

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

WSIS has been instrumental in advancing global digital development and fostering international cooperation. Among its most significant achievements are the institutionalization of multistakeholder approach and the creation of key coordination mechanisms such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), WSIS Forum, and the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS). These platforms have played a critical role in promoting inclusive discussions on digital governance and policy-making. WSIS has also driven notable progress in digital access and usage. The private sector has been vital in expanding global connectivity, delivering innovative digital solutions, and cultivating digital skills, reinforcing the principle that infrastructure access must be paired with the capacity to use technology effectively. Collectively, these achievements highlight WSIS's impact in positioning digital solutions as essential tools for inclusive development.

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? \*

From a private sector perspective, ongoing and emerging challenges continue to hinder progress toward the goals of WSIS. Despite substantial investment in digital infrastructure and services, significant digital divides remain, particularly around access, affordability, and digital literacy. These gaps restrict inclusive participation and limit economic opportunities for many communities. The fragmentation of the Internet represents a systemic threat to one of WSIS's core aspirations: a free, open, and interoperable global network. Diverging regulatory frameworks risk undermining connectivity, introducing barriers to cross-border innovation and trade, and jeopardizing long-standing collaborative gains. A further concern is the uneven application of the multistakeholder approach across policy-making processes. When not uniformly embraced, it curtails opportunities for meaningful collaboration, balanced decision-making, and trust-building. In contrast, inclusive and transparent governance consistently yields more effective and sustainable digital policies. Together, these challenges reinforce the urgent need for coherent global cooperation and inclusive governance that meaningfully incorporates private sector expertise. Stronger alignment between WSIS, the Global Digital Compact, and emerging digital governance frameworks will be essential to fostering equitable digital progress and building resilient digital ecosystems.

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? \*

Advancing the WSIS vision requires a strategic focus that responds to the evolving digital landscape and promotes inclusive, resilient development. Consistent and meaningful application of the multistakeholder model is vital. Inclusive participation, drawing on governments, the private sector, civil society, academia, and the technical community, leads to more balanced policies and deeper trust. WSIS platforms should further reinforce this collaborative spirit and guarantee full engagement of all stakeholders. Central to achieving the WSIS vision is the continued prioritization of human rights in digital spaces. As technology evolves, governance frameworks must champion rights-based digital transformation rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and aligned with other international human rights instruments. Integrating these principles into digital ecosystems is key to fostering trust and long-term resilience. In an era of rapid digital transformation, a coherent and predictable regulatory environment is critical. Fragmented digital governance threatens interoperability and stifles innovation, while inconsistent regulations pose barriers to cross-border collaboration and global opportunities. Ensuring alignment between WSIS, the Global Digital Compact, and emerging AI governance frameworks is essential to promote transparency, harmonization, and innovation.

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

In light of the evolving digital landscape, Microsoft recommends integrating the following thematic priority: Cybersecurity and Attribution: To strengthen the section on Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs, explicit references to attribution are essential. Strengthening cybersecurity requires credible and transparent attribution of malicious cyber activities, grounded in robust technical evidence, observed attacker patterns, and international cooperation among defenders. Such attribution, conducted responsibly and collectively, builds trust, accountability, and stability in cyberspace.

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

Microsoft appreciates the broad scope of the Elements Paper and offers the following suggestions for refinement:

In the section on Information and Communications Technologies for Development, we recommend emphasizing public-private partnerships and recognizing the private sector's role in expanding access to and use of digital technologies.

The Digital Economy section should highlight AI's potential to drive economic growth and support small businesses by lowering operational barriers. A balanced approach is needed, addressing risks while recognizing AI's ability to advance fundamental rights and enrich economies.

In Social and Cultural Development, we suggest clarifying that digital ID systems can raise privacy concerns without proper safeguards.

We welcome the recognition of AI's positive role in Environmental Impacts. To balance opportunity and responsibility, the section should also address how AI can help reduce carbon footprints, find more efficient solutions to environmental challenges, and support sustainable growth.

In Bridging Digital Divides, we propose amending paragraph 34 to identify cybercrime and harmful online content as key challenges.

The Enabling Environment section would benefit from emphasizing the importance of coherent, predictable regulatory landscape and harmonized policy frameworks. Effective digital governance is essential to facilitate cross-border data flows and global collaboration.

In Human Rights and Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society, we have concerns about absence of references to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in paragraphs 48 and 50 and recommend including them. In paragraph 43, "protecting human rights" should be replaced with "respecting human rights," reflecting actions/consequences of ICTs'. Paragraph 47 should be reframed to focus on illegal and harmful content more broadly, rather than disinformation alone. We propose revising paragraph 50 to: "Stakeholders should promote access to information, protect the integrity of democratic processes, strengthen international cooperation concerning hate speech online, and mitigate the risks of information operations targeting democracies in a manner consistent with international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Governments should promote diverse and resilient information ecosystems and strengthen independent and public media."

In Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs, we suggest amending paragraph 53 to separate disinformation as a harm to the information ecosystem, distinct from harms to individuals.

In Internet Governance, we recommend including a working definition of Internet Governance and ensuring paragraph 59 includes references to both – multilateral and multistakeholder processes.

In Data Governance, we propose enhancing paragraph 66 by adding responsible data practices, which are critical alongside data quality and reliability for effective deployment of data for development.

In Artificial Intelligence, we respectfully disagree with a claim in paragraph 73 regarding a global AI governance deficit. Notable progress includes three UN resolutions adopted last year and initiatives from the G7, OECD, GAIGO, UNESCO, and others, demonstrating growing international coordination.

Finally, in Capacity Building, we suggest incorporating the phrase "transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms," consistent with the Tunis Agenda and Geneva Plan of Action.

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

We believe greater alignment between WSIS and newer initiatives, particularly the Global Digital Compact and emerging AI governance efforts, is essential to prevent fragmentation and enhance policy coherence.

Renewing the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) offers a strategic opportunity to reinforce its role as a leading multistakeholder platform for open and inclusive dialogue. Moreover, the IGF should be empowered to continue facilitating equal engagement of all stakeholders.

WSIS platforms, especially the WSIS Forum and IGF, are vital in fostering shared understanding and collaboration across diverse stakeholder communities.

Enhancing coordination among these mechanisms will amplify their collective impact and support progress toward a people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented digital future.

While digital technologies have advanced significantly since the last WSIS review in 2015, we believe the existing Action Lines offer sufficient flexibility to accommodate these developments. Rather than introducing new Action Lines, refining the current framework would help maintain continuity and uphold the principle of technological neutrality.

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

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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

Elina Volksone, Microsoft

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

Please enter an email