Session Outcome Document
WSIS Action Line C7 E-business

Building an inclusive digital economy: The role of the WSIS e-business action line and the Global Digital Compact

ITC, UNCTAD, UPU, in collaboration with UNIDO
8 July 2025, 11:00–12:00 (UTC+02:00)
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Agenda/Session/380

Key Issues discussed: Looking Beyond 2025

- The session discussed how UN agencies can ensure effective collaboration to prevent silos, so that the implementations of the WSIS action line and of GDC commitments are aligned, with a view to supporting sustainable development goals and digital inclusion.

- In developing countries, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) need three enablers for digital readiness: affordable access to technology infrastructure, enabling regulatory frameworks, and digital skills. In addition, business support organizations are essential to facilitate SME adoption of digital technologies.

- Existing postal infrastructure can be leveraged in developing countries to provide e-business related services to rural communities, while enhancing trust between buyers and sellers. For example, the postal system can offer payment options and e-commerce platforms.

- In India, for example, digital inclusion has been coupled with financial inclusion, providing digital identity and mobile services in local languages, aiming to include the unbanked. This initiative is driven by the Government, which sees digital inclusion as a key driver of growth in India. The Indian postal system is one of the largest in the world and has the best reach into rural areas to facilitate access to services, for example for women selling their handiwork beyond local markets, who can also open savings accounts with the Post and build capital.

- In addition to local actions to enhance digital inclusion, coordination on digital issues is necessary at the international level to guide policy and facilitate technical assistance in developing countries. For example, UNCTAD coordinates the eTrade for Women initiative that, in collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders, supports the advocacy of women digital entrepreneurs from developing countries in policymaking spaces.

- There is still room for improvement in connecting the dots and overcoming the silos of international agencies when it comes to digital cooperation. When implementing the GDC

commitments to foster innovation and entrepreneurship and improve access to markets and digital technologies, it is imperative to find synergies among various initiatives to make them more efficient in the future. The GDC roadmap will require international public and private actors to collaborate to enact digital-based solutions for trade and development.

- For example, UNCTAD and UNIDO have joined efforts under Objective 2 of the GDC (expanding the benefits of the digital economy) to engage countries in initiatives that build digital ecosystems and scale digital innovations to drive inclusive and sustainable industrial growth.

Tangible Outcomes of the session

- The UNIDO Development Dialogue on Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence in 2024 and 2025 provided a high-level platform for shaping the future of AI and digital transformation in development.
- The ITC announced the launch its flagship report "[SME Competitiveness Outlook](#)" (SMECO) 2025 at the Global SME Ministerial Meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, that will take place on 22-24 July 2025. The SMECO offers actionable insights into how digital tools and innovation can empower SMEs to thrive in the global economy.
- The co-facilitators agreed to build their collaboration to break down silos and improve cooperation on digital initiatives.

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

- Governments are encouraged to reach out to international organizations for digital readiness assessments and tailored policy guidance in order to develop their inclusive digital economies.
- To scale up digital adoption by SMEs, Governments and international organizations should include business support organization that can identify the needs of SMEs and support skills development. Other mechanisms to encourage digital inclusion are Centres of Excellence and the digitalization of government services.
- Digitalization must also be accompanied by adapting the regulatory frameworks for digital trade, building skills, and increasing financing for digital development.