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

Multistakeholder model: the WSIS outcomes (Geneva, Tunisia and WSIS+10) brought global acceptance and acknowledgment for a multistakeholder framework for global digital policies and cooperation. The Internet has always relied on multistakeholder participation by its very nature. The multistakeholder model of Internet governance has continued to drive the Internet's development. Given that it was reaffirmed in UNGA Res. 70/125, and in the Global Digital Compact (GDC), it should be reaffirmed in the Zero Draft, and the texts about Internet governance should include language that reflects the achievements of the WSIS+10 and the GDC.

Multilingual access and digital participation: the vast majority of the world's population are non-native English speakers. Enabling a multilingual Internet enables people to use the domain name and email address of their choice, in their native languages and in ways that reflect their cultural context and identity. This allows them to fully benefit from the social and cultural dimensions of the information and communication infrastructure. Significant progress has been made on digital inclusion, including multilingualism. We are encouraged that the WSIS+20 Elements Paper (EP) recognises this as a key factor in bridging the digital divide. We are honored that the document references ICANN's role in making the Internet more multilingual and inclusive. Together with our community, we have supported the delegation of 151 top-level Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) supporting 37 languages across 23 scripts, and developed rules for 26 widely used scripts, covering more than 350 languages. This directly supports the WSIS commitments in the 2003 Geneva Declaration and the 2005 Tunis Agenda to advance the multilingualization of the Internet. We believe meaningful access can be further strengthened through Universal Acceptance (UA) of IDNs and corresponding email addresses. UA ensures all valid domain names and email addresses, regardless of their script, language, or length, are accepted by all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems.

Over 67% of the world's population is online: Internet access has expanded significantly over the past two decades, providing users with access to information at high speeds and low prices not available in 2005.

Spurred innovations and technologies: WSIS has fostered an enabling environment that spurred new innovations and technologies that have transformed the digital landscape, and have made an impact in many aspects of our daily lives. Great strides have been made in addressing the digital divide and advancing meaningful connectivity, while enhanced security and privacy measures have strengthened the Internet infrastructure and bolstered trust in the digital ecosystem.

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 its achievements, the WSIS process faces ongoing challenges in some of its implementations. Threats of fragmentation of the Internet's technical layer are a concern. Such threats could be triggered, among others, by geopolitical tensions, competing national interests that hinder consensus and global cooperation on digital policies, and the enactment of rules without a thorough understanding of their technical implications.

Efforts have been made to foster open dialogues and encourage collaboration amongst various stakeholders to find effective solutions to challenges, including the ones cited above. While no single entity can solve all issues, maintaining the integrity of the Internet is a conditio sine qua non, and is the result of many collaborative efforts. Regular interaction that includes all stakeholders - governments, private sector, civil society, academia, technical community, and others - in their respective roles - is crucial. The contribution of the technical community to the creation, development, and functioning of the Internet is widely recognized, and decisions for the future of the Internet should not be taken without the participation of this stakeholder group. For more than two decades, this consensus-based model of Internet governance has helped ensure the Internet remains open, secure, and globally interoperable, allowing billions of people to have access to it and dramatically changing the lives of all people for the better.

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 relevance and applicability of WSIS outcomes to new and emerging areas highlight the importance of enhancing the implementation of its evolved principles and Action Lines. To address these topics effectively, the multistakeholder model of Internet governance should continue to be leveraged, with a focus on improving its effectiveness in fostering timely responses and identifying implementable and sustainable solutions. This involves streamlining decision-making processes, ensuring diverse stakeholder participation, and fostering their empowerment to represent a broad range of perspectives.

• The multistakeholder model of Internet governance: the Internet has and continues to thrive and evolve when its governance reflects the shared responsibilities of those who run, use, and rely on it. The Internet is a network of networks – not centrally owned or controlled, but coordinated by those who develop its protocols, operate its infrastructure, and rely on its stability. The multistakeholder model reflects that reality. It has kept the Internet stable and interoperable since its inception. It delivers results by combining technical expertise with global participation – ensuring policies can be implemented and adapted across borders.

ICANN, which includes the organization, its Board, and its Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees, has provided technically grounded, globally coordinated governance of the Domain Name System for over 27 years. The DNS supports billions of queries daily – including through crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been made possible through collaboration with governments, private sector, civil society, international organizations and academia. In addition to managing the DNS, ICANN coordinates the allocation of Internet Protocol (IP) addresses and management of protocol parameters, both essential to maintaining a secure and globally interoperable Internet.

• The IGF as the multistakeholder platform for dialogue: the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was acknowledged by the Global Digital Compact (GDC) as the primary multistakeholder platform for discussion of Internet governance issues. The IGF is the only global platform where all stakeholders – governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, academic and technical communities – engage as peers. To remain effective, it requires stable resources, clearer mandates, and the ability to produce actionable outcomes. ICANN has circulated a draft paper, The IGF We Want, which we would submit separately to the co-facilitators for their consideration.

• Recognition of the unique role of all stakeholders: the functioning of the technical Internet infrastructure is of crucial importance for the whole world. The technical community's role is foundational—not interchangeable with any other group. Likewise with other stakeholders, whose roles are outlined in the Tunis Agenda. The work of the technical community underpins the Internet's security, stability, and interoperability. This should be reflected in the Zero Draft.

All three elements will serve as a firm base for addressing the emerging trends of achieving the WSIS vision. Preserving and fostering them should be a priority for action.

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

Structure: the EP has covered a broad range of topics that are important to the present state of affairs in the digital sphere. However, there is some inconsistency - the first seven issues follow a standard format, i.e. problem, progress, challenge, and opportunity for feedback, but the latter issues for the most part describe the problem from 20 years ago and fail to reflect the progress made. It seems that in an attempt to be precise and distinct, the paper has missed the reality that governance approaches are linked to all digital issues. Hence, by not linking issues under a broader digital governance framework - or by looking at governance through the lens of individual issues - the EP risks weakening the overall structure and leaving limited space for integrated governance approaches or cross-cutting coordination. In addition, this could risk duplicating platforms for coordination and dialogue, when the IGF already exists and its mandate is broad enough to cover a wider range of issues. For instance, the IGF could be repackaged or regrouped to reflect how technical infrastructure, data policy, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance intersect. Future IGF programming could better highlight the role of coordination across these domains to prevent fragmentation and promote trust in using information and communication technologies.

Alignment of the WSIS Implementation and the GDC: while the EP has identified several excellent points in its Introductory part, including identifying key opportunities to align the implementations of the WSIS and the GDC, it lacks an explanation as to how this alignment will be done without risking duplication and wasting resources. The Zero Draft may benefit from referencing the 11 April 2025 Report on the twenty-eighth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (7–11 April 2025) (E/2025/31-E/CN.16/2025/4) recommending "developing a joint implementation road map, to integrate the GDC commitments into the World Summit architecture, ensuring a unified approach to digital cooperation that avoids duplication and maximizes resource efficiency." In addition, the Zero Draft may expand the alignments beyond the two processes' implementation, particularly given that the U.N. Member States had already taken efforts to thoroughly examine and negotiate the GDC text in 2024. For example, the GDC cited the importance of the multistakeholder principle of cooperation (p. 8(k) of the GDC) and the "interoperable" character of data governance that should be discussed "in a comprehensive and inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue" (p. 48 of the GDC). The GDC also asks "to pursue common understandings for data governance at all levels" (p. 49). The Zero Draft can benefit from referencing these agreed points.

WSIS Framework: ICANN recognises that the EP is not meant to be thorough or final and that it serves as a framework for the Zero Draft. It is reassuring that the EP made several references to the WSIS Framework (e.g. WSIS Action Lines, IGF, WSIS Forum, UNGIS etc. - as cited in Question # 6), but their references could be cited in full in the Zero Draft. For instance, while the IGF is discussed at length, there was no mention of the relevance and role of the ITU WSIS Forum HLE and UNGIS. ICANN views that the ITU WSIS+20 Forum HLE deserves a mention in the Zero Draft as it is an important milestone of the WSIS+20 review process and has successfully delivered its work as a mechanism for multistakeholder coordination.

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

Introduction: the EP's Introductory section is relatively inclusive in its tone and reaffirms the outcomes of WSIS+10 and the Global Digital Compact (GDC). A positive sign is that multistakeholder cooperation is explicitly referenced. This is particularly relevant in the context of the governance of the Internet's technical underpinnings because the Internet thrives when its governance reflects the shared responsibilities of those who run, use, and rely on it. Its model is grounded in coordination, not control. However, the EP applies the wording on multistakeholder cooperation inconsistently even though it is stated as an element.

Structure and format: the standardised format shifts from paragraph 43 onwards. There is no longer any explicit invitation for feedback, and the text adopts a more prescriptive tone when compared to the earlier paragraphs. ICANN urges the co-facilitators to consider adopting the standardized format for all sections in alignment with the consultative nature of this exercise, so that Member States may be informed to examine issues thoroughly and weigh matters carefully.

Internet governance: ICANN hopes that the Zero Draft will recognise the evolution of the Internet and its multistakeholder model of governance since the days of WSIS-Geneva, WSIS-Tunisia, and WSIS+10. The EP missed the opportunity to recognise the maturity of the multistakeholder model that has been implemented within the IGF, ICANN, or the GDC-related processes. It would be very productive if the Zero Draft will do that.

While the concept of enhanced cooperation has been a longstanding topic within the WSIS and other UN processes, some observers consider that it has evolved over time into the kind of sustained, practical collaboration that now underpins much of Internet governance. Perhaps the Zero Draft could mention this achievement of the WSIS process, and not try to revive a process that had its meaning 20 years ago, but today has lost most of it, as governments are well involved in the multistakeholder model of Internet governance, and have their role reaffirmed in the WSIS+10 and the GDC.

The Internet's success that was achieved through 20 years of cooperation should be highlighted and not erased. Therefore, the language on Internet governance should reflect progress and not go back in history. For example, instead of building on its past work at the WSIS+10 review or the GDC, paragraph 59 is going back in time. This risks legitimizing outdated language that no longer reflects the current state of cooperation. ICANN calls for the Zero Draft to use language consistent with UNGA Res. 70/125 and the GDC. The Internet's nature has to be depicted as open, interoperable and secure; Internet governance should include references to its multistakeholder character and the technical community needs to be described as a distinct stakeholder on par with governments, private sector, civil society, international organizations and academic community (pp. 57, 59).

Internet Governance Forum (IGF): the IGF's mandate enables it to evolve with the Internet and the technologies that are facilitated by and built on top of the Internet. As such, the WSIS implementation beyond 2025 could benefit from leveraging this existing and mature assembly. While the EP has recognised the IGF's role as the primary multistakeholder platform, it fell short in recognising its potential to discuss the broader digital governance and digital transformation issues as a neutral coordination venue. ICANN hopes that the Zero Draft will consider the IGF's potential for growth and its achievements since its inception. Furthermore, to strengthen the support for the extension of the mandate of the IGF, ICANN hopes that the Zero Draft could examine practical approaches to support the IGF. In order for the IGF to remain effective, it requires stable resources and clearer mandates to further its ability to produce actionable outcomes.

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

WSIS action lines call for local content, cultural identity and linguistic diversity. They also aspire to connect the "unconnected", and bridge the digital divide. ICANN initiatives contribute to these action lines through, among others, the Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Universal Acceptance (UA) program. The IDN and UA program facilitates multilingualism on the Internet by enabling secure and stable use of domain names in different languages and scripts of the communities globally and further ensuring their UA, i.e., these internationalized domain names and corresponding email addresses can be used by all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems. The adoption of IDN and UA will not only help bridge the digital divide and provide the gateway to the next billion Internet users but also sustain language diversity, build trust in the infrastructure of the Internet, and reduce barriers to access for all communities.

Global collaboration and coordination have enabled multilingual access and development outcomes across regions. This includes meaningful progress in expanding resilient infrastructure, including the deployment of DNS root services. Meaningful digital access requires more than connectivity; it depends on trust, resilience, and multilingual reach.

Thus each component of the multistakeholder equation is vital: governments, private sector, civil society, international organizations, and technical and academic communities. It is important to acknowledge not only their distinct role but also the collaboration that exists between them for upholding the WSIS+20 Framework.

Finally, the role of the UN agencies, which have contributed to the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines, should be recognised and further supported. To give just two of the many examples:
A) ITU has done a commendable job in tracking and encouraging WSIS Implementation, including WSIS stocktaking through its annual ITU WSIS Forum.
B) UNESCO is working to enhance linguistic diversity in the digital world to make the Internet more accessible to hundreds of millions of users. This effort is complementary to the achievements of the WSIS Action Line C8.

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

ICANN commends the work of the co-facilitators on the EP. In addition, this opportunity to provide further feedback that could be considered for the preparation of the Zero Draft reaffirms the WSIS+20 co-facilitators' commitment to a WSIS+20 process that is open to all stakeholders to the extent possible. The coordination of the Internet's technical underpinning, including its infrastructure coordination, is inherently multistakeholder in nature. We hope that the process towards the agreement on the WSIS+20 Outcome Document would allow all relevant stakeholders to contribute. As such, we welcome the proposal for the establishment of the WSIS+20 Informal Multistakeholder Sounding Board (IMSB) and look forward to the publication of a more detailed schedule of consultations with the participation of Member States and stakeholders.

To conclude and reiterate our earlier points:

• Internet thrives because it's open and built on global cooperation. The multistakeholder model ensures that no single group is in control—everyone with a stake has a voice. The Zero Draft should "recognize that the Internet is a critical global facility for inclusive and equitable digital transformation. To fully benefit all, it must be open, global, interoperable, stable and secure". The Internet's success stems not from being controlled by a single actor or governed from the top, but from being coordinated by all stakeholders. The Zero Draft should "recognize 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 multistakeholder model of Internet governance is a stated principle and should be applied consistently. It is an essential model, not optional.

• IGF has the potential to be an anchor in a fragmented governance landscape. The IGF is the only global forum where all Internet stakeholders – governments, civil society, private sector, international organizations, technical and academic l communities – collaborate as peers to shape Internet policy. The IGF is "the primary multi-stakeholder platform for discussion of Internet governance issues".To remain effective in today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, it requires stable resources and clearer mandates. Without this, we risk losing the most representative and collaborative venue for coordinated global governance of the Internet.

• Within the multistakeholder model, organizations like ICANN bring that global community together to turn shared responsibility into meaningful action. The technical community operates the infrastructure that keeps the Internet running. Their work underpins the Internet's technical stability and ensures that the system stays secure, reliable, and globally interoperable. Without their direct involvement, we risk policies that cannot be implemented, or are implemented insufficiently, weakening systems and leading to reduced resilience. Hence, their role is unique and not interchangeable.

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

Alexey Trepykhalin (USA); Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN); Technical community; https://www.icann.org (ICANN's website)

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

Please enter an email