1. What are the most important **achievements** arising from WSIS that should be highlighted in the Zero Draft? *

AFNIC, the French Internet Registry and Network Information Centre, would like to welcome the publication of the WSIS+20 Element Paper and thank the co-facilitators for the opportunity to contribute to the review process.

In the last twenty years, since the WSIS, the digital transformation of society has been extensive.
The Internet has allowed billions of people to connect and to exchange ideas, laying the foundation stone for the common vision « where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge ».

AFNIC considers that major progress has been made in implementing a number of specific WSIS outcomes. Significant progress has been made toward digital inclusion. But results are mixed and uneven depending on the region of the world, 33% of the world is still unconnected, and inequalities are still patent. AFNIC as a public service concession is committed to an open internet that benefits everyone, promoting the French vision of a secure and stable internet open to innovation. Alongside, the AFNIC Foundation for Digital Solidarity which supports local initiatives to promote digital inclusion.

We strongly believe that implementing the WSIS outcomes has been facilitated by multi-stakeholder cooperation in both the development of internet technical standards and policy discussions. For that reason, AFNIC is involved in global Internet governance by actively playing a role in coordinating and representing the various French stakeholders within international bodies; and by contributing to the development of new internet standards and services. AFNIC is actively involved in the work carried out by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) with the aim of contributing to the development of policies and sharing good practice and expertise. We also contribute to Standards Developing Organisations, first of which the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), as well as in ITU work (ITU-T, ITU-D, Council), both in the French Delegation and as a Sector Member, to help shaping the future of the internet and Internet governance.

The Element Paper is clearly laying out the context and current WSIS environment (WSIS+10, Global digital Compact, SDGs, etc.). The WSIS vision of a "people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society" is reaffirmed. We welcome the focus on sustainable development and on the need to bridge the persistent digital divides. The mention of the mutltistakeholder approach and the contribution of an open and interoperable Internet are also welcomed, as well as the acknowledgment of the work done on the promotion of a more multilingual internet and Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs).

The implementation of the multistakeholder model in the past 20 years has demonstrated the importance of involving stakeholders in discussions on the governance and evolution of the Internet. This open cooperation is a key factor in the success of the internet. This should be strongly emphasized in the Zero Draft.

2. What are the most important **challenges** to the achievement of WSIS outcomes to date and in the future that need to be addressed in the Zero Draft? *

Building a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information society is still a global challenge to be met in 2025, 20 years after the WSIS.

We strongly believe that one of the key challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes remains the digital divide and persistent difficulties to achieve meaningful access and participation in the information society.

Culture and linguistic diversity online need further commitment and work to allow for the emergence of a multilingual and diverse internet, as well as the development of local contents. Recalling paragraph 53 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles « The creation, dissemination and preservation of content in diverse languages and formats must be accorded high priority in building an inclusive Information Society The creation, dissemination and preservation of content in diverse languages and formats must be accorded high priority in building an inclusive Information Society », multilingualism is a key enabler and allows for better dialogue and promoting tolerance and collaboration.

New and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, post quantum or the development of the Internet of things, reminds us of the importance of trust in the digital space, in particular faced with the risk of new digital divides.

3. What are the most important **priorities** for action to achieve the WSIS vision of a 'people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society' in the future, taking into account emerging trends? *

The WSIS outcomes have demonstrated their relevance and applicability to new and emerging areas, as well as the need to continue working toward. Implementing the WSIS outcomes has been facilitated by leveraging the multistakeholder approach of governance. We believe that strengthening multistakeholder and diverse cooperation is essential if we are to find innovative and sustainable solutions to the emerging problems we face.

AFNIC welcomes the positive mention of the "open, interoperable nature of the Internet" which "has underpinned the development of an extraordinary variety of services and applications, reaching across the range of human society including governance, economy, development and rights.", and the acknowledgment of the mutltistakeholder approach (paragraph 5).

The Open, trustworthy and interoperable nature of the internet, and the mutltistakeholder governance approach, is key to achieve the WSIS vision of a 'people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society' and we believe that this should remain a priority after 2025.

The emphasis on capacity building in all areas of digital governance is also essential to achieving the WSIS vision.

4. What **additional themes/issues**, if any, should be included in the Elements Paper? *

We welcome the publication of the WSIS+20 Element Paper. However, some elements are missing in the paper in particular,

1) the integration of GDC implementation into the WSIS framework. Further alignment is needed as highlighted in the CSTD report of the 28th session ;

2) the strengthening of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) especially by making it a permanent body with sustainable resources ;

3) A strong focus on cultural and linguistic diversity.

It is essential to tackle the digital divide in all its aspects in order to build an inclusive information society. Cultural and linguistic diversity must be a pillar in the construction of such a rich and varied information society. Two important issues for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions must be highlighted. On the one hand, the issue of linguistic diversity online. Language is the primary vehicle of culture. On the other hand, the issue of the discoverability of local and national content, as a key driver of cultural and linguistic diversity.

5. Do you wish to comment on **particular themes/issues/paragraphs** in the Elements Paper? *

On Internet Governance, we are concerned that the section does not reflect the agreement reached in the Global Digital Compact. In particular, paragraph 59 of the Element Paper mentions that internet governance "should be multilateral, transparent and democratic" instead of recognizing that "Internet governance must continue to be global and multi-stakeholder in nature, with the full involvement of Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders in accordance with their respective roles and responsibilities."

The language doesn't reflect the 20-year consensus on the need of a distributed multi stakeholders governance of the Internet and should be further improved. The Element paper could also use the working definition of Internet governance developed by the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) and included in the Tunis Agenda.

While the Element Paper begins to address stakeholder participation, further improvements are needed. The diversity of stakeholders is key and the technical and academic communities should be mentioned explicitly as stakeholders.

Furthermore, we would like to emphasize the very useful São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines developed during the NETMundial+10 for addressing and improving Internet Governance and Digital Policy Processes.

On Enhanced cooperation, the Paper is also looking backward. Since the IANA transition, the core Internet functions are managed by the global internet community. It should also be noted that the past two WGEC, convened in 2013 and 2016, failed to reach consensus and merely acknowledged the divergence of views.

On the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). The Element Paper highlights, paragraph 60, the IGF as "an established forum for discussion and its importance as the primary multi-stakeholder platform for discussion of Internet governance issues has been recognized". The IGF is the primary platform and is multistakeholder and thus an essential space for dialogue. We are of the opinion that the IGF should be extended and strengthened especially by making it a permanent body with sustainable resources. We are of the opinion that the IGF has demonstrated its ability to adapt and evolve. The IGF is not just an annual event but an ecosystem that works all year round. Policy networks, dynamic coalition and best practice forums produce numerous works using a collaborative and inclusive approach.

On Bridging digital divides, AFNIC welcome the mention of ICANN and of the work done on promoting a more multilingual Internet with the introduction of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs). The section should further stress the importance of strengthening cultural and linguistic diversity: need of local contents, diversity of languages, etc.

6. What suggestions do you have to support the development of the **WSIS framework** (WSIS Action Lines, IGF, WSIS Forum, UNGIS etc.)? *

The WSIS Framework has demonstrated its ability to adapt to emerging issues. As exemplified, the IGF is successful and should be renewed and extended but also strengthened especially by making it a permanent body with sustainable resources to enhance operational efficiency and outcomes. We believe that we must be ambitious for the IGF, and WSIS framework. The interface between the various processes could be greatly strengthened - CSTD, WSIS Forum, UNGIS, ITU, SDOs etc.- which would allow for greater adaptability and better framing in a constantly changing world.

7. Do you have any **other** comments? *

We would also like to stress the need of a clear agenda and timeline of the consultations until December 2025 to allow for a meaningful engagement of all stakeholders.

8. Who is **submitting** this input? *

Kindly provide the name of the person submitting this input, as well as the associated country, organization, stakeholder type, and relevant contact information

Lucien CASTEX, FRANCE, AFNIC, Technical Community

9. Please provide your **e-mail** address: *

Please enter an email