**Concept Note:**

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

**SocialTech Lab; Institute of Social Ethics, University of Lucerne**

**Session 281: Tuesday, 8 July 2025, 17:00–17:45, WSIS+20 Open Space, Palexpo**

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**Background**

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has long recognized the transformative power of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to advance development, inclusion, and empowerment. However, in an increasingly interconnected and fragile world, digital technologies can also amplify social and political tensions, spread disinformation, and fuel violent conflict.

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*).

**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.”***

**Objectives**

* 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.
* Develop shared indicators to monitor PeaceTech impacts.
* Develop ethical standards and guidelines for PeaceTech design and use, ensuring alignment with human rights principles.

**Proposed Priority Areas**

**Digital Infrastructure for Peace**  
Support the development of digital tools such as early warning systems, conflict mapping platforms, and rumor tracking applications.

**Capacity Building & Literacy**  
Provide training for peacebuilders, community leaders, and vulnerable groups to use ICTs for conflict prevention and dialogue.

**Inclusive PeaceTech Design**  
Promote participative, locally-led, culturally-sensitive, and gender-responsive PeaceTech solutions.

**Ethical & Regulatory Frameworks**  
Develop guidance for conflict-sensitive ICT policies that reduce misuse of digital spaces for incitement to violence.

**Monitoring & Evaluation**  
Define clear indicators to measure PeaceTech’s contribution to peace and share lessons learned.

**Suggested Activities**

* **Pilot Projects:** Launch demonstration initiatives in conflict-affected or fragile contexts.
* **Knowledge Hub:** Develop an open-access repository of PeaceTech tools, case studies, and good practices.
* **Regional Workshops:** Facilitate regional exchanges and capacity-building events.
* **Annual PeaceTech Track:** Integrate PeaceTech sessions into the WSIS Forum to spotlight progress.
* **Policy Development:** Draft model frameworks for conflict-sensitive ICT governance.

**Key Stakeholders**

* **Governments:** Ministries of ICT, foreign affairs, and peacebuilding.
* **UN Agencies:** ITU (*ICT infrastructure*), UNDP (*peacebuilding*), UNESCO (*ethics, media, education*), OHCHR (*human rights standards and protection*)
* **Civil Society & Peacebuilders**: Local and regional NGOs, community groups.
* **Tech Sector:** Social entrepreneurs and startups innovating in peace building and human rights.
* **Academia & Think Tanks:** Research on opportunities, risks, and best practices.

**Expected Outcomes**

* Increased use of PeaceTech tools and platforms in fragile and conflict-prone settings.
* Strengthened capacity and resilience of communities to address conflict risks online and offline.
* Improved cooperation across sectors, bridging technology, development, human rights, and peacebuilding.
* Development and adoption of standards and guidelines for rights-respecting and conflict-sensitive PeaceTech design and implementation.
* Measurable contributions to SDG 16 and other related goals.

**Proposed Next Steps**

* Initiate consultations with stakeholders at the WSIS Forum and regional meetings.
* Develop a multi-year roadmap with clear deliverables and pilot initiatives.
* Mobilize resources through partnerships and funding mechanisms.
* Integrate PeaceTech reporting into WSIS stocktaking and annual progress reviews.

**Contact**

For more information or to express interest in co-designing this Action Line:

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