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WSIS FORUM
2026

OUTCOME DOCUMENT
(Draft)

WSIS FORUM 2026

6-10 July 2026
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Please note the WSIS Forum 2026 Outcome Document is a compilation of the outcomes of the sessions (interactive sessions, partner insights, Action Line Facilitation Meetings, High-Level Dialogues, and many more) submitted to the WSIS secretariat by the organizations responsible for their respective sessions. ITU does not hold any responsibility for the outcomes provided by the organizers of the sessions for the WSIS Forum 2026.

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WSIS FORUM 2026
OUTCOME DOCUMENT
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WSIS Forum 2026: Introduction

The WSIS Forum 2026, co-hosted by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Swiss Confederation and co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, and UNCTAD, took place from 6 to 10 July 2026 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Forum was held from 6 to 7 July at ITU Headquarters and from 8 to 10 July at Palexpo, as part of Geneva Digital Week.

Building on two decades of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process and following the WSIS+20 review, the WSIS Forum 2026 further strengthened its role as the central global multistakeholder platform for advancing digital cooperation, accelerating implementation of the WSIS Action Lines and their annual roadmaps, convening diverse stakeholders to shape emerging digital priorities, and building consensus for a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable digital future. The Forum brought together governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia, youth, and the technical community to strengthen partnerships and advance a more inclusive, people-centred, and sustainable digital future.

As a key component of Geneva Digital Week, the WSIS Forum 2026 was held alongside the AI for Good Global Summit and the UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance, creating a unique convergence of global discussions on digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and emerging technologies. Together, the events welcomed 12,000 participants from around the world, both onsite and virtually from 177 countries, representing a diverse range of stakeholders, including more than 250 high level representatives including ministers and deputies, regulators, UN heads and leaders, as well as policymakers, industry leaders, international organizations, researchers, innovators, civil society representatives, and youth.

The Forum reaffirmed the enduring relevance of the WSIS process as a strategic framework for translating digital cooperation into tangible outcomes and advancing the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines. Discussions emphasized the need for the next phase of WSIS to remain action-oriented, supporting countries in transforming digital strategies into meaningful services, skills, opportunities, and improved outcomes for communities.

Throughout the five-day programme, participants engaged in high-level dialogues, interactive sessions, and knowledge exchanges addressing a wide range of digital priorities across the WSIS Action Lines. Key messages highlighted throughout the Forum included the continued importance of advancing digital inclusion beyond connectivity by strengthening access, digital skills, relevant content, and meaningful use of technology. Participants also underscored the need to harness emerging tech, in particular, artificial intelligence as a driver for development, while addressing emerging challenges such as the AI divide, capacity gaps, and the importance of trusted, responsible, and sustainable approaches to AI.

The Forum further highlighted the role of digital finance, youth engagement, and efforts to close the gender digital divide as essential components of equitable digital transformation. A strong emphasis was placed on measuring impact and ensuring that progress is assessed not only through technological deployment, but through the tangible benefits delivered to people and communities.

Discussions across high-level sessions reinforced the importance of moving from dialogue to implementation through strengthened partnerships, improved coordination, and measurable outcomes. The WSIS Action Line Facilitators advanced work on updated roadmaps and indicators in line with the WSIS+20 Outcome Document, supporting a shared vision for the continued evolution of the WSIS process.

UNGIS High-Level Meeting brought together heads and senior representatives of more than 40 UN entities to reaffirm the UN system's commitment to implementing the WSIS+20 Outcome Document. Members recognized UNGIS as the UN's principal coordination mechanism for digital cooperation, underscoring its role in strengthening policy coherence, reducing duplication, mobilising shared expertise, and supporting Member States. The meeting also marked the transition of the UNGIS Chair from UNCTAD to ITU for the 2026–2027 term and set priorities for the forthcoming UNGIS Work Plan, with ITU serving as the permanent secretariat of UNGIS.

The Ministerial Roundtable brought ministers together around AI strategy and policy, digital transformation, and infrastructure and inclusion. A common thread ran through the room: readiness, trust, and cooperation. Ministers called not for identical systems but interoperable ones that respect national circumstances, with ITU as a trusted platform translating shared principles into practical cooperation. AI must remain people-centred, ethical, and accountable, with growing momentum behind

sovereign AI models and local-language datasets. Ministers warned of a structural divide as AI infrastructure funding concentrates in a few large private firms, and stressed that success should be measured not by technology deployed but by lives improved, calling for blended finance, compute sharing, and investment that reaches underserved communities.

The Regulators Roundtable focused on putting governance essentials into practice, introducing the Actionable Core Toolkit to help regulators move from assessment to action across the seven governance essentials of the GSR-26 best practice guidelines, with concrete approaches shared from Nigeria's network intelligence ecosystems to Singapore's regulatory sandboxes and Ukraine's adaptive regulation sustaining resilience.

WSIS Prizes 2026 celebrated outstanding digital development initiatives from around the world, recognizing innovative projects that demonstrate the impact of ICTs in advancing sustainable development and implementing the WSIS Action Lines.

WSIS Stocktaking continues to serve as the global repository for collecting and sharing ICT-enabled initiatives supporting the WSIS Action Lines and the Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting good practices, innovative solutions, and collaborative efforts from around the world.

Looking ahead, the Forum highlighted the importance of the coming decade as a period of accelerated implementation, with a focus on digital inclusion, responsible innovation, digital trust, and sustainable development. The WSIS process remains a vital mechanism for fostering cooperation, aligning priorities, and ensuring that digital transformation contributes to meaningful progress worldwide.

The Event was chaired by H.E. Eng. Raafat Hendy, Minister, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Egypt (Arab Republic of). At the closing ceremony, H.E. Raafat Hendy presented the Chair’s Summary, capturing the key messages and outcomes that emerged from the programme of the Forum.

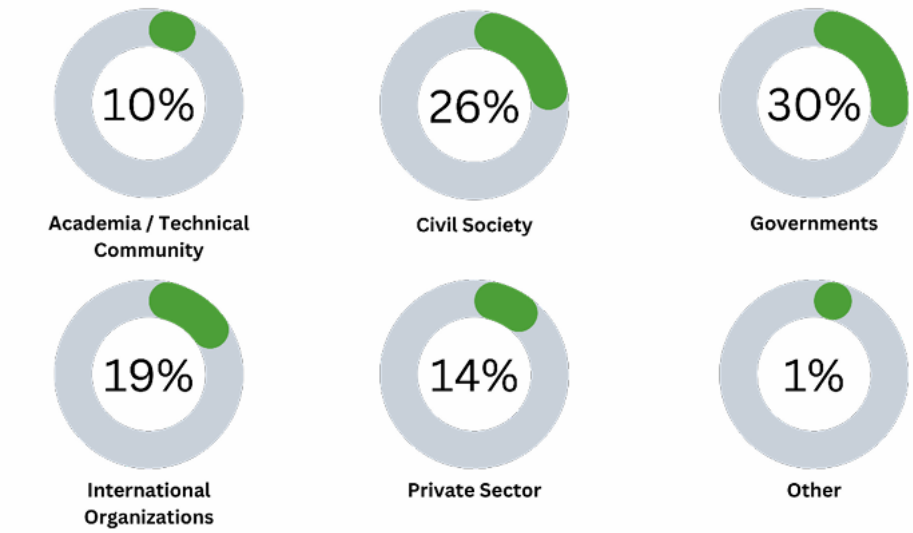
Open Consultation Process

The agenda and programme of the WSIS Forum 2026 were designed in collaboration with the multistakeholders on the basis of official submissions received during the Open Consultation Process (OCP) on the thematic aspects and innovations of the format of the Event. Engaging all WSIS stakeholders (governments, international organizations, civil society, private sector, technical community, and academia), this process aims to ensure active participation across sectors in forming the agenda and the programme of the WSIS Forum, highlighting linkages between the WSIS Action Lines, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Global Digital Compact objectives. The OCP for the WSIS Forum 2026 began in January 2026 with consultative meetings organized to collect inputs to shape the programme of the event.

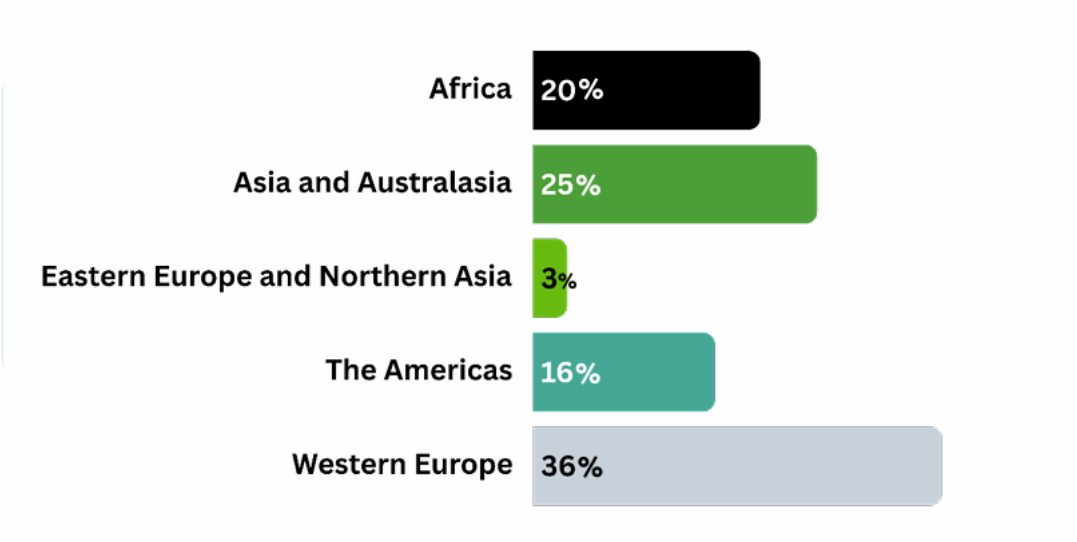
The ITU-WSIS Secretariat received more than 700 submissions containing proposals on the thematic aspects and innovations on the format of the WSIS Forum 2026, including binding requests for sessions, exhibition spaces, partnerships, and more. All related information can be found at:

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Home/Consultations

Stakeholder Type distribution



Regional distribution of contributions



It is important to note that about half of submissions from Western Europe came from the headquarters of organizations with an international presence.

Participation at the WSIS Forum 2026

- Over 250 sessions took place throughout the week, featuring high-level dialogues, Leader TalkX sessions, interactive discussions, knowledge cafés, exhibitions, WSIS Prizes and recognition ceremonies, ministerial and regulatory roundtables, stakeholder engagement activities, social events, and more. The programme brought together approximately 1,000 speakers from around the world, contributing diverse perspectives on key digital priorities and the future of digital transformation.

- Geneva Digital Week brought 12,000 participants from 177 countries, bringing together the first UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance, WSIS Forum 2026, and the AI for Good Global Summit 2026.

- The Forum brought together 78 ministers and deputies, 46 regulators, 29 UN Heads and deputies from UN entities, alongside CEOs, civil society leaders, youth, and representatives from international organizations, the technical community, and academia.

- Participation reflected a strong gender balance, with 44% women and 53% men.

- Over 1700 participants actively used the WSIS Forum 2026 networking app during the event.

Social Media at the WSIS Forum 2026

The social media presence for the WSIS Forum 2026 serves as a key digital channel for sharing updates, highlights, and key moments from the event.

Across multiple platforms, content such as event recaps, session coverage, and announcements is posted regularly, helping both onsite and online participants stay informed and engaged throughout the event.

The coverage of the event is available on the following platforms:

- WSIS Process X
- WSIS Process Facebook
- WSIS Process Instagram
- WSIS Process LinkedIn
- WSIS Flash

PRESS COVERAGE

High-Level Plenary Sessions

WSIS Forum 2026 Inaugural session

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 09:00-09:15

Please find session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/121

Handover of Chair and the Appointment of Chair of WSIS Forum 2026

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 09:15-09:125

Please find session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/600

WSIS Forum 2026 Inaugural session: Spotlight session

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 09:15-09:125

Please find session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/500

WSIS Forum 2026 Inaugural session: High-Level Plenary: The Future We Choose: Leadership for an Inclusive Digital World

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 09:40-10:30

Please find session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/501

WSIS Forum 2026 co-organisers remarks

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 10:30-10:45

Please find session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/598

Ministerial Roundtable

9 July 2026 10:00 – 12:00 CEST

Please find session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/479



The Ministerial Roundtable held during the WSIS Forum 2026 brought together ministers representing all the regions of the world.
The discussions addressed three key topics:

- AI Strategy and Policy
- Digital Transformation
- Infrastructure and Inclusion

Topic 1: AI Strategy and Policy

1. Key Messages

- Ministers reaffirmed that AI is becoming a strategic driver of economic growth, public-sector modernization and sustainable development.
- There was broad consensus that trusted legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks are essential to foster innovation while ensuring trust, inclusion and security.
- Ministers emphasized that international cooperation, capacity-building and knowledge-sharing are essential to prevent new AI divides, and recognized the important role of ITU, the WSIS process, AI for Good and the wider UN system as platforms for sharing experiences, strengthening national AI capabilities and supporting countries in harnessing AI for sustainable development.

- Ministers underlined that national AI strategies should place human capacity and trusted, ethics-based governance at their core, with several countries embedding AI skills across the education system from early schooling to build long-term national readiness.
- AI capacity-building must go beyond teaching skills – it is about building a country's underlying ability to adopt, adapt and, over time, contribute to AI development itself.
- National AI strategies should be human-centric across the full AI lifecycle, paired with mechanisms (e.g. dedicated trust bodies) that let research, entrepreneurship and government move together.
- Strategies need to evolve as fast as the technology – several delegations noted revising national AI strategies more than once within just a few years.
- AI should function as a tool to grow the economy and improve people's lives, not as an end in itself.
- Governance, trust and innovation need to advance together; safeguarding young people ("AI natives") while enabling their equal participation was raised as a live tension.
- Participants recognized AI as a strategic enabler of economic growth, public service modernization and sustainable development. However, they stressed that AI benefits will remain uneven unless countries invest in the foundations of AI readiness: human capacity, data, computing resources, digital infrastructure, research capabilities and appropriate governance frameworks.
- Ministers underlined the importance of human-centric, trustworthy, inclusive and transparent AI, while noting the risk of widening divides between advanced and developing economies.
- The direction was clear: AI must serve people and keep them at the center of decision-making – human-centered, ethical, inclusive, transparent and accountable, respecting privacy, rights, and cultural and linguistic diversity. Ministers emphasized useful, responsible AI built on strong skills, reliable data, adequate infrastructure and ethical governance. Several reported national AI strategies already adopted or in implementation, directing AI at public services, education, health, agriculture, productivity and youth-led innovation. Sovereignty over data and digital choices was stressed, including the view that training models only on others' data embeds others' values.

2. Challenges identified

- Uneven national capacities in AI skills, compute, data and institutional readiness risk widening AI divides.

- Fragmented policy and regulatory approaches could hinder interoperability and international cooperation.
- Smaller countries, local languages and vulnerable populations risk being left behind without targeted support.
- Uneven access to data, computing power, digital infrastructure and financing limits which countries can build and use AI meaningfully, particularly those not among the most advanced.
- Skills gaps persist, but skills alone are not sufficient without complementary local infrastructure – reliable broadband, DPI, high-quality local datasets and local-language resources.
- Limited resources and weaker underlying digital infrastructure make it harder to keep pace with fast-evolving AI strategy needs.
- Balancing AI safety/protection for children and youth against the goal of full digital participation remains unresolved.
- Weak multilateral cooperation on complex issues like AI; very large private technology firms that are difficult to govern; and a structural divide between a few strong AI powers and a majority left as observers.

3. Opportunities and good practices

- National AI strategies aligned with sustainable development priorities and supported by multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- Regional AI compute infrastructure, regulatory sandboxes and shared AI resources to strengthen national AI ecosystems.
- Investment in AI literacy, public-sector capabilities and local-language AI models to promote inclusive and culturally diverse AI.
- Open-source and sovereign AI models that broaden access to AI capabilities, support local relevance and reduce dependence on a small number of providers.
- Sovereign/local approaches (local-language models, locally relevant datasets) to preserve culture and heritage while building AI capability.
- Regional and cross-country collaboration on shared compute and innovation infrastructure to lower the barrier for smaller economies.
- Linking AI growth to sustainability – pairing AI infrastructure expansion with renewable energy sourcing.
- Multi-stakeholder ecosystems (research institutions, entrepreneurs, government, development partners) moving together rather than in silos.
- Good practices include national AI strategies aligned with development priorities, public-private partnerships, international cooperation through ITU,

open-source approaches and international standards that support interoperability, safety and trust.

- Sovereign national AI models and datasets; large national language models covering local and regional languages; AI-based e-services; capacity-building from school through university; and readiness to share technological solutions and exchange experience regionally.

4. Emerging Trends

- Growing emphasis on sovereign AI capabilities and nationally relevant AI ecosystems.
- Increased focus on AI readiness, innovation and critical-thinking skills alongside AI literacy.
- AI is increasingly being integrated into public services and national development strategies.
- The conversation is shifting from "having a strategy" to implementation – sharing what works, what doesn't, and building practical peer-learning mechanisms.
- Growing emphasis on foundational building blocks (broadband, DPI, trusted institutions, local data) as prerequisites for AI value creation, not computing access alone.
- Rising interest in "green AI" – pairing AI growth with environmental and energy considerations.
- Interoperable rather than identical governance; sovereign AI to prevent AI becoming an elite privilege; and growing attention to local language models. "AI must serve people, not replace their judgment or our voice."

5. Role of ITU / International Organizations

- Strong endorsement of the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on AI and similar peer-learning platforms as the right vehicle for capacity-building support.
- WSIS recognized as a valued global platform for exchange, especially for countries not among the most advanced in AI.
- Repeated calls for ITU/the UN system to focus on facilitating collaboration, knowledge-sharing and implementation support – the "next phase" being less about strategy-setting and more about execution.
- Multilateralism described explicitly as fundamental to progress on AI governance.

Topic 2: Digital Transformation

1. Key Messages

- Ministers highlighted trusted, interoperable, secure and resilient digital public infrastructure as the foundation of digital transformation.
- Digital public infrastructure, technical standards and interoperability were recognized as key enablers of efficient public services, economic growth and innovation.
- Strong leadership, clear national vision and whole-of-government approaches were seen as essential to delivering people-centred digital transformation.
- Robust legal safeguards, including the protection of personal data, were seen as essential to sustaining citizens' trust in digital government and in proactive, citizen-centred public services.
- Digital transformation and inclusion cannot be treated separately – inclusion safeguards need to be built in from the start, not added afterward.
- Success depends less on the technology itself and more on governance, strong institutions, a clear legal mandate, phased rollout, and a sustainable financing model.
- Interoperable, standards-based digital public infrastructure (DPI) – not siloed solutions – is essential to enable data protection, trust and smart technology adoption.
- Investment in people (digital literacy, lifelong learning) was framed as equally important as investment in infrastructure and standards.
- Ministers agreed that digitalization is now a whole-of-government and whole-of-society agenda. Digital Public Infrastructure and Digital Public Goods were identified as foundational enablers of inclusive digital development. Trust, interoperability, privacy, consumer protection and cybersecurity were seen as essential.
- Digital transformation was framed as a strategic choice for development, state modernisation and better public services — measured not by technology deployed but by lives improved and services made accessible. Ministers prioritized more accessible, faster, transparent and connected public administration, noting its contribution to revenue mobilization, transaction traceability, expenditure efficiency and trust in the state. Transformation must be anchored in a safe and trusted digital ecosystem, with strong data governance, digital identity, government data-exchange platforms and digital sovereignty. Connectivity must translate into productivity and growth, not connectivity alone.

2. Challenges identified

- Fragmented digital systems and limited interoperability continue to slow digital transformation.
- Financing and institutional capacity constraints remain significant implementation barriers.
- Maintaining trust while balancing openness, security and resilience remains a common challenge.
- Scaling open, interoperable DPI is not purely a technical challenge – lack of governance and institutional coordination causes duplication and fragmentation.
- Legacy, incompatible systems continue to hold back transformation; common standards and investment in identity/data-exchange systems are needed.
- Financing remains a major barrier: DPI investment needs are significant, returns take time to materialize, and support from development partners and the private sector is needed to bridge the gap.
- Key challenges include fragmented platforms, legacy systems, weak interoperability, limited institutional capacity, regulatory gaps and financing constraints.
- Public finances under heavy strain, struggling to fund digital public infrastructure and compute alongside basic needs such as water and electricity; protecting citizens, especially children, online; and ensuring connectivity yields real economic value.

3. Opportunities and good practices

- Digital identity, interoperable government platforms and internationally recognized technical standards.
- Whole-of-government digital transformation supported by trusted digital infrastructure.
- Partnerships among governments, academia, industry and the private sector to accelerate innovation and implementation.
- Blended finance models combining development banks and private capital were highlighted as a practical path to closing financing gaps.
- Cross-sector cooperation (government, academia, private sector) supports both digital literacy and stronger DPI ecosystems.
- Standards-setting work was seen as a key enabler of interoperability, trust and predictability across borders.
- Open standards, open-source solutions and regional cooperation were highlighted as ways to reduce fragmentation and accelerate innovation.
- Large-scale inclusive infrastructure (satellite and fibre programmes, expanding 5G across thousands of islands); a digital economy reaching USD

100 billion with ambitions to triple it; regulation protecting children online through age verification and content classification; turnkey national cybersecurity centers with transferable, inspectable source code; and cyber-immunity-by-default systems.

4. Emerging Trends

- Transition from isolated digital projects toward integrated national digital ecosystems.
- Growing role of digital public infrastructure as the backbone of digital economies.
- Increasing integration of AI into public services and digital government.
- A shift toward treating digital transformation success as fundamentally an institutional/governance challenge rather than a purely technical one.
- Growing consensus that DPI investment should be sequenced deliberately – foundations first, additional services (e.g. financial services) layered on top.
- Digital public infrastructure as the foundation for all services; "trust-first" transformation; and cybersecurity as the supporting structure of the whole digital system. "Success is measured not by the technology deployed, but by the number of lives improved and opportunities created."

5. Role of ITU / International Organizations

- Strong trust expressed specifically in ITU's standards-setting work as central to interoperability and predictability.
- The Global Digital Compact and WSIS Action Lines referenced repeatedly as the shared implementation roadmap delegations are aligning behind.
- Multilateral cooperation reaffirmed as fundamental to progress on digital transformation.

Topic 3: Infrastructure and Inclusion

1. Key Messages

- Ministers reaffirmed that universal, affordable, meaningful and resilient connectivity remains the foundation for AI and digital transformation.
- Telecommunications infrastructure – including emerging space-based connectivity – was recognized as a strategic enabler of AI-enabled societies and resilient digital economies.
- Participants stressed that digital infrastructure, energy infrastructure, innovative financing and international partnerships must advance together to achieve inclusive and sustainable digital development.

- Ministers noted that connectivity infrastructure is increasingly being extended into the intelligence age through national AI infrastructure, compute capacity and data centres, and stressed that connectivity, compute, data and skills must not become the privilege of a few.
- Delegations pointed to real progress on fibre network expansion, mobile penetration and mobile money adoption, but rural areas continue to lag behind urban centers.
- Young people – described as "digital/AI natives" – need infrastructure that both protects them and enables equal participation, alongside legislation that keeps pace with technology.
- Financing gaps for connectivity, especially in rural and underserved areas, remain a central and recurring concern.
- Participants reaffirmed that digital infrastructure remains the foundation for all digital development goals. Persistent connectivity gaps, particularly in rural and underserved areas, continue to prevent communities from benefiting from digital technologies.
- Ministers stressed that infrastructure deployment must be accompanied by affordability, skills, relevant services and inclusive policies. Particular concern was expressed about rural-urban divides, high deployment costs, limited investment capital and weak mechanisms to measure impact.
- Infrastructure is ultimately about inclusion: investment should not simply follow markets but expand opportunity, financing infrastructure that reaches underserved communities and letting countries at every stage of AI capability help shape how AI is governed and applied. Ministers stressed reducing the urban–rural divide and widening access for women, young people and small businesses, and building interoperable, secure digital public infrastructure adapted to national realities. A recurring concern was that, with private companies now funding AI infrastructure, countries without such firms face a structurally widening divide.

2. Challenges identified

- Persistent connectivity gaps, particularly in rural and underserved communities.
- Financing constraints and inadequate supporting infrastructure, including energy deficits in many developing regions.
- Continued digital inclusion challenges affecting women, youth, marginalized communities and countries with limited digital capacities.

- The growing resource footprint of AI infrastructure — including the energy and water requirements of data centres — was raised as a challenge that must be balanced against communities' basic needs.
- Persistent rural-urban connectivity gap, including migration pressure toward urban data-centre hubs.
- Financing constraints for extending infrastructure into commercially harder-to-reach areas.
- Balancing child online protection and human dignity with the broader push for connectivity and participation.
- A third of the world still lacks internet access; limited commercial viability in underserved areas; concentration of AI infrastructure funding in a few large private firms; and constrained public finances.

3. Opportunities and good practices

- Blended finance, partnerships with development banks and infrastructure-sharing models to expand connectivity.
- Space technologies and innovative connectivity solutions to extend broadband access and strengthen resilience.
- Regional cooperation, universal service mechanisms and public-private partnerships to promote inclusive digital infrastructure.
- Dedicated task forces/mechanisms on financing digital development, combining blended finance with development banks, cited as a practical model to replicate.
- Submarine cable and renewable energy investment noted as complementary infrastructure priorities.
- Strong fibre and mobile-money penetration in some contexts show what sustained investment can achieve.
- Opportunities include blended finance, infrastructure sharing, open-access models, community connectivity initiatives and universal access programmes linked to broader development outcomes.
- Blended finance and concessional financing; open models and international standards; coordination among the UN, multilateral development banks, governments and the private sector; compute for technology exchange between partners; and proposals for a shared register of open, proven solutions and of incident contact points to lower the entry threshold for developing countries.

4. Emerging Trends

- Increasing focus on resilient, secure and future-ready digital infrastructure.

- Greater integration of infrastructure investment with AI readiness and national digital strategies.
- Recognition that inclusion, resilience and sustainability must underpin future digital infrastructure investments.
- Growing attention to child online safety and human dignity as explicit components of infrastructure and inclusion policy, rather than an afterthought.
- Infrastructure planning increasingly linked to energy strategy (renewables) and broader sustainability goals.
- Mechanisms to redistribute technology-sector wealth toward capacity-building; interoperability of sovereign platforms; and the ITU / WSIS as a trusted, non-discriminatory cooperation platform. "The digital future must not leave any people on the sidelines."

5. Role of ITU / International Organizations

- The Global Digital Compact and WSIS Action Lines referenced again as the shared roadmap for closing connectivity gaps.
- Calls for ITU/the UN system to keep playing a convening role – bringing together governments, development banks and private capital around financing mechanisms.

Cross-cutting observations

- Ministers consistently emphasized that AI, digital transformation and connectivity are mutually reinforcing priorities that should be advanced through integrated national strategies.
- Capacity-building, practical implementation and international cooperation were repeatedly highlighted as the most immediate priorities, alongside sustained investment in resilient digital infrastructure.
- There was strong recognition of the continued role of ITU, the WSIS process and the wider UN system in convening stakeholders, facilitating international cooperation, sharing good practices and supporting countries in advancing inclusive digital transformation and AI for sustainable development.
- Ministers repeatedly stressed that people must remain at the centre of AI and digital transformation, with human capacity, inclusion and equitable access to connectivity, compute and data treated as prerequisites for shared prosperity.
- Overall, the main outcome was a strong call for trusted partnerships, interoperable standards, innovative financing and inclusive capacity-building.

- Ministers recognized that AI, digital transformation and infrastructure must advance together if countries are to build resilient digital economies and ensure that no country and no community is left behind.
- The discussion highlighted pursuing interoperable systems and governance, with the ITU translating shared principles into practical cooperation.
- The discussion stressed treating inclusion as the purpose of infrastructure: finance underserved communities rather than following markets alone.
- The Ministers addressed the widening divide created by concentration of AI funding in a few large private firms, including wealth-redistribution and compute-sharing mechanisms.
- The Ministers supported sovereign AI – models, data, local languages and cybersecurity – while keeping platforms compatible across borders.
- Scale blended finance, open models, standards and capacity-building through coordinated UN, government and private-sector action.
- Ministers addressed AI strategy and policy, digital transformation, and infrastructure and inclusion through a common lens: readiness, trust and cooperation with the readiness of the more advanced economies to share technology and capacity. The discussion emphasized diversity underlining that countries are not seeking identical systems or rules, but interoperable approaches that respect national circumstances while enabling collaboration. ITU was repeatedly seen as a trusted platform to help translate shared principles into practical cooperation.
- On AI, ministers emphasized that AI must remain human-centered, ethical, inclusive, transparent and accountable. It should support public services, education, health, agriculture, productivity and youth innovation, while respecting privacy, rights, sovereignty, and cultural and linguistic diversity. A key concern was the widening gap between a few strong AI powers and countries that risk becoming observers rather than shapers of AI development.
- On digital transformation, ministers stressed that success should be measured by lives improved and services made more accessible, not by technology alone. Digital public infrastructure, data governance, digital identity, cybersecurity and trust were presented as essential foundations for modern public administration and economic growth.
- On infrastructure and inclusion, ministers highlighted that investment must reach underserved communities, women, young people, rural populations and small businesses. They called for blended finance, open models, standards, capacity-building, technology exchange and stronger cooperation among governments, the UN system, development banks and

the private sector. The central message is clear: the digital future must be inclusive, trusted, interoperable and shaped by all countries, not only by those with the greatest resources.

- Delegations addressed all three topics in single statements. A common thread ran through the room — readiness, trust and cooperation as mutually reinforcing priorities that no country can achieve alone. Ministers repeatedly framed the goal not as identical systems or rules, but as interoperable ones that work together while respecting national circumstances, and called on the ITU to act as a trusted platform translating shared principles into practical cooperation.
- The discussion highlighted that AI strategy and policy, digital transformation, and infrastructure and inclusion are mutually reinforcing priorities for inclusive and sustainable digital development.
- Ministers emphasized that progress cannot be achieved through isolated interventions. Countries need integrated approaches combining infrastructure investment, skills development, governance, financing, innovation ecosystems and international cooperation.

Regulators Roundtable

Putting Governance Essentials into Practice: Implementing the New Core Kit for Digital Regulators

9 July 2026

Please find session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/520

The digital landscape is moving faster than traditional rulemaking cycles, requiring regulators to establish a minimum baseline of governance that makes markets investable while ensuring protections are predictable and measurable. Responding to this need, in May 2026, the global regulatory community endorsed the GSR-26 Best Practice Guidelines on "Regulatory Governance Essentials: The new core kit regulators need to make digital markets deliver".

The Executive Roundtable focused on the practical pathways for implementing these guidelines. Moving beyond high-level principles, this session provided an opportunity for Heads of Regulatory Authorities to share strategic insights on how they are translating the seven governance essentials into a practical checklist of priority actions. To support this transition from principle to practice, this roundtable focused on getting views and insights on the tools and practical actions needed to operationalize the GSR-26 Best Practice Guidelines. The reflections were used in the Actionable Core Toolkit (ACT): Governance Essentials in Practice – A Self-Assessment and Implementation Toolkit.

Key Takeaways

- From Principles to Practice: Regulators must move from high-level guidelines to operational implementation, using the Actionable Core Toolkit (ACT) to identify gaps and drive reforms.

- Agile and Data-Driven Oversight: Regulatory bodies need to replace reactive approaches with adaptive, data-driven governance supported by real-time market intelligence.

- Innovation and Protection: A predictive governance baseline is essential to protect consumers while ensuring digital markets remain investable and innovative.

- Cohesive Regulation: As digital services span physical and sectoral boundaries, strong collaboration across regulatory domains is indispensable.

For regulators to succeed, the issues raised across these areas are interconnected and must be addressed together.

Partner's Insight

Beyond Digital: Advancing Digital and AI Transformation in the UAE (UAE)

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 14:00-15:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/490

Inclusivity for an Equitable Future: Towards a Connected, Inclusive and Safe Digital Society (Malaysia)

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 15:00-15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/492

The Future of AI in Saudi Arabia: Innovation, Trust, and Partnership (Saudi Arabia)

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 16:00-16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/494

The Workforce of the Future - Workplace Transition and the role of Education (International Federation for Information Processing)

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 16:00-16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/413

Meaningful Connectivity by Design - The Role of Technical Standards in Connecting the Unconnected (IEEE)

Monday, 06 July 2026, 10:00-10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/518

Key Issue: With 2.9 billion unconnected individuals, how do we build connectivity solutions that are affordable, feasible and localized solutions
Themes:

- Understand Core Barriers: Understanding the core issues that drive the connectivity gap is key: regulatory challenges (i.e. spectrum), infrastructure, affordability and digital literacy and trust.
- Deploying Decentralized, Community-Led Network Solutions: Develop and support development of localized, community-managed networks to reach areas where traditional commercial models are not viable.
- Leveraging Open Standards as Deployment Blueprints: Using open, interoperable standards (such as IEEE 802 frameworks) as customizable blueprints adaptable to local infrastructure, community needs, and regional languages.
- Utilizing Replicable, Low-Cost Infrastructure: Maximizing existing local assets through practical, highly replicable field frameworks (like the *CR Bolo Project*) to achieve immediate, low-cost connectivity.

Key Outcomes of the Session

- Key Takeaway 1: Effective connectivity solutions require evaluating each community's unique ecosystem of challenges and design appropriate solutions that address regulatory barriers, infrastructure limits, affordability, digital literacy, and trust intersect.
- Key Takeaway 2: Rather than relying solely on traditional, large-scale commercial operator deployments in low-population zones, consider a community based decentralized approach that empowers local communities to deploy and manage localized networks. Utilize low-cost, replicable technology frameworks (such as the *CR Bolo Project* model) built on open interoperable standards.
- Key Takeaway 3: Technical standards can operate as blueprints to design localized connectivity solutions. By tailoring these blueprints to specific

regional infrastructure, community needs, and local languages, you can efficiently scale affordable internet access to the most remote populations.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

To effectively bridge the digital divide in underserved areas, the following strategic actions focus on community-led network deployment and the localization of technical blueprints:

- Community-Centric Connectivity Solutions: Support localized, community-managed networks in low-population zones using low-cost, open, and replicable frameworks like the CR Bolo Project model.
- Standards as Blueprints: Apply technical standards as flexible frameworks that can be customized to fit existing regional infrastructure, community requirements, and local languages. This customization enables the systematic and affordable expansion of internet access to remote populations.

Case Studies on Connectivity: Young Practitioners in the Forefront (IEEE)

Monday, 06 July 2026, 11:00-11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/195

Key Issue: Session explored how emerging leaders leverage digital connectivity, AI, data-driven infrastructure, and capacity building to advance sustainable energy transitions, culminating in practical recommendations for youth to advance sustainability objectives.

Key Outcomes

Panelists provided audience members with practical recommendations on how to advance sustainability objectives through their professional capacity outlined in the themes below:

1. Lifelong Learning: Building a future ready workforce that can tackle sustainability and energy challenges requires embedding digital literacy, AI data analysis, and advanced concepts like digital twins into education at every level. One approach is micro-credentialing which can help young professionals regularly upskill to adapt to evolving job markets and challenges.
2. Tech Integration Skills Energy Transition: Modernizing energy systems will require vital enablers such as integrating AI and digital infrastructures into processes. Equipping young professionals with skills to apply these technologies to grid flexibility, power optimization, and renewable integration directly accelerates decarbonization and the creation of resilient, low-carbon energy systems.
3. Sustainable Infrastructure Solutions: Young professionals need to be sensitized to the role of standards, eco-design and energy efficiency principles in addressing sustainability challenges to help them better integrate such principles into their professional practice
4. National Labor Retention Strategies: Panellists identified that governments play a critical role in ensuring that they are appropriately investing in a future workforce that can help solve complex sustainability challenges by developing national youth development strategies. Approaches need to

focus on investing in young professions through initiatives around connectivity and responsible AI use.

Key Recommendations

1. Advanced Digital Literacy and AI Training: Young practitioners, employers and educational institutions need to integrate AI literacy, data analytics and other modern tools and concepts into curricula at all levels and take a lifelong approach to learning.
2. Expand Eco-Design and Standards Education: Young professionals, employers and educational institutions should integrate standard education and eco-design principles and practices into education early on to sensitive young practitioners to these critical concepts and tools. These tools operate as the key tools and blueprints to help address emerging sustainability challenges.
3. National Strategy for Youth Development: National policymakers must prioritize building a workforce capable of tackling modern sustainability challenges. This requires a comprehensive, lifelong learning approach that equips young professionals with the essential digital and environmental tools needed to deploy effective, real-world solutions.

Young people's mental health in an online world (Mission permanente de Belgique - Wallonie-Bruxelles à Genève)

Monday, 06 July 2026, 15:00-15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/252

Post Quantum: Preparing the Internet for Post-Quantum Cryptography (AFNIC)

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 10:00-10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/277

Advancing Universal Acceptance of all Domain Names and Email Addresses (ICANN)

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 13:00-13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/281

Country's Insight

From AI Strategy to AI Delivery: Building National AI Institutions for Public Impact (Rwanda)

Tuesday, 07 July 2026, 09:00 - 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/555

Digital Payments - A tool for Financial Inclusion: Success stories from Dubai Cashless Strategy (UAE)

Wednesday, 09 July 2026, 13:00 - 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/558

New Technological Deal, or a Global South Digital strategy for impactful ICT Transformation (Senegal)

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 16:00 - 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/259

Tanzania e-Government AI initiatives to enhance service delivery (Tanzania)

Friday, 10 July 2026, 11:00 - 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/261

Nigeria's Digital Economy: From Vision to Impact (Nigeria)

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/565

Human-Centred Model for Global AI Governance: What Can Be Learned from the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence (Lithuania)

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/229

Key Issues discussed:

- The role of the Vilnius Convention as the first legally binding international treaty on AI, and its contribution to advancing global AI governance beyond voluntary frameworks by establishing shared commitments based on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.
- The Convention's global relevance and openness to wider participation, including how it can provide value for countries with different legal systems, regulatory approaches, and levels of AI development.
- The balance between AI innovation and responsible governance, ensuring that regulatory approaches protect fundamental values while supporting technological progress, competitiveness, and opportunities for businesses and societies.
- The transition from signing to implementation/ratification, including the need for effective institutions, regulatory capacity, oversight mechanisms, and national strategies to operationalise the Convention's principles.
- The importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation, bringing together governments, international organisations, academia, industry, technical experts, and civil society to make AI governance effective in practice.
- Addressing emerging AI challenges, particularly related to general-purpose AI, foundation models, and autonomous systems, while maintaining flexibility to respond to rapid technological developments.
- The Convention's potential global impact, including capacity building, knowledge exchange, and support for countries seeking to develop or strengthen their own AI governance frameworks.

Key Outcomes of the session

- The session reaffirmed the importance of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (Vilnius Convention) as the first legally binding international treaty

dedicated to AI, providing a shared, human-centred foundation for international cooperation on AI governance.

- Participants highlighted the importance of moving from signature to ratification and effective implementation of the Convention, in order to translate its principles into concrete national policies, legislation, institutional arrangements, and oversight mechanisms.
- The Convention was recognised as an open and globally relevant framework with the potential to attract a broader and more geographically and economically diverse membership, including countries from all regions, least developed countries (LDCs), developing countries, and countries with different legal, institutional, and technological contexts.
- The session underscored the Convention's potential to serve as a backbone and common reference point for future multilateral negotiations and discussions on AI, helping to build greater coherence among international efforts in this field.
- Participants also highlighted the Convention's relevance for supporting national legislative and regulatory initiatives on AI, by providing common principles and a rights-based framework that countries can adapt to their own legal systems and national circumstances.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

- Promote the ratification and implementation of the Vilnius Convention as a contribution to WSIS implementation towards 2035, particularly in advancing an inclusive, human-centred, rights-based, and development-oriented approach to emerging technologies and AI.
- Strengthen outreach and capacity-building efforts to support countries interested in joining the Convention and developing the institutional, legal, and technical capacity necessary for its effective implementation, in line with the WSIS objective of reducing digital divides and ensuring that the benefits of digital transformation are shared broadly.
- Use the Convention as a common foundation for future multilateral dialogue and negotiations on AI, helping to promote WSIS vision for a greater coherence and complementarity among international AI governance initiatives.
- Encourage countries to draw on the Convention when developing national AI legislation, regulation, and policy frameworks, while allowing sufficient flexibility to reflect different national legal systems, levels of development, and technological capacities thereby supporting the WSIS objective of enabling

an environment conducive to innovation, development, trust, and the responsible use of digital technologies.

- Deepen cooperation among governments, international organisations, the private sector, academia, technical experts, and civil society to ensure that the implementation of AI governance frameworks remains inclusive, practical, and responsive to technological developments.

Regional Insight

The 2nd Interregional Dialogue on Digital Cooperation: Regional and Inter-regional pathways for the WSIS 2035 and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 13:15 – 14:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/388

Key Issues discussed:

- WSIS+20 implementation to 2035 and the reinforced role of UN Regional Commissions as regional implementation and follow-up mechanisms, connected with IGF processes, the Global Digital Compact and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance.
- Regional AI governance consultation outcomes from the Arab region, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and how they can inform global-level dialogue and regional action.
- Areas of interregional convergence, including inclusive and human-centred AI governance, digital inclusion, trust and safety, data governance, capacity building, and enabling policy environments.
- Persistent differences across regions in infrastructure, skills, institutional readiness and resources, requiring practical cooperation rather than one-size-fits-all approaches.
- The need to move from one-off exchanges toward sustained interregional coordination, shared learning and feasible joint workstreams across WSIS- and GDC-related priorities.
- The importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships involving Member States, UN entities, regional organizations, the technical community, private sector, academia and civil society to deliver implementation on the ground.

Key Outcomes of the session

- The session stressed the unique role of the United Nations Regional Commissions as the primary UN entities supporting the regional implementation and follow-up of WSIS 2035 and the Global Digital Compact (GDC), while contributing to the evolving global dialogue and regional implementation of AI governance.

- Reaffirmed the importance of translating global digital and AI governance mandates into regional visions, and further into national policies, strategies and implementation actions.
- Recognized the Global Dialogue on AI Governance as a platform not only for building international consensus, but also for strengthening regional capacities, fostering knowledge exchange, and promoting practical cooperation among stakeholders.
- Emphasized the need to translate global AI governance principles into regionally interoperable AI governance frameworks and models, while respecting regional priorities and national contexts.
- Highlighted the shared priority across regions to preserve Member States' sovereignty in defining strategic pathways for AI development, while collectively addressing AI capacity gaps and bridging AI divides.
- Noted the commitment of Egypt and other Member States to advancing regional progress on AI governance within the Arab and African regions.
- Showcased successful regional cooperation models, including the strategic partnership between ESCWA and the League of Arab States through the Arab Digital Agenda, the collaboration between ECA and the African Union on the African Digital Strategy, as well as initiatives such as eLAC in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Asian Superhighway in Asia and the Pacific, illustrating the comparative advantage of the UN Regional Commissions in regional digital cooperation.
- Identified opportunities to strengthen interregional, bilateral and triangular cooperation, particularly among neighbouring regions such as ESCWA, ECA and ECE, to advance coordinated approaches to digital transformation and AI governance.
- Reaffirmed broad convergence across regional AI governance processes on promoting responsible, inclusive, human rights-based and development-oriented AI, supported by capacity building, digital inclusion, digital infrastructure, data governance, cybersecurity, digital skills, and effective monitoring of implementation.
- Encouraged continued collaboration among the UN Regional Commissions and stakeholders through practical joint workstreams and coordinated regional contributions to future global AI governance processes, including preparations for the 2027 Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

- Establish a light interregional coordination mechanism among the UN Regional Commissions, building on existing regional cooperation

frameworks, to facilitate bilateral, triangular and multiregional cooperation, exchange updates, map regional consultations and identify joint inputs to WSIS 2035 and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

- Develop initial joint workstreams at the intersection of WSIS 2035 and the GDC, beginning with AI governance, capacity building, data governance, digital inclusion and enabling infrastructure, while supporting the translation of global commitments into regional frameworks and national implementation.
- Create a shared evidence and knowledge base of regional AI governance priorities, interoperable governance approaches, good practices and implementation gaps to inform policy dialogue, technical assistance and future WSIS Forum sessions.
- Prepare coordinated regional contributions for the 2027 Global Dialogue on AI Governance and keep the next phase inclusive by engaging Member States, regional organizations, youth and women, the private sector, the technical community, academia and civil society, while respecting national priorities, sovereignty and different levels of digital readiness.

UN-WSIS Regional Commissions

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/453

Interactive Action Lines Facilitation Meeting

WSIS Action Line C1: WSIS+20 in Action: Implementation, Cooperation and Review – Part I

Monday, 06 July 2026, 09:00-09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/334

Key Issues Discussed

- The session positioned Action Line C1 as one of the decisive entry points for translating the WSIS+20 outcome from political reaffirmation into implementation discipline. Participants underlined that the next phase of WSIS cannot be limited to retrospective reporting. It must move towards forward-looking planning, with clear baselines, realistic ambition, measurable steps and a sharper understanding of what implementation requires in different national and institutional contexts.
- A central issue was how a future C1 Implementation Roadmap should be designed. Participants noted that C1 is deliberately broad, covering national digital strategies, the role of public authorities, multistakeholder cooperation, public-private partnerships, international cooperation, inclusive participation and institutional capacity. This breadth is a strength of WSIS, but it also creates a risk of vague reporting unless the agenda is structured into coherent clusters and practical sub-roadmaps. A roadmap was therefore described not as another reporting template, but as a bridge between commitment and delivery.
- The discussion also focused on the future of reporting to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. Participants stressed that inputs should become more targeted, result-oriented and useful for Member States. Reporting should be linked to relevant Sustainable Development Goal targets and Global Digital Compact commitments, supported by indicators and metrics, and designed with the realities of documentation limits and meeting-time constraints in mind. The strongest message was that reporting must become more candid: it should show evidence of implementation, identify gaps and capacity needs, and offer

practical policy recommendations rather than repeat familiar language without demonstrating change.

- Participants emphasized that C1 implementation must be evidence-based and differentiated. Countries are not at the same stage. Some still lack digital strategies; others have outdated strategies; and others have sound strategies on paper but weak implementation in practice. For this reason, maturity models were proposed as a useful way to reflect different starting points and guide countries towards the next practical step. This approach would allow the C1 roadmap to speak both to ambition and to reality.
- The quality of multistakeholder participation was another major theme. Participants stressed that meaningful participation is not achieved by simply ensuring that stakeholder groups are present in a room. It requires issue-driven engagement, collaboration around concrete problems, and the inclusion of actors closest to implementation. National and regional participation, including through local authorities, civil society, libraries, post offices and community-level institutions, was highlighted as essential. Gender should also be built into the goals, methods and participation choices of C1 implementation, rather than treated as an add-on.
- The session reaffirmed that an open, stable, secure, resilient and interoperable Internet remains a foundational condition for WSIS implementation. Participants stressed that the Internet's value depends on its functioning as a single global ecosystem, supported by open standards, interoperable technologies, trusted coordination and meaningful multistakeholder cooperation. Avoiding fragmentation is therefore not a technical side issue; it is a development priority.
- Artificial intelligence was discussed as a cross-cutting pressure on the C1 agenda. Participants noted that the current language and framing of C1 may need to be refreshed to reflect the realities of AI, digital public services, institutional capacity, trusted local capability and new skills requirements. At the same time, participants cautioned that updating C1 should not fragment the WSIS approach. The value of WSIS lies in its ability to connect infrastructure, governance, inclusion, capacity, access, rights, development and cooperation within one holistic framework.

Key Outcomes of the Session

- The session produced a clear implementation message: C1 must become a planning instrument, not only a reporting channel. Participants converged around the need for a roadmap that identifies where countries and

stakeholders stand today, where they need to go, and what practical steps can help bridge the gap.

- There was strong agreement that future reporting to the CSTD should become more candid, evidence-based and implementation-oriented. The session identified three categories of input that would make reporting more useful: evidence of implementation rather than statements of intent; analysis of gaps, obstacles and capacity needs; and concrete policy recommendations that can inform intergovernmental discussion and practical follow-up.
- The discussion also clarified the status of the roadmap process. UN DESA recalled that no completed action-line-specific roadmaps for C1 to C11 yet exist, and that these are separate from the broader UNGIS joint implementation roadmap. Action Line facilitators are expected to develop usable roadmaps by mid-November, creating an immediate opportunity for stakeholders to provide evidence, priorities and concrete suggestions.
- Participants welcomed the idea of using roadmaps to organize broad WSIS commitments into more manageable thematic clusters. The example of a roadmap for Internet Exchange Points under another Action Line was presented as a possible model, demonstrating how a broad WSIS commitment can be translated into a focused implementation pathway. For C1, possible clusters included national digital strategies, whole-of-government coordination, inclusive policymaking, public digital services, institutional capacity, multistakeholder participation and international cooperation.
- The session highlighted the IGF ecosystem, including National, Regional and Youth Initiatives, as an important channel for grounded input into C1 implementation. Participants noted that the IGF should not be seen only as an annual meeting, but as a year-round ecosystem that can help connect global commitments to national, regional and local realities. In this context, UN DESA's role as both C1 facilitator and institutional home of the IGF gives it a unique convening position to connect evidence from communities with formal WSIS follow-up.
- A further outcome was the recognition that implementation requires delivery actors beyond central government. Local governments, libraries, post offices, civil society organizations, community networks and Global South stakeholders were identified as practical actors that can turn national strategies into public value. Their role should be visible in the C1 roadmap if WSIS implementation is to reach people and communities rather than remain at the level of policy declarations.

- The session also recognized that the C1 agenda must be updated for the present digital environment. Artificial intelligence, digital public infrastructure, cybersecurity, meaningful connectivity and skills for human agency all require attention. However, participants emphasized that C1 should be refreshed in a way that preserves the holistic and cross-cutting nature of WSIS.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

- UN DESA should take forward the C1 roadmap as a practical implementation architecture. The roadmap should be organized around coherent thematic clusters and sub-roadmaps, each with a baseline, ambition, milestones, indicators and clear links to relevant SDG targets and Global Digital Compact commitments. It should help move WSIS from a culture of general reporting to a culture of implementation, learning and course correction.
- The C1 roadmap should use maturity models to reflect different national realities. It should distinguish between countries without digital strategies, countries with outdated strategies, and countries with strategies that require stronger implementation capacity. This would allow the roadmap to provide practical guidance that is useful to countries at different stages of digital transformation.
- Future CSTD reporting should be redesigned to reward evidence, not repetition. Contributors should be encouraged to report what has been implemented, what has changed, what remains blocked, what capacity is missing and what practice can be replicated. UN DESA, working through its facilitation role, can help set a higher standard for concise, honest and policy-relevant inputs.
- The reporting process should combine synthetic reporting with deeper issue-specific evidence. Over the two-year CSTD cycle, one part of the process could focus on broad synthesis while another part could invite granular reporting on selected themes. Meaningful connectivity could be an early theme, examined through infrastructure, affordability, demand, skills, inclusion and user-group perspectives.
- The C1 roadmap should make multistakeholder participation more precise and more useful. Participation should be organized around issues, delivery challenges and implementation evidence, not only stakeholder categories. Gender equality, youth participation, accessibility and the involvement of developing-country stakeholders should be built into the design of the roadmap itself.

- UN DESA should draw more systematically on the IGF ecosystem, including National, Regional and Youth Initiatives, as channels for evidence and implementation feedback. These networks can help identify what is happening on the ground, where global commitments are not reaching communities, and which local practices can inform broader WSIS follow-up.
- The roadmap should explicitly recognize delivery actors that are often invisible in global reporting. Local governments, libraries, post offices, community institutions and civil society organizations are not peripheral to C1 implementation; they are often where digital inclusion becomes real. Their role should be reflected in national strategies and in the evidence collected for WSIS follow-up.
- The C1 roadmap should reaffirm the open, stable, secure, resilient and interoperable Internet as a development foundation. Preserving the Internet as a single global ecosystem should be treated as a core condition for digital inclusion, public service delivery, innovation, trust and sustainable development.
- C1 should be refreshed to address artificial intelligence and today's digital governance needs. This should include attention to skills, institutional capacity, trusted local capability, human judgement, digital public services and the relationship between AI and public governance. The update should be bold but not fragmented: C1 should remain the place where governance, inclusion, infrastructure, public authority and stakeholder cooperation are brought together.
- The immediate next step is to convert the richness of the discussion into a focused set of inputs for the C1 Implementation Roadmap. UN DESA is well placed to lead this transition from consultation to structure, from structure to reporting, and from reporting to implementation. The session confirmed that WSIS+20 has given the system a renewed mandate; the task now is to make that mandate operational.

WSIS Action Line C7: E-business - Advancing inclusive implementation and the Tunisian example

Monday, 06 July 2026, 09:00-09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/299

Key Issues discussed:

- Tunisia's 20-year digital transformation journey was presented as a practical example of implementing the WSIS e-Business Action Line through coordinated legal, institutional, and technological reforms.
- Establishing trust in digital transactions through e-commerce legislation, digital signatures, certification services, and data protection frameworks was identified as a foundational requirement.
- The eTrade Readiness Assessment, conducted by UNCTAD in 2021, provides an in-depth diagnosis of Tunisia's e-commerce ecosystem and identifies reform priorities to unlock its growth potential for MSMEs, youth, and women. Since then, other development partners have drawn on the Assessment to design programmes aimed at strengthening e-commerce in Tunisia.
- International cooperation with ITC, UPU, UNCTAD, the World Bank, SECO, GIZ and other partners has played a key role in advancing e-commerce and digital trade.
- Expanding opportunities for MSMEs, women, youth, and rural entrepreneurs through cross-border e-commerce was highlighted as a major development objective.
- The Easy Export Initiative demonstrated how postal networks can serve as gateways to international markets by simplifying export processes and logistics for MSMes.
- Digital payments, fintech reforms, and digital identity systems were highlighted as essential enablers of e-business growth and formalization.
- Effective governance, institutional coordination, and long-term political commitment were identified as critical success factors.
- Regional integration and future readiness, including AfCFTA implementation and digital trade cooperation in the MENA region, were discussed as important next steps.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Tunisia showcased a holistic approach to e-business development that combines legal reforms, trade facilitation, digital infrastructure, digital payments, and capacity building.
- UPU informed about its new initiatives TradePost and Heya, aimed at enhancing access to international trade for MSMEs and women-led MSMEs in remote areas through tailored mobile post offices, postal-enabled collaborative centers, and strengthening of cross-border trade corridors.
- ITC highlighted its long-standing partnership with Tunisia, from the Virtual Marketplace Project through current support for SME digital trade capacity-building, e-commerce coaching, institutional strengthening and digital trade regulatory readiness under the AfCFTA.
- The session reaffirmed that inclusive digital transformation can help MSMEs, women entrepreneurs, and rural communities participate more effectively in international trade.
- Progress under Tunisia's eTrade readiness process was highlighted, with 78% of actions in the 2022–2023 eTrade action plan completed or in advanced stages of implementation.
- Tunisia announced the preparation of its first National E-Commerce Strategy (2027 – 2031) with support from UNCTAD and SECO.
- Ongoing implementation of the Digital Transformation Programme 2030 and participation in a regional digital trade initiative for the MENA region were presented.
- UNCTAD's eTrade Reform Tracker is expected to support future monitoring and coordination of the forthcoming national e-commerce strategy of Tunisia.
- The co-facilitators reaffirmed their commitment to continued collaboration in support of digital trade and e-business development recognising the complementary contributions of UNCTAD (policy and strategy), ITC (enterprise competitiveness, institutional capacity and digital trade implementation) and UPU (trade facilitation and postal logistics).
- The UPU presented the TradePost and Heya initiatives, which leverage postal networks to strengthen cross-border e-commerce by simplifying trade procedures, improving access to trade information, supporting digital payments, and enhancing last-mile delivery services. These initiatives place particular emphasis on the inclusion of MSMEs, women, and youth in rural and remote areas through postal one-stop shops, mobile collection services, training and digitalization support, with the goal of expanding market access and fostering inclusive digital trade.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

- Strengthen national coordination mechanisms and multi-stakeholder governance to ensure effective implementation of digital trade strategies.
- Scale up support for MSMEs, women, youth, and rural entrepreneurs through simplified export procedures, digital tools, and capacity-building programmes.
- Strengthen business support organisations and intermediary service providers so they can deliver sustained coaching, digital trade advisory services and market access support to MSMEs.
- Leverage the postal network to strengthen trade corridors to facilitate cross-border ecommerce flows and simplify returns between countries.
- Continue modernizing digital payments, digital identity systems, and regulatory frameworks to strengthen trust and participation in e-commerce.
- Promote greater regional and international cooperation to harmonize digital trade regulations and facilitate cross-border e-commerce.
- Enhance monitoring, implementation support, and financing mechanisms to accelerate WSIS Action Line implementation and advance digital inclusion towards 2035.

WSIS Action Line C10 - Ethics of the Information Society: Navigating the governance landscape of emerging and converging technologies

Monday, 06 July 2026, 11:00-11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/310

WSIS Action Line C7 E-agriculture - Advancing Trusted Data Governance, Inclusive AI, and Digital Public Goods to enable scalable DPI and collaborative, Multilingual Innovation Ecosystems for Agrifood Systems Transformation

Monday, 06 July 2026, 15:00-15:45 PM

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/304

Key Issues discussed:

- Advancing trusted data governance and inclusive AI to support equitable and sustainable digital transformation of agrifood systems, while ensuring that smallholder farmers, women, youth, and rural communities benefit from digital innovation.
- Leveraging Digital Public Goods (DPGs) and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) to scale digital agriculture services, improve interoperability, and strengthen access to digital solutions for agrifood systems.
- Strengthening collaborative and multilingual innovation ecosystems through digital agriculture innovation hubs, communities of practice, digital literacy initiatives, and knowledge-sharing platforms.
- Supporting the development of national digital agriculture strategies through participatory approaches that promote capacity development, institutional strengthening, and country ownership of digital transformation processes.
- Fostering youth-led innovation and enhancing access to digital knowledge resources through global innovation challenges, digital villages, and platforms such as the STI Portal and ATIO Knowledge Base to accelerate the adoption of locally relevant and scalable agritech solutions.

Key Outcomes of the session

- The session recognized Digital Public Goods (DPGs) and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) as critical enablers of trusted, interoperable, and scalable digital agriculture ecosystems.
- The session emphasized the need for inclusive, ethical, and responsible AI, supported by strong data governance frameworks to ensure trust, transparency, and accountability in agrifood systems.

- Highlighted key barriers to digital transformation, including fragmented digital systems, limited interoperability, inadequate connectivity, and institutional capacity gaps.
- Stressed the importance of expanding rural connectivity and digital inclusion to ensure that smallholder farmers, women, youth, and marginalized communities benefit from digital innovation.
- Underscored the value of multilingual digital ecosystems, trusted data-sharing mechanisms, and common standards to improve accessibility and cross-border collaboration.
- Recognized regional cooperation and knowledge sharing as key to accelerating the adoption of AI, digital public goods, and digital agriculture solutions across countries.
- Reaffirmed a shared commitment to strengthening partnerships among governments, international organizations, academia, the private sector, and farmers' organizations to advance the WSIS+20 vision and agrifood systems transformation.
- Agreed to continue promoting open, interoperable, and reusable digital solutions, while enhancing capacity development, innovation ecosystems, and communities of practice supporting WSIS Action Line C7 on E-Agriculture.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

- Develop and strengthen national and regional frameworks for trusted data governance, interoperability, and responsible AI in agrifood systems.
- Increase investments in Digital Public Infrastructure, rural connectivity, and digital literacy to ensure that no rural communities are left behind.
- Scale and promote Digital Public Goods that can be adapted and reused across countries to reduce costs and accelerate innovation.
- Strengthen support for women, youth, and smallholder farmers through inclusive digital policies, targeted capacity-building programmes, and locally relevant digital solutions.
- Foster stronger partnerships among governments, international organizations, research institutions, the private sector, and farmers' organizations to advance the WSIS+20 vision and accelerate sustainable agrifood systems transformation.

WSIS Action Line C7 – E-learning

Monday, 06 July 2026, 15:00-15:45 AM

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/301

WSIS Action Line C7 E-government Inclusive e-government services: Reaching the hardest to reach through multi-channel service delivery

Monday, 06 July 2026, 16:00-16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/298

Key Issues discussed:

- The rapid expansion of online public services risks excluding the 2.2 billion people who remain offline, as well as those facing barriers related to affordability, connectivity, digital skills, disability, language, devices or geographic isolation.
- Online availability does not automatically translate into effective access. Governments therefore need multi-channel service-delivery models that combine websites and applications with physical, assisted, mobile and telephone-based channels.
- Existing community infrastructure – including post offices, libraries and other service centres – can extend e-government services into underserved areas more quickly and cost-effectively than establishing entirely new networks of government offices.
- Postal networks have particular potential because of their extensive rural presence, trusted staff, buildings, payment infrastructure and delivery networks. More than half of postal operators across 153 economies already provide some form of e-government service.
- Egypt demonstrated how modernized post offices, kiosks, mobile post offices, ATMs and assisted services can connect rural communities to the Digital Egypt platform, while targeted measures support rural women and persons with disabilities.
- Kenya presented its hybrid Huduma model, combining one-stop service centres, digital platforms, community digital hubs, mobile outreach, contact centres and emerging AI-enabled interfaces in local languages.
- Libraries can similarly serve as trusted e-government access points by providing devices, connectivity, neutral public spaces, digital-skills support and one-to-one assistance, as illustrated by initiatives in the Netherlands and Senegal.

- Participants emphasized that there is no single institutional model for every country. Channels should be selected according to citizens' needs, geographic reach, accessibility, convenience, institutional capacity and public trust. There is also no one-size fits model for how to deliver e-government services through postal operators.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Participants reached a shared understanding that inclusive e-government should not require all citizens to use online self-service. Digital platforms must be complemented by trusted physical locations, mobile outreach and human assistance.
- Inclusion is a service-design choice. Trained frontline staff and human touch points are as important as connectivity and digital platforms for people with limited skills, confidence or access to devices.
- Leveraging existing public-facing networks like post offices and libraries can reduce government infrastructure costs, bring services closer to citizens and create opportunities for institutional sustainability and service diversification.
- Effective multi-channel delivery may involve several institutions simultaneously rather than selecting a single national channel. Such is the case in Kenya, where more than half of Huduma centers are co-located at post offices.
- All participants of the panel expressed interest in sharing their experiences with inclusive e-government service delivery again in the future

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Adopt multi-channel delivery by design: Ensure that essential public services remain accessible through appropriate combinations of online, in-person, assisted, mobile and telephone channels, particularly for people who cannot use digital services independently.
- Invest in existing trusted infrastructure: Map and upgrade post offices, libraries, community centres and other public-facing institutions in underserved areas, including their connectivity, equipment, accessibility and integration with national e-government platforms.
- Invest in human support alongside technology: Provide frontline staff with appropriate training, resources and mandates to help citizens access services, while incorporating local-language support, disability accessibility and digital-literacy assistance.
- Create enabling institutional and financing frameworks: Strengthen coordination across ministries and service-delivery institutions, remove

regulatory barriers and establish sustainable funding and partnership arrangements for multi-channel delivery.

- Measure effective access and outcomes: Complement indicators of online service availability with data on geographic coverage, channel use, accessibility, service quality, user satisfaction and the ability of underserved groups to complete transactions successfully.
- Presentations and discussions from this panel will help inform future UN DESA and UPU guidance and capacity building materials on inclusive e-government service delivery and leveraging post offices for inclusive e-government service delivery.

WSIS Action Line C7 E-health Building Health Systems Resilience and Local Capacity through Digital Foundations, Learning and Partnerships

Tuesday, 07 July 2026, 09:00-09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/302

WSIS Action Line C8 Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

Tuesday, 07 July 2026, 09:00-09:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/307

WSIS Action Line C6 Enabling Environment

Tuesday, 08 July 2025, 11:30-12:30

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/295

The session highlighted the importance of benchmarking as a practical tool for strengthening digital governance, supporting regulatory modernization, and enabling informed policy decisions. Participants emphasized that benchmarking helps countries identify gaps, prioritize reforms, monitor progress, and strengthen accountability. Combined with tools such as the ITU Digital Readiness Framework and collaborative platforms such as the Digital Regulation Network (DRN), benchmarking can help transform data into action, facilitate institutional learning, and advance inclusive, resilient, and sustainable digital transformation in support of the WSIS vision for 2035.

Key Issues Discussed:

- Participants agreed that benchmarking is most effective when used as a tool for evidence-based decision-making, reform prioritization, and continuous policy improvement rather than as a mechanism for comparing rankings.
- The ITU Digital Readiness Framework was recognized as a valuable instrument to support countries in identifying strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for policy and regulatory reform.
- Regional and international cooperation were identified as essential enablers for translating benchmarking data into actionable policy measures.
- Panelists highlighted the importance of combining benchmarking results with stakeholder dialogue, institutional capacity building, and peer learning to maximize policy impact.
- The discussion underscored that benchmarking helps move policy discussions from perceptions to evidence, allowing governments to identify priorities based on measurable outcomes rather than assumptions.
- Speakers agreed that benchmarking can play an important role in supporting the transition toward collaborative and whole-of-government approaches to digital governance, particularly in emerging areas such as artificial intelligence, data governance, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- ITU showcased the Digital Readiness Framework as part of its broader efforts to support countries in assessing and strengthening digital governance readiness.
- The session highlighted the continued role of the Digital Regulation Network (DRN) as a platform for cooperation among regional regulatory associations and their members worldwide.
- ITU introduced the Global Economic Model Study (GEMS) Tool, an evidence-based platform that helps countries assess the socio-economic impact of digital infrastructure investments and policy options. The tool supports informed decision-making by providing data-driven insights to strengthen digital policy planning, investment strategies, and sustainable digital transformation.
- Participants expressed strong support for continued collaboration through regional regulatory associations and the ITU Digital Regulation Network.
- Speakers reaffirmed the importance of sharing regulatory experiences, lessons learned, and best practices through peer networks and ITU-led initiatives.
- The session reinforced the commitment among regulators and policy-makers to strengthen evidence-based approaches to digital governance and reform.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Promote the use of benchmarking as a diagnostic and governance tool rather than a ranking exercise, ensuring that benchmarking results are systematically linked to regulatory reform roadmaps, institutional learning, and continuous monitoring of outcomes.
- Strengthen analytical and institutional capacities within governments and regulatory authorities to improve the interpretation and practical use of benchmarking evidence.
- Expand cooperation through regional regulatory associations and the ITU Digital Regulation Network (DRN) to facilitate peer learning, exchange of best practices, and collaborative problem-solving.
- Use benchmarking results as a basis for multi-stakeholder dialogue involving regulators, ministries, industry, academia, and development partners to support coordinated digital policy reforms.
- Leverage benchmarking and digital governance frameworks to strengthen resilience and preparedness, ensuring that digital infrastructure and regulatory capabilities can contribute effectively to the sustainable development objectives as WSIS advances toward 2035.

WSIS Action Line C7 E-Employment: AI, Digitalisation and the Transformation of Jobs: Ensuring Decent Work

Tuesday, 07 July 2026, 11:00-11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/296

Key Issues discussed:

- AI is reshaping labour markets primarily through changes in tasks rather than the replacement of jobs. While approximately one in four workers globally are exposed to AI, only a relatively small share of jobs is currently highly exposed to automation, highlighting the importance of focusing on job transformation and job quality rather than job losses alone.
- AI and algorithmic management systems are increasingly being deployed across sectors - including manufacturing, healthcare, logistics, finance and retail - for recruitment, task allocation, workflow management and performance monitoring. While these technologies can improve productivity and service delivery, they also raise concerns related to worker surveillance, privacy, work intensity, transparency and occupational safety and health.
- The discussion highlighted the often-invisible workforce underpinning AI systems. Workers, primarily in the Global South, engaged in data annotation, labelling, content moderation and other digital tasks play a critical role in AI development, yet frequently face precarious working conditions, low wages and psychosocial risks. Greater attention is needed to decent work and labour standards throughout AI supply chains.
- It was emphasized that employment and labour market policies and labour market institutions must evolve alongside technological change. Governments are increasingly integrating digital technologies into employment policies through social dialogue and seeking policy coherence.
- Lifelong learning and digital skills development were identified as essential to ensuring inclusive participation in the digital economy. Capacity development should be learner centred, flexible and responsive to evolving labour market needs, with particular attention to women, youth and under-served/vulnerable populations.
- It was stressed that AI governance should adopt a human-centred approach, ensuring that technological innovation is accompanied by adequate labour

protections, transparency, accountability and respect for fundamental rights at work.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- It was reaffirmed that AI should be understood as transforming work through changes in tasks, work organization and job quality, rather than only through job creation or displacement.
- The session highlighted the importance of addressing both the deployment and the development of AI, including improving labour conditions for workers throughout AI supply chains and making the contribution of data workers more visible. • Speakers emphasized that existing International Labour Standards remain an important foundation for governing AI in the world of work, while recognizing the need to address emerging issues such as algorithmic transparency, data governance, accountability and bias.
- The discussion showcased ongoing initiatives by the ILO and the ITU to support member States through research, policy advice, capacity development and digital skills programmes, including the ILO Observatory on AI and Work in the Digital Economy and the ITU Academy.
- Participants welcomed continued collaboration between the ILO and ITU under the WSIS framework to strengthen digital skills, promote evidence-based policymaking and support inclusive digital transformation.
- The session also highlighted the recent adoption of the new ILO Convention on platform work (Convention 193) as an important milestone.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Strengthen human-centred AI governance by ensuring that employment, labour and social policies are coordinated with AI strategies and that workers' rights, transparency and accountability remain central.
- Invest in lifelong learning and digital skills through inclusive, accessible and demand driven capacity development programmes that enable workers, enterprises and public institutions to adapt to digital transformation.
- Promote decent work across AI value chains by strengthening labour protections, improving transparency regarding AI development processes and ensuring fair working conditions for workers engaged in data annotation, content moderation and other digital labour.
- Enhance international cooperation and social dialogue by fostering collaboration among governments, employers, workers' organizations, international organizations and other stakeholders to exchange good practices and develop coherent policy responses that support the

implementation of WSIS Action Line C7 on e-employment and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Support evidence-based policymaking by strengthening research, labour market data and international knowledge-sharing on the impacts of AI and digitalization on jobs.

WSIS Action Line C9: Media - Towards Resilient Information Ecosystems in Times of Crisis: Rethinking 'Preparedness' in Digital Governance

Tuesday, 07 July 2026, 14:00-14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/309

Key Issues discussed:

- Over the past twenty years of implementing WSIS Action Line C9, digital transformation has significantly expanded access to information, participation, and media pluralism. At the same time, it has introduced systemic challenges to the availability, visibility, and sustainability of trustworthy public-interest information, particularly during crises. The concept of information integrity provides an integrated framework for understanding the resilience of information ecosystems. In line with UNESCO's Internet 4 Trust initiative and the Guidelines on the Governance of Digital Platforms, protecting journalists and public-interest media; strengthening media and information literacy; and promoting human rights-based digital platform governance and resilient information ecosystems should no longer be treated as separate, siloed issues, particularly in crisis contexts.
- Crisis communication has fundamentally changed. Rather than relying primarily on national communication systems, crises now unfold across interconnected digital and data ecosystems, including digital platforms, cloud services, artificial intelligence, satellite systems and connectivity infrastructure, which have become critical components of crisis response and resilience. These infrastructures should therefore be considered core elements of crisis governance rather than merely "technical add-on" to existing frameworks.
- Humanitarian action has also become increasingly dependent on digital communication. Digital communication infrastructures now support not only information flows but also the delivery of essential services, humanitarian coordination, rights-enabling functionalities, and the preservation of cultural memory. At the same time, growing dependence on private technology providers, cloud infrastructure and digital platforms has introduced new vulnerabilities, including cyberattacks, surveillance, internet shutdowns, spyware, data exploitation and restrictions on humanitarian access. These challenges stemming from digital transformation often outpace the

development of new or existing humanitarian and protection frameworks. Much of the gaps, including the protection of digital records, online cultural heritage, digital identities or demographic records and other rights-enabling communication systems, often remain outside traditional protection mandates, despite becoming increasingly essential for affected populations. The usual course of action often enforced by traditional mandate holders is blanket shutdowns, which then forced affected population to untrustworthy information bubbles, now with AI as accelerator. At the same time, it is often local journalists and digital rights activists on the grounds who work to fill in these gaps at high personal/professional costs and with limited support.

- ICTs regulators have an increasingly important role in safeguarding information resilience. Experiences shared from disaster preparedness in South Africa demonstrated the importance of risk assessment, early warning systems, clear institutional roles, regular testing of communication systems, multilingual communication and coordinated multi-stakeholder responses that prioritize the needs of affected communities.
- Practical experience from conflict settings in Ukraine also illustrated the growing limitations of national regulatory approaches. While Ukrainian legislators and regulators had developed some measures between 2014 and 2022, including identifying key actors, threats and digital platforms likely to amplify harmful content, effective implementation has increasingly been constrained by declining cooperation from digital platforms. Although many platforms initially engaged closely with authorities in 2022, this cooperation has gradually diminished. By 2026, meaningful dialogue between major technology companies and Ukrainian authorities had gone down to almost zero, leaving national authorities with few mechanisms to ensure platform responsiveness, transparency or accountability. This is a challenging reality for countries with limited market leverage like Ukraine, where platforms often apply global policies without adapting their systems and designs to the specific realities and risks of crisis contexts.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Preliminary findings from UNESCO's collaboration with the University of Melbourne, based on a global survey of more than 200 regulatory experts (to be published soon in 2026), highlighted: 61% of respondents indicated that their country's digital regulatory frameworks do not include specific provisions for crisis situations or were unsure whether such provisions exist; most respondents reported that critical transnational digital infrastructures, including cloud services, satellite systems and other digital infrastructure, are

not adequately addressed within national crisis communication frameworks; and approximately 70% reported that privacy safeguards during crises are either absent or unclear, pointing to significant governance and accountability gaps. The results of the survey underlined the importance of strengthening international cooperation to address the increasingly transnational character of crisis communication and digital governance.

- More broadly, the session highlighted that regulation of digital communication during crises represents an emerging policy field requiring new governance approaches. Existing regulatory models are often insufficient to address the transnational nature of contemporary digital communication ecosystems.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Adopt a whole-of-ecosystem approach to crisis communications. Governance frameworks should explicitly integrate digital platforms, cloud infrastructure, satellite communications, artificial intelligence and other critical digital infrastructures into preparedness planning, while strengthening institutional capacities and cross-sector coordination.
- Strengthen international multistakeholder cooperation in this regard, including under the WSIS framework. Meaningful and continued collaboration and dialogue will be essential to 2 develop shared norms, evidence and governance approaches capable of responding to increasingly transnational and digitally mediated crisis communication.
- Place human rights at the core of international governance frameworks. Future policy frameworks should ensure that humanitarian communication remains grounded in international human rights principles.
- Translate theories to practice with clear governance arrangements to strengthen institutional preparedness. While many guidance and studies have been emerging at the international level, they need to be institutionalized in established frameworks with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, operational coordination mechanisms, multilingual public communication systems, and regularly tested crisis communication protocols that place affected communities at the center of preparedness efforts.
- Enhance platform accountability during crises. There is a need for stronger international cooperation to develop governance mechanisms that require meaningful platform engagement during crises, including enhanced due diligence, transparency and accountability obligations, while ensuring safeguards against the misuse of these frameworks by governments and authorities.

WSIS Action Lines C7 E-environment

Tuesday, 07 July 2026, 15:00-15:55

Please find the session details here
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/303

Key Issues discussed:

- Environmental governance of digital transformation, including the need to measure and manage the environmental footprint of ICTs.
- ICT-sector emissions, energy consumption, resource use, and the importance of reliable data and common methodologies.
- The role of regulators in integrating environmental considerations into national digital strategies and policy frameworks.
- Environmental risks and governance implications of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence.
- E-waste management and the need for effective national frameworks to address the growing volume of electronic waste.
- Circular economy approaches for digital technologies, including stronger participation from industry, consumers, and local stakeholders.
- The role of ICTs in disaster risk reduction, including monitoring, forecasting, early warning systems, emergency communications, and resilient connectivity.
- The importance of enabling policy, legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks to support sustainable, resilient, and inclusive digital transformation.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Strengthened understanding of the environmental dimensions of digital transformation under Action Line C7.
- Increased recognition of the need for reliable data, common methodologies, and harmonized indicators to measure the environmental footprint of the ICT sector.
- Greater awareness of the role of regulators in integrating environmental considerations into national digital strategies and policy frameworks.
- Identification of artificial intelligence as an emerging priority requiring stronger environmental governance and responsible policy approaches.
- Reinforced commitment to advancing e-waste management through national frameworks, circular economy approaches, and multi-stakeholder participation.

- Recognition of resilient connectivity, emergency telecommunications, and early warning systems as essential components of disaster risk reduction.
- Increased awareness of the importance of modern public warning systems, including Cell Broadcast, location-based alerts, and interoperable standards-based systems.
- Emphasis on the need for continued collaboration among governments, regulators, UN agencies, industry, academia, civil society, and humanitarian partners to advance sustainable, resilient, and inclusive digital transformation.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Strengthen data, governance, and regulatory frameworks to better measure and manage the environmental impact of ICTs, including emerging technologies such as AI.
- Promote circular economy approaches across the digital ecosystem, including repair, reuse, recycling, safe disposal, and producer responsibility.
- Support countries in strengthening emergency telecommunications, resilient connectivity, and coordination mechanisms for disaster risk reduction.
- Scale up inclusive, interoperable, and standards-based early warning and public alerting systems to reach communities at risk.

Together, these recommendations will help advance the implementation of the WSIS framework for action by strengthening the three priority actions of the Action Lind C7 on e-environment.

WSIS Action Line C7: E-Science in Action: Operationalizing the WSIS+20 Vision through AI, Quantum, and Open Data for the Global South

Tuesday, 07 July 2025, 16:00-16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/305

WSIS Action Line: C4 Rethinking capacity building and digital learning for today and tomorrow's world

Friday, 10 July 2025, 10:00-10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/293

Key Issues discussed:

- Learning must be purposeful to be useful. The session highlighted that capacity building programmes should help learners gain trusted credentials and translate skills into impact for their families, communities, institutions, and their countries' national development.
- A recurring concern was the existing gaps between policy/research findings and the practical implementation in classrooms and institutions. The session noted that while technologies, labour markets and needs evolve rapidly, capacity building systems often move at a much slower pace.
- These perpetual shifts in the digital landscape pose an evidence dilemma for policymakers as by the time proper policy responses are designed to address identified gaps, the ICT environment has likely already shifted.
- As emerging technologies (including AI, Quantum, etc.) are reshaping both the content and pace of learning, they have the potential to democratize ICT capacity development, including for creative production and educational content. Access to these technologies depends, however, on the infrastructure, skills, peer networks, and enabling ecosystems at national and local levels.
- Intermediary institutions, such as the schools of government network from UNESCO's SPARK Alliance, were presented as essential actors that can collect evidence, advise governments, convene stakeholders, and translate discussions and resolutions into concrete capacity building interventions.
- Human-centered capabilities and soft skills such as curiosity, critical thinking, empathy, adaptability are equally as important as technical skills in today and tomorrow's rapidly changing ICT landscape.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Digital skills development and capacity building are not only a training challenge, but a question of ecosystems. Effective programmes require learner support for relevant learning pathways that include credible

credentials. In addition, partnerships and agile adaptable systems help to build a strong foundation for capacity building ecosystems.

- Concrete examples were shared from governments, the private sector, public administration, and creative-industry perspectives, including digital skills pathways supported by ITU's Digital Transformation Centres (DTC) Initiative and HP courses, UNESCO's SPARK Alliance schools of government networks, and AI-enabled media production.
- Micro-credentials were highlighted as useful training checkpoints when they are embedded within broader learning pathways rather than treated as isolated objectives.
- Consensus emerged on the need for faster feedback loops between evidence, policy, and practice, especially for AI-related capacity building in the public sector and education systems.
- Multistakeholder partnerships are crucial but insufficient unless they are anchored in a theory of change and a realistic understanding of whether institutions can absorb, use and apply the knowledge gained and skills acquired.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Move beyond delivering stand-alone courses towards developing people, communities and entire digital ecosystems through learner-centered pathways that meet different groups where they are, including digital consumers, ICT professionals, business or creative users, and more.
- Develop agile and continuously updated capacity building programmes, including micro credentials and modular learning pathways that can adapt to technological change.
- Strengthen public-private-academic partnerships and expand collaboration with international organizations to scale access to quality digital skills and AI training.
- Invest in enabling ecosystems, including digital infrastructure, community learning spaces, and clear pathways from learning to employment and entrepreneurship.
- Establish institutions and mechanisms that can continuously collect evidence, assess emerging challenges, and translate findings into capacity building policies.
- Promote a culture of lifelong learning by prioritising and fostering curiosity, adaptability, and the ability to unlearn outdated practices, while prioritising human-centered skills such as critical thinking, collaboration and ethical decision-making.

WSIS Action Line C3 Access to information and knowledge

Friday, 10 July 2026, 11:00-11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/291

WSIS Action Line C5 Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

Friday, 10 July 2026, 11:00-11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/294

Facilitation Session for WSIS Action Line C11

Friday, 10 July 2026, 11:00-11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/314

Key Issues Discussed:

- The session positioned Action Line C11 as the place where WSIS+20 follow-up must confront one of the central challenges of the digital governance landscape: not the absence of processes, but the proliferation of them. Participants recognized that international and regional cooperation has become crowded with overlapping mandates, forums, dialogues, reporting lines and review processes. The task ahead is therefore not to create another mechanism, but to make existing mechanisms speak to each other, reduce duplication and help Member States and stakeholders navigate the system with greater clarity.
- UN DESA framed the discussion around consolidation, coherence and implementation. The original C11 mandate, adopted in 2003, focused on international cooperation, development assistance, public-private partnerships and the mainstreaming of ICTs in international and regional organizations. That mandate remains relevant, but the environment has changed dramatically. Today, C11 must operate in a landscape that includes WSIS follow-up, the Global Digital Compact, the Internet Governance Forum, the STI Forum, UNGIS, emerging AI governance processes, regional digital strategies and multiple reporting obligations. The session therefore asked how C11 can become a disciplined coordination layer rather than another item in an already complex architecture.
- A recurring issue was the need to move from rhetorical alignment to operational coherence. Participants warned that high-level language on coordination is no longer enough. Roadmaps must show what should be aligned, who is responsible, what should be measured and how stakeholders can see the effect of their contributions. Several speakers stressed that Member States and stakeholders need fewer parallel conversations and more visible pathways from consultation to implementation.
- The session also addressed the strategic role of roadmaps. Participants described the C11 roadmap as an opportunity to recalibrate digital cooperation within the UN system, connect WSIS more clearly to the broader UN development agenda, and prepare for the post-2030 context. The

roadmap should not be treated as an administrative exercise. It should be a strategic instrument that clarifies priorities, timelines, institutional roles, regional needs and measurable deliverables.

- Regional cooperation emerged as a central pillar of C11 implementation. Participants emphasized that global commitments do not implement themselves at the national level. Regional bodies can help translate global mandates into practical guidance, harmonize indicators, reduce reporting burdens and support countries in adapting commitments to regional and national realities. Africa was highlighted as an important case where regional roadmaps, Agenda 2063, digital transformation strategies and WSIS+20 implementation must be brought into a coherent framework.
- The discussion also highlighted the risk of mechanical roadmap design. Participants cautioned against producing matrices that are comprehensive but lifeless. A roadmap that only maps mandates to columns will not drive implementation. It must speak to real problems, help actors prioritize and show how cooperation produces outcomes for people. Participants therefore called for a roadmap that combines strategic clarity with practical accountability.
- Meaningful participation was a major theme. Civil society and community-based actors warned that participation often remains symbolic, especially in fragmented or exclusive processes where stakeholders are placed at the margins or invited only after decisions have already taken shape. Participants stressed that C11 must place participation at the centre of implementation, not at the edge of consultation. This includes clearer pipelines from national and regional spaces into global review processes, traceable feedback loops and stronger recognition of local evidence.
- The IGF ecosystem, including National, Regional and Youth IGF Initiatives, was repeatedly identified as a vital bridge between global digital cooperation and local realities. Participants noted that NRIs can help surface issues from communities, track how concerns move from national to regional and global levels, and provide evidence on whether international commitments are producing change. The IGF should therefore be treated not only as a forum for dialogue, but as part of the evidence and implementation infrastructure of WSIS follow-up.
- Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies were discussed as both a governance challenge and a coherence test. Participants noted that AI governance is increasingly fragmented across formal and informal forums, many of which are difficult for developing countries and civil society to access.

C11 can help ensure that AI-related cooperation remains connected to development priorities, capacity-building, inclusion, human rights and the WSIS vision of a people-centred information society.

- Measurement and indicators were also debated. Participants agreed that the C11 roadmap must include indicators, but cautioned that easy proxy indicators are not enough. Counting initiatives, meetings or participants does not necessarily show whether cooperation is improving policy, implementation or inclusion. Outcome-oriented indicators are needed to capture whether cooperation leads to better national policies, stronger regional coordination, reduced duplication, greater stakeholder influence and more tangible development results.
- The session also addressed the need for knowledge consolidation. Participants pointed out that the number of resolutions, processes and commitments is becoming difficult to follow even for specialists. A single, accessible knowledge base or mapping tool could help governments, civil society and other stakeholders understand what has been agreed, who is responsible and where follow-up is expected. UN DESA's work in mapping WSIS+20 follow-up asks was recognized as an important step towards a more accountable and navigable system.

Key Outcomes of the Session:

- The session produced a strong and shared diagnosis: the international digital cooperation landscape is fragmented, and C11 must now become the action line of coherence. Its value lies in helping the system consolidate, align and deliver, rather than multiplying forums or reporting requirements.
- Participants converged around the view that the C11 roadmap should be a strategic recalibration tool. It should help clarify how WSIS, the Global Digital Compact, the STI Forum, the IGF, UNGIS, regional processes and AI governance discussions reinforce one another. It should also help explain the continued relevance of WSIS within the wider UN development agenda, including the post-2030 agenda and the evolving UN reform context.
- The session confirmed that good roadmap design must balance ambition and discipline. Participants called for concrete deliverables, regionally differentiated priorities, defined timelines and measurable outcomes. At the same time, they warned that the roadmap should not become a mechanical matrix. It must remain understandable, strategic and capable of guiding action.
- There was strong support for using regional structures as translation platforms between global commitments and national implementation. Regional

roadmaps, clustered indicators and alignment with existing regional frameworks can reduce duplication and help Member States focus on priorities that are relevant to their contexts. The African experience showed that regional coordination can help move from global text to national action when it is connected to existing development frameworks and reporting needs.

- The session highlighted the importance of outcome-oriented indicators. Participants agreed that measurement should move beyond counting events, inputs or participation numbers. The roadmap should measure whether cooperation changes practice: whether national policies become more inclusive, whether regional coordination improves, whether digital divides narrow, whether local evidence reaches global processes, and whether stakeholders can see the effect of their engagement.
- A clear outcome was the recognition that civil society participation must become more traceable and consequential. Participants called for formal channels from national and regional IGFs and civil society networks into CSTD, GDC and WSIS follow-up mechanisms. They also stressed that stakeholders should be able to understand how their inputs are received, reflected and used. Consultation without feedback was described as insufficient for the next phase of WSIS implementation.
- The IGF ecosystem was identified as a key implementation asset for C11. Its value lies not only in convening annual dialogue, but in connecting national, regional and global communities, surfacing emerging issues and supporting multistakeholder cooperation in practice. UN DESA's unique position, as facilitator of C11 and institutional home of the IGF, gives it a practical role in connecting these channels to formal WSIS follow-up.
- The session also confirmed the need to address AI governance through the lens of coherence. Participants noted that AI-related processes are expanding quickly and risk deepening fragmentation. C11 can help ensure that AI governance remains connected to digital development, human rights, capacity-building, regional cooperation and the broader WSIS framework.
- UN DESA presented practical next steps in the roadmap process, including the development of a draft C11 roadmap, linkages to SDGs, GDC objectives, gender equality, human rights, AI and core activities, and the preparation of an online survey to gather wider stakeholder input. This confirmed that the session was not a stand-alone discussion, but part of a structured follow-up process leading towards CSTD consideration.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- UN DESA should position the C11 roadmap as the coherence roadmap for WSIS+20 implementation. Its purpose should be to connect mandates, simplify the landscape, reduce duplication and make cooperation easier to understand and use. C11 should become the place where the digital cooperation system learns to work as one system.
- The roadmap should avoid institutional proliferation. The guiding question should not be what new forum is needed, but which existing process can deliver, how it should be connected to others, and how its outputs can inform implementation. This approach would respond directly to Member States' repeated calls to avoid duplication.
- The C11 roadmap should include a concise map of relevant processes, mandates and review cycles. This should cover WSIS follow-up, GDC review, CSTD, STI Forum, IGF, UNGIS, AI governance processes and regional digital cooperation mechanisms. Such a map would help Member States and stakeholders understand where decisions are taken, where inputs can be made and where follow-up is expected.
- The roadmap should establish a small number of strategic priorities rather than attempt to cover everything. These priorities could include coherence across digital cooperation processes, regional implementation, meaningful participation, capacity-building, digital inclusion, AI governance coherence and measurement. Each priority should include a baseline, timeline, responsible actors and expected outcome.
- C11 implementation should be regionally differentiated. The roadmap should recognize that cooperation needs are not the same across regions. It should allow for region-specific deliverables, such as improving cross-border infrastructure, strengthening regional policy coordination, supporting regional data and indicator systems, and helping countries translate global commitments into national action.
- UN DESA should use its convening role to connect regional evidence to global follow-up. Regional commissions and regional stakeholders can help identify what is working, what is duplicated, what is missing and what countries actually need. This evidence should feed into CSTD reporting and future WSIS reviews in a structured and visible way.
- The roadmap should move from proxy indicators to outcome-oriented indicators. Instead of counting only the number of meetings, NRIs or participants, indicators should examine whether cooperation improves policy coherence, reduces duplication, strengthens participation, supports national implementation and produces measurable development results.

- The IGF and its National, Regional and Youth Initiatives should be used as channels for implementation evidence. The roadmap should create clearer pathways for issues raised at national and regional levels to inform global WSIS follow-up, CSTD discussions and GDC-related review processes. It should also explore how to track whether issues move from local discussion to regional and global outcomes.
- Civil society participation should become traceable. The roadmap should include feedback loops showing how stakeholder inputs are received, reflected and used. This would help move C11 from consultation to co-governance and from symbolic inclusion to accountable participation.
- The roadmap should address the resource burden on stakeholders. Civil society, developing-country experts and smaller institutions cannot follow every parallel process. UN DESA should help identify priorities, consolidate information and make participation more efficient. A clearer knowledge base of WSIS+20 follow-up commitments, responsible actors and reporting timelines would be a practical contribution.
- C11 should help bring AI governance back into a development and cooperation frame. As AI-related processes multiply, the roadmap should ensure coherence with WSIS principles, human rights, capacity-building, digital inclusion and regional participation. AI governance should not become another silo detached from the broader digital development agenda.
- The roadmap should preserve the multistakeholder character of WSIS while making it more operational. It should draw from the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines, the IGF ecosystem and national and regional practices to strengthen participation that is issue-based, inclusive and connected to outcomes.
- The next step is to use the roadmap process to turn this diagnosis into architecture. UN DESA can lead by making C11 the action line that organizes complexity, connects actors and gives Member States and stakeholders a clearer path from global commitments to national and regional implementation. The session confirmed that the future of C11 is not more process. Its future is coherence, delivery and accountability.

WSIS Action Lines Roundtable - WSIS Forum 2026 (closed meeting)

Monday, 6 July 2025, 12:00-13:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/330

Special Tracks

Accessibility Special Track
Building Accessible and Unbiased AI

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/569

Internet Governance Forum Track

The Next Byte – Shaping Human-Centred Internet Governance

Friday, 10 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/282

Partnership on Measuring ICT development

Measuring What Matters: Revisiting ICT Core Indicators for the WSIS Vision

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/266

Key Issues Discussed:

- The Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development has served since 2004 as the principal international coordination mechanism for comparable official ICT statistics and maintains a Core List of more than 50 indicators.
- The current Core List remains a strong foundation, covering infrastructure and access, affordability, digital skills, Internet use and barriers, and ICT use in enterprises, education and government, as well as e-waste.
- The WSIS+20 Outcome Document adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2025 recognizes the Partnership and mandates a systematic review of existing WSIS indicators and methodologies, with findings to be reported in 2027.
- The review should assess data availability and relevance in relation to the WSIS Action Lines, the Global Digital Compact and the Universal and Meaningful Connectivity targets, and should measure not only access but also whether connectivity is affordable, high quality, secure, meaningful and enabling.
- Priority gaps identified included AI adoption and use, digital trust and cybersecurity, enabling policy and data-governance frameworks, green ICT and sustainability, data centres, health, community access, and inclusive digital transformation, including gender and disability dimensions.
- Participants stressed that new or revised indicators must be policy relevant, feasible for countries to produce, internationally comparable and grounded in official statistics, while safeguarding quality and privacy.
- Practical approaches were discussed to improve the availability, quality and comparability of ICT data through methodological work, capacity building, sustainable financing and data partnerships.

Key Outcomes of the Session:

- Participants agreed that the Core List remains valuable but must evolve to reflect the WSIS+20 vision and emerging digital policy needs, with particular attention to meaningful connectivity.

- Ongoing revisions already address business digital transformation and household and individual ICT use, including ICT skills and the use of artificial intelligence.
- ICANN highlighted the need for indicators related to the domain-name ecosystem and Internet infrastructure, and noted joint work with UNESCO on indicators for multilingualism and linguistic diversity online.
- Participants called for more sex-disaggregated data and stronger gender mainstreaming across the Core List, alongside indicators that capture disability and other dimensions of digital inclusion.
- The session launched a broader consultation to collect proposals on indicator areas and specific indicators to retain, revise or add, and participants were invited to complete the Partnership survey.
- The Partnership will undertake the review with WSIS Action Line Facilitators and support from the UN Statistical Commission, and report its findings to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in 2027.
- The discussion brought together ITU, UNCTAD, UN DESA, ECLAC, ECA, ICANN, OECD and Cetic.br, reinforcing the importance of coordinated international and regional action.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Develop a balanced WSIS monitoring framework that combines established access and connectivity measures with indicators on quality, meaningful use, domain names and Internet infrastructure, trust and security, AI, sustainability and inclusion.
- Engage national statistical offices, regulators, ministries, the private sector and civil society so that proposed indicators answer real policy questions and are practical to implement.
- Prioritize methodological development, capacity building, sustainable financing and data partnerships to close persistent gaps in existing indicators while preserving statistical quality, privacy and international comparability. Funding remains critical, including the estimated USD 100 million required to support 60 surveys in countries where data are unavailable.
- Use the 2026-2027 review to align the Core List with the WSIS Action Lines and other global digital-development commitments, establish a sustainable mechanism for periodic updates through 2035, and encourage all stakeholders to contribute through the Partnership survey.

Quote (from the moderator): "Measuring digital transformation is becoming more complex, but it has never been more necessary. Revising the Core List is essential to move towards a new generation of ICT indicators."

Smart Cities Track

Co-Designing Inclusive and Safe Smart Cities: Public Engagement, Security, and Gender Responsive Urban Innovation

Friday, 10 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/461

Foresight for FAIR Cities – Exploring AI Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/399

WSIS 20+ Special Track

From Negotiation to Implementation: Reimagining the IGF in the WSIS+20 Era

Monday, 6 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/279

WSIS+20 Outcome Document: Fostering Digital Transformation in Africa

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/423

Key Issues discussed:

- The need to move from policy commitments and declarations to practical implementation of the WSIS+20 Outcome Document through coordinated national, regional, and continental action.
- Development and operationalization of the Africa 2035 Digital Implementation Roadmap as a mechanism for aligning WSIS+20 outcomes, the Global Digital Compact, Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Persistent challenges to digital transformation in Africa, including inadequate infrastructure, connectivity gaps, limited financing, weak policy harmonization, digital sovereignty concerns, and institutional coordination challenges.
- The importance of measuring implementation through harmonized indicators, reporting templates, implementation dashboards, and accountability mechanisms to track progress and inform decision-making.
- Digital skills development, including ICT, digital literacy, AI literacy, STEM education, workforce reskilling, and capacity-development initiatives to prepare Africans for the digital economy.
- Digital inclusion and bridging the digital divides, particularly for women, girls, youth, rural communities, and other underserved populations through improved access to technology, digital identity, connectivity, and digital opportunities.
- Strengthening Africa's AI ecosystem through investments in computing infrastructure, data centres, local innovation, AI governance frameworks, and the development of solutions that support African languages and contexts.
- The critical role of multi-stakeholder collaboration among governments, private sector actors, academia, technical communities, civil society organizations, and development partners in implementing digital transformation initiatives and achieving sustainable development outcomes. Guidelines for Session Organisers– WSIS Forum 2026

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Launch and presentation of the Africa 2035 Digital Implementation Roadmap by UNECA, providing a structured framework for translating the WSIS+20 Outcome Document, the Global Digital Compact, Agenda 2063, and the SDGs into coordinated implementation actions across Africa.
- Agreement on the importance of harmonized measurement and accountability mechanisms, including the proposed fifteen priority indicators and unified reporting framework to enable consistent tracking of digital transformation progress across African countries.
- Reaffirmation of Nigeria's leadership role in WSIS+20 implementation and African digital cooperation, with NITDA highlighting ongoing initiatives such as the African Digital Acceleration Cooperation framework, digital identity reforms, and the 3 Million Technical Talent (3MTT) Programme.
- Recognition of digital skills, AI readiness, and inclusive digital access as critical enablers of Africa's digital transformation, with particular emphasis on women, youth, rural communities, and other underserved groups.
- Strengthened commitment to multistakeholder collaboration, with governments, private sector actors, academia, civil society, technical communities, and development partners encouraged to align programmes, investments, and implementation efforts around common priorities and measurable outcomes.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Accelerate the domestication and implementation of the Africa 2035 Digital Implementation Roadmap by aligning national digital strategies, policies, and investments with the WSIS+20 Outcome Document, the Global Digital Compact, Agenda 2063, and the SDGs.
- Adopt harmonized monitoring and reporting frameworks, including the proposed priority indicators and implementation measurement tools, to track progress, strengthen accountability, and support evidence-based decision-making across African countries.
- Increase investments in digital infrastructure, connectivity, computing capacity, and digital public infrastructure, particularly in underserved communities, to support digital inclusion, innovation, AI readiness, and sustainable economic growth.
- Expand digital skills, ICT, and AI literacy programmes, with targeted interventions for women, girls, youth, and rural populations to bridge the digital divide and promote inclusive participation in the digital economy.
- Promote African language inclusion and local content development in digital technologies and AI systems to ensure that digital transformation benefits

diverse communities, strengthens digital sovereignty, and enhances accessibility for underserved populations.

- Strengthen academia-industry-government collaboration frameworks to support research, innovation, technology transfer, and practical skills development, ensuring that educational institutions produce graduates equipped to meet the evolving demands of the digital economy and emerging technologies.
- Strengthen multistakeholder partnerships and resource mobilization efforts among governments, the private sector, academia, civil society, technical communities, and development partners to coordinate implementation, share best practices, and scale successful digital transformation initiatives across Africa.

Applying Responsible AI Governance Under WSIS+20: Strengthening Capacity, Ethics, and International Cooperation

Monday, 6 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/280

Business Perspectives on Furthering the Outcomes of the WSIS+20 Review

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/255

Key Issues discussed:

- The role of business in supporting implementation of the WSIS+20 outcomes through investment, innovation and multistakeholder collaboration.
- The importance of enabling policy and regulatory environments to unlock digital transformation and AI adoption.
- Strengthening coordination across the UN system and creating practical mechanisms for sustained multistakeholder engagement.
- Translating the WSIS+20 Review and Global Digital Compact into measurable implementation, accountability and practical action.
- Mobilising public and private investment to close persistent gaps in connectivity, digital infrastructure, digital skills and AI capacity, particularly in developing countries.

Key Outcomes of the session:

Key insights and findings:

- Participants agreed that the focus should now shift from developing commitments to implementing them. Delivering the WSIS vision will require practical cooperation between governments, business, international organisations, civil society and the technical community.
- Business highlighted that investment in infrastructure, innovation, connectivity and digital skills is already underway, but scaling these efforts depends on enabling policy environments that encourage investment, innovation and cross-border collaboration.
- Connectivity remains the foundation of inclusive digital transformation. As AI adoption accelerates, ensuring access to infrastructure, compute, skills and locally relevant innovation ecosystems will be essential to enabling countries to benefit from the AI economy.
- Participants recognised the importance of ensuring that digital transformation generates sustainable local economic value through partnerships with local businesses, skills development and interoperable digital ecosystems.

Announcements, launches, or initiatives presented:

- UNGIS members outlined ongoing efforts to strengthen coordination across the UN system and deepen multistakeholder engagement through new consultation mechanisms, building on the experience and expertise of the WSIS community.
- Participants highlighted a growing number of public-private initiatives supporting connectivity, digital infrastructure, AI capacity-building and digital skills, demonstrating strong momentum towards implementation of the WSIS Action Lines.
- Ongoing work to explore financing approaches for digital development was welcomed as an important contribution to accelerating implementation of the WSIS+20 outcomes.

Agreements, collaborations, or commitments:

- Participants reaffirmed the value of the multistakeholder model as the foundation for implementing the WSIS+20 outcomes.
- There was broad support for strengthening UNGIS as a practical coordination mechanism and accessible entry point for engagement across the UN system.
- Participants agreed that implementation should build on more than twenty years of experience and partnerships developed through the WSIS process while maintaining meaningful stakeholder participation.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions (2–5 bullet points outlining practical and actionable recommendations to support WSIS implementation towards 2035)

- Prioritise implementation by developing practical guidance, measurable indicators and accountability mechanisms that translate global commitments into country-level action.
- Foster enabling policy environments that encourage investment in digital infrastructure, connectivity, AI, innovation and digital skills.
- Strengthen coordination across the UN system by creating clear and sustained mechanisms for multistakeholder collaboration, including structured engagement with business.
- Mobilise public and private investment to accelerate digital inclusion and expand access to infrastructure, compute and digital capabilities, particularly in developing countries.
- Promote open, interoperable and trusted digital ecosystems that support innovation, local value creation and broad participation in the digital economy.

WSIS+20 follow-up - from Milestones to Momentum: what comes next?

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/233

Women and girls in digital Special Track

Building an Inclusive Digital Transformation in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Digital Futures, Leadership and Diversity in Decision Making

Monday, 6 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/166

Key Issues discussed:

- The critical importance of positioning women and girls not only as beneficiaries of digital transformation, but as architects of the digital future through leadership, STEM education, Artificial Intelligence, innovation, entrepreneurship and participation in digital governance.
- The role of Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies in shaping a more inclusive, ethical and sustainable digital future.
- The importance of ensuring that digital transformation contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDGs 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16 and 17.
- The need to move beyond digital connectivity by addressing affordability, meaningful access, digital skills, AI literacy and lifelong learning opportunities.
- The importance of embedding ethics, diversity, transparency, human rights and gender-responsive approaches into AI governance and digital policymaking.
- The value of multistakeholder collaboration among governments, regulators, industry, academia, civil society and international organizations to accelerate inclusive digital transformation.
- The urgency of strengthening women's participation in digital leadership, entrepreneurship, regulatory institutions and global technology governance to ensure that no one is left behind.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- The session brought together Ana Gabriela Valdiviezo, Claudia Ximena Bustamante, Martha Liliana Suárez, Sonia Agnese, Guillermo Aguedo Montenegro, Valeria Soler and Renata Santoyo, who collectively emphasized that an inclusive digital future requires coordinated action to ensure that Artificial Intelligence, digital transformation and innovation reduce inequalities, strengthen digital capacities and expand opportunities for women and girls.

- Panelists agreed that Artificial Intelligence governance must integrate ethics, transparency, accountability and gender-responsive approaches to ensure that technological innovation reduces rather than reinforces inequalities.
- Participants highlighted the urgent need to invest in early STEM education, digital literacy, AI skills and lifelong learning pathways to prepare women and girls for the digital economy.
- Panelists presented concrete initiatives and successful experiences being implemented across Colombia, Argentina, Brazil and Ecuador, demonstrating how multistakeholder collaboration can accelerate inclusive digital transformation. Among these, *Las STEMinistas*, an initiative from Ecuador, was highlighted as a best practice for empowering girls and women through STEM education, digital skills development, mentoring, female role models and leadership opportunities, the initiative demonstrates how coordinated action can inspire girls to become scientists, engineers, innovators and leaders, while contributing to closing gender gaps and building a more inclusive digital future.
- The discussion emphasized that women's participation in regulatory bodies, standards organizations, AI governance and public policymaking is essential for building more innovative, representative and sustainable digital ecosystems.
- The session generated practical recommendations that will contribute to both the WSIS Forum 2026 Outcome Document and the WSIS Women and Girls Action Plan 2035.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Develop gender-responsive digital policies and Artificial Intelligence governance frameworks that ensure transparency, accountability, human rights protection and the mitigation of algorithmic bias.
- Invest in lifelong digital education, beginning with early STEM education for girls and continuing through AI, digital leadership, entrepreneurship and future-ready skills for women throughout their lives.
- Institutionalize women's participation in digital decision-making, increasing representation in governments, regulatory authorities, standards organizations, technology companies and international digital governance processes.
- Strengthen multistakeholder partnerships among governments, academia, industry, civil society and international organizations to replicate successful initiatives and accelerate progress toward digital inclusion.

- Adopt new indicators to measure digital inclusion, moving beyond connectivity to include women's leadership, participation in AI development, digital entrepreneurship, innovation and public decision-making as key indicators of success toward WSIS 2035.

Closing Reflection

Participants emphasized that the rapid evolution of Artificial Intelligence represents an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate sustainable development, improve quality of life and expand economic opportunities. However, these benefits will only be realized if AI is developed and governed through ethical, inclusive and human-centered approaches that protect fundamental rights and reduce, rather than reinforce, existing inequalities.

One of the central messages emerging from the discussion was that women and girls must no longer be viewed solely as beneficiaries of digital transformation, but as architects of the digital future: scientists, engineers, innovators, entrepreneurs, policymakers and leaders actively shaping technologies, public policies and global digital governance.

True inclusion is not about giving women and girls a bigger seat at someone else's table. It is about ensuring they have the opportunity to design the table, define the agenda and build the future. The session reaffirmed that achieving the vision of WSIS+20, the WSIS Women and Girls Action Plan 2035, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will require bold leadership, inclusive governance, strong multistakeholder cooperation and sustained investment in digital education, innovation and gender equality.

Ultimately, participants agreed that the future of Artificial Intelligence and digital transformation should not be designed for women and girls without women and girls. It must be built with them, led by them, and shaped for the benefit of all humanity.

All women and girls are architects of a safe digital future

Monday, 6 July 2025, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/485

The DPI Opportunity for Women & Girls

Monday, 6 July 2025, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/415

From Access to Leadership: AI for Women's Empowerment and Inclusive Growth

Monday, 6 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/178

Fit for Whom?

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/184

Deep Skilling for the Quantum Age: A Global Education Model for Women and Girls

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/222

Key Issues Discussed:

- Quantum readiness was defined as the capacity of governments, industry, universities and society to understand, adopt and responsibly apply quantum technologies. The principal constraint is no longer the technology but the readiness of the people who will use it.
- The future quantum workforce extends beyond specialists to a far larger population of domain experts, including healthcare professionals, engineers, educators, manufacturers, financial analysts, lawyers, policy-makers, public servants and business leaders, who require quantum literacy. The transition to post-quantum cryptography was cited as a case in which non-specialists make consequential decisions.
- Africa and other emerging regions were reframed as future producers of quantum-ready talent and innovation, not passive recipients of imported technology or externally designed education. As one panelist stated, Africa must become a major producer of quantum-ready talent.
- Quantum education initiatives should be co-designed with local universities, educators, governments, industry and communities, not merely adapted after a global model has already been designed. A global model cannot be taken into a community and applied unchanged.
- The participation of women and girls is both an entry and a retention challenge. In some regions women participate strongly through graduate education but participation falls sharply in the transition to careers, so strategies must address the full career trajectory.
- Quantum preparation should begin well before university, through age-appropriate exposure, experiential science education and the early development of analytical and critical-thinking skills.
- Emerging ecosystems can begin immediately by embedding quantum concepts into existing STEM and engineering programmes (physics, mathematics, electrical engineering, computer science, photonics,

materials science and artificial intelligence) rather than waiting to establish stand-alone quantum institutions.

- International collaboration is essential because standards, cybersecurity, research and supply chains are global. Partners should share both successful and unsuccessful education models so that emerging programmes can avoid repeating costly mistakes.

Key Outcomes of the Session

Key insights and findings

- Panelists converged on a two-workforce model consisting of quantum specialists and a much larger quantum-literate professional workforce, prepared through experiential and interdisciplinary learning.
- Evidence from Open Quantum Institute programmes in Ghana and Pakistan suggested that geographic inclusion and gender inclusion can reinforce one another, with participation by women reaching approximately 45 per cent and 52 per cent respectively in selected initiatives.
- The session identified a need for T-shaped professionals, with depth in one discipline and enough fluency across hardware, algorithms, software and applications to translate between the quantum stack and real-world needs, and for quantum champions within non-quantum organizations who can identify use cases, engage specialists and guide responsible adoption.

Contribution toward a Global Quantum Skilling Framework (WSIS Action Line C4)

- The discussion surfaced six principles offered as a contribution toward a Global Quantum Skilling Framework:
  - Two workforces: quantum specialists and quantum-capable domain experts.
  - Local co-design: global principles combined with locally designed implementation.
  - Early and lifelong learning: from school exposure to professional and executive education.
  - Translation across disciplines: T-shaped professionals and quantum champions.
  - Inclusive ecosystem design: women, girls and underserved geographies included from the outset and retained through careers.
  - Shared global infrastructure: access to hardware, educators, credentials, standards and implementation knowledge.

Initiatives and access models identified

- The Global Quantum and Exponential Technologies Education Initiative (GQEI) was presented as a collaborative platform to connect and strengthen existing quantum education efforts rather than duplicate them. UNESCO, IEEE Quantum Week, CERN's Open Quantum Institute, universities and national partners were identified as complementary contributors.
- CMC Microsystems was identified as a potential model for remote, shared and subsidized access to multiple quantum hardware platforms for countries without domestic quantum infrastructure.
- The Commonwealth was identified as a potentially valuable implementation network linking established quantum ecosystems with emerging regions through shared education, mobility, infrastructure access and workforce development.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Advance GQEI as a collaborative international platform linking governments, universities, standards bodies, industry and international organizations, and co-design quantum education with local institutions rather than adapting a global model after the fact.
- Begin quantum readiness before university through age-appropriate exposure and analytical and critical-thinking skills, and embed quantum concepts into existing STEM and engineering programmes rather than waiting to establish stand-alone quantum institutions.
- Develop quantum champions within non-quantum sectors such as healthcare, manufacturing, finance and government, and T-shaped professionals able to translate across the quantum stack.
- Make the participation of women and girls intentional across the full pipeline, from early engagement through research, employment and leadership, and expand access in underserved geographies as a means of strengthening gender inclusion.
- Establish remote and subsidized hardware-access partnerships, document and share both successful and unsuccessful education models, develop shared indicators for national quantum readiness, and explore the Commonwealth as a coordinated implementation network.

Connecting the Unconnected in the field of Education Excellence, Cyber Security & Rural Solutions and Women Empowerment in ICT

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/372

I Thought AI Was Only for Tech Experts: A Practical Introduction to Engaging with AI for Women

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/318

Key Issues discussed:

- AI is not the future. It is the present. AI is becoming embedded across every sector of society, yet women remain significantly under-represented across the AI ecosystem as users, developers, entrepreneurs, researchers, leaders and decision-makers, limiting both equitable participation and inclusive AI governance.
- Practical AI literacy and capacity-building are essential to enable women in all sectors to engage meaningfully and confidently with AI and apply it responsibly in their work.
- Participants heard the benefit of focusing on the task before selecting an AI tool, and were shown how small, simple adjustments in prompting technique can improve the quality, relevance and usefulness of AI-generated outputs.
- Responsible AI use was discussed including the importance of verifying AI-generated information, recognising hallucinations and bias, protecting personal, sensitive and confidential information, and the importance of critical thinking and human judgement.
- Practical implementation challenges discussed included unequal access to AI tools, connectivity constraints, language barriers, affordability, and the need for guidance tailored to local contexts and community needs.
- Participants recognised that educational institutions are actively exploring ways to harness the benefits of AI while safeguarding the development of critical thinking, independent analysis and academic integrity.
- Questions and discussion revealed strong demand for accessible AI literacy training that addresses practical workplace needs particularly in low resource settings.

Key Outcomes of the Session:

- Moving beyond discussion of the need for AI capacity-building, this session demonstrated that AI capacity-building for women new to AI can be successfully delivered within the WSIS Forum by presenting AI in clear,

accessible language, strengthening participants' foundational understanding, and providing practical exercises and resources to support continued learning after the workshop.

- The International Council of Women launched its Practical AI Companion, a beginner friendly practical resource to accompany the workshop and to share widely after WSIS. Collaborations
- The workshop benefited from the valued collaboration of e-Durable and Recycled Clouds, Switzerland, particularly the support of Founder John-Damien Beaud and technical consultant Leo Angonnet.
- Our existing collaborations with Adam Skali, President Young AI Leader Madrid Hub, Spain who assisted with planning and technical support and Kristine Yakhama, Together in Solidarity, Kenya who managed the online participation, were further strengthened.
- We gratefully acknowledge the support of Janna Salokangas from US-based Mia AI in delivering the hands-on segment of the workshop and thank Patrick Rey for his valuable technical expertise during the planning process.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Governments, international organisations and development partners should invest in locally led, gender-responsive AI capacity-building that reflects local languages, cultures, priorities and community realities.
- AI literacy initiatives should prioritize task-based learning allowing participants to apply AI immediately in their professional work while promoting responsible and ethical use.
- Women's organisations, civil society networks and educational institutions should strengthen collaboration to expand AI literacy, share resources and advocate for inclusive AI policies that ensure women participate fully in shaping the future of AI.
- Future WSIS implementation should continue supporting accessible AI education through affordable tools, practical learning resources and capacity-building approaches that address barriers including limited connectivity, device access, language diversity and time and other constraints many women face such as unpaid care responsibilities.
- Overall, it is essential that AI systems respect human rights, uphold equity and inclusion, 2 serve all communities fairly, and are developed and used responsibly.

Enhancing CEDAW Accountability through AI Governance and Tech Value Chains

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/215

Key Issues discussed:

- Structural exclusion of women from the AI ecosystems, women remain significantly underrepresented in AI research, development, leadership and decision-making, limiting their ability to shape the technologies that increasingly affect their lives and rights and leading to biased technologies and unequal outcomes.
- Gender-based violence online, including algorithmic bias, online misogyny, harassment, and abuse targeting women and girls.
- Persistent digital gender divide caused by discriminatory access to digital technologies, connectivity and digital skills for women and girls, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, continues to restrict opportunities for equal participation and economic empowerment.
- Strong relevance of CEDAW and its General Recommendations, including General Recommendation No. 40, as a human rights framework for AI governance and digital transformation.
- Importance of applying the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) as the authoritative framework clarifying States' duty to protect, companies' responsibility to respect human rights, and access to remedy in AI governance and technology value chains.
- Importance of collaboration among States, international organizations, academia, civil society and the private sector to advance women's leadership, participation and inclusion in the digital economy.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Key insights and findings
  - Strong emphasis on ensuring the meaningful participation of women as leaders, decision-makers and "architects" of AI systems, rather than passive beneficiaries of technological change. Need for a shift from viewing women primarily as individuals needing protection to recognizing them as producers, innovators and decision-makers shaping the digital future.

  - AI is not gender-neutral: existing gender inequalities are being replicated and, in some cases, amplified through AI systems and commercial AI systems are designed primarily to maximize profit rather than protect human rights.
  - Exclusion of marginalized groups from training data risks reinforcing inequalities through increasingly recursive AI systems.
  - Operationalizing CEDAW in the digital age requires action by both States and technology companies, including embedding gender-responsive human rights due diligence across the design, development, deployment and governance of AI systems.
  - Gender-related harms arise across technology value chains and require ongoing identification, prevention, mitigation, tracking and transparent reporting by companies, consistent with the UNGPs.
- Announcements, launches, or new initiatives presented during the session
  - OHCHR's B-Tech Project to translate the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights into practical guidance for companies, States, investors and civil society actors working on digital technologies and AI. The Project has a gender workstream.
  - Potential of CEDAW compliant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure and enforce gender parity across technology value chains
  - UN Women's ACT AI School, supporting civil society and women's rights organizations on online safety and digital participation.
  - ITU initiatives to advance women's participation in technology, including Girls in ICT Day and leadership networks.
  - Microsoft's AI skills and inclusion initiatives, including Microsoft Elevate and training programmes implemented with the ILO.
- Agreements, collaborations, or commitments made
  - Reinforcement of the need for coordinated action and increased collaboration across public and private sectors.
  - Recommendation to increase investment in research and evidence generation on the long-term gendered impacts of AI systems.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Require gender-responsive and intersectional human rights due diligence, impact assessments throughout the values chains and across the full lifecycle of AI systems, including meaningful stakeholder engagement, transparency and access to remedy.

- Ensure the equal participation and leadership of women, including through measurable commitments, in AI development, governance, standards-setting bodies, regulatory institutions and technology companies.
- Ensure legally binding standards and accountability mechanisms for digital platforms.
- Promote coordinated regulatory frameworks that address algorithmic discrimination, technology-facilitated gender-based violence and other digital harms affecting women and girls.
- Integrate CEDAW standards and gender-responsive human rights due diligence into AI regulation, public procurement and other State governance measures.
- Establish measurable accountability frameworks, including CEDAW-compliant KPIs, to assess corporate performance on gender equality, due diligence and remedy.

Empowering the Next Generation: Girls in STEM and AI for Good

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/379

Workshop: Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in ICT Leadership Circle Lab 2026

Friday, 10 July 2025, 11:00–11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/391

Women Leading the Digital Future - Shaping Policy Together

Friday, 10 July 2025, 13:00–13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/486

Youth special track

AI for Educational Transformation and Youth Development: Opportunities and Risks

Monday, 6 July 2026, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/130

Key Issues discussed:

- AI is transforming education by advancing personalized learning, inclusion, teacher empowerment, and lifelong learning, while introducing new governance, ethical, and equity challenges.
- Ensuring equitable access to AI alone is no longer sufficient. Participants emphasized the importance of AI literacy, responsible use, algorithmic fairness, accessibility, and governance mechanisms to ensure that AI contributes to inclusive and sustainable education rather than widening existing inequalities.
- Youth should not only be beneficiaries of AI-enabled education, but also active contributors to AI governance. Meaningful youth participation in digital policymaking requires institutional mechanisms, capacity building, and opportunities for co-creation rather than symbolic engagement.
- Youth-led research highlighted emerging challenges including AI bias, academic integrity, cultural diversity in multilingual AI, gender equity, inclusive education for learners with disabilities, and the future relationship between AI and educational assessment.
- Participants emphasized that human-centred AI governance, youth-led research, and international cooperation are essential to advancing inclusive AI-enabled education aligned with the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs.

Key Outcomes of the session (concise billet points capturing the concrete results of the session):

- Eight interdisciplinary youth research teams from leading Chinese universities presented evidence-based research covering AI governance, educational equity, AI literacy, accessibility technologies, research integrity, civic participation, and cross cultural collaboration.
- The session reaffirmed that AI should remain human-centred and that AI literacy should integrate technical competencies with ethics, critical thinking, civic participation, and global competence.

- Announcements, launches, or new initiatives presented during the session
    - ICDC showcased outcomes from its International Competence Development Programme while providing an international platform for youth-led dialogue on AI enabled education.
- Agreements, collaborations, or commitments made
    - Participants committed to advancing youth-led AI research, promoting responsible AI practices, and supporting the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines and the Global Digital Compact through international collaboration.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Develop comprehensive AI literacy frameworks that integrate technical competencies with ethics, critical thinking, digital citizenship, and global competence.
- Strengthen institutional mechanisms that enable meaningful youth participation in AI governance, including policy dialogue, international cooperation, and multi-stakeholder decision-making.
- Promote human-centred AI governance by ensuring transparency, fairness, accessibility, inclusiveness, and accountability throughout the design and deployment of AI in education.
- Expand international collaboration among governments, international organizations, universities, and youth communities to share best practices and jointly advance AI enabled educational transformation toward WSIS 2035 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Empowering Voices: Strengthening CSO and Youth Participation in AI Governance

Monday, 6 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/163

Case Studies on Connectivity: Young Practitioners in the Forefront

Monday, 6 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/195

Catalyzing Youth-Led Digital Public Infrastructure: A Philanthropic Roadmap for Human-Centric AI and Global Equity

Monday, 6 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/254

AI Filmmaking: Navigating Creativity in the Generative Era

Monday, 6 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/274

Young people's mental health in an online world

Monday, 6 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/252

Children First: Empowering the Next Generation with a Holistic Digital Code of Conduct

Monday, 6 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/170

Key Issues discussed:

- The impact of technology on childhood development: The discussion examined how social media, AI and digital technologies are influencing children's behaviour, concentration, cognitive development, emotional wellbeing and relationships.
- The changing ways in which children learn and influence one another: Children increasingly learn how to navigate the digital world from their peers, often without sufficient adult guidance or understanding of the risks and harms they may encounter.
- The digital knowledge gap among parents and caregivers: Many parents remain insufficiently aware of the dangers children face online, highlighting the need for greater awareness, education and support to help families navigate the digital age.
- The evolving nature of online risks and the limitations of current regulation: Existing laws, policies and regulatory frameworks are not always sufficiently robust, up to date or effectively implemented to address rapidly evolving challenges, including AI-enabled harms.
- The absence of children's experiences from policy and governance: The discussion highlighted the importance of ensuring that children and young people's lived experiences and perspectives are meaningfully reflected in the policies and governance frameworks that shape their digital lives.
- The accountability and responsibility of technology companies: Concerns were raised about whether existing mechanisms are sufficient to hold technology companies accountable when the design or operation of their platforms contributes to serious harm, including harm to children's mental and physical wellbeing.
- The commercialisation of children's attention and vulnerability: The discussion questioned business models that can incentivise the maximisation of children's engagement, attention and data for commercial gain, raising fundamental questions about corporate responsibility and the need for a genuine duty of care.
- The relationship between online and offline harms: The dialogue explored the connections between cyberbullying, online abuse and real-world physical and psychological harm, including concerns about AI systems and chatbots potentially

reinforcing harmful behaviour or encouraging children to harm themselves or others.

- The inability of regulation and policy to keep pace with a rapidly evolving threat landscape: The discussion highlighted the growing gap between the speed at which AI, social media and other digital technologies are evolving and the ability of governments, regulators and policymakers to respond. New forms of online harm and increasingly complex threats are emerging faster than policies and regulatory frameworks can be developed, updated and implemented.
- Policy recommendations to address the impact of AI on children's health, safety, and development governments, regulators, and international bodies should adopt a holistic framework that i) Embeds child-centered governance and regulation; ii) Mandates safe and age-appropriate AI design; iii) Enforces privacy, data protection, and transparency'; iv) Prioritizes mental health, cognitive, and emotional development and v) Expands education, digital literacy, and caregiver support

Key Outcomes of the session:

Key Insights and Findings

- Children's wellbeing must be placed at the centre of digital governance. Technology, AI and social media must be designed and governed with the safety, dignity, development and wellbeing of children as a fundamental priority.
- Children's voices must be meaningfully included in policymaking. Children and young people should not simply be the subjects of policies that affect them; their lived experiences, perspectives and insights must inform the development of policies, regulations and governance frameworks.
- Parents and caregivers need greater support to raise children in the digital age. There is an urgent need for accessible information, digital literacy and practical guidance to help parents understand online risks and support their children in navigating increasingly complex digital environments.
- Regulation and policy must become more agile and responsive. Governments and regulators need mechanisms that enable policies, standards and legislation to evolve at the pace of technological change and respond effectively to new and emerging forms of harm.
- Technology companies must be subject to stronger accountability and a genuine duty of care. Companies should be responsible for understanding and mitigating foreseeable risks arising from the design, development and deployment of their technologies, particularly where children are involved.
- Children must not be treated as a source of revenue through the exploitation of their attention, data or vulnerabilities. Business models and platform designs must be

challenged where commercial incentives may conflict with children's safety, healthy development and wellbeing.

- Online and offline harms must be addressed as interconnected. Cyberbullying, online abuse, algorithmic amplification and AI-enabled harms can have serious real-world consequences. Effective prevention and intervention therefore require a more holistic understanding of the relationship between digital experiences and physical and psychological harm.
- A whole-of-society approach is essential. Protecting children in the digital age requires collaboration between children and young people, parents, educators, technology companies, governments, regulators, law enforcement, civil society and international organisations.

Announcements, Launches, or New Initiatives Presented During the Session

- Expansion of the Children First network: The Children First intergenerational network will expand to include more children and young people from across the Nordic countries and Switzerland, strengthening the diversity and reach of youth voices in discussions on AI governance, social media and the future of childhood.
- Closer collaboration with schools: A new initiative will focus on working more closely with schools to raise awareness among children, teachers and educators about emerging digital harms, online safety and the impact of AI and social media. The initial work will begin in Switzerland and England, with the ambition to expand internationally.
- Launch of the Digital Code of Conduct for Young People: The Digital Code of Conduct, co-created by young people from different countries, will be made available online for young people to access, use and share. The initiative provides a youth-informed framework for encouraging safer, more respectful and ethical behaviour in digital spaces.
- Launch of Parenting in the Age of Digital Anxiety: Raising Resilient and Confident Children in an AI-Driven World: The book will provide parents and caregivers with practical insights and guidance to help them understand the rapidly changing digital environment and support children in developing resilience, confidence and healthy relationships with technology.
- Commitment to further research on toxic gaming and its impact on young people: Further research will be undertaken to better understand how toxic gaming environments may influence young people's attitudes, behaviour, emotional development and social interactions, including potential impacts on developing brains.
- Further research into the impact of technology on child development: Additional research will explore how exposure to digital technologies and online content may influence child development, particularly in relation to hostility, anger, aggression,

desensitisation to violence, and the potential normalisation or addictive consumption of abuse and graphic content.
- Establish a new collaboration with Kenya to strengthen regional partnerships and advance shared objectives.
- Expand youth-focused collaboration with Ghana through eWWG initiatives, ensuring continuity of ongoing efforts.
- Prioritize resilience-building for children in the evolving landscape of AI-related risks.
- Safeguard young people as artificial intelligence becomes increasingly sophisticated, by promoting awareness, protection, and proactive engagement.

Agreements, Collaborations, or Commitments Made

- Continued expansion of the Children First network: The network will continue to grow, with a commitment to engage more children and young people from additional countries and regions, including Ghana, Kenya and Türkiye, while strengthening participation from the Nordic countries and Switzerland.
- Strengthened collaboration with the Mothers' Network: The Children First initiative will work closely with the Mothers' Network (professional women in AI, cyber, resilience, risk and law) established in parallel, recognising the important role of parents and caregivers in understanding and responding to the challenges children face in the digital age. Particular efforts will be made to deepen collaboration with the networks around the world.
- Expansion of international partnerships and collaborations: New collaborations will be developed with organisations, schools, educators, researchers, policymakers and youth networks in additional countries, creating a broader international community focused on children, AI governance and digital wellbeing.
- Continued commitment from eWorldwide Group: eWorldwide Group will continue to support the engagement and empowerment of young people as active contributors to the digital future. This includes supporting young people to co-create initiatives, programmes, knowledge resources and practical solutions that strengthen their capabilities and influence in shaping the technologies that affect their lives.
- Formal documentation of recommendations for policymakers: The recommendations emerging from the Children First dialogue will be formally documented and shared with policymakers and other relevant stakeholders, with a particular focus on ensuring that policies and governance frameworks address the impact of AI on child development, wellbeing and mental health.
- Commitment to further research on technology and children's mental health: The participants committed to expanding research and understanding of the impact of technology particularly AI on children's mental health, emotional wellbeing, cognitive development and social behaviour.

- Development of a longer-term research and knowledge agenda: Further collaboration will explore the relationship between AI, social media, online harms and child development, including the effects of exposure to hostility, aggression, violence, abuse and other harmful content, with the aim of generating evidence to inform better policy, education and prevention.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions (outlining practical and actionable recommendations to support WSIS implementation towards 2035):

- Embed Children's Wellbeing in Digital Governance Ensure that all AI and digital policies prioritize the safety, dignity, and healthy development of children, making their wellbeing a central pillar of governance frameworks.
- Institutionalize Youth Participation in Policymaking Establish formal mechanisms for children and young people to contribute their lived experiences and perspectives to WSIS-related policy processes, ensuring inclusivity and relevance.
- Strengthen Global and Regional Collaborations Expand partnerships with countries such as Kenya and Ghana, alongside broader international networks, to build resilience against AI-enabled harms and foster collective action across regions.
- Accelerate Agile Regulation and Accountability Develop adaptive regulatory frameworks that evolve at the pace of technological change, while enforcing stronger accountability and a genuine duty of care from technology companies to protect children.

Who Gets to Shape AI Governance? Youth, the Global South, and the Future of Digital Power

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/283

Tool or Takeover? AI, Music, and Creative Ownership

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/317

Key Issues discussed:

- AI now allows anyone to create a song in a matter of seconds, disrupting traditional pathways and livelihoods for musicians and songwriters
- Bad actors are using AI to disenfranchise human creators of music, including diverting royalties, infringing on ownership rights, and using bot networks to manipulate systems built for human creators
- The session identified three priorities for protecting human creators in music: clarity on what is legal, consequences for bad actors, and human assistance when navigating issues
- Positive use cases of AI for musicians were highlighted, including tools that let people become songwriters without owning an instrument, AI lowering the cost of music production, and non-songwriter musicians using AI to create songs they then perform with real instruments
- The session featured video clips from Lindsey Mastis' mini-documentary "Is AI Ruining Music?", including Rock & Roll Hall of Fame songwriter Jackson Browne, a representative from a California musicians' union, a music influencer, and a touring and session musician using AI tools to gain inspiration for a film score
- A robust audience Q&A followed the keynote, raising questions about royalties, how generative music technology is trained, whether that training constitutes theft or mirrors how musicians have always learned by being influenced by what they hear, and how to use AI as a tool rather than a takeover.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Key insights and findings: there is a clear need for clarity on what is legal, establishing clear rules and guidelines so artists can create, share, and grow with confidence; consequences for bad actors, enforcing the rules, investigating abuse, and holding bad actors accountable; and artist protections, appeals, and human review, protecting artists from unfair harm through easy appeals and real human review that resolves issues

- The robust discussion following the keynote focused on how the technology is impacting the music industry and individual musicians, including questions about royalties, how generative music technology is trained, whether that training constitutes theft or is comparable to how musicians have always learned by being influenced by what they hear, and how to use AI as a tool rather than a takeover

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Prioritize legal clarity: establish clear, enforceable rules on what is and isn't permitted so independent artists can create, share, and grow with confidence
- Continue to highlight positive use cases of AI for Good in music on international stages such as WSIS and AI for Good, to balance the narrative around risk with real examples of empowerment
- Require that AI companies provide dedicated assistance channels with real human intervention. This must include a way to reach a helpful human, not just an automated appeals process. And this must especially be available for cases where AI systems misidentify independent musicians' music or accounts as non-human

UNIGE Trialogue Remodeling UN
Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 09:00 – 14:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/473

Citizen Digital Sovereignty in Action: From a Civic Declaration to a Global Alliance

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/201

Key Issues discussed: (5–8 bullet points summarizing the main discussion points)

- Being connected is not enough. Access to devices and the internet is necessary but insufficient if citizens cannot understand how technology works, make decisions about it, and take an active part in the governance and design of the digital world. This is the starting point for the concept of Citizen Digital Sovereignty (CDS).
- A 3-step path: technological appropriation, digital empowerment and citizen digital sovereignty, understood not as a slogan but as a shared action agenda that lets people access, understand, use, shape and participate in decisions about technology.
- A risk to rights, diversity and identity: the growing concentration of technological power in very few hands and the privatisation of the digital ecosystem.
- The Collective Declaration for CDS and its 10 guiding principles, co-created through a six-month participatory process that gathered the voices of more than 500 people of different ages, profiles and regions from around the world. https://empodera.org/en/Citizen-Digital-Sovereignty-Fundacion-Cibervoluntarios.pdf
- The Global Alliance for Citizen Digital Sovereignty as an open space (not a closed structure and not owned by any single organisation) built on a shared framework and a common vision, and organised around five action areas: citizens' rights and participation; data, privacy and transparency; artificial intelligence and the digital future; education and technological empowerment; and inclusion, opportunities and open technology.
- Open debate among participants, around 3 guiding questions: why CDS matters today, what barriers prevent citizens from exercising it, and what concrete actions could strengthen it locally.
- How to reach citizens not affiliated with any organisation (including youth and marginalised communities) and how to move the principles from declaration to real implementation at scale.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Insight: broad agreement that digital inclusion must evolve from access and skills towards active citizenship in digital governance; Citizen Digital Sovereignty reframes people as protagonists, not passive users, of the digital ecosystem.
- Insight: the most effective route to reach unaffiliated citizens is to work through organisations already rooted in communities (municipalities, local associations, schools, universities), replicating the model across countries. Fundación Cibervoluntarios shared its own scale as evidence: 25 years of work, more than 280,000 people reached in 2025 through free digital-skills activities, 4,500 technology volunteers as the heart of the model, 7,000+ partner organisations, and some 500 activities per week (around 30% in rural areas).
- Initiative presented: the Collective Declaration for Citizen Digital Sovereignty and its 10 principles, together with the opening of the Global Alliance for Citizen Digital Sovereignty, inviting all stakeholders to join.
- Announcements: two forthcoming enablers were presented (an open toolkit so organisations worldwide can claim and apply the principles locally, and a digital community platform for Alliance members to share ideas, resources and action points).
- Commitments and collaborations: interest from international civil-society organisations (including Internet Society and Global South digital-rights networks) to engage with the Alliance, with particular attention to citizens' rights and freedom of expression; and a shared commitment to build a broader civil-society table within the WSIS process, with a year-round work route so more organisations can use the process outcomes.
- Next in-person milestone: EmpoderaLIVE, 6-7 October 2026, Málaga, open to all interested organisations.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Work towards Citizen Digital Sovereignty as a shared global framework within the WSIS/UN ecosystem, advancing its recognition as a reference agenda (in the spirit of the SDGs), to guide a people-centred, rights-based digital future through 2035.
- Develop and disseminate the open toolkit that translates the 10 principles into local action across sectors and regions.
- Launch the digital community platform to connect Alliance members and scale cross-sector, cross-border collaboration.
- Reach unaffiliated and under-represented citizens (youth, rural and marginalised communities) by partnering with locally-rooted organisations, starting the international rollout in Latin America.

- Join and co-build the Alliance: civil society, public institutions, academia, the technical community, businesses and international organisations are invited to join at https://empodera.org/en/defiende and turn principles into proposals, projects and real impact.
- Key resources:
    - Join the Citizen Digital Sovereignty Alliance https://empodera.org/en/defiende
    - Yolanda Rueda (video). United Nations (WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting, New York, December 2025): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS3HTR9nb0U
    - The making of the Citizen Digital Sovereignty Declaration, participatory process (video): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZSzncSyar4

INTERACTIVE SESSIONS

Public Trust and AI Procurement

Monday, 6 July 2026, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/139

Data & Indicator Lab: Multistakeholder Dialogue on WSIS Action Lines, Indicators, and Accountability

Monday, 6 July 2026, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/265

Scientists as Bridge-Builders: Contributing Research to Global Digital Public Goods

Monday, 6 July 2026, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/530

Key Issues discussed:

- Redefined DPGs: The session expands Digital Public Goods beyond infrastructure to include data, talent and localized knowledge, better serving developing economies.
- Inclusive AI standard-setting: It calls for equal participation of Global South researchers to eliminate "innovation fragmentation" in global AI governance.
- IP and knowledge balance: Participants addressed conflicts between patent protection and public knowledge sharing, proposing open-source principles for global governance.
- Culturally inclusive AI ethics: The innovative "Global South Ethics" was raised to build diverse, multi-civilizational AI ethical frameworks.
- Youth capacity building: Sustainable talent systems via training, mentorship and cross-border collaboration are highlighted for young researchers.
- Proactive regulation: Portuguese regulatory pre-positioning and sandbox models are explored to govern emerging AI technologies in advance.
- Digital empowerment: Improving public privacy literacy through scenario-based education benefits digital development in developing regions.
- Citizen participatory research: A Citizen Science Credit System is proposed to quantify and reward public scientific contributions.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- key insights and findings
  Five-point consensus – multilateralism, youth inclusion, DPG redefinition, localized transfer, AI as ethics. Gurry urged open-source; Seck stressed local solutions; Stückelberger proposed Global South Ethics; Maximiano shared pre-positioning; Grey advocated citizen science credit.
- announcements, launches, or new initiatives presented during the session
  Released Global Youth Consensus on AI Governance (five principles). WAYS×GYDA launched four initiatives: scholars network, DPG conversion, youth in standard-setting, South-South capacity. Proposed Citizen Science Credit System.
- agreements, collaborations, or commitments made

Unanimous support for Consensus, team expansion; preliminary bilateral frameworks, exchange programmes; plan for AI societal impact report.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Balance open knowledge sharing and IP protection by promoting open-source practices and preventing over-protection of intellectual property.
- Build adaptive, inclusive governance with differentiated transitional rules and proactive sandbox regulation to protect localized innovation.
- Strengthen developing-country youth capacity via training, fellowships and global case libraries for cross-border experience replication.
- Establish permanent youth consultation mechanisms under ITU/WIPO to institutionalize youth participation in global tech standard-setting and bilateral cooperation.
- Develop human-AI control models, respect cross-cultural ethical differences, and deliver public AI literacy and digital rights education.

AI for Good at Scale: The Community-Led Impact Flywheel

Monday, 6 July 2026, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/571

Key Issues Discussed:

- The persistent challenge of scaling proven social impact interventions without losing the local context that makes them effective.
- Why many AI for social good initiatives remain limited to pilots and struggle to achieve sustainable systems-level impact.
- The importance of placing frontline organisations and community expertise at the centre of AI design and deployment.
- How startup product development principles – including user-centred design, rapid experimentation, and continuous iteration– can strengthen social impact implementation.
- The role of AI in expanding human capacity by reducing administrative burdens rather than replacing frontline workers.
- Practical lessons from deploying AI in low-resource education settings across Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.
- The need for collaborative frameworks that enable governments, nonprofits, funders, and technology partners to co-create responsible AI solutions.

Key Outcomes of the Session Key insights and findings:

- Introduced the Community-Led Impact Flywheel as a practical framework for scaling AI-enabled social impact through continuous learning and community feedback.
- Demonstrated how community-led product development can produce AI tools that are more relevant, trusted, and sustainable.
- Showcased the Interlai Teaching Assistant as a practical example of AI expanding teacher capacity while strengthening education systems. Announcements, launches, or new initiatives
- Shared Interlai Foundation's Community-Led Impact Flywheel framework with the broader WSIS and AI for Good community.
- Highlighted ongoing pilots of the Interlai Teaching Assistant with education partners in Kenya, Rwanda, and South Africa. Agreements, collaborations, or commitments
- Invited participants to contribute feedback and practical insights to further develop the Community-Led Impact Flywheel.

- Strengthened connections between practitioners interested in applying community-led approaches to AI implementation across different sectors.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Prioritise community-led design by engaging frontline organisations as long term co-design partners throughout the AI development lifecycle.
- Shift investment from short-term pilots towards iterative systems that continuously learn, improve, and scale proven interventions.
- Measure AI success by its ability to expand human capacity, strengthen institutions, and improve outcomes for communities.
- Foster cross-sector collaboration between governments, civil society, academia, philanthropy, and technology partners to accelerate responsible AI adoption.
- Continue developing and validating practical frameworks, such as the Community-Led Impact Flywheel, that enable scalable, locally led implementation of AI aligned with the WSIS vision for inclusive digital transformation.

Strengthening health data governance legislative frameworks: The foundation of trusted digital health and AI

Monday, 6 July 2026, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/127

Key Issues discussed:

- AI, digital technology, and the data driving them hold extraordinary promise for health - planning, innovation, patient care, outbreak prediction, stronger health systems - but that promise can only be realised equitably, responsibly, and with people's trust if governance keeps pace.
- There are existing foundations to build on, including Transform Health's Health Data Governance Principles (endorsed by 175+ organisations and governments), the legislative blueprint (Model Law), the OECD's recommendation on health data governance (backed by 38 member states), WHO AI guidelines, and ongoing work by the Health Data Collaborative.
- A convergence moment for global alignment: there are overlapping global processes, including political support at the 2026 World Health Assembly for a global health data governance and AI resolution, the Global Digital Compact, the WSIS Action Lines, Africa CDC's continental health data governance framework. These efforts must not be separate conversations but should converge towards a common global standard.
- Governance is lagging behind AI and digital health innovation, and only legislation - not policy or guidelines alone - establishes rights and responsibilities, provides the legal certainty, enforceability, and accountability needed to sustain public trust as digital transformation and AI advance.
- Fragmentation and duplication plague national, regional, and global governance processes, with siloed focal points, parallel frameworks, and limited coordination even within the same government (Lawyers Hub).
- There is fragmentation and duplication across governance processes, with siloed focal points attending different forums, resulting in parallel frameworks and initiatives, and limited coordination.
- Africa faces an implementation gap rather than a policy gap: national AI strategies exist, but many lack the budget, technical skills and institutional capacity to execute them, and frameworks are often borrowed from other regions without local adaptation (Africa AI Governance Index findings).

- Key stakeholders remain underrepresented in governance discussions, including end users/under-served populations, parliamentarians, the judiciary, the private sector, and African voices specifically in global discussions, the latter constrained further by visa cost and validity barriers to attending fora like this one.
- Regional frameworks offer building blocks for global alignment. The Africa CDC's continental health data governance framework (validation expected later in 2026, adoption in early 2027) and the EU's European Health Data Space are regional efforts that should directly inform global standard-setting.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Agreement around key priorities and foundations: Agreement that legislative - not just policy-level - action is the necessary foundation for trust, accountability, and enforceability. Broad agreement that existing tools and frameworks (e.g. Transform Health's Health Data Governance Principles and legislative blueprint/Model Law; OECD recommendation; WHO AI guidelines) provide a foundation to build for a global framework and World Health Assembly resolution.
- Increased political awareness and commitment: Consensus that the political momentum generated at the 2026 World Health Assembly for a global health data and AI governance resolution should be sustained and built upon ahead of WHA 2027, and that regional frameworks (Africa CDC, EU) should feed directly into this global alignment.
- Convergence on strengthening alignment: Need for alignment between different global processes, to ensure they contribute towards a common goal - global alignment through a legislative frameworks/standard, endorsed through the World Health Assembly in 2027.
- Momentum toward a WHA 2027 resolution: Oman's delegation set out four priority pillars for the path forward: building consensus among member states and stakeholders; strengthening national capacities and laws with practical WHO-backed implementation guidance; continuing broad consultation (governments, international organisations, academia, civil society, private sector, industry, and end users); and supporting countries at different levels of digital maturity while respecting national sovereignty.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Strengthen national legislative frameworks for health data and AI, paired with practical implementation guidance and dedicated capacity-building. (WSIS Action Line C6 – Enabling Environment)
- Build global alignment around a legislative standard for health data and AI governance, including building on the Africa Continental Framework and the European Health Data Space as inputs into a global standard. (Action Line C11 – International and Regional Cooperation)
- Broaden and coordinate meaningful stakeholder engagement, including parliamentarians, the judiciary, the private sector, and end users/under-served populations in national, regional and global governance processes. (Action Line C10 – Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society)
- Sustain political momentum from WHA 2026 toward a global health data governance framework/resolution for WHA 2027, which also supports sector-specific implementation of the Global Digital Compact. (Action Line C11 – International and Regional Cooperation).

Redefining Digital Citizenship: Safeguarding and Empowering Citizens in the AI Age

Monday, 6 July 2026, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/126

Key Issues discussed:

- Digital citizenship should evolve beyond digital access to encompass the safe, ethical, inclusive, and responsible use of AI and digital technologies.
- Capacity building should target citizens across all age groups - including children, youth, educators, public servants, journalists, and vulnerable groups - to strengthen AI literacy, critical thinking, and responsible digital participation.
- Information integrity requires empowering citizens to critically assess online content while addressing misinformation through education, innovation, and AI-enabled solutions.
- Digital Public Infrastructure should be designed with inclusion, privacy, accountability, interoperability, and user trust embedded from the outset through multi-stakeholder collaboration.
- Trusted digital citizenship depends on resilient internet infrastructure, cybersecurity, adaptive regulatory frameworks, and transparent governance.
- Young people should be recognised as active contributors to digital transformation and engaged in policymaking, awareness, and community digital adoption.
- AI governance should move beyond high-level principles toward practical implementation through readiness assessments, audit mechanisms, regulatory sandboxes, and institutional capacity building.
- Collaboration between development organizations and the technical community is essential to strengthen institutional and technical capacity for trusted digital transformation. As an example, RIPE NCC highlighted its partnership with UNDP and Jordan's Telecommunications Regulatory Commission on regional Internet infrastructure and IPv6 capacity building, with Egypt's National Telecom Regulatory Authority set to host the next phase for Arab and African countries.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Key insights and findings

    - Speakers reached broad consensus that digital citizenship in the AI era requires combining digital skills with trustworthy infrastructure, inclusive governance, ethical AI, and institutional readiness.
    - Capacity building remains a cross-cutting priority for governments, regulators, educators, and citizens to safely adopt AI and digital technologies.
    - Practical implementation mechanisms - including AI readiness assessments, AI audit laboratories, and regulatory sandboxes - are increasingly important to operationalize responsible AI governance.
- Announcements, launches, or new initiatives presented during the session
    - Co-Develop announced the forthcoming launch of a practical guide on multi stakeholder collaboration for governments implementing Digital Public Infrastructure.
    - Egypt shared progress on establishing an AI Audit Lab, supported by UNDP, GSMA, GIZ, and Datasphere Initiative, as an initial step toward a future AI sandbox for responsible AI testing and implementation.
- Agreements, collaborations, or commitments made
    - Speakers consistently highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration among governments, international organizations, academia, civil society, and the private sector for trusted digital transformation.
    - Participants emphasized continued collaboration on AI governance, institutional readiness, digital public infrastructure, and responsible AI implementation through practical partnerships and shared learning.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Strengthen digital citizenship through inclusive AI literacy, digital skills, and online safety programmes for all segments of society
- Embed trust, privacy, inclusion, and accountability into the design and governance of digital public infrastructure and AI systems.
- Promote practical implementation of responsible AI through institutional capacity building, readiness assessments, and collaborative testing environments.

- Foster multi-stakeholder collaboration among governments, international organizations, academia, civil society, youth, and the private sector to advance trusted and human-centred digital transformation towards WSIS 2035.

Human-Centred AI and Cognitive Readiness: Preparing Learners and Entrepreneurs for the Next Digital Economy

Monday, 6 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/151

Accessible digital educational environments: transferring research knowledge

Monday, 6 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/155

Key issues discussed:

- Accessibility as a core pillar, not an add-on: Shift from viewing accessibility as an afterthought or a compliance measure to a fundamental element of high-quality, equitable education.
- Complex digital learning communication spaces: The challenges and opportunities of modern educational settings transformed by migration, internationalization, multilingualism, and digital learning.
- Audio description for inclusion and minoritized languages: Utilizing audio description (AD) beyond traditional accessibility services – specifically as a pedagogical tool for active language learning and promoting minoritized languages.
- Eliminating cognitive and format barriers: Designing learning materials that focus on structural formatting and presentation to remove unnecessary barriers, allowing diverse learners to focus on learning objectives rather than format struggles.
- Multimodal and autonomous sign language resources: Enhancing inclusive classrooms and student autonomy through digital, multimodal self-learning environments for Catalan Sign Language (LSC).
- Research knowledge transfer to society: Transforming academic research into practical, innovative, and accessible digital tools to address systemic exclusion in the digital society.

Key outcomes of the session:

Key insights and findings

- Accessibility inherently benefits the entire educational community, not just specific target demographics, by creating cleaner, more flexible, and multi-channel paths to information.
- Simplification should move beyond adapting the level of text difficulty to re-evaluating layout, presentation, and delivery mediums.

Announcements, launches, or new initiatives presented during the session

- Presentation of the AccessCat Network ecosystem (accesscat.net), showcasing Catalonia's centralized framework for driving knowledge transfer in communication and digital accessibility.
- Showcasing of multimodal online resources and self-learning platforms developed by member research groups (such as the LSC Lab tools; NeurekaLab, a spin-off by the Digital Care group, or the digital and media accessibility related project outputs by TransMedia Catalonia).

Agreements, collaborations, or commitments made

- Shared commitment by the network's specialized researchers to continue bridging the gap between scientific innovation and educational institutions to foster social justice.

Key recommendations and forward-looking actions:

- Embed accessible, universal design early: Urge educational developers and tech creators to systematically integrate universal design principles into digital content creation pipelines from inception, aligning with WSIS implementation goals for inclusive education.
- Cocreate with end users to ensure usability and impact: Actively involve end users, especially local organisations, in the design, development, and testing phases of digital educational tools. This ensures that technologies are genuinely co-created, ground-tested, and tailored to the lived experiences and specific needs of the communities they serve.
- Promote multimodal and linguistic diversity: Leverage access services (e.g., Audio Description, Sign Language tools) to protect local or minoritized languages, ensuring digital acceleration does not trigger further cultural or linguistic exclusion by 2035.
- Strengthen knowledge transfer ecosystems: Establish institutional frameworks modelled on networks like AccessCat to foster direct, fluid collaboration between academic accessibility researchers, policymakers, and classroom educators.

Beyond the Access Gap: Gendered Realities of Digital Inclusion in Africa with Evidence from Four Countries

Monday, 6 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/162

Key Issues discussed:

- Global digital inclusion metrics still equate device or internet access with meaningful participation, obscuring the deeper barriers women face.
- An affordability paradox forces many women to ration data or rely on shared/borrowed devices, undermining consistent connectivity.
- Domestic power dynamics often give male household members control over phone and internet access, limiting women's autonomous use.
- Cultural norms frame women's online visibility as transgressive, discouraging active digital participation.
- Technology-facilitated gender-based violence functions as a structural constraint on women's digital engagement, not merely an individual risk.
- Informal peer networks, rather than formal government or NGO programmes, are the main channel through which women build digital skills.
- Disability compounds gendered digital exclusion, adding further barriers for women with disabilities.
- National context shapes the gender digital divide differently across Ethiopia (post-conflict landscape), Ghana (North-South infrastructure divide), Nigeria (digital spaces as sites of gendered power), and Uganda (state-mandated digital systems).

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Panelists agreed that access-based metrics are insufficient and must be complemented by qualitative, gender-disaggregated evidence such as the After Access Gender Study.
- Discussion converged on technology-facilitated gender-based violence and informal peer-learning networks as two under-addressed factors that policymakers must factor into digital inclusion strategies.
- Country comparisons showed that a single, uniform approach cannot close the gender digital divide across diverse national contexts.
- Each panelist closed with a distinct policy ask, reflecting shared support for structural, rights-based interventions over infrastructure-only solutions.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Embed qualitative, gender-disaggregated research into national and regional digital inclusion strategies to move measurement beyond simple access indicators.
- Treat technology-facilitated gender-based violence as a structural governance issue, with accountability mechanisms for both governments and platforms.
- Formally recognise and support informal peer networks as legitimate digital-skills pathways for women, alongside formal digital literacy programmes.
- Localise digital-safety tools and platform interfaces into local languages to make protective features accessible to all women.
- Pair state-mandated digitalisation initiatives with parallel investment in infrastructure and literacy so adoption does not outpace communities' readiness.

Democratizing Innovation: Citizen Data, Indigenous Knowledge & Participatory STEM

Monday, 6 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/321

Key Issues discussed:

- People-centred digital transformation requires women, girls and underserved communities to move beyond being users of technology to becoming active contributors to science, innovation and citizen-generated data ecosystems.
- Participatory, community-based STEM education was identified as a practical approach for enabling learners to investigate local challenges, generate evidence, develop innovative solutions and contribute new knowledge rooted in community experience.
- Citizen-generated and indigenous data were recognised as strategic assets for sustainable development and artificial intelligence, providing valuable local insights that strengthen evidence-based policymaking and innovation.
- Effective data governance must balance innovation with the protection of individual and community rights through frameworks founded on privacy, transparency, fairness, accountability, security and responsible stewardship of data.
- Indigenous knowledge and citizen-generated data require governance approaches that recognise community participation, collective rights and appropriate mechanisms for attribution, protection and responsible utilisation.
- Trusted data-sharing ecosystems supported by clear legal frameworks, institutional accountability, privacy-enhancing technologies, cybersecurity and independent regulatory oversight are essential for responsible innovation and public confidence.
- Communities that generate valuable datasets should benefit from their responsible use through equitable benefit-sharing, improved public services, local innovation and inclusive digital development.
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration among governments, academia, civil society, industry and local communities is essential to build inclusive innovation ecosystems and trustworthy AI that reflects diverse knowledge systems.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- The session demonstrated that participatory STEM education provides a practical pathway for empowering women and girls to become innovators, citizen scientists and contributors to citizen-generated data ecosystems.
- Participants reaffirmed that citizen-generated and indigenous data should be recognised as valuable public assets and governed through rights-based frameworks that promote trust, accountability and responsible innovation.
- The discussion highlighted the need to strengthen the connection between community-generated knowledge, responsible data governance and AI development to ensure that digital transformation remains inclusive and people-centred.
- There was broad recognition that empowering educators, communities and institutions to collaborate in generating and responsibly governing data will strengthen sustainable development outcomes and digital inclusion.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Integrate participatory, community-based STEM education into national education systems to strengthen citizen science, innovation and local problem-solving.
- Develop adaptive, rights-based data governance frameworks that protect citizen-generated and indigenous data while enabling responsible data sharing, trusted AI and equitable benefit-sharing.
- Invest in teacher capacity-building, digital infrastructure and community innovation programmes that expand opportunities for women, girls and underserved communities to participate in science, innovation and digital development.
- Strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships to promote trusted data ecosystems, responsible AI governance and inclusive digital transformation that values community knowledge and advances the WSIS vision beyond 2035.

Control Systems for Excellence: Data & Processing Systems (specific reference to bionic eyes)

Monday, 6 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/156

Key Issues discussed:

Recommended frameworks:

- COSO family of practice guidelines, including medical applications specifications, ISO, OECD, Lean Management, Project Management tools, Sigma 6, Enterprise Risk Management ERP guidelines, IEEE, ITU, IGF best practices, privacy and health regulations by jurisdiction, with global practice guidelines for an international ecosystem. Patient and human rights policies. Policies must be updated regularly to keep up with advancement of technology, governance, device mechanics, interoperability. Integrate several monitoring frameworks, with critical thinking, for best results. Please review the recording for an excellent deep dive into the subject matter.
- There is an ethical duty that once built, a system or process must ensure continued quality of outputs and service, as expected, until it is updated or bettered. It is essential to update, so as to keep up with new regulations, issues of interoperability, cultural change and so forth.
- Developers are expected to build with best design intentions. However, budget and time constraints mean that post design modifications may be implemented during build, for a quick win to production operations and meet modified budgets. This causes intrinsic risk, that can lead to even fatalities, due to poor judgements or facts, based on poor data quality and overall deficient production outcomes. To self-guard on these risks, a timely, systematic, meaningful monitoring of the system and its outcomes is a must. Betterment for deficiencies must be applied for ongoing best production outcomes, as soon as they are identified, to enable a robust data and processing system.

Session outcome themes and insights:

- Assurance of relevant (e.g. local data), factual, fraud free, manipulation free, meaningful, evidence based, authentic, verifiable, data quality for equity, supported by AI, for overcoming the health digital divide and building trust. Systems must be risk managed with realistic expectations and betterment,

with holistic responsible human oversight and compassionate human designed judgement.

- Security and hence encryption and multifactor authentication is critical for the health ecosystem, as there is patient specific data to be managed. 24/7 monitoring of access, incidents with logs and automated AI alerts are a must. Updates without testing must not be applied.
- Tracking of patient data could be taken advantage of for broader or patient specific use, with the advancement of technologies with sensors and real time data. Privacy must be considered for, effective outcomes.
- Management by life cycle, inter domain, dynamic vs rule-based governance and meaningful data, AI (agents) and system architecture design with multistakeholder participation is best practice. Responsibility for trusted systems must be shared, even with the patient who may be wearing a self-managed device for preventative care. Patients must be included in the design and full application life cycle. Hence, end users are critical for multistakeholder engagement.
- Stable electrical power must be ensured as safety of the systems are critical. Backups must be present for data and perhaps parallel systems implemented for switch over in times of disruption, for critical systems. Outages must be managed with care, and a learning environment enables to learn from failure to develop best practice.
- With the emergence of complex unstructured data, such as sourced from the bionic eye and other neurological data sources, there is potential for data manipulation from many access points by disruptive actors, agents and forums. Prevention of disruptions is key.
- Continuous monitoring 24/7 is required for health systems. Wearables or federated systems pose additional issues of risk. Data, privacy, interoperability, system integration, access, incident management and exceptions identification are all required to work together holistically, for a well-functioning ecosystem of applications. Strong regulation is needed for manufacturers and operators of devices and systems and sharing of data must be with care for privacy, and intellectual property and evaluated for risks.

Recommendations:

- Need for ongoing multistakeholder dialogue for the development of standards for working with neurological data sets, which are currently at a formative stage.
- Various forms of neurological, sensory, auditory, ambient and other classes of data can be derived, AI provoked, attacked and manipulated for

predetermined outcomes. Out of line human agency could be checked with AI agents. Citizens must be protected from harms. Strong ethics, critical thinking and compassionate judgement towards the patient must be applied.

- Opportunity to develop new frameworks for safeguarding individual and collective data sets exist. Continuous and meaningful monitoring with no harms self-management systems is a must. Re-framing privacy laws as needed for collaboration. Patient and human rights centered design and ethical judgement is important. Care of wheels within wheels.
- Need for more discussion on the complex interoperable, inter jurisdiction, inter sector, inter device, unstructured data frameworks for use in artificial, non-human and clinical use. Surveillance (hospital, clinic, pharmacy) must be discussed openly. Commercial operations bionic eye data management for risk management, regulation and compliance is hence, required (workplace access and surveillance for patient safety).
- AI autonomous agents must be observed, controlled and regulated with a shared responsibility by all parties to the agent's design, build and operations. Patients must be protected from harms. A no error system must be applied. Errors could lead to death or permanent disability of a patient.
- Human agency is central to citizen centered design. Systems that support human life must not be cutoff based on a budget or technical constraint, but with patient family consent. Cost must not be a factor to achieving best practice results. Substandard technology must not be knowingly used for patient care.
- The patient must be in control of their own health destiny. This is what is ethical. The patient must make the choices wherever possible, and the clinician must seek patient input in a reasonable, timely, responsible and Inclusive manner, even though the patient may be tracked every step of the way and managed by best clinical technical systems practice!
- Continuous learning and betterment within the ecosystem of integrated applications is key. With federated AI systems, new standards may have to be developed after consultation at multistakeholder best practice forums that could be facilitated by WSIS, ITU, IGF, Health Without Boarders, IEEE and other UN agencies and commercial forums. A bottom-up consultation provides for outcomes with integrity and inclusion and ensures a diversity of options.
- Transparency with responsible privacy, ethics, timeliness of corrective actions, and accountability are required for effective internal and shared control systems compliance, for any health or other purpose application.

The Global Shield: Collaborative Cyber Resilience for global e-Commerce and logistics

Monday, 6 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/324

Key Issues discussed:

- The Interconnected Vulnerability of Global E-Commerce: The session highlighted how modern e-commerce depends entirely on an invisible, deeply digital, and borderless engine of logistics and postal networks. Because these systems are interconnected, a cyber vulnerability in one single national operator or logistics node presents a systemic risk to the entire global supply chain.
- Industrialized Cybercrime and Malicious AI: Panelists discussed how modern cyberattacks are no longer random; they are orchestrated by highly structured criminal networks operating an industrial-scale corporate supply chain. Furthermore, malicious AI acts as a massive threat multiplier, enabling even low-skilled attackers to rapidly discover infrastructure weaknesses and launch complex, automated campaigns.
- Filtering Threat Intelligence for Niche Vulnerabilities: The discussion focused on how operators can manage the overwhelming volume of generic threat data. Because the postal sector uses unique vertical technologies – such as automated mail and parcel sorting systems– a coordinated response allows the sector to filter out the noise and deliver highly curated, relevant threat intelligence specific to logistics infrastructure.
- Diagnosis of Global Cyber Maturity: Findings from the comprehensive UPU Cybersecurity Survey (compiled from 152 member-operator responses) were analyzed. While basic measures like web encryption show strong global adoption, critical operational areas – such as formal incident-response and crisis-management plans – remain severely underdeveloped across multiple regions.
- The "Capacity Gap" vs. Awareness: Data demonstrated that global postal operators are overwhelmingly aware of cybersecurity risks and existing secure platforms. However, the true binding constraint facing vulnerable operators is a significant lack of operational capacity, dedicated funding, and technical training, especially as cyber workloads heavily outpace current budget growths.

- Translating High-Level Policy into Inclusive Resilience: The panel examined how global policy frameworks, such as the Universal Postal Union's Dubai Congress mandates, provide the necessary legal and strategic foundation to build secure digital environments. These frameworks ensure that developing countries are not left digitally vulnerable, promoting equitable global economic inclusion.
- Operationalizing Threat Intelligence via POST-ISAC: Panelists discussed the practical deployment of platforms like the UPU's POST-ISAC. It was emphasized that moving from abstract threat awareness to real-time, cross-border intelligence sharing requires building a strong culture of trust and shared data protocols among sovereign postal operators.
- Securing Digital Space via .POST Infrastructure: The role of the .POST top-level domain and SECURE.POST platforms was highlighted as a concrete mechanism to turn international policies into a functional, highly secure digital ecosystem, shielding final mile delivery and transactions from exploitation. • Strategic UPU Action Points for the Future: The discussion concluded with five concrete strategic pathways for international organizational support: bridging the capacity gap through direct funding relief, productizing standardized cyber-hygiene training, brokering cross-border incident-response and recovery layers (e.g., CERT networks), prioritizing aid by residual risk outliers rather than just standard development tiers, and validating self-reported maturity scores with practical readiness checks.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Key insights and findings:
    - The Capability Paradox: Data from 152 member-operators confirmed that while basic awareness and web-encryption adoption are exceptionally high globally (66%), practical operational defense is severely lacking – with only 41% of operators possessing formal incident-response plans and only 35% affiliated with an active national response team.
    - The Shift to "Collective Defense": The session established a unified consensus that modern, interconnected e-commerce logistics cannot be protected using siloed national security models; a cyber vulnerability in a single node threatens the entire global supply chain, necessitating a shift toward shared, borderless ecosystem defense.
    - Niche Operational Security Capabilities: A key insight from the front lines showed that the postal sector's widespread physical and digital footprint gives it a unique tactical advantage. National operators have

deep, vertical expertise in specialized automated transit technologies, making them uniquely capable of spotting, identifying, and escalating emerging supply-chain threat scenarios with much higher precision than general cybersecurity frameworks.

    - The True Constraint is Capacity: The primary barrier to global postal cyber resilience is not a lack of risk awareness, but a severe capacity deficit. 69% of operators face a rapidly growing cyber workload, yet only 49% see corresponding budget growth, creating a "capacity scissors" gap that disproportionately leaves developing nations vulnerable.

- Announcements, launches, or new initiatives presented during the session 2
    - The UPU Cybersecurity Position Paper Framework: The session served as the formal presentation platform for the UPU's forthcoming Cybersecurity Position Paper, establishing the 5 strategic pillars for future global postal defense (Direct Cyber-Hygiene Funding, Productized Training Curriculums, Shared SME Pools, Cross-Border Response/Recovery Layers, and Risk-Outlier Triaging).
    - Operationalizing POST-ISAC Capabilities: A roadmap was highlighted for expanding the UPU's POST-ISAC platform from an information-sharing repository into a live, real-time threat-intelligence-sharing network capable of pushing active alerts directly to national operators' front lines.
- Agreements, collaborations, or commitments made
    - Commitment to WSIS Action Line C7 (E-Business):
    - The UPU re-affirmed its institutional mandate as a co-facilitator of Action Line C7, committing to actively bridge the technical divide between high-maturity operators and vulnerable, developing-market digital economies.
    - Leveraging Economies of Scale through POST-ISAC: Participants committed to utilizing the POST-ISAC platform to break the traditional, "island-based" model of isolated national defense. By collaborating globally, operators agree to leverage the network's massive scale to drastically reduce the cost of cybersecurity threat-hunting and technical training, ensuring that even under funded, smaller operators can access high-quality protective barriers.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- International organizations and stakeholders should redirect technical assistance resources to target the operational "capacity scissors" gap. Future

initiatives must prioritize direct financial support and technical budget relief for cyber-hygiene execution rather than redundant, high-level risk awareness campaigns.

- To address the severe global deficit in technical staff skills, a standardized, universally accessible cyber-hygiene training curriculum must be institutionalized. This should be backed by a shared pool of international Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to provide targeted operational training to vulnerable operators on demand.
- Global frameworks must expand their focus beyond mere attack prevention to embrace active resilience. Stakeholders should collaborate to broker mutual-assistance, CERT style regional networks and publish shared, standardized incident-response and disaster-recovery playbooks to handle active ransomware and systemic supply chain threats.
- Digital development assistance should move away from rigid, purely geographic or standard macroeconomic development tiers. Strategic aid and intervention resources must be dynamically prioritized and triaged toward "high residual risk outliers" — specifically identifying mid-development nations that report near-zero technical cyber maturity.
- To ensure true structural resilience heading toward WSIS 2035, the international community must treat self-reported security scores as a foundational baseline rather than a final verdict. Frameworks must integrate mandatory, hands-on digital assessments and incident-readiness pressure tests to validate the real-world defense capabilities of highly ranked networks.

The bridges the gap between high-level digital policy and the practical, socio-ecological realities of small-scale food producers in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT)

Monday, 6 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/328

From Data to Decisions: accelerating meaningful connectivity through the Connectivity Planning Platform (CPP)

Monday, 6 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/326

Closing the Connectivity Gap in the Age of AI and E-Governance

Monday, 6 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/193

Key Issues discussed:

- The session provided a comparative analysis of the status of connectivity in the era of AI, in the Global South.
- The session identified gaps in policy and practice that hinder the implementation of inclusion-promoting practices. They stated that many countries have adopted policies that seek to promote universal, affordable access to the internet, yet they have not yet fully implemented these policies due to lack of provisions to ensure implementation, leaving the frameworks shelved.
- The session explored the interdependence between internet access and AI advancements, demonstrating that some countries continue to lag behind as they struggle to ensure basic connectivity, meaning that as other countries advance, the digital divide will widen and communities in underserved and rural areas will remain unconnected and will not enjoy AI's benefits if this gap is not bridged.
- The session discussed increased internet shutdowns, power outages and high data and device costs as impediments to internet access, leaving at least 2.6 billion globally unconnected and over half of Africa's population unconnected. The discussion stated that this is despite that the United Nations General Assembly, through Resolution A/RES/80/173 adopted the Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, which in paragraph 27 reinforces committment to achieving entry-level broadband subscription costs that are accessible and affordable, through collaboration with stakeholders and adoption of mechanisms including universal service funds and community networks.
- Panelists emphasised the need to ensure access to the internet is available through public access facilities such as schools, post offices, libraries and hospitals, in making access available, including to those in vulnerable situations.
- The session highlighted the need for proactive disclosure of information on Universal Service Funds, including public information on progress and

budgets and for efforts to expand connectivity, to ensure transparency and accountability.

- The session called on private-sector actors, including telecommunications firms, to fulfill their mandates and contribute to the USF.
- The session discussed the challenges arising from heavy taxation on digital technologies, which often lead to high prices for internet-compatible devices, rendering them inaccessible to vulnerable populations.
- The session provided examples of countries that are doing well in proactively disclosing information about their implementation of the USF and connectivity projects, examples of countries that have now adopted policies to improve connectivity and examples of countries that are effectively implementing USF projects, including those that previously had implementation challenges that are now showing progress.
- The session discussed that implementing WSIS toward 2035 and the GDC follow-up should create mechanisms to assess qualitative data on use and effectiveness, rather than focusing solely on quantitative data on infrastructure availability, to ensure a balanced review.
- The session discussed that AI-enabled Digital Social Protection systems and Digital ID systems have led to discrimination and exclusion of marginalised groups.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- PIN presented findings from a report that assesses the compliance of 29 countries with African Human Rights standards. The findings provide policy developments, human rights harms, regression and best practices, on 12 indicators including digital inclusion.
- PIN committed to collaborating with stakeholders to continue assessing implementation and compliance with human rights standards.
- The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) indicated interest in collaborating after we shared our findings and will share more insights into their approaches.
- Robust interactions seeking clarity on best cases were great for demonstrating what works. Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

WSIS Secretariat should:

- Integrate the assessment of countries' compliance with human rights standards in the tracking of the achievement of the goals set out in the WSIS Outcome document.

- Tracking of implementation of WSIS action lines should integrate assessment of qualitative data on use, effectiveness, rights upheld and harms in pursuit of closing the digital divide, compared to only assessing quantitative data on availability of infrastructure.
- Develop follow-up mechanisms for achieving the goals set out in the WSIS Outcome document.

Governments should:

- Enact policies that promote access to the internet for vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Promote stronger alignment in policy and practice.
- Conduct human rights impact assessments to assess the impact of AI, digital IDs and emerging technologies before adoption and use.
- Adopt and implement USF projects to close the digital divide.
- Enact policies on the regulation of AI and emerging technologies.
- Provide assistive technologies to persons with disabilities.
- Promote low taxation fees on digital technologies.
- Develop economic measures to improve access to technologies.

Anchoring AI Evolution in Humanity: Pathways for Ethical, Inclusive, and Cross Boundary Collaboration

Monday, 6 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/191

Key Issues discussed:

- Three panelists attended, including:
  - Ms. Hao Ji Zhu, Founder, Zhu Consulting (moderator)
  - Ms. Yu Ping Chan, Head of Partnerships and Engagement, UNDP Digital, AI and Innovation Hub & Coordinator, UNDP-Singapore Global Center
  - Dr. Peter Slattery, Research Scientist, MIT FutureTech, MIT AI Risk Initiative

- Discussion examined current challenges in responsible AI implementation, high-leverage pathways for near-term principle implementation, and strategies for more effective cross-boundary ecosystem partnerships.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Imminent catastrophic risks and the responsibility gap: New MIT AI Risk Initiative data reveals 18 of 24 risk domains carry ≥10% probability of catastrophic outcomes within five years. Top harms include dangerous capabilities, competitive dynamics, weapons and cyberattacks, power centralization, and false information. While public users are most vulnerable, the primary burden of mitigation falls on developers and governance actors operating under an "illusion of responsibility," assuming others act. This is worsened by a lack of systemic understanding delineating power and accountability, exacerbated by the absence of shared taxonomies, consolidated evidence, and interoperable frameworks. Effective risk management demands substantial mitigation and structural coordination, including shared knowledge infrastructures, yet most institutions and countries lag behind.
- The asymmetry of the Global South: Risks are unequally distributed. Developing countries face amplified challenges due to infrastructure (e.g. electricity and internet connectivity) and governance capacity gaps, deepening the digital divide. Imported models and regulatory standards often fail to address local realities. With power concentrated in the Global North, developing nations in the Global South lack the leverage to "vote with

wallets" like their Northern counterparts. The disproportionate impact of AI on the Global South requires further studies.

- Narrow defintion of capacity building: Traditional rapid training is insufficient for building the true institutional readiness and resilience required for responsible AI adoption and governance. There is a critical need to shift from isolated knowledge transfer to problem-specific and long-term institutional adaption.
- Coordination deficit: The lack of incentives for coordination is a key failure point in ecosystem collaboration. Addressing this requires a shift in donor and institutional metrics to value and fund the "invisible work" of multistakeholder alignment.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Humanity-centric framing: Anchor on the purpose of humanity, treating responsible AI as a continuous negotiation, with the protection of the most vulnerable as a guiding imperative.
- "Problem-first" AI adoption: Shift from blind adoption of existing technologies to a demand-driven, context-specific, and people-centered approach, ensuring AI solutions address the tangible realities and needs of local communities.
- "Small AI" and localized alternatives: Pivot to "small AI" and open-source models tailored for local contexts as viable, more cost-effective, and more locally appropriate alternatives for developing countries, reducing dependency and concentration.
- Creating enabling environment through localized capacity building: Cultivate enabling environment via localized capacity building, including expanding efforts beyond standalone training to long-term context-specific institutional adaptation. Mobilize diverse cross-sector partnerships to enable this type of assistance.
- Systems mapping and targeted accountability: Formulate granular systems mapping to delineate roles, incentives, and barriers across all levels, distinguishing between lack of will and lack of guidance. Adopt a co-design process where broadly applicable principles are contextualized locally, allowing local contexts, especially in the Global South, to feed insights into broader framework developments while preserving interoperability. Expanding empirical repositories allows us to replace vague mandates with documented actionable mitigations and strengthens local agency.
- Aligning incentives via coordinated legal, civic, and market pressures: Adopt a triad of legal, civic, and market pressures to realign incentives toward safety,

especially through advocacy and regulation. Layered interventions can create stronger momentum to make irresponsible behavior costly and responsible adoption the optimal choice with the least resistance.

- Performance metrics and funding models for coordination: Revise performance metrics and funding models to actively reward cross-silo collaboration, recognizing that partnerships is a prerequisite for translating high-level principles into the reality. By allocating resources to mechanisms and initiatives that facilitate dialogues and joint actions across sectors, regions, and levels, the ecosystem can shift into a more unified and efficient response to the complexities of AI risk.
- Coalitions and UN's role as a coordinator: To counter market asymmetry, Global South developing countries could benefit from collective capacity, aggregating isolated capabilities and efforts into strategic coalitions with leverage and ability to negotiate better terms and exert stronger influence on global norm-setting. UN can support this coordination, facilitating an inclusive global AI architecture.

Re-engineering Institutions for Digital Transformation and AI Readiness

Monday, 6 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/248

Trustworthy Health Information in the Age of Generative AI: GEO as a New Capacity for Digital Health Governance

Monday, 6 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/269

The role of humans in the cyber age

Monday, 6 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/141

Technology is usually considered neutral, neither good nor bad it is the purpose and use that humans choose to make the difference. For a long time, researchers in the technological sector didn't pose their attention both on ethical and ontological aspects nor on the mid- and long- term impacts of their discoveries on society.
The added value and results achieved thanks to digital technology, including of course artificial intelligence and quantum computing, are not in doubt, but it seems appropriate to carefully evaluate the concerns raised and the potential disadvantages.
Several novels and probably much more sci-fiction movies through time depicted some future societies based on full top-down control or completely anesthetised by pleasant goods, or completely unable to use critical thinking. Among the novels we can refer to George Orwell's "Big Brother - Nineteen Eighty-Four" (1949), Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 (1951), and last but not less relevant Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" (1932).
These three novels provide three different dystopic models of future society foreseen in a twenty-year period from 1930s to the 1950s. Looking to our society though these lenses we can find several aspects that recall these novels. All of them offer a dystopic world often dominated by technologies, totalitarian states, top-down centralised control sometimes managed by automatic non supervised machines, techno-surveillance, flooding of mainstream information, filtering and elimination of divergent thoughts, reduced human rights, eradication of culture and critical thinking.
His holiness Pope Leo XIV recently issued an encyclical letter entitled "Magnifica Humanitas" with specific focus, as stated in the heading, "On safeguarding the human person in the time of artificial intelligence". Section three is entitled "Technology and dominance. the grandeur of humanity in light of the promises of AI" the set of paragraphs "The technocratic paradigm and digital power" recall Pope Francis Encyclical "Laudato Si" "denounced the growing dominance of a technocratic paradigm in our globalised world: the tendency to let the logic of efficiency, control and profit alone shape personal, social and economic decisions. This makes it clear that technology is not simply a tool. Do we consider some of these scenarios realistic for the near future? Which will be the role of humans in the cyber age?

Key Issues discussed:

• DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION	• NEW NORMAL
• ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE	• AGENTIC AI
• HUMAN RIGHT	• ETHICS

Key Outcomes of the session (concise billet points capturing the concrete results of the session):

- AI lack of "Asimov's Laws", potential dual use both "political / top-down control" and military.
- AI and Agentic AI must be kept always under human control, even if the quest for efficiency considers humans the weakest link in the decision chain.
- Risk to fall into "AI generated" moral philosophy principles.
- In different areas of the globe AI must comply with cultural models and related ethical principles.

Initiative: to publish a book on main impacts of AI on society.

Agreements: extend the team in cooperation with some session's attendees.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Establish interdisciplinary team to foresee from different perspective the future scenario.
- Setup and promote AI services citizens' awareness
- Identify concrete models to keep AI and Agentic AI under human control.
- Collecting some of the contribution from the floor improve the studies on AI impact on society based on concrete experiences / case study.
- Identify the impact of AI outcomes on the different class of age (youth, mature, seniors)

Governing the Systemic Impacts of AI Where Regulation Doesn't Reach: Standardised Commitments and Lateral Requirements across Value Chains

Monday, 6 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/337

Key Issues discussed:

- The governance gap: the UN Independent Scientific Panel counts over 40 AI governance instruments, finding them fragmented, concentrated at the corporate level, and rarely measuring real-world effectiveness. The session asked how the real-world, systemic impacts of the AI transition can be governed at the layer where they are configured - the commercial relationships of AI value chains.
- Presentation of the AI Commons (AIC) Framework: a standardised licensing instrument through which any AI actor - from a two-person startup to a platform provider - voluntarily adopts public-interest commitments across six profiles (Reciprocity, Sustainability, Openness, Governance, Access, Value), expressed in a compact deployment matrix readable by humans at a glance and by machines.
- The systemic design logic: exponential dynamics emerge from interaction, not addition. Beneficial systemic effects can therefore be induced when adopters extend their own commitments as requirements on partners upstream and downstream, creating mutual expectations across value chains - following the precedent of Creative Commons and open-source licensing.
- Enforcement without new institutions: commitments are written into the ordinary documents of deployment (terms of service, API conditions, procurement contracts) and bind under existing contract law in every jurisdiction - no treaty, harmonisation, or certification body required.
- Panel discussion on the session's central question - voluntary standards spread only when actors choose them, so what would make these terms worth choosing - covering operationalisation of responsible-AI principles, licensing as a lightweight pathway across an uneven regulatory landscape, SME adoption, cooperative models for individuals and small businesses, and a live platform case examined against all six profiles.
- Floor discussion: the framework's complementarity with safety and liability regimes (it governs the systemic effects that accumulate after safety and lawfulness are met), and enforcement in the absence of a central mandate.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Key insights and findings: panellists positioned the framework as an operational arm for responsible-AI principles (OECD, UN agencies) and as governance matched to the dynamic, agentic character of current AI - governance that lives in value chains, ecosystems, and procurement decisions, not only in norms; precedents identified include open-source/Creative Commons licensing and the social licence to operate.
- Speed-matching principle: measures for governing AI must be capable of growing at least as fast as the systems they govern; contract-layer instruments propagate at the speed of business relationships.
- A live worked example (an open-source decentralised AI platform) demonstrated profile-by-profile application - including a deliberate divergence on the Value profile, illustrating the framework's voluntary, compositional design.
- Announcements: first public presentation of the AIC deployment matrix and profile notation; the AIC Working Group (hosted at CLEA, Vrije Universiteit Brussel) presented its pathway toward an open international standard, with clause sets at v0.9 under working-group review.
- Collaborations: the Head of the UN AI Governance for Humanity Lab conveyed the Lab's interest in continued collaboration and in opportunities to test and pilot the framework; further expressions of interest were gathered in the room and through the Forum week.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Bring the AIC clause library to its first public release (v1.0) as an open international standard, and pilot it across actor sizes and jurisdictions - startups, municipalities and public procurers, and platform providers (Action Lines C1, C6).
- Use procurement, public and private, as the implementation entry point: writing standardised public interest commitments into the documents through which AI is already acquired gives every country a pathway that requires no new legislation and works within existing legal systems (C1, C6).
- Pursue piloting collaboration with the UN AI Governance for Humanity Lab and similar bodies, so that real-world effectiveness is measured from the outset - responding directly to the Scientific Panel's finding that existing instruments rarely measure it (C10).
- Map the complementarity between safety-focused regulation and contract-layer commitments: which distributional, environmental, and participatory

consequences of AI fall outside existing instruments, and how standardised commitments close that gap across jurisdictions (C3, C10).

Measuring what matters: Embedding gender equality in AI governance through gender-specific indicators

Monday, 6 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/271

Key Issues discussed:

- Resolution A/RES/80/173 mandates gender equality to be mainstreamed across all WSIS Action Lines and the inclusion of "potential targets, indicators and metrics to facilitate monitoring and measurement." Although the resolution shows progress, gender is currently absent from the measurement architecture. There are no gender indicators embedded in the Action Line implementation frameworks beyond basic access measures, and the UNGIS Draft Joint Implementation Road Map for WSIS–GDC coherence, presented to CSTD 29 in April, contains the word gender zero times.
- Governance is the meta-indicator we need to track to effectively assess progress in addressing gender barriers in the AI paradigm. The question is not just whether women have access to the consumption market for AI services, but whether they are able to meaningfully realise the value potential of AI innovation. Who is value accruing to? And are the trajectories of AI innovation making the lives of women better? And which women?
- Gender-responsive indicators must capture participation, agency, leadership, safety, and decision-making, including women's representation in governance bodies, gender-responsive AI design, meaningful connectivity, and investment in inclusive AI systems.
- The data already exists. Many proposed indicators can build on existing data sources, including those collected by UN agencies, governments, and civil society organisations. The challenge is ensuring this data informs accountability frameworks. We don't need to reinvent the wheel - just coordinate better.
- Indicators determine what gets measured, what gets funded, and what governments are held accountable for. The roadmaps being developed now will shape digital governance priorities for the next decade.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Presentation of the Gender in Digital Coalition's feminist guiding principles for AI governance. Safety, dignity and human rights must be built into AI governance by design, not treated as an afterthought:

- Safety, dignity and interoperability by design;
- Precaution before deployment, data sovereignty, algorithmic bias, no AI above human rights, TFGBV, inclusive and equitable ai (neocolonialism and linguistic), investment for feminist AI, feminist AI governance mechanisms;
- With strong recommendations, such as independent mechanisms, pre- and post-human rights assessments, and public audits.
- Participants were invited to sign up for a mailing list to continue the conversation with us, where we will discuss incorporating gender into the Action Lines and AI governance mechanisms.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- All indicators should adopt an intersectional approach. Gender does not operate in isolation. Experiences of exclusion are shaped by race, ethnicity, disability, age, migration status, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, and geographic location. If our indicators fail to reflect these intersecting realities, they will overlook those who are most affected by digital inequalities.
- Implementation must be supported by meaningful participation. The development, monitoring, and evaluation of these indicators should include feminist organisations, women's rights groups, LGBTQI+ organisations, Indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, and other civil society actors who bring lived experience and evidence from affected communities.
- Build a joint implementation roadmap across global processes. Rather than treating the WSIS review, the Global Digital Compact, and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance as separate tracks, we should identify where commitments overlap and develop common implementation priorities, shared indicators where appropriate, and coordinated reporting mechanisms. This would reduce fragmentation and ease the reporting and monitoring burdens on governments and stakeholders, thereby increasing the incentive to implement. A shared roadmap would also help ensure that gender equality remains visible across future digital governance discussions, rather than being revisited from scratch in each new process. It would ensure policy coherence and provide a stronger basis for measuring collective progress over time.
- Under Action Line C1: Role of public governance authorities, we could measure the % of women in decision-making (not advisory) roles in national digital/AI governance authorities and regulators. For Action Lines C1 and C6, there is already data being collected here by action line facilitators, which can be used for effective monitoring and measurement.

- Under Action Line C3 Access to information & knowledge, we can, for instance, measure the gender gap between who produces digital content and knowledge and who consumes it, and not only, as we currently do, who has skills and access to ICT. This would help us determine if women and gender-diverse communities are meaningfully participating in technology governance.
- Or C5 Building confidence & security - are national cybersecurity frameworks including gender-responsive threat modelling, and whether national CERTs disaggregate incident reporting by sex (i.e. whether the safety infrastructure can see gendered harm at all). So, we can evaluate if states are implementing safeguards against TFGBV.
- Similarly, for C10 Ethical dimensions, we could measure the % of AI systems deployed in public services that have undergone an integrated human right, gender, environmental, and labour impact assessment before deployment (where gender is a required, separately reported dimension). This will help us understand if AI systems are being assessed for discriminatory impacts against women and other marginalised groups.

As for strengthening the data architecture for gender monitoring in AI:

1. Data should guide where investments go: The global annual value of AI venture capital (VC) has risen dramatically. Some investors, particularly early-stage investors, are often in a position to exert leverage, as they support investees in shaping and defining a project's outlook. How can we make gender a non-negotiable?
2. Develop incidence reporting mechanisms with robust taxonomies of gendered harms in the AI value chain: As UNESCO's Outlook study on AI and gender has highlighted, it is important to track gender harms in the AI lifecycle: Economic, socio-cultural, political and harms to physical safety.
3. National strategy – gender equality is an integral component of responsible AI. The first edition of the Global Index on Responsible AI in 2024 found that only 24 of the countries assessed had government frameworks addressing the intersection of gender.

Rising from the Margins: Co-Creating Inclusive Digital Learning for Every Child

Monday, 6 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/340

Building E-waste Management Systems
Monday, 6 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/272

Key Issues discussed:

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) as the shared regulatory model behind the national frameworks developed in Paraguay, Rwanda and Zambia under the three-year (2023–2026) ITU–CST collaboration on e-waste management.
- Coordination between ICT/telecom regulators and environmental authorities remains a recurring challenge, raised repeatedly regarding where regulatory responsibility for e waste should sit.
- How Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) are governed and how fees are calculated and passed to producers/importers without an excessive cost burden.
- Engaging the informal sector, which handles much of e-waste collection and repair in many developing countries, was flagged as necessary but difficult, since it already provides livelihoods.
- The role of upstream decisions — product design (perspective of Lenovo) and sustainable procurement/eco-labels (perspective of Global Electronics Council) — in reducing e-waste volume before it is generated.
- The Basel Convention's framework for transboundary movement of e-waste, and how national systems can allow repair, refurbishment and cross-border recycling under prior informed consent procedures.
- Emerging non-traditional actors, notably postal operators, are being explored as reverse-logistics infrastructure for e-waste collection.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Rwanda is updating its national EPR regulations and established a PRO hosted under the Private Sector Federation, which aims to mobilize producers of electronics. 161 stakeholders from 104 public and private entities have been involved and consulted during the ITU-CST project in Rwanda.
- In Zambia, the project supported drafting e-waste and EPR regulations building on the 2011 Environmental Management Act, identifying the ICT Association of Zambia as a potential voluntary PRO, and developing key guidance documents for the ICT sector, engaging 186 stakeholders from 112 entities.

- Paraguay has prepared its first full draft decree on e-waste management based on EPR principles, supported by national implementation guidelines, and an in-depth financing study. 137 stakeholders from 62 entities were consulted throughout the project.
- The initiative "Recycle Your Device" of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has recycled over 100,000 devices (value above SAR 120 million) via delivery-app partnerships with 14+ partners, phasing out incentives once awareness took hold.
- ITU and CST reaffirmed their intention to continue the partnership beyond this project phase and invited other countries to engage with the project's toolkit and lessons from Rwanda, Zambia and Paraguay.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Strengthen formal coordination between ICT/telecom regulators and relevant public authorities at national, regional and international level.
- Involve the informal sector and civil society/consumer protection bodies from the design phase of e-waste regulation, not as a later add-on.
- Design EPR fee and financing mechanisms to scale with the number of registered producers/importers, rather than rising exponentially with volume.
- Countries without formal e-waste management legislation can start with a pilot, incentive-based collection scheme to build trust before implementing regulations.
- Broaden collaboration to include postal networks and eco-label/procurement bodies, and align national systems with Basel Convention requirements to keep repair and cross border recycling possible.

Dialing up Mobile Phone Data for Official Statistics

Monday, 6 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/171

Key Issues discussed:

- The role of Mobile Phone Data (MPD) as a complementary data source for official statistics, offering greater granularity, timeliness and geographic detail while preserving user privacy.
- The governance requirements necessary to establish sustainable MPD systems, including strategic, legal and technical frameworks, institutional arrangements and high-level authorization processes.
- Legal and privacy considerations associated with the use of mobile phone data, including legal bases for data sharing, data protection requirements and privacy preserving techniques.
- Country experiences demonstrating how mobile phone data can support humanitarian response, disaster management and official statistics through partnerships among mobile operators, regulators, national statistical offices and development partners.
- Operational challenges related to accessing MPD, building technical capacity and ensuring data quality and reliability for statistical purposes.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Participants gained a clearer understanding of how MPD can be operationalized through a practical governance framework structured around strategic, legal and technical pillars.
- Successful country experiences on the use of MPD were shared, including long-term partnerships in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti and Ghana, demonstrating the value of MPD for public policy, humanitarian action and official statistics.
- Existing resources and tools were showcased, including governance frameworks, MPD maturity assessment approaches and practical guidance for ensuring sustainability of MPD implementation for official statistics.
- The ITU MPD Jupyter Notebooks was presented as a hands-on capacity-building resource that enables users to explore the complete MPD workflow showcased in the context of the Information Society indicators.
- The discussion reinforced the need for sustained engagement and collaboration among regulators, mobile operators, national statistical offices

and other stakeholders to enable responsible, effective and sustainable use of MPD for official statistics.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Develop national MPD governance frameworks that clearly define roles, responsibilities, legal bases and operational procedures for the use of MPD in official statistics.
- Strengthen partnerships between national statistical offices, regulators, mobile network operators, ministries and development organizations to support sustainable access to MPD.
- Invest in capacity development through practical training resources, toolkits and communities of practice to enhance national expertise in MPD analysis.
- Promote the use of privacy-preserving technologies, data governance mechanisms and transparent protocols to build trust and support responsible data use.
- Encourage further exploration of MPD applications for disaster response, mobility analysis and official statistics in support of evidence-based decision-making and the WSIS 2035 vision.
- Establish a permanent operational data pipeline. Countries should invest in sustainable partnerships and data sharing that enable mobile phone data to be securely and rapidly mobilized for policy responses during disasters, epidemics and other emergencies, as well as for use in official statistics.

Quotes:

- Paul Blanchard: "By building a governance framework, MPD requires a certain level of standardization, promoting unified thinking in a structured manner" // "In a nutshell, the key takeaway is a comprehensive and organized framework for complex systems that is highly adaptable to country contexts. It is both strategic and technical, offering practical guidance for implementing MPD systems." 2
- Daniel Power: "We take data privacy very seriously, as it is a highly sensitive matter." // "There is a significant impact there, and we need to invest more and more in data."
- Esperanza Magpantay: "Mobile phone data (MPD) are not intended to replace official data sources such as household surveys. The same applies to indicators on Internet use: while MPD can provide more timely and geographically granular insights, it should complement rather than substitute traditional data collection. However, in situations where household surveys or other conventional data sources are unavailable or cannot be conducted in a

timely manner, MPD can serve as a valuable alternative for producing the information needed to support evidence-based policymaking."

- Fredrik Eriksson: "One of the greatest challenges in working with mobile phone data is developing the necessary skills without access to real data. This is exactly what the ITU Notebooks aim to address."

Optimal decision making in the digital age

Monday, 6 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/172

From Ideas to Action: the integration of the Sao Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines within the broader digital governance processes

Monday, 6 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/173

Key Issues discussed:

- Concrete steps for the improvement of multilateral and multistakeholder processes and spaces in light of the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines. ☐ Multistakeholderism as a process that attracts people from different backgrounds and drives discussions in the context of digital governance.
- There is interest about the inclusion of multistakeholderism in the multilateral context. However, the participation of non-governmental stakeholders in these discussions is still difficult– e.g., there is still a lack of access to information and to documents being negotiated.
- It was highlighted that multilateral processes can benefit from the Guidelines, in order to promote better transparency and consensus building. The implementation of multi stakeholderism is possible with genuine political will.
- Practical resources to support the implementation of the Guidelines and multistakeholder processes: 1) sharing and accessing knowledge; 2) capacity building and development of skills; 3) practical hands-on support on how to start implementing the Guidelines.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Implementing the Guidelines is a process to be conducted by all stakeholders and by the Internet governance community as a whole, whether at the global, regional, or national level.
- The community believes in the multistakeholder process and there are already practical examples of the implementation of the SPMGs, as can be seen by the Swiss IGF example.
- The recognition of the SPMGs in the WSIS+20 Outcome Document is a great achievement.
- The Guidelines help the different Internet governance processes understand if they are truly multistakeholder and what benefits will arise from the adoption of this approach.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- The different multistakeholder and multilateral spaces should use the Guidelines for assessing and improving their processes.
- The IGF should be a primary space of discussion of the Guidelines and their application in different processes

Digital Inclusion in an Unequal World

Monday, 6 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/347

Key Issues discussed:

This session built on the outcomes of our session (306) at WSIS 2025 on "Digital Tech and the Most Marginalised: what still needs to be done", and provides an overview and examples from the new book "Digital Inclusion in an Unequal World: An Emancipatory Manifesto" which was partly derived from discussions in that session. The speakers included Benita Rowe, Prof G. 'Hari' Harindranath, Yuliya Morenets (online) and Prof Tim Unwin.

The session was highly interactive, and addressed the following broad issues:

- Why there is so much reinvention of the wheel in the field of digital tech for development;
- Why the poorest and most marginalised have insufficiently benefitted from the use of digital tech in development;
- How it is possible for individuals, governments, the private sector and civil society to make a positive difference to the lives of the most marginalised through get use of digital tech.

Key Outcomes of the session:

Five main reasons were offered to help us all understand why the poorest are insufficiently benefitting from the use of digital tech:

  - A global focus that is more on economic growth than on equity
  - The capture of the UN digital agenda by the private sector
  - A focus on "me" rather than "we"
  - The innovation fetish
  - Digital enslavement

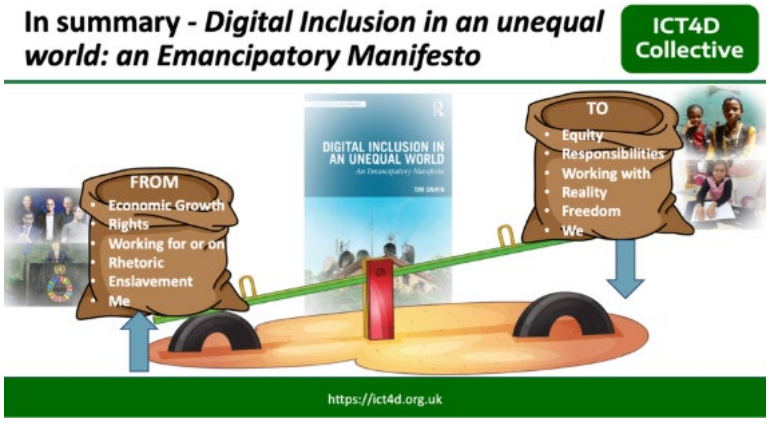
- The session also served as a launch platform for Tim Unwin's latest book *Digital Inclusion in an Unequal World: An Empancipatory Manifesto* (Routledge, 2026; https://ict4d.or.uk.diuw)
- The session concluded with advocacy for a responsibilities-based approach to the use of digital tech in "development" to balance the existing human rights agenda, that would emphasise the responsibilities of individuals (both personally and professionally) alongside governments, UN agencies, the private sector and civil society.



Session 347, Credit ITU Photographer

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

Looking forward, we need to shift the balance of the seesaw "from" the emphasis in the left sack in the image below "towards" those on the right sack if "we" are seriously committed to using digital tech in the interests of the poor and marginalised.



Transforming Global Education through Digital Innovation: Bridging Access, Skills, and Leadership

Monday, 6 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/167

Key Issues Discussed:

- Overcoming Educational Barriers: Addressing the systemic challenges that millions of learners particularly in developing countries and underserved communities face in accessing quality education, digital skills, and leadership opportunities.
- The Evolution of Learning Models: The necessity for traditional education delivery models to evolve into inclusive, technology-enabled, learner-centered, and globally connected systems.
- Closing the Digital Divide: Practical approaches to bridging global inequalities by convening multi-stakeholder partnerships across academia, governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector.
- Inclusive Digital Transformation: Ensuring that emerging digital technologies and methodologies prioritize the participation of women, youth, marginalized populations, and low-resource learners who are disproportionately affected by technological disparities.
- Ethical Innovation and Governance: Balancing the adoption of disruptive technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and quantum computing with robust data privacy engineering, cybersecurity resilience, and human rights compliance.
- Future-Ready Competencies: Equipping the next generation of working professionals and emerging youth leaders with market-aligned leadership, entrepreneurship, and technical skills necessary for the future of work.

Key Outcomes of the Session Key Insights and Findings:

- Digital transformation must fundamentally serve humanity by promoting equitable access to knowledge, lifelong learning, and international cooperation.
- Young people and women are not merely passive beneficiaries of digital infrastructure but essential, active partners in shaping the future of the Information Society and driving local sustainable development.

- Responsible tech innovation requires a dual focus: expanding digital access while simultaneously ensuring security, audit-ready AI governance, and public trust. Announcements, Launches, or New Initiatives
- NBU Leadership & Capacity-Building Frameworks: Showcase of Nation Builders University's hybrid learning initiatives and virtual environments designed to expand market-aligned leadership and business education globally.
- AI Governance Literatures: Highlighted the publication of foundational AI governance texts, Governing Intelligence: Law, Privacy, Security, and Compliance in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (2026) and When the Model Was Wrong (2026), as critical educational resources for navigating AI deployment risks.
- Youth & Gender Advocacy Progress: Presentations of grassroots impact initiatives, including Jordan's Gen D Rights initiative for digital civic space and African Women's League Global, which advance digital literacy and inclusive governance. Agreements, Collaborations, or Commitments
- WSIS+20 Strategic Alignment: Participants committed to advancing the post-2025 WSIS vision by collaborating on an interconnected educational ecosystem that actively works to eliminate digital inequalities across borders.
- Cross-Sector Mentorship: Renewed commitments between international experts, advisory boards, and youth advocates to deliver cross-cultural mentorship and knowledge-sharing via digital platforms.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Formulate Multi-Stakeholder Tech Alliances: Accelerate international cooperation to build resilient digital education infrastructures that cater directly to low-resource settings and promote localized, culturally relevant content.
- Integrate AI and Privacy Literacies into Core Curricula: Embed cybersecurity awareness, ethical tech innovation, and privacy engineering into global education frameworks to prepare emerging leaders for regulated, high-risk tech environments.
- Target Gender-Responsive Digital Programming: Intentionally fund and design tech-focused educational campaigns, STEM mentorship programs, and leadership platforms specifically tailored to empower young women and girls globally.

Governing AI for Humanity: Policy, Ethics, and Multistakeholder Pathways to Inclusive Digital Futures

Monday, 6 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/179

Responsible GenAI in Public Services: From Policy Principles to Deployable Workflows

Monday, 6 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/213

Poland's Model for Digital Resilience: Secure Schools, Skilled Citizens, Strong Society

Monday, 6 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/176

Key Issues discussed:

- Building digital resilience requires a comprehensive approach that combines secure digital infrastructure, cybersecurity services, and digital skills development rather than focusing solely on connectivity.
- Poland's Nationwide Education Network (OSE) demonstrates how universal, state-funded school connectivity can evolve into a national platform providing internet access, cybersecurity protection, educational resources, and digital competence development.
- Long-term sustainability is a critical challenge for national connectivity programs. Beyond deployment, significant attention must be devoted to maintenance, modernization, operational resilience, equipment replacement, and service-quality management.
- Cybersecurity in education must be integrated from the outset. Schools require multilayer protection including network security, content filtering, threat detection, protection against harmful content, and support in addressing cyberbullying and online risks.
- Digital resilience depends on people as much as technology. Teachers, students, parents, and seniors all require continuous access to digital literacy, cybersecurity awareness, media literacy, AI-related competencies, and critical-thinking skills.
- Growing digitalization, increased use of cloud services, AI tools, online learning platforms, and exposure to misinformation create new demands for both infrastructure capacity and digital competencies.
- Collaboration between government, academia, telecommunications operators, schools, civil society, and the private sector is essential for achieving nationwide impact and ensuring resilience against cyber and hybrid threats.

Key Outcomes of the session (concise billet points capturing the concrete results of the session):

Key insights and findings

- The Polish OSE model demonstrates that sustainable digital resilience requires the integration of connectivity, cybersecurity, and digital-skills development.
- Strong interest was expressed by participants in the Polish approach, particularly regarding the operational model, cybersecurity services for schools, and long-term sustainability of the programme.
- The session confirmed that digital resilience depends not only on infrastructure but also on citizens' ability to recognize misinformation, cyber threats, and online manipulation.

Announcements, launches, or new initiatives presented during the session

- NASK presented ongoing and recently launched educational initiatives, including the Digital Opportunities Club (2025–2029), Defend Yourself Online, OSEhero, Safe Online, Digital Well-being, and Intergenerational School.
- Participants were informed about the continued modernization of OSE infrastructure and the further development of cybersecurity and educational services supporting more than 20,000 schools across Poland.

Agreements, collaborations, or commitments made

- The session highlighted the importance of cooperation between governments, educational institutions, research organizations, telecommunications operators, and civil society in building digital resilience.
- Following the presentation, participants requested contact details for the Polish representative and presentation materials to continue exchanges on the OSE model and explore possible knowledge-sharing and cooperation opportunities.
- Several follow-up questions were submitted by e-mail after the session, demonstrating continued international interest in the Polish experience and its applicability in other countries.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Encourage countries to adopt integrated approaches combining connectivity, cybersecurity, and digital-skills development.
- Ensure that school-connectivity programmes include sustainable operational, maintenance, and cybersecurity components from the outset.
- Strengthen digital-literacy and resilience programmes addressing cybersecurity, misinformation, AI-related risks, and online safety.
- Promote schools as community hubs for digital inclusion and intergenerational learning.

- Foster multi-stakeholder cooperation and international exchange of good practices to support implementation of WSIS Action Lines and build resilient digital societies by 2035.

Beyond State vs. Corporate: Community Data Governance Models from the Global Majority

Monday, 6 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/175

Key Issues discussed: (5–8 bullet points summarizing the main discussion points)

- Mainstream data governance debates remain trapped in a state-vs-corporate binary that fails Global Majority communities.
- The session diagnosed data extraction as a structural crisis, not merely a privacy problem: large-scale scraping, concentration of power in a small number of corporations and states, and opaque algorithms shielded by trade secrecy.
- The panelists presented their in-progress policy brief built on three pillars: (1) data stewardship and community agency (data as a collective asset); (2) participatory decision-making (enforceable community power); (3) equitable benefit-sharing (mandatory, audited return of monetary and non-monetary value to source communities).
- Participants stress-tested the framework against a hypothetical case examining who decides on data use, who holds rights, who is present or absent from decision-making, and how value is identified and shared.
- Key tensions surfaced included: who constitutes "the community" and its legitimate steward where populations are layered; how participatory processes survive real decision deadlines; and how non-monetary benefits can be independently valued and audited rather than self-certified.

Key Outcomes of the session (concise bullet points capturing the concrete results of the session):

- The framework should elaborate on legitimate stewards' responsibilities, including determining what valid knowledge is.
- AI hyperscalers profit from global data aggregation and the framework should propose valuable solutions that can be used by tech companies to compensate communities
- Legitimate representative entities or organizations will not always exist for every community. How can the framework accommodate governance processes for communities with more diffuse forms of collective identity or without formal representation?

- Publicly available templates and examples of data sharing agreements can support communities during negotiation processes by providing practical references and lowering barriers to developing such agreements.
- Non-monetary benefit-sharing requires independent audit against baselines
- Commitment: Tech Global Institute, Paradigm Initiative and InternetLab will integrate the session's feedback and finalize the brief for publication after the Forum
- Participants were invited to contact the presenters (the brief's authors) for further one-on-one consultation if needed, and to later endorse and localize the final brief if interested.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions (2–5 bullet points outlining practical and actionable recommendations to support WSIS implementation towards 2035):

- WSIS implementation toward 2035 and GDC follow-up should formally recognize communities as legitimate data governance actors, moving beyond individual consent toward collective data rights in national data protection reform.
- Governments should establish legal recognition for community data stewards, trusts and cooperatives, and adopt permanent community oversight mechanisms for large-scale data projects – including digital public infrastructure.
- Benefit-sharing agreements should become a binding condition of large-scale data collection, with public registries and independent auditing of non-monetary commitments across the data lifecycle.
- Multilateral bodies should fund a Global Majority research and capacity agenda on data sovereignty so communities can participate in – and govern – the data systems deployed on them.

Advancing Circular ICT: Eco-design, E-waste and Digital Product Information Systems (DPIS)

Monday, 6 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/343

Bridging the Intelligence Divide: AI Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing for the Global South

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/183

Key Issues discussed:

- The intelligence divide between the Global North and Global South is widening, with Africa facing the most severe challenges: less than 7% of Africa's measurable Sustainable Development Goals are on track to be achieved by 2030. Africa's independent AI development suffers from two major drawbacks: a severe shortage of local data centers and homegrown AI and engineering professionals, alongside heavy reliance on foreign providers for data storage and core technologies.
- Six interrelated core obstacles restrict Africa's independent AI development: humanistic values and governance systems, critical mineral supply chains, investment capital, data sovereignty, green energy supply, and inclusive political governance. These six factors are interdependent and equally indispensable.
- Equitable international AI cooperation faces multiple barriers, including cross-cultural cognitive gaps, incompatible cross-border communication tools, one-size-fits-all overseas training programs ill-suited to local demands, and the underutilization of Africa's indigenous talent pool.
- China offers a differentiated approach to bridging the intelligence divide: instead of waiting for full infrastructure deployment before talent cultivation, it promotes lightweight open-source AI tools and tiered customized local training models, distinct from the standardized export model adopted by Western countries. China stands as a key partner supporting Africa's AI capacity building, yet its cooperation needs improvements in cross-cultural exchange and inclusive communication mechanisms.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- AI capacity building must not focus solely on technical training; it must simultaneously address six supporting dimensions: labor rights, data sovereignty, green energy, local industrialization of critical minerals, governance systems, and cross-cultural collaboration.

- Africa's youth represent a vast, untapped talent pool for AI development, yet local talents cannot fully realize their potential due to poor infrastructure and insufficient domestic investment.
- Talent cultivation can be carried out in parallel without waiting for the full completion of infrastructure. Low-cost cloud services, multilingual open-source AI models and basic hardware can be leveraged to boost local workforce capabilities concurrently.
- Language barriers hinder participation from the Global South in AI development, as mainstream AI translation tools lack support for indigenous African languages.
- All participants reached a consensus that global AI governance negotiations must include representatives from communities and data workers in the Global South, and guarantee formal representation for data labeling labor unions.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Establish unified and fair global regulatory standards for the AI data ecosystem: enshrine the fundamental ownership of community data and formulate reciprocal benefit mechanisms for data sharing.
- Build indigenous foundational AI infrastructure for Africa: jointly develop local data centers powered by green energy (solar and hydropower); advance local deep processing and industrialization of critical minerals.
- Improve inclusive international AI cooperation mechanisms for the WSIS 2035 agenda: Mandate cross-cultural exchange modules and multilingual AI translation tools covering indigenous African languages in all North-South technology cooperation projects. Require open-source communities to adopt globally accessible communication tools to facilitate participation from stakeholders across the Global South.

Bridging the Algorithmic Divide: Deploying Offline-First DPI and AI for Universal Disability Inclusion in the Global South

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/220

AI and Virtual Worlds

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/285

I.T.U. – leaving no one behind…. I need a Telephone to connect to you

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/352

The session identified a linked questionnaire which WSIS members and also the session participants were asked to take part in and to share more widely. NOTE: this stays open for one month (until – 7 August) and you are kindly invited to add your responses.

Opening remarks referred to the fact that society is becoming 'digital by default' and that even an analogue phone is not available to the older generation who are increasingly finding themselves being "locked out of essential and life-saving services" (see also the session overview document).

- 1) The session started with Dr Fox discussing her linked research which explored generations and the names we apply to each – for example, the Silent, the Baby Boomers, Generation X'ers, etc., relative to their time (in history).
- 2) Dr Fox identified the correlation between technology advancements (related to generations) and human rights; and, questioned whether the fourth industrial revolution called for a fourth generation of human rights.
- 3) She then went on to discuss the rights and limitations applied to certain age groups – for example: the differing age for sexual consent (as young as 14 years in some countries); the age of criminal responsibility – largely stated, as guidance, by the UN as being 16-year and upwards. Whilst, across the world, this is often found lower – including in England and Wales – 10 years, and Scotland – 8 years.
- 4) Dr Fox then discussed the new digital limitations/protections (rights?) for the under 16 year-olds, in relation to social media (e.g. Australia and the UK) 5) Finally, she homed in on the older generation and how they should be defined and what, if any ways, they needed extra protections in this new and evolving digital-AI age.

Key Issues discussed by the panel and then extended to the wider audience, which were:

- Whether the current UN Declaration on Human Rights was suited to the new and advancing digital (AI) age – that is, whether the current approach of the UN Council in the form of the resolution declaring that human rights apply equally offline and online, was sufficient; And/or,

- If new UN (Digital - AI) Rights (above a Declaration – e.g. a Convention/Treaty) should be considered?
- And whether Digital-AI Rights should be age specific, in this case, for the older generation?
- And what we should interpret as the older generation – e.g. as part of the developing UN Treaty for the Rights of the Older Persons;
- And whether this UN Treaty for Older Persons, should include specific reference to digital rights.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Key insights and findings:
- The session concluded (panelists and participants) with general agreement that more action is URGENTLY needed across the following:
    - Specific UN Human Rights for Humanity, in order to be protected in this new digital cyber age which is seeing the explosion of AI embedded in other technologies.
    - That the current UN Framework remains insufficient for this purpose and action is critical NOW
    - That there is not a one-size fits all in terms of either age specific digital-AI rights (older or younger generation) whilst it was agreed that on some occasions it is beneficial to include in specific other Treaties/Conventions – e.g. UN Treaty for the Rights of the Older Persons
- A commitment was undertaken between all panelists to collaborate together (India the South and Europe - the EU and the UK) in order to identify and promote some of the negative consequences and risks of AI development (e.g. social exclusion of some of society; deepening divides); whilst, at the same time, taking positive (pro-active) actions to address these alongside raising the profile of where action is needed.
- And to seek funding and support to achieve the (above) commitment.
- Dr Fox announced that her research is to be published in the European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance, 4th Issue, in 2026 (end of the year) – it is entitled: A Society for all ages? Older People – Technology & Rights!

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions are to:

i) Guide the UN Community to revisit and strengthen the Human Rights Council interpretation (of the UNDR) within Resolution L13 – The Promotion, Protection and Enjoyment of Human Rights on the Internet (adopted by consensus on by the Human Rights Council

on Thursday, July 6, 2012) specifically to the new and advancing Digital AI age.

ii) Advocate that the UN Treaty for the Rights of the Older Persons should contain protection and rights (including the right to opt-in or out of digital services and/or be provided with alternative mechanisms which includes human-contact support).

iii) Stipulate that wider discussions must be given to negative future consequences of technologies, such as AI, and that concerted action must be taken in the form of proactive Treaties and or policy intervention in order to limit and mitigate for risks in order to protect society and humanity (in the long-term). Finally to reiterate the UN General Assembly (A/RES/78/213) "that certain applications of new and emerging digital technologies are not compatible with international human rights law, and noting that uses of new and emerging digital technologies that impact the enjoyment of human rights may lack adequate regulation and governance mechanisms" thereby, Asserting the need for new specific Human Rights protections for the A.I. Age.

The Future of Education and Research in the AI Era: Equipping Young People for Tomorrow

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/541

Key issues discussed:

The session "The Future of Education and Research in the AI Era" examined how emerging technologies are reshaping learning and research, and which competencies will best prepare young people for the future. Panelists highlighted the value of applied, real-world learning experiences and interdisciplinary approaches bridging technology with other fields. Drawing on practical experience, speakers shared what works, what doesn't, and how institutions can adapt to an AI-driven world. The discussion brought together professors, students, and other stakeholders invested in the future of education and research.

- How students should prepare for evolving job markets amid rapid AI growth, and how universities can support graduates already in the workforce
- How students should prepare for evolving job markets amid rapid AI growth, and how universities can support graduates already in the workforce
- Balancing AI use with critical thinking; ensuring AI supports rather than replaces intellectual rigor and independent thought. AI is not a substitute and more as an enabler.
- Some highlighted the fragmented nature of AI technology and the growing responsibility on AI deployment and use
- Some also emphasized that AI could widen inequality; between developed/developing countries, urban/rural communities, and different income levels
- The state of technical education in the developing world, including the estimated 1 in 10 primary school aged children globally who are not in school1
- Some noted that environmental and energy costs of AI infrastructure, including data center impact and carbon emissions
- The risk of over-reliance on AI in research, including hallucination risks and knowing when human judgment should not be delegated

Key outcomes of the session:

Insights and Findings

- Universities need to serve two audiences: current students and alumni already navigating an AI-altered job market
- Equity, not just economic growth, should be the guiding principle for AI-driven development strategies
- Use AI in research and studies but responsibly
- Maintaining critical oversight and knowing when not to use AI emerged as a core research competency, per the Sciences Po Capstone findings
- Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology's three-pillar model (student selection, common STEM curriculum, professor assisted research) and its work on LLM guardrails, explainability, and robotics
- Huazhong University's "one person one company" project, using AI tools to build entrepreneurial and AI literacy skills among students
- University of Pennsylvania Capstone Project on environmental standards for AI data centers, developed in connection with ITU

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions Towards 2035:

- Embed critical thinking and independent research skills alongside AI training, so AI remains an assistant rather than a substitute for intellectual rigor
- Prioritize equity in AI and digital development strategies to prevent widening gaps between regions and income groups
- Strengthen technical education infrastructure in developing countries and prioritize re-engaging out-of-school children and youth
- Expand experiential, real-world learning models (e.g., capstone projects, entrepreneurial incubators) that pair AI literacy with hands-on applications.

Trust and authenticity in digital communication: enabling transparent and accountable Institutions

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/359

Advancing WSIS Implementation: Emerging Trends across Governance, Infrastructure, Access, and Capacity

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/185

Empowering Individuals and Strengthening Resilience in an AI-Driven Information Environment

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/187

AI and Healthcare: Building the Foundations of Intelligent Health Systems

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/566

Key Issues discussed:

- The growing role of AI in strengthening health systems, from diagnostics and clinical decision support to improving the efficiency of healthcare delivery.
- The importance of ensuring that AI for health is developed and governed in ways that reflect the needs, data, and contexts of countries in the Global South.
- South-South cooperation as a model for moving beyond technology transfer towards knowledge exchange, co-creation, and shared ownership of AI solutions.
- The critical role of governance, institutional capacity, and data governance in enabling the safe, ethical, and responsible adoption of AI in healthcare.
- Challenges to scaling AI beyond pilot projects, including interoperability, validation, sustainable financing, compute infrastructure, and integration into existing health systems.
- Opportunities and risks associated with emerging AI technologies, including large multimodal models, with particular attention to bias, transparency, cybersecurity, and regulatory readiness.
- The need for trusted partnerships between governments, international organizations, industry, academia, and innovators to accelerate responsible AI adoption.

Key Outcomes of the session (concise billet points capturing the concrete results of the session):

- The session highlighted Egypt's AI SHARE initiative as a new platform to promote South-South cooperation in AI for health by creating pathways for locally developed AI solutions to be responsibly adapted and shared across Africa and the Arab States.
- Participants agreed that responsible AI in healthcare requires investment not only in technology, but also in governance frameworks, institutional capacity, and trusted data ecosystems.
- The discussion highlighted the importance of locally relevant datasets and inclusive AI development to improve the effectiveness and equity of AI-enabled healthcare solutions.

- Speakers emphasized that scaling AI requires moving beyond successful pilots towards sustainable implementation through common standards, validation mechanisms, and interoperable digital health systems.
- The session reinforced the importance of regional collaboration to enable countries facing similar health challenges to exchange knowledge, strengthen capacity, and develop shared approaches to AI governance.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions (2–5 bullet points outlining practical and actionable recommendations to support WSIS implementation towards 2035)

- Strengthen governance and institutional readiness by developing robust policy frameworks, ethical standards, and public sector capacity to support the responsible adoption of AI in healthcare.
- Promote trusted data ecosystems by advancing data governance, interoperability, and secure data-sharing practices that enable AI innovation while protecting privacy and fostering public trust.
- Foster multi-stakeholder and South-South collaboration to accelerate the development, adaptation, and responsible scaling of AI solutions through partnerships between governments, international organizations, academia, industry, and innovators.

Strengthen Digital Capacity-Building to Create an Inclusive and Secure Digital-Intelligent Future Beneficial to All

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/357

Key Issues discussed:

- The profound impact of digital technologies on the information society and emerging tech trends, as well as new requirements for capacity-building.
- The realistic opportunities in building digital/AI capacity.
- Best practices in digital capacity-building and governance.
- Concrete measures to boost governance efficiency, safeguard digital security, narrow digital and intelligent divide, advance inclusive development, and enrich information society governance approaches.
- Roles of governments, international organizations, technical communities, enterprises, think tanks and relevant institutions in strengthening digital capacity-building.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Bridge divides through capacity building to deliver an equitable digital-intelligent future. Guided by the vision of building a community with a shared future in cyberspace, all the stakeholders should seize opportunities brought by digital technologies, accelerate digital infrastructure deployment, and jointly pursue cutting-edge digital innovation.
- Pursue inclusive development as a guiding principle to enable open access and sharing of digital and intelligent resources. Global cooperation and digital capacity building call for an open and inclusive mindset, deeper collaboration on basic science and technological research, full engagement of stakeholders ranging from governments, academia and industries to institutional platforms, experience sharing on digital development and governance, sustained innovation momentum, and joint efforts to build a framework for sustainable, high-quality digital and intelligent development.
- Uphold security and responsible governance as the bottom line to build a reliable and trustworthy digital-intelligent ecosystem. Global stakeholders are encouraged to enhance dialogue and mutual learning over cyber policies and regulations, deepen joint research and coordinated law-based cyberspace governance, build consensus on legal governance frameworks, engage

actively in global cyberspace governance, and jointly advance peaceful, secure, open, cooperative and orderly development of cyberspace.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Digital and intelligent transformation should be fully leveraged to improve people's wellbeing, eradicate poverty and narrow digital divides, advancing the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Advance sustained delivery of WSIS Action Lines, notably on capacity building, infrastructure and international cooperation. Support the United Nations as the primary platform for global digital governance and jointly develop rules catering to the interests and needs of all countries, with special attention to developing countries.
- Strengthen dialogue and cooperation on cybersecurity, data governance and AI governance, and jointly combat cybercrimes to safeguard internet users' legitimate rights and interests.
- Promote open-source technology and technology transfer, support the development of AI models tailored to low-resource languages and local cultural contexts, and advance technological inclusivity worldwide.

Structural Asymmetry: Addressing the Sovereign Risk of AI Labor Displacement

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/196

Key Issues discussed:

- The session examined the structural mismatch between the speed of AI capability deployment and the slower pace of institutional response. AI adoption is advancing on a timeline measured in months, while national workforce, education, and AI-governance reforms often require years to reach operational milestones.
- Participants discussed why this mismatch is especially relevant for service-export economies, where digitally delivered services support formal employment, export receipts, foreign-exchange earnings, household consumption, and tax-base stability.
- The session emphasized that the issue should not be framed as a prediction of immediate job displacement. The more practical concern is whether governments have early-warning instruments in place before labour-market or fiscal effects become visible in lagging data.
- The discussion highlighted the need to distinguish exposure from displacement. Existing AI exposure indicators are useful signals, but they should not be treated as forecasts of job losses. Their primary value is to guide monitoring, preparedness, and policy sequencing.
- The session introduced the AI Workforce Stability Architecture (AWSA) as a design-stage fiscal-resilience framework. AWSA combines demand-side exposure mapping, fiscal-sensitivity thresholds, and velocity-aware transition sequencing.
- A central issue was the absence of fiscal trigger logic in existing AI, labour, and digital-governance frameworks. Current frameworks provide valuable principles, exposure measures, and governance machinery, but they generally do not link policy escalation to export-revenue, foreign-exchange, remittance, or tax-base thresholds.
- The session considered pilot-country relevance, with particular attention to the Philippines, India, and Viet Nam. These countries represent different structural variants: mono-exposure and foreign-exchange criticality, incumbent scale, and future-growth-model exposure.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- The session advanced a shared framing of AI labour-market transition as not only a labour-policy issue, but also a fiscal-resilience and macroeconomic-monitoring issue for service-export economies.
- Participants recognized the importance of monitoring AI transition dynamics before aggregate employment data deteriorates. The session stressed that the reform clock must start early because long-cycle workforce and education reforms cannot be improvised after fiscal or labour-market stress appears.
- AWSA was presented as a design-stage architecture rather than a deployed instrument. Its purpose is to help governments monitor fiscal exposure, pre-commit response thresholds, and sequence policy action against measured adoption speed.
- The session identified three practical functions that should be tested through country pilots:
    - A baseline grid linking exposed service-export employment and receipts to client-market AI adoption;
    - A fiscal-sensitivity threshold annex using the country's own fiscal and balance-of-payments data;
    - A transition sequencing protocol with named authorities, response timelines, and pre-financed policy rails.
- The discussion clarified that AWSA should complement, not replace, existing work by the ILO, IMF, OECD, UN, and regional institutions. AWSA consumes existing exposure science and adds the fiscal-transmission and timing layers that are not currently operationalized in the audited framework set.
- The session reinforced a key methodological principle: monitor, do not forecast. Triggers should be based on observable fiscal and adoption indicators, with policy judgment retained by a named public authority.
- The session proposed the development of country pilots using already published data, beginning with economies where digitally delivered services are material to employment, export receipts, and fiscal stability.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Governments in service-export economies should conduct national AI transition assessments that integrate labour exposure, export-revenue dependence, foreign-exchange exposure, remittance sensitivity, and tax-base concentration.
- Finance ministries, labour ministries, central banks, and national statistics offices should jointly develop fiscal-sensitivity thresholds for exposed service-

export sectors. These thresholds should be published as part of fiscal-risk monitoring rather than treated as ad hoc crisis tools.

- Country pilots should be launched to test the AWSA architecture within one budget cycle. Each pilot should produce a baseline exposure grid, a draft fiscal-threshold annex, and a sequencing protocol with 30/60/90-day response milestones.
- International organizations should support the creation of common methods for demand-side exposure mapping, especially the link between client-market AI adoption and service-export receipts in supplier economies.
- WSIS implementation towards 2035 should include practical monitoring instruments that operationalize the commitment to ensure AI complements and augments human labour. The next stage is not another forecast, but a set of tested early-warning and response mechanisms that governments can run.

AI Empowerment for Older People from a Gender Mainstreaming Perspective

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/188

Artificial Intelligence and Digital Government Ecosystem

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/323

Intergenerational Mentorship in the Age of AI

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/377

Converging Digital Intelligence for an Accessible Future: Building Sustainable Ecosystems for Information Inclusion

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/190

Smart Hydrology: Data, AI and the Future of Water Management
Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/366

Key Issues discussed:

- AI is the most transformative technology and an enabler for hydrology with significant potential to enhance hydrological forecasting, risk assessment and decision support by enabling faster and efficient analysis of large and diverse datasets. However, AI should be viewed as a tool that augments, rather than replacing human expertise and operational forecasters.
- Hybrid modelling approaches as the future of hydrological forecasting by combining traditional physics based hydrological models with AI models. This can help in rapid detection of patterns while physically based models provide scientific validation and improve forecast reliability. In Republic of Korea, AI based flood forecasting systems are already operational. The AI model helps detect the initial threat of floods based on which operational forecasters work on the physics-based model to verify the forecasts, including identifying the potential impacts.
- From data abundance to actionable intelligence: The challenge is not limited to the availability of hydrometeorological and Earth observation data, but transforming these data into timely, trusted and actionable information for decision-makers and communities.
- Importance of high-quality, trusted data: AI models are only as reliable as the data used to train them. Strong observational networks, quality-controlled datasets, interoperability and open data policies are essential for the success of AI solutions.
- Increased accessibility of satellite observations particularly through initiatives such as Copernicus, together with cloud computing and AI, is lowering barriers for countries to develop operational hydrological services.
- Need for integrated, systems-based approaches: Water challenges cannot be addressed in isolation. Future hydrological services should integrate water, ecosystems, agriculture, food, energy and environmental considerations to support whole-of-system decision-making and resilience.
- Innovation should be human-centered and inclusive that requires two-way communication between the service providers and users, integration of indigenous and local knowledge, and co-design with stakeholders to ensure solutions respond to the needs on the ground.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- There was broad consensus that **AI will become an integral component of future hydrological services**, particularly when deployed alongside physical modelling approaches.
- Participants reaffirmed that **human expertise remains indispensable**, with operational forecasters providing critical interpretation, validation and communication of AI-generated forecasts.
- **AI assisted flood forecasting is already delivering measurable benefits** in some countries, and ongoing pilot initiatives using AI-based flood forecasting is providing valuable evidence for wider adoption and scaling up.
- **Future hydrological systems should evolve towards integrated digital ecosystems**, leveraging digital twins, real-time observations, AI and multidisciplinary datasets to support more holistic water management. Platforms such as Village OS already leverages different technologies such as generative AI and local EdgeAI servers to design, optimize and autonomously operate self-sufficient, climate-resilient communities.
- The value of **international cooperation** among UN agencies, governments, academia, research institutions and the private sector is instrumental for accelerating responsible adoption of AI and other emerging technologies.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- **Promote hybrid operational forecasting systems** combining the best of both worlds – AI capabilities and physics-based hydrological models to improve forecast accuracy and to promote transparency and trust.
- **Invest in multidisciplinary capacity development**, equipping hydrologists, data scientists and decision-makers with skills in AI, digital technologies, governance and systems thinking.
- **Develop inclusive AI governance frameworks** that ensure transparency, explainability, accountability and ethical use of AI.
- **Advance international collaboration** under the WSIS framework and across the UN system to share best practices, common guidance and promote equitable access to emerging technologies for water management.
- **Strengthen user-centered service design** by improving two-way communication with users and providers.

Helping SMEs Succeed in Digital Trade: Lessons from European & ASEAN Trade Promotion Organisations

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/368

Key Issues discussed:

- Governments maintain different priorities. In considering the role of the public sector in trade-related public-private partnerships, it is important to consider the priorities of the government, whether it be market competitiveness, sustainable development, export development, etc.
- Markets remain fragmented, a crucial consideration in the proliferation of digital trade. In Europe, despite the European Union, there is still a need for localized strategies and regulatory compliance which varies per country. Trade Promotion Europe (TPE), the pan-European association of TPOs, is playing an important advocacy role in this area. In the Philippines, there are inherent infrastructural challenges as an archipelago made up of thousands of islands.
- Combined governance structures can mitigate challenges of public-private partnerships in trade initiatives. As demonstrated by an example from West Africa, maintaining a board with representatives across the public and private sectors, as well as government ministers can facilitate access to resources while preserving innovation.
- Innovative technology must meet users where they are. Users will adopt practices that suit their needs, so innovative technologies must be adapted to local environments for the greatest uptake. In the Philippines, users have not demonstrated strong digital resistance, however adopting new technologies means rethinking workflows.
- Digital platforms can strongly facilitate digital trade. In the Philippines, PHX Source supports government mandates for export development and supports market access for enterprises. TPO Switzerland Global Enterprise hosts a tender service platform to streamline resources for users, facilitate ease of operations, and present a database of opportunities for exporters.
- Artificial intelligence creates opportunities to improve the effectiveness of digital platforms, to further facilitate the proliferation of global trade. There is further an underutilized opportunity of AI; beyond generative AI, systems like predictive AI and language learning models, for example, hold transformative potential.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Facilitated dialogue between TPOs (Switzerland, the Philippines, TPE), academia (University of Amsterdam, University of Malta), and private sector perspectives on key considerations related to digital commerce.
- Examined how TPOs and other BSOs integrate digital innovation to rethink their organizational set up and their service portfolios to support SME participation in global digitally enabled trade.
- Highlighted practical case studies from the Philippines, Senegal, and Switzerland to identify operational models and service delivery mechanisms that enable SMEs, particularly smaller firms with limited digital capacity, to participate more effectively in global digital trade markets with the support of TPOs.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Scale and strengthen digital TPO platforms as gateways for enterprises by providing centralized access to market intelligence, export opportunities, tender information, business support services, and AI-enabled tools that reduce barriers to international trade and enable enterprises – particularly SMEs – to compete more effectively in global digital markets.
- Strengthen public-private collaboration through inclusive governance models that bring together governments, TPOs, academia, and the private sector to co-design and implement digital trade initiatives that balance innovation, sustainability, and national development priorities.
- Expand the adoption of AI-powered trade support services by integrating predictive analytics, multilingual tools, and intelligent matchmaking into TPO digital platforms to improve market intelligence, streamline exporter services, and ultimately enhance SME competitiveness.
- Promote international knowledge sharing and replication of successful digital trade models through partnerships among TPOs, international organizations, and research institutions to exchange best practices, scale proven solutions, and support inclusive digital trade ecosystems worldwide.

Scaling trust: from Digital Proof-of-Life to a UN Digital Identity ecosystem

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/528

Key Issues discussed:

- Explored how the UNJSPF's Digital Certificate of Entitlement (DCE), originally developed to modernize the annual proof-of-life process, has become a scalable digital identity solution.
- Examined how the DCE's use of biometrics, blockchain and artificial intelligence can strengthen secure, user-centered digital public infrastructure by improving efficiency, security and access to services.
- Discussed how lessons learned from the DCE informed the development of the UN Digital ID, a system-wide digital identity ecosystem designed to reduce data fragmentation, facilitate secure data sharing and provide a trusted digital identity throughout an individual's UN journey.
- Highlighted trust-by-design as a foundational principle for digital identity, emphasizing strong authentication, distributed verification, auditable records, user consent and responsible governance.
- Addressed digital inclusion through UNDP-supported DCE kiosks, which help users overcome connectivity, device and accessibility barriers.
- Underscored the value of collaboration among UNJSPF, UNICC, UNDP and IDB in developing trusted digital identity solutions that can be adapted and scaled across institutions.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Demonstrated how a practical pension administration tool has evolved into a model for digital public infrastructure and identity across the UN system.
- Showcased the DCE's global impact, enabling more than 60% of UNJSPF retirees and beneficiaries worldwide to complete their annual proof of life digitally.
- Positioned the DCE as the practical foundation for the UN Digital ID, supporting the development of a trusted, interoperable digital identity ecosystem across UN organizations.
- Reinforced trust-by-design, noting that the DCE is the first and only UN system solution to receive ISO certification for responsible AI.

- Showcased practical measures to promote digital inclusion, including UNDP's deployment of DCE kiosks in 18 duty stations to expand access for those requiring additional support.
- Strengthened collaboration among participating organizations, including IDB's announcement that it will launch a similar DCE solution for its own beneficiaries.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Continue advancing the UN Digital ID by building on the experience and lessons learned from the DCE to create a trusted, interoperable digital identity ecosystem across the UN.
- Expand secure digital public infrastructure to improve service access and reduce administrative burdens for staff, retirees and beneficiaries.
- Embed trust-by-design principles into future digital identity initiatives by incorporating strong authentication, distributed verification, responsible AI, user consent and robust governance.
- Strengthen digital inclusion by expanding assisted digital services, low-connectivity solutions and accessibility measures to ensure equitable access for all users, particularly vulnerable populations and those in remote locations.
- Continue fostering inter-agency and multilateral partnerships to share expertise, strengthen governance and accelerate the adoption of trusted digital identity solutions.

Operationalizing Digital Sovereignty: The Autonomy Blueprint

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/373

From Fragmentation to Coherence: The Role of the International Law Association in Global AI Governance

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/203

Key Issues discussed:

The ambition of the International Law Association to play a role in Global AI Governance

- AI as a catalyst for cooperation and multilateralism
- The polyphony of voices for a trustworthy, safe, human-centred and sustainable AI
- The fallacy of the distinction between civil and military uses: AI is inherently dual-use
- The necessity of red-lines and safeguards
- The indispensability of international rules
- Gaps and overlaps in the current international regulatory framework

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Key insights and findings
    - To say that AI brings challenges and opportunities, benefits and risks and to argue for human rights-based approach and a responsive environment and ecosystem for AI, is one thing. How to operationalize it is another story. We need an articulated but also systemic picture of the multiple intersections between AI and human rights, which is still missing, together with the recognition that not all human rights, as we know them, might apply.
    - The diversity of regulatory instruments and governance initiatives is not a failure, but a logical consequence of an emerging branch of law trying to find its way. The task before us is to turn the currently fragmented legal landscape into coherence, and the ILA Committee – given its diverse, cross-regional and cross-sectoral membership – is well-placed to help in this regard.
    - The session affirmed the ILA Committee's role as a legal forum for identifying convergence, gaps and overlaps across AI governance instruments, including treaties, soft-law frameworks, technical standards and national regulation.
- Announcements, launches, or new initiatives presented during the session

- The International Law Association will hold its 82nd Biennial International Law Conference in Vienna, Austria, between 17-21 August 2026, where the ILA Committee on AI and Technology Law will also hold special sessions that will provide an opportunity to present its activities to the broader audience and to continue the discussion of the topics also highlighted at the WSIS side-event.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- While a multistakeholder approach remains essential and all actors along the life cycle of AI are relevant, addressing users – contributing to their critical thinking and fostering their imagination – is key to ensure the safety, security, transparency, accountability and sustainability of AI.
- The Committee should develop practical comparative guidance, shared principles and, where appropriate, model laws or legal toolkits to support coherent, human rights-based and sustainable AI governance towards WSIS implementation by 2035.

Access, Agency, Voice. How communities in the Global South are shaping another technological world

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/205

Key Issues discussed:

- Digital sovereignty – the collective ability of nations and communities to shape, govern, and safeguard the digital infrastructures, data, and standards that underpin their societies, including Artificial Intelligence – is a key principle of the UN's Global Digital Compact.
- For this to happen, the Minority World will have to relinquish its grip on the development and deployment of digital technologies and encourage the Majority World to develop and deploy its own. The World Summit on the Information Society's principles of inclusion, openness, and people-centred governance offer a clear path towards a global architecture which is more balanced and capable of addressing the thorny issues of decolonization and digital sovereignty.
- What does the WSIS process need to do concretely to strengthen cultural integrity and community resilience in the context of digital communication and AI?
- What do concrete examples of how "other technological worlds" are possible and already being created by local communities and indigenous peoples of the global South tell us about what works, and what further steps must be taken?

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Key insights and findings
    - There is not one technological world or one technological future. Multiple technological worlds are possible.
    - Digital transformation will only succeed if communities are not merely connected, but empowered to shape, use, and benefit from digital technologies
    - Connectivity is not an end in itself: it is a tool to strengthen community development, culture, and participation.
    - Concrete examples in Africa, Asia, and Latin America show that communities can be protagonists of digital change and, with the

necessary support, are capable of managing and sustaining their own connectivity projects
    - Technology must reflect the diversity of communities.
    - The challenge now is to articulate public, private, and community efforts to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Announcements, launches, or new initiatives presented during the session
    - Agreements, collaborations, or commitments made
    - The organizations participating in the session highlighted their ongoing collaboration and reaffirmed their commitment to continue working together to strengthen capacity-building efforts and create enabling conditions for communities to create, operate, maintain, and sustain their own communication media, connectivity infrastructure, and meaningful digital inclusion initiatives. Participants emphasized the importance of continued cooperation among community actors, civil society organizations, governments, academia, and international institutions to advance local agency, digital sovereignty, cultural integrity, and inclusive digital transformation towards 2035.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Action 1: Invest in community-driven digital ecosystems.
- Action 2: Put communities at the centre of technology design.
- Action 3: Respect diverse solutions – respect the agency of communities and protect the community governance of their own technology.
- Action 4: Build digital capacities that foster empowerment and enable autonomy.
- Action 5: Establish funding sources to support community-centred sustainability.

The Monoculture Problem in Artificial Intelligence

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/374

Promoting and enhancing cybersecurity among small and medium-sized enterprises for sustainable development: trends and best practices

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/206

Key Issues discussed:

- Specifics and major trends of cybersecurity landscape for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- Perspectives on the issue from the East Asia, Africa and Middle East;
- Specifics of cybersecurity for SMEs and its importance for national economies;
- Best practices of incentivizing SMEs to prioritize their cybersecurity;
- Importance of international cooperation in enhancing SMEs cyber resilience.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- The session enabled active interaction between public and private sector organisations at national and international, highlighting areas of involvement and contribution towards SME cyber resilience.
- Given the primary role of SMEs in national economies, the sessions highlighted the importance of preserving SMEs from cyberthreats by a combination of measures ranging from incentivization to imposition of regulatory controls, while ensuring access to appropriate training and affordable security solutions.
- Cybersecurity landscape for SMEs is rapidly evolving. While attacks through contractors (trusted relationship attacks), remain one of the top three methods used to breach corporate networks, AI-driven attacks are becoming increasingly common, making phishing and malware campaigns easier to prepare and quickly adapt, thus increasing their scale;

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- All stakeholders (governments, international organizations, IT vendors) should strengthen their support of SMEs aimed at enhancing their cybersecurity. Such support should, among others, include providing cyber capacity building tailored for the specifics of small- and medium-sized businesses and facilitating access to cybersecurity solution that are adapted to this economic segment.

- Governments, industry and international organizations should work together to improve awareness, facilitate information sharing and promote secure digital transformation, to effectively support SME in the prevention, detection, response to and recovery from cyberthreats.

Competition Policy, Platform Ecosystems, and Fair Opportunities for Small Developers: Building an Inclusive App Economy

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/212

Key Issues discussed:

- Legal and compliance costs as a barrier to starting and scaling: Navigating overlapping regulatory regimes requires legal expertise that small teams often can't afford, effectively raising the cost of entry and diverting resources away from product development toward compliance work.
- Regulatory fragmentation across jurisdictions: Divergent rules between the EU, US, and UK create friction for startups trying to scale across borders, forcing founders to adapt their products or business models market-by-market instead of growing on a single, predictable set of rules.
- Risk of regulation undoing that on-ramp: If rules designed for large gatekeepers end up disrupting the tools and platforms smaller players depend on, the same regulation meant to increase competition could inadvertently shrink opportunity for the smallest market entrants.
- Direct link to WSIS's founding vision: Startups are the ones trying to achieve WSIS's goals with unique ideas, projects and products but they need a regulatory landscape that allows them to do that.
- Regulatory frameworks built for big players, felt by everyone else: Regulations usually try to target big players, but the compliance burden and unintended consequences tend to land hardest on small developers and startups rather than the intended targets.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- The panel reached clear consensus that regulation written for large gatekeepers routinely lands hardest on the small developers it was never meant to constrain, and framed this as a fixable design problem rather than an unavoidable cost, one that proportionality and up-front small-player impact assessment can address.
- Participants converged on cross-border regulatory coherence as one of the highest leverage fixes available, agreeing that interoperability and mutual recognition between the EU, US, and UK should be treated as a near-term priority rather than a long-term aspiration.

- The discussion tied startup viability directly to WSIS's founding vision and produced agreement that the SME and startup perspective is structurally under-represented in digital governance, a gap the WSIS+20 process is well placed to close by recognising founders as a distinct stakeholder voice.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Institutionalise startup and SME input early in the legislative process, rather than through post-hoc consultation, so digital market rules are shaped with small-player impact assessed from the outset, not corrected after the fact.
- Pursue interoperability and mutual recognition mechanisms between jurisdictions (EU, US, UK, and beyond) to reduce compliance fragmentation for startups scaling across borders.
- Use the WSIS+20 process to formally recognise SME/startup voice as a stakeholder category under Action Line C6, giving founders a standing seat in the multi-stakeholder model rather than an ad hoc one.
- Establish a recurring startup-policymaker dialogue mechanism (rather than one-off panels) so the "startups in the room" principle becomes a structural feature of digital governance discussions through 2035, not just a WSIS Forum moment.

From Conversation to Co-creation: Fostering Next-Generation Leadership for Sustainable Development through AI Literacy

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/218

Teaching AI to Speak our Language: A Showcase of Global Efforts to Bridge the "Last Mile" of AI Inclusion for Local Impact

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/225

Whose Wallet, Whose Future? Operationalizing Multistakeholder Financing for Digital Development

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/224

Key Issues discussed:

- The WSIS+20 outcome created the UNGIS Task Force on Financing Mechanisms for Digital Development – an internal, inter-agency body reporting to the CSTD in 2027 with no formal civil society seat – whose first deliverable, a scoping report, is due in August 2026, making early, coordinated, evidence-based civil society input urgent.
- The session situated the task force in twenty years of institutional failure on WSIS financing: the 2003–04 Task Force on Financial Mechanisms produced recommendations without follow-through, and the voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund was dissolved in 2009 – a history the new task force risks repeating without accountability and sustained engagement.
- Panellists explored decolonized funding approaches that increase local organizations' bargaining power and institutional sustainability.
- Regional evidence was presented on financing models that already exist: Africa's universal service and access funds, where a persistent gap between levies collected and funds disbursed leaves rural communities unserved, with reform directions for the scoping report; and the Numun Fund as a working model of flexible, community-governed feminist tech funding, alongside the Philippines' experience of ineffective universal service mechanisms.
- Participants examined shrinking development assistance, debt constraints on domestic public resources, idle universal service funds, and the question of contributions from technology firms profiting in Global Majority markets.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Through an interactive exchange with on-site and online participants, the session generated substantive input on its guiding questions.
- The principles that should guide the task force are accountability, transparency, and avoiding a repeat of the 2004 experience
- The mechanisms deserving the scoping report's attention, including universal service and access fund reform, community-governed funding models, and contributions from technology firms.

- The convening organizations will consolidate the session's recommendations and submit them to the task force secretariat ahead of the August 2026 scoping report

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- The UNGIS Task Force should operate with maximum openness despite its internal composition: published workplan and milestones, open written consultations before each deliverable, a named civil society focal point, and meetings/consultations co-located with the WSIS Forum, IGF and CSTD.
- The August 2026 scoping report should examine reform of universal service and access funds – unlocking undisbursed levies through transparency, competitive disbursement and eligibility for community networks – alongside community-governed funding models, blended finance, and contributions from technology firms.
- Financing recommendations should embed equity-by-design principles drawn from working models: flexible funding, community participation in disbursement decisions, public tracking of commitments, and use of the task force's mandate to monitor financial commitments.
- Toward 2035, WSIS financing should be framed as digital equity – infrastructure together with skills, local content and community capacity.

Science in the Age of AI: Knowledge, Data, and Trust

Tuesday, 7 July 2026, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/216

Key Issues discussed:

- AI is transforming every stage of the scientific process, from knowledge generation and data analysis to publication and peer review, raising fundamental questions about what scientific discovery means in an AI-mediated research environment.
- The volume of AI-generated research is overwhelming existing systems of quality control and peer review, with serious implications for research integrity and the trustworthiness of the scientific record.
- In many Global South contexts, AI adoption is outpacing the foundational research skills and institutional capacity needed to use it critically, risking a generation of researchers unable to independently collect, analyse, or evaluate evidence.
- The concentration of AI capability among well-resourced institutions and large technology companies is narrowing the research agenda and drawing talent away from public science systems, with long-term consequences for the public interest.
- Existing data infrastructure, governance frameworks, and national AI strategies in many countries remain poorly adapted to the specific needs and dynamics of science systems.
- The push for open science and open data is generating new tensions around data sovereignty, with researchers in some contexts choosing to restrict access to their data out of concern that benefits will flow disproportionately to those with the greatest computational resources.
- AI raises deep interpretability challenges for science: in some fields, it may be possible for AI to advance human understanding in ways that humans themselves cannot fully explain or validate.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- AI is transforming every stage of the research process, from knowledge generation and data analysis to publishing and peer review, raising fundamental questions about scientific integrity, reproducibility, and what constitutes genuine discovery.

- In Global South research systems, AI adoption is outpacing the institutional capacity needed to use it critically, with risks including empirically undertrained researchers, immature data infrastructure, and limited access to compute.
- The volume of AI-generated scientific output is already straining peer review systems to breaking point, with urgent questions emerging about how to distinguish quality research from AI-generated noise.
- A paradox is emerging around open science: the push for open data may be driving researchers to conceal their data, amid concerns that benefits flow disproportionately to well-resourced actors rather than back to the communities that generated the data.
- Concentration of AI research investment among large technology companies and elite institutions risks narrowing the scientific agenda and drawing talent away from the broader public research system.
- The ISC presented findings from its report on preparing national research ecosystems for AI, drawing on case studies across 26 countries, with a key finding that existing national AI strategies largely overlook the science sector itself.
- No formal agreements were announced, though the session reinforced the importance of ISC and CODATA continued collaboration on AI governance frameworks relevant to science systems.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- National AI strategies must explicitly address the science sector, including research integrity, data governance, and the capacity of research institutions to engage critically with AI tools.
- Equitable licensing frameworks for scientific data need to be developed urgently, ensuring that open science does not become a vehicle for extracting value from Global South data without reciprocal benefit.
- Investment in data infrastructure, compute capacity, and AI literacy within Global South research systems is essential to prevent a widening gap between those who build AI tools and those who are shaped by them.
- The scientific community must develop new norms and checks and balances for an era of AI-assisted research, preserving the integrity of peer review, the transparency of methods, and the culture of critical inquiry.
- Multilateral forums including WSIS should promote governance frameworks that counteract the concentration of AI research capacity among a small number of institutions and companies, and that protect science as a global public good.

From Data to Implementation: Scaling Digital Tools for Human Rights Monitoring

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/387

Putting data justice at the heart of AI governance

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/385

Key Issues discussed:

- Data justice must be built into data governance and AI governance from the onset. It is not to be retrofitted. Data governance is where the economics is, the control is; it is about justice and equity. Developing countries don't want extraction. They want to share equitably in the benefits of data and AI innovation.
- Data justice begins with understanding the experiences of communities affected by data and AI systems: farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous communities, women producers and so on. Data justice cannot be reduced to privacy, access, or interoperability. It is about infrastructural power. Who shapes data and AI systems? Who controls them? Who benefits from them?
- There is a big imbalance between people who create data and those who collect, process and create products out of data and harvest its value. Today, it is critical to bring data out of corporate enclosures and ensure its benefits to the wider public.
- As Artificial Intelligence re-organises production in global value chains, there's a new underdevelopment trap. The intangible assets of innovation patents accrue to the global North, while the low-paid labour of data work and the ecological costs (especially from critical mineral mining) are borne by the global South. Further, as the domestic economy's dependence on foreign AI models and cloud AI services increases, there is a rising foreign exchange deficit and the risk of reproducing a dual economy or two-speed structure.
- The push for a harmonised free data flows regime as the one-size-fits-all solution for development risks permanently entrenching data injustice, as it does not recognize the deep asymmetries in digital infrastructure, capital, and bargaining power that leave countries at different starting points.
- International economic law and data and AI governance need to be relocated in the sovereign equality of states principle for us to effectively challenge data injustice.
- Environmental justice is integral to data justice.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Data governance is structurally upstream of AI governance; every AI system is trained and deployed on the data flows. Treating data and AI conversations as separate would be an artificial and costly separation.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- It is important to link the work of the UN CSTD Working Group on Data Governance to the Global Dialogue on AI governance. We need to ensure that the recommendations of the Working Group are integrated into AI governance conversations effectively.

Investing in what already works: Public access institutions as drivers of digital equity

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/199

Key Issues discussed:

- The session opened with a reminder of the fact that the WSIS Action Lines underline the relevance of connecting community anchor institutions as an enabler of wider connectivity and inclusion. The relevance of this has been reaffirmed by the WSIS+20 outcome document. The question then is of what a high-impact public access strategy looks like in the 3rd decade of WSIS.
- UNESCO highlighted work to promote a more holistic approach to understanding internet inclusion, notably the ROAM-X indicators and work around multilingualism, as well as work with IFLA to underline the role of libraries in this space.
- UPU and IFLA presented fresh research into the degree to which Universal Service and Access Funds are already engaging post offices and IFLA.
- UPU started by highlighting how post offices were frequently present in areas which tended to suffer most from connectivity challenges, and were also very often active in providing a variety of services that helped people make the most of the internet. UPU highlighted in particular the examples of Zimbabwe, Mauritius and Botswana.
- IFLA noted libraries' wide reach and ability to offer a range of services alongside internet access, including access to culture and public space.
- The research demonstrated that both types of institution were involved in USAF-funded projects that covered new services, digital literacy training, and other forms of support, underlining that there is already a wealth of experience of how to integrate them into wider universal service planning.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- A large majority of active Universal Service and Access Funds either have a record of investing directly in supporting connectivity via post offices and libraries, or are supporting the type of activities that these anchor institutions offer.
- With both the UPU and IFLA reports based on desk-research, there is strong potential to strengthen the findings by engaging directly with USAF authorities and beneficiaries.

- In response to questions about the priorities for a research and action agenda on public access in the third decade of the WSIS process, participants highlighted in particular the need to reflect on how to ensure the long-term sustainability of funding for such inclusion efforts, how to measure the impact of public access infrastructures, and how to build skills in the public sector to make the most of these opportunities.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- UPU and IFLA will together seek additional inputs and ideas on what a research and action agenda could look like, with a view to finalising a plan by the 2026 Internet Governance Forum. They will welcome cooperation with other actors with a shared interest in realising the potential of public access to drive digital inclusion.
- There is also a value in taking forwards work on USAFs, and to work to integrate consideration of libraries into wider processes bringing together relevant authorities to plan for the future.

UNESCO, UPU and IFLA will explore the potential for a policy brief on connectivity through community anchor institutions.

Whole-of-Society Approaches to Countering Digital Scams

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/384

Key Issues discussed:

- This session explored how digital scams are evolving, what is needed to effectively counter scams and support more resilient digital ecosystems, and how actors across sectors can work together to deliver on anti-scam strategies.
- Digital scams now cost the world between $442 billion and one trillion dollars per year. Although the data is incomplete, current evidence suggests that developing countries experience higher losses to scams as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product as compared to developed countries.
- Digital scams are a complex challenge: no one actor can effectively counter scams alone. Whole-of-society approaches are needed that bring in governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community and others.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Digital scams are rapidly evolving. Artificial intelligence is helping scammers to become more effective and scale their attacks. Defenders are also using AI, for instance to detect suspicious behavior and block malicious URLs.
- Digital scams do not only inflict financial costs; they also cause social and psychological harms and erode digital trust, with one panelist emphasizing that digital scams are accelerating a 'crisis of trust.'
- Scammers are targeted all geographies and all demographics, with young people particularly at risk.
- A wide range of actors are involved in building effective anti-scam responses, including governments, civil society, and a wide swath of the private sector, from banks and payment companies, to platforms, to frontier AI companies, to mobile telecomm operators, to insurers and others.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- There is a need to better understand how scams are evolving, including investing in horizon scanning and scenarios exercises to better anticipate shifts in scam tactics.

- There is a need for more opportunities to learn across sectors and countries, including to adopt and adapt existing tools, campaigns, and approaches that work.

Enabling Inclusive Digital Development: Regulatory Capacity-Building through Multilingual Peer-to-Peer Learning between EU and Sub-Saharan Africa

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/158

Key Issues discussed:

- The role of regulatory capacity-building in supporting inclusive and sustainable digital transformation.
- Peer-to-peer learning as a model for mutual knowledge exchange between African and European telecommunications regulators.
- Multilingual delivery (English, French and Portuguese) to broaden participation and strengthen regional cooperation.
- Institutional strengthening to address emerging regulatory issues, including cybersecurity, satellite services, AI and digital inclusion.
- The importance of communities of practice and long-term collaboration among regulators.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- iPRIS project partners shared experiences from English and French capacity-building cycles and announced the launch of a Portuguese cycle.
- Partners reaffirmed their commitment to continued collaboration under the Team Europe Initiative.
- Participants highlighted peer learning as an effective approach to supporting national regulatory change initiatives and long-term institutional capacity.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Continue investing in regulatory institutions alongside digital infrastructure.
- Expand multilingual peer-learning programmes to strengthen cross-regional cooperation.
- Promote sustained collaboration through regulatory networks and communities of practice.
- Embed diversity, equity and inclusion in regulatory capacity-building and policy development.

2nd Business Roundtable

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 07:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/568

Key Issues discussed:

- The adoption of the WSIS+20 outcome document marks the beginning of a new phase focused on implementation.
- As primary investors, operators, and innovators of the digital economy, businesses play a central role in delivering many of the outcomes reflected in the WSIS Action Lines and the WSIS+20 outcome document.
- This roundtable provided an opportunity for business leaders to explain how industry is supporting implementation of the WSIS agenda and helping to close the digital divide. Representatives from the private sector shared some key focus areas which included: AI, children's online safety, connectivity, digital governance, and public-private partnerships.
- Speakers from multilateral organizations stressed that the digital divide will not be closed through public funding alone and broader efforts to mobilize investment for digital transformation are needed.
- Government stakeholders emphasized that industry partnerships, market-driven innovation, and enabling policy environments are essential to achieving the WSIS vision.
- Many participants emphasized that the WSIS+20 outcome document reaffirmed the multistakeholder model. They pointed to the permanent mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as a significant outcome, and business engagement in at the IGF in Kenya this December will be critical.
- There was broad agreement that the multistakeholder model remains the foundation of successful digital governance. Speakers highlighted that the model is not simply about representation, but about each stakeholder bringing unique expertise and contributions to the table.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Showcased how businesses are contributing to the implementation of the WSIS+20 outcomes.
- Exchanged views on how governments, regulators, international organizations, and business can work together to mobilize investment, accelerate digital transformation, and bridge digital divides.

- Provided practical business perspectives to inform discussions on WSIS+20 implementation.
- Emphasized business commitment to the multistakeholder model.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- ICC and USCIB will explore convening a follow-up engagement on the sidelines of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to continue advancing these discussions and support implementation of the WSIS+20 outcomes.
- these discussions and support implementation of the WSIS+20 outcomes.

From Digital Inclusion to Digital Sovereignty: Building Capacity, Infrastructure, and Governance for Sustainable Digital Transformation

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/122

Promoting Universal Acceptance (UA) for a Multilingual Internet: Launch of the UNESCO–ICANN UA Policy Brief

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/257

How Technological innovation could improve Early warning system and traditional media alerts in case of Disasters

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/284

Connected and coherent: the Yin and Yang of digital education

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 14:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/327

Key Issues Discussed:

- Digital education advances through two complementary pillars – the "Yin" of school connectivity (Giga) and the "Yang" of coherent, interoperable digital education systems (Gateways to Public Digital Learning) – which must be pursued together, not sequentially.
- Country experience shows connectivity itself has evolved: from simply "getting a school online" to designing tailored, end-to-end solutions per school, including electricity, security, child online protection and sustainable financing.
- Connecting a school is only the starting point. Panellists cautioned against the instinct to follow connectivity with more hardware – tablets or standalone LMS platforms are costly, difficult to sustain, and require a level of teacher capacity that is often not yet in place.
- The technical foundations needed once a school is connected include curriculum-mapped content coded as infrastructure, interoperable data registries, and verifiable credentials – the building blocks that let teachers, third parties and AI build on a trusted digital education system.
- Sustainable investment depends on partnerships that go beyond initial project support: regulators enabling fair, competitive markets; Universal Service Funds evolving into long-term delivery vehicles; and whole-of-government ownership.
- Local language, cultural relevance and inclusion (children with disabilities, out-of-school children, emergencies) must be designed into both the connectivity and content layers from the start, not added later.

Key Outcomes of the Session:

- Broad agreement that connectivity and DPI for education (Giga and Gateways) are complementary, not sequential, agendas – the "Yin and Yang" of digital education – and that their coming together, alongside deepening collaboration between ITU, UNICEF and UNESCO, marks a maturing of the joint approach.
- School connectivity must go beyond the last mile to the school and reach the classrooms and shared spaces where students learn and staff work. Only then,

connectivity would turn into meaningful access; improving learning, strengthening school services and expanding opportunity for the wider community access.

- The session clarified what comes after connectivity: not additional devices or platforms layered on top, but a curriculum-mapped digital learning repository, built as public digital infrastructure and accessible to teachers, innovators and AI.
- Country examples (Mozambique, Kenya, Cambodia, South Africa) illustrated how connectivity and digital learning systems are being reframed as government-owned, whole-of-government priorities rather than isolated, donor-dependent projects.
- The Charter for Public Digital Learning Platforms was reaffirmed as the shared normative anchor linking the two agendas, framing digital learning content and platforms as public assets serving the public interest.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Plan connectivity and digital education systems as a single continuum: align Giga and Gateways investments from the outset, treating digital learning platforms as the natural evolution once schools are connected.
- Build on accurate, shared data – mapping existing initiatives and school-level needs – before designing new interventions, to avoid duplication and target investment where it matters most.
- Invest in digital learning content as public digital infrastructure: coded, curriculum-mapped, interoperable and accessible to AI and third-party developers, rather than isolated learning management systems.
- Measure success in people, not infrastructure: track lives changed, skills gained and jobs created, alongside schools connected.
- Strengthen multi-stakeholder, whole-of-government partnerships – regulators, private sector, development partners and local communities – to sustain both connectivity and content investments beyond initial project support.

Rethinking skills in the AI age

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/582

Key Issues discussed:

- Panellists shed light on channels through which artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming labour markets today by automating tasks, creating new opportunities and increasing productivity.
- Discussions explored shifting skill requirements and challenges faced by individuals, businesses and governments to adjust to the rapid pace of change.
- Country insights were shared by Korea.
- Finally, panellists underlined possible policy responses to harness AI's transformative potential while mitigating its social and economic risks.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Launch of a new OECD report entitled "Skills in the AI age" undertaken under the auspices of the OECD-Korea Digital Society Initiative. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/skills-in-the-ai-age_972bd15e-en.html

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Investing in the quality, equity and labour market relevance of education and training systems
- Training ICT professionals through both formal education and lifelong learning
- Encouraging employer-led training
- Promoting AI literacy
- Providing tailored support for displaced workers
- Ensuring the right mix of skills for all

Beyond Ethics and Regulation: Compassionate AI for a Just and Sustainable World

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/574

Key Issues discussed:

- Translating principles into practice: Responsible AI principles are broadly accepted but hard to operationalise. Standards were discussed as the "middle layer" between policy intent and technical implementation, and measurable indicators — as the SDGs gave the Millennium goals — as what turn aspiration into something technologists can build.
- Whether values can be standardised: Algorithms inevitably carry a philosophy reflecting their creators and training data, so the question is not whether AI has values but whether they are visible. The aim should be to standardise not values themselves — which differ across cultures — but the transparency of values and decision-making, so societies can choose the systems they prefer.
- Upstream design versus downstream governance: There are limits of governing AI only after harm occurs. In every other sector, products are assessed for impact before release, raising the case for impact assessment before deployment.
- Incentives and the market's blind spot: The market does not currently value compassionate AI or voluntary standards, and that mandates are essential and can be supplemented with well-designed incentives (procurement conditions, funding alignment) to shift behaviour. Incentives must be aligned with goals the market will not solve on its own, and financial reward alone is not sustainable without a shared, well-defined vision of a desirable future state.
- Inclusion, language and access: Multilingualism and local-language data was highlighted as bridging the risk-focused and access-focused camps in AI governance: it reduces bias and extends access to those otherwise excluded at once.
- Bringing stakeholders together: Progress requires closing a long-standing gap between those who build technology and those who understand its human stakes — technologists historically dismissive of human-rights considerations, civil society often lacking technical fluency.
- Compassion as a design input: Compassion (understood as mindful problem-solving, contextual awareness, fairness, and moral reasoning) must be built

into AI systems at the training stage, and this requires reframing the underlying narrative of technological progress away from pure efficiency and profit maximisation toward solidarity and shared human values.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Compassion was advanced as a design principle for AI — embedded at the training stage so harm is prevented upstream rather than remedied after deployment — and engaged seriously across industry, multilateral and civil-society perspectives.
- The main constraint on responsible AI is now operational, not aspirational: the principles are broadly agreed; what is missing are practical, measurable ways to implement them.
- Governing AI only after deployment is widely seen as insufficient, with the emphasis shifting upstream — toward transparency in how systems are built and decide, rather than the harder task of standardising values across societies.
- Market forces alone will not produce compassionate AI; mandates, reinforced by well-designed incentives, are needed to change how systems are built.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Embed compassion at the design stage. To build Compassionate AI, systems that recognise harm, understand context, and weigh human consequences before optimising for outcomes, compassion must be designed into how systems are trained and built, not added after release.
    - SMGC offers its Satyarthi Compassion Quotient (SCQ) as the framework for doing this: a structured way to make deliberate choices at the training stage about whose realities the data represents, what harms are designed against, and what values are treated as non-negotiable. Embedding these upstream also makes them measurable as a defined standard a system can be held to before it is deployed.
- Train AI teams to see what they build. Developers cannot design for realities they have never encountered. Standardised training should bring technologists into direct contact with the communities that bear the costs of these systems — especially children and vulnerable groups — so those realities shape design from the outset.
- Move scrutiny upstream. Introduce impact assessment during design and before deployment, drawing on the pre-market scrutiny that exists in every other sector.

- Standardise transparency and align incentives. Require disclosure of how systems are trained, what data they use, and how they decide — and pair enforceable requirements with incentives such as procurement conditions and funding alignment.
- Build inclusion in by design. Treat multilingualism, local-language data, and the participation of affected and under-represented communities as core inputs rather than afterthoughts, advancing both risk reduction and equitable access, in line with WSIS's people-centred vision and its 2035 horizon.

AI for faster and better targeted humanitarian response

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/147

The Politics of Knowledge in the AI Age: Empowering Human Agency through Standards, Human Rights, and the Role of Corporations

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/395

Key Issues Discussed:

- AI is reshaping how knowledge is produced, distributed and trusted. Technical standards, though often perceived as neutral, function as governance infrastructures that shape data flows, identity systems, content moderation, and algorithmic parameters, with direct consequences for human agency and rights, such as freedom of expression, access to information, privacy, and freedom of thought.
- Economics of knowledge and liability (Brazil): the case for fair remuneration of the informational, cultural and journalistic inputs to generative AI; the risks of "engagement maximization" as the dominant platform performance metric; and Brazil's move toward a shared responsibility, due diligence-based liability framework rather than blanket platform non-liability.
- Human rights anchoring of standards (OHCHR/B-Tech): human agency and control as the anchor of AI governance; standards as governance infrastructure that can entrench power asymmetries if under-represented voices are excluded from standard setting bodies; the duties of states (as regulators, setter of incentive-systems and as AI procurers) and the responsibility of companies to conduct human rights due diligence under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD 1 Guidelines; OHCHR's newly launched work stream on AI product design and human rights due diligence.
- "Politics of knowledge" as a concept (Harvard Carr-Ryan Center): knowledge is contested along three axes: what gets recorded, what gets trusted, and what gets found, and AI risks concentrating all three inside opaque, privately built systems. Standards matter more than law in some respects because they are durable, encode the interests of whoever is "in the room," and operate beneath normal democratic scrutiny. Under-resourced languages and communities risk becoming invisible to AI systems, not for lack of value but for lack of machine-readable standards.
- Platform practice (TikTok): how a human rights-based governance structure (a cross-functional human rights working group, community guidelines grounded in international human rights law, transparency reporting, AI

content labelling since 2023, and a $2 million AI literacy fund) translates into product and policy choices, and TikTok's growing engagement in technical standard setting (e.g., C2PA).

- Content provenance and civil society (WITNESS): the value and limits of provenance/watermarking standards (C2PA) for authenticating content and protecting journalists, activists and human rights defenders; the risk that the same metadata can expose vulnerable individuals to surveillance or retaliation, particularly under authoritarian governments; the need for stronger governance of standards bodies themselves, including civil society oversight, as provenance standards get written into regulation (EU, US) and thus become de facto compliance mechanisms.
- Floor discussion: how to incorporate the knowledge and lived experience of AI harm victims and civil society into governance frameworks; how standards address oral knowledge traditions and non-written languages; copyright and remuneration tensions between rights holders, platforms, and AI training pipelines; and support for digital public goods such as Wikipedia/Wikimedia as counterweights to concentrated private control of information infrastructure.

Tangible Outcomes of the Session:

- Reaffirmation from OHCHR/B-Tech and Harvard Carr-Ryan Center of active, ongoing collaboration with ITU on embedding human rights review into standards development processes.
- Announcement of a new OHCHR/B-Tech work stream on AI product design and human rights due diligence, including a civil society validation component to test whether private sector risk mitigation claims hold up in practice.
- WITNESS's public release (the day before the session) of a report on surveillance risks associated with the C2PA content provenance standard, and its call for stronger multi-stakeholder governance of the C2PA coalition as provenance standards are increasingly referenced in EU and US legislation.
- TikTok's articulation of concrete platform practices, including AI content labelling (in use since 2023, tens of millions of uses), a $2 million AI literacy fund, and active 2 participation in C2PA, as a model for translating human rights commitments into product design.
- Brazil's articulation of a shared responsibility/due diligence liability model (following its Supreme Court ruling) as a reference point for other jurisdictions rethinking platform liability frameworks.

- Renewed calls, echoed across panellists and the floor, for public and philanthropic support to digital public goods (Wikipedia/Wikimedia) as a counterweight to privately controlled knowledge infrastructure.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Action Points:

- Bring rights holders and affected communities, including AI harm victims, civil society, and Global South and Global Majority actors, into the design stage of standard setting, not merely as consultees after the fact.
- Build contestability, explainability, and rights of appeal into standards themselves, so that the rights-respecting design choice is also the easiest and cheapest path for implementers to follow.
- Strengthen governance of standards bodies (such as the C2PA), including civil society oversight and red lines against misuse (e.g., surveillance through provenance/watermarking metadata), especially as such standards are incorporated by reference into binding regulation.
- Advance shared vocabulary and structured dialogue between human rights and technical/standardization communities, building on OHCHR B-Tech's work bridging standards of conduct (UNGPs, OECD Guidelines) with technical standards.
- Address the economics of knowledge: explore mechanisms for fair remuneration of journalistic, cultural, and creative inputs to generative AI, and re-examine platform liability frameworks to strike a balance between innovation and accountability for content distribution choices.
- Extend standardization efforts to underserved languages and oral knowledge traditions to prevent whole bodies of knowledge from becoming functionally invisible to AI systems.
- Support digital public goods (e.g., Wikimedia) through public/multilateral funding mechanisms (e.g., UNESCO-administered information integrity funds) as an alternative to sole reliance on privately governed information infrastructure.
- Continue and deepen the ITU-OHCHR joint work plan on standards and human rights as a concrete vehicle for operationalizing these recommendations in the follow-up to the WSIS+20 Review.

From GenAI to Agentic Fraud: A Multi-stakeholder Approach to Building Global Digital Trust

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/513

Key Issues Discussed: Looking Beyond 2026:

- **The governance challenge has shifted from generative to agentic AI.** Generative AI creates content; agentic AI acts autonomously, capable of registering domains, reconstructing websites, creating phishing infrastructure, and launching fraud campaigns without human intervention. This distinction fundamentally changes the speed, scale, and cost of digital fraud, and requires a corresponding shift in governance frameworks.
- **Crime has become a service.** The same way software became a service, criminal capability is now a subscription model. Bad actors no longer need technical skills to set up a website or create convincing-looking content. AI has democratized access to sophisticated fraud infrastructure, enabling impersonation and brand abuse at industrial scale. To the extent at times the copycat sites look better than the original site.
- **The economics of enforcement are structurally misaligned.** Registering an infringing domain costs approximately $20. Filing a UDRP proceeding costs $1,500. WIPO recorded its busiest UDRP filing year ever in 2025, with an estimated 20–25% of cases involving clear fraud. The asymmetry between the cost of attack and the cost of defense is not sustainable.
- **Anonymization of registrant information enables agentic fraud at scale.** Trademark databases are public. Corporate registrations are public. But WHOIS data, namely the identity of the person who registered a domain pointing consumers to a fraudulent copy of a brand is anonymised. Brand owners must obtain a court order simply to find out who registered the offending domain, making rapid enforcement effectively impossible.
- **Infringing infrastructure now exceeds the quality of legitimate infrastructure.** AI-generated fake websites, synthetic customer service agents, and deepfake brand ambassadors are, in some documented cases, indistinguishable from, or more convincing than, the authentic brand experience.
- **National frameworks, however well-designed, cannot solve a cross-jurisdictional, multi-TLD, agentic-scale problem alone.** The Delhi High Court's December 2025 order in the Colgate/NIXI case imposed meaningful

new obligations on domain registrars in India, but infringers simply migrated to other TLDs. Good national law without cross-border coordination can lead to whack-a-mole dynamics.

- **Emerging national policy models offer replicable legislative blueprints.** Denmark has emerged as a legislative pioneer, with a proposed Copyright Act amendment that remains a priority for the returning government following a June 2026 parliamentary election. Ireland has signalled its intention to follow.
- **The Global South requires accessible, harmonized frameworks, not expensive litigation.**

Developing countries, SMEs and underserved communities require affordable, interoperable and accessible governance frameworks that enable participation in the digital economy without disproportionate legal or technical burdens.

- **The new gTLD round will significantly expand the abuse surface.** Each new generic top-level domain multiplies the namespace available for bad actors to register infringing and phishing domains, increases fragmentation across dispute forums, and places growing defensive registration costs on brand owners. Without proactive policy action, the structural problems identified in this session will intensify.
- **Fragmented regulation is both a governance failure and a barrier to inclusion.** The absence of cross-jurisdictional coordination across WIPO UDRP, CCTLD forums, national courts, ICANN, and regional regulatory bodies means enforcement is only as strong as its weakest link and bad actors operate precisely at those seams.
- **Digital trust is no longer solely a cybersecurity or intellectual property issue.** It is a prerequisite for achieving the WSIS vision of an inclusive, people-centred information society and for maintaining confidence in digital public infrastructure, online commerce, and cross-border digital services.

Tangible Outcomes of the Session:

The panel, comprising Brian Beckham, Head of the Internet Dispute Resolution Section at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO); Daniel Greenberg, CEO of Lexsynergy, a leading corporate domain registrar; Vibhav Mithal, Associate Partner at Anand & Anand, a leading Indian IP law firm, counsel in India's first AI and personality rights case, and co-author of the NASSCOM Developer's Playbook for Responsible AI; and Nina Ringen, Head of IP & Life Sciences of Copenhagen-based law firm, Bruun & Hjejle, reached consensus on the following:

- **Existing IP law already recognizes the harm.** Deepfakes, synthetic impersonation, and agentic brand abuse are not legally novel in kind,

however, they are faster, more convincing, and more autonomous versions of previous harms which IP frameworks have addressed for decades. The legal foundation exists. The problems are fragmentation, enforcement cost asymmetry, and the absence of coordinated cross-border standards. As the harms we are encountering are exponentially greater than in the past, we must adopt scalable approaches for mitigation while maintaining the core principles of legal due process and fundamental fairness.

- Know Your Customer (KYC) for domain registrars is the single most targeted policy intervention available. Financial services regulators already require institutions to verify the identity of their customers. Applying an equivalent proportionate standard to domain registrars would close the anonymity gap that makes agentic fraud trivially easy to scale, without requiring new substantive law.
- The multi-stakeholder model is not optional, it-b is the only model that can tackle this problem. The session demonstrated that effective responses require intergovernmental organisations (WIPO), technical infrastructure actors (registrars), IP practitioners, AI governance specialists, and legislators operating in coordination. No single sector has the full toolkit. Participants noted that effective governance requires coordinated action across governments, technical community organisations, standards bodies, rights holders, AI developers, registries, registrars, law enforcement and civil society.
- Protection must be democratized. Any forward-looking framework that protects only well-resourced brands and celebrities while leaving SMEs, civil society, and individuals in developing economies exposed is both ethically inadequate and structurally incomplete.
- dotBrand recommendation fits naturally into the forward-looking action plan. Offering a structural solution to digital trust rather than only an enforcement mechanism. However, the high cost restricts this option to very large enterprises.

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

- We recommend exploration of governance mechanisms to address coordinated fraud campaigns that span multiple TLDs. This could start with examining the structure of the domain dispute resolution. Under the current framework, a rights holder must file separate proceedings under UDRP, ccTLD dispute policies, and registry-specific procedures to address a single fraud campaign at significant cost and with no guarantee of consistent

outcomes. A single consolidated proceeding or mutual recognition of findings across forums would materially reduce that burden.

- We recommend that governance mechaisms and national domain registries adopt Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements proportionate to those applied in the financial services sector. Identity verification at the point of domain registration is a targeted, technically feasible intervention that would close the anonymity gap enabling agentic fraud at scale, while remaining consistent with privacy frameworks including GDPR.
- We recommend that WSIS encourage member states to adopt emerging national policy models for personality rights protection against AI-generated impersonation and synthetic media. Frameworks such as the one which is being developed in Denmark, using existing enforcement mechanisms including the EU Digital Services Act, provide replicable templates that do not require new international treaty infrastructure to implement.
- We recommend that ITU establish accessible guidance resources for developing nations, SMEs, and civil society on navigating AI-driven brand abuse and digital impersonation. Technical, legal, and ethical expertise must be made available beyond the tier of organizations that can afford specialist counsel, consistent with the WSIS vision of an inclusive information society.
- We recommend that WSIS consider INTA's Board Resolution on 5 Foundational AI Principles which are available online, as a framework to inform the WSIS+20 Review, particularly as it relates to transparency, human oversight, and the rights of IP holders in AI-driven environments.
- We further recommend that the post-2026 WSIS framework explicitly recognize IP rights infrastructure as digital trust infrastructure. Trademark systems, domain dispute mechanisms, and personality rights frameworks are foundational to whether people can trust what they see, who they are communicating with, and whether the digital economy is safe for them to participate in. WSIS Action Lines C5 and C10, and UN Global Digital Compact Objectives 3 and 5, provide the anchors for this recognition.

From local to global Internet governance

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/393

In the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum, which was held in Geneva from 6 to 10 July 2026 under the auspices of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD, with the support of the Swiss Confederation, the Internet Society (ISOC) France organized a round table dedicated to Internet governance and its evolution across several national and regional contexts.

This session, entrusted by Nicolas Chagny, President of the Internet Society France, to Sébastien Bachollet, Honorary President, was held on July 9, 2026 and brought together:

- Sébastien Bachollet (France), chair of the session – a look back at the birth of IGF France
- Abdeldjalil Bachar Bong (Chad) – IGF Chad and the African Sub-Regional IGF
- Olivier Crépin-Leblond (United Kingdom) – the British IGF and EuroDIG
- Kyoko Yoshinaga (Japan) – The Evolution of Internet Governance in Japan

The exchanges, organized around several national and regional experiences, addressed how artificial intelligence can contribute to strengthening the multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance, before a time of open dialogue with the room and online participants.

Governance that must be built from the bottom up

In his opening remarks, Sébastien Bachollet recalled that Internet governance must be built "*from the bottom* up". He explained that while the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was born out of the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva and then in 2005 in Tunis, he personally would have preferred local initiatives to precede the global forum – a vision that he said had gradually become a reality through the proliferation of national and regional IGFs.

He retraced several milestones in this history:

- In 2018, France hosted the World Forum in Paris, at the UNESCO premises.
- The IGF France has been held under this name since 2014, and has become the meeting place for the various players in Internet governance in France, bringing together the presidents of the regulatory authorities (CNIL, Arcep, CSA, etc.) and the ministers in charge of digital affairs, with the participation of international organizations such as the Internet Society Monde Monde, ICANN, EURALO and UNESCO.

- In addition, the organizers of the IGF (including the Internet Society Frrance and Afnic) have set up the Digital Future Workshops, which punctuate the year to produce proposals that feed into the debates of national, regional and global forums. Organized for four years in a small village in the Nièvre region, these Workshops bring together local, national and global actors around topics such as AI, the Internet and democracy, or the functioning of the Internet.
- Sébastien Bachollet also recalled the French precedent in this area: from 2002 to 2008, an event was held under the name of EGENI, supported by the Internet Society France, Cigref, Medef and the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with the support of Afnic.
- Finally, he mentioned that IGF France strives to organize activities related to the Arts at each of its events.

More information: igf-france.fr

Contrasting national and regional experiences

In Chad, a forum that has become a space for dialogue between citizens and authorities

Abdeldjalil Bachar Bong presented the experience of the National Forum of Chad, created in 2014 to bring together actors who previously worked in isolation. The first national forum, held in 2015, brought together more than 700 participants from government, academia, civil society, youth and women.

According to him, the forum has become a real space for dialogue between citizens and authorities, with discussions including the high cost of the internet, its quality, cybersecurity and digital policies, and the recommendations made are then forwarded to the government. He also said that this forum has enabled Chad to strengthen its presence in African and international bodies, such as the African IGF and ICANN, and insisted on the need to develop digital skills through Internet governance schools and training for young people.

More information: igf.td

United Kingdom: stable funding and renewal challenges

Olivier Crépin-Leblond presented the UK Internet Governance Forum, created in 2007. He explained that its main advantage is stable funding, but that this sometimes limits the diversity of partners; He insisted on the need to renew the members of the organising committee, to improve the diversity of profiles and to better represent the whole of British society.

He then described the functioning of EuroDIG, the European Internet Governance Forum, which relies entirely on the participation of the community: the

topics are proposed, grouped and then selected by the participants themselves, with the Board of Directors focusing mainly on the administrative, legal and financial aspects. He stressed that the main difficulties of EuroDIG are funding, the mobilisation of volunteers and the maintenance of a truly multi-stakeholder model.
More information: ukigf.org.uk

Japan, from Internet Governance to Artificial Intelligence Governance
Kyoko Yoshinaga traced the evolution of digital governance in Japan, from the early days of the Internet to the current challenges of artificial intelligence. A lawyer specializing in public policy, she explained that laws are no longer enough to regulate digital technologies that evolve much faster than legislative processes.
It has shown that modern governance is based on a combination of regulations, voluntary standards, public-private cooperation and civil society participation. She pointed out that the challenges posed by AI – disinformation, deepfakes, cybersecurity, privacy – are similar to those faced with the internet, but on a much larger scale. It concluded that AI could improve governance through machine translation, public consultation analysis, and decision support, but that it should never replace the multi-stakeholder process.
Exchanges with the audience
Discussions with participants in the room and online focused on:

- the governance of the African IGF and its development (igf.africa);
- protecting children online;
- digital education and the history of the Internet (isoc.fr – Education and training);
- the importance of Youth IGFs;
- the difficulties of financing and mobilizing volunteers.

Conclusions
The speakers agreed on several key ideas:

- Internet governance must remain multi-stakeholder, involving States, the private sector, civil society, researchers and the technical community;
- national IGFs are essential to escalate citizens' needs to the regional and global levels;
- there is a need to strengthen youth participation, foster multilingualism and maintain an open Internet while protecting users, especially children;
- Artificial intelligence must support governance processes, without ever replacing human participation.

Advancing Universal Acceptance of all Domain Names and Email Addresses

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/281

Who Certifies the AI That Moves Among Us? Building Independent Safety Assurance for AI in the Physical World

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/208

Key Issues Discussed:

- AI
  has left the screen: autonomous and assistive systems now make consequent ial decisions in the physical world – drones
  over inhabited areas, ground robots
  in hospitals, airports and streets, surgical and assistive devices – often aroun d civilians who never consented to their presence.
- A structural gap exists in the
  global governance architecture: aviation, nuclear power and rail each rest on a mature, independent safety certification regime, yet no equivalent body certifies AI systems acting in open physical environments. The EU
  AI Act addresses governance and risk classification; ISO/IEC standards
  are emerging; EASA has begun work for aviation – but the general cyber physical case falls between existing mandates.
- WSIS Action Line C5 ("confidence and security in the use of ICTs")
  has meant cybersecurity for two decades; it must now extend to safety in the engineering sense – the
  assurance that an autonomous system will not harm those around it.
- Safety is not a property of the model alone: contemporary AI models are not certifiable the way classical critical software is, because of the
  gap between the mathematics that builds a system and
  the mathematics that would guarantee its behaviour at scale. Safety is theref ore a property of the integrated architecture
  and its verified operating envelope.
- The evaluation methods already exist – EASA's SORA methodology shows how to assess the operational risk an autonomous system poses to people. What is missing is not the science but the institutional home to apply it independently to the general case.
- The multilateral system established two AI mechanisms in 2025–2026 – the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance – but neither produces, nor is mandated to produce,

an operational safety guarantee for a given system.
A third pillar – independent third-party certification – remains empty.

Key Outcomes of the Session:

- Key insight: independence is a structural necessity, not a virtue added afterwards. The maritime industry separated insurer from certifier in 1834 – one cannot impartially judge the safety of what one has an interest in deploying. This principle later built modern aviation and safety-critical software certification, and applies directly to AI: the certifier cannot be the developer, its insurer, or its client.
- Key insight: certification must be graduated and pre-normative – calibrated to operational risk (in the spirit of SORA) and producing safety criteria upstream, before standards harden, so that fut ure norms rest on a scientifically grounded basis rather than a consensus negotiated under pressure.
- Key insight: credible certification enables deployment rather than obstructing it, exactly as aviation certification made mass air travel possible by making it trustworthy.
- New initiative presented: RAISE (Responsible AI for Safety and Ethics), a Swiss foundation forming in Geneva, was presented as an effort to instantiate this missing certification pillar – conducting the pre-normative work of defining safety criteria for AI interacting with the physical world, drawing on the 1834 separation principle and SORA-type operational risk assessment.
- Commitment: RAISE positions itself as a concrete contribution to implementing the AI dimension of the WSIS+20 review, and to anchoring an independent safety-assurance capability within International Geneva.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Recognise safety assurance for physically-acting AI as the unaddressed half of WSIS Action Line C5, and name it explicitly in the WSIS+20 follow-up toward 2035.
- Mandate and recognise an independent, third-party safety-certification function for cyber-physical AI – complementing, not duplicating, the Scientific Panel (which produces knowledge) and the Global Dialogue (which produces deliberation).

- Articulate this pre-normative work with existing standards and regulatory frameworks (ISO/IEC, EASA, the AI Act), through technical dialogue among peers rather than institutional merger.
- Support the prefiguration of an independent certification institution based in Geneva, at the heart of the multilateral system, as a tangible demonstration of multilateralism's capacity to produce concrete public goods.
- Move from research to implementation: treat independent safety certification as operational infrastructure to be built now, before autonomous systems scale further into shared civilian space.

Reference Note — A Structural Gap in the Global Digital Architecture:
The following develops the session's argument for readers who did not attend, and is intended to be citable in its own right.

Artificial intelligence is no longer confined to screens and data centres. It now flies drones over inhabited areas, drives ground robots through hospitals, airports and city streets, and operates assistive and surgical systems — taking decisions that act directly on the physical world, often in the presence of civilians who never consented to be near them. Aviation, nuclear power and rail each rest on a mature, independent safety-certification regime. For AI acting in open physical environments, no equivalent body exists. The European AI Act addresses governance and risk classification; ISO/IEC standards are emerging; EASA has begun work for aviation. The general case — an AI making consequential physical decisions among people — falls between existing mandates. This is not a transient regulatory lag; it is a structural gap in a governance architecture the international community is actively building.

The difficulty runs deeper than institutional design. A contemporary AI model cannot be certified the way a classical critical-software component can. There is a fundamental asymmetry between the constructive mathematics that builds and trains a system and the analytical mathematics that would allow its behaviour to be guaranteed at scale. This analytical deficit is the root reason such models are not certifiable in isolation. Safety, therefore, is not a property of the model: it is a property of the integrated architecture and its verified operating envelope. For learning systems, the objective itself cannot be fully specified without drift – Goodhart's law here is demonstrated rather than metaphorical — but verifiable

bounds on action can be imposed. The object to be certified shifts accordingly: not the learned policy, but the bounds that contain it.

Crucially, the methods to do this already exist. EASA's SORA methodology shows how to assess the operational risk a drone poses to people on the ground. What is missing is not the science but the institutional home to apply it, systematically and independently, to the general cyber-physical case. The multilateral system has recently equipped itself with two valuable mechanisms — the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, which synthesises scientific knowledge on a non-prescriptive basis, and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, which convenes multistakeholder deliberation. Neither produces, nor is meant to produce, an operational guarantee that a particular system is safe for the people it acts upon. That is a third and distinct pillar — independent third-party certification — and it remains empty. The distinction is exact: a scientific panel characterises a class of risks, as the IPCC characterises seismic hazard; it does not certify that a given structure will stand.

The shape of the solution can be deduced rather than invented. Independence is structural: the maritime industry separated insurer from certifier in 1834, recognising that one cannot impartially judge the safety of what one has an interest in deploying — the principle that later underpinned aviation and safety-critical software. The certifier of an AI system can therefore be neither its developer, nor its insurer, nor its client. Certification must be graduated to operational risk and pre-normative in character, supplying the technical substance that standards bodies and regulators will need. And far from obstructing innovation, credible certification is what permits deployment at scale — as aviation certification did not constrain air travel but made its mass adoption possible by making it trustworthy.

Such an institution belongs at the heart of the multilateral system, not within a national jurisdiction that would compromise its perceived independence. Geneva — home to the ITU, with its tradition of neutral standardisation and its unique density of international expertise — offers exactly these conditions. It is in this spirit that RAISE (Responsible AI for Safety and Ethics), a Swiss foundation, is forming in Geneva: to carry out the pre-normative work of defining safety criteria for real-world AI and to instantiate the missing certification pillar. The call that follows is deliberately selective rather than universal. It asks states and the multilateral system to recognise and mandate an independent certification function; it asks standards bodies and regulators to articulate their frameworks with this pre-normative work; and it asks funders to make its prefiguration possible. As the WSIS+20 review

moves from stocktaking to implementation, safety assurance for AI acting in the physical world is the frontier on which “confidence and security” must now be earned.

Building the infrastructure of trust, governance, and scalability for the prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/210

Advancing Quantum Safe Transitions: Ethical, Legal, Social, and Policy Dimensions

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/207

Key Issues discussed:

- Beyond Technical Migration: Participants agreed that quantum-safe transitions should not be viewed solely as technical cryptographic upgrades, but as broader socio-technical transformations that redistribute trust, responsibility, and risk across digital infrastructures, institutions, markets, and society.
- Anticipatory and Human-Centred Governance: The discussion highlighted the importance of anticipatory governance, drawing lessons from AI governance by embedding ethical, legal, social, and policy considerations into quantum governance before technologies become widely deployed. Participants stressed the need to mainstream quantum literacy and capacity-building among policymakers, regulators, industry, academia, civil society, and citizens to enable informed participation in governance, procurement, and public decision-making.
- Addressing the Quantum Divide: Speakers examined the multidimensional quantum divide, including disparities in human capacity, cybersecurity readiness, gender representation, and participation in standards development. Participants emphasised that without targeted interventions, these gaps risk excluding many countries and communities from the benefits of the quantum era.
- Standards, Infrastructure and Coordinated Action: Participants highlighted that international standards, interoperable digital infrastructure, and multistakeholder governance are fundamental to trusted and secure quantum-safe transitions. Building on ITU's leadership in standards and connectivity, the discussion emphasised that successful implementation also requires broad participation in standards development, sustained political commitment, secure-by-design procurement, investment, institutional coordination, and timely migration, as delays by a single actor can undermine the security and resilience of interconnected digital ecosystems.
- International Cooperation and Europe's Quantum Strategy: The panel reflected on Europe's evolving quantum initiatives, including the Quantum Europe Strategy, the forthcoming Quantum Act, EuroHPC, the Chips Act, and

IRIS² and discussed how these will need to be aligned with existing international digital cooperation initiatives such as the Global Gateway and Digital Decade in order to promote interoperability, trusted digital infrastructure, inclusion, and equitable global participation, beyond the EU.

- Strengthening Local Innovation Ecosystems in the Global Majority: Participants agreed that quantum-safe transitions should be viewed as opportunities to strengthen resilient local innovation ecosystems rather than simply deploy new technologies. Alongside international standards, interoperable digital infrastructure, and multistakeholder governance, successful transitions require investment in local research, skills, entrepreneurship, institutional capacity, and participation in international standards development. This ecosystem approach can support context-specific implementation, strengthen digital sovereignty, reduce technological dependency, and enable countries to become active contributors to the emerging quantum economy.
- From Innovation to Implementation: Participants recognised that successful quantum-safe transitions depend not only on technological innovation but also on effective governance, political leadership, secure-by-design procurement, investment, economic incentives, and coordinated action across the public and private sectors. There was broad agreement that countries with greater technical, financial, and institutional resources have a shared responsibility to design equity into quantum ecosystems from the outset through meaningful international cooperation, capacity building, and knowledge sharing. Such an approach can help prevent technological lock-in, reduce new forms of dependency, and avoid reproducing historical digital inequalities while enabling all countries to participate in and benefit from the quantum future.
- Equitable Quantum-Safe Transitions through Digital Development Cooperation Participants recognised that countries with greater resources have a responsibility to promote equitable quantum-safe transitions by embedding inclusion and capacity-building into governance from the outset. This includes supporting meaningful digital development cooperation that strengthens local quantum ecosystems, promotes knowledge transfer, and enables countries to build sustainable capabilities, thereby avoiding technological lock-in, reducing dependency on external governments and private corporations, and preventing the reproduction of historical digital inequalities.

Key Outcomes of the session:

Key insights and findings

- There was broad consensus that quantum-safe migration is an ecosystem governance challenge, requiring collaboration across governments, standards bodies, industry, academia, civil society, and international organisations.
- Participants recognised that AI governance provides valuable lessons for quantum governance, particularly regarding trust, inclusion, transparency, accountability, and international cooperation. But there are also many unknowns regarding the tangible impact of quantum technologies which requires anticipatory governance.
- UNESCO highlighted the importance of human rights, information ethics, universal access to information, critical information infrastructure, and inclusive Knowledge Societies as foundational principles for global quantum governance.
- ITU emphasised the critical role of international standards and interoperable digital infrastructure in supporting secure quantum-safe transitions while encouraging broader participation in standards development.
- The discussion highlighted that delayed migration by one actor can undermine the security and resilience of interconnected digital ecosystems, reinforcing the need for coordinated action across sectors and borders.

Announcements, launches, and new initiatives:

- The session presented the research findings from the forthcoming ITU Kaleidoscope 2026 paper: Ahmed, S., Sipinen, M., & Bell, P. (2026). An Innovation Ecosystem Ethics Approach for Quantum Safe Transitions.
- The session also contributed to the development of a forthcoming DepHUB-UNESCO IFAP–ITU Policy Issue Brief on the ethical, legal, social, and policy dimensions of quantum-safe transitions.
- UNESCO highlighted the publication of The Quantum Moment, documenting key findings from the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology (2025), including evidence of an emerging global quantum divide. Agreements and collaborations Participants broadly agreed that:
- Quantum-safe transitions should be approached through inclusive, multistakeholder governance.
- Human rights, information ethics, trust, and sustainable digital development should be embedded into quantum governance from the outset.
- International digital cooperation remains essential to preventing fragmentation, ensuring interoperability, and equitable of digital dividends in our interdependent global digital economy and information society.

- An intersectional approach to addressing inequities is required to improve greater participation from developing countries, women, and underrepresented communities is necessary to build a more inclusive global quantum ecosystem.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Advance anticipatory and human-rights-centred quantum governance by embedding ethical, legal, social, economic, and policy considerations into quantum technology development, standards, and deployment from the outset, drawing on lessons from AI governance and aligning with human rights, information ethics, and sustainable development principles.
- Invest in inclusive quantum innovation ecosystems by strengthening local research capacity, skills development, entrepreneurship, institutional capabilities, and participation in international standards development. International cooperation should support countries in becoming active contributors to the quantum economy rather than creating long-term technological dependency or lock-in.
- Strengthen global capacity-building and quantum literacy for policymakers, regulators, standards experts, industry, academia, civil society, and the technical community to reduce the emerging quantum divide and enable informed participation in governance, standards, procurement, and public decision-making.
- Promote coordinated, secure, and interoperable quantum-safe transitions through international standards, multistakeholder governance, secure-by-design procurement, investment, and institutional coordination, recognising that delayed migration by individual actors can undermine the security and resilience of interconnected digital ecosystems.
- Deepen multilateral cooperation and prevent duplication of efforts among UN entities, governments, academia, industry, standards bodies, civil society, and development partners to foster interoperable, trustworthy, and inclusive quantum ecosystems. Participants further emphasised that countries with greater technical, financial, and institutional resources have a shared responsibility to design equity into the quantum ecosystem from the outset, supporting meaningful digital development cooperation that enables all countries to participate in and benefit from the quantum future in line with the WSIS vision beyond 2035.

Breaking Barriers: Pathways to Accelerate AI Enabled Healthcare

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/232

From Policy to Practice: Implementing AI Governance and Cybersecurity Frameworks in Emerging Digital States

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/401

Building to Belong – Future of Public AI and Lessons from Local Innovation

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/236

Preventing Non-Consensual Intimate Image Abuse: Global Responses to Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 14:00 – 14:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/397

Key Issues discussed:

- Challenges for member states following the Cybercrime Convention mandate to criminalise non-consensual distribution of intimate content
- The need for harmonized cross-border reporting channels
- The rising tide of domestic legislation criminalising NCII distribution and swift take-down requirements
- The expectations from the UK regulator Ofcom
- What platforms are considered high risk for NCII distribution
- What platforms should be doing to combat NCII distribution on their service/ the regulator's expectations

Key Outcomes of the session:

- UK regulator made it clear that they expect to see safety as part of the thought process from the very beginning of platforms' product or feature building journey
- Ofcom also stated that all platforms with a content upload button are considered at risk of their service being used to facilitate NCII distribution
- The European Commission spoke about the need for harmony across member states and to learn from nations with more mature NCII responses
- South West Grid for Learning outlined their model national framework, providing a blueprint for countries to combat NCII distribution https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/model-national-framework-for-addressing-non-consensual-intimate-images/

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Holding platforms to account when it comes to integrating proven safety measures to combat NCII distribution such as hashmatching and takedown policies
- Encouraging wider adopting of the UK/ SWGFL and UNODC Model National Framework https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/model-national-framework-for-addressing-non-consensual-intimate-images/

Green Digital Action: The road between COP30 to COP31

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/400

Operationalizing Digital Resilience
Thursday, 9 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/235

Key Issues discussed:

- The Internet's resilience has been built over more than four decades through open standards, interoperability, distributed architectures, infrastructure diversity, and voluntary cooperation among technical, operational and policy communities. These principles have enabled the Internet to continue operating despite failures, attacks and continuous growth, providing an enduring foundation for global digital development.
- As societies become increasingly dependent on digital services, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), cloud computing and global digital trade, Internet resilience becomes the foundation for creating justifiable trust in the digital society. Trust must be earned through demonstrable reliability, continuity and resilience — not assumed.
- Internet resilience ultimately exists to ensure that people, businesses and governments can reliably achieve their objectives through digital services. Delivering this outcome depends on a complex ecosystem of cooperating networks, Internet infrastructure, cloud platforms, power systems, supply chains, standards organizations and governance arrangements that often remain invisible to end users.
- The Life of a Packet demonstrates that even the simplest digital interaction depends on numerous technical, operational and institutional components working together. Understanding these dependencies — including those deep within routing, DNS, transport infrastructure and their supporting services — is fundamental to identifying systemic risks, preventing cascading failures and strengthening resilience across the digital ecosystem. The framework illustrates that resilience extends well beyond the visible application layer to include critical supporting infrastructures such as power, security, supply chains, finance and governance.
- A recurring finding from the Business Resilience Guide's engagement with organizations: many believe they have redundancy, but their "independent" connections often share the same physical trench, upstream provider, or power source, which are invisible until the moment of failure. Redundancy is not resilience if the underlying dependencies are shared. The Guide operationalizes this through four sequential steps adapted from hyperscaler-

grade practice for organizations without dedicated continuity teams: assessing availability needs, modeling risk through scenario mapping, building a contingency plan, and establishing governance through named ownership and regular testing.

- As practical contributions to implementing the WSIS Action Lines and the Global Digital Compact, the session will present the Marconi Society Internet Resilience Institute's two flagship Phase 1 outputs: the Life of a Packet Mapping Framework, providing a common model for understanding Internet dependencies, and the Business Resilience Guide, translating resilience practices developed by hyperscale infrastructure providers into practical guidance for SMEs and other organizations. Both resources are intended as living frameworks and are offered openly to the global community for continued refinement through broad multistakeholder participation.
- Justifiable trust must be engineered by design and sustained through operational excellence. This requires diversity of infrastructure and suppliers, interoperability, optionality in network paths and services, avoidance of circular dependencies, continuous monitoring, resilience testing, operational preparedness and ongoing evaluation of hidden technical, operational and geopolitical dependencies. Practical examples include increasing geographic diversity of critical infrastructure, reducing dependency on single providers, and designing architectures that favour long-term resilience over short-term efficiency.
- Emerging developments – including AI-enabled cyberattacks, cloud concentration, edge computing, Internet of Things deployments and the transition to post-quantum cryptography – introduce new dependencies and attack surfaces. These disruptions are already occurring. These developments reinforce the need to evolve resilience practices while preserving the Internet's open, interoperable and collaborative architecture.
- Effective resilience models must also reflect human realities. Failure scenarios experienced by mobile-first users, young people, informal economies and underserved communities often differ fundamentally from those assumed in enterprise environments. A resilience framework is only as complete as the failure scenarios against which it has been tested. Incorporating these lived experiences is therefore essential to building resilience that serves all Internet users.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Recognition that the Internet's resilience has been achieved through decades of collaborative engineering, distributed design, open standards and

multistakeholder cooperation, providing valuable lessons for future digital development.

- Shared understanding that Internet resilience is a prerequisite for creating justifiable trust in the digital society, and should therefore become an explicit consideration in implementing the WSIS Action Lines, the Global Digital Compact and emerging AI governance frameworks.
- Recognition that resilience depends not only on sound architecture and standards, but equally on the expertise, operational practices and continuous cooperation of Internet operators responsible for delivering reliable Internet services every day.
- Recognition that voluntary, measurable frameworks, such as the Business Resilience Guide's four-step model (assess, model, plan, own and test), give organizations of any size a concrete entry point for implementation, directly responsive to the session's goal of advancing measurable resilience approaches within national digital strategies.
- Increased awareness that creating justifiable trust requires understanding and managing hidden dependencies across technical infrastructure, organizations and users, including reducing concentration risks through diversity, optionality and resilience-by-design.
- Presentation and public availability of the Internet Resilience Institute's Phase 1 outputs– the Life of a Packet Mapping Framework and the Business Resilience Guide – as practical resources for governments, infrastructure operators, businesses, researchers, academia and civil society. Participants will be invited to contribute practical experience and additional use cases as these resources evolve through the Institute's Phase 2 activities.
- Strengthened dialogue between governments, industry, standards organizations, the technical community, academia, civil society and youth representatives on advancing Internet resilience as an implementation priority for WSIS+20 and beyond.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Continue strengthening the architectural principles that have made the Internet resilient, including open standards, interoperability, distributed architectures, infrastructure diversity and voluntary multistakeholder cooperation.
- Embed resilience-by-design as a foundation for creating justifiable trust, reducing hidden dependencies, avoiding unnecessary concentration, increasing optionality, strengthening routing and DNS resilience, and continuously evaluating technical, operational and geopolitical risks.

- Integrate Internet resilience into the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines, the Global Digital Compact and national digital strategies, recognising resilient Internet infrastructure as foundational to AI, Digital Public Infrastructure, digital public services and sustainable digital transformation.
- Adopt ownership and testing as standard organizational practice: name a resilience owner, and require regular testing of failover and contingency plans. Resilience becomes real only when it has an owner, a test, and a learning loop - not simply a written plan.
- Expand resilience modelling and testing to incorporate both technical dependency analysis and real-world user experiences, ensuring that resilience frameworks reflect the needs of youth, mobile-first users, SMEs and underserved communities whose failure scenarios often differ from those of large enterprises.
- Strengthen collaboration between policymakers, technical standards bodies and Internet operators, ensuring that operational experience directly informs resilience policies, implementation guidance and future Internet architecture.
- Continue developing the Internet Resilience Institute's open resilience frameworks through broad international participation, encouraging governments, operators, standards bodies, industry, academia, civil society and youth to contribute practical experience, additional failure scenarios and implementation guidance as the frameworks evolve through Phase 2.

Closing Reflection:

- The Internet has demonstrated remarkable resilience because it was designed as an open, distributed and collaborative system, and because it has been continuously strengthened through decades of operational excellence, engineering innovation and multistakeholder cooperation. As digital transformation accelerates and societies become increasingly dependent on AI, Digital Public Infrastructure and globally interconnected services, the challenge is not to reinvent these principles, but to extend them to new technologies, new dependencies and new users.
- Yet the same architectural resilience that protects the Internet at a global level can create a false sense of security at the organizational level: many entities assume they are protected by redundancy that, on inspection, shares a single point of failure. Translating architectural resilience into organizational

survivability requires deliberate, tested, owned practice - the gap the Business Resilience Guide is built to close.

The Life of a Packet Mapping Framework and the Business Resilience Guide, developed collaboratively through the Marconi Society Internet Resilience Institute, represent practical first steps towards that objective. They are offered to the global WSIS community as open implementation resources and an invitation to participate in their continued refinement through the Institute's Phase 2 activities. By combining resilient architecture, operational excellence, practical implementation guidance and the lived experiences of Internet users, they help translate the ambitions of the WSIS+20 Review and the Global Digital Compact into concrete actions that strengthen resilience and build justifiable trust in the digital society.

Engineering Justifiable Trust through Internet Resilience:

Why this organization of the take-aways: the narrative that I plan to make explicit in my moderator's framing is that each speaker represents one stage in the resilience lifecycle:

- Vint Cerf: The architectural principles that have made the Internet resilient.
- Victor Kuarsingh: Understanding dependencies through the Life of a Packet.
- Ram Mohan: Turning resilience into practical implementation through the Business Resilience Guide.
- Followed by comments from stakeholders in the chain:
- Philippe (Orange): Operational excellence: how resilience is maintained every day.
- Moritz Müller (SIDN): Engineering resilience by design.
- Katarina (SCION): Building diversity and optionality into future Internet architectures.
- Raneem Zitoun: Ensuring resilience is validated against the lived experiences of diverse users.

This progression, from architecture to dependencies to implementation to reflections from operations, engineering, and society demonstrates that Internet resilience is not solely a technical issue or a policy issue, but a continuous lifecycle of design, operation, learning and improvement that creates justifiable trust in the digital society. I believe that framing will resonate strongly with the implementation focus of both the WSIS+20 Review and the Global Digital Compact.

When digital systems fail: Understanding the Risk of a Global Digital Pandemic

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/408

Key Issues discussed:

- Up to 89% of digital-service disruptions caused by natural hazards result from secondary ripple effects, with up to 10 times more people affected than were exposed to the initial event.
- Cascading risks across power grids, data centres, cloud services, mobile networks, hospitals, payment systems and emergency alerts.
- Dependence on submarine cables, which carry over 99% of international data traffic through nearly 600 active and planned systems spanning 1.7 million kilometres; around 200 faults occur each year.
- Economic exposure: a one-day worldwide Internet outage could generate around USD 29 billion in direct losses.
- National preparedness gaps, including limited mapping of critical dependencies, unclear crisis leadership and insufficient cross-sector testing.
- Need for redundancy across cable routes, mobile networks, satellites, data centres, power supplies and emergency communications.
- Importance of international information-sharing, cyber diplomacy and public-private coordination, as most critical digital infrastructure is privately owned or operated.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Digital resilience is not solely a technical issue; it requires governance, investment, diplomacy and public-private cooperation.
- Participants identified mapping critical digital dependencies, cross-sector stress testing and clear institutional responsibilities as immediate national priorities.
- Infrastructure resilience should combine geographical diversity, alternative cable routes, satellite and mobile backup, emergency roaming, backup power and offline procedures.
- Practical examples showed that preparedness measures such as regular exercises, redundant infrastructure and pre-agreed crisis protocols can keep essential services operational during major disruptions.

- The discussion highlighted the risks created by incomplete information during crises, including misidentification of the cause, delayed response and possible cross-border escalation.
- Business-continuity arrangements should be agreed in advance among governments, regulators, operators, energy providers, financial institutions and emergency services.
- Participants supported integrating digital risks into wider multi-hazard disaster risk management and expanding practical simulations at national and international levels.
- Initiatives highlighted: The *When Digital Systems Fail* report, ITU's cybersecurity support and drills, and the International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Map national critical digital infrastructure, cross-sector dependencies, chokepoints and single points of failure.
- Conduct regular cross-sector and cross-border stress tests covering power, telecommunications, cloud services, finance, healthcare and emergency alerts.
- Require redundancy and fallback capacity, including geographically diverse cable routes, backup power, satellite alternatives, emergency roaming and offline or analogue procedures.
- Establish named crisis coordinators, decision thresholds and trusted information-sharing channels before disruptions occur.
- Integrate digital resilience into national disaster risk reduction frameworks, investment decisions and emergency telecommunication plans; by 2023, 83% of countries had such plans, but implementation and testing remain uneven.

Africa's Digital Roadmap to 2035: Implementing WSIS+20 Outcomes, Advancing Agenda 2063 and Accelerating Inclusive Digital Transformation

Thursday 09 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/577

Sustainable financing for digital development

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 15:00 – 15:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/116

Key Issues discussed:

1. The WSIS financing gap is structural and long-standing Financing for digital development has been under-addressed since the original WSIS process in 2003, and was one of the most contested and least-resolved issues in the WSIS+20 negotiations.
2. Two competing paradigms shaped (and continue to shape) the debate – the UNGIS Task Force has to choose the original WSIS (2003 and 2005) framing was oriented towards a development-impact (financing for sustainable development enabled by technology) and most developing countries persisted with this approach during the WSIS+20 process. Most developed countries tended to frame the issue around the financing of digital governance and infrastructure. This leaves the UNGIS Task Force with a choice as to which paradigm to adopt for its work. The choice seems obvious if one is to honour the WSIS vision and most speakers repeatedly stressed that the conversation should be people-centred and development-led, not technology-led.
3. The traditional blended finance model has largely failed to deliver Referred to as 'public-private partnerships' during and after the WSIS the assumption has been that concessional public finance would leverage significant private capital (the "multiplier effect"). But this has not materialised in practice. Evidence suggests public concessional finance has more often leveraged further public finance rather than de-risking private investment at scale. And the flow of private sector investment very rarely, if ever, reached poor countries and underserved regions where investment is most needed. This points to the importance of mobilising public resources, but this is challenging as outlined below.
4. Domestic public resource mobilisation faces compounding structural constraints Two constraints stand out: The inability of Global South governments to tax the virtualised operations of multinational corporations, and historically high debt-servicing burdens that outweigh digital/ICT budgets in several African countries. Debt servicing exceeds health and food-security spending in 25 of 54 countries in Africa studied by one of the speakers. Examples cited included external debt servicing at 18x Nigeria's

Ministry of Digital Economy budget, 45x Kenya's ICT sector budget, 54x Uganda's digital transformation budget, and 64x Tanzania's ICT ministry budget.

5. A significant gap exists between large-scale infrastructure investment and financing for last/middle mile connectivity. Development finance is structurally biased toward large transactions (e.g., large telecom operators, fibre backhaul, data centres) because they carry lower relative transaction costs, leaving local access and community-centred connectivity models — which could serve the estimated 2+ billion people still unconnected — poorly matched to existing financing architecture.
6. Institutional investors and existing African financial architecture remain significantly under-leveraged for digital development This includes pension funds, insurance companies, sovereign wealth funds, and the continent's 11 multilateral financial institutions (combined balance sheet of ~US$70 billion).

Key Outcomes of the session:

Key insights and findings that present useful considerations for the UNGIS Inter-agency Task Force on Financing Digital Development as it starts its work

- Development actors (not only the digital/technology community) need to lead financing discussions, to ensure digital financing is understood within the broader development finance context rather than as a standalone technology agenda.
- National autonomy and sovereignty over investment priorities emerged as a cross-cutting concern, particularly given growing power asymmetries in the AI-driven digital economy.
- A "financing bridge" — rather than a micro/macro trade-off — is needed to channel macro-level capital toward community-led, locally rooted connectivity solutions.
- Ministries of ICT/Digital Economy generally have weaker familiarity with development finance institutions and mechanisms than Ministries of Finance, creating a capacity and navigation gap.
- There is a capacity gap at the level of donor-countries, agencies and investors who often lack an understanding of development challenges faced by those most in need of financial support
- Blended-financing solutions are not an easy fix. They have failed to deliver in many cases. Public resources remain a key source of support, but faces structural constraints. Announcements, launches, or new initiatives presented

- Proposed WSIS Help Desk (presented by OFCOM/Switzerland): a liaison and signposting mechanism – not a new institution or parallel policy body – to connect Member States and stakeholders to existing, currently fragmented financing mechanisms. Builds on a recommendation from the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation and on two OFCOM non-papers (June 2025 and March 2026) proposing an integrated WSIS implementation architecture (IGF → UNGIS → WSIS Forum → SG biennial report → CSTD/ECOSOC → back to IGF).
- Proposed multistakeholer advisory group to complement UNGIS, grounded in the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines, already beginning to take shape through UNGIS's multistakeholder collaboration groups.
- ITU/UNCTAD Digital Infrastructure Investment Catalyzer, launched at the 2025 Financing for Development Forum in Seville as part of the Seville Platform for Action – an open working group connecting MDBs, DFIs, private tech companies, and civil society to share tools, templates, data, and capacity-building resources, and to help structure investable projects.
- ITU exploration of the role of Universal Service Funds (USFs) for the provision of the non-returnable capital in blended finance mechanisms.
- APC's work on micro-level blended finance intermediaries (with FCDO and Sida support) exploring how capital can be channelled through specialised intermediaries to community connectivity initiatives, distinct from the macro-level blended finance models critiqued elsewhere in the session.
- UNGIS Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing confirmed as formally established (mandated under para. 67 of the WSIS+20 Outcome Document, coordinated by ITU as UNGIS Secretariat), though its first meeting has not yet taken place.

Agreements, collaborations, or commitments made:

- Recognition that approaches to financing ICT enabled development remains a key and not effectively addressed challenge
- Broad convergence that the Task Force should build on existing mechanisms rather than create new institutions ("integration rather than proliferation").
- Task Force (via UNDESA) committed to three working priorities: (1) disaggregating evidence on financing gaps by country/context, (2) building on and mapping existing mechanisms rather than duplicating them, and (3) producing practical, actionable recommendations for the CSTD in 2027.
- Speakers welcomed continued dialogue between the Task Force and session participants, with APC and ACET specifically offering to contribute ongoing evidence and field experience.'

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Ground the Task Force's work in David Souter's four framing questions – (1) what is the actual goal (sustainable development vs. digital development for its own sake); (2) what is the right starting point (development challenges vs. technological possibilities); (3) who should lead (development community vs. digital community, ideally jointly, with development actors at the forefront); and (4) how to protect national autonomy and sovereignty over the priorities of investors.
- Pursue reform of the global financial architecture in parallel with WSIS-specific financing work, including sovereign debt relief and the ongoing UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation negotiations, rather than treating digital financing as separable from broader development finance reform.
- Mobilise under-utilised domestic and regional capital pools – e.g., African pension/insurance/sovereign wealth fund allocations to alternative assets (currently far below prudential limits, as in Ghana's ~1% vs. 25% allowable), and better coordination across Africa's 11 multilateral financial institutions – as a more immediately actionable lever than new external financing instruments.
- Advance the proposed WSIS Help Desk as the practical "front door" to whatever financing map the Task Force produces, prioritising support for Ministries of ICT/Digital Economy, which typically have less development-finance fluency than Ministries of Finance.
- Build a dedicated financing bridge mechanism for community-centred connectivity, using domestic public resources (e.g. universal service funds) as a concessional layer to leverage private and DFI co-investment around nationally defined priorities – distinct from, and correcting the failures of, prior large-scale blended finance approaches.

From Implementation to Review: WGDT Reflections on next steps for the GDC (closed group meeting)

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/417

Better Data for AI – A Possible Task

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/239

Key issues discussed:

- The role of data quality, provenance and documentation in enabling reliable AI systems, including the risks of biased, unreliable or poorly documented data inputs.
- The contribution of official statistics as trusted evidence for AI, including transparent methodologies, agreed definitions, quality assurance frameworks and confidentiality protections.
- Requirements for AI-ready data ecosystems, including findability, interoperability, harmonized metadata, clear governance and machine-readable access.
- The role of non-centralized approaches to identifying trusted data, such as the Trusted Data Observatory, and their integration with national metadata platforms and established global statistical frameworks.
- Integration of official statistics with responsibly governed new data sources, including administrative data, mobile phone data (MPD) and other non-traditional data sources.
- Responsible use of non-traditional data sources, including privacy protection, aggregation at source, representativeness, bias mitigation and safeguards for downstream use in decision-making and AI.
- Sustainable financing of national data and statistical systems, including the limitations of sectoral, short-term or project-based funding and the need for long-term capacity.
- Institutional capacity to measure digital transformation and AI adoption, including stable, independent and innovative statistical programmes and stronger coordination across public and private actors.

Key outcomes of the session:

- The session reaffirmed that "better data for AI" requires trusted, representative, well-documented, interoperable, ethically sourced and well-governed data, not simply larger volumes of data.
- ITU highlighted its work with the World Bank to support the integration of mobile phone data into official statistics, emphasizing multi-stakeholder

collaboration, responsible use and service-based incentives for operators rather than routine payment for data.

- The Federal Statistical Office of Switzerland presented the Trusted Data Observatory as a practical pathway to make trusted datasets more visible through linked national and global metadata platforms, and invited partners and potential funders to engage.
- Norad highlighted the relevance of the Sevilla Platform for Action, structured around four priorities: data and statistics as a public good, stronger system coordination, improved governance and innovation, and investment in national capacity.
- Flowminder demonstrated how anonymized mobile operator data supported Ebola surveillance in the Democratic Republic of Congo, helping identify highly connected health zones while keeping individual-level data within the operator environment.
- Cetic.br presented Brazil's self-sustaining financing model for ICT surveys, funded through ".br" domain registry revenues, supporting more than 20 years of continuity, independence and innovation in ICT statistics.
- A shared conclusion was that AI-ready data ecosystems require sustained partnerships among statistical offices, regulators, donors, private companies, academia and civil society.

Key recommendations and forward-looking actions:

- Invest in metadata, clear data documentation and machine-readable access so that trusted public-interest datasets can be discovered, understood and used responsibly by both people and machines.
- Advance non-centralized approaches to trusted data discovery, by linking national metadata platforms with global statistical frameworks while keeping data ownership .and responsibility with the relevant institutions.
- Strengthen responsible data-use safeguards for non-traditional data sources, including privacy protection, source-level aggregation where appropriate, quality assessment, representativeness checks and bias mitigation before data are used for decision-making or AI.
- Support sustainable financing for national statistical systems by moving beyond short-term, sectoral or project-based funding towards domestic commitments, coordinated donor support and innovative models that preserve continuity, independence and innovation.
- Build institutional and multi-stakeholder capacity to combine official statistics, administrative data, non-traditional data sources, such as MPD, in support of

AI-ready data ecosystems, digital transformation measurement and WSIS implementation towards 2035

Common But Differentiated Responsibilities – How can we realize this principle in WSIS implementation?

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/237

A. Key Issues discussed:

- Undoubtedly, a just and sustainable digital transition is a common global concern the environmental footprints of pan-global data and AI value chains, the risks to humanity from unregulated AI development, and the extreme consolidation of digital corporate power affect all of us. At the same time, the historical evolution of digital technologies also reflects structural exclusions that impede digital equity.
- Without the infrastructural capabilities to harness intelligence from data, developing countries end up being trapped in a neocolonial dynamic. The intangible assets of digital innovation patents accrue to the global North, while the low-paid labour of data work and the ecological costs are increasingly borne by the global South.
- Just as CBDR promotes climate justice by recognising differentiated responsibilities based on historical emissions, capabilities, and development levels, digital cooperation should advance digital justice by ensuring equitable access to the benefits of digital technologies and AI.
- Persistent– and in some cases widening– digital inequalities between and within countries should be recognised as a systemic risk requiring coordinated international action, particularly for the benefit of developing countries.
- The challenges surrounding AI and digital technologies cannot be understood in isolation from wider failures in multilateral governance and the provision of global public goods.
- Existing international governance arrangements have not merely failed to reduce inequalities – they have often exacerbated them.
- Rather than treating assistance as charity or reparations, CBDR frames the provision of global public goods as a shared international responsibility, requiring differentiated obligations based on historical advantage and capacity. Open-source AI, digital public infrastructure (DPI), and other locally developed digital public goods offer viable pathways for inclusive digital development that reduce dependence on Global North platforms. Further, data is the primary public good. Data has been progressively enclosed

through platformization and AI development, enabling a handful of companies to accumulate the data and resources needed to dominate AI.

B. Recommendations and forward-looking actions:

- AI governance principles must be backed by: adequate financing; sustained political commitment; measurable and auditable outcomes; and meaningful capacity-building for developing countries.
- Global governance has favoured Big Tech. Decades of multilateral governance have produced outcomes that disproportionately benefit large technology companies, which now play a significant role in shaping international policy agendas.
- Current multilateral reforms have fallen short. Recent G20 processes have failed to deliver meaningful reforms to the international financial architecture or advance digital justice, data justice, and economic justice.
- International tax reform is a priority. Ensuring that large technology companies pay their fair share of taxes would significantly expand fiscal space for developing countries and reduce financing constraints.
- Debt relief commitments need to be honoured. The failure to implement promised debt relief has undermined developing countries' ability to fulfil CBDR and finance development.
- Global public goods require public financing and governance. Reforming multilateral institutions to finance and govern digital public goods in the public interest should be a central objective.
- Plurilateral cooperation should complement multilateralism. While multilateral reform remains essential, developing countries should also leverage alternative arrangements—such as the BRICS New Development Bank—to strengthen their bargaining power and advance shared priorities. Regional integration is particularly important for Africa. Sharing infrastructure, harmonising regulatory frameworks, and creating larger regional markets can generate the scale needed to negotiate more effectively with both multilateral institutions and major technology companies.

Delivering ICT's Climate Impact: Data, Methods and Country Experiences

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 16:00 – 16:45

Please find the session details here:

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/416

How can we articulate Global AI Governance with Human Rights and Multistakeholder Engagement?

Thursday, 9 July 2025, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/424

Key Issues discussed:

- The fragmentation of AI governance processes and obstacles for meaningful Global South participation across the Global Digital Compact, the Global Dialogue on AI, WSIS+20, AI for Good and other international and regional forums;
- Structural barriers to meaningful Global South participation, including funding limitations, geographic concentration of events in the Global North, overlapping agendas, visa barriers and unequal access to governments and diplomatic spaces;
- Challenges to the inclusiveness of the UN Global Dialogue and other processes, particularly regarding session overlaps, limite dspeaking opportunities, unclear participation procedures and the absence of transparent mechanisms to show how stakeholder inputs are integrated;
- The tension between development narratives on AI and the need to ensure t hat human rights are not treated as secondary to innovation, competitivenes s, infrastructure or economic growth;
- The disconnect between global AI governance and national implementation capacities;
- The need to recognize and address existing and documented AI harms, incl uding gender-based harms affecting communities already facing structural inequalities;
- Persistent blind spots in existing AI governance agendas, particularly the exclusion of military appli cations of AI and autonomous weapons from major international AI governa nce discussions such as the Dialogue;
- The importance of grounding AI governance in meaningful multistakeholder participation, drawing from lessons learned in Internet governance processes, including WSIS, IGF and NetMundial+10.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Participants emphasized that human rights should not be considered merely asa thematic cluster within AI governance. Instead, international human righ

ts law should constitute the normative baseline for the development, deployment, implementation, regulation and governance of AI systems;

- The session highlighted the need to move beyond general principles and towards concrete accountability mechanisms, including operational AI red lines for uses and design choices that are incompatible with human rights;
- Speakers identified the current design of the UN Global Dialogue on AI as requiring improvements to ensure meaningful multistakeholder participation, addressing issues such as overlapping sessions, limited opportunities for intervention, and the lack of transparency on how stakeholder contributions are reflected in outcomes;
- The discussion pointed to the need for intersessional work; inspired by Internet governance mechanisms, including the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group model and the WSIS+20 multistakeholder experience;
- The session underlined the importance of linking global AI governance with national implementation. Capacity-building should not remain limited to global forums, but should support governments, civil society, experts and affected communities at the national level;
- Speakers called for wider recognition of existing AI harms, particularly spaces for addressing AI Red Lines, including the military use of AI, and for greater attention to document evidence produced by civil society, journalists, researchers and affected communities;
- The discussion brought that the UN Independent Scientific Panel on AI should consider not only technical and academic evidence, but also evidence generated by civil society and communities directly affected by AI systems;
- Existing frameworks were identified as important references for future AI governance debates, such as NetMundial+10 guidelines on procedural aspects of improving meaningful multistakeholder participation, and the UNESCO Recommendations on the Ethics of AI regarding the peaceful use of AI systems.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Establish human rights and international human rights law as the baseline framework for all AI governance processes, including the development of accountability mechanisms and clear, operationable AI red lines grounded in existing human rights obligations by the States;

- Address structural barriers for inclusive participation in AI governance processes, including funding, speaking opportunities, session overlaps, and power asymmetries;
- Strengthen intersessional multistakeholder mechanisms between global AI governance processes, including the UN Global Dialogue on AI, the upcoming Swiss Summit and the IGF, ensuring the participation of civil society, affected communities, technical experts, human rights experts and Global South actors;
- Global AI governance should be better aligned with national implementation, with more coordination among governments to promote capacity-building and fostering dialogues that create connections with local contexts and harms;
- Ensure that underrepresented issues in AI governance are addressed in future discussions, particularly military applications of AI, autonomous weapons, gender-based harms, environmental impacts, labor impacts, documented real-world harms, and evidence generated by affected communities.

Digital Inclusion as a Driver of Community Development

Thursday, 9 July 2025, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/355

Key Issues discussed:

- Digital inclusion requires a holistic approach that goes beyond infrastructure deployment and addresses affordability, accessibility, local relevance, and community ownership.
- Community-centred digital inclusion and connectivity initiatives play a critical role in extending meaningful connectivity to rural, remote and Indigenous communities that remain underserved by conventional telecommunications models.
- Capacity development emerged as a key enabler for sustainable connectivity, empowering local actors to design, deploy, manage and sustain digital infrastructure and services.
- Evidence from Africa and Latin America demonstrated that community-centred training programmes can generate tangible social, economic and development impacts at the local level.
- The importance of mentorship, peer learning and knowledge exchange networks was highlighted as a mechanism for strengthening long-term sustainability and replication.
- Participants emphasized that training alone is insufficient without enabling policy, regulatory and financing environments that support community-centred connectivity initiatives.
- Strong collaboration among international organizations, technical partners, civil society, academic institutions and local communities was identified as a key success factor.
- The session highlighted the need for continued efforts to address the specific needs, realities and aspirations of Indigenous Peoples and rural and remote communities

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Shared evidence from ITU-supported capacity development programmes in Africa and Latin America, highlighting their contribution to digital inclusion and community development.
- The session reinforced the importance of combining capacity development efforts with enabling policy, regulatory and financing frameworks.

- Partners reaffirmed their commitment to continued collaboration, knowledge exchange and peer-learning mechanisms to strengthen local digital inclusion ecosystems.
- Successful community-centred approaches were recognized as scalable and adaptable to different regional contexts.
- Participants expressed interest in exploring opportunities to expand these capacity development models to additional regions, including Francophone Africa and Asia-Pacific.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Continue investing in community-centred capacity development programmes that equip local actors with the skills and knowledge needed to build, manage and sustain digital inclusion initiatives.
- Strengthen enabling policy and regulatory environments that support community-centred connectivity initiatives and digital inclusion efforts in underserved areas.
- Ensure that digital inclusion strategies address not only connectivity, but also affordability, accessibility and the specific needs of rural, remote and Indigenous communities.
- Foster stronger collaboration among governments, regulators, international organizations, civil society and local communities to accelerate inclusive digital transformation.
- Promote the replication and adaptation of successful community-centred models across different regions through knowledge exchange, peer learning and international cooperation.

Rethinking learning for the AI era

Thursday, 9 July 2025, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/250

Key issues discussed:

- Two foundational modes of learning - apprenticeship and storytelling - are being disrupted by AI. Throughout history, humans have learned in two core ways: by observing masters (apprenticeship) and by constructing and sharing narratives (storytelling). AI now threatens the second mode, as students can generate polished essays with minimal effort, undermining the cognitive and emotional process of building a narrative.
- Students have started using AI to pass exams without genuinely learning, raising urgent questions about the purpose of education. This raises the broader question of who will generate new knowledge in the future if we rely more and more on AI synthesis rather than original thought.
- Five meta-capabilities were proposed as essential for the AI era: learning agility, execution capability, communication skills, leadership potential, and critical judgement. AI should not replace education but should push institutions to raise their standards, shifting the university's role from providing answers to helping students ask better questions.
- Critical thinking and adaptability are becoming increasingly rare and therefore increasingly valuable. As access to information becomes cheap and ubiquitous through AI, the ability to evaluate, filter, and make sound decisions in a sea of contradictory data is now at a premium. Adaptability is a learnable skill, not an innate trait, and continuous learning is the quality most likely to sustain professionals through an unpredictable future.
- Human qualities - curiosity, compassion, and imperfection - remain irreplaceable and must anchor education in the AI era.

Key insights:

- The discussion reflected a cross-cultural and cross-generational convergence on several core themes: that AI is a tool which must remain in service of human agency; that critical thinking and adaptability are the most valuable skills in an AI-saturated world; that distinctively human qualities - storytelling, curiosity, compassion, and the capacity for genuine reflection - cannot be replicated by machines.

- AI acts as 'a mirror' that reveals what makes people uniquely human. Education should not aim to optimise students into machine-like efficiency, but instead preserve the human capacity for imperfection, reflection, and independent thought.
- AI will continue transforming education, but its success will ultimately depend on whether schools and universities place greater emphasis on critical thinking, storytelling, adaptability, and lifelong learning, skills that remain fundamentally human despite rapid advances in AI.
- A commitment to lifelong learning, ideally established early in life, is the most resilient foundation for a career, as the specific disciplines studied are likely to be transformed or rendered obsolete by technological change.
- AI is an increasingly indispensable professional tool capable of improving productivity, drafting documents, and supporting complex operational decisions, but human vision, responsibility, and face-to-face collaboration remain irreplaceable.
- Execution capability - the ability to translate AI-generated ideas into real-world results - is the key differentiator in the AI era, since idea generation itself has been largely commoditised by AI tools.

Key recommendations and forward-looking actions:

- Pedagogy must align with actual human behaviour. Since students will naturally use available AI tools, educational systems that ignore this reality are ineffective. Assessment methods must evolve accordingly.
- Rather than banning AI outright or permitting unrestricted use, a middle path was suggested: designing assessments - such as oral examinations and project-based evaluations - that require genuine understanding and cannot be gamed by AI, thereby accommodating AI as a tool while preserving learning integrity.
- On the question of when students should engage AI, a compromise practice was proposed: students should first clarify their own understanding and formulate their own questions before consulting AI, so that they can critically evaluate the AI's response rather than passively accepting it - a middle ground between avoiding AI and depending on it.
- Rather than framing AI as either a threat to replace or a panacea to embrace uncritically, multiple speakers converged on a compromise position: AI should be used as an assistant for time-consuming or information-gathering tasks, freeing human cognitive capacity for higher-order reflection, creativity, and judgement.

AI and Energy for Sustainable Digital Development: Governance, Infrastructure, and Global Cooperation

Thursday, 9 July 2025, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/421

Key Issues Discussed:

- The AI-energy paradox: AI is simultaneously the fastest-growing source of energy demand — data center electricity consumption reached approximately 480 TWh in 2025, growing 17% in a single year, with projections reaching 945 TWh by 2030 — while also offering tools to optimize the energy systems it depends on.
- The physical cost of AI infrastructure: power grids in several countries are already saturated, water consumption in data centers is significant (U.S. data centers alone consume roughly 1% of Lake Geneva's total water volume annually), and at night, when renewables are unavailable, demand is met by fossil fuels — meaning AI's actual carbon footprint is systematically underreported.
- The rebound effect: efficiency gains per AI task are real but immediately absorbed by growth in usage. Every technological advance is outpaced within months by new demand, making efficiency necessary but insufficient without governance frameworks to cap or steer consumption.
- The question of restraint and intent: not every use case requires AI. Deploying AI without a clear answer to "what problem are we actually solving?" creates unnecessary dependency, increases attack surfaces, and undermines resilience. The most resilient AI may be the AI you choose not to use.
- Digital sovereignty and concentration of power: approximately 70% of global cloud infrastructure is controlled by three companies; more than 50% of global computing power is concentrated in one country; and the EU estimates its dependency on non-EU digital infrastructure at above 80%. This concentration creates both soft power risks (language, values, cultural framing of AI models) and hard power risks (the ability of one country or company to disable another's critical systems).
- Governance as a learning organization: existing regulatory frameworks were designed for 19th-century governance speeds and cannot keep pace with AI's rate of change. Governance must evolve from static compliance to a dynamic, collective capacity to learn, measure, and adapt — with standards, metrics, and accountability distributed across the entire value chain.

- Education and data literacy: responsible AI deployment requires that citizens, policymakers, and engineers understand what AI is, what it costs, and what it replaces. Educating future generations is necessary but not sufficient – today's decision-makers must develop the same literacy urgently.

Key Outcomes of the Session:

- The session established a shared diagnostic framework – the AI-energy nexus – structured around five interconnected dimensions: the core tension between AI as load and AI as tool; infrastructure under strain; resilience and the case for restraint; governance as a collective learning challenge; and digital sovereignty as a precondition for a stable and inclusive digital order.
- Practical solutions were identified: liquid cooling technologies (including NVIDIA's closed-circuit hot-water cooling systems) can significantly reduce water and energy consumption in data centers; AI-responsive grid management (demonstrated in a UK pilot involving Emerald AI, NVIDIA, Nebius, National Grid, and EPRI) shows that data centers can shift from energy consumers to active participants in grid stabilization.
- A key reframing was proposed: data is easier to transport than electricity. Bringing compute to where clean energy, cool climates, and spare grid capacity already exist – rather than building energy infrastructure around existing data centers – represents a structural opportunity to reduce AI's environmental footprint.
- The session produced a shared call to action: build the awareness, the literacy, and the governance capacity to ensure that AI scales responsibly – not just more efficiently.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Establish standardized metrics for AI's energy and water footprint, aligned with ITU's Green Digital Action initiative, so that the true cost of AI infrastructure is visible, comparable, and accountable across jurisdictions.
- Require use-case justification before AI deployment in public infrastructure and critical systems: the burden of proof should be on demonstrating necessity, not on justifying restraint.
- Accelerate the transition to AI-responsive grid infrastructure by enabling data centers to participate actively in grid stabilization – through demand flexibility, co-location with renewable energy sources, and energy storage integration.
- Develop and implement governance frameworks capable of evolving at the speed of the technology they regulate – moving from static compliance

models to dynamic, multi-stakeholder learning organizations that distribute accountability across designers, operators, regulators, and users.

- Prioritize digital sovereignty as a governance objective: nations and communities must conduct structured assessments of which critical systems require sovereign infrastructure and governance, and act accordingly – including reducing dependency on a small number of hyperscalers where systemic risk is high.

From Dialogue to Practice: NRI-Driven Multistakeholder Labs for WSIS Implementation

Thursday, 9 July 2025, 17:00 – 17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/425

Key Issues discussed:

1. NRI contributions to WSIS implementation.
2. Bridging local and global digital governance.
3. NRI Labs as multistakeholder knowledge-sharing spaces.
4. Knowledge aggregation and peer learning across NRIs.
5. Feeding in NRI outcomes to the WSIS Forum.
6. Operationalizing paragraphs 100 and 102 of UN General Assembly Resolution 80/173 through practical multistakeholder mechanisms.

Key Outcomes of the session:

Overall Outcome

Participants recognised that National and Regional IGF Initiatives generate a rich diversity of knowledge, experiences and good practices through their local multistakeholder processes. This diversity reflects different regional priorities, governance models and implementation contexts, representing one of the greatest strengths of the IGF ecosystem rather than a challenge.

Across all discussion groups, participants agreed that the key objective is to establish practical mechanisms capable of capturing, connecting, aggregating and transmitting this distributed knowledge to support the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and the Global Digital Compact.

The NRI Labs concept was broadly recognised as a promising, voluntary and community-driven approach to foster continuous peer learning while strengthening the contribution of local multistakeholder processes to global digital governance.

- Outcomes from Group 1 – Connecting Local Experiences
  - Participants highlighted the importance of establishing a predictable annual contribution cycle linking NRIs with the global IGF and the WSIS Forum.
  - Several participants suggested launching the planning process well in advance – ideally around one year before each IGF cycle– to allow interested NRIs to voluntarily identify the WSIS Action Lines

and Global Digital Compact commitments most relevant to their local priorities.

- This would provide sufficient time to organise multistakeholder discussions, engage local stakeholders, document implementation experiences and prepare meaningful contributions throughout the year.
- Participants stressed that the objective should not be to require all NRIs to work on the same issues, but rather to allow each initiative to contribute where it can add the greatest value, while progressively building a shared body of implementation knowledge across the global NRI community.

- Outcomes from Group 2 – Designing NRI Labs
  - Participants discussed possible operational models for NRI Labs and suggested drawing inspiration from open collaborative community platforms, such as the RIPE NCC model.
  - NRI Labs could provide an open space where participants voluntarily share project ideas, implementation experiences, methodologies and practical resources.
  - The discussion highlighted the importance of organising contributions through a common tagging system to facilitate thematic searches, peer learning and collaboration among NRIs working on similar issues.
- Outcomes from Group 3 – From IGF to WSIS Forum
  - Participants discussed how knowledge generated through NRI Labs could better inform the WSIS Forum and other global digital governance processes.
  - The discussion highlighted the need to strengthen the visibility and participation of the IGF ecosystem in broader international processes, including initiatives such as the Global AI Dialogue and AI for Good and other UN digital cooperation processes.
  - Participants also emphasised the importance of strengthening cooperation between NRIs and existing IGF intersessional work, creating stronger connections across the different components of the IGF ecosystem.
  - Participants considered NRI Labs a practical mechanism for improving the flow of knowledge from local multistakeholder discussions into global implementation processes, consistent with paragraphs 100 and 102 of UN General Assembly Resolution 80/173.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Continue developing the NRI Labs concept as a voluntary, community-driven mechanism to capture, connect, aggregate and disseminate implementation knowledge emerging f rom National and Regional IGF Initiatives.
- Establish an annual planning cycle beginning sufficiently in advance of each IGF process, enabling interested NRIs to voluntarily identify priority WSIS Action Lines and Global Digital Compact commitments and organise corresponding multistakeholder activities throughout the year.
- Preserve the diversity of National and Regional IGF Initiatives while creating a common framework that facilitates collaboration, peer learning and knowledge exchange across the global NRI network.
- Develop collaborative digital tools, common tagging methodologies and lightweight knowledge-management practices to improve the discoverability, aggregation and reuse of implementation experiences.
- Strengthen cooperation between NRI Labs, existing IGF intersessional activities, the global IGF programme and the WSIS Forum, ensuring that knowledge generated through local multistakeholder processes contributes more effectively to global implementation efforts.

Continue the community-driven discussion involving NRIs, the IGF Secretariat and interested stakeholders to refine the operational model and explore possible pilot activities for future IGF cycles.

Participants agreed that the long-term value of NRI Labs lies in transforming the knowledge generated through more than 180 National and Regional IGF Initiatives into a shared global learning ecosystem capable of continuously supporting WSIS implementation, strengthening multistakeholder cooperation and informing future digital governance processes.

Open Source and AI for Sustainable Development: Digital Infrastructure, Open Data, and Multistakeholder Cooperation

Friday, 10 July 2025, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/231

Ethical and interoperable data and AI governance for health, crisis response, and digital public infrastructure

Friday, 10 July 2025, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/268

Building fit-for purpose networks: Emergency Telecommunications in Action

Friday, 10 July 2025, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/428

Key Issues discussed:

- Strong regulations, including emergency roaming frameworks, are essential to maintain communications during crises.
- Clear roles, responsibilities and strong political will and commitment are needed before emergencies happen.
- Coordination among governments, regulators, operators, humanitarian partners and communities is critical. No entity can deliver alone.
- Backup systems, redundancy and rapid restoration are key to resilient networks.
- Early Warning Systems must be reliable, accessible and integrated into emergency response.
- Lessons learned, training and simulations help test and improve preparedness.
- Community involvement ensures solutions meet real needs and support affected populations.
- National and regional emergency numbers are essential for public safety and crisis response.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Emergency telecommunications must be planned and regulated before crises occur, not improvised during emergencies.
- Regulations, including emergency roaming frameworks, are critical to ensure continuity of communications when networks are disrupted.
- Strong political will and commitment, national ownership and clearly defined roles are essential for effective preparedness and response.
- Multi-stakeholder coordination is central, bringing together governments, regulators, operators, humanitarian partners and communities.
- Resilient networks require backup systems, redundancy, rapid restoration and integration with Early Warning Systems.
- Lessons learned from past disasters should inform planning, training, simulations and practical improvements.
- Community involvement helps ensure that emergency communications respond to real needs and support affected populations.

- National and regional emergency numbers are a key public safety tool and should be accessible, reliable and harmonized.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Move from discussion to implementation by translating policy commitments into concrete national action plans, timelines and accountable follow-up mechanisms.
- Establish regular coordination platforms that bring together public authorities, regulators, operators, humanitarian actors and technical experts to maintain dialogue beyond crisis moments.
- Prioritize investment in preparedness measures that can be tested in real conditions, including contingency protocols, operational procedures and practical readiness exercises.
- Strengthen knowledge-sharing across countries and regions by documenting good practices, lessons learned and scalable models that can support countries facing similar risks.
- Ensure that future emergency telecommunications planning remains people-centred, inclusive and responsive to the needs of affected communities, particularly those in vulnerable or hard-to-reach areas.

Together, these recommendations will help advance the implementation of the WSIS framework for action by strengthening inclusive, resilient and people-centred digital infrastructure for emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

Inclusion Without Safety Is Not Empowerment: Automation Is Scaling Harm Faster Than We Can Respond

Friday, 10 July 2025, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/243

Key Issues Discussed:

- The gap between expanding technological access and ensuring safety, and how that gap disproportionately shifts risk onto women, girls, and marginalised communities.
- The shift required in how digital inclusion is measured, from optimising for engagement and efficiency to optimising for safety and wellbeing.
- The 'automation multiplier': how engagement-driven design, algorithmic learning, and accelerated scale interact to amplify existing inequality faster than human oversight can respond.
- Seven recurring patterns of automated harm, spanning content-level harms (escalating content, digital overload) through to institutional-level harms (automated denial of care, automated coercive control, cultural and linguistic exclusion).
- The Vulnerability Stacking framework: why overlapping vulnerabilities, gender, disability, isolation, language, compound multiplicatively rather than additively, and what that means for risk assessment design.
- The Compounding-Risk Screen: a nine-question structural tool across three phases, design and data architecture, systemic human impact, and meaningful governance, for assessing systems before they are built, deployed, or scaled.
- [Concerns from participants about the escalation of harm, expressions of gratitude regarding the thorough explanation of risks and the sense of urgency]

Key Outcomes of the Session:

- Reinforced that safe participation is a precondition for sustainable development, not a later add-on, directly linking WSIS Action Lines C5 and C10 to SDGs 5, 10, and 16.
- Introduced the Compounding-Risk Screen and Vulnerability Stacking framework to the WSIS audience as practical, structural tools rather than abstract principles.

- Announced free availability of governance tools, including the Alt-TAB pre-deployment AI ethics assessment tool, at alttab.afk.org.au.

Main Implementation Activities & Corresponding WSIS Action Lines:

- C5, Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs: embedding the Compounding-Risk Screen into pre-deployment assessment practice for AI systems affecting vulnerable users.
- C7, E-government / e-health: applying fairness and inclusion questions to automated decision-making in welfare, disability, and health-adjacent systems.
- C9, Media: addressing algorithmic amplification of harmful narratives through accountability in content distribution systems.
- C10, Ethical dimensions of the information society: formalising the Vulnerability Stacking framework as a mechanism for recognising compounding risk in ethical assessment.
- C11, International and regional cooperation: sharing the governance screen as a free, openly available tool to support cross-jurisdictional consistency in AI safety practice.
- [Add: discussion by Away from Keyboard Inc. and Soroptimist International having opportunity to raise awareness through our platform of the Action Lines and the Key Indicators.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Encourage system designers and policymakers to adopt multiplicative, not additive, risk models when assessing how automated systems affect individuals with overlapping vulnerabilities.
- Integrate structural risk screens, such as the Compounding-Risk Screen, into standard practice before systems are built, deployed, or scaled, rather than relying on post-deployment remediation.
- Strengthen the WSIS Action Line C10 mandate by embedding accountability requirements at the point where harm is foreseeable, not only where it is administratively convenient.
- Sustain cross-sectoral collaboration between civil society, technical, and policy communities so that safety and inclusion remain linked priorities rather than sequential ones.

Making AI Safe in the Real World: From Governance Principles to Operational Tools

Friday, 10 July 2025, 09:00 – 09:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/241

Key Issues discussed:

- The gap between high-level AI governance principles and their practical application in public services, digital infrastructure and organisational decision-making.
- The role of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and the HUDERIA methodology in translating human rights, democracy and rule-of-law obligations into operational safeguards.
- The importance of coherent and interoperable governance approaches across international legal frameworks, national policies and technical standards.
- Egypt's experience in developing institutional capacity for responsible AI implementation, following its recent admission as an Observer to the CDNET.
- Sierra Leone's perspective on implementing AI safeguards in contexts where capacity, infrastructure and access to expertise remain uneven.
- The contribution of international standardisation, including ISO/IEC 42005:2025 on AI system impact assessment, to practical implementation and organisational accountability.
- The need to connect policy, procurement, risk and impact assessment, technical standards, capacity-building and continuous monitoring throughout the AI system lifecycle.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Participants agreed that effective AI governance requires an implementation ecosystem rather than a single instrument: legal obligations, institutional responsibilities, impact assessment, technical standards and operational guidance must work together.
- The discussion showed that HUDERIA and international standards can be mutually reinforcing: HUDERIA provides a treaty-grounded human rights framework, while standards can support repeatable organisational processes and technical implementation.

- Country experiences demonstrated that implementation models must be adaptable to different levels of institutional maturity and resources, while maintaining a common baseline of rights protection and accountability.
- The participation of Egypt, a newly admitted Observer to the CDNET, highlighted opportunities for closer exchange between the Council of Europe and partner countries on practical AI governance and capacity-building.
- The session strengthened dialogue among governments, the Council of Europe and the international standardisation community on aligning governance requirements with tools that organisations can apply in practice.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Support governments and public institutions in moving from AI strategies to implementation through practical guidance, training, peer exchange and context sensitive capacity-building.
- Promote interoperability between human-rights-based governance frameworks, such as the Council of Europe Framework Convention and HUDERIA, and relevant international technical standards.
- Embed risk and impact assessment, transparency, accountability and monitoring requirements throughout public-sector AI procurement and deployment lifecycles.
- Expand cooperation with CDNET members, observers and international partners – including Egypt and other countries seeking implementation support – to share tested approaches and lessons learned.
- Use the WSIS process towards 2035 to encourage inclusive implementation models that enable countries with differing capacities to benefit from AI while maintaining effective safeguards.

Sovereign Health Systems and the Collective Privacy Gap: What the World's First Indigenous-Sovereign AI Health Initiative Reveals About the Limits of Current Governance

Friday, 10 July 2025, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/488

Key Issues Discussed:

- The session examined what Pam Dixon (World Privacy Forum) described as the collective privacy gap. While privacy law and human-rights instruments are constructed around the individual, artificial intelligence increasingly operates on collective data, and much of the intelligence embedded in today's health AI is drawn from datasets that underrepresent the communities carrying the greatest burden of disease. Drawing on more than a decade of work on collective governance, including with the UN Statistical Commission and on New Zealand's algorithmic governance work where the Māori conception of privacy is collective rather than individual, Dixon characterised the gap as at once legal, socio-cultural, and technical.
- Against the backdrop of more than 4.6 billion people without access to essential healthcare, Healthcare Without Borders was presented as a working implementation case for how community governed digital infrastructure can allow communities to contribute to future health intelligence while retaining control over their data, governance, and decisions.
- Representatives of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation described sovereignty in healthcare as the community acting as its own voice in every decision. Non-consensual testing during the residential-school era continues to deter members from seeking care, and holding health information within the community, then co-designing and owning the infrastructure rather than adopting it, was presented as essential to rebuilding trust. The Nation participates as co-developer of both the governance model and the technology, not as a recipient.
- Dr. Luigi Serio (CERN, in personal capacity) described federated learning, in which models are trained where data is generated and only model parameters are exchanged, so records never leave the source. Developed for particle-physics data, the approach is already implemented in three European healthcare projects, producing high-performing prediction, diagnosis, and prevention models while data remains local.

- Sovereign clinical intelligence running on low-power devices without connectivity was presented alongside federated learning as the combination that allows a community to retain full control of its data while contributing to and benefiting from shared models. Dino Dell'Accio (UN Joint Staff Pension Fund) described the Fund's blockchain-based digital identity system, used to confirm proof of life for beneficiaries across many countries and reframed as digital dignity, in which zero knowledge proofs preserve individual privacy within collective infrastructure.
- Dr. Raghwa Gopal set out five measures against which health leaders will judge the first implementation: health outcomes, trust in data governance, operational performance, economic sustainability, and scalability across jurisdictions. Broad transformation depends on an innovation becoming repeatable, which requires common standards, interoperable technologies, supportive policy, committed leadership, and genuine partnership with communities.
- Dr. Nalini Saligram (Arogya World) reported reaching 29.5 million people in India over fifteen years, including the mDiabetes programme of 62 messages over six months, now augmented with AI, noting that 80 percent of type 2 diabetes is preventable through diet, activity, and avoiding tobacco. Adapting validated prevention content within the initiative was proposed on three conditions: cultural relevance, recruitment through a trusted local partner, and lower cost.
- Panelists examined adaptation across dispersed and under-served systems. Councillor Juliana Haimbodi described Namibia's population of about 2.1 million across a vast area with care concentrated in urban centres, setting three conditions: digital health must complement rather than replace clinicians, data must remain in-country with strong cybersecurity, and connectivity and digital literacy require investment. Nurain Janah (Kandūfā Foundation) described the Maldives as 1,200 dispersed islands on the front line of climate-related health impacts, where specialised care requires travel abroad, raising community ownership of traditional knowledge and its intellectual property. Dr. Amit Rana, a clinician, identified care providers as the system's most constrained resource and described how connected, co-designed care can reduce fragmentation, cognitive load, and burnout.

Key Outcomes of the Session:

- Healthcare Without Borders was presented with the Tsleil-Waututh Nation as founding implementation partner and first reference implementation, now in

preparation and co-designed with the Nation across both governance and technology, intended to inform later implementations elsewhere.

- Federated learning was reported as already delivering high-performing clinical models in three European healthcare projects with data kept local, evidence that collective intelligence and data sovereignty are compatible rather than opposed.
- The collective privacy gap was defined as both a legal and a technical gap, positioning collective and community rights, alongside individual rights, as the governance question that sovereign AI enabled health infrastructure must answer, and underscoring that equitable AI-enabled healthcare depends as much on governance and trust as on technology.
- Arogya World expressed interest in adapting its validated diabetes-prevention content within a modular ecosystem alongside clinical intelligence, wellness applications, and interoperable infrastructure. Namibia and the Maldives reaffirmed interest in adaptation, the latter referencing its recently launched Maldives Health Digital Blueprint. The Council of Europe Convention 108+ was identified as an accessible instrument for states without data-protection law (Pam Dixon). Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions
- Develop community-governed digital health infrastructure as a replicable reference model for the WSIS e-health agenda toward 2035, documenting, evaluating, and publishing lessons from the first implementation so that other Indigenous Nations, governments, and jurisdictions can adapt them while respecting local governance, culture, and priorities.
- Advance data-governance frameworks that recognise community-level rights alongside individual rights. For states without data-protection legislation, Convention 108+ offers an accessible instrument with enforcement effect against external data extraction.
- Hold health data under community or national control, in-country rather than in foreign cloud jurisdictions, adopting on-device inference and federated learning as the reference architecture for sovereign participation in shared models, and invest in the connectivity, cybersecurity, and digital literacy that make such systems usable.
- Pursue a phased international pathway that builds on the Tsleil-Waututh reference model, with context-specific implementations in interested jurisdictions including the Maldives, Namibia, India, and Australia, each strengthening the next while communities retain sovereignty over data and decisions.

- Use the convening of 56 Commonwealth Heads of Government in Antigua and Barbuda in November 2026 to establish a multi-stakeholder mechanism for scaling community-governed digital health, including sustainable financing and capacity building that address the resource and power asymmetry small states face in negotiating interoperable, non-extractive systems.

Building Digital Trust: The Role of International Standards in Inclusive Digital Transformation

Friday, 10 July 2025, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/246

Key Issues discussed:

- Trust Imperative: The discussion established that systemic risks and economic resilience require digital trust, setting this within the broader WSIS+20 context.
- Development Partner Perspectives: The UK's approach to digital development was detailed, including specific insights into how the standards-led toolkit was received during its deployment in Nigeria.
- Closing Regulatory Gaps: The panel explored how standards-based frameworks successfully close regulatory gaps and ensure the resilience of new financial technologies, utilising practical insights from the Central Bank of Kenya.
- Data Governance & Interoperability: Experiences from the Nigeria Data Protection Commission highlighted how international standards assist in strengthening national data governance and ensuring system interoperability.
- Bridging Policy and Practice: A key discussion point, raised during the Q&A by DSIT, focused on how to effectively raise awareness of international standards as the practical tool bridging high-level policy resolutions and grassroots implementation.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Official Publication Launch: The session served as the official launch platform for the new FCDO-BSI guidance document.
- Framework Delivery: The new guidance document was unveiled with a summary of its four core pillars and their direct, measurable impact on international digital development.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Embed Standards in Capacity Building: International development partners should integrate the core four pillars outlined in the newly launched publication into future capacity-building projects to guarantee long-term, sustainable impact beyond the lifecycle of a single grant.

- Adopt Proactive Regulatory Frameworks: Emerging economies are encouraged to leverage the guidance document to close regulatory gaps in finance technologies and data governance proactively, moving from reactive compliance to structured resilience.
- Accelerate Awareness: Drive dedicated initiatives to increase stakeholder awareness regarding the critical role of international standards in translating high-level WSIS+20 aspirations into actionable, grassroots implementation.

Safe at Scale: Translating the UN Automated Driving Systems (ADS) Regulation into Global Action

Friday, 10 July 2025, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/245

Key Issues discussed:

- The ADS GTR as the first common, evidence-based safety framework for automated driving that preserves innovation and national legal flexibility.
- Translating it into national law, certification, liability, insurance and in-service monitoring without divergent interpretations.
- The complementary roles of regulation, voluntary standards, guidance, shared scenarios and objective assessment criteria.
- How simulation, closed course and real-world testing, safety cases, and field monitoring can form credible, traceable evidence across the vehicle lifecycle.
- Capacity and cooperation required across regulators, standards bodies, developers, AI infrastructure providers, and independent testing institutions.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Adoption is a starting point: a common safety baseline can reduce duplicated validation and fragmented compliance while respecting national sovereignty.
- By connecting UN rulemaking and standards with national law, engineering, deployment and testing, the session identified comparable safety evidence as the central shared challenge.
- Safety requires auditable, structured evidence across the lifecycle – not mileage or a single test – integrating safety cases, ODD controls, simulation, track and road testing, updates and monitoring.
- UNECE reported work on interpretation guidance, implementation cooperation and scenario exchange. Speakers stressed broad participation to limit divergence and enable future mutual recognition.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Governments should build capacity to review safety management systems and safety cases, assess simulations, monitor in-service performance, and update traffic, liability and insurance rules.
- WP.29 and standards bodies should accelerate common terminology, interpretation guidance, scenario sharing and objective evaluation criteria, with participation from all major markets.

- Industry and testers should create independently verifiable, traceable pipelines linking simulation, track, road and field data to support comparable evidence and interoperable certification.

The Next Byte – Shaping Human-Centred Internet Governance

Friday, 10 July 2025, 10:00 – 10:45

Please find the session details here:

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/282

ITU Contribution to the WSIS Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes
Friday, 10 July 2025, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/430

Ethical, Human-Centric, and Inclusive Development: Integrating Right, Truth, Justice and Consultations Principles in ICT Governance for a Sustainable Future

Friday, 10 July 2025, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/316

Developing strategies for AI literacy in action
Friday, 10 July 2025, 11:00 – 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/136

Key Issues discussed:

- The session brought together experts from across sectors, all working on AI Literacy in different ways, to share their work. The goal of the session was to provide participants with the opportunity to hear from these experts and then take this learning and apply it. This included Adele Taylor from NoFiltr, Rebecca Zausmer from Global Partners Digital and Theresa Tjandrawinata, CEO of Yapp and TikTok creator.
- TikTok highlighted their Responsible AI Principles that prioritize transparency, accountability, fairness, privacy, and safety, pairing advanced technology with human oversight, clear labeling, and industry partnerships. They also discussed the importance of transparency around the use of AIGC being critical to build trust in the technology, as it helps creators and users understand what they are seeing and its origin.
- #NoFiltr described the importance of involving young people in the creation of content for young people. They work directly with young people, from ages 13-18, to create content about AI literacy that will be directly relevant to other young people, delivered on TikTok and beyond. They discussed the importance of involving young people into conversations about AI substantively, not just as an affected group, but also as a key expert in their own lived experiences.
- The CEO of Yapp and TikTok creator spoke about the power of creating a community across social platforms and delivering easy to understand and relevant content about AI, which users could then turn around and apply in their own contexts. They spoke about the importance of authenticity and reaching people where they are at.
- Global Partners Digital spoke about their Tech Harms Check tool, which provides users with a resource to better understand the human rights risks of the tools they plan to use or deploy. A better understanding of the AI tool we plan to use provides us with a clear opportunity to make critical and important decisions about the ways in which we deploy AI in our own contexts and provides greater literacy on what risks exist that we might not think about otherwise.

- During the discussion, session participants described the issue of AI literacy permeating all sectors, with a specific focus on the education sector and in universities. They described some positive examples of AI literacy work in practice, including examples in Oman and across Sub-Saharan Africa. Most table discussions focused on the need for partnerships and a multi-stakeholder approach to delivering effective and ongoing AI literacy support to all age groups.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Key insights and findings
    - AI literacy is a whole of ecosystem approach. The education sector plays a strong role, but companies and governments have strong roles as well.
    - There are already great practices of reaching young people where they are at on AI literacy, education initiatives across schools, universities and government-backed digital training centers. We should learn from these good practices and apply them to our own contexts.
- Announcements, launches, or new initiatives presented during the session
    - TikTok presented their 2025 $2M AI Literacy Fund investment and shared plans for its expansion, which was announced later that same day.
    - Global Partners Digital presented their Tech Harms Check tool, developed in partnership with the Danish Institute for Human Rights and the governments of Canada and Germany.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Across the panel and discussions, participants recommended continued work to bring together multistakeholder communities to work together to tackle issues raised by AI. WSIS continues to be a strong forum in which to collaborate across stakeholder groups, given our shared responsibility to promote responsible use of AI and AI literacy.
- There was a strong recommendation to involve young people in conversations about their own lives online and to involve them in the solutions.

Building Trust and Protection for Essential Digital Services

Friday, 10 July 2025, 11:15 – 12:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/436

Key Issues discussed:

- The growing dependence of medical services, humanitarian organizations and other essential civilian services on digital infrastructure – and the serious human consequences that can result when this infrastructure is disrupted during armed conflict.
- The concept of a digital emblem as a technical means of identifying digital infrastructure associated with entities and activities protected under international humanitarian law, without creating new legal protections or altering the applicable rules of IHL.
- The progress made in moving the Digital Emblem Project from an initial concept towards operational implementation, including the development and demonstration of a prototype technical architecture.
- The importance of ensuring that a digital emblem can be issued, displayed and verified in a manner that is trustworthy, secure, decentralized and compatible with the operational realities of protected entities and potential verifiers.
- The role of open and inclusive technical standardization, including ongoing work within the Internet Engineering Task Force and engagement with the International Telecommunication Union, in promoting interoperability and global adoption.
- The need for continued testing with medical services, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, humanitarian organizations, cybersecurity practitioners and other relevant stakeholders to determine whether proposed solutions are feasible, understandable and compatible with existing systems.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Participants gained a clearer understanding of how the Digital Emblem Project seeks to translate existing IHL protections into a recognizable and verifiable technical signal for the digital environment.
- The discussion confirmed that technical feasibility alone is insufficient: effective implementation will also depend on legal clarity, trusted authorization processes, interoperability, operational testing and recognition by those expected to verify the emblem.

- The session highlighted the importance of designing the digital emblem through a genuinely multistakeholder process involving States, protected entities, humanitarian organizations, technical experts, standards bodies, cybersecurity practitioners, and industry.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Support the development of open, interoperable and globally accessible technical standards for the digital emblem through inclusive international standards processes; important to ensure that this process includes diverse stakeholders from across regions and professions.
- Expand structured testing in realistic operational environments, particularly with medical services, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other eligible humanitarian actors, while separately engaging cyber operators and other potential verifiers.

Creative Intelligence: Art in the Age of AI
Friday, 10 July 2025, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/134

Are we concerned about the development of Superintelligent AI?

Friday, 10 July 2025, 13:00 – 13:45

Please find the session details here:

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/363

HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE

Voices of the Digital Future: Youth High-Level Dialogue

Monday, 06 July 2026, 10:00-10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/149

High-Level Dialogue: Mayors - Localizing the Twin Transition

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 11:00-11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/382

Key Issues discussed:

- The role of Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) in translating global twin transition ambitions into locally adapted solutions.
- Strengthening collaboration between international organizations and LRGs to ensure cities contribute to the development of policies, indicators, and recommendations.
- The use of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and digital twins to improve urban governance, service delivery, and social inclusion.
- Inclusive data governance and the need to address urban data gaps affecting vulnerable and underrepresented communities.
- The contribution of international cooperation and cross-sector partnerships to advancing sustainable and inclusive digital transformation.
- The importance of evidence-based policymaking supported by innovative data sources and digital public infrastructure.
- Ensuring that technological innovation promotes equity and avoids reinforcing existing social and territorial inequalities.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Participants recognized the need for Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) to act as co-creators of global digital and sustainability agendas, rather than solely as policy implementers.
- Cities shared practical examples demonstrating how AI, digital twins, and other digital technologies can improve public services, urban planning, equity, and inclusion.
- The session underscored the importance of inclusive and representative data as a foundation for equitable, evidence-based policymaking.
- Innovative initiatives were presented, including Rio de Janeiro's Senseable City Rio (MIT Lab), Agadir's AI-enabled governance approach, Barcelona Provincial Council's use of digital twins, and the Universal Postal Union's use of postal networks to collect environmental and territorial data.
- Participants reaffirmed the importance of strengthening partnerships between international organizations and LRGs to accelerate the twin transition.

- Broad support was expressed for expanding opportunities for cities to contribute to international policymaking, knowledge exchange, and the co-development of digital governance frameworks.
- The dialogue reinforced the value of continued international cooperation to advance people-centred, inclusive, and sustainable digital transformation.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Strengthen the institutional participation of LRGs in the co-design of international policies, indicators, and recommendations related to the twin transition.
- Promote inclusive data governance frameworks that ensure marginalized and underrepresented communities are reflected in digital policymaking.
- Scale the adoption of AI, digital twins, and other digital public infrastructure solutions that improve public services while embedding principles of equity and inclusion.
- Foster international cooperation, peer learning, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms that enable cities to exchange best practices and accelerate implementation of the WSIS vision towards 2035.
- Encourage the use of innovative and diverse data sources, including local and community-based information, to support evidence-based decision-making and sustainable urban development.

High-Level Dialogue: Connecting Communities, Unlocking Futures: Strengthening Digital Connectivity for Refugees and Host Communities

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 16:00-17:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/466

High-Level Dialogue on Financial Mechanisms for Digital Development

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 17:00-18:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/468

Key Issues discussed:

- The session focused on paragraph 67 of the WSIS+20 UN General Assembly outcome document (A/RES/80/173), which calls on ITU, as UNGIS secretariat, to assess gaps and recommend strengthened financial mechanisms for digital development in developing countries.
- Participants discussed financing national connectivity ambitions, AI infrastructure, and regional digital transformation, emphasizing that no single actor can meet these challenges alone.
- Governments highlighted the importance of common frameworks and coordinated national plans to align investments and scale inclusive connectivity.
- South Africa highlighted its SA Connect strategy and the Digital Infrastructure Investment Study developed by DBSA and the National Planning Commission, which estimates that approximately USD 8.2 billion is needed for universal broadband connectivity, with the private sector contributing USD 3.5 billion in 2025.
- Senegal outlined an ambitious USD 1 billion, 10-year programme to expand network coverage, connect public institutions including schools, town halls and health centers, and advance digital inclusion, innovation, and accessibility.
- Private sector and multilateral development bank participants emphasized the need to move beyond accounting exercises toward greater coordination, transparency, and common metrics to build a stronger pipeline of projects.
- Participants stressed the importance of mobilizing private capital, strengthening government leadership, harnessing innovative finance models, improving coordination, and centralizing funding for implementation.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- The discussion reinforced the need for collaboration, blended finance, and risk-sharing to attract investment and support universal, meaningful connectivity.
- A key insight was the need to shift from AI ambition to AI readiness, with technical assistance helping governments access specialized skills and institutional support, particularly in cybersecurity, digital skills development, and AI readiness.
- ZTE, Microsoft, and the Asian Development Bank announced new Partner2Connect pledges, reinforcing momentum toward universal, meaningful connectivity.
- ZTE committed USD 450 million over three years to advance collaborative AI ecosystems; Microsoft pledged significant investments in AI, cloud, and satellite-enabled connectivity, including rural access and skills development; and ADB outlined its Asia-Pacific Digital Highway, aiming to mobilize up to USD 20 billion to improve connectivity for up to 650 million people.
- The session concluded with the announcement that Partner2Connect has surpassed its USD 100 billion target, reaching approximately USD 121 billion in commitments.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Strengthen coordinated national digital investment plans and common frameworks to align public, private, and development finance around inclusive connectivity priorities.
- Scale blended finance, risk-sharing instruments, and innovative financing models to mobilize private capital and accelerate implementation in developing countries.
- Improve transparency, common metrics, and project preparation support to build a stronger pipeline of bankable digital infrastructure projects.
- Expand technical assistance to strengthen government capacity in cybersecurity, digital skills, AI readiness, and institutional coordination.
- Use Partner2Connect and related mechanisms – including Giga, the Digital Infrastructure Investment Catalyser, and Connecting Humanity Action Blueprint – to lay the foundation, track commitments, centralize support for implementation, and sustain momentum toward WSIS implementation by 2035.

UN Leaders Dialogue

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 14:00-15:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/449

High-Level Dialogue - LLDCs

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 17:00-18:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/420

Key Issues discussed:

- The High-Level Dialogue examined how digital connectivity and digital transformation can support implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) (2024–2034) and contribute to sustainable development. Participants emphasized that while geography remains a structural constraint for LLDCs, digital technologies provide unprecedented opportunities to overcome barriers associated with remoteness, high trade costs, and limited market access.
- Speakers highlighted persistent challenges facing LLDCs, including inadequate digital infrastructure, affordability barriers, limited digital skills, financing gaps, and dependence on transit countries for international connectivity. Discussions also underscored the importance of resilient broadband networks, data infrastructure, cybersecurity, digital governance, and inclusive digital ecosystems.
- A recurring theme was the need to complement infrastructure investments with digital skills development, innovation support, practical digital applications, and demand creation. Several speakers stressed that connectivity should be viewed not merely as a technology issue but as an enabler of improved outcomes in education, healthcare, agriculture, trade, and public service delivery.
- The dialogue further explored the role of regional cooperation, cross-border fibre networks, data centres, digital corridors, and regional connectivity gateways in helping LLDCs address geographic disadvantages. Development partners, international organizations, and private-sector representatives emphasized the importance of creating enabling policy and regulatory environments capable of attracting long-term investment and supporting sustainable digital transformation.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- The dialogue reaffirmed that digital connectivity is a foundational enabler of the Awaza Programme of Action and an essential component of broader sustainable development efforts in LLDCs.

- Participants recognized that overcoming the digital divide in LLDCs requires a comprehensive approach that combines infrastructure investment, digital skills development, innovation, financing, and supportive policy frameworks.
- There was broad agreement on the importance of regional cooperation to strengthen international connectivity, improve resilience, reduce costs, and expand access to digital infrastructure. Examples of successful collaboration demonstrated the value of coordinated approaches among landlocked and transit countries.
- The discussion highlighted the need for stronger public-private partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms to mobilize investment for digital infrastructure, including last-mile connectivity and emerging digital technologies. Participants also emphasized the importance of developing investment-ready projects and reducing risks associated with infrastructure deployment.
- The dialogue further underscored that resilience, redundancy, and diversification of connectivity routes should become central considerations in digital infrastructure planning for LLDCs.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Accelerate investment in resilient, affordable, and inclusive digital infrastructure, including broadband networks, cross-border fibre links, regional digital corridors, and last-mile connectivity solutions.
- Strengthen policy and regulatory frameworks that promote investment, competition, innovation, infrastructure sharing, and efficient spectrum management.
- Expand regional cooperation among LLDCs and transit countries to improve international connectivity, infrastructure resilience, roaming arrangements, and access to digital services.
- Support digital skills development, innovation ecosystems, entrepreneurship, and the adoption of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and digital trade platforms.
- Mobilize greater financing through public-private partnerships, blended finance mechanisms, development finance institutions, and investment facilitation initiatives.
- Promote practical digital applications in sectors such as education, healthcare, agriculture, trade facilitation, and public administration to create demand and maximize development impact.

- Foster stronger partnerships among governments, international organizations, development partners, academia, civil society, and the private sector to support implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action.

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Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Accelerate investment in resilient, affordable, and inclusive digital infrastructure, including broadband networks, cross-border fibre links, regional digital corridors, and last-mile connectivity solutions.
- Strengthen policy and regulatory frameworks that promote investment, competition, innovation, infrastructure sharing, and efficient spectrum management.
- Expand regional cooperation among LLDCs and transit countries to improve international connectivity, infrastructure resilience, roaming arrangements, and access to digital services.
- Support digital skills development, innovation ecosystems, entrepreneurship, and the adoption of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and digital trade platforms.
- Mobilize greater financing through public-private partnerships, blended finance mechanisms, development finance institutions, and investment facilitation initiatives.
- Promote practical digital applications in sectors such as education, healthcare, agriculture, trade facilitation, and public administration to create demand and maximize development impact.
- Foster stronger partnerships among governments, international organizations, development partners, academia, civil society, and the private sector to support implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action.

High-Level Dialogue Parliamentarian: Parliamentary Dialogue on Digital Governance

Friday, 09 July 2026, 10:15-11:15

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/429

Key Issues discussed:

- Parliaments must be central to digital governance, not passive downstream stakeholders. Speakers stressed their role in translating WSIS commitments into law, budgets, scrutiny and citizen representation.
- Digital transformation is a governance and rights issue, not only a technological agenda. The discussion linked digital policy to accountability, transparency, the rule of law, inclusion and the protection of human rights.
- Durable frameworks depend on design, enforcement and cooperation. Drawing on the EU AI Act, speakers argued for rules that do not date as technology evolves, independent and well-resourced regulators, and cross-border cooperation to turn commitments into workable law.
- Parliamentary capacity is a binding constraint. Members need a baseline of knowledge to scrutinise digital and AI policy without becoming technical experts, with deeper support for parliaments with fewer resources, including in the Global South.
- Children's rights and online safety should be a priority area. Child protection can provide a unifying issue across political divides and should be more consistently embedded in global digital governance discussions.
- Inclusive leadership must be at the center of digital governance. The discussion highlighted the importance of ensuring that parliaments and decision-making spaces reflect the diversity of the societies they represent. Strengthening the leadership and participation of women parliamentarians and other underrepresented groups is essential to ensure that digital policies respond to a broader range of experiences, priorities, and concerns.
- A gap persists between executive and parliamentary support, raising questions of accountability. Governments often receive technical assistance while legislatures do not, and speakers asked who is answerable to citizens when automated systems shape rights and services. Stronger reporting back to parliaments on international fora, knowledge-sharing and parliamentary networks were highlighted as key to closing this gap.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- Insights: the session affirmed parliaments as essential to the delivery of the WSIS agenda, identified parliamentary capacity as the main constraint, and converged on issues considered shared "red lines", including child protection and non-consensual deepfakes.
- Initiatives: partners highlighted the value of sharing parliamentary learning across regions, including through resources that track parliamentary action on AI, and pointed to cross-UN efforts to embed children's rights in digital governance.
- Commitments: the IPU, UNDP and CPA signaled continued joint work to support parliamentary engagement with WSIS and the Action Line roadmaps towards 2027, and a shared push to report back from international forums inside parliaments.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Embed parliaments in WSIS implementation and review. Recognise legislatures as central actors in turning global commitments into national law, budgets, oversight and citizen-facing outcomes.
- Close the capacity gap for legislatures. Extend technical assistance and capacity building to parliaments, from a shared baseline for all members to deeper support for those with specific responsibilities, prioritising parliaments with fewer resources.
- Invest in inclusive parliamentary leadership for the digital era. Beyond technical capacity building, there is a need to strengthen confidence, networks, and leadership opportunities for women parliamentarians and diverse voices so they can meaningfully engage in shaping digital governance frameworks and oversight mechanisms.
- Strengthen knowledge-sharing between parliaments. Support regional networks, peer learning, structured reporting back from international forums, and practical toolkits that help legislatures better understand and appreciate WSIS Action Lines in their own national contexts.

High-Level Dialogue: Strengthening the Resilience of Telecommunication Submarine Cables

Friday, 09 July 2026, 13:00-14:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/476

Key Issues discussed:

- Submarine cables carry over 99 per cent of intercontinental data traffic yet remain highly exposed to fishing activity, anchoring, natural hazards and infrastructure congestion, with disproportionate impact in regions where redundancy is limited.
- Restoration and repair timelines are lengthening in some regions due to complex permitting processes, fragmented regulatory frameworks and limited availability of repair vessels, extending outage duration and economic impact.
- Small island developing States, least developed countries and other underserved regions remain highly dependent on a small number of cable systems, leaving them particularly vulnerable to connectivity disruptions.
- Changing weather patterns and environmental pressures are emerging as significant risk factors affecting coastal landing infrastructure, seabed stability and long-term network planning.
- Stronger coordination between governments and industry, including clearer permitting procedures and improved inter-agency coordination, was highlighted as essential to accelerating deployment and repair.
- Panellists underscored the value of improved risk identification and monitoring, enhanced seabed mapping, better data-sharing and incident reporting, alongside greater route diversity to reduce reliance on heavily trafficked corridors.
- Submarine Telecommunications Cable resilience is a shared responsibility requiring coordinated cooperation across governments, industry and international organizations, in line with the Abuja and Porto Summit Declarations.

Key Outcomes of the session:

- IAB Co-Chair H.E. Minister Bosun Tijani (Nigeria) committed to championing the report and its recommendations in Nigeria and across the West Africa region, encouraging fellow governments to draw on its findings.
- Speakers highlighted the recent launch of the IAB Report of the Working Groups 2026 as a practical reference tool that stakeholders will use to channel good practices and guidelines on submarine cable resilience.
- Participants reaffirmed their commitment to sustaining the multi-stakeholder collaboration built through the IAB, with governments, industry and international organizations agreeing to continue working together beyond the Body's conclusion. Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions
- Governments and regulators are encouraged to draw on the IAB Report of the Working Groups 2026 when updating national policies and regulatory frameworks for submarine cable resilience.
- Regional champions, building on Nigeria's commitment across West Africa, should be identified in other regions to drive uptake of the report's guidelines and good practices.
- ITU and ICPC should sustain the multi-stakeholder cooperation built through the IAB and support continued dissemination of the report.

Leaders TalkX

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

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 14:00-14:30

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/464

Leaders TalkX 2 - Shaping Intelligent Societies: The Role of Multistakeholder Partnerships

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 14:30-15:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/481

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

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 15:00-15:30

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/465

Leaders TalkX 4 - Information Without Barriers: Making Knowledge Accessible

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 15:30-16:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/470

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

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 17:15-17:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/483

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

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 10:15 - 10:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/508

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

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 10:45 - 11:15

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/514

Leaders TalkX 8 - Strengthening International Cooperation for the Information Society

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 11:15 - 11:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/516

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

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 15:00 - 15:30

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/478

Leaders TalkX 10 - Global Perspectives on Emerging Technology

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 15:30 - 16:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/403

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

Thursday, 09 July 2026, 16:00 - 16:30

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/410

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

Friday, 10 July 2026, 10:00 - 10:30

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/585

Knowledge Café

Youth Knowledge Café - Youth Participation and Digital Inclusion Action Toward WSIS 2035

Monday, 6 July 2026, 12:00-13:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/332

Knowledge Café - WSIS Action Lines

Tuesday, 07 July 2026, 12:00-12:30

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/537

Key Issues and Challenges Discussed:

- Persistent digital divides affecting access, affordability, skills and meaningful participation.
- The need to strengthen digital literacy and institutional capacity, particularly in relation to artificial intelligence.
- The importance of ensuring that digital solutions respond to concrete development needs.
- Challenges related to AI governance.
- The need for continued coordination across WSIS Action Lines and stakeholder groups.

Key Outcomes of the Session:

- Participants reaffirmed the continued relevance of the WSIS Action Lines as a flexible framework for inclusive digital development.
- Capacity building, digital skills and multi-stakeholder cooperation were identified as key enablers of implementation.
- Action Line Facilitators illustrated progress through concrete initiatives in areas such as digital agriculture, support to women-owned MSMEs, AI-related capacity building, youth and platform employment, access to information, and digital technologies for environmental monitoring and disaster risk reduction.
- The session highlighted the potential of AI to support sustainable development while recognizing the need for safeguards and responsible governance.
- Inclusion, local relevance and measurable development impact were emphasized as essential principles for digital initiatives.
- Participants expressed a shared vision of stronger international collaboration towards an inclusive and human-centred digital future.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Strengthen coordination and joint initiatives across Action Lines.
- Share and showcase good practices and measurable results.

- Integrate emerging priorities, including AI and digital inclusion.
- Expand stakeholder participation and practical partnerships.
- Maintain the Knowledge Café as a space for peer exchange.

Knowledge Café - Meaningful Connectivity by Design: Exploring Practical Pathways and Solutions Together

Wednesday, 08 July 2026, 12:00-13:00
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Agenda/Session/445

Key Issue: The Knowledge Cafe created a highly participatory space for WSIS stakeholders to exchange practical experiences and co-develop ideas on enabling meaningful connectivity by design, such as reliable, secure, affordable and usable access that is sustainable over time

Key Outcomes:
Participants explored the topic of meaningful connectivity through thoughtful conversation through prompts, the following key themes emerged:

1. Defining Meaningful Connectivity: Participants identified meaningful connectivity as being multidimensional with emphasis placed on being inclusive, affordable and reliable for all communities rural and urban.
2. Barriers to Connectivity: Participants identified an ecosystem of barriers they determined needed to be addressed to achieve meaningful connectivity which included infrastructure, energy sustainability and greater education around digital safety and trust on how to utilize connectivity without compromising privacy.
3. Evolution of Meaningful Connectivity: The next generation of meaningful connectivity will require on a practical level sustainable connectivity hardware, updated networks to support increased demand from AI applications and greater approaches to delivering connectivity that factors in the most effective approaches given a region's geographic challenges.

Key Recommendations:

1. Expand & Modernize Connectivity: From a practical lens; connectivity standards, infrastructure and frameworks currently existing need to be modernized factoring in new demands on networks and sustainability

while also diversifying deployment approaches including community and low-cost architecture.

2. Inclusive, Community-Centric Technology Frameworks: Connectivity solutions need to be universally available and accessible. Governments and providers need to develop purposeful solutions that serve the distinct needs of the target populations rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all implementation. This means factoring in what the target community uses connectivity for and the appropriate technology that can provide that. Identifying societal barriers that may prevent individuals from utilizing connectivity solutions such as a lack of trust and language access.

Knowledge Café: WSIS+20 Follow-up towards 2035 WSIS-GDC Coherence

Friday 10 July 2026 – 12:00 am
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/440

Moderated by Facilitator:
Sarah El Omari

Executive Summary:
Key Issues and challenges discussed:
How the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact can work together to support digital development and deliver practical benefits for people by 2035.
1. How can WSIS and the Global Digital Compact best support each other?
   - What common goals can be advanced together?
2. How can existing WSIS mechanisms help implement digital cooperation objectives?
   - How can platforms such as the WSIS Forum and WSIS Action Lines contribute?
3. What simple steps can stakeholders take to work more closely together towards?
   - How can governments, the UN, the private sector, technical community, and civil society collaborate more effectively?

Key Outcomes of the session:
- Highlighting the complementary roles of the WSIS process and the Global Digital Compact (GDC).
- WSIS provides an established multi-stakeholder framework, supported by more than 20 years of experience, while the GDC brings renewed political momentum and addresses emerging digital priorities.
- Existing WSIS mechanisms, including the WSIS Action Lines, the WSIS Forum, the Internet Governance Forum and regional platforms, can support the implementation of GDC objectives.
- Highlighting the importance of building on existing WSIS structures rather than creating parallel or duplicative processes.
- The discussion identified the need to map areas of alignment, as well as gaps, between the WSIS Action Lines and the GDC objectives.
- Inclusivity and emerging digital issues were highlighted as areas requiring continued attention.

- Participants reaffirmed the importance of inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement involving governments, civil society, the private sector, youth, the technical community and regional actors.
- Local and regional engagement was recognized as essential for translating global commitments into practical action.
- Continuous engagement between annual forums was considered important for maintaining momentum and showcasing stakeholder contributions.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions:

- Strengthen alignment between the WSIS Action Lines, the GDC objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Develop practical mapping tools to identify overlaps, gaps and opportunities for coordinated implementation.
- Continue leveraging existing WSIS platforms and mechanisms to facilitate knowledge-sharing, showcase good practices and monitor progress.
- Promote intersessional activities and regional initiatives to support continuous engagement throughout the year.
- Strengthen the participation of youth, civil society, smaller technology actors and underrepresented stakeholder groups.
- Broaden private-sector participation beyond the technology sector.
- Better connect private-sector priorities and performance indicators with WSIS, GDC and Sustainable Development Goal objectives.
- Encourage stakeholders to use shared terminology, data and reporting approaches.
- Regularly showcase national, regional and local contributions to WSIS and GDC implementation.
- Ensure that the WSIS process continues to evolve in coherence with the GDC and in response to rapid technological and societal developments.

Knowledge Café WSIS Stocktaking - Showcasing Projects

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 12:00 – 13:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/539

Nigeria Knowledge Café

Friday, 06 July 2026, 12:15-13:45

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/Agenda/Session/149

UNGIS

UNGIS High-Level meeting

Sunday, 05 July 2025, 12:00-13:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/119

UNGIS Working Level Meeting

Friday, 10 July 2026, 09:00-10:30

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/455

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WSIS Prizes 2026

WSIS Prizes 2026 Winners' Ceremony

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 09:00–10:00

Please find the sessions details here:
Session 442 – WSIS Prizes 2026 Winners Ceremony | WSIS Forum 2026



The 2026 edition of the WSIS Prizes celebrated outstanding ICT-driven initiatives addressing global challenges and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This edition received a record-breaking 1,595 project submissions from 122 countries, reflecting the growing global engagement and recognition of the WSIS Prizes as a platform for showcasing impactful digital solutions.

From these submissions, 360 projects were nominated, and a record 2.2 million votes were cast by stakeholders worldwide. A total of 90 Champion projects– five in each of the 18 WSIS Action Line categories– were recognized for their excellence. Among them, 18 projects were selected as overall winners, reflecting the exceptional quality, innovation, and impact of this year's submissions.

The 18 WSIS Prizes 2026 winners were announced during the WSIS Prizes Ceremony, held on 9 July 2026 as part of the WSIS Forum at Palexpo in Geneva, by 9 High Level participants: H.E. Mr. Majed Sultan Al Mesmar, Director General of Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority; H.E. Mr. Datuk Abdul Halim Hamzah, Secretary General of Ministry of Communications; H.E. Mr.

Chaichanok Chidchob, Minister of Digital Economy and Society, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society; Mr. Rafał Rosiński, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Digital Affairs; H.E. Dr. Bosun Tijani, Minister of Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy; H.E. Dr. Takuo Imagawa, Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications; H.E. Mr. Mondli Gungubele, Deputy Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Department of Communications and Digital Technologies; H.E. Ms. Paula Ingabire Minister, Ministry of ICT and Innovation and H.E. Mr. Mark Schaan, Associate Deputy Minister, Innovation, Science and Economic Development.
The awards were presented on the main stage of the Plenary Hall by Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). All 18 winners attended the ceremony in person or were represented, highlighting the global reach and significance of the WSIS Prizes.

This ceremony plays a pivotal role in recognizing outstanding ICT initiatives while providing a unique platform to showcase best practices and foster innovation. By celebrating impactful projects, the WSIS Prizes promote knowledge sharing, encourage collaboration, and support the widespread adoption of ICTs as a catalyst for sustainable development, digital inclusion, and positive societal transformation around the world.

Please find the list of WSIS Prizes winners below:

CATEGORY	PROJECT	ENTITY NAME	COUNTRY
Category 1 – AL C1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development.	ASEAN 5G Skills Framework and Capacity Development Platform	Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission	Malaysia
Category 2 – AL C2. Information and communication infrastructure	AI for Digital Inclusion	Algérie Télécom	Algeria
Category 3 – AL C3. Access to information and knowledge	Digital Skills Training for Persons with Disabilities	Internet Society Zimbabwe Chapter	Zimbabwe

Category 4 – AL C4. Capacity building	Building Capabilities in the Asia Pacific	APNIC Foundation	Australia
Category 5 – AL C5. Building confidence and security in use of ICTs	National Cybersecurity Training Program	National Cyber Security Agency	Qatar
Category 6 – AL C6. Enabling environment	Samriddh Gram: Integrated Phygital Service Delivery Model Enabled by BharatNet	Department of Telecommunications, Government of India	India
Category 7 – AL C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life – E government	Rumah Pendidikan	Center for Data and Information Technology for Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education	Indonesia
Category 8 – AL C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life – E-business	Cross Border E-Commerce Platform	Dubai Customs	United Arab Emirates
Category 9 – AL C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life – E-learning	QSpark - The Spark of Intelligent E-Learning	Qassim University	Saudi Arabia
Category 10 – AL C7. ICT	MomConnect: A National Mobile	Reach Digital Health	South Africa

applications: benefits in all aspects of life – E-health	Technology Platform to Improve Maternal and Child Health Outcomes in South Africa		
Category 11 – AL C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life – E employment	Enabling 1 million Women and Girls Coders by 2030	iamtheCODE	United Kingdom
Category 12 – AL C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life – E environment	Enhancing Environmental Sustainability and Energy Efficiency through Smart Lighting Poles	Musandam governorate	Oman
Category 13 – AL C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life – E-agriculture	IoT Empowering Smart Agriculture Irrigation	China Unicom	China
Category 14 – AL C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life – E-science	KoboToolbox	Kobo	United States of America
Category 15 – AL C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content	Digital Souls, Native Tongues: The LAKIP Story	Department of Information and Communications Technology Region X	Philippines

Category 16 – AL C9. Media	Vérif'All : The First All-in-One Fact-Checking Application for West Africa	Vérif'All	Benin
Category 17 – AL C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society	Foster Family	Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan
Category 18 – AL C11. International and regional cooperation	Electronic Government Network of Latin America and the Caribbean	Inter-American Network on Digital Government (Red GEALC)	Uruguay

WSIS Prizes 2026 Champions' Ceremony

Friday, 10 July 2026, 11:00–12:30

Please find the sessions details here:
Session 438 – WSIS Prizes Champions' Ceremony | WSIS Forum 2026



The special ceremony honouring the achievements of the WSIS Prizes 2026 Champions, recognized as finalists alongside the WSIS Prizes 2026 Winners, took place on 10 July 2026 during the WSIS Forum 2026 at Palexpo in Geneva. During the ceremony, 72 Champion projects were celebrated, and their representatives' received awards on the main stage of the Plenary Hall from Mr. Seizo Onoe, Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, Mr. Mario Maniewicz, Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau at the International Telecommunication Union, and Ms. Sulyna Nur Abdulla, Chief, Digital Knowledge Hub Department (DKH), BDT/ITU.

WSIS Prizes 2026 Nominees' Ceremonies

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 13:45–14:00

Please find the sessions details here:

Session 563 – WSIS Nominees' Ceremony | WSIS Forum 2026

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 17:45–18:00

Please find the sessions details here:

Session 471 – WSIS Nominees' Ceremony | WSIS Forum 2026

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 18.00–18:15

Please find the sessions details here:

Session 475 – WSIS Nominees' Ceremony | WSIS Forum 2026

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 11:45–12:00

Please find the sessions details here:

Session 564 – WSIS Nominees' Ceremony | WSIS Forum 2026

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 12.00–12:15

Please find the sessions details here:

Session 572 – WSIS Nominees' Ceremony | WSIS Forum 2026

Thursday, 9 July 2026, 16:45–17:00

Please find the sessions details here:

Session 411 – WSIS Nominees' Ceremony | WSIS Forum 2026



During the WSIS Prizes 2025 Nominees Ceremonies, all officially nominated projects were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the use of ICTs in advancing sustainable development. Nominees received certificates of recognition, celebrating their achievement as the top-voted projects in their respective categories from among more than 1,595 submissions worldwide.

Following the Nomination Phase, 360 projects advanced to the online voting phase, during which more than 2.2 million votes were cast. Of the 360 nominees, 90 projects were selected as WSIS Prizes Champions. The remaining 270 nominated projects were celebrated during a series of special ceremonies held on 8 and 9 July 2026.

The nominees were recognized across six ceremonies, organized according to the WSIS Action Lines. During the first ceremony on Wednesday, BDT Director Dr Cosmas Zavazava presented certificates to nominees in the following Action Lines: C1 – The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development; C2 – Information and communication infrastructure; and C3 – Access to information and knowledge.

During the second ceremony, Ms Sulyna Nur Abdulla, Chief of SPM, presented certificates to nominees in C4 – Capacity building; C5 – Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs; and C6 – Enabling environment.

In the third ceremony, TSB Director Mr Seizo Onoe awarded nominees in C7 – E-government, C7 – E-business, and C7 – E-learning.

On the following day, BR Director Mr Mario Maniewicz presented certificates to nominees in C7 – E-health, C7 – E-employment, and C7 – E-environment. In the subsequent session, he recognized nominees in C7 – E-agriculture, C7 – E-science, and C8 – Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content.

Finally, during the last ceremony, Ms Sulyna Nur Abdulla, Chief of SPM, presented certificates to nominees in C9 – Media; C10 – Ethical dimensions of the Information Society; and C11 – International and regional cooperation.

These informal yet meaningful ceremonies brought together nominees from different regions, highlighting the diversity, innovation, and real-world impact of grassroots and institutional ICT initiatives worldwide.

For further information about the nominated projects, please visit: Nominated Projects - WSIS Prizes 2026.

WSIS Photo Contest 2026

The WSIS Photo Contest 2026

Please see the winners and other photos here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/PhotoContest

Exhibition Inauguration

Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 08:30-08:45

Please find the sessions details here:
Session 496 – WSIS Forum 2026 Exhibition Inauguration | WSIS Forum 2026



The WSIS Forum 2026 Exhibition was officially inaugurated on Wednesday, 8 July 2026, at 08:30 (UTC+02:00) in the ABC Lobby of Palexpo. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was led by Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), alongside H.E. Mr. Abdul Halim Hamzah, Secretary General of the Ministry of Communications; H.E. Eng. Raafat Hendy, Minister of Communications and Information Technology and Chair of the WSIS Forum 2026; and H.E. Mr. Majed Sultan Al Mesmar, Director General of the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority.





The inauguration followed a networking breakfast that brought together participants, exhibitors and WSIS Forum partners ahead of the ceremony. More than 50 exhibitors and partners from around the world showcased innovative digital initiatives and practical solutions advancing sustainable development, spanning areas such as artificial intelligence, digital inclusion, connectivity, education, cybersecurity, capacity development and emerging technologies. Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony, distinguished guests were guided through the exhibition and engaged directly with exhibitors presenting projects from governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia and the technical community. The inauguration set a dynamic and collaborative tone for the exhibition, creating an interactive space for participants to discover innovative approaches, exchange experiences and build new partnerships around inclusive and sustainable digital development.

CLOSING CEREMONY

Closing Ceremony and Chair's WSIS Forum 2026 Summary

Friday 10 July 2026, 16:00 – 17:00

Please find the session details here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/533

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WSIS Forum 2026: Chair's Summary:

The Chair's Summary is available here:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Files/outcomes/WSISForum2026-ChairsSummary.pdf

WSIS Forum 2026 Sponsors

The success of the WSIS Forum 2026 was made possible through the commitment and generous support of various partners:

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Social Events

Agenda | WSIS Forum 2026

EVENT	DATE & TIME
WSIS Welcome & Connect **(WSIS/ITU)**	Monday 6 July, 2026 08:30 – 09:00
Yoga: Wellbeing and mindfulness session with professional instructors **(Permanent Mission of India)**	Monday 6 July, 2026 18:00 – 18:30 Wednesday 9 July, 2025 18:00 – 18:30
WSIS Youth Networking Reception **(WSIS/ITU)**	Monday 6 July, 2026 18:30 – 20:30
Reception by Poland **(Poland)**	Monday 6 July, 2026 19:00 – 21:00
Coffee Break **(Latvia)**	Tuesday 7 July, 2026 10:45 – 11:00
High-Level Lunch **(Saudi Arabia)**	Tuesday 7 July, 2026 12:15 – 13:45
WSIS Gala Dinner **(United Arab Emirates)**	Tuesday 7 July, 2026 19:00 – 22:00
High-Level Lunch **(United Arab Emirates)**	Wednesday 8 July, 2026 12:15 – 13:45
Coffee Break **(United Arab Emirates)**	Wednesday 8 July, 2026 13:45 – 14:00
Coffee Break **(Malaysia)**	Wednesday 8 July, 2026 14:15 – 15:00
Coffee Break **(Saudi Arabia)**	Wednesday 8 July, 2026 15:15 – 16:00
High-Level Lunch **(Malaysia)**	Thursday 9 July, 2026 12:15 – 13:45
Coffee Break **(South Africa)**	Thursday 9 July, 2026 14:45 – 15:00
Coffee Break **(Nigeria)**	Thursday 9 July, 2026 16:00 – 16:15
WSIS Forum 2026: Official Reception | Partners Certificate Ceremony **(WSIS/ITU, Switzerland)**	Thursday 9 July, 2026 17:45 – 20:00

Documentation

Recordings:

https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/RPWeb?live=False

Video Highlights and Interviews:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAZZu0E29gr8

Photographs

Day 1: World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2026 | Flickr
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Day 4: World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2026 Day 4 | Flickr
Day 5: World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2026 Day 5 | Flickr

Quick Links

- WSIS Forum 2026 Official Website: https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/
- Highlights and Outcomes of the WSIS Forum 2026: https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Home/Outcomes
- Open Consultation Process: https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Home/Consultations
- Agenda: https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda
- Facebook WSIS Process: https://www.facebook.com/WSISprocess
- WSIS Flash: https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/stocktaking/Flash/Newsletter
- X WSIS Process #WSIS: https://x.com/wsisprocess
- WSIS on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/wsisprocess
- WSIS Stocktaking: https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/stocktaking
- United Nations Group on the Information Society: www.ungis.org
- Partnership for Measuring ICT for Development: http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/partnership/

For further information please write to the WSIS Secretariat at wsis-info@itu.int