Session Outcome Document

Championing A New WSIS Action Line For PeaceTech - Harnessing ICTs for Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention

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https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Agenda/Session/281

Key Issues discussed: Looking Beyond 2025

- While existing WSIS Action Lines address crucial areas like development, cybersecurity, ethics, and cultural diversity, there is no dedicated framework that explicitly focuses on how ICTs can be leveraged proactively to prevent conflict and build peaceful, resilient societies. **PeaceTech** — the responsible and innovative use of digital tools for peacebuilding — fills this gap. An Action Line on PeaceTech would align the WSIS vision with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially SDG 16 (*Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*).

- Despite a rise in armed conflicts, wars and geopolitical tensions which has resulted in worrisome increases of national defence spendings and arms races, there are hardly any global initiatives that would support local and regional peace building initiatives that focus on non-violent means to build social cohesion, foster mutual trust and respect, and increase the resilience of societies in times of crises. A new WSIS Action Line on Technology & Peace building could bring local actors together to learn from each other, exchange experiences and best practices.

- There is a risk that PeaceTech could be instrumentalized for violent purposes - taking into account that in modern history, most wars have been fought in the name of safeguarding or restoring peace. Therefore, the focus must be on positive peace - as opposed to negative peace defined by the absence of direct violence. Positive peace encompasses active and non-violent efforts to build peace by addressing the root causes of war, as well as building relationships that are characterized by friendship and based on mutual trust and respect. Contributions to positive peace can be characterized by progress on respect for human rights, democracy, employability, climate and environmental sustainability, and more - giving communities the opportunity to be resilient to crises and prosper.

- To clearly distinguish PeaceTech from WarTech (national defence), as well as to also exclude the use of technology for control and mass surveillance purposes of citizens, social activists, or marginalized groups by repressive regimes, ethical and human-rights based standards must be developed that focus on non-violent uses of technology which are based on human rights, human dignity, freedom, and equality.

- It was also recognized, that despite the many opportunities offered by technology, there are also new risks that need to be addressed, especially in fragile conflict settings which are more prone to violence. To avoid unintentional harm, PeaceTech needs to adopt a conflict-sensitive lens that is aware of local contexts, seeks the involvement of local stakeholders in its design

and implementation, and still maintains a "human" element that complements technology by bringing people together.

Tangible Outcomes of the Session

- **Key Achievements:**
  - Discussion of the proposal to launch a new WSIS Action Line on PeaceTech
  - Drafting of a Concept Note on new PeaceTech WSIS Action Line - see attachment

- **Agreements/Commitments as an Outcome of the Session:**
  - Broad agreement among panellists and audience to focus on positive peace and a human-rights based approach to clearly distinguish PeaceTech (peace building, social cohesion, resilience, human rights) from WarTech (national defence, surveillance)
  - Input from stakeholders in the audience confirming their alignment with the session's vision. Statements collected below:
    - *"Tech should be more responsive to positive peace but not negative peace"*
    - *"I think it's [a new Action Line] is a positive idea, worth considering in the negotiation."*
    - *"Visibility - make it [PeaceTech] a recognized area for investment, research, policy dev: attract more attention and resources."*
    - *"It [PeaceTech] should focus more actively on peacebuilding"*
    - *"[PeaceTech should consider] intention of design and regular measurement of impact"*

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)

Overall objective: Launch a new WSIS Action Line on PeaceTech with the vision to: ***"promote the responsible use of ICTs and digital innovation to support inclusive peace networks and processes, strengthen respect for human rights, prevent armed conflicts, build trust, and foster resilient, cohesive societies."***

Specific objectives:
- Develop ethical standards to guide the design and use of PeaceTech, ensuring alignment with human rights principles.
- Empower stakeholders to develop, adopt, and scale PeaceTech solutions
- Strengthen the capacity of local peacebuilders, social tech entrepreneurs, and communities to use ICTs safely and effectively for building peace in their respective contexts.
- Mitigate digital harms that threaten peace and human rights (e.g., hate speech, disinformation, online radicalization).
- Foster multi-stakeholder partnerships and knowledge exchange across sectors. Share best practices so that learnings can be implemented quickly and proactively, which is necessary in fragile conflict settings.
- Develop shared indicators to monitor PeaceTech impacts and progress on peacebuilding.