

Statement on behalf of the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS)

CSTD Intersessional Panel – WSIS+20 Review

Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

It is my pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the United Nations Group on the Information Society, UNGIS.

In today's fast evolving digital landscape, effective digital collaboration and coherent, coordinated, and inclusive responses across the UN System have never been more important. It is therefore essential that we build on and fully leverage existing mechanisms that enable such collaboration.

Established by the United Nations Chief Executives Board in 2006, UNGIS serves as the UN system's inter-agency mechanism for coordinating substantive and policy issues related to the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society. Bringing together 31 UN entities and 17 observers, it promotes policy coherence, fosters partnerships, and leverages the diverse capacities of the United Nations system to advance a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society. The UNGIS Chair rotates among the Vice-Chairs ITU, UNCTAD, UNDP, and UNESCO, with one of the Regional Commissions serving as an additional rotating Vice-Chair. ITU also serves as its permanent secretariat.

Through its work, UNGIS supports UN system's efforts to help bridge digital divides, strengthen capacities, and align digital transformation efforts with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its members also co-organize and contribute to the annual WSIS Forum, which remains the UN system's principal platform for multistakeholder dialogue and review of digital development.

Over the past year, UNGIS coordinated the collective inputs of its member agencies to the WSIS+20 Elements Paper and we appreciate the positive references made to UNGIS by many Member States and other stakeholders in the negotiations of the WSIS+20 Review, in line with our three key messages:

First, there is a need for explicit recognition of UNGIS as the United Nations system's inter-agency mechanism for WSIS follow-up and digital policy coherence. With nearly two decades of institutional experience and participation of almost 50 UN entities, UNGIS offers a proven structure to ensure coherent and sustained system-wide support for WSIS implementation.

Second, regarding the WSIS+20 and the Global Digital Compact, UNGIS emphasized the importance of building upon existing structures and mechanisms. In this context, the Group has developed analytical tools—such as the Matrix linking the WSIS Process, the 2030 Agenda and the GDC Matrix.

Third, UNGIS stresses the importance of inclusive multistakeholder participation, notably through the WSIS Forum and the Internet Governance Forum. While UNGIS is an inter-agency mechanism, it reaffirmed that meaningful engagement of governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, the technical community, academia and regional actors remains essential to achieving a people-centred and rights-based digital future that leaves no one behind.

UNGIS is encouraged that these elements are reflected in the Revised draft of the WSIS+20 outcome document, which gives renewed prominence to its role. In particular, we welcome the recognition in paragraphs 119 and 120 of UNGIS as the United Nations system's inter-agency stewardship mechanism for advancing policy coherence and programme coordination on digital matters, and take note of the request to prepare, by 2026, a Joint Implementation Roadmap, in line with the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council.

UNGIS stands ready to adapt to the final outcome of the WSIS+20 Review and decisions by the Chief Executives Board.

Before closing, let me express our appreciation to all members and observers of UNGIS for their contributions to promoting effective digital cooperation across the UN System.

Thank you, Chair.