev. Dubai, 2023\)](#); [WSIS+10 Statement on the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes](#); [WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS beyond 2015](#); [Final WSIS Targets Review](#); [WSIS+10 Report – ITU’s Ten Year Contribution to the WSIS Implementation and Follow-up \(2005-2014\)](#); [Roadmap for ITU’s activities to help achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#); [World Summit on the Information Society \(WSIS\)+20: WSIS beyond 2025 – WSIS+20 Roadmap](#); [Summit of the Future Outcome Documents](#); [WSIS Process and 2030 Agenda – GDC Matrix](#)

ITU resources for WSIS implementation and follow-up

- [ITU Gateway for WSIS](#) – provides an overview of the ITU role and the activities carried out in the context of World Summit on the Information Society. It should serve as the main directory to the ITU websites and electronic resources related to the WSIS.
- [WSIS Portal](#) – serves as a central hub for information, activities, and resources related to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), including its implementation, follow-up actions, forums, stocktaking, since 2003.
- [WSIS Fund in Trust](#) – a voluntary trust fund supporting WSIS-related activities, including the WSIS Forum and stocktaking. Contributions from Member States and stakeholders ensure the sustainability of WSIS initiatives.
- [ITU Contribution to the WSIS Implementation](#) – ITU’s official annual report on WSIS implementation across the organization’s three sectors (Radiocommunication, Standardization, Development) and the General Secretariat.
- [UNGIS](#) – a key UN inter-agency mechanism ensuring policy coherence and coordination in digital development initiatives.
- [ITU WSIS Action Line Roadmaps](#) – provide strategic guidance for WSIS Action Lines (e.g., C2 – Infrastructure, C4 – Capacity Building) aligned with SDGs, helping policymakers track progress.
- [WSIS Review](#) – periodic assessments of WSIS implementation, including contributions to the UN’s broader digital development agenda.
- [WSIS+10 High-Level Event](#) – held in 2014, reviewing the first decade of WSIS implementation and setting priorities for ongoing ICT development.
- [UNGA High-Level Meeting](#) – the United Nations General Assembly’s high-level discussions on WSIS outcomes and their relevance to global digital policies.
- [WSIS Forum](#) – held annually as a global platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and multistakeholder collaboration on digital development.
- [WSIS Stocktaking](#) – a database of digital projects worldwide that align with WSIS goals, supporting best practice sharing and partnerships.
- [WSIS Prizes](#) – a prestigious annual competition recognizing ICT projects that contribute to sustainable development.
- [CWG-WSIS & SDGs](#) – ITU’s inter-agency group that ensures WSIS action lines remain aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- [CWG-Internet](#) – ITU’s dedicated working group on global Internet governance and policy challenges.
- [Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development](#) – a multistakeholder initiative improving global ICT data collection, led by ITU, UN agencies, and the World Bank.

- [ICT Statistics](#) – ITU’s global database on ICT penetration, digital divide indicators, and emerging trends.
- [World Telecommunication and Information Society Day](#) – celebrated annually on 17 May to highlight the importance of technologies in global development.

Other ITU websites and online resources relevant to WSIS implementation and follow-up:

- [ITU Publications](#) – a portal providing access to a wide range of ITU publications, including reports, handbooks, and databases. It offers functionalities to search, order products, and download digital content.
- [ITU Hub](#) – offering free access to global, telecom, and ICT reports, trends, analysis, telecom data. It features topics such as digital skills, e-waste, satellite, 5G, and the digital divide.
- [ITU Academy](#) – providing access to a wide range of training programmes, courses, and resources for capacity building in the ICT sector.
- [Digital Transformation for People-Centred Cities](#) – providing information on the digital transformation of cities and communities. It facilitates knowledge exchange, identifies policy needs, and develops international standards to support people-centred smart cities.
 - [Publications related to digital transformation for people-centred smart cities and communities](#)
 - [Toolkit on Digital Transformation for People-Oriented Cities and Communities](#)
The resources contained in this Toolkit include international standards and guidance, the latest research and projections, and cutting-edge reports on various timely topics relevant to the digital transformation of cities and communities.
 - [Digital Transformation Resource Hub](#)
The Digital Transformation Resource Hub provides a wide range of quality publications on a range of digital transformation topics, including smart sustainable cities, cities’ actions to tackle COVID-19, digital public infrastructure, AI, IoT, blockchain, digital twin etc.
- [United for Smart Sustainable Cities \(U4SSC\) initiative](#) – U4SSC is a global platform supported by 19 UN agencies. U4SSC serves as an international platform for exchanging knowledge and fostering partnerships to empower cities and communities in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
 - [U4SSC publications](#)
 - [U4SSC Key performance indicators project](#)
The U4SSC KPIs webpage offers detailed guidelines, methodology, and case studies to support cities in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities.
 - [Reports on U4SSC KPIs implementation](#)
- [Metaverse and AI-powered virtual worlds](#) – providing information on ITU’s activities on metaverse and AI-powered virtual worlds.
 - [Global Initiative on Virtual Worlds and AI – Discovering the Citiverse](#) – a global platform that aims at fostering open, interoperable and innovative AI-powered virtual worlds that can be used safely and with confidence by people, businesses and public services.
 - [Publications on Metaverse and AI-powered virtual worlds](#)
- [AI for Good](#) – a year-round platform with information on ITU’s activities on artificial intelligence (AI), including AI for Good Global Summit, AI standards, AI governance
- [International Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience](#) – promoting dialogue and collaboration on ways and means to improve the resilience of the vital undersea infrastructure that powers global communications and the digital economy.