

Session Outcome Document

Inclusive and Ethical ICT Policies for a Sustainable and Equitable Digital Future

International Standard University, City University

Friday, 11 July 2025, 11:00–11:45 CEST

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Agenda/Session/413>

Key Issues discussed: Looking Beyond 2025 (5–8 bullet points highlighting achievements, emerging trends, challenges in 20 years, figures, success stories and opportunities for WSIS beyond 2025)

- **Digital Inclusion Milestones:** WSIS programs have linked more than 4.5 billion people worldwide over the last 20 years, with significant advancements in low- and middle-income nations. However, 2.6 billion people—mostly women and people living in rural areas—remain offline, necessitating the development of new inclusive connectivity initiatives.
- **Ethical AI and Data Governance:** Big data and AI are being adopted at a faster rate than ethical and legal frameworks. The necessity of open, rights-based data policies was underlined in the discussions, particularly with regard to citizen services, healthcare, and education.
- **Green ICT and Sustainability:** E-waste has increased to more than 60 million metric tons per year, despite the fact that ICT has helped many sectors optimize energy use. The discussion argued for more robust international green ICT norms and highlighted effective circular economy models, such as Rwanda's e-waste policy.
- **Closing Policy Gaps:** Developed and developing regions continue to have distinct regulatory frameworks. Global data flow harmonization and equity are hampered by the fact that many nations lack enforceable digital rights laws, despite the EU's GDPR serving as a model.
- **Human Rights in the Digital Age:** Case studies from Kenya and India demonstrated how national digital ID initiatives pose both surveillance and empowerment threats. In order to guarantee ethical tech use worldwide, panelists emphasized UN-based supervision measures.
- **Emerging Technologies & Ethics:** There are both opportunities and policy gaps in the next digital frontier (quantum, Web3, and metaverse). Instead of bridging current digital disparities, these tools run the risk of reproducing them in the absence of inclusive forethought.
- **Youth and Gender Empowerment:** Speakers emphasized the importance of mainstreaming gender equity in national ICT strategies as a prerequisite for a just digital future, citing advancements made through UN Women's digital literacy campaigns and WSIS Youth Initiatives.
- **Prospects After 2025:** It was highlighted that a key legacy of WSIS+20 and a model for WSIS+30 is the co-creation of SDG-linked, locally grounded ICT frameworks that incorporate environmental, ethical, and social justice criteria.



Tangible Outcomes of the session

- key achievements: Using real-world case studies from four continents, the session effectively exposed policy gaps in inclusive and ethical ICT frameworks and offered practical, SDG-aligned recommendations.
- announcements/launch during the session : "Towards Ethical and Sustainable ICT Governance Beyond 2025" is the title of a collaborative policy brief that will be co-developed by collaborating institutions and stakeholders.
- agreements/commitments as an outcome of the session: With an emphasis on capacity-building and ethical AI integration, presenters and attendees pledged to establish a South-South knowledge-sharing network on inclusive digital policy development.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Action Plan for the WSIS+20 Review and Beyond (2–5 bullet points presenting concrete actions and guidance to inform the WSIS+20 Review by UNGA and build the multistakeholder vision of WSIS beyond 2025)

- Create a Framework for International Ethical ICT Policy: Create a rights-based ICT governance framework supported by the UN that is based on morality, environmental sustainability, and social justice while guaranteeing compatibility with national digital strategies.
- Co-creation mechanisms for mainstream inclusive policies: Establish multistakeholder participation in national and international digital policies, with a focus on women, youth, indigenous communities, and people with disabilities.
- Encourage the development of capacity in the Global South: Increase funding for South-South knowledge sharing platforms, regulatory training, and digital literacy to enable marginalized populations to influence and carry out ICT policy.
- Incorporate national agendas with green ICT standards: In accordance with SDGs 12 and 13, mandate environmental sustainability goals (such as carbon neutrality and circular e-waste systems) in public procurement and digital transformation strategies.
- Encourage worldwide digital solidarity by utilizing shared infrastructure. Promote open-source tools, cross-border data-sharing frameworks, and public-private partnerships for fair broadband access in order to close the digital gap and lessen policy asymmetries.