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INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION

WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY FORUM 2023

High-Level Strategic Dialogue: WSIS+20 and the future of WSIS  
beyond 2025

ROOM D

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WSIS + 20 and future beyond WSIS 2025.

The WSIS process is a great example of an existing process with an excellent digital cooperation mechanism with all stakeholders including QN inter-agency coordination with more than 30 United Nations agencies committed to the process.

The WSIS process provides an excellent framework of the WSIS Action Lines that are also relevant, even today, for equal, just, and well-functioning information and knowledge societies. It is time now that we start planning the future of this important process beyond 2025 together, and Mr. Tomas Lamanauskas as Deputy Secretary-General of ITU is already here with me so I invite you to initiate the dialogue.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to invite the distinguished panelists. Amandeep, please. I think the protocol will be setting -- wait. Yes. Just a few minutes for technical break.

We have our vice-chairman, Mr.-- I don't see him now, Mr. Al-Qurashi.

I think we're still missing a couple of participants, but I think we'll start and then hopefully we'll have them join. I think Paul Mitchell from IGF and Mansour are not here, no, so

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maybe hopefully they will join as we go.

Definitely, thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, again, being here with us today. We continue today's segment. This is still the opening segment of the conference. The topic of this session today is actually a review of the WSIS + 20 and Future of WSIS Beyond 2025. I think that's very, as we are now reaching the really -- you know, this year is the 20 years since the first WSIS Summit, and now I have to admit I hadn't participated in the first one. I know some people in the room did. I did participate in the second one in Tunisia, actually, and now is a good time to reflect when we look back in 2000 and 2003, the time was not very easy, we just came out of the dot com bubble and tech bust at the time and so a lot of uncertainty as sometimes we have now. There was also a lot of hope, and we heard Doreen Bogdan-Martin, ITU Secretary-General also referring to the words really saying and noting the potential that digital technology was seen to be having already at that time for everyone around the world.

So I think now is the time to kind of reflect back, you know, what have we achieved in the 20 years of WSIS? And also where are we going next, and also what's next for WSIS?

And I'll introduce the panelists as we go, I suggest, so that we don't have separate introductions, but of course so as I will start with Dr. Jelassi, our partner in organizing WSIS Forums for many years now, and also a big part of the WSIS implementation process. So what are reflections from UNESCO over the last years, if you can use those as we go forward and how do you see the WSIS + 20 process linking up with other global processes, including the Global Digital Compact and we'll have you comment on that later, please.

>> TAWFIK JELASSI: Thank you very much, Tomas. Good morning to all of you. I was also at the Tunisia edition of WSIS 2005, I was there as guest speaker. Certainly, we had a big ambition. We had a lot of goals. We were very optimistic and very enthusiastic as to the creation of this information society and even beyond a knowledge-base society. What have we done since? We certainly have advanced quite a bit, but as Doreen said this morning, the road is quite long. The challenges are huge, and the world has changed. The question to us is have we changed enough in the face of the changes that have occurred over the last 20 years?

So I think we all agree that we haven't changed enough, and I dare to say that it should not be really WSIS + 20. We need to reboot WSIS. It should be WSIS 2.0. We have to strategically rethink. We have to step back. We have to take stock of what has worked and what has not worked, and together collectively, in a truly multistakeholder approach because this

is I believe a key feature of WSIS. WSIS is not only an inter-governmental process. WSIS is also Civil Society, NGO organizations, academia, research institutions, Member States, of course. But it's a collective, true multistakeholder approach. To think of the new digital space that we want and new digital governance that we should put in place. Why? To combat the harmful side -- I'm sorry, to combat the harmful side of digital. I said briefly in my remarks this morning that we see today a lot of people, especially the youth, spending two or three hours a day on digital platforms. They spend more time on the platforms than in the classroom, and they listen to what they come across more than they listen to their professors and their teachers in the classroom. We have really to pay attention to this new digital Civil Society and the harmful side that we don't want to see, so we have advanced, yes, but we haven't advanced combating misinformation, disinformation, hate speech online, online harassment, cyberbullying, and the list goes on and on.

We even today challenge the integrity of elections because of what happens online, influencing the voters, and casting doubt on the integrity of the electoral processes. We have seen this in dozens of countries, help that forms, even impact negatively democratic processes and elections.

Again, let me stop here because we have distinguished panelists that need also time to express their views. We have advanced, but clearly we haven't advanced enough and we are facing new challenges that we haven't thought of back in 2003, back in 2005, and we have to rise to that challenge. Thank you.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much. Indeed, we still have a lot of things to do. With that I pass the word to Amandeep Singh Gill, UN Secretary-General Enjoy for Technology. With a segue will digital compact be the WSIS 2.0? And what are ways we'll be addressing, how will we address the topics that WSIS has missed so far? And also more generally, how you're planning to involve broad multistakeholder community also in that process as well to make sure all of you is together. Please, Amandeep?

>> AMANDEEP SINGH GILL: Thank you, Tomas. I heard Tawfic say it would be WSIS 2.0 and not Global Digital Compact. Next I want to join Doreen in historical interest, a billion people on the net, no social platforms, and they mentioned harms and potential risks that we see. And the Internet was not really yet a global Internet, but if you look at last year's figures, for instance, 48% of the Internet traffic today comes from China, a big shift to Asia, so we are in a different paradigm with machine learning, data, the new platforms you see

today with generative AI, the kind of strides that are being made in turning artificial intelligence into a new infrastructure as well.

So we are really in a new paradigm. The ICT paradigm, even the information society paradigm has been absorbed into this more, let's say, ubiquitous cross-cutting horizontal paradigm. The opportunities are enormous. Look at the share of global GDP coming from digital today. By some estimates 16% or 17%. The rate at which it is growing, that's very interesting. Soon you may have this at about 50%, so if you can contemplate that 3-times jump, so the opportunities are enormous and that growth is there to be seized, and I think when I was listening to Tawfik, this mention of we, the we as who are the we here who stand ready to take advantage of those opportunities and handle the risks and consequences, including the shifts in the labor markets, the institutional rebooting we would need to do.

So I think there if you look back at the progress, many governments have played a key role and private sector has played a key role in driving progress on the goals set at Tunisia and Geneva. I think they would continue to be the lead actors, but then Civil Society, academia, the tech community play a very important role in keeping us all honest, helping us make sure that we are not losing sight of the excluded. We don't want a digital future in which a large number are left out as bystanders. It's not only a question of human agency in a sense of decision-making, but as a question of being not left out as bystanders. This is where the Global Digital Compact becomes important. It's a once-in-a-generation opportunity to craft a shared vision, to come out with some objectives, an action framework, and I think it's nicely timed with regard to the WSIS + 20 meeting where the Internet Governance Forum, another very, very important Forum, a multistakeholder forum will come up as well. It's a kind of opportunity for us to reboot, as Tawfik said, go on and update our software, and when we reboot, we have to make sure that the machine starts again and that it works better than before.

I won't say anything more on the process because the co-facilitators have already spoken and shared with you their roadmap. We are in a listening phase, a consultation phase which will end in June, and then the Ministers will meet in September, give us guidance for the Summit of the Future in 2024, so it's a very important early stage in the process, and I invite all of you to participate, to contribute, and seize the opportunity.

As Doreen said, it's our time. Thank you.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: We'll pass back the microphone.

Thank you very much, Amandeep. It's indeed once-in-a-generation opportunity to step back and say what we want from digital development and digital cooperation, indeed, and it's great to see this in yourself here in this forum adds well, really, actively engaging with stakeholders.

So now again, the first stage of WSIS it was in Geneva in 2003, and then understand, and we have with us Ambassador Thomas Schneider, and I understand you were there then, and now of course you represent in digital affairs of Ambassador and Director of digital affairs in OFFCOM Switzerland so it would be great to hear. How do you rate achievements in the last 20 years, have we lived up to the expectations as we set them, and what do you expect at the next stage, what do you expect at WSIS 2.0 as referring back? Thank you.

>> THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Yes. Thank you, Tomas. Thanks for organizing this. We have heard this morning that Doreen the ITU Secretary-General has said that much more work is needed to achieve the goals agreed by WSIS and to contribute to achieving to the SDGs. And, of course, Doreen is always right so she's also right on this.

At the same time, talking about achievements, we think that the WSIS process since 2003 has actually achieved a lot. One of the main achievements is actually understanding, which is a prerequisite. In 2003 when we were sitting here in Geneva, most of the government representatives barely knew how the Internet works and what it takes to keep it running. But at the WSIS, then governments agreed that they need to listen to and cooperate with all stakeholders in respective roles and create appropriate structures that allow us to learn from each other and to work together to achieve the goals at WSIS and SDGs.

Now with regard to looking forward at what's coming up in the coming months and years, we have a number of important processes. We have started the work on the GDC which will then feed into the Summit of the Future. Whatever we agree as political goals in these processes, we must assure that these do not remain just paper. So we, again, need structures to implement these goals, to make a real difference for the people, then we need the expertise from all stakeholders and that they work together on the ground to find solutions that allow all people in the world to seize the opportunities that new technologies offer and that risks and disadvantages and new inequalities are minimized.

This is in our view the WSIS + 20 process becomes crucial. In 2003 and 2005 where we have not only agreed on papers and we have also created structure, and we have designated the ITU, UNESCO and other specialized UN agencies to

facilitate the implementation of the WSIS goals and action lines. And since then, these specialized agencies have not only contributed to the work on the ground directly, but they have facilitated many, many partnerships across the different stakeholder groups that work together to achieve the agreed goals.

And they have created structures to facilitate this cooperation like the WSIS Forum here in Geneva that meets annually or other structures like the UN Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development.

With the AI for Good summit, the ITU is bringing together many actors from all sectors and stakeholders trying to promote the use of AI for common good. Last month UNESCO organized a big conference on another issue of very high importance and urgency to all of us, platform regulation. And it will continue to develop guidance in a multistakeholder format that should help all actors, again, in their respective roles to work together to make sure that platforms are a tool to exercise freedom of expression and other fundamental rights while at the same time upholding the functioning of peaceful and democratic societies.

Last but not least, the WSIS has created the IGF, the world's biggest and most important multistakeholder platform to identify emerging issues and promote ways to use new technologies for the good of all people.

So when we discussed the political goals of the GDC, the common agenda, the summit of the future, we should think about how to organize to move from words to action. We are convinced that the structures created by the WSIS with a facilitating capacity of ITU, UNESCO and other specialized agencies, should continue to have a key role.

We also think that the IGF has an important role to play. It could actually act as a platform that creates transparency and accountability by serving as the annual place where the activities of all actors are discussed and reviewed with regard to their contribution to achieving the political goals. So let me end by saying that Switzerland who has been a strong supporter since the WSIS in 2003 here in Geneva will continue to support all actors and processes that bring together all stakeholders development and shared goals beyond 2025. In this regard looking forward to WSIS + 20 Forum in 2024 here in Geneva that will gather the many, many, many, many people here in Geneva and then we should discuss how to organize ourselves for 25 and beyond. Thank you very much.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much, indeed, Thomas. Indeed, I like how you planned very well so indeed next year, the event in Geneva. I think we'll be looking

forward to organizing with you. I think I really take away your message about structures, the importance of structures, because it's one thing what we agree in the meeting rooms and the process, but another thing, do we have the right structures to follow it up and adapt to the changes, you know, as we go and as the time changes and to take on these new challenge as well.

So now, you know with that I'll be passing to Mr. Mansour Al-Qurashi, Vice-chair Commission on Science and technology, WSIS + 20 review and this is where the information comes and ISOC and general assembly advises if we're on track or not and adjust. Plays the important role in 10 years in 2015 I still remember, you know, being here in Geneva for that, but as so how do you see, Mansour from your side, you know, how you know what is the process, or what is the most effective process of your review that you can do, and where do you need help from others as well, and what lessons are you taking from the last 20 years that would help us moving forward? Please.

>> MANSOUR AL-QURASHI: Thank you, Tomas. Good morning, everyone. Looking at the history and how WSIS started here in ITU, it was a Tunisian idea, supported by Switzerland and then the whole leaders gathered in together to have this concrete outcome, which I admit a document guiding our work in the future, and even working as north star for how to solve current challenges. I believe we're at the birth place of WSIS and built a strong platform of private sector, Civil Society, and this should be preserved and made even more powerful, bigger, in order to tackle the future challenges.

When it comes to the SDGs, the UN system focal point to review the progress made, challenges, achievement, and every year the commission has twice meetings, inter-sessional panel and we try to bring all stakeholders to navigate what challenges, what distractions there are, sharing on how can we together improve the process. As you know, many action lines, one of the good things that we had facilitated of the UN agencies that will lead the efforts of the ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, WHO, so it's a multistakeholder event that everyone should work together to serve the globe.

Moving, I would say beyond 2024, is a challenge process. We have so many parallel processes, I know at the GTC, Summit of the Future, I would say the UN Tech Envoy is onboarding us, so how can we all collaborate together to join forces to make it easier, even for Member States to follow the discussions, to be there, expertise, financial support, to one process that will help everyone.

My recommendation is this is the challenge, how we make and identify UN action and others to have a better future for

everyone.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you. Raising the challenge. And already warning the panelists, that will be my question back to you after we go through the first round, how we bring it all together back. So it's just -- so a pre-warning to think about that as well.

So, then you know the really big strength of the WSIS process is also there is multistakeholder and from the beginning that was the design, not only governments, but Civil Society and private sector are fully involved and contributing. And also as we go forward those voices are very important. So with that, they would really like to turn to Dr. Liberato, be Bautista, President of Cons frens of nongovernmental organizations, in relationship with United Nations and CoNGO for short, so representative of Civil Society in yaigs and the process including WSIS and especially the interest, so what do you see -- what do you see the role is in Civil Society in the WSIS process? Has it been successful so far, maybe I can ask as well? And then why it's important to have that role? Please.

>> LIBERATO BAUTISTA: Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. Firstly, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Lamanauskas, for your intellect as Deputy Secretary-General of ITU. Thank you for giving me the time to address two questions and speak on behalf of the Conference of NGOs. CoNGO is international NGO with status with ECOSOC and composed of a little over 600 non-governmental organizations accredited in the United Nations system (non-governmental).

Every Secretary-General of United Nations and heads of entities in the UN system, including ITU, have invariably acknowledged the critical role of NGOs in the work of the United Nations system, and the achievement of substantive multilateral agendas, not the least agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and indeed the WSIS Action Lines.

This role of NGOs emanated from Article 71 of the United Nations charter and elaborated further by ECOSOC resolution 1996/31. The full and successful implementation of the multilateral agenda relies heavily on the partnerships among governments, multilateral institutions, the private and business sectors, and why this breadth of Civil Society groupings, including non-governmental organizations?

Says to the premises that is the physical space and to the premises that this substantive agenda of the UN is critical to the multilateral consultation process, and such access has been a feature of the WSIS process and NGOs want this feature to continue, even as we embark on an assessment of the progress



made in the last 20 years of the implementation of and follow-up to the WSIS outcomes. NGOs look forward to their meaningful participation in this assessment process, including in the meetings leading to a resolution on the global digital compact.

The inclusion and involvement of the broadest possible diversity of Civil Society organizations in WSIS beyond 25 are critical to this multilateral, all be it, intergovernmental process. The digital justice and communications rights are essential to an open, free, accessible, people and multistakeholder-centered knowledge and information societies. And then these are concerns that the people of the world, certainly NGOs, cannot delay or set aside.

Ladies and gentlemen, WSIS and CoNGOs long history of collaboration is ee will you sitive of the multistakeholder collaboration and cooperation. Presidents before me collaborated since the WSIS forum was created. CoNGO and member organizations are invested in the partnerships that flourished for the past 20 years if the WSIS process and we pledge to do our part to strengthen this beyond 2025.

In the meantime, CoNGO and the 600 members will contribute a compendium of NGO good practice in the use of information technology. I wish for us a productive and meaningful forum. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much, Liberato. It's important to have societal involvement. Thank you for the active engagement. With that another very important stakeholder group is private sector and again been with us since the beginning of WSIS, and again very important to have you here. We have Mr. Global Digital Policy Lead from International Chamber of Commerce and you indeed represented the private sector 20 years ago, I see you in the private sector 20 years ago in the WSIS process, and since then, so what have we learned from the process? Was it effective and why private sector participation is important, and what we expect in the future as well? Please.

>> TIMEA SUTO: Thank you, Tomas. Excellencies, distinguished participant, it's a pleasure and honor to join you today and contribute to the diversity of views on the panel from the perspective of the global private sector and on behalf of the International Chamber of Commerce.

ICC is the institutional representative of more than 45-million companies in over 100 countries, for those of you who don't know us, through a unique mix of advocacy, solutions, and standard setting, we promote international trade, responsible business conduct, and global approach to regulation.

All members include members of the leading world companies, SMEs, business associations, and local chambers of commerce as well. We were founded in 1919 and for over 100 years now, we have served as the voice of the global business across many international organizations and multistakeholder fora, and as you said, Thomas, also we were the business focal point for the WSIS process that started here in Geneva 20 years ago.

And when the WSIS concluded in Tunisia in 2005, business stayed engaged to ICC action to support the information society initiative on the WSIS follow-up workstream such as Internet governance Forum and the WSIS Action Lines as well as various discussions on Internet public policy matters and Internet governance.

There are two main considerations that were reached at WSIS that since then we hold axiomatic. Firstly that ICTs, Internet, and digital technologies hold an enormous potential for inclusive, social, and economic growth. And secondly, that this potential can only be truly unlocked and effectively harnessed through multistakeholder cooperation between governments, businesses, Civil Society, and technical and academic communities.

These have held through over the past 20 years, and as the ICTs of digital technologies continue to develop, ever since as building the WSIS Action Lines 2030 Agenda and multistakeholder agenda continues to spread partnerships across the globe. This means both in practical terms of delivering infrastructure skills that make up the digital ecosystem and developing the policy frameworks that enabling, continue inclusive digitalization and address the potential challenges that come with it.

Business takes its role in advancing the global agenda very seriously and here in Geneva and New York at UNHQ and around the globe working with governments and stakeholder community to inform and partner to shared our interest in economic and social development.

Now, the WSIS Forum provides a valuable inflection point for us each year to come together and take stock of the progress made on the WSIS goals. It is part of how we collectively work towards an open and inclusive information society as envisioned in the Geneva Plan of Action and pursuit of the WSIS Action Lines. We appreciate hearing highlights from the efforts made across the many UN agencies, governments, stakeholders to benchmark and incentivize further direction. We still have a long way to go. There are still billions of people waiting for the opportunity to join the people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented information society that was

envisioned at WSIS, and as we look ahead to the review of the WSIS process and beyond, we must remember the lessons learned 20 years ago and ever since. And just like in business management, we should not fall for the trap of top-down management or allow politics to come between us and our goals. It will take all stakeholders to reach the WSIS and meet the goals. The multistakeholder model is how we would connect everyone and everything to better future. The WIS + 20 review should aim to be, strengthen, spread, and enable this model, and I look forward to discussing this in the more issues with you at the forum this week. Thank you very much.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very, very much. Indeed, business involvement is important and as you say, even though we have new challenges some of those still same challenges, the moral is fundamentally still the model that seems to service.

As I said, as I promised, we'll have a second round, you know, and that's where I definitely would like to hear briefly, so how do you see, you know, these all different processes coming together and what's the best way to approach that? Already, you know, I like to be moderator and say we have a third round, and I'll ask about your vision like three sentences of your vision on WSIS + 20, what was the ideal outcome of that? We'll start now with just with how to bring the different strands together, and again Tawfik, please.

>> TAWFIK JELASSI: Thank you very much, Thomas. First of all I thank Thomas Schneider for mentioning last month UNESCO conference on building Internet for trust and trying to regulate digital platforms for information to be a common public good. When you have a Member State like Switzerland mentioning your conference, then you realize that it's quite a bit of buy-in process-wise, so thank you, Thomas.

A couple of quick points. First of all, we first all acknowledge the UN Secretary-General Common Agenda that calls for great collaboration and partnership. I think this is fundamental. Number two, I would like to say that going forward on your question, Thomas, we definitely need to work closely with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the different initiatives that we heard about, WSIS + 20, the IGF + 20, the Global Digital Compact which is part, of course, of the broader summit for the future that all of these initiatives, their goals, workstreams are mutually reinforcing.

I think for me or for us at UNESCO, this is a very important point. Finally, I want to say that we need to move forward with the vision of inclusive people-centered, development-oriented information society that is respectful of human rights. That is for us the anchoring pillar for all of

what we do. People-centered, development-oriented and inclusive information society which is respectful of human rights. Thank you.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you. Great vision. I couldn't agree more. Amandeep?

>> AMANDEEP SINGH GILL: Thank you. How does it all come together? I think the Member States play a crucial role since we are in UN setting. And the Member States have come together at the 75th anniversary of the UN Commemoration to decide that they will reinforce, they will strengthen digital cooperation. And they've also decided that there will be a Summit of the Future where leaders will come together, and that summit is an opportunity to reboot multilateralism overall, Secretary-General's common agenda report has laid out the various directions in which we need to work. There is the very, very important work on the SDG agenda, we have the midterm review, it's going to be a sobering review. We have the climate change challenge, we have the environmental pollution challenge, biodiversity challenge, all of these, important management of outer space will be discussed in the Summit of the Future. Global digital compact coming out of that is a opportunity for us to come together, shape a shared vision. These other trends that have been there, important stands, IGF, they have a important role, multistakeholder characteristic that is very valuable, and they will continue to contribute to achieves the vision the forefathers of the UN have set for us, us, we the peoples. That vision is anchored in human rights, in sustainable development, and in peace and security. That's how it comes together.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much, Amandeep. One thing I really hear the same tracks about development, human rights, inclusion. Yeah, a lot of people's interests. It's definitely at least on the principles where we're seeking the same vision. Thomas, now.

>> THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Yes. Thank you. The big lines are not so complicated yet for each agency if each of them focus on what it can do best. New York is the place where big lines across the issues, across technologies are agreed. This is what New York can do and nobody else can do. Here if Geneva and Paris and elsewhere, we go more into the details of the issue, give guidance to ITU and many institutions here can give guidance on specific issues like using AI in health or how to deal with frequency, how to set goals, how to advise regulators to boost connectivity in rural areas and so on and so forth, so there is for me a Ferrell clear division of labor. And then again, many, many more actors than can contribute. So, for instance, I'm currently chairing a committee at the Council of

Europe, and this is not European Union, this is like the UN for Europe for those not familiar with this. Where we're working on the first binding convention, binding treaty on artificial intelligence, which is a process that is open to all interested governments in the world, so it is not a European process and we do have a growing number of countries participating, and it is also multistakeholder process because actors from all stakeholders are allowed to participate and feed into the work on this convention. So it is New York, it is Geneva, these are let's say the biggest, but then there are many others. (?) also has important role to play, whatever you buy on the Internet needs to somehow be bought to your home. It is Bourne Paris, UNESCO, Rome, Vienna also important there, but others also around the world. UN agencies and also -- and it is complicated but the world is complicated and we need to find out how we organize ourselves in a way that we don't spend too much time coordinating, but just know that what we are doing we are connected but each of us can do what we're good at and move things forward together. Thank you.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you. We had Ambassador New York is a dining room and Geneva is kitchen. You need both spots to have good food and pleasant atmosphere. Thank you. Putting it to you to answer your own question, so please.

>> MANSOUR AL-QURASHI: Tawfik and Thomas raised two issues kept as challenge since 2005 and 2006 is how do deal with incidental platform. It's a good question, how do you find a solution that will help everyone, developed and developing countries, rich and poor, educated and not educated, we live in digital age no matter what we do, are we even on cellular phone or PC or tablet. It's a future where we should find a solution. We should be responsible as Member State, stakeholders, UN agencies. As we said we are a kitchen now in Geneva and have differences, but we should work collectively together as we try to bring rich together. I would love to see UNESCO by the end of March, tomorrow wearing two hats and the rest of the stakeholders to come in one platform and to try to have this unified solution with the ITU and with the rest of UN agencies. I think after COVID we should be really responsible how we deal with the world and how we find our common way to go forward.

It is not acceptable that different part of the world they have their own solutions and then we will end up with many I say left-hands that we cannot communicate together and cannot solve these issues. So with Europe, Africa, Americas, we should come around to one table and find a solution that will have a digital future for everyone.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much. Liberator,

you involve both, New York and probably engineers, how would you bring these?

>> LIBERATO BAUTISTA: I think as we wade through the various multilateral processes between now and 2025, we must humble ourselves, real otherwising we are tinkering with the future which is not ours. The future of both the natural world of that is our planet and that of human beings, the people of the world. These peoples of the world are what United Nations charter referred to in the Preamble. They must be included intentionally in every process leading to 2025. Until access, political access, and digital access. An the shared a warning this morning by the Director-General of UNOG, at Anna, value vai we must not invisiblize, all the peoples must be included in all of these processes.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much. And indeed now in the common agenda, we're also discussing how to include the people of the future, indeed, the future generations and there were some proposals coming out from the Secretary-General as well in that regard. So, Timea, from your side, how would you bring everything together?

>> TIMEA SUTO: That would be a great challenge, of course. I want to remind us of -- I was not there, personally, 20 years ago, but my organizations were and many of the people around the room here were there 20 years ago when the WSIS process started. And you remember the knocks at the door from Civil Society, from business, from the technical community and academics.

We've come a long way from that. We are all sitting around the virtual table here and conversing. And I think this is the way -- it's not perfect, but it's a lot better than the way we've come in the past 20 years to bring not just governments of the world together, but stakeholders of the world around the same table and have conversations, and we've referenced a number of processes between now and the WSIS + 20 process review. I think all of those, the SDG Summit this year, the Summit for the Future next year, WSIS + 20 in 2025, the 2030 Summit and everything else that comes after. How do we make sure to include around the table meaningfully all the stakeholders next to the governments? I think it's a huge win already that the Secretary-General's common agenda that says to convene the digital compact we need multistakeholder and multilateral process. That was not there in the WSIS. There was a long conversation until we included both in the WSIS, so I think the 2020 success would be for this to not be a question anymore, and that to be the way at that we just go forward for future conversations.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much. All right

for the last round I promised, as well, a challenge. So already Liberato said already we're thinking for the future, and then it's always good to think. Think about what we think the future imagines to be. And as we mentioned some of the successes you would see from the outcome. I think I would like us to conclude really with a vision, you know, some consultants use this tool called beach-front approach, so to know what you're getting, you have to imagine the beach with the palms and sand and magical place that you'll reach. What is the beach from WSIS + 20 and beyond? Where would you like to be when we go through this review process and what would be success for you?

>> TAWFIK JELASSI: Thank you, Tomas. I'm not sure I have the answer of how to get there for your question. Three questions that we need to answer. Again, following a multistakeholder approach, the why, what, and the how. We all agree on the why. Many of us mentioned this paradigm shift that we have seen over 20 years, a paradigm shift in all aspects of life. We have been talking about digital transformation, companies have been talking about digital business transformation. Have we succeeded in transforming through digital our lives? This last summer in New York is the trans forping digital summit, how can digital technology change teaching and learning and education at large? This is happening as we speak. Digital communication is the way, transforming culture, sciences, open science approach, education through open educational resources, all enabled by digital and that is the pillar. We know all digital seems to be a tool, and it's a strategic enabler and cast catalyst for change. Before we meet the changes happening, we have to think of digital as a catalyst for the change.

Second, very briefly, I believe that that's the why. The what, we have all to agree what we want to achieve through a global digital compact through WSIS 2.0, through our common digital agenda, what is the scope, what are the boundaries, so we know what we're going to implement. Implement is the how, how can we execute, how can we implement, how can we deploy in order to create this better future for all as it was said by many people, of course to implement, to bring about positive change and have impact on the ground in inclusive manner. So we suggest the structure, the why, the what, and the how. Thank you.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much. So hearing there there is of course making sure we really harness digital for the transformation of the fundamental digital society would be part of that really vision and beach front and making sure that we have a good structure for that. Tomas, what is your

beach in that regard that you would like to reach once you go through all of these processes?

>> THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. My dream would be there is a beach for everybody. At least one day a week, every person in the world can lay at the beach and the sun of course should be shining and not raining.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Just like Geneva.

>> THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Whether it's a lake, river, or sea. The problem is I think we should basically go back to Square 1 where we were in 1945 or after 1945 and say okay, what does it take so that everybody can lie at the beach? What does it take that we can live peacefully, share resources, live in competition but not in war. I think coming from a small country for us, it is crucial to live in rule-based societies and have rule-based economies and also to create incentive that everybody is following the rules that we all agree together on. It's important at that these processes are inclusive with all stakeholders in their respective roles.

If you take the issue of platform regulation, it is not enough just to tell the platforms how they should behave. We also need to tell our politicians and citizens and other leetders how to behave when they're using platforms. We need to create incentives that all of us, in particular the powerful actors, stick to the rules and that everybody is held accountable whether you're a private company or government or Civil Society movement, and that we all hold each other accountable and whoever is going against our goals and rules will be brought back into the community and told how to behave. I think this is something that we need to work on very seriously, and also in the multiwill the ral system, it's a combination between the mutty lateral and multistakeholder system and we need the processes but need to be honest with each other and say tell us how to better follow the rules that we agreed with a goal that everybody has a place at the beach at least once a week. Thank you.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you. Inclusiveness and working together. I already see myself using a new hashtag. Beach for everybody. Thanks.

>> If we speak about the beach I want a respectful beach, culture, a beach that will make everyone develop, prosper, and beach that makes sure the sustainability is helping for everyone. We need a place better for our children and grandchildren. We're not developing the world for ourself. I'm quite young, but the next generation are looking at us now and how we can make sure that we are giving them the right environment to develop, to grow in areas of science, technology, space, culture, social, I mean it's really



interconnected, so this speech should be inclusive again, respectful for many cultures and religion, as well as making sure that development and sustainability is for everyone am.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much. We need to have everyone there. Liberato?

>> LIBERATO BAUTISTA: I'm tempted to say now that life is a beach. Multilateral life that is, as you're moderating. And as much as we think -- want to tinker with the future, we must also pause for the present. Wade through those waves in the present and look at the deficits of the multilateral system so that as we at this pointinger with the future, that future will be ever-more inclusive, just, and participatory.

I have very high hopes that we can do it because the multilateral practice that we have, has indicate that had we can and we must and we will.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much. Some people think the multilateral life is too much for the beach, and not always down there in the waves as well, you know, but indeed. Thanks.

>> TIMEA SUTO: Thank you, Tomas. If I imagine my beach, that one is open and free and safe. It is trustworthy, where I feel that we want want to let lose and be happy when we go on vacation. Once a week, hopefully as tomorrow as said. That's the Internet also that we need to build, free, open to everyone, inclusive of everyone, safe and trustworthy for all of us and future generations as many of you said, to use.

If that's the beach front that we imagine to paraphrase Tawfik, how we get there I think is the way for all of us to start going in the same direction towards the same beach and not just to hold hands and king around the campfire. But really to inform each other's perspectives of how we make decisions, how the business community makes investment decisions to manufacture the way that policymakers think about how they make governance decisions or regulatory decisions, and how the Civil Society -- what they see at the grassroots level to inform the way that business thinks about the technology they develop.

So I think the way to get there is as important as the vision of what we want to see, I think the key to both of that is to have everyone around the table.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very, very much. In fact, we have, that's a good inspiring vision to start with. We have some stuff to get there. I hope this inspiration for today will give us a head to actually do that work. Not just thinking but actually to, yeah, put some work on that. With that, I hope that is also a good start for us or boost for further efforts in the WSIS + 20.

With that, I'm passing back word to Madam Chair to continue the event. Please.

>> CHAIR: Thank you so much, Tomas. Thank you to all the participants for sharing your visions beyond 2025 for the Forum. I'm so happy that it's raining outside because after so much talk about the beach, I was afraid that you're going to run away and go to the Lake of Geneva.

At the end of the opening session of the WSIS Forum 2023, I would once again like to express my gratitude to all the participants, le speakers, organizers who made this event a huge reflect. Let us reflect on the powerful insights shared. Efficient corporation of government, businesses, Civil Society, and technical community is extreme low important for meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals, so during the last 20 years of WSIS process, we have achieved a lot but there is still many complex challenges ahead of us, and maybe WSIS 2.0 will manage to deal with them as well.

We should carry this momentum forward as we work towards a more inclusive and sustainable digital future where technology serves the needs of all people, regardless of their background, gender, knowledge, location, and what I learned today, abilities as well.

The discussions and interactions over the past two hours have been inspiring and thought provoking. I invite you to continue to work in moderated high-level policy sessions towards achieving our shared vision of a more ininclusiveness and sustainable society, and this is the how. So we said that we tonight want to all need to discuss where.

Thank you so much. See you at the next sessions.

(session completed at 6:20 it a.m. CST)

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