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WSIS+20  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

JULY 7, 2025  
HIGH-LEVEL EVENT 2025 INAUGURAL SESSION  
SESSION 128

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Agenda/Session/128>

ROOM C  
9:00 A.M. CEST

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>> HOST: Welcome, everyone. We want to thank the music event. Please settle down. We will start with a welcoming video exactly at 8:58. Please settle down, find your seats and make yourself comfortable. Thank you very much.

>>VIDEO: Over 20 years ago, a bold idea was born, to harness technology for good. That idea became WSIS. The Mission is a digital future built on inclusion, transparency and equality. Since then WSIS has brought together Governments, Civil Society, and communities to shape a connected world that works for all. The WSIS Action Lines established a framework to evolve alongside technology and address its challenges. Our Stocktaking platform now holds over 15,000 initiatives capturing the pulse of Global process. From infrastructure to ethics, Cybersecurity to capacity building. By creating an environment for regulatory frameworks. WSIS proves that 20 years of digital cooperation really works.

Its outcomes will be essential in the United Nations General Assembly overall review. As we reflect on two decades of impact, we celebrate a legacy of partnership and look ahead with purpose. To create a digital society that is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable for generations to come.

Welcome to the WSIS+20 High-Level Event, 2025.

(Music)

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Agenda/Session/128>

>> HOST: Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025. Thank you for joining us here in Geneva as we celebrate two decades of this UN process the World Summit on the Information Society. This milestone reflects our collective commitment to a people-centred, development-overoriented inclusive information and knowledge society and towards a digitally inclusive future.

Over the next five days, we will engage in dynamic discussions, tactile digital challenges and shape the future of Global Digital Governance together. WSIS is about being together, multistakeholders coming together to ensure that we get a chance to shape policy.

Let's explore our successes, learn from our experiences and envision a more connected and inclusive digital world.

As we embark on this pivotal journey at the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025, it is my distinct honour to invite Ms. Celina Realuyo, Chief of membership and special advisor to the Secretary-General of the ITU to lead us through the inaugural session. Thank you, Celina, over to you.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you very much. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good morning, and welcome to the Inaugural Session of the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025. Is it a pleasure to see so many familiar faces and new ones.

WSIS is the milestone for the WSIS community and the world writ large. This High-Level Event brings together an incredible fusion of expectations and expertise. It shows how much we have achieved and the potential to continue on this path when we unite toward a common purpose for a shared digital journey.

It is my distinct pleasure to invite our co-hosts and co-organizers on stage. First, the co-host and co-organizer of WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025. Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, SG of the ITU. And we have Thomas Schneider, Ambassador and Director of International Affairs Office Fédéral de la Communication representing the Swiss Confederation.

And our co-organizers, Dr. Tawfik Jelassi Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for UNESCO. Ms. Agi Veres Director of UNDP office in Geneva. Joining us later will be Mr. Pedro Manuel Moreno, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD. Please, let's give a warm round of applause to welcome them. Thank you. Please, please, please be seated. Thank you. I don't think that was warm enough. Can we try again!?

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Now, please join me in welcoming the ITU Secretary-General Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin to address us. Secretary-General, please, the lectern is yours.

>> DOREEN BOGDAN-MARTIN: Thank you. Thank you Celina. Good morning, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. It is wonderful to have you all here with us as we begin this milestone week, especially here in Switzerland, which is the home of the ITU and the home of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, which took place

right here in Geneva in 2000 three.

-- 2003.

Looking out at this full room, how many of you were here in 2003? Raise your hand. Okay. I'm seeing -- what do you think maybe 20, 25. Too few.

(Chuckling)

Okay. So back in 2003, the WSIS determined with the greatest conviction that the Information Society must be people-centred, inclusive and development oriented.

The outcome in the form of the Geneva Declaration was described by the then Swiss President as a constitution for the Information Society.

This marks 20 years since the conclusion of the Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society which set a bold vision. A bold vision to shape our shared digital future that reaffirmed our commitment to turning the digital divide into digital opportunities that called on the international community to take the necessary steps to ensure that all countries have equitable access to the benefits of the Information Society.

This week is a time for all of us to reflect. Reflect on how far we have come, and start to chart the path forward for the next two decades.

WSIS remains a Global benchmark for digital cooperation and for inclusive digital development.

Its Action Lines have created a clear framework for implementing change and the outcome Documents were adopted at the highest political level by Heads of State and heads of Government.

I think, ladies and gentlemen, it is something world celebrating.

20 years ago, just one billion people, 16% of the world's population was online. Today, that figure stands at 68%. That progress stems from the WSIS vision of an open and inclusive Information Society that drives digital development for all.

But what truly made this progress possible?

I think it can be summed up in two words. Multistakeholder participation. That is the beating heart of the WSIS process in which 160 countries have been part of.

We have had some 50,000 stakeholders join from Governments, from international organisations, from the Private Sector, Civil Society, Academia, the technical community, and youth. There is lots of youth here this week as well.

That is what makes this Forum so powerful.

In the days ahead, we look forward to working closely with the incoming Chair of this year's WSIS Forum. His Excellency Mr. Solly Malatsi of South Africa. And I also want to recognize as well that we have our co-facilitators of the WSIS+20 process with us. We have the Ambassador from Albania, welcome, Ambassador. And we will also have the Ambassador from Kenya. Both working in New York on that WSIS+20 process. So we're very happy to have you with us.

I also want to recognize our co-organizers and thank them. Our

fellow UN family members. UNDP, UNESCO, UNCTAD, and the 50-plus UN entities that have contributed. I also want to recognize our sponsors that have made this WSIS+20 High-Level Event possible.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as digital technologies grow more complex and emerging challenges come into view, we need broad, inclusive, multistakeholder participation now more than ever before.

It is worth remembering that it is WSIS gave birth to the Internet Governance Forum which successfully held their 20th session in Norway the week before last. Today, the WSIS stands strong and agile in helping guide the implementation of the Global Digital Compact and Pact for the Future that was adopted by Member States last year.

Ladies and gentlemen, we know digital can accelerate progress on every front, from poverty eradication, to quality education to stronger institutions to improved healthcare.

And we know that this next phase, this next part of the WSIS journey has to focus on universal, meaningful connectivity for all.

Capacity building and digital skills to ensure that no one is left behind. Cybersecurity, to protect users and build trust in digital technologies and of course strengthened digital cooperation as envisaged by the WSIS from the very, very start.

Throughout the last 20 years, we have taken groundbreaking actions, we laid the groundwork for an inclusive Digital Transformation across all sectors and all Regions.

To meet the needs of our ever-evolving technological landscape, the next two decades have to be about scaling our activities to keep base as the broadband Commission mentioned yesterday, being bold and also being intentional.

As the UN Secretary-General put it when he visit the ITU last year, technical expertise and commitment to collaboration are the very qualities that our world needs as we navigate this new digital age.

And our experience with the WSIS is a guarantee that we have the conditions to be able to move forward positively. As we mark this milestone moment together, let us do more than just reflect on our past. Let's get inspired. Let's get inspired by the digital opportunities around us all. Let's get energized, energized by the spirit of cooperation that we feel in this very room.

And let's move forward, positively building a digital future that we can all be proud of, that benefits everyone everywhere. I thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you, Secretary-General for your inspiring remarks, and I mean that, in sharing your WSIS vision and experience with us.

Before I invite the next speaker, I would like to take a moment to reflect on how full this room is. Thank you very much to everyone who have made their way here this morning amidst the heavy traffic of Geneva.

I realize it is standing room only, and I thank those of you who are standing for your patience and understanding.

Now, I have the pleasure to invite Ambassador Thomas Schneider to deliver his welcome remarks. Ambassador, I turn the lectern over to you now. Thank you.

>> THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Secretary-General, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, and friends.

It is my pleasure with the Swiss Confederation to welcome you to Geneva for the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event, 2025. Switzerland is very proud to be co-host of this Forum in partnership with the ITU.

This edition is particularly special not only because we're marking two decades since the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, but for the first time, the Forum and the Summit is being held at Palexpo. It is the first time since the WSIS Summit in 2003 it is nice to see how it has developed.

It is the pleasure to serve as the Chair of last year's High-Level Event.

This event offered not just a moment of reflection, but a chance to renew a shared commitment to building inclusive, equitable, rights-based digital societies.

As a Chair, we sought to facilitate a dialogue that was open, inclusive, and grounded in multistakeholder collaboration.

We were inspired by the diversity of voices from Governments, Civil Society, Private Sector, Academia, and youth that came together to discuss our digital future.

Together, we reflected on the achievements that we have made but we also had to recognize that challenges still persist.

The Digital Divide remains a reality. Cybersecurity risks, online misinformation, ethical concerns surrounding AI and other issues demand urgent attention.

For us, still, the WSIS principles and Action Lines continue to serve as a pertinent framework for discussion on Internet and digital policy and Governance issues.

WSIS values and principles have been referenced in many policy Documents over the years. They have been further developed in the framework of instruments.

Multistakeholder mechanisms emanated from the WSIS like the IGF and the WSIS Forum have with stood the test of time and reflect the focus of the vast evolving digital space and opportunities and challenged associated with so-called both old and new digital technologies.

These mechanisms should be the basis for future implementation of the WSIS vision but they also should be further strengthened and leverages through the Global Digital Compact and in support of the implementation.

As we prepare for the WSIS overall review by the UN General Assembly later this year, time has come to think boldly and widely about a strengthened and further developed inclusive framework for Digital Governance cooperation to be fit for purpose and service as

well as the current framework has done for the last 22 years.

In this regard, and given the current research situation of the multilateral system, we think it is essential that for the implementation of WSIS as well as of the GDC, we make best use of the existing structures which have proven to work and adapt well so far.

In order to avoid duplication we invite you to think about a joint implementation Roadmap for WSIS including GDC based on an even closer cooperation amongst all partners and stakeholders.

This week is essential in shaping what we call the vision of WSIS+. We encourage all to actively engage, share your insights and contribute to the discussions.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to sincerely thank all of that contributed to the WSIS process. Our co-organizer, ITU, all Action Lines facilitators and most importantly, the participants that are bringing life and meaning to this dialogue.

Of course, I look forward to the new Chairmanship by our friends from South Africa. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you very much Ambassador Thomas Schneider. And through you, we extend our sincere appreciation to Switzerland for the continued support and commitment to the WSIS process and for chairing the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 24.

2024.

We turn to the co-organizers for remarks. I am pleased to invite Pedro Manuel Moreno from UNCTAD. I am glad you made it. I hear traffic was bad on your end. Glad you're here. Thank you.

>> PEDRO MANUEL MORENO: Ladies and gentlemen, 20 years ago, we gathered with a vision. Today we stand at the edge of two worlds. In one world, artificial intelligence and frontier technologies are transforming human life. The market is projected to grow sixfold to 16.4 trillion U.S. dollars by 2023. Here a farmer in Kenya accesses markets via smart phone and AI diagnosis diseases in remote villages. In this world, services rate grow 9% annually, the digital economy contributes 3.1% to Global GDP and hundreds of millions find new jobs and meaning in emerging markets.

In the other world, 3.4 billion people live in countries that spend more on debt servicing than they spend on health or education.

Only 37% of people in least developed countries have Internet access and women are still less likely than men to be online.

In that world, six tech companies alone command market values nearly six times Africa's GDP. And 118 countries mainly Global South are excluded from key AI Governance initiatives. These are not separate worlds. They're our world, our only world.

As we mark 20 years of the World Summit on the Information Society we need to ask will the digital revolution unite or divide us? Will it bridge old gaps or create new ones? We stand at an inflection point. 40% of global jobs may be shaped by AI. The digital economies, environment footprint is growing rapidly. Decisions about the future of Digital Governance are being made but not by all of

us and not for all of us.

Your Excellencies, WSIS+20 coincides with transformative processes across the UN system and the broader digital landscape. The GDC renews the course for digital inclusive cooperation. UN 2.0 process drives institutional innovation. We are just five years from 2030 deadline.

UNCTAD is proud to be part of the journey as co-organizer of this Conference, on the DCDT and starting as Chair of the UN Group for Information Society for 2025-2026. And our upcoming UNCTAD 16, we place these topics at its core.

Ladies and gentlemen, 20 years ago, we day dared to envision an Information Society for all. Today we must dare to build an inclusive, empowering equitable digital future where technology is a bridge, not a barrier. The choice is ours. The time is now. Let us ensure that when we meet again we celebrate one world, digitally united, sustainably connected with no one left behind. Thank you.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you, Mr. Pedro Manuel Moreno for your remarks. I agree, the choice is ours and the time is now. Next, I have the pleasure of welcoming Dr. Tawfik Jelassi Assistant Director General for information and communication at UNESCO to the lectern. Tawfik, please you have the lectern.

>> TAWFIK JELASSI: Excellencies, Ministers, Madam ITU Secretary-General, distinguished Ambassador, dignitaries, guests, esteemed participants, friends and colleagues. I'm pleased to join you this morning for celebrating the 20-year mark of the World Summit on the Information Society. I would like to thank the ITU and the Swiss Confederation for making this milestone possible.

My appreciation also extends to our fellow co-organizers, ITU, UNDP and UNCTAD and South Africa which is taking over the Chairmanship of the WSIS.

20 years ago, the World Summit on the Information Society took place in the City of Tunis, Tunisia. How many of you were there in Tunis in 2005? Raise your hand, please. Few more than in Geneva in 2003.

Thomas.

And as Doreen Bogdan-Martin reminded us, the vision of the WSIS 2005 was building people centred, inclusive and development oriented Information Society, grounded in the multistakeholder approach.

So obviously our gathering this week here is a unique opportunity to step back and take stock of what has been done. What we have collectively achieved since 2005.

Have we built this people-oriented, inclusive and development oriented Information Society.

As we celebrate the progress made since then, we must also reflect on our future vision. One that will be shared by both enduring and emerging challenges and opportunities. The transformative digital developments of recent years call for an equally ambitious innovative and coordinated response. This is why UNESCO has consistently advocated for a reinvigorated action oriented WSIS 2.0



vision. One that is agile enough to navigate the complexities of a rapidly evolving information landscape while accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

One vision that includes of course addressing the gender Digital Divide, combating misinformation and disinformation and other harmful online content and ensuring the protection of human rights and freedom of expression online.

A key feature of this renewed vision is the further strengthening of WSIS as an inclusive multistakeholder model to remain effective our cooperation in the WSIS framework and external stakeholders must be deepened.

Central to this effort is our engagement with the UN Group on the Information Society, which is currently chaired by UNESCO, alongside the Vice-Chairs and the lead implementers of the WSIS outcomes, ITU, UNDP, UNCTAD, and all members of the Group to help ensure the entire UN system speaks with one voice with digital development and avoids duplication and amplifies impact on the ground.

To further strengthen its effectiveness and track progress, WSIS must also establish a robust monitoring framework. Such framework should leverage existing tools, such as the UNESCO Internet universality indicators which embody four key principles. Human rights, openness, accessibility, and multistakeholder participation.

Moreover the WSIS framework through Action Lines can be further strengthened by aligning with and integrating the follow-up to the Global Digital Compact and other relevant Global initiatives.

To truly shape a positive digital future, we must ensure the human element remains at the centre of these efforts.

UNESCO has long championed the concept of knowledge societies, a vision which is central to the 2030 Agenda.

To this end, it will be critical that we focus on transforming information into knowledge that individuals and communities truly own empowering them to improve their lives and create Sustainable Development.

Here, I would like just to plug in the vision and the Mission of UNESCO from eight years ago, when UNESCO was created back in 1945 and its constitutional Charter said your Mission is to build peace in the minds of men and women.

Today digital should help us building peace in the minds of men and women. That is why I made reference to combating misinformation and disinformation and hate speak and other harmful online content.

In closing, as you mark two decades of WSIS at the end of this year, I would like to reaffirm UNESCO commitment to building a digital future where technology truly serves humanity, grounded in rights, ethics and inclusion.

Indeed, as Berners-Lee inventor of the World Wide Web said, the power of the web is in its universality. Let's strive to create a digital world that lives up to the aspirations and empowers every individual to thrive.



And if you can positively answer the following two questions, then we can say that WSIS achieves this Mission. The two questions are ... are we making our stakeholders and individuals more successful through what we have been offering them?

Are we transforming lives? Thank you.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you Dr. Tawfik Jelassi, for your valuable contribution and UNESCO's longstanding support for WSIS. So many things you mentioned just now, but what stuck with me is today, digital should help us build peace in the minds of men and women.

And next I would like to invite Agi Veres, Director of the UNDP office in Geneva to deliver her remarks. Agi, thank you.

>> AGI VERES: Thank you very much. Excellencies, Secretary-General, ladies and gentlemen, it is my absolute pleasure to represent UNDP at this event as we're a longstanding partner, proud to be a co-Convener of the annual WSIS Forum and working closely with ITU, UNESCO and UNCTAD. The WSIS process and community that developed around it have played really a crucial role in Global digital cooperation.

Over the last 20 years, WSIS has served as one of the most inclusive and enduring platforms for digital discussions, bringing together Governments, Private Sector, Civil Society, Academia, and of course, the UN system.

Two weeks after the 20th Internet Governance Forum in Oslo are gathering here today, reinforces our shared commitment to the multistakeholder approach ensuring voices from across the Sectors, Regions, including Developing Countries and communities inform digital policy and practice.

As we work on the ground in 170 countries as UNDP we have been privileged to witness how the principles underpin the underlying WSIS and Action Lines have remained relevant and in fact are even more important today. One of the WSIS most concrete contribution is scaling digital capacity building efforts as one of the Action Lines and on the ground directly supporting the capacity building for Digital Transformation working through whole of Government approaches on digital public infrastructure, co-creating new digital public goods to include service delivery and working on data Governance to ensure the rights of the most vulnerable are protected. Looking ahead to the WSIS+20 Review, it will be important to reinforce the importance of the WSIS framework and also reflect the critical changes in the digital landscape including last year's adoption of the Global Digital Compact.

The WSIS vision is also a people-centred inclusive and develop Internet Society. It is more urgently needed more than ever. This was the message of the publication of the UN development report that focuses this year on AI, emphasizing how human Agency and empowerment must be at the heart of our approach to digital technologies.

This is why building on the Digital Transformation is more important than ever because leveraging AI to meet people's expectations for a better life is a choice that the world can make.

AI cannot alone solve the problems but give the potential to re-ignite human development. This is what we are advocating for in the human development report. And generate new opportunities and help make up for the lost time. Using the right way and building on the Digital Transformation that so much underlies the WSIS efforts, it will offer an opportunity to expand human capabilities.

Looking ahead to the WSIS+20 Review and process of our Conference, we believe the process is crucial for the way forward on Digital Transformation but also paving the way for a people-centred approach.

I believe that our discussion this week will be crucial in fostering the shared commitment and approach and we very much look forward to working closely with all our partners and stakeholders and continue commitment from UNDP. Thank you very much.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you, Agi for your remarks and UNDP's active support in this process. Thank you to all our co-organizers for the continued collaboration and sharing the thoughtful reflections as we move forward in the WSIS+20 process.

At this juncture, I would like to go off script for a little minute, a minute to request the ITU photographers to help me take this very heartwarming picture of such a full hall, please, from this angle.

Once again, I would like to thank all of our friends that are patiently standing at the side. We'll be with you shortly. Thank you for your understanding.

It is time now for the handing over of the Chair of the WSIS+20 High-Level Event. It is technical for those on stage. I would like to request the co-hosts and co-organizers to the centre of the stage, while I invite His Excellency, Solly Malatsi from DCDT to join us with the symbolic hand over of the Chair of the WSIS+20 High-Level Event. Mr. Pedro Manuel Moreno, Tawfik Jelassi, Mr. Solly Malatsi. It is technical, we have all of the crosses up here. Thank you, well done. Thank you, Tawfik.

We have a gavel that will be handed over from Ambassador Thomas Schneider who was the Chair of the High-Level Event last year to Minister Solly Malatsi 2025, witnessed by all of our VIPs. You may exchange the gavel, please. Can we help them with a round of applause? Thank you.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you very much. The difficult job is now with you, Mr. Solly Malatsi. I invite you back to your seats on stage while I invite Minister Solly Malatsi to say a few words. Thank you.

>> SOLLY MALATSI: I'm slightly taller than you, I need to adjust the mic. Good morning Excellencies, distinguished guests in the room and everyone joining us virtually. It is an immense honour for me to take over the Chairmanship of this event. We have the second 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society. Over the past two decades WSIS has played a foundational role in the Global Information Society and remains more relevant than ever in today's digital age. From Geneva in 2003, to Tunis in 2005 when some of us

look much younger than we do now and through the years that followed WSIS has remained the cornerstone of Global digital cooperation and digital development.

Its strength lies in the diversity of thought and experiences it facilitates in bringing together Government, Civil Society, Private Sector, and technical and academic communities. While each of us and the people we represent come from unique and different circumstances, WSIS has allowed us to unite behind a shared Global vision. One to promote an inclusive Information Society that delivers meaningful benefit to all citizens of the world.

And as we engage over the next five days, our task is not only to reflect on the progress of the last 20 years, we must also chart a path toward, we must ask ourselves and answer honestly, where have we succeeded and where must we do better?

Most importantly, how must we adapt the frameworks in the technology that is transforming the fabric of our societies.

Most importantly, how do we respond to the deepening inequalities and interconnected challenges? How do we ensure that Digital Transformation continues to advance equity, inclusion, and most importantly human dignity.

The WSIS+20 process gives us a unique opportunity to recalibrate and re-imagine our approach to building an inclusive and trusted Information Society. This opportunity comes with great responsibility. We are not here simply representing the interest of the organisations that are funding our participation but representing the aspirations of the whole world upon from the recommend villages across all of Africa, to the financial distance of New York and London, from Rio de Janeiro, to the tech corridors and the serene streets of Geneva, your experiences will be represented. I have the pleasure to represent as the Chair. The Summit will reflect our priorities and our shared commitment to a digital future that is open, inclusive, sustainable and rights based.

I encourage you to actively participate in this week's discussions. Let us make this moment count. We owe this not only to ourselves and the people we hold dearly, and future generations.

I want to thank the Secretary-General and thank all of you for your work up to this moment. And the work that is coming up. I look forward to a productive, collaborative and inspiring week ahead. Thank you very much. (Gavel)

Do I get to keep the hammer? Now we will do the symbolic takeover of the Chairmanship. Thank you. (Gavel)

>> MODERATOR: I'm reminded that I'm shorter than His Excellency. Thank you, Excellency, and congratulations on being appointed to the Chair of the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025.

Before we close the ceremony this morning, we have a special address about to be given. The United Arab Emirates has the distinction of being a longstanding partner of the WSIS Forum having been a major sponsor and partner since inception in 2009.

At this 20th Anniversary of WSIS, we are delighted to invite His Excellency, the Director General of the Telecommunication and

Digital Government Regulatory Authority of the United Arab Emirates to deliver a special address for this occasion. Your Excellency, welcome to the stage. I hand over to you, sir.

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Madam Secretary-General, newly appointed Chairman, my best wishes to you. Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, as-salamu alaykum. Good morning to everybody.

It is my pleasure to join you here at the pivotal moment for the World Summit on the Information Society. We approach the WSIS+20 Review, a milestone of great significance to all of us as we reflect more than two decades of shared progress and chart the course for the future.

For all this time, the United Arab Emirates has remained steadfast supporter of the WSIS process.

Driven by our deep commitment to digital cooperation, innovation, and Sustainable Development. Throughout these years, we have consistently presented initiatives that have been recognized globally. Earning nearly 60 prestigious awards since 2012, spanning the spectrum of Digital Transformation from Government services and education to healthcare, Cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure.

These awards are not just complements, they're reflections of a long-term vision, rooted in our belief that innovation must serve humanity and advance the WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Excellencies, as we look back on the progress achieved over the past 20 years, we must also confront the realities ahead.

Today, they're about 2.6 billion people remain disconnected from the digital world.

As our collective responsibility to sustain the WSIS vision and intensify our efforts to bridge the Digital Divide.

Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, 5G networks, and satellite solutions present us with transformative tools, yet they are only as effective as our shared commitment. Let us not forget the solutions begin from within. Governments, telecom regulators and providers, device manufacturers bear the duty to act. It all falls between enablement between themselves and ... fostering each other and collaborating.

We remain convinced that the WSIS framework continues to be relevant beyond 2025.

Rather than introducing a new Action Line we recommend enhancing the current framework to incorporate new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and data Governance while safeguarding the integrity and continuity of WSIS.

We also call for strong alignment between the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact.

Ensuring cohesive coordinated action at the international level. In closing the UAE standing ready to actively participate in the WSIS+20 Review and work hand in hand with the international partners to keep this process vibrant and impactful. Together, let's reaffirm our shared vision for a connected, inclusive, and

sustainable digital future. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you very much Your Excellency for your special remarks. And UAE's continued support of the WSIS Forum and process. We have come to the close of this morning's ceremony. I would like to thank everyone for participating, including an partners, co-hosts and co-organizers with more than 200 sessions in the Programme this week, including the award ceremony for the WSIS Prizes. I wish you all fruitful and insightful discussions. This has been the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025 Inaugural Session: Celebrating Two Decades and Achieving Future Milestones Together. Thank you!

We will begin the next session immediately. Over to you, Celina.

(Concluded)

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