

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

One of the most important achievements of the WSIS process has been the gradual recognition of community-led and community-centered connectivity models as legitimate and effective strategies to advance digital inclusion. Initiatives such as community networks have shown that locally driven solutions can provide meaningful connectivity in contexts where commercial models fail to deliver. The WSIS framework helped to open space in international digital policy for diverse approaches rooted in social participation, autonomy, and the common good.

The growing visibility of these models, especially in Indigenous and rural territories, reflects years of collective advocacy. WSIS contributed to a shift from purely top-down narratives to more plural and inclusive ones. The fact that community networks and locally owned infrastructure are now part of the global conversation marks a major achievement.

Still, the WSIS+20 High-Level Event and broader review process brought mixed feelings. While community-centered connectivity was acknowledged more than in past editions, the participation of those most affected by digital exclusion, including Indigenous Peoples, was limited. Twenty years ago, dedicated spaces existed for Indigenous communities to voice their priorities. Today, such spaces have become less visible.

Moving forward, the WSIS process must not only celebrate inclusion rhetorically, but ensure real participation of those implementing alternative connectivity solutions on the ground.

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? \*

The lack of an enabling environment remains a key barrier. Policy and regulatory frameworks still overwhelmingly favor commercial and centralized models. Community-led initiatives face major obstacles, including limited access to spectrum, lack of eligibility for public funding, and legal uncertainty.

Indigenous Peoples face additional challenges. Often misclassified as just another "vulnerable group," they are in fact rights-holders with distinct governance systems, cultural frameworks, and relationships to territory. This lack of recognition leads to poorly designed policies that fail to support Indigenous digital autonomy and self-determined infrastructure development.

The framing of the "2.6 billion unconnected" often abstracts from real-life struggles. Discussions remain fixated on coverage and devices, without addressing the deeper structural causes of exclusion: land dispossession, linguistic marginalization, discrimination, and lack of control over digital resources.

Finally, global processes continue to privilege top-down solutions and tech-driven narratives, widening the gap between international discourse and grassroots realities. Without rebalancing power and representation, WSIS will fall short of its people-centered vision.

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 fulfill the WSIS vision, the following priorities must be addressed:

- Create an enabling regulatory environment for community-led and small-scale connectivity models. This includes legal recognition, simplified licensing, access to spectrum, and eligibility for universal service funding.
- Acknowledge Indigenous Peoples as distinct rights-holders in digital policy frameworks. Support their self-determined governance of digital infrastructure and content.
- Ensure meaningful participation of grassroots actors in WSIS and related spaces. This includes the revival of dedicated platforms for Indigenous Peoples and unconnected communities.
- Reframe access as a justice issue, not just a technical one. Digital rights begin with access, and access must be grounded in autonomy, sustainability, and cultural relevance.
- Invest in digital ecosystems, including local language content, training programs based on local knowledge, and digital tools adapted to community realities.
- Emerging technologies like AI must not widen existing inequalities. Indigenous Peoples and community-based organizations must be included in the governance of AI, data, and digital public infrastructure.

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

The Elements Paper should:

- Expand the concept of an enabling environment to explicitly include non-commercial and community-based actors.
- Emphasize the importance of territorial and cultural autonomy in digital inclusion for Indigenous Peoples.
- Establish a principle of digital self-determination, especially for peoples with distinct governance systems.
- Include commitments to long-term funding mechanisms for community-led infrastructure, training, and content creation.
- Address the linguistic and cultural diversity of the global population and support the development of digital tools and services in Indigenous languages.

These themes are critical for the next phase of WSIS if it aims to be truly inclusive and sustainable.

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

We recommend:

- Paragraph 8 should be expanded to explicitly recognize that Indigenous Peoples are not simply one of many vulnerable groups, but are collective rights-holders with unique legal status, governance systems, and territorial relationships.
- Paragraphs 36–38 on the enabling environment should include reference to regulatory frameworks that support decentralized, community-led connectivity models.
- The document should use "Indigenous Peoples" consistently, capitalized and in the plural, in line with international standards such as UNDRIP.
- A new paragraph should be added under digital inclusion or governance, recognizing digital self-determination as a foundational principle for communities, especially Indigenous Peoples.

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

To ensure the WSIS framework reflects lived realities and emerging needs:

- Actively integrate Indigenous Peoples and community networks into the design of Action Lines and IGF tracks.
- Restore or create dedicated spaces for Indigenous participation, building on lessons from the original WSIS process.
- Ensure regional and national-level WSIS processes also reflect this inclusion, not just global forums.
- Promote interoperability between WSIS and the Global Digital Compact, aligning both processes around shared commitments to inclusion, rights, and sustainability.
- Develop cross-cutting mechanisms for capacity building that include the political, legal, and technical tools needed for communities to exercise digital autonomy.

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

The WSIS+20 process revealed both the progress and limitations of global digital cooperation. Community-led initiatives are no longer peripheral. Yet, the lack of visibility and participation of the most affected communities remains a structural flaw.

For WSIS to move forward with legitimacy and impact, it must become a space of dialogue with those who are building solutions from the ground up. This means shifting from rhetorical inclusion to redistributive participation, where those shaping the digital future include not just states and corporations, but also Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and grassroots innovators.

Digital justice starts with rebalancing who gets to speak, who defines priorities, and who benefits from global agendas.

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