

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

Affirmation of journalism and media's important role in the digital governance and that communication, which media and journalism underpin, is a fundamental societal process is well-established under the Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+10) and related Principle 55, including the corresponding Action Line C9 in the Geneva Declaration of Principles.

These existing documents have provided a solid foothold for building a people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented information society by recognizing freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as independence, pluralism, and diversity of media (Principle 55). This recognition has also been translated into commitment 35.b in the Global Digital Compact, which seeks to "Promote diverse and resilient information ecosystems, including by strengthening independent and public media and supporting journalists and media workers." In the context of WSIS, it means preserving Principle 55 and Action Line C9 and better implementation and integration of media perspectives across other sections of the WSIS framework.

Recognition of the need for and establishment of a multistakeholder governance model, including the Internet Governance Forum, which aims to foster participatory and inclusive approaches to digital policy from state authorities, the private sectors, civil society, media, international organisations, the technical and academic community and all the other relevant stakeholders that continually worked together on the implementation of WSIS vision.

Affirmation and fostering of universality, indivisibility, interdependence, and interrelation of human rights. Protection of human rights is built on affirmation of international human rights treaties, multistakeholder cooperation and stressing the role of the states in ensuring their compliance with the international human rights treaties

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? *

Despite the foundational importance of noted WSIS architecture, media and journalism, as important actors in the digital governance framework, still face serious challenges that need to be addressed in the Zero Draft

Serious threats to freedom of expression, plurality of information, independent and public media, and journalists caused by increased dependence on social media business models and design (also noted in UNGA RES/76/227 from 24 December 2021), in particular, the weak social media platforms' accountability.

Digital divide that remains between certain sectors, including also concerns over unequal access, affordability, stability, and local content production to digital infrastructure, such as AI tools, cloud services, secure hosting for media and journalists as enablers of sustainable development. Media and journalists are vital to ensuring accessible and fact-based information, and their access to ICT solutions, based on open source, free software, is vital to that end.

Digital governance frameworks give insufficient consideration of the impact of digital infrastructure and the internet on the survival of independent journalism and yet digital and media governance are extremely interconnected and often addressed separately.

Inconsistent and weak state measures to ensure freedom of expression, including the need to respect media independence and viability, and to enable resilient information ecosystems and human rights-based uses of ICTs in line with international human rights treaties.

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? *

Anchor WSIS vision in the international human rights treaties, with particular emphasis on freedom of expression as a bedrock of information integrity and media independence. WSIS should preserve its international human rights protection rationale, including a reference to the important role of the OHCHR.

The WSIS process must continue to recognise and promote the independence of the media and journalism as a public good, aligned with the UN's international treaties and documents, also referenced in this submission.

Preserve WSIS commitment to the principles of freedom of the media, with particular focus on independence, pluralism, diversity of media, media ownership and viability, as stipulated in Principle 55 of the Geneva Declaration. Address the digital divide and unequal meaningful participation from underrepresented communities or sectors, such as investigative and independent journalism, and smaller news media outlets in digital governance processes. This would require the creation of resources and financial support to ensure a people-centered multistakeholder governance model.

Finally, prioritize assessment and inclusion of media and journalism perspectives across other WSIS Sections to reflect current and emerging threats to journalism and to link explicitly to commitments made in the Global Digital Compact, such as strengthening independent media, protecting journalists, and enabling fact-based information.

Ensure that the WSIS architecture plays a central role in the implementation of the GDC commitments by integrating the processes to ensure cohesion at the international digital governance level. Follow the Sao Paulo Multistakeholder guidelines as the model for Internet governance, to ensure that digital systems and governance are co-designed equitable and respect the needs and rights of all persons.

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

Alongside clear references to information integrity in the Zero-draft, the Elements paper is an opportunity to expand this notion through acknowledgement of the role of journalism and the commitment to fostering diverse and resilient information ecosystems, strengthening independent and public media and supporting journalists and media workers that provide access to relevant, timely, local, multilingual, and fact-based information. Such commitment is a prerequisite to any meaningful digital content governance framework- in line with the SDGs 16, GDC, WSIS+10 Resolution, various UN Resolutions, and international human rights treaties.

Media independence, viability, pluralism, and diversity of media should be reaffirmed as central to information integrity and democratic processes and must be safeguarded in today's digital governance landscape. By doing this, the WSIS Elements paper will be fully capable of meeting SDG 16 and upholding WSIS+10 commitment (para.45) and principle 55.

Information integrity and platform accountability should be tied to infrastructure design and governance, addressed beyond content regulation, self-regulation, and generative AI emergence, including media literacy.

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

Para.48: International human rights treaties enshrine that any limitation on freedom of expression must meet the following criteria: legality (existence of a clearly defined legal basis), necessity in a democratic society, and proportionality to the legitimate aim pursued.

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

Preserving Action Line C9 as a core component of the WSIS mandate

Fostering diverse and resilient information ecosystems, supporting independent media and journalism that provide access to relevant, timely, local, multilingual, and fact-based information is a prerequisite to any meaningful digital content governance framework. To support the necessary actions to uphold this objective and to enable the implementation of multilateral commitments by 2030 means "strengthening independent and public media and supporting journalists and media workers", as noted in the GDC Information Integrity commitments

Consider Media Perspectives Across Action Lines

Media-related commitments and action lines must be systematically integrated into the monitoring, measurement of all relevant Action Lines, in particular ICT for data governance, AI, development, Digital Economy, Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity, and local content, Enabling environment, International and regional cooperation. This includes identifying opportunities to meet the commitments, and addressing any potential gaps or regulatory blind spots that could negatively impact open, safe, and secure internet, media, and journalism, access to, and distribution of fact-based and diverse information.

Leverage the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as a permanent venue to advance dialogue on digital public infrastructure and journalism, building synergies between WSIS, GDC, and technical standard-setting spaces.

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

WSIS+20 must not be a backward-looking review, but a forward-looking agenda-setting process that reaffirms, preserves and builds on the achievement of the WSIS+10 Resolution and GDC.

The next phase must recognize the convergence between content and infrastructure, and ensure journalism is not left behind in digital governance. To future-proof WSIS, digital governance must embrace not only ICT for development but also public-interest infrastructure for democracy, including the infrastructures that enable journalism, protect rights, and facilitate civic participation

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

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

Please enter an email