



World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20 Forum High-Level Event:

First Meeting of the Open Consultation Process Meeting

11 October 2023, 11:00-12:00 JST (UTC+9)

Workshop Room 8, (Room C-1), Kyoto International Conference Center, ICC Kyoto, Japan

The First Meeting of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20 Forum High-Level Event Open Consultation Process was held on 11 October 2023 at 11:00-12:00 JST (UTC+9) during the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2023. The session was organised by the WSIS Forum co-organisers: ITU, UNDP, UNESCO, and UNCTAD.

Mr. Tomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General, ITU delivered welcoming remarks and highlighted the importance role that the WSIS has played in shaping the digital landscape over the past two decades. He appreciated Switzerland for co-hosting the event in 2024 and its continued support in the WSIS process. He encouraged all participants to participate and contribute to the ongoing Open Consultation Process, which will shape the programme of the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event, scheduled from 27 to 31 May 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. In preparation for the WSIS+20 review, Mr. Lamanauskas highlighted the close collaboration among UN agencies (UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD, CSTD and UN DESA), which underlines the shared commitment to the review.

Mr. Prateek Sibal, Programme Specialist, Digital Policies and Digital Transformation Section, UNESCO reaffirmed UNESCO's commitment to WSIS. He outlined UNESCO's initiatives within their mandate, covering aspects such as media, open educational resources, digital capacity building, and the recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence. He informed that UNESCO will be organising a major conference in February 2025, which will focus on digital governance and digital transformation empowering civil servants.

Ms. Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD and Head of the CSTD Secretariat, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development informed that CSTD has launched its first consultation on WSIS+20 review at the IGF 2023. Further, she informed that CSTD has rolled out a survey questionnaire on WSIS+20, in collaboration with ITU, UNDP, UNESCO. She highlighted UNCTAD's work under their mandates, which focuses on leveraging international trade for development. Ms. Sirimanne conveyed that UNCTAD will organise e-Week on 4-8 December 2023 under the theme 'Shaping the future of the digital economy'.

Mr. Robert Opp, Chief Digital Officer, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) underscored the importance role of ICTs and digital technologies in accelerating progress to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He highlighted the SDG Digital Acceleration Agenda, developed by ITU and UNDP, in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Boston Consulting Group, which explores the transformative potential of digital. He also emphasized the importance of WSIS in contributing to the global processes, including the Global Digital Compact (GDC). He acknowledged the collaborative efforts with other UN agencies towards the WSIS+20 review process.

Mr. Thomas Schneider, Ambassador and Director of International Affairs, OFCOM (Switzerland) shared his views on WSIS+20 process. He noted the challenges in defining what the process will look like,

given the increasing complexity of the world with numerous events, structures, and overlapping initiatives, especially when compared to two decades ago when the Geneva Declaration and Plan of Action were negotiated. Mr. Schneider stressed the importance of having multiple tracks to accommodate various voices, emphasizing that one size may not fit all. He expressed support for the WSIS process' role in broadening the space for stakeholder participation and building bridges between UN processes and diverse global stakeholders. He mentioned the significance of continuing the WSIS process, including the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), to ensure inclusive decision-making that respects the diverse needs of people worldwide. Mr. Schneider reaffirmed Switzerland's support for the WSIS process and expressed its support in co-hosting the upcoming WSIS+20 High-Level Forum and the AI for Good Summit.

Ms. Gitanjali Sah, Strategy and Policy Coordinator, ITU delivered a presentation which provides updates on the latest preparation towards the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event. The presentation is available [here](#).

Open Discussion with stakeholders

Stakeholder name	Stakeholder type	Country	Organisation	Intervention/Remarks
Prof. Dr. Peter A. Bruck	Civil Society	Austria	World Summit Awards (WSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasized the importance of a bottom-up multistakeholder approach. • Highlighted the importance of addressing local content and impact. • Suggested the need to prioritise and focus on key issues, such as the knowledge society and its transformation, including skills, competences, democratic participation, and media transformation. • Advocated for addressing the economics of digital transformation and the impact on traditional media. • Called for attention to the digital solidarity agenda, including funding and equitable approaches to closing digital divides.
Valeria Betancourt	Civil Society	Ecuador	Association for Progressive Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on changes since the WSIS+10 review. • Preparing for the WSIS+20 review requires addressing these changes and reinterpreting the WSIS vision. • The overarching question is about what type of digital

				<p>society we want to build, including the financial resources needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to identify what contributions are needed and the outcomes that balance the differences of interest. • The WSIS+20 review process should be used to contribute to strengthening the mandate of the IGF. • Reiterated APC's commitment to continue contributing to the WSIS Action Lines, the WSIS+20 review and its phases.
Justin Fair	Government	United States of America	U.S. Department of State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciated the WSIS Forum co-organisers and Switzerland for organising the event next year. • Highlighted concerns about an overwhelmed system and the need to avoid duplication of effort and improve digital cooperation. • Commended the coordination within the WSIS process and emphasized its maturity and strengthening. • WSIS+20 Forum is an opportunity to take stock of progress, challenges, and how to move forward. • Asked about more information regarding the UNESCO conference in February 2025 and logistics for both WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event and AI for Good events in the same week in Geneva.
Byron Holland	Technical Community	Canada	Canadian Internet Registration Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested to include the technical community in the agenda, underscoring their significance as one of key stakeholders in the process.
Nigel Hickson	Government	United Kingdom	Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasized the importance of the WSIS+20 review process.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasized the inclusion of all stakeholders and regions to contribute to the WSIS+20 review process leading up to the UN GA discussions. • Highlighted the importance of a report that will be issued by UN CSTD, which will assess WSIS in the past 20 years and the future. • The need to focus on bridging the connectivity gap and evolving WSIS Action Lines to complement the SDGs. • Recognised the importance of thorough preparation to ensure ministers are well-prepared to engage in critical discussions at the upcoming Forum. • Acknowledged UNESCO's significant work in multilingualism, which may emerge as a prominent topic at the Forum.
AHM Bazlur Rahman	NGO	Bangladesh	Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangladesh is one of the impact countries of WSIS implementation. • Bangladesh successfully integrated WSIS Action Line C1 to C11 with its five-year plan, digital Bangladesh process, and smart Bangladesh process. • Bangladesh received several WSIS prizes. • Suggested for the WSIS secretariat to publish a toolkit for parliamentarians and mayors. • The need for WSIS Action Line localization, such as sub-regional open consultation for reviewing the WSIS Action Lines progress. • Community media is important for giving a voice to the voiceless, even

				<p>though it faces challenges from social media and new technology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed about the "Bangladesh Initiative for Connecting, Empowering, and Amplifying Unified Voice on Global Digital Compact and UN Summit of the Future."
Bertrand de La Chapelle	Multistakeholder organization	France	Internet & Jurisdiction Policy Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressed concern with the progress of WSIS+20 and the need to strengthen international cooperation. • Emphasized the need for ambitious goals in WSIS and ambition in addressing the challenges of the digital society. • Called for a focus on the future rather than dwelling on past accomplishments.
Prof. Vladimir Minkin	Academia	Russian Federation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined the desired outcome for the WSIS+20 High-Level Event and planned its preparation. • Envisioned the future of WSIS beyond 2025. • Highlighted multistakeholder views on the future of WSIS, SDGs, and GDC