



Session Outcome Document

(2 pages max)

Between free market and public digital infrastructure: intersections of media viability and public interest journalism

Global Forum for Media Development

Monday, 7 July 2025 - 16:00–16:45 (UTC+02:00)

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Agenda/Session/277>

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)

1. Over the past 20 years, **WSIS Action Line C9** has served as a foundational recognition of the **importance of media pluralism, freedom of expression, and access to diverse and fact-based information as essential to a people-centred Information Society.**
2. Participants emphasized that **journalism should be recognised and supported as an essential public good:** vital to the integrity of democracy, civic participation, and equitable access to information.
3. While connectivity and digitalisation have improved globally, **emerging challenges** (such as platform monopolies, algorithmic opacity, and rising infrastructure costs) **are creating a hostile environment for independent journalism.**
4. The combined pressures of **rising costs, lack of control** over infrastructure and data, and **reduced competitiveness** in platform-dominated environments threaten media sustainability and civic space.
5. There was consensus that **Digital Public Infrastructure** should not be seen only as state-led technical infrastructure but **must be designed and governed in the public interest, with human rights, transparency, and public oversight at its core.**
6. The current WSIS framework does **not reflect the realities of platform dominance, algorithmic content distribution, or the structural barriers that limit media actors' access to critical digital infrastructure.** As highlighted during the session, concepts like Digital Public Infrastructure and the role of journalism as civic infrastructure remain underdeveloped in both the WSIS framework and the WSIS+20 Elements Paper.

7. Speakers from Zimbabwe, Costa Rica, and indigenous and women's communities highlighted the **need for DPI and WSIS processes to reflect cultural autonomy, context-driven design, and community-led governance models.**

Tangible Outcomes of the session

- **Key achievements**
 1. Reaffirmation of the **need to integrate media sustainability and infrastructure access into the WSIS+20 outcome document.**
 2. Recognition that **public digital infrastructure must include and support journalism,** as much as it supports e-government or financial inclusion.
 3. Stakeholders expressed interest in continued collaboration, aligning WSIS+20 advocacy with other processes, including the GDC, Financing for Development, and the IGF.
- **Agreements/commitments as an outcome of the session**
 - Participants were invited to contribute to and endorse GFMD's WSIS+20 advocacy efforts, including the [position paper](#) and consultations on the **Elements Paper** and future Zero Draft.
 - Strong support was expressed for embedding journalism, DPI, and information integrity into the WSIS+20 outcome through a rights-based and multistakeholder lens.

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)

1. Ensure **explicit recognition of journalism and media sustainability in WSIS+20 outcomes,** in alignment with GDC information integrity commitments.
2. Establish **dedicated support and follow-up mechanisms to monitor Action Line C9 progress and related commitments,** resource capacity-building for media actors (especially in the Global Majority countries), and engage stakeholders in its implementation.
3. Promote **equitable access to digital infrastructure and services for independent, local, and public interest journalism media,** especially in the Global Majority, by investing in open, human rights-based alternatives to platform monopolies.
4. **Support multi-stakeholder dialogue spaces for digital governance,** like the Internet Governance Forum, to connect media, civil society, technical communities, and policy actors in shaping the future of WSIS.