

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

For the last two decades, the overall global effort related to a more universal, more inclusive, and more development-oriented Information Society has been spearheaded by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The WSIS Action Lines, although a "flexible" assembled world invented because of abnormal complexity, have moved beyond potential global dimensionality and spectrums, on the case of enabling countries to shape their own digital transformations related to the SDGs, and promote multistakeholder approaches to narrow digital divides in networks, institutions, sectors, and communities.

On the global scale, some of the significant global outcomes on the global dimension of the WSIS, were able to:

(a) to facilitate the IGF and sustainably institutionalise the concept of multi-stakeholderism in ICT policy processes,

(b) to stimulate national digital strategies and policies, and,

(c) pioneer the mainstreaming of ICT for Development (ICT4D) with innovation in addressing e-Health (health), e-Education, e-agriculture, and digital government.

There was a strong belief that universal access/affordability, digital literacy, security, and respect for culture and privacy would provide the global-beneficiary public and civil society with a better foundation for ensuring inclusive and sustainable international and national digital directions, and to some extent a more concrete national vision of a societal, equitable, and lawful expansion and emergence within a global architectural design.

India's digital journey has matched this global journey closely, not despite WSIS, but because of the vision of 'WSIS that led the Digital India Mission'. That mission implements multiple WSIS action lines at the same time – for example, creating infrastructure, e-governance and digital empowerment. Also enhancing national and regional universality through initiatives like BharatNet and PM-WANI. These initiatives contribute directly to universal and affordable access, and provide examples of DPI components like Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker to show how WSIS-based practices can scale across the Global South.

India's experience also demonstrates the need for local language Internet, the importance of community-based digital literacy, and inclusive participation of women and youth in the digital economy (C3, C4, and C8). The country-moving ahead with cybersecurity frameworks and data protection architecture supports Action Line C5 while paving the way for responsible data governance as AI engenders to levels of advanced analytics.

As we look to the future with WSIS+20, it is imperative that the Zero Draft recognises these cumulative global achievements yet calls for a renewed, collective commitment to address new challenges. Areas such as platform governance, algorithmic bias, environmental sustainability of ICT, and multi-level goals for equitable AI deployment will frame the discourse of WSIS's next steps. It is therefore essential that WSIS evolve to be properly aligned with the conditions of today's digital age while remaining true to its multistakeholder and inclusive foundations.

In this context, India continues to be supportive of acknowledging Digital Public Infrastructure, as a digital public good, the role of the Global South in future Internet governance, and group clarifications to improve cross border cooperation, capacity building, and technology transfer. The next phase of WSIS would need to be now.

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? *

Although significant progress has been made, the challenges posed by the WSIS outcomes still loom very large. The persistent digital divides, especially for rural, gendered and marginalized populations, are still a barriers to connectivity that could be considered meaningful. In India, efforts such as BharatNet and PMGDISHA are positive developments but there is still a lot to be done in order to achieve digital inclusion in all its complexities.

At a global level as well as in India, multistakeholder participation is languishing, and needs to be bolstered from youth, civil society and the Global South. In contrast, the existing governance and policy systems are dominated by large platforms, so has the discourse around data rights, misinformation and trust. There are signs that India's evolving legislation on data protection and ongoing developments on AI demonstrate some early responses to this emerging challenge.

Cybersecurity gaps and online safety continue to be critical, threats are escalating and organisations are not equipped—the capacity for responsive action at the grassroots level is missing. Emerging technologies, such as AI, quantum computing etc., have outpaced regulatory and policy systems. The environmental sustainability of ICT has largely escaped from past and current responses to the rapidly shrinking ecological space relevant to the shrinking of the biosphere.

For the Zero Draft to respond effectively, it should draw from past and current frameworks and practices to enable:

1) Bridging meaningful gaps in access,

2) Fostering inclusive governance,

3) Addressing platform accountability, data justice,

4) Enabling cyber-resilience and green ICT, and

5) Delivering interoperable, rights-based digital public infrastructure specifically for the Global South.

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? *

To achieve the WSIS vision for a people-centred and inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, future actions must prioritise:

1) Meaningful Bridging of the Digital Divide:

Go beyond connection to ensure affordability, digital literacy, local content, and accessibility to rural people, women, and vulnerable groups. India's experience delivering BharatNet and PMGDISHA offers models to replicate.

2) Inclusive Governance & the Global South:

Enhance multi stakeholder participation to ensure civil society, youth, and the developing world shape digital policy. India should also enhance its active role in both IGF and in GDC recommendations at the grassroots level.

3) Trust, Safety & Rights Online:

The issues of platform accountability, disinformation, and user protection of data are real. India has made progress through the Digital Personal Data Protection Act toward user-centric development, but new actions are needed.

4) Responsible AI and Governance of Emerging Technologies:

Social, ethical, transparent and inclusive new governance frameworks for AI, Quantum and algorithmic systems should be developed to guarantee technology serves the promotion of human rights, equity, and development.

5) Digital Public Infrastructure as a Global Public Good:

Promote interoperable and open-source models of public digital infrastructures such as India's Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker as means of producing equitable public goods and services.

6) Green and Resilient Digital Transitions:

Integrate new frameworks for sustainability in the digital growth- reduce e-waste, increase energy efficiency, and green technology practices.

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

Additional Themes for Consideration in the Elements Paper

- 1) Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) as a Public Good
- 2) Data Justice and Data Sovereignty
- 3) AI Governance and Algorithmic Accountability
- 4) Youth, Gender and Indigenous Leadership in Digital Policymaking
- 5) Digital Sustainability and Climate Resiliency
- 6) Local Content and Local Language

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

1) -Paragraphs 2–3 (Relevance of WSIS Vision & Multistakeholder Participation):

While the Elements Paper reverberates the WSIS vision, the report needs to more directly advocate how to deepen multi-stakeholderism at national and local levels, particularly in the developing world. In India's case, while multi-stakeholderism seeks to engage multiple people and groups, it often disregards local NGOs, youth or other local groups and the voices of these specific groups. Thus, there is a need for advocacy of enhancing decentralised participation.

2) Paragraph 7 (New risks):

The Elements Paper correctly identifies risks including inequality, exclusion from digital development, and risks from cybersecurity threats, however, we believe it needs to expressly include issues related to platform accountability, harms related to artificial intelligence (AI), data colonialism or data oppression as well as issues of digital surveillance and the emerging gap in governance of these issues. The debates occurring in India surrounding data protection law, misinformation and automated decision-making systems are not specific to India and, therefore, should be considered urgent globally.

3) Paragraphs 8–9 (Digital divide and gender):

This section should recognise 'meaningful access' beyond connectivity meaning more than connectivity, around the provision of affordability, digital literacy, accessibility, and relevance to the content being delivered. India's experience with Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) is significant in that it has been found to close access gaps by making low-cost, inclusive services available to its citizens.

4) Paragraph 15 (Digital exclusion):

Community Networks, such as local and regional innovation and preparing for their future role should be acknowledged as part of the solution. In India's case, community-led last-mile delivery strategies and approaches (such as mesh networks in tribal or rural regions) are an effort to support government's policy initiatives, and acknowledge their role as an essential aspect of the solution and thus should be acknowledged in the Elements Paper.

5) Paragraph 25-27 (Environmental Impacts):

While energy and electronic waste are mentioned, there is no mechanism for accountability which includes green digital policy. Recommend establishing benchmarks and targets for digital sustainability, encouraging eco-friendly technology and promoting "green by design" infrastructure.

6) Paragraphs 31-34 (Digital Literacy, Content, and Misinformation):

The Paper should emphasise the need for multilingual content generation, algorithmic transparencies and instruction of media literacy. In India, despite linguistic diversity of hundreds of languages, digital content remains dominated by just a few languages.

7) Paragraph 36-38 (Enabling Environment):

This Section should highlight that interoperable, open digital systems or digital public infrastructure (DPI) is a critical importance. India has shown it can have public value at scale with its Aadhaar-UPI-DigiLocker stack, comprising several digital systems that connected citizens with their Government. WSIS should advocate for globally available digital public goods that are non-proprietary with safeguards.

8) Missing Theme:

- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

There is no mention of digital public infrastructure in this document. Noting DPI aligns with WSIS goals, while it has the potential to democratise access, facilitate citizen empowerment, and expedite delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. India's DPI model, which is founded on the principles of inclusion and open standards should be highlighted as a best practice in the WSIS agenda.

-Youth Leadership

While youth are mentioned in the document, they are referenced in a passive manner. WSIS+20 should proactively position youth as co-creators (not only beneficiaries) of digital futures. The inclusion of 'mechanisms'.

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

Recommendations to Enhance the WSIS Framework

1) Revitalise WSIS Action Lines to better incorporate emerging issues, such as AI governance, data justice and digital public infrastructure (DPI), and sustainability.

2) Enhance IGF outputs by more directly transferring them into policy action and providing more participation by the Global South.

3) Make WSIS Forum outputs more actionable with more clarity on follow-up mechanisms and inclusive reporting formats.

4) Strengthen coordination through UNGIS by engaging with UN agencies to better capture impacts on LDCs and track all initiatives and considering ways to scale up to more impactful action in all WISS process.

5) Formalise the role of youth and local stakeholders in all processes related to WSIS—not simple their participation but as partners in the co-creation of the agenda.

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

No

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: *

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