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

Over the past 20 years, the WSIS process has played a pivotal role in shaping a more inclusive, development-oriented, and collaborative digital future. It has helped create a unique multistakeholder framework that has proven both agile and effective in addressing the rapidly evolving landscape of digital technologies.

One of the most significant achievements has been the global expansion of connectivity, now reaching over 96% of the world's population. This foundational progress is the result of combined efforts – of governments, the private sector, civil society, and technical and academic communities – and reflects the substantial investments made by the private sector in building digital infrastructure and services.

Second, WSIS has driven real-world development impact by supporting the deployment of innovative digital services across sectors such as education, healthcare, financial inclusion, and public service delivery. Business has been instrumental in this regard—designing and scaling technologies that enable access to online learning, telemedicine, digital payments, and e-government platforms. These tools not only expand opportunity but are also accelerating progress toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the green transition. In addition, the private sector has led efforts in digital skills development, recognizing that infrastructure and tools alone are not enough. Through capacity-building initiatives, businesses are empowering individuals and communities with the digital literacy and competencies needed to participate fully in the digital economy.

Third, the growing application and institutionalisation of the multistakeholder model across digital governance processes at all levels, as established by WSIS, has proven to be essential to managing the complexity and pace of technological change. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) stands as a flagship example of this success. Since its creation as an outcome of the WSIS, the IGF has steadily grown in participation and influence as a critical platform for dialogue, where diverse stakeholders can exchange views, build mutual understanding, and advance common priorities on pressing digital issues – from digital inclusion to data governance, from cybersecurity to AI. The quality and diversity of participation at the IGF, including youth, SMEs, technical experts, legislators, and policymakers, reflect the deepening commitment to multistakeholder governance across sectors. Importantly, the IGF's evolution into a global ecosystem of national, sub-regional, and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs) is one of the most tangible and impactful developments of the past two decades. These local forums have brought the WSIS vision closer to communities, enabling context-specific dialogue, capacity building, and local policy innovation. NRIs also provide a pathway for grassroots actors to influence broader digital policy debates, helping to bridge global and local governance efforts.

Furthermore, WSIS has helped catalyse the use of advanced digital technologies (big data analytics, machine learning, AI, etc) for good. Businesses are leveraging these technologies not just for efficiency or productivity, but to create solutions that promote sustainability, improve healthcare outcomes, enhance education access, and accelerate clean energy innovation. AI, in particular, has emerged as a powerful accelerant for digital inclusion and sustainable development.

In short, the past two decades of WSIS implementation have demonstrated the catalytic role of ICTs and digital technologies in advancing inclusive development. The global business community remains a committed partner-investing, innovating, and collaborating-to help realize the WSIS vision of a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society." The collective contributions of the multistakeholder community remains the surest path to unlocking the full potential of digital transformation for all.

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? *

First and foremost, the persistent digital divide continues to pose a significant challenge. Despite impressive connectivity gains, 4% of the global population still lives out of reach of broadband networks, according to ITU. In parallel, there is a substantial "usage gap" where 39% of the global population that is covered by broadband networks and could go online but does not. This stark reality underscores a central concern for the global business community: the social and economic opportunities of digital transformation are not being benefitted from widely enough. Inequalities in connectivity and internet adoption are closely correlated with location, economic opportunity, education, gender, age, as well as social and cultural norms and governance approaches. These inequalities become even more pronounced when we consider who has the capacity to generate, access, and use data and advanced technologies like artificial intelligence. To tackle this growing imbalance, it is essential that future efforts under WSIS address the barriers to connectivity and Internet adoption at its roots. Three types of interrelated barriers stand out:
•Financial barriers – factors that impact public and private investment in connectivity, affect costs and inhibit sufficient return on investment for researching, developing, deploying, maintaining, or upgrading networks, or inhibit alternative business models to deliver connectivity;
•Technological barriers – factors that limit the development or deployment of new technologies or pose barriers to investment in innovation, research and development that would enable connectivity, especially in remote and hard-to-reach areas; and
•Regulatory barriers – norms, policies, laws and regulations that limit the deployment of networks (especially through new and innovative technologies and methods), disincentivise investments, or inhibit the uptake and use of the Internet for certain segments of the population.
In addition, we must also consider factors that limit people's ability to go online, such as affordability, low digital literacy and skills, lack of relevant content (including in local languages), safety and security concerns, and lack of fundamental enablers (such as electricity, formal ID etc).
Second, the increasing tendency toward fragmentation poses a systemic risk to the open, interoperable, and global nature of the Internet. Policies and regulatory approaches that promote fragmentation undermine global connectivity, create barriers to trade and innovation, and ultimately hurt users. Business is concerned that this trend will reverse gains made over the last two decades in developing common digital standards, promoting innovation, and fostering global collaboration.
A third challenge is the uneven adoption and implementation of the multistakeholder model across countries and institutions. While the model has gained broad recognition as an inclusive approach to digital governance, it is still not consistently or meaningfully applied in many policy contexts. This is a missed opportunity. Inclusive, transparent, and participatory processes help build better, more balanced digital policies that are fit for purpose and more likely to succeed in practice. They also create channels for collaboration, reduce policy uncertainty, and foster greater trust in digital ecosystems.
As the digital policy landscape becomes more complex –with emerging issues like AI and cross-border data governance–a more consistent application of the multistakeholder model is urgently needed. It is essential that all countries, regardless of their stage of digital development, are supported and encouraged to adopt participatory approaches that reflect the spirit of WSIS and its vision of an inclusive, people-centred Information Society.
The WSIS+20 process must reaffirm the importance of multistakeholder cooperation – not just as a principle, but as a practical tool for effective, inclusive, and sustainable digital development.

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 of a 'people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society' in the years ahead, the international community must take decisive action in three key areas: 1) expanding meaningful connectivity and internet adoption, 2) fostering enabling policy environments for digital transformation, and 3) reinforcing multistakeholder digital governance.
1.Enabling meaningful connectivity and internet adoption
Over the past 20 years, the expansion of digital networks has connected billions, yet 2.6 billion people remain offline. Connectivity is not a stand-alone goal, but the gateway to participation in the modern economy and society. Importantly, today's digital divides are deepening—not only in who is connected, but in who can meaningfully access and leverage data and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. Without urgent action, these gaps will widen exponentially. Access to reliable infrastructure and services must be paired with investments in digital literacy, locally relevant content, and capacity building.
2. Fostering enabling policy environments
To fully harness the power of ICTs and digital technologies, we need policy frameworks that are fit for purpose in a dynamic, multi-layered digital economy. These frameworks must go beyond narrow sectoral regulation and consider the entire digital services and communications ecosystem that includes infrastructure, services and applications, and skills.
A central priority should be creating environments that encourage investment, foster innovation, and support competition. This includes:
- Embracing light-touch regulatory approaches that lower market entry barriers and encourage competition;
- Avoiding overly prescriptive or fragmented regulation that stifles innovation or creates uncertainty for investors;
- Supporting open markets and cross-border cooperation, especially for fast-moving digital services; and
- Ensuring legal and regulatory stability, which is critical for long-term private sector engagement.
When policy frameworks are open, transparent, and innovation-friendly, they catalyse progress, not just in economic growth, but in public service delivery, sustainability, and social development.
3. Strengthen multistakeholder cooperation
WSIS correctly identified multistakeholder collaboration as a core enabler of sustainable digital development. Today, this approach is more essential than ever. The digital policy landscape is increasingly complex, with new technologies emerging faster than governance mechanisms can adapt. To keep pace, it is critical that governments embed multistakeholder engagement into policymaking—ensuring that all voices, including those of business, civil society, the technical community, and marginalised groups, are heard and integrated.
In particular, the governance of artificial intelligence must be built on inclusive, interoperable, and rights-based approaches. International cooperation will be essential to avoid fragmented regulatory regimes that hamper innovation, reduce trust, and increase compliance burdens.
In summary, the WSIS vision remains as relevant today as it was in 2003—but achieving it in the context of today's fast-changing digital landscape requires renewed ambition and coordinated action.

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

N/A

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

1.Enabling Environment
The reference to an enabling environment is a welcome starting ground, but the section should be revised to more clearly define the conditions of such an environment, including stable legal and regulatory frameworks, open markets, international collaboration, and cross-border data flows. A whole-of-government approach is equally important that enables coordinated, cross-sector policy responses to evolving digital challenges and opportunities.
It is fundamental to recognize that governments alone cannot meet the investment needs of the growing demand for digital infrastructure and services. The private sector has been the core driver of innovation and investment. For that to continue and grow, it is critical that policymakers understand how regulatory and policy choices impact business decisions and the long-term viability of digital infrastructure and services.
Policy frameworks must be developed in close collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that policies are practically implementable and responsive to local needs and priorities.
2.Human Rights
We welcome that the paper recognizes the potential of ICTs to strengthen the exercise of human rights. Future language should be balanced to note not only ICT risks but also solutions (e.g. privacy enhancing technologies, encryption, etc) and align with previously reached agreements (e.g. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Best Interests of the Child framework established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child) and recognize the obligation of governments to protect and businesses to respect human rights.
3.Internet Governance
We welcome acknowledgment of the importance of multistakeholder cooperation in the WSIS process (par.5). However, this is not accurately reflected in the section on Internet governance, in particular par.59. More appropriate and widely agreed language can be found in the WSIS+10 Outcome Document (A/RES/70/125 par.57-58) and echoed in the GDC (A/RES/79/1 Annex 1 par.27), that both affirm that Internet governance should be multistakeholder in nature, including the full involvement of governments, business, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities, and all other relevant stakeholders, in their respective roles and responsibilities.
We recommend that the WSIS+20review does not reopen debates around enhanced cooperation. Doing so would fail to recognise the work of the two CSTD Working Groups dedicated to this issue and to acknowledge the significance of the IANA transition.
The WSIS+20process should also recognise the important contributions of the IGF as a key platform for dialogue and cooperation across stakeholder groups.
4.Data Governance
As data governance was extensively discussed and addressed in the GDC, it is not necessary for the WSIS+20review to reopen this topic. Instead, the review should recognise and support the ongoing work of the CSTD Working Group on Data Governance, established as a direct outcome of the GDC. Allowing this group to carry out its mandate without duplication will help ensure coherence and continuity across international processes.
5.Artificial Intelligence
The section on AI would also benefit from closer alignment with the consensus reached in the GDC. The GDC emphasizes the need for inclusive, multistakeholder approaches to AI governance, which is not captured in the current text. Additionally, while the GDC acknowledges that the UN has an important role to play, the Elements Paper refers to its role as essential, which overstates the agreed language and may create confusion.
As conversations around AI governance initiatives launched under the GDC are still in their early stages and most likely will not have commenced their work by the time the WSIS+20review concludes, the WSIS+20 process should refrain from putting forward new proposals. Instead, it should focus on supporting the coherent implementation of existing initiatives

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

1. Strengthening the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines
The WSIS+20 review should recognize the continued relevance of the WSIS Action Lines in addressing emerging digital challenges such as AI governance, data flows, cyber threats, and environmental sustainability. To reinforce their impact, the WSIS+20 review should seek to:
• Promote flexibility and adaptability: the broad, technology-agnostic and future-proof design of the Action Lines has allowed alignment with frameworks like the SDGs. WSIS+20 discussions should clarify how they can address emerging challenges, such as those discussed in the GDC, without creating new Action Lines;
• Enhance capacity building and knowledge sharing: scaling up capacity-building and improving access to good practices and policy models, including through platforms like the WSIS Forum and IGF will help all stakeholders to step up their efforts in implementing the Action Lines; and
• Strengthen multistakeholder engagement: ensuring open policymaking and wider participation enriches debates and leads to more effective, locally relevant solutions and helps deliver more practical and scalable responses to new issues.
2. Strengthening the WSIS implementation framework
The WSIS framework – including the WSIS Forum, IGF, UNGIS, and the reporting mechanism through CSTD – has served well in the implementation of the Action Lines. Given the shared focus of WSIS and the GDC on inclusive digital cooperation, this framework also offers a natural home for implementing the GDC. To further strengthen this framework, the WSIS+20 review should consider:
• Aligning WSIS and GDC through a joint implementation plan;
• Empowering UNGIS to oversee this joint implementation plan and coordinate across relevant UN entities;
• Reinforcing the IGF's role as central to the WSIS framework by making its mandate permanent and stabilizing its funding;
• Refocusing the WSIS Forum as a space for showcasing national and stakeholder implementation of WSIS Action Lines, including those aligned with GDC commitments; and
• Reinforcing the role of the CSTD as the central venue for reporting on the progress made on the joint WSIS-GDC implementation plan.
3. Strengthening and institutionalizing the IGF
The IGF plays a critical role in the WSIS framework and should be reinforced to maximize its contributions. To this end, the WSIS+20 review should consider:
• Making the IGF's mandate permanent, with periodic performance reviews aligned with WSIS milestones;
• Recognizing the IGF's leadership structure (Multistakeholder Advisory Group, Leadership Panel), national and regional network (NRIs), and intersessional ecosystem (Best Practice Forums, Policy Networks, Dynamic Coalitions);
• Improving the IGF's interaction with other WSIS structures by targeted communication of the IGF's various outputs to UNGIS, the CSTD, and the WSIS Forum; and
• Stabilizing the IGF's funding to support its full range of activities and intersessional work.
By advancing these suggestions, the WSIS framework can retain its foundational strengths while evolving to meet new needs, reduce fragmentation across digital governance processes, and support inclusive, effective global cooperation. The International Chamber of Commerce stands ready to contribute to this effort.

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

N/A

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

Timea Suto, Global Digital Policy Lead, International Chamber of Commerce, Private Sector

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

Please enter an email