

United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) for Digital Transformation

What is UNGIS?

UNGIS serves as the inter-agency mechanism of the UN system for digital cooperation. Its core function is to facilitate the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), enhance policy coherence, and coordinate UN-wide action on issues and emerging trends related to information and communication technologies (ICTs), science, and technology for sustainable development.

UNGIS was established in April 2006 by the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), following a request in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (2005) for the UN Secretary-General, in consultation with CEB members, to set up a group consisting of the relevant UN bodies and organizations to advance WSIS outcomes.

Objectives

UN inter-agency coordination and synergies on digital transformation in line with each organization's mandate, avoiding redundancies and enhancing effectiveness within the UN System.

Membership

UNGIS comprises of [31 members](#) and [17 observers](#): FAO, IAEA, ICAO, IFAD, ILO, IMF, IMO, IOM, ITU, UN, UN Tourism, UN Women, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UNRWA, UPU, WFP, WHO, WIPO, WMO, World Bank, WTO, and 17 observers from the United Nations system: CTBTO, ITC, ODET, OECD, OHCHR, UN DESA, UN AIDS, UN ECA, UN ECE, UN ECLAC, UN ESCAP, UN ESCWA, UNFCCC, UNICC, UNITAR, UNJSPF, UNU.

Chair, Vice-Chairs and Secretariat

UNGIS Chair and Vice-Chairs rotate annually among ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, and UNCTAD. A UN Regional Commission serves as the fourth Vice-Chair, on a rotational basis among UN Regional Commissions.

ITU serves as the permanent secretariat of UNGIS.

UNGIS Website

ITU developed the official UNGIS website (www.ungis.org) and maintains it. The website reflects the annual workplans, and the different activities undertaken by UNGIS Members related to the implementation of digital transformation.

UNGIS Implementation Activities since 2006

Every year UNGIS publishes a programmatic focus and priorities, aligning its activities with global agendas such as the WSIS process, the Global Digital Compact, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These annual plans set thematic priorities and guide joint outputs, side events, and knowledge products.

Annual and working-level meetings

Since 2006, UNGIS convenes [annual High-Level and working level meetings](#), held at the annual WSIS Forum in Geneva. These meetings set strategic priorities, review progress, and approve joint initiatives. Between annual gatherings, UNGIS organizes regular working-level meetings, thematic discussions, and coordination calls to maintain progress on deliverables.



Figure 1: Annual UNGIS meetings

UNGIS Side Events and contributions to UN processes

UNGIS highlights the impact of digital in different UN processes. These include:

- Annual High-Level Political Forum
- Annual ECOSOC Partnership Forum
- Annual Internet Governance Forum
- UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries
- Commission on the Status of Women
- World Summit for Social Development
- Global Digital Compact

These activities are coordinated by the permanent secretariat (ITU), with the participation of the Chair, Vice-Chairs (ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD and UN Regional Commission) and invitations to all UNGIS members. They emphasize UN cooperation on digital governance and WSIS-related priorities, while also promoting public awareness of how the UN system is implementing digital transformation and

facilitating access for developing countries to new and emerging technologies. More information available here: <https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/ungis/ThematicMeetings>



Figure 2: Digital for Development: UN in Action, UNGIS session at IGF 2024 in Riyadh

UNGIS Digital Repository

Among its key outputs, UNGIS has evolved over time and since 2020 maintains a public repository of projects by its members on digital transformation. This repository, developed and launched by ITU, serves as a reference guide for UN agencies, showcasing various implemented initiatives and activities that demonstrate the direct impact of the WSIS Action Lines on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Evolution & Impact of UNGIS

Since its inception, UNGIS has played an important role in the WSIS process, including by forging collaboration and partnerships among its members to achieve WSIS objectives. The overall goals have been to achieve more coordinated actions, greater coherence and effectiveness in the UN's overall support to the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and digital transformation for development.



Key Milestones

- **2006:** UNGIS was created to coordinate WSIS follow-up across UN agencies, and coordinate UN-wide action on issues related to information and communication technologies (ICTs)
- **2015:** UNGIS aligned its activities with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, integrating the WSIS Action Lines with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Endorsement of the WSIS-SDG Matrix,

developed by WSIS Action Line Facilitators, creating a clear and direct link and an explicit connection between the key aim of the WSIS Action Lines, that of harnessing the potential of ICTs for development, and the various SDGs and related targets.

- **2020:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNGIS emphasized digital resilience and adopted hybrid formats for its meetings and events, ensuring continuity and adaptability.
- **2024:** UNGIS has facilitated discussions and side events at major UN fora, including the Summit for the Future and the High-Level Political Forum, showing how GDC commitments are aligned with and can be integrated into the WSIS Action Lines. These engagements have underscored the need for a cohesive approach within the UN System to accelerate progress toward the SDGs.

In addition, UNGIS developed a [WSIS Process and 2030 Agenda - GDC matrix](#) aligning the GDC Objectives with the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs, offering a structured approach for effective follow-up and implementation of the GDC.

WSIS Process and 2030 Agenda – GDC Matrix			
Objectives (texts extracted from GDC)	SDG (extracted from GDC)	WSIS Action Lines	Existing WSIS structures, mechanisms and supporting activities
Objective 1: Close all digital divides and accelerate progress across the Sustainable Development Goals	All SDGs	All 18 WSIS Action Lines	Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, UNGIS, WSIS Forum, IGF, WSIS Action Line facilitation, WSIS and SDG Matrix, WSIS Stocktaking, WSIS Prizes
Connectivity			
(a) Develop and strengthen targets, indicators and metrics for universal meaningful and affordable connectivity, building on existing work, and integrate these into international, regional and national development strategies	SDG 9	WSIS Action Lines C1 C2, C3, C5, C6, C7:E-government, C7:E employment, C11, C7 E-Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development • World Telecommunication Indicators Summit • ICT Development Index (IDI) • ITU DataHub • UMC - Universal and Meaningful Connectivity project • UNGIS • WSIS Forum • WSIS Action Line facilitation • WSIS and SDG Matrix • IGF • ITU statistics • WTIS - World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium • ITU/UNESCO Broadband Commission • Arab Digital Agenda 2023-2033 (ESCWA)

Figure 3: WSIS Process and 2030 Agenda - GDC matrix developed by UNGIS Members

- **2025:** [GDC implementation map](#) was developed by the Working Group on Digital Technologies (WGDT), co-chaired by ITU and ODET. This map builds on the WSIS-GDC-SDG Matrix, an initiative led by ITU in collaboration with UNGIS members.

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