

## Commission on Science and Technology for Development twenty-ninth session

### Interventions

#### ***Consultation on the Joint Implementation Road Map by UNGIS***

***(paragraph 122, A/RES/80/173)***

**21 April 2026, Geneva, Switzerland**

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### **Switzerland**

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues, four months ago we arrived at a very valuable consensus in these times with the WSIS+20 outcome document in New York. Now it is time to put those words, those agreements into action.

Switzerland thanks the Secretariat, thanks UNGIS for the preparation of the joint implementation roadmap and for the considerable preparatory work undertaken at this stage.

We see this as a first version of the roadmap and as a first important step in an ongoing process.

It provides a useful basis to create a clear articulation of WSIS as a foundational framework for inclusive rights-based digital development alongside the Global Digital Compact as a renewed commitment.

Together with the broadening, strengthening and improvement of UNGIS, which is also mandated in WSIS+20, and the potential establishment of a multistakeholder advisory group to UNGIS—an idea which we support—the roadmap is a key element to support advancing the WSIS vision and its implementation.

Switzerland sees a valuable opportunity to build on the progress achieved so far and to further operationalize the roadmap. This process can serve as an important milestone to collectively move from mapping existing efforts towards a more concrete and implementation-oriented approach.

In this regard, Switzerland recalls that both the ECOSOC and General Assembly resolutions call for enhanced coherence, efficiency and coordination through, and I quote, a unified and resource-efficient approach to digital cooperation that avoids duplication and maximizes synergies across the United Nations—something very important in light of UN80 and the different efforts underway.

We also note that the roadmap is to present it for the consideration of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

Looking ahead, today's and further intersessional discussions of CSTD could help further clarify how this can be achieved in practice, including through more detailed timelines, clearer responsibilities and measurable outcomes embedded within a forward-looking and operational implementation framework—what we would term as a 2.0 version of the roadmap.

In this context, we also recall the objective of aligning the Global Digital Compact commitments into the WSIS architecture in order to ensure coherence, avoid fragmentation and support a more coordinated approach to implementation.

In this regard, Switzerland underlines the importance of more streamlined cooperation between UNGIS with the WGDT as a concrete step towards greater effectiveness and efficiency.

To conclude, and against this background, Switzerland stands ready to engage constructively in this process and to build on the positive momentum created so far, working together for a WSIS and GDC that deliver firmly anchored in human rights and international law.

Thank you for your attention.

## **Portugal**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates and colleagues,

I wish to thank UNGIS Secretariat for the preparation of the joint implementation roadmap and for the considerable effort invested in bringing this document forward.

The objective of advancing coherence between WSIS and the Global Digital Compact is both timely and fully supported.

At this stage, the comments we would like to make are on certain aspects of the framing.

In a few instances, the draft seems to go beyond the language agreed in the WSIS+20 outcome document and to attribute to certain elements of the WSIS architecture a more central role than that reflected in the WSIS+20 review outcome.

So a more precise articulation of functions across the system could strengthen the roadmap, ensuring that each component operates within its respective mandate.

This includes maintaining the distinction between interagency coordination, thematic contributions, multistakeholder dialogue, and oversight and guidance.

In addition, certain formulations would benefit from further clarification to ensure consistency with the established WSIS framework. In particular, reference to WSIS Action Lines should accurately reflect their origin in the Geneva Plan of Action and avoid conflating them with elements of the agenda which addresses governance and follow-up arrangements through the modalities.

More broadly, the roadmap is at its most effective when it remains focused on its core function as a practical coordination and implementation tool—mapping linkages, identifying responsible actors within existing mandates, and supporting monitoring and reporting.

Looking forward to working with all to refine the document.

Thank you very much.

## **United Kingdom**

Thank you again, Chair, Excellencies and Distinguished Colleagues.

The UK also thanks UNGIS and the ITU Secretariat for the preparation of the Joint Implementation Roadmap for discussion here at the 29th CSTD.

As others have mentioned before me, this work is crucial towards achieving the WSIS+20 outcome on the need for coherence between WSIS, the Global Digital Compact, and with the SDGs in mind.

The first draft is an opportunity to promote more effective join-up across the UN system.

This all helps towards reducing duplication and ensuring greater efficiency, coordination and effectiveness.

To echo the distinguished delegate from Switzerland, this is a positive first step and can be used to build on the progress achieved so far and to further operationalize the roadmap.

Informal stakeholder input is also crucial to its success, and we welcome opportunities for the wider WSIS community to share views, noting that many are key players in the development of WSIS, GDC and SDG objectives.

Therefore, we would support the proposal for an informal multistakeholder consultation group to support UNGIS' WSIS implementation work. We look forward to further proposals on what this group would do and how it will be appointed.

We would also look for greater levels of detail in future iterations of this roadmap, including clear analysis of the opportunities and challenges, detailed plans for addressing them, measurable outcomes to aim for, as well as more detailed timelines.

We would also agree with Switzerland that the CSTD intersessional discussions could be used to help strengthen the roadmap and discuss its tangible implementation in practice.

Again, we welcome the openness and transparency behind this process, and we look forward to continuing this work in the hope that it remains inclusive throughout its lifecycle.

Thank you.

## **Austria**

Thank you, Madam Chair, distinguished colleagues.

Austria would like to thank UNGIS for the joint implementation roadmap.

We have stressed the importance of coherence and the principle of avoiding duplication of functions in the GDC negotiations throughout the discussions, and we will continue to do so.

At a moment when multilateralism has come under pressure, governments and other stakeholders are looking to deliver results in the most effective way.

The WSIS process remains essential for development-oriented and wide-space digital cooperation, closing digital divides and thus the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The WSIS Action Lines and the GDC commitments complement each other and must be implemented hand in hand in an integrated way for existing processes.

In this regard, coordination and cooperation between UNGIS and the Working Group on Digital Technologies seems essential.

The draft implementation roadmap is a good starting point but needs to be operationalized.

For the Action Line-level roadmaps to be elaborated during this year, clearly identifying for each WSIS Action Line the corresponding GDC commitments, as well as overlaps and synergies in implementation.

These roadmaps should be elaborated in a cooperative and inclusive way and clearly distinguish functions across the UN architecture, while requiring cooperation between all relevant UN bodies according to their mandates.

This also means taking a comprehensive look at WSIS Action Line facilitators.

The WSIS+20 document contains a welcome segment on human rights and the role for the OHCHR in integrating human rights across all Action Lines.

This should be reflected in the implementation.

We look forward to continuing the discussions, including in the CSTD, and to further strengthening a One UN approach to digital cooperation, digital transformation, and rights-based global digital governance processes.

Thank you.

## **Italy (on behalf of the European Union)**

Italy has the honor to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The European Union thanks UNGIS for the preparation of this draft joint implementation roadmap for WSIS–GDC coherence and welcomes the continued efforts across the UN system to ensure that the implementation of the Global Digital Compact is firmly anchored in the existing WSIS architecture in a way that avoids overlapping, duplication of functions and the proliferation of new entities.

This corresponds closely to the WSIS+20 mandate as reflected in the outcome document and the relevant CSTD and General Assembly resolutions, which stress the synergy between the WSIS process, the GDC and the SDGs.

This UNGIS draft, as said by our Swiss, UK and Austrian colleagues, is a useful first step.

It provides a helpful overview of the relevant mandates, recalls the importance of coherence across the UN system, and confirms the centrality of existing mechanisms including the GDC objectives, WSIS Action Lines, the WSIS Forum, the IGF, regional commissions and the CSTD itself.

We also take note of the matrix as a useful reference tool.

In the EU's view, the matrix and the present roadmap should be seen as a foundation for the next phase of work rather than as an endpoint in themselves.

Mr. Chair, for the European Union, the real added value now lies in a fully operational steer linking WSIS Action Lines, SDG targets and GDC commitments.

One such opportunity is the preparation of the Action Line-level roadmaps foreseen for 2027.

Those roadmaps should be generally targeted, result-oriented and action-oriented.

They should translate coherence into implementation.

In practical terms, this means that they should identify clearly for each relevant Action Line the most relevant SDG targets and GDC commitments, highlight gaps, overlaps and synergies, and set out concrete priorities for delivering, including where appropriate indicators, metrics and milestones.

This would give operational meaning to the mandate already reflected in the WSIS+20 outcome and in the EU's own proposal on WSIS–SDG–GDC roadmaps.

The EU also considers that these roadmaps should be firmly innovation- and development-oriented.

Their purpose should be to support concrete progress in bridging persistent and emerging digital divides and advancing sustainable, inclusive, human rights-based and human-centric digital transformation.

In this context, we would encourage a focus on practical outcomes in areas such as secure and meaningful connectivity, cybersecurity, data governance, digital skills and capacity building, digital public goods and digital public infrastructure.

In addition, gender equality, linguistic diversity, accessibility, promotion of information integrity and resilience should be covered. These cross-cutting enablers should be reflected systematically in the work ahead.

We would also like to underline the importance of multistakeholder input, as previous colleagues reminded.

The annual WSIS Forum, based on its multistakeholder nature, should also assess progress in the preparation and later implementation of the 2027 Action Line roadmaps and bring in practical experiences from all stakeholder groups.

In the same spirit, multistakeholder discussions in the IGF should be used in a regular manner to inform the roadmaps and the review.

The European Union therefore encourages UNGIS and the Action Line facilitators, in coordination with the relevant UN entities, to use the period until 2027 to develop an implementation framework that is transparent, inclusive and measurable, while remaining within existing mandates and resources.

We see particular value in regular reporting to the CSTD on progress in preparing and implementing the roadmaps.

The roadmaps should subsequently benefit from regular multistakeholder exchanges at the WSIS Forum and the IGF, helping bring in practical experience and stakeholder input, while intergovernmental follow-up and review remain anchored in the CSTD.

In conclusion, the European Union welcomes the UNGIS draft roadmap as a constructive basis for further work. At the same time, we believe the next step is now clear: to move from mapping to implementation.

The EU remains ready to engage constructively with UNGIS, Action Line facilitators and stakeholders involved in the GDC implementation in that spirit.

Thank you.

## ODET

Thank you, Chairperson.

I will also be brief.

I would like to congratulate the rotating Chair of UNGIS, UNCTAD and also the ITU permanent Secretariat for stewarding this important work.

Coordination work is timely and it is sensitive, and I think that, as many colleagues have reiterated, the first draft of the joint implementation roadmap is an excellent basis for further work.

ODET would like to reiterate our full support for joining up forces across coordination mechanisms.

We co-chair with the ITU the Working Group on Digital Technologies that stewards GDC implementation and likewise delivered a map to the CSTD over the summer.

We see great room to join up forces and deliver even more granularity on how these two agendas complement each other and jointly deliver digital cooperation.

That said, there are a few items for consideration from our side.

One is that it is difficult to know when to stop the list of all the possible UN touchpoints that can advance digital cooperation. I would just like to highlight a few.

The STI Forum, I think, has become a critical point for digital cooperation in the UN calendar.

And there are others that we could consider, jointly expanding the vision from the WSIS architecture to other architectures that have been built up over time and likewise are multistakeholder and share the spirit of WSIS.

A second point is how the joint roadmap reflects the very strong mandate from the WSIS+20 review outcome document on human rights.

In what way can we work more closely with the human rights ecosystem here in Geneva to ensure that the linkages between the work of WSIS and the digital and human rights safety online dialogue—a permanent feature here in Geneva—are mutually reinforcing?

The last point I would like to share is about the AI modalities.

In the first version of the joint implementation roadmap, we can clearly see the Geneva global governance on AI dialogue listed as a milestone.

However, let us not forget the next one that will take place in New York in 2027.

I think we have all heard here today the support and the expectation that the AI modalities will bring forth the vision of WSIS as well.

So I would like to highlight that they should both be reflected in the roadmap.

Thank you, Chair.

## **APC**

We congratulate UNGIS with this excellent document. We would like to stress the following points:

We are concerned about the lack of mention of UN-based human rights and gender equality mechanisms: WSIS and GDC implementation must integrate existing human rights processes, including OHCHR and the regional mechanisms such as the IACHR and ACHPR. We would also like to see UN Women be assigned a specific role. We realise these bodies are part of UNGIS, but they are actively engaged in digital rights and equality work in their own right, and we believe the Map should highlight this.

National and Regional IGF Initiatives (NRIs): The document overlooks the critical role NRIs can play as bottom-up, broad-based participation platforms for WSIS and GDC implementation at national and regional levels.

Policy coherence in practice: Advancing policy coherence and programme coordination requires inclusive participation from implementers and affected communities — not just at the global level. Without interdepartmental collaboration in national governments and meaningful engagement at local and national levels, coherence risks remaining confined to boardrooms in Geneva and New York. Strategic mobilisation of IGF NRIs — in collaboration with the WSIS Forum, UNDP country offices and the AI Dialogue — offers the most affordable and immediately available mechanism for achieving inclusive coherence and coordination.