Session Outcome Document

Enhanced Cooperation in the Digital Age: From Concept to Commitment at WSIS+20

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs / Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government

Thursday, 10 July 2025 | 10:00–10:45 (UTC+02:00)

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Agenda/Session/400

Key Issues discussed: Looking Beyond 2025

- The concept of enhanced cooperation, introduced in the 2005 Tunis Agenda, remains a key milestone in global Internet governance. While many stakeholders believe progress has already been achieved, others maintain that further steps are needed to fully realize its goals. Despite different perspectives, there is broad agreement that enhanced cooperation continues to shape international discussions on public policy issues related to the Internet, distinct from day-to-day technical and operational matters.

- Despite its longstanding presence in global discussions, enhanced cooperation lacks consensus on practical implementation, with stakeholders emphasizing the need to clarify its institutional home, scope, and process to move forward effectively.

- The IANA transition in 2016 successfully transferred the oversight of critical Internet resources from the U.S. government to the global multistakeholder community, marking a significant step toward inclusive Internet governance. Still, further advancement of enhanced cooperation on broader international public policy issues is needed.

- The Working Groups on Enhanced Cooperation (2013–14 and 2016–18) were unable to reach consensus on recommendations due to divergent views. Nonetheless, the first group contributed valuable inputs, including a questionnaire and a matrix mapping key issues and mechanisms.

- Current platforms do not fully address emerging cross-border digital policy issues, including cybersecurity, AI governance, and e-commerce, highlighting gaps in existing frameworks.

- There is growing convergence that multistakeholder and multilateral processes can be complementary, with some governments and stakeholders advocating for dual-track approaches to policy development.

- Developing countries emphasized the need for an intergovernmental space to ensure equitable participation in digital policy discussions and to address persistent power asymmetries.

- CSTD was discussed as a potential institutional anchor for enhanced cooperation, with broad support for reinforcing its role through formal UN processes.

Tangible Outcomes of the session

- The session reaffirmed the relevance of enhanced cooperation as defined in the Tunis Agenda and highlighted broad agreement on the need for a structured and inclusive mechanism to operationalize it beyond 2025.

- There was general alignment around the idea of utilizing existing UN platforms, particularly the CSTD, to advance enhanced cooperation. Participants expressed interest in pursuing an ECOSOC or UNGA resolution—potentially through the ongoing WSIS+20 overall review by the UN General Assembly, which will culminate in December 2025—to formalize this role.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Action Plan for the WSIS+20 Review and Beyond

- Recognize the Tunis Agenda's definition of enhanced cooperation, emphasizing the exclusion of technical and operational matters and focusing on international public policy issues.

- Consider CSTD as a central forum for enhanced cooperation by pursuing formal recognition through a UN General Assembly or ECOSOC resolution.

- Encourage UN agencies and regional bodies to report to the CSTD on their efforts to support enhanced cooperation and enable governments to participate equally in digital policy processes.

- Promote multistakeholder frameworks, such as the NetMundial guidelines and ICANN's GAC model, to ensure inclusive participation in emerging policy areas like AI and cybersecurity.