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WSIS
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High-Level Track Facilitators
Session Summaries

WSIS Forum 2026: High-Level Track Facilitators Session Summaries

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Introduction

At the WSIS Forum 2026, moderated Leaders TalkX took place on the 8th and 9th of July 2026. These 12 sessions, moderated by High-Level Track facilitators nominated and identified by WSIS stakeholders, gathered High-ranking officials of the WSIS Stakeholder community, representing the Government, Private Sector, Civil Society, Academia, and International Organizations. Additionally, a Ministerial Roundtable and a Regulators Roundtable were organized, fostering invaluable dialogue on pressing ICT and development issues among top-level policymakers and regulatory authorities.

A comprehensive list of High-Level Participants is available here:

[High-Level Representatives | WSIS Forum 2026](#)

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WSIS Forum 2026: Chair



H.E. Eng. Raafat Hendy

Minister

Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
Egypt (Arab Republic of)

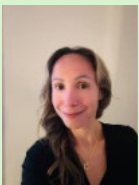
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Moderation: High-Level Track Facilitators (HLTFs)

All the Leaders TalkX sessions were moderated by High-level Track Facilitators nominated by the different stakeholder types, i.e. Civil Society, Academia, Private Sector and Technical Community.

Session	Photo	Name	Title	Organization
From Access to Impact: Leading ICT Infrastructure Development https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/464		Ms. Valeria Betancourt	Global Governance Advocacy Lead	Association for Progressive Communications
Shaping Intelligent Societies: The Role of Multistakeholder Partnerships https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/481		Prof. Lucien CASTEX	Advisor to the CEO, Internet Governance and Society	AFNIC
Artificial Intelligence: Policy, Ethics, and Global Cooperation https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/465		Ms. Nandini Chami	Deputy Director	IT for Change
Information Without Barriers: Making Knowledge Accessible https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/470		Ms. Tara Harris	Group IP Lead: Digital & AI Governance	Naspers, International Trademark Association

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Building Resilience: Secure and Trusted Digital Public Infrastructure https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/483		Ms. Cheryl Miller	Vice President, Digital Policy	United States Council for International Business (USCIB)
Skills for the Future: Leading Inclusive Capacity Building https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/508		Dr. Sajith Wijesuriya	Chair, IEEE Power & Engineering Society (PES) Young Professionals Advisory Council	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)
Frameworks that Enable: Policy Leadership in ICT Development https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/514		Mr. Leonard Obonyo	Head of Digital Development	Commonwealth Telecommunication Organization
Strengthening International Cooperation for the Information Society https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/516		Dr. Chafic Chaya	Regional Manager, Public Policy and Government Affairs	RIPE NCC
Cyber Confidence: Enhancing Security in the Digital Age https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/478		Ms. Timea Suto	Global Digital Policy Lead	International Chamber of Commerce
Global Perspectives on Emerging Technology https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/403		Mr. Thomas Aarheim	Global Government Advisory	Access Partnership

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Digital Government, Digital Citizens: Ensuring Accessibility to Public Services https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/410		Ms. Meni Anastasiadou	Digital Policy Manager	International Chamber of Commerce
Co-Creating Tomorrow: Digital and AI in Partnership https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/585		Ms. Caitlin Kraft-Buchman	CEO / Founder	Women At The Table / A+ Alliance for Inclusive Algorithms / AI & Equality Initiative

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Leaders TalkX 1: From Access to Impact: Leading ICT Infrastructure Development

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Ms. Valeria Betancourt

Introduction

WSIS made the world aware of how big the digital divides are. Despite remarkable progress in connecting people, the digital divides are still with us. Unless we close them, the work the various stakeholders are doing to ensure that the benefits from new and emerging technologies reach everyone, will fail. The Leaders TalkX1 confronted questions about the policy barriers, financing gaps and governance challenges that persist. The session was held on 8 July 2026 as part of the agenda of the WSIS Forum 2026

Achievements

Following two decades of efforts focused on rolling out infrastructure to provide access, and strategies for the adoption of technologies by a significant proportion of the population, there is now a recognized need to assess the impacts, including the changes brought about by new technologies, consolidate regulatory frameworks that combines infrastructure obligations with competition enhancing policies, and explore alternatives to address persistent and emerging digital divides as a priority for social and economic development and for infrastructure to create value for people's lives.

Fresh priorities

Quality, resilience, and future-readiness of infrastructure, as well as investment in next-generation technologies and promotion of regional distribution of infrastructure to enhance resilience and enable more efficient use of data constitute new priorities. Universal telecommunications service funds continue to be a key pillar and instrument to bridge digital divides, particularly the rural urban one, and bring affordable connectivity to isolated communities in areas not profitable for private operators. In the context of the global South, including Small Island Developing States, and with the goal to accelerate digital economy, revitalizing the funds supported by effective governance frameworks oriented to infrastructure expansion, broadband access, equipping institutions, training the population and innovation to make services accessible in rural areas is a top priority. Promoting infrastructure sharing and more efficient use of telecommunications assets as well as continue updating regulations on quality of service, competition, and consumer protection in line with international best practices is paramount.

Emerging trends

Promoting new approaches aimed to strengthen trusted connectivity in order to improve resilience and ensure inclusive growth regionally. Growing emphasis on infrastructure sharing, regulatory modernization, and international cooperation in digital technologies governance. Recognition of

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communications infrastructure as a strategic enabler of economic competitiveness, innovation, inclusion, and sustainable development.

Opportunities

The integration of the WSIS and GDC goals, resulting from the WSIS +20 review, provides an opportunity to align national and regional goals more directly within the joint framework for implementation and to advance global cooperation. The existence of global, consensus-based standards processes that bring together engineers, industry, policymakers and civil society from around the world offer a valuable opportunity to translate high-level principles into practical technical requirements and, therefore, effectively use standards to intentionally design inclusive rights based and safe environments from the outset.

Key challenges

Ensuring that infrastructure works both economically and socially as the result of consistent and strategic public policy support and the market-driven development that meet contextual needs remains a challenge. There is also the need to ensure balanced infrastructure development between urban and rural regions and maintaining universal access to advanced digital services while, at the same time, strengthening human capital and regulatory capacity in a rapidly evolving sector.

Connectivity gaps have created unequal access to digital opportunities. These disparities stem from uneven infrastructure deployment and require urgent action, including stronger public financing initiatives. Moreover, progress in investment, cooperation and coordination remains uneven.

Links to WSIS Action Lines

Action Line C2: Advancing universal access policies, strengthening universal telecommunications service funds and creating enabling environments to ensure that no community is left behind.

Action Line C11: The +20 review context and an integrated implementation of the WSIS and the GDC goals is an opportunity to review shared responsibilities and renew a common commitment to put digital technologies at the service for the well being of people and the planet.

Vision for WSIS beyond 2025

Solid and meaningful partnerships sharing the ambition to turn connectivity into real impact, to use digital technologies to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and introducing digital technologies into priority sectors of the economy to address concrete needs of specific groups, particularly vulnerable and isolated ones. Enabling environments with effective regulation, competitive markets, and targeted infrastructure requirements designed to strengthen social and economic ecosystems that improves people's lives. Innovative financing models for meaningful connectivity is a central element of the imagination of prosperous digital futures.

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Leaders TalkX 2: From Access to Impact: Leading ICT Infrastructure Development

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Prof. Lucien CASTEX

If the past twenty years— since the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)— have taught us anything, it is that no single actor can shape the digital society on its own. The diversity of approaches and viewpoints made possible by the diversity of stakeholders enables shaping intelligent society.

Emerging technologies have raised new challenges and delivering on the vision of a people-centred, inclusive, and development-oriented information society requires cooperation and leadership across all stakeholders, from governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community, academia and international organizations.

Participants emphasized the need to rely on multistakeholder partnerships to ensure that intelligent societies are not only at the cutting edge of technology, but also inclusive, trustworthy, resilient, and equitable. First people need infrastructure to be able to be an active part of an intelligent society, 2.2 billion are still offline. Tanzania highlighted a partnership between the Government and the private sector which allowed for the deployment of *2,352 telecommunications towers, reaching 2,006 wards and bringing roughly 32 million citizens in once-unserved areas into the digital economy.*

To achieve this, participants highlighted the variety of possible multi-stakeholder partnerships needed to move from principles to use cases, pilot projects, then scale up and deliver tangible benefits to citizens. Participants emphasized the key role of trust building on concrete example such as Cyprus Digital Citizen application, which enables citizens to hold and verify official documents in digital form. Participants also mentioned the key challenges raised by artificial intelligence insisting on the priority to make it trustworthy and human-centred. Bahrain has set an example with its central national vision by 2030, in a world constantly changing, ecosystem-wide collaboration is necessary to enable the implementation of new initiatives and improve their effectiveness.

The need for capacity building, skills and training is also central to build local capacity and allow for the emergence of new talents and future partners. Mozambique also stressed that bridging the digital divide means giving every citizen the opportunity to participate fully in the digital economy, and

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highlighted the need to ensure the resilience of infrastructure—whether in terms of access to electricity, broadband, or the adoption of digital services.

To build such an intelligent society, the Internet is essential as the underlying infrastructure that enables the development of digital services, as well as the sharing knowledge, information, and access to the digital society. Internet is possible because it is based on open standards, open architecture, technical collaboration through the multistakeholder model. To achieve a true multistakeholder partnership, the Internet Society emphasized that stakeholder participation must begin at the very start of discussions, not simply after decisions have been made. In this context, it is essential to draw on the expertise of the private sector, as emphasized by the U.S. Council for International Business (USCIB): in an increasingly fragmented environment, the role of businesses is to contribute their expertise and present concrete use cases, applications and projects.

The next few years will be critical for expanding meaningful connectivity, leveraging multistakeholder partnerships, and strengthening the multistakeholder model itself making possible to build the bridges connecting people to intelligent, resilience and inclusive societies.

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Leaders TalkX 3: Artificial Intelligence: Policy, Ethics, and Global Cooperation

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Ms. Nandini Chami

Key issues discussed:

- As the UN Secretary General has highlighted: Artificial Intelligence is no longer a distant horizon. It is here, transforming daily life, the information space, and the global economy at breathtaking speed. The question is whether we will govern this transformation together, or let it govern us, and how can we govern it effectively before technology outpaces us. Global cooperation is essential. No one country can govern AI alone.
- What would help developing countries in the AI revolution is the sharing of funds and new technologies, as well as the learnings on knowledge, experiences, governance frameworks and governance models on building inclusive, human-centric AI. There is a shared responsibility to help emerging economies catch up and build innovation together. We need cooperation, especially for smaller economies, in connecting laboratories, data spaces, open models, evaluation facilities and talent networks.
- It is important to bridge the agency divide in AI. There is a gap between countries with the capacity to adapt AI to local needs, evaluate risks, protect rights, develop solutions and retain public value, and others who are left just using AI.
- Developing countries cannot be merely consumers of AI. They need to be active participants in determining their development trajectories, that is shaping the models, data architectures, standards, and markets that will determine their development opportunities.
- Open standards in innovation, such as open models that are shared, and the creation of open national datasets of robust quality are important. Building national sandboxes for the pre-testing of high risk AI innovation ecosystems helps regulators build the institutional capabilities for setting effective guardrails. We must act both locally and globally in AI governance.
- A Responsible AI perspective is important in AI governance, especially in the frontier issue of governing AI agents. The directions of agentic AI should not lead to a situation that fragments the global Internet. The policy labs of the IGF have a role to play in shaping this debate.
- Digital transformation must deliver tangible benefits for all. AI must solve real problems for farmers, students, patients, women, small enterprises and citizens who need better services.

Forward-looking actions:

- IGF policy labs can play a key role in furthering the dialogue on AI governance, particularly agentic AI.
- International cooperation is needed in helping developing countries claim AI innovation trajectories as active participants. This needs not just sharing of technologies and finance but equally the sharing of knowledge (in standards development, data and model architectures) and experiences of governance.

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Leaders TalkX 4: Information Without Barriers: Making Knowledge Accessible

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Ms. Tara Harris

Introduction

Leaders TalkX 4 convened senior government ministers, regulatory authority heads, a digital economy special envoy, a technical community leader, and a parliamentarian to address whether 20 years of digital cooperation have truly democratized access to information and knowledge and what must change to ensure that AI bridges rather than widens existing divides.

Participants: H.E. Mr. Sid Ali Zerrouki (Algeria); H.E. Mr. Abdlbaset Albaour (Libya); Dr. Hans Wijayasuriya (Sri Lanka); Mr. Carlos Watson Carazo (Costa Rica); Mr. Célestin Kadjidja (Gabon); Mr. Rakotovao Nanja Johanesa Andriamihaja (Madagascar); Mr. Ömer Abdullah Karagözoğlu (Turkey); Mr. Kurtis Lindqvist (ICANN);

The WSIS process has delivered measurable progress. Connectivity has expanded across Africa, Asia, and Latin America through Universal Service Funds and public-private partnerships. Gabon highlighted fiber investments placing it among continental ICT leaders; Costa Rica cited impact in education and health. The multi-stakeholder model was recognized as a durable architecture for digital cooperation. The formal recognition of the technical community as a distinct stakeholder group in the WSIS+20 outcome document was welcomed as an important milestone.

Fresh Priorities

Consensus emerged that infrastructure is necessary but no longer sufficient. The new frontier is meaningful inclusion. Key priorities:

- Local-language AI: AI must be developed around diverse languages, scripts, and datasets, not only dominant commercial languages.
- Digital literacy as infrastructure: Universal service frameworks must treat digital skills as a public good on par with connectivity.
- Universal Acceptance: All domain names and email addresses must function reliably across all systems, scripts, and languages.
- Digitization of public services: Analogue archives and fragmented government portals remain barriers, particularly in Africa.
- Inclusive AI ecosystems: Investment in local-language datasets, representative foundation models, and accessible Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).
- Equitable access to computing and regulation that actively enables inclusion.

Emerging Trends

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AI is the defining technology of the next WSIS phase.

- AI can deliver knowledge and services directly to people regardless of literacy level, language, geography, or disability.
- Farmers can photograph a diseased crop and receive diagnosis in their local language; elderly citizens can access public services simply by speaking.
- 5G deployment is accelerating, but its value depends on regulatory frameworks that embed social-impact incentives, particularly for rural and vulnerable populations.
- The role of the technical community in sustaining the open, interoperable Internet through Universal Acceptance, reliable identifier systems, and multi-stakeholder governance is a precondition for any AI-enabled inclusion agenda.
- The convergence of the WSIS Action Lines with the Global Digital Compact and the SDGs was identified as both a coordination opportunity and a governance challenge.

Opportunities

- AI as an equalizer: Unlike prior technology waves, AI can actively adapt to the user, compensating for low literacy and bridging excluded communities to formal systems.
- Regulatory sandboxes: Flexible environments allow local innovators and NGOs to develop hyper-localized applications without compliance burdens designed for large telecoms.
- Technical community integration: WSIS+20 recognition creates a clear avenue connecting policy ambition with technical implementation, notably on Universal Acceptance.
- Public-private partnerships: Gabon's PPP-financed national backbone, including cross-border interconnection and submarine cable access, offers a replicable regional model.
- Multilingual DPI: Integrated e-government services, national identification portals, and sovereign data centres create trusted foundations for AI-powered public services.

Key Challenges

- The AI language gap: Market forces will favor commercially dominant languages, deepening the information divide.
- Supply-side regulatory fixation: Regulation still focuses on coverage maps rather than meaningful adoption and citizen benefit.
- Fragmented digital public services: Administrative systems remain siloed or inaccessible in local languages across much of the developing world.
- Capacity constraints: Smaller regulators lack the expertise to shape AI governance, participate in standard-setting, or build representative training datasets.
- The implementation gap: Strong WSIS policy commitments exist, but the distance between ambition and on-the-ground outcomes remains too wide.

Links to WSIS Action Lines

C1 (Governance): USF expansion, co-regulation, multi-stakeholder partnerships. C2 (Infrastructure): 5G, PPP backbones, rural solar-powered base stations. C3 (Access to knowledge): Universal Acceptance, local-language AI, multilingual content. C4 (Capacity building): Digital literacy as public

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infrastructure; INPTIC/ARCEP training. C6 (Enabling environment): Regulatory sandboxes; social-impact licensing incentives. C7 (ICT applications): Integrated e-government portals, National ID portals, AI-powered citizen tools. C8 (Cultural diversity): Local content through training, education, and regulation. C11 (Cooperation): Technical community recognition; ICANN's Universal Acceptance work; cross-border backbone interconnection.

Case Examples

Algeria launched the 777 Programme, a national network of digital skill centres serving citizens from age 7 to 77, providing safe, structured access to digital learning including AI.

Turkey proposed three regulatory shifts: expanding USFs to cover digital literacy and local-language content; deploying regulatory sandboxes for local AI innovators; and embedding social-impact incentives in spectrum allocation, shifting the measure of success from coverage to meaningful adoption.

Sri Lanka, navigating a three-language environment (Sinhala, Tamil, English), illustrated how language determines who benefits from each technology wave. Dr. Wijayasuriya called for investment in inclusive AI ecosystems (local-language datasets, representative foundation models, accessible DPI) and cross-sector partnerships, since no single actor can solve this alone.

Gabon combines Universal Service obligations, infrastructure-sharing requirements, and solar-powered rural 4G with a PPP national backbone providing regional and submarine cable connectivity. ARCEP's partnership with INPTIC for digital skills training builds the foundation for a sovereign, AI-ready digital economy.

ICANN: Internet interoperability is not automatic, it requires sustained technical coordination. Universal Acceptance ensures all domain names and email addresses function across all applications and scripts. Where Internet systems fail to support a user's language, a technical gap becomes a participation barrier; solving it multiplies every other inclusion investment.

Vision for WSIS Beyond 2035

Digital development must evolve from connectivity to comprehension. Speakers converged on: AI-powered universal knowledge access for all, regardless of language, literacy, or geography; human-centric regulation measured by citizen outcomes not infrastructure metrics; inclusive AI governance built on representative data and multilingual models; stronger multi-stakeholder implementation mechanisms; and digital sovereignty grounded in trusted, secure infrastructure.

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Leaders TalkX 5 - Building Resilience: Secure and Trusted Digital Public Infrastructure

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Ms. Cheryl Miller

Key Issues discussed:

- The session considered how the growth of digital public infrastructure (DPI) is increasingly anchored to the integrity of the digital identity layer and the resilience of communications networks.
- Panelists discussed what it takes to design, finance, and govern digital public infrastructure that is genuinely resilient, inclusive, and built to last.
- The session considered the many global challenges that can thwart the growth of DPI, and panelists shared case studies from their countries on how they are navigating these challenges to harness the benefits of digital progress for their citizens.
- This panel showcased how different countries are building upon shared foundations from the local level to the global level on DPI.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Digital technologies have transformed the marketplace, however, we must focus on inclusion, interoperability, security, trust, resiliency and collaboration in order to ensure open source software, open data, and interoperable standards create the baseline needed for a successful digital transformation.
- Trust cannot simply be added after deployment, it must be deliberately engineered from the beginning.
- Fragmentation remains a concern, and ensuring the seamless flow of data across borders is crucial to the success of DPI.
- DPI is a key enabler for digital government and economic development, and countries are developing new projects to harness new opportunities for their citizens in this space.
- Connectivity and infrastructure are two important focal points for the growth of secure DPI, and for DPI to be successful investment must also be made in capacity building efforts around education and skilling.
- Open and interoperable digital public infrastructure creates a platform for innovation.
- Disaster readiness and response measures are important in building resiliency in DPI, and some countries are disaster-prone. The growth of DPI in remote areas is also a challenge.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Build digital technology into the service itself with no single point of failure or control, no invisible decisions, and no automated dead end.

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- Ensure automated systems make consequential decisions about a person that can be understood, challenged and reversed.
- Build DPI that is secure by design, interoperable by architecture, auditable by default, and open to appeal.
- Build digital building blocks that can be used and reused across sectors.
- Leverage public-private partnerships that are public in purpose, secure by design, and inclusive in reach.
- Inclusion must be the starting point and trust must be the foundation of every digital ecosystem.
- Digital progress must respect human rights, sovereignty, and local realities.
- DPI should be universally and affordably accessible, reliable and resilient, and ensure that essential services remain available when they are most needed.
- DPI must protect privacy, personal data and safeguard citizens from digital threats.
- DPI must be interoperable, enabling ministries, departments and agencies to work together securely and seamlessly.
- DPI must Deliver high-quality services and experiences, respond to evolving needs of citizens, and provide timely recourse when things go wrong.

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Leaders TalkX 6 - Skills for the Future: Leading Inclusive Capacity Building

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Dr. Sajith Wijesuriya

I facilitated the session under the topic **"Skills for the Future: Leading Inclusive Capacity Building."** Represented were Malaysia, Andorra, Sweden, Uganda, Poland, the United Arab Emirates, and Women in Technology in Nigeria (WITIN).

Speakers shared national and organizational experiences in strengthening digital competencies across diverse stakeholder groups, including citizens, businesses, women, and underserved communities. Discussions highlighted approaches ranging from national digital transformation strategies and regulatory initiatives to targeted digital literacy programmes, AI capacity-building efforts, and gender-responsive interventions. Participants emphasized that expanding digital infrastructure alone is insufficient; sustainable digital transformation requires investment in human capital, lifelong learning, digital trust, cybersecurity awareness, and inclusive governance.

A recurring theme throughout the session was the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration among governments, industry, academia, technical communities, and civil society to ensure that capacity-building initiatives remain relevant as technologies continue to evolve. Panelists underscored the need to equip individuals not only with technical skills but also with the ability to use digital technologies safely, responsibly, and ethically. The discussion concluded with a shared recognition that inclusive capacity building is fundamental to ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital age and to realizing the vision of the WSIS process and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Abdul Karim Fakir Ali, Managing Director of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, highlighted the national-level efforts being carried out. Specifically, the National Information Dissemination Centers serve 2 million people in communities, helping to ensure that no one is left behind. The DTC network also supports communities across Malaysia. He also pointed out that ASEAN member states have created a common framework for the workforce. A whole-of-society approach is important to prepare for the AI-driven future. Investing in people as much as we invest in technology is equally important.

Mr. David Vicente, Director of Andorra Digital, recognized that the country's challenge is no longer providing access to digital infrastructure, but ensuring that citizens, businesses, and public institutions can confidently, safely, and effectively use digital technologies. While connectivity is nearly universal, digital capacity gaps persist in the adoption of public digital services, the digital maturity of small and medium-sized enterprises, and the effective use of digital identity and online services. These challenges vary across different population groups, including older adults, vulnerable communities, young people, and the workforce, requiring tailored interventions that promote digital skills, trust, online safety, and digital well-being. To address these systemic gaps, the Government of Andorra has integrated capacity

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building into its Digital Strategy 2030, led by Andorra Digital, with a people-centered digital transformation that enables everyone to fully benefit from the digital economy.

Ms. Lena Nyberg, Director General of the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority (PTS), highlighted the country's capacity-building programmes as well as Sweden's support for other countries in strengthening digital capacities. Sweden has been driving the expansion of communication technologies, and PTS has worked to provide digital infrastructure for all, including those living in large rural areas. Sweden is also involved in global fora to further extend this work. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that no one is left behind and that everyone is included in the digital transformation.

Hon. Nyombi Thembo underscored that digital transformation must be people-centered, with digital skills serving as the foundation for inclusive participation in the digital economy. He noted that significant skills gaps remain among women, persons with disabilities, SMEs, and other underserved communities as digital technologies become increasingly essential. Through the Connected Uganda 2030 strategy and the Uganda Communications Universal Service and Access Fund (UCUSAF), the Uganda Communications Commission has expanded ICT access in schools, trained teachers, empowered SMEs and women with digital skills, and supported targeted programmes for farmers and persons with disabilities.

Mr. Karol Krzywicki, Deputy President of UKE, Office of Electronic Communications, highlighted that in the age of AI, the real challenge lies in data security. He also emphasized three key areas of importance: infrastructure, regulatory aspects, and education. He presented data gathered from a consumer survey of children, which found that young people spend 4–5 hours online per day on weekdays and up to 7 hours per day on weekends. Recognizing these patterns, Poland has conducted campaigns targeting various groups, including children, youth, teachers, and underserved communities.

H.E. Ms. Mubarak Ibrahim, Chief AI Officer and Chief Information Officer of Emirates Health Services, shared three important reflections. First, AI is the need of the hour and represents the future. Second, technology augments human intent and intellect. Neither AI nor emerging technologies can outpace human intellect because humans created the technology. Third, as long as the human good remains at the heart of technology development, there is no reason for concern that regulation, governance, and monitoring cannot address emerging challenges.

Ms. Martha Omoekpen Alade emphasized that gender-responsive capacity building must go beyond digital skills training to create inclusive systems that enable women and girls to lead, innovate, and thrive in the digital economy. Drawing on WITIN's experience, she highlighted community-based STEM education, entrepreneurship, mentorship, and local leadership as key to sustainable impact. She identified critical gaps in pedagogy, policy implementation, digital access, partnerships, economic opportunities, evidence, knowledge governance, and long-term investment that continue to limit women's participation. She called for stronger multi-stakeholder collaboration, improved STEM education, integrated digital public infrastructure, inclusive AI and data governance, and sustained financing to move beyond digital inclusion toward digital leadership, ensuring that women and girls become innovators, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers in shaping the digital future.

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Leaders TalkX 7 - Frameworks that Enable: Policy Leadership in ICT Development

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Mr. Leonard Obonyo

The WSIS Forum 2026 High-Level Session, “*Frameworks that Enable: Policy Leadership in ICT Development*,” brought together regulators, policymakers and industry leaders to examine how effective policy, legal and regulatory frameworks can accelerate inclusive digital transformation while supporting innovation, investment and public trust. Moderated by Mr. Leonard Obonyo, Head of Digital Development at the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), the discussion explored practical experiences from different regions and highlighted the critical role of governance in achieving the WSIS Vision 2035.

Opening the discussion, Malaysia, represented by Mr. Syahrilazli Mahammad of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), reflected on lessons from Malaysia’s recent work on digital governance, online safety and platform accountability. The intervention emphasized that effective frameworks require a balance between innovation and protection, built on clear governance structures, stakeholder engagement, proportionate regulation and public trust. Malaysia underscored the need for regulatory approaches that remain agile enough to support emerging technologies while maintaining strong safeguards for consumers and digital citizens.

Responding to the question on future-ready ICT policy, Gabon’s Mr. Alberto Wenceslas Mounguengui Moudoki, Chief Executive Officer of ANINF, highlighted the challenges of building digital sovereignty while accelerating national digital transformation. Drawing on Gabon’s current digital agenda, he emphasized the importance of secure digital infrastructure, strong governance and regulatory frameworks, digital identity systems, cybersecurity readiness, skills development and international cooperation. Gabon’s approach positions digital transformation not merely as a technology programme but as a strategic pillar of economic competitiveness, public-sector modernisation and national sovereignty.

Georgia’s Commissioner, Ms. Ekaterine Imedadze, presented Georgia’s regulatory model as an example of how trust, transparency and regulatory certainty can stimulate investment and digital growth. She outlined Georgia’s successful 5G spectrum assignments, pro-competitive market reforms, infrastructure-sharing policies and support for broadband expansion. The discussion highlighted Georgia’s strong broadband penetration, its internationally recognised *Log In Georgia* initiative, and investments in digital literacy and citizen empowerment. Looking forward, Georgia stressed the need for agile, technology-neutral governance frameworks capable of responding to artificial intelligence, satellite communications and next-generation digital infrastructure.

From Montenegro, Dr. Milan Radulovic, President of EKIP, described the evolving role of regulators as architects of digital trust and inclusion. He highlighted Montenegro’s achievement of 96% 5G population coverage by the end of 2025 and examined the rapid growth of e-commerce and parcel delivery services. His intervention demonstrated how digital infrastructure and economic activity are increasingly interconnected, requiring regulatory approaches that encourage innovation while addressing sustainability, cybersecurity, consumer protection and efficient logistics. Montenegro stressed that future regulation must support both advanced connectivity and the broader digital economy.

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Addressing the transformative impact of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, Mr. Oumar Diene Sakho, Chairman of ARTP Senegal, argued for a shift towards collaborative regulation, aligned with the ITU's concept of fifth-generation regulation. He identified three areas for policy evolution: governance of data and digital infrastructure, fair value-sharing between network operators and global digital platforms, and stronger international regulatory cooperation. Senegal emphasized that traditional regulatory models are no longer sufficient in a world shaped by AI, cloud infrastructure, satellite services and cross-border digital platforms. The intervention called for coordinated action to ensure that developing countries benefit fairly from the digital economy while preserving data sovereignty and sustainable investment incentives.

Speaking from the perspective of a Small Island Developing State, Mr. Adam Caldwell of the Federated States of Micronesia Telecommunications Regulation Authority highlighted the unique challenges faced by small and geographically dispersed nations. He stressed that regulatory capacity-building must go beyond formal rules and focus on practical implementation. Micronesia underscored the importance of international partnerships, regional cooperation, knowledge sharing and context-sensitive policy development. A key message was that global digital frameworks must remain flexible enough to accommodate the realities of small markets with limited resources, while ensuring that such countries have both a seat and a voice in international digital policy discussions.

The representative of AI Policy Labs was unable to attend the session.

Closing the panel contributions, Ms. Isabelle Mauro, Director General of GSOA, advocated for technology-neutral and outcome-focused regulatory approaches. She noted that achieving universal connectivity requires policymakers to recognise the complementary role of multiple technologies, including satellite networks, terrestrial infrastructure and emerging connectivity solutions. Her intervention stressed the importance of predictable, proportionate and investment-friendly regulatory environments that encourage innovation while extending meaningful connectivity and digital services to underserved communities.

Across the discussion, several common themes emerged. Panellists consistently emphasized the importance of trust, investment certainty, digital inclusion, regulatory agility, cybersecurity, data governance and international cooperation. There was broad agreement that regulators must move beyond traditional sector oversight and adopt more collaborative, cross-sectoral approaches capable of addressing increasingly complex digital ecosystems. Participants also highlighted the need to balance innovation with consumer protection, ensure equitable participation in the digital economy, and build governance frameworks that are resilient, inclusive and adaptable to rapid technological change.

The session concluded that effective policy leadership will be fundamental to achieving the WSIS Vision 2035. While national circumstances differ, the experiences shared by regulators and industry leaders demonstrated that future-ready regulatory frameworks remain essential enablers of connectivity, innovation, economic development and digital inclusion. A group photograph marked the close of the session.

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Leaders TalkX 8 - Strengthening International Cooperation for the Information Society

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Dr. Chafic Chaya

Introduction

Leaders TalkX 8, “Strengthening International Cooperation for the Information Society”, brought together high-level representatives from various stakeholder groups to reflect on how international cooperation can support the next phase of WSIS implementation. The discussion was framed by the WSIS+20 context and focused on practical cooperation across infrastructure resilience, digital regulation, inclusive connectivity, trust, accountability, cybersecurity, finance and the governance of emerging technologies. Across the panel, there was broad recognition that the challenges of building an inclusive, secure and sustainable digital society are global, require international and regional collaboration, cooperation and trust, and that no country can meet them alone.

Achievements of 20 years of WSIS

Participants recalled that the WSIS process has provided a durable framework for multistakeholder cooperation, helping countries and institutions expand connectivity, strengthen digital policy dialogue and align ICT development with broader sustainable development objectives. The WSIS Action Lines have helped structure cooperation across governance, infrastructure, access, capacity building, confidence and security, enabling environments and international cooperation. Speakers also noted that WSIS has supported a shift from digital access, viewed as a narrow connectivity objective, to a broader understanding of meaningful and trusted participation in the Information Society.

Fresh priorities

The session highlighted several priorities for the period ahead. These include strengthening trust in digital environments, improving accountability among actors in the digital ecosystem, ensuring resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive connectivity for rural and underserved communities, and building institutional financial and capacity for emerging technologies. Participants also stressed the importance of regulatory cooperation, evidence sharing, regional coordination, and inclusive approaches that take account of women, youth, persons with disabilities and marginalised communities. The discussion also underlined that more voices ensure better outcomes, particularly when small and developing governments, SMEs, women and young people are meaningfully included.

Emerging trends

Several emerging trends were identified. Artificial intelligence is increasing dependence on reliable connectivity, data flows and computing infrastructure. Submarine cables, cloud infrastructure, data centres, satellite connectivity and terrestrial networks are increasingly part of a single digital ecosystem.

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Digital regulation is expanding beyond traditional telecommunications mandates into areas such as AI, cybersecurity, data governance and platform related risks. At the same time, digital inclusion now requires attention not only to networks, but also to affordability, digital skills, relevant content, online safety and institutional trust.

Opportunities

Participants underlined the opportunity to use WSIS beyond 2025 as a practical platform for implementation, coordination and knowledge exchange. There is scope to strengthen cooperation among regulators, governments, international organisations, the private sector, academia, civil society and the technical community. Practical opportunities include regional observatories, networks of regulators, repositories of good practices, voluntary accountability mechanisms, blended financing models, shared infrastructure, capacity building initiatives, and stronger links between national implementation and global policy processes. The session also highlighted the need to build partnerships, financing mechanisms, and shared accountability frameworks that can support inclusive digital development in practice. A further opportunity identified was closer coordination between the IGF and WSIS Forum, so that both processes can reinforce each other throughout the year.

Key challenges

The discussion identified persistent gaps in meaningful connectivity, especially for rural communities, developing countries and vulnerable groups. Participants also noted challenges related to infrastructure resilience, fragmented regulatory approaches, limited institutional capacity, insufficient financing, cybersecurity threats, cross border data protection issues, and the pace of technological change. Another challenge is ensuring that global discussions on AI and digital governance do not remain at the level of principles only, but translate into capabilities, implementation tools and measurable outcomes. Participants also noted that duplication and uneven participation across global digital governance processes remain significant obstacles.

Links to WSIS Action Lines

The session was closely linked to several WSIS Action Lines, particularly C1 on the role of governments and all stakeholders, C2 on information and communication infrastructure, C3 on access to information and knowledge, C4 on capacity building, C5 on building confidence and security in the use of ICTs, C6 on the enabling environment, C7 on ICT applications, C10 on ethical dimensions of the Information Society, and C11 on international and regional cooperation. Throughout the discussion, participants emphasised that these Action Lines remain relevant but must be applied in ways that reflect today's realities of AI, platform economies, cyber risks, infrastructure interdependence, and digital inclusion gaps.

Case Examples

Several practical examples were shared. Latin American experience was used to illustrate the need for shared responsibility and accountability frameworks for inclusive and trustworthy digital environments.

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Portugal highlighted international and national cooperation on submarine cable resilience, including the importance of route diversity, risk mitigation and coordination among governments, regulators, industry, academia and international organisations. Romania noted the evolving role of regulators in supporting trusted digital transformation, including responsibilities linked to emerging technologies and AI governance. Zimbabwe presented examples of cooperation with regional and international organisations on rural connectivity, digital centres, youth innovation, cybersecurity, data protection and spectrum coordination. The Democratic Republic of the Congo highlighted the potential reform of Universal Service Funds through transparent governance, diversified financing and targeted support for women, youth and rural communities. The United Kingdom emphasised multistakeholder cooperation across governments, industry, the tech sector, academia, civil society and wider stakeholders, noting that this approach is central to global Internet governance, digital standards and emerging AI governance discussions. The IGF MAG Chair highlighted three practical ways for the IGF and WSIS processes to reinforce each other: coordination, collaboration and cohesion within the wider WSIS architecture, and the network of more than 180 National, Regional, Sub-regional and Youth IGF Initiatives can serve as natural WSIS implementers.

Vision for WSIS beyond 2035

Looking beyond 2035, the session pointed to a WSIS process that remains inclusive, implementation oriented and responsive to technological change. The Information Society of the future will require stronger cooperation between global principles and national capacities, between digital infrastructure and social inclusion, and between innovation and trust. WSIS should continue to serve as a bridge between multilateral and multistakeholder processes, helping translate shared objectives into practical action. This also requires stronger cohesion between the WSIS Forum, the IGF, UNGIS and the follow-up processes for WSIS and the Global Digital Compact.

The session's forward-looking message: The future WSIS vision should therefore focus on resilient and interoperable infrastructure, inclusive digital participation, trusted governance, sustainable financing, capacity development and cooperation that delivers measurable benefits for people and communities.

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Leaders TalkX 9 - Cyber Confidence: Enhancing Security in the Digital Age

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Ms. Timea Suto

Session summary

The session explored how governments, industry, the technical community and civil society can strengthen cyber confidence and digital trust as the foundation for an inclusive, secure, and resilient digital future. Participants emphasized that digital transformation can only deliver its full economic and social benefits when citizens, businesses, and governments trust the systems and services on which they increasingly depend.

A recurring theme was that **trust must be embedded into digital ecosystems** by design rather than treated as an afterthought. Speakers highlighted the importance of building secure digital infrastructure, trusted digital identity systems, resilient public services, and effective cybersecurity capabilities from the outset. This is particularly relevant for developing countries and regions that continue to expand digital connectivity and digital public infrastructure.

The discussion underscored that **cybersecurity is no longer solely a technical issue but a strategic enabler of economic growth, institutional resilience, public confidence, and sustainable development**. Strong cybersecurity frameworks, secure digital payments, trusted data governance, and resilient digital services were identified as critical components of a thriving digital economy.

Several interventions highlighted the importance of **regional and international cooperation**. Participants noted that cyber threats do not respect national borders and that effective responses require harmonized regulatory approaches, interoperable digital systems, information sharing, coordinated cybersecurity efforts, and cross-border collaboration. Regional frameworks and multilateral cooperation were presented as essential tools for building trusted digital ecosystems and advancing collective resilience.

The session also examined the relationship between artificial intelligence and trust. Participants stressed that **AI governance must be grounded in fundamental rights, transparency, accountability, and proportionality**. AI was described as a diverse set of technologies whose risks and benefits vary according to context, requiring **risk-based and context-sensitive governance approaches**.

The growing cybersecurity implications of AI were another major focus. Speakers discussed how AI can both strengthen cybersecurity defences and create new categories of threats. Addressing these challenges was seen as requiring close **collaboration among governments, industry, academia, and civil society to develop safeguards, share expertise, and promote the responsible development and deployment of advanced AI systems**.

Digital inclusion emerged as a central dimension of cyber confidence. Expanding meaningful access, digital literacy, cybersecurity skills, and participation in the digital economy remains a priority,

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particularly in developing countries. Investment in youth, STEM education, cybersecurity expertise, and AI skills was identified as critical for long-term resilience and competitiveness.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of **empowering women, families, vulnerable groups, and local communities** to participate safely and confidently in digital environments. Participants stressed that building trust requires not only technical protections but also inclusive policies, digital literacy initiatives, and safeguards that enable all users to benefit from digital technologies.

Across the various perspectives presented, there was broad agreement that the future success of digital transformation will depend less on the pace of technological innovation alone and more on the ability of societies to create trusted digital environments. **Secure infrastructure, responsible AI governance, protection of fundamental rights, inclusive participation, and international cooperation were consistently identified as the pillars of a trusted digital future.**

Achievements of 20 Years of WSIS

Over the past two decades, the WSIS process has helped advance global connectivity, digital inclusion, and multistakeholder cooperation while promoting a people-centred and development-oriented approach to digital transformation. As countries have expanded digital public services, digital identity systems, and digital economies, WSIS has contributed to a growing recognition that trust, security, and resilience are essential foundations of sustainable digital development. It has also elevated cybersecurity from a technical issue to a strategic enabler of economic growth and social progress, while fostering international cooperation, capacity building, and dialogue on emerging technologies. These achievements have helped lay the foundations for trusted digital ecosystems that support innovation, inclusion, and sustainable development.

Fresh priorities

Looking toward the next phase of digital transformation, participants identified several priorities:

- Embedding trust, security, and resilience into digital systems by design.
- Strengthening cybersecurity as a strategic enabler of economic and social development.
- Ensuring responsible, transparent, and accountable governance of AI technologies.
- Expanding digital inclusion and meaningful connectivity, particularly in developing countries.
- Investing in digital literacy, cybersecurity skills, STEM education, and AI competencies.
- Promoting inclusive participation of women, families, youth, and vulnerable groups in the digital economy.
- Enhancing regional and international cooperation to address cross-border cyber risks.

Emerging trends

Several emerging trends were highlighted during the discussion:

- Growing recognition of digital trust as a prerequisite for economic growth and digital transformation.

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- The convergence of digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, data- and AI governance as interconnected policy priorities.
- Rising demand for regional interoperability and cross-border digital cooperation.
- Increased attention to cyber resilience as a component of national and economic security.

Opportunities

Participants identified significant opportunities to accelerate progress toward trusted digital societies:

- Building secure and interoperable digital public infrastructure from the outset, particularly in developing economies.
- Leveraging AI to improve public service delivery, efficiency, and access to opportunities.
- Expanding digital participation through investments in connectivity, skills, and digital literacy.
- Using regional cooperation mechanisms to strengthen cybersecurity capabilities and facilitate trusted digital services across borders.
- Empowering young populations with digital and AI-related skills to support innovation and economic growth.
- Creating inclusive digital ecosystems that enable broader participation in economic and social development.

Key challenges

Despite substantial progress, important challenges remain:

- Persistent digital divides and unequal access to connectivity and digital services.
- Growing sophistication and scale of cyber threats.
- Limited cybersecurity capacity and skills in many countries.
- The need to balance AI innovation with safeguards for transparency, accountability, and fundamental rights.
- Fragmentation of regulatory and governance approaches across jurisdictions.
- Building and maintaining public trust in increasingly complex digital systems.
- Ensuring that vulnerable groups are not excluded from digital transformation efforts.

Case examples

The session highlighted practical examples demonstrating implementation on the ground:

- Efforts to strengthen trusted digital public infrastructure and secure mobile ecosystems to support financial inclusion, public services, education, and healthcare.
- Regional cooperation initiatives focused on interoperability, cybersecurity coordination, and trusted cross-border digital services.
- National initiatives to develop digital skills, cybersecurity expertise, and AI capabilities among young people.
- Emerging approaches to AI governance that emphasize transparency, accountability, explainability, and protection of fundamental rights.

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Leaders TalkX 10 - Global Perspectives on Emerging Technology

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Mr. Thomas Aarheim

Introduction

Leaders TalkX 10 examined how governments and the wider digital community can harness emerging technologies while managing risks related to security, trust, inequality, governance and institutional capacity. Discussions focused primarily on artificial intelligence (AI), alongside blockchain, quantum computing, the Internet of Things and the digital infrastructure required to support their deployment.

Speakers emphasized that the benefits of emerging technologies depend on more than access to advanced tools. Effective adoption requires resilient infrastructure, trusted data, appropriate regulation, skilled institutions and inclusive governance. Government representatives outlined national approaches to AI adoption and digital development, while technical and policy stakeholders highlighted internet resilience, multistakeholder cooperation and the need for governance frameworks capable of responding to increasingly interconnected technologies.

Government perspectives

Namibia

1. Evaluation of technology should precede public deployment.

Namibia called for stronger third-party evaluation, monitoring and auditing of emerging technologies before their release. Particular attention was given to cybersecurity risks, potential misuse and bias affecting minority groups and other communities.

2. Transparency and accountability are essential to public trust.

The intervention emphasized the need for institutions that citizens can approach when seeking accountability. Namibia highlighted systems that allow individuals to see who has accessed their data, why it was accessed and how they can object, presenting transparency as a practical means of increasing trust in digital government.

Lithuania

1. Strong digital and data foundations should come before high-profile technology projects.

Lithuania said its digital transformation began with investment in underlying infrastructure. The consolidation of 99 government server rooms into centralized data centers reduced operating costs by 30% and energy use by up to 60%. The country has also opened more than 2,600 government datasets and is integrating public-sector information into a centralized State Data Lake.

2. A systemic approach has enabled rapid AI adoption.

Lithuania reported that business use of AI increased from 4.5% in 2021 to 21.3% in 2025. Current

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initiatives include National AI Strategic Guidelines, a planned €130 million AI supercomputing facility, an AI Sandbox supporting implementation of the European Union AI Act and €25 million in funding for Lithuanian-language AI resources. Lithuania presented its experience as evidence that smaller economies can achieve high levels of adoption through consistent investment in foundations.

Oman

1. Emerging economies do not need to compete directly with frontier AI developers.

Oman argued that value from AI will be created across infrastructure, energy, data, skills, applications, regulation and trust, rather than solely through the development of large AI models. It identified strategic geography, energy resources, connectivity and growing digital infrastructure as areas of its comparative advantage.

2. Oman is focusing on infrastructure, adoption and domestic capability.

Its approach includes expanding cloud infrastructure, connectivity and sustainable data centers; accelerating AI adoption across government and industry; and developing local talent and technology companies. The objective is to strengthen participation in global AI value chains and support productivity, diversification and inclusive growth.

Kenya

1. The focus after WSIS+20 should be implementation.

Kenya called for stronger alignment between the WSIS Action Lines, the Global Digital Compact and the WSIS+20 outcome at the country level. It argued that the digital divide now extends beyond connectivity and affordability to include computing capacity, quality data, local-language resources, skills, safety and institutional capability.

2. AI should be treated as part of national development infrastructure.

Kenya highlighted its National AI Strategy 2025–2030 and broader work on AI and emerging technology policy. It identified digital public infrastructure, AI-ready data, affordable computing capacity, secure cloud services and capable public institutions as prerequisites for responsible adoption. Sustainability was also emphasized, including energy efficiency, water use, electronic waste and the environmental impact of data centers.

Technical community perspectives

Canadian Internet Registration Authority

1. Emerging technologies depend on an open, secure and globally connected internet.

CIRA said the benefits of emerging technologies are not automatic and depend on infrastructure that remains interoperable, trusted and resilient. It argued that emerging technology governance cannot be separated from the multistakeholder governance of the internet.

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2. Digital inclusion must address quality, security and local participation.

Drawing on its operation of the .CA domain, cybersecurity services and community investment programs, CIRA emphasized that inclusion involves more than basic connectivity. Communities also require secure infrastructure, digital skills and a meaningful role in decisions affecting technology. It warned that fragmentation or exclusion could deepen existing inequalities.

RIPE Network Coordination Centre

1. The open and interoperable nature of the internet should be protected.

RIPE NCC stressed that AI, IoT, blockchain, quantum computing and digital public infrastructure all depend on shared internet foundations. While recognizing national priorities around security and sovereignty, it cautioned that fragmentation could weaken innovation, trust and participation in the digital economy.

2. Technical resilience and capacity building are practical priorities.

RIPE NCC highlighted routing security, Resource Public Key Infrastructure, Internet Protocol version 6 deployment, network measurement and cooperation around Internet Exchange Points. It also emphasized training and institutional expertise to ensure that policymakers understand how regulatory decisions affect infrastructure in practice.

Non-government perspectives

Dr. Nele Leosk

1. Technology must be suited to national circumstances and supported by an enabling environment.

Dr. Leosk observed that most countries are users and buyers rather than producers of emerging technologies. Successful deployment therefore depends on selecting appropriate tools and establishing the necessary regulatory, governance and institutional conditions.

2. Future digital divides may increasingly reflect differences in foundational readiness.

Connectivity remains essential, but Dr. Leosk argued that countries will also be differentiated by the quality of their data, interoperability, digital identity systems and institutional capacity. Drawing on Estonia's experience, she stressed that visible AI applications depend on less visible digital foundations.

Gabriela Ramos

1. Technological convergence is creating increasingly systemic risks.

Ramos argued that AI is becoming closely integrated with quantum computing, blockchain and IoT. As these technologies converge across health care, finance, energy, transport and public services, risks may emerge from interactions between systems rather than from one technology alone.

2. Governance should focus on outcomes across the full technology value chain.

Ramos called for governance centered on human rights, safety, competition, resilience, accountability

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and environmental sustainability. Responsibilities should extend across developers, infrastructure providers, deployers and public authorities. She also supported joint testing, auditing and regulatory sandboxes capable of assessing converging technologies together.

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Leaders TalkX 11 - Digital Government, Digital Citizens: Ensuring Accessibility to Public Services

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Ms. Meni Anastasiadou

Key Issues discussed:

- Participants highlighted digital public infrastructure (DPI) as a key enabler of inclusive, citizen-centric digital government and an essential foundation for delivering trusted and accessible public services.
- The discussion underscored the importance of enabling policy, regulatory and institutional environments that foster investment, innovation, interoperability, competition and consumer trust, while supporting countries' digital transformation priorities.
- Speakers emphasized that successful digital government requires strong collaboration across governments, regulators, the private sector, international organizations and development partners, alongside continued international knowledge exchange and capacity building.
- Participants explored practical approaches to ensuring that digital public services are accessible, user-centric and trusted, including through interoperable digital ecosystems, digital identity, secure data exchange, multilingual services, and maintaining alternative service delivery channels for underserved communities.
- The discussion reaffirmed that digital transformation should ultimately be measured by improved outcomes for citizens, ensuring services are usable regardless of geography, income, disability, language, connectivity or digital skills.

Key Outcomes of the session

Key insights and findings:

- Broad recognition that inclusive, trusted and user-centric digital government depends on strong digital public infrastructure supported by coherent national strategies.
- Reinforced the importance of embedding accessibility, inclusion and trust into the design of digital public services from the outset.
- Shared practical experiences demonstrating the value of integrated service platforms, interoperable systems and citizen-focused service delivery models.
- Highlighted the complementary roles of policy, regulation, institutional coordination and technology in advancing digital government.

Announcements, launches, or initiatives presented:

- National digital government initiatives and digital public service platforms were presented as examples of integrated, citizen-centred service delivery.
- Examples of integrated government service platforms showcased approaches such as "life-event" service delivery, single sign-on, multilingual interfaces, virtual assistants and one-stop government service centres to simplify citizens' interactions with government.
- Participants highlighted initiatives to strengthen digital trust through data protection, cybersecurity, interoperable government architecture and digital identity frameworks.

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Agreements, collaborations, or commitments:

- Shared commitment to advancing inclusive, accessible and trusted digital government as part of broader sustainable development objectives.
- Recognition of the value of continued international cooperation, knowledge exchange and capacity building to support national digital transformation efforts.
- Common support for strengthening digital public infrastructure and interoperable digital ecosystems to improve public service delivery.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

- Continue investing in secure, interoperable and inclusive digital public infrastructure as the foundation for accessible digital government.
- Foster enabling policy and regulatory environments that encourage innovation, investment, competition and trusted digital services.
- Strengthen public-private partnerships and multistakeholder collaboration to accelerate the development and implementation of citizen-centric digital government solutions.
- Promote international cooperation and knowledge sharing to support countries in adapting successful digital government models to their national priorities and contexts.
- Ensure digital transformation efforts remain focused on inclusion by investing in connectivity, digital skills, accessibility and user-centred service design so that all citizens can benefit from digital public services.

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Leaders TalkX 12 - Co-Creating Tomorrow: Digital and AI in Partnership

Executive Summary by High-Level Track Facilitator Ms. Caitlin Kraft-Buchman

1. Executive outcome

The session's central message was clear: the WSIS process must now move from declaration to delivery. Twenty years of multistakeholder cooperation have established a shared language for digital development. The urgency of AI, infrastructure concentration, environmental pressure and widening capacity gaps now demands mechanisms that turn that language into implementation.

Speakers did not present innovation, regulation, sovereignty, sustainability and inclusion as competing objectives. They argued that these goals can coexist when standards are well designed, knowledge is shared, perspectives are integrated early, and cooperation is structured to build national and local capacity rather than deepen dependence.

"The future will not be shaped by the intelligence of our technologies. It will be designed by the wisdom of our collaboration."

- Bocar A. Ba, SAMENA Telecommunications Council

2. The outcome in six messages

1. From declaration to delivery. WSIS must preserve its multistakeholder character while becoming more operational: clearer commitments, faster implementation, shared accountability and stronger support for countries with limited capacity.

2. Collaboration must replace silos. AI, connectivity, cybersecurity, skills, trust, investment and resilience are now one interdependent agenda. Governments, regulators, industry, academia, technical communities and civil society need shared learning and coordinated action.

3. Sustainability requires a generational horizon. AI infrastructure decisions made today will shape societies two or three generations from now. Data-centre expansion cannot be allowed to undermine the environmental foundations on which future prosperity depends.

4. Innovation and governance can coexist. Competitiveness and productivity do not require the abandonment of safeguards. Well-designed standards can reduce uncertainty, improve information across the value chain and create incentives for safer, fairer innovation.

5. Inclusion requires pluriversality. Global cooperation must integrate multiple knowledge systems, social realities and development pathways. Bridge-building coalitions are needed so that Global South actors participate in defining problems, evidence and rules - not only in implementing them.

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6. Sovereignty must be exercised through trusted interdependence. No country can build every layer of the digital stack alone. Sovereignty is strengthened when dependencies are chosen, diversified, governed and used to convert global capability into national capacity.

3. Speaker interventions and outcomes

THE GAMBIA

H.E. Prof. Muhammadou M. O. Kah

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Mission of The Gambia to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva

Looking across more than two decades of WSIS, Ambassador Kah emphasised the enduring value of the multistakeholder approach and the urgency of translating consensus into results. The next decade cannot be measured principally by declarations adopted or meetings convened, but by whether cooperation closes gaps and improves people's lives.

Outcome: WSIS should move decisively from declaration to delivery, retaining inclusive multistakeholder participation while strengthening implementation, follow-through and accountability.

JORDAN

H.E. Eng. Lara El-Khateeb

Chairperson, Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC), Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

AI is a development agenda as well as a technology agenda. Jordan's intervention stressed shared learning, regulatory dialogue and collaboration across institutions. As AI becomes embedded in telecommunications networks and public infrastructure, governance cannot remain fragmented across separate policy silos.

Outcome: International cooperation should connect telecom regulation, AI governance, cybersecurity, interoperability, digital skills and investment, with practical capacity-building for developing countries.

IFIP

Ms. Margaret Havey

IFIP IP3 Board Director; Technical Advisor, Shared Services Canada

Technology should support coexistence - among people, societies and the natural environment. The expansion of AI data centres should therefore be assessed through a two- or three-generation horizon, not only through immediate demand for compute, speed and economic return.

Outcome: Sustainable digital infrastructure requires transparent choices about energy, water, land, materials, local benefit and resilience. Today's infrastructure boom cannot destroy the environmental basis of tomorrow's prosperity.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Prof. Christopher S. Yoo

Imasogie Professor in Law and Technology; Founding Director, Center for Technology, Innovation & Competition

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The growing emphasis on productivity and national competitiveness need not displace safety and fairness. Professor Yoo argued that well-designed standards can help upstream developers provide the information downstream actors need, reducing reliance on the “honour system” and improving incentives throughout the AI value chain.

Outcome: Competitiveness, innovation and governance can thrive together when standards are technically credible, proportionate and designed to make trustworthy innovation easier rather than merely adding procedural burden.

CCG, NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY DELHI

Ms. Jhalak M. Kakkar

Executive Director, Centre for Communication Governance

Drawing on MAP AI, Ms. Kakkar highlighted the work required to integrate perspectives rather than simply invite them. Inclusive governance depends on bridge-building coalitions that connect regions, disciplines, institutions and communities, while recognising pluriversality: there is no single universal pathway through which societies will experience or govern AI.

Outcome: Global South participation must shape agenda-setting, evidence and institutional design from the outset. Meaningful inclusion is authorship, not consultation after key choices have already been made.

SAMENA TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL

Mr. Bocar A. Ba

Chief Executive Officer; Chair, ITU Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues

Mr. Ba described the present moment as an era of digital interdependence in which investment, cybersecurity, AI, connectivity, trust, skills and resilience are inseparable. Sovereignty and interdependence are not opposites: imposed and concentrated dependence weakens sovereignty, while chosen, diversified and trusted dependence can strengthen it.

Outcome: The next WSIS chapter should build trusted interdependence. The private sector must help create confidence that infrastructure will remain resilient, AI will augment human potential, and countries will not be locked out because they cannot build every layer of the stack themselves. Cooperation must move beyond sharing ideas to sharing responsibility.

4. Areas of convergence

Implementation is the test of legitimacy. The credibility of global digital cooperation will depend on visible results: improved capacity, resilient infrastructure, fair access, trusted systems and development gains.

Multistakeholderism remains essential, but must mature. Participation should lead to shared decisions, defined responsibilities and practical delivery. Presence alone is not co-creation.

AI governance is infrastructure governance. Telecommunications, compute, energy, data, standards, cybersecurity and skills must be addressed as a connected system.

Standards are enabling tools. When they provide reliable information, interoperability and clear expectations, standards can support both public safeguards and competitive innovation.

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Sustainability is not an externality. Environmental and intergenerational impacts belong inside the design and approval of digital infrastructure, not in a separate exercise after investment decisions are made.

Plural perspectives improve governance quality. Coalitions that bridge regions, disciplines and knowledge systems produce more legitimate and context-sensitive decisions.

Capacity is the basis of meaningful sovereignty. Countries need infrastructure, skills, institutions and negotiating power that allow them to choose and govern their digital dependencies.

5. Priorities for the next decade of WSIS

- Create delivery-oriented multistakeholder mechanisms with named responsibilities, time-bound actions and public reporting on outcomes.
- Establish sustained peer-learning and cooperation among telecommunications, digital, competition, data-protection and sectoral regulators, with dedicated support for developing countries.
- Treat AI infrastructure as a sustainable-development issue by incorporating energy, water, material use, resilience, local value and intergenerational impact into planning and investment decisions.
- Advance technically credible and interoperable standards that improve information across the AI value chain and allow innovation, safety and fairness to reinforce one another.
- Fund bridge-building coalitions and Global South-led research so that diverse perspectives shape problem definition, standards, policy and evaluation from the beginning.
- Develop practical principles for trusted interdependence: diversified partnerships, resilient infrastructure, open and interoperable systems, local capability and respect for national policy space.
- Define private-sector responsibility in terms of confidence-building, transparency, cybersecurity cooperation, fair access and investment that turns global capability into durable national capacity.
- Measure success through delivery: who gains agency, which gaps close, what capacity remains locally, and whether digital transformation protects both people and planet.