

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

Mobile broadband infrastructure expansion represents one of the most tangible and transformative achievements of the WSIS process, rolling out internet coverage to 96% of the world's population and driving progress across all Action Lines. Highlighting this success in the Zero Draft will not only recognise the accomplishments that have arisen from WSIS but also provide a strategic foundation for future efforts to close the digital divide.

Indeed, while 96% of the global population are covered by a mobile broadband network and a majority of the world's internet users access the internet via mobile broadband, 39% of the global population remains offline despite living in areas served by mobile broadband infrastructure. In highlighting the achievements made in the expansion of mobile broadband infrastructure – and the specific challenge of encouraging its usage and adoption – WSIS+20 can help catalyse efforts to close the digital divide.

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? \*

As noted above, while 57% of the global population now access the internet via mobile broadband, there remain a further 39% who live in an area covered by a mobile broadband network but do not use it. This is referred to as the usage gap. Its persistence remains one of the biggest challenges in the implementation of the WSIS process.

95% of all the people who remain offline live in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The unconnected are disproportionately poor, persons with disabilities, those living in rural areas and women. Women are 14% less likely than men to use mobile internet in low- and middle-income countries.

GSMA data and research show that people face several barriers to mobile internet adoption and use. The top reported barriers to mobile internet adoption for those aware of mobile internet but not using it are affordability, particularly of handsets; lack of literacy and digital skills; and safety and security concerns. Other important barriers include a lack of access to networks and enablers such as formal proof of identity, sales agents or electricity, as well as a lack of relevant content and services that meet users' needs. Women tend to experience these barriers more acutely than men due to structural inequalities and underlying social norms, including disparities in education and income.

The Zero Draft must highlight these challenges and offer a text that will refocus multi-stakeholder efforts on closing this usage gap and ensuring that people everywhere can enjoy the benefits of connectivity.

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? \*

In addition to addressing the usage gap, as mentioned above, the most critical long-term priority for achieving the WSIS vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society is addressing the widening digital infrastructure investment gap. While the connectivity ecosystem expands daily, driven by technological innovation and surging demand for data at higher speeds, a fundamental mismatch has emerged between the scale of investment required and the economic conditions that enable it.

To accommodate rising digital traffic flows and sustain service performance, mobile operators must constantly invest to expand network capacity, close coverage gaps, build network resilience, and deploy new technologies. However, sector-specific regulatory and fiscal requirements create disproportionate burdens on network operators. Asymmetric regulatory obligations, sector-specific taxes and fees, network deployment costs and restrictions, combined with market imbalances along the digital value chain, constrain operators' ability to generate adequate returns on essential infrastructure investments.

All segments of the internet ecosystem should have opportunities to make fair returns in competitive markets. Industry leaders, stakeholders and policymakers must engage in dialogue to ensure regulatory asymmetries and market distortions do not limit investment capacity, and make sure that the right incentives for digital infrastructure investment are in place to support the long-term growth of the digital ecosystem.

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

We welcome the recognition of marginalised groups within the Elements Paper, but believe that the Zero Draft must include a dedicated section on the digital gender divide. The digital gender divide is a cross-cutting issue that spans multiple policy areas, from digital inclusion strategies to enabling environment frameworks, requiring coordinated focus rather than fragmented approaches across different sections.

The scale of the digital gender divide demands urgent attention. Women across low- and middle-income countries are 14% less likely to use mobile internet than men, resulting in 235 million fewer women than men accessing mobile internet services. This disparity is particularly significant given that mobile connectivity remains the primary means through which most people, especially women, access the internet and digital services in LMICs.

A dedicated section on the digital gender divide would enable policymakers to develop targeted interventions that address the specific barriers women face in accessing and using digital technologies. This focused approach is essential for ensuring that digital transformation serves all members of society and advances the WSIS vision of people-centred, inclusive development.

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

The sections on internet governance and data governance reopen discussions that were resolved during the drafting of the GDC. The section on data governance should be entirely removed and the CSTD Working Group on Data Governance permitted to complete its work. The section on internet governance should reflect the text of the GDC and prior agreements, which have resolved that the governance of the internet governance is a multistakeholder process.

The section on the enabling environment should also be expanded to explicitly name the factors which contribute to an enabling environment, such as fair competition, independent and predictable regulation and proportionate taxation.

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

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

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