

Statement by Alia Gupta, Board Member at Dynamic Teen Coalition at the WSIS+20 Consultations

Thank you. I speak for the Dynamic Teen Coalition; a global teen-led network actively researching and engaging in digital governance across IGF, NRIs, ITU, UN Foundation, and platform policies.

As WSIS is the future of multistakeholder policies, DTC's work reveals patterns of **exclusion that operate through structural gaps and outdated frameworks**.

In our audit of over 50 NRIs worldwide, most either lack clear age or participation criteria or default to narrow definitions that exclude many voices. Without formal recognition or standardized definitions, entire groups, especially **younger or informal digital actors**, are left out by default, unable to access such forums.

For example, focused programs like the **IGF 2025 YOUTH Mentorship Program** restrict participation to ages **18–20** block younger leaders and emerging contributors from engagement, despite their commitment shown through our ageism study.

We're also tracking a growing pattern of "**teen bans**" across major social media platforms, where young people are removed from spaces critical to digital civic engagement. These bans happen with *limited transparency or appeal, shrinking the very public spheres where governance conversations take place*.

Together, these practices create **exclusion by default**, not always by explicit intent, but with deep consequences: the voices shaping policies are increasingly disconnected from the diverse, dynamic communities affected.

This reflects a broader structural problem in multistakeholderism: **static stakeholder models fail to adapt to evolving digital realities**

To address this, *DTC proposes a TESTED alternative*.

Using the inclusive, lifelong multistakeholder model that our DTC Co-Chairs Pyrate Ruby Passell and Stacy Gildenston developed over three years, the *Dynamic Teen Coalition* embraces participation spanning childhood through adulthood, balances protection with empowerment, especially for emerging participants and establishes flexible, clear, and self-selected participation pathways rather than rigid age or status cutoffs which we **STRICTLY URGE** as essential recommendations at this platform.

We have used this approach in multiple forums and community consultations, demonstrating its viability and benefits for inclusion and legitimacy.

THIS is a critical moment. Not just to acknowledge these gaps but to act decisively to close them. Here at the end, I ask that we, the teens, must be included in platforms that shape our future.

The point being that Only by evolving multistakeholderism into a **flexible, inclusive, lifelong model** can we ensure digital governance reflects and serves all users.

Thank you.