

GFMD Submission to the WSIS+20 Rev. 2 Outcome Document

December 2025

10 December 2025

At this final stage of the WSIS+20 Review process, the [Global Forum for Media Development \(GFMD\)](#) wishes to **reiterate its strong support for the commitments and acknowledgements related to media independence, the safety of journalists, and the call to strengthen stakeholder support for media outlets, media workers, and an enabling environment in which journalists can operate freely and without harassment (para. 74).**

We firmly recognize that **preserving this paragraph and its referenced commitments will be fundamental to achieving the WSIS vision of a people-centred, open, and safe internet.**

We also welcome the strengthened language in op.13 on the human-rights-centred lifecycle of technology, and in particular, the language in para. 54 addressing violence and other adverse impacts relevant to various vulnerable groups.

Finally, we wish to highlight **three key opportunities to further strengthen human rights safeguards and reinforce corporate and private-sector accountability** – ensuring that the WSIS+20 remains a future-looking document.

1. **Op. 67** We reaffirm our commitment, set out in General Assembly resolution 69/166 of 18 December 2014, that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online. We recall the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 78/213 on 22 December 2023, which set out principles and actions concerning the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of digital technologies. We will uphold international human rights law throughout the life cycle of digital and emerging technologies, so that users can safely benefit from digital technologies and are protected from violations, abuses, and all forms of discrimination. We commit *“to refrain from or cease the use of digital technologies that are impossible to operate in compliance with international human rights law or that pose undue risks to the enjoyment of human rights and”** to establish appropriate safeguards to prevent and address any adverse impact on human rights arising from the use of digital and emerging technologies and protect individuals against violations and abuses of their human rights in the digital space, including through *“regular, comprehensive human rights impact assessments of digital technologies”*** human rights due diligence and establishing effective oversight and remedy mechanisms.

* A/RES/78/213, para.20(b)

2. **Op. 71.** We reaffirm our commitment to article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that no person shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, consistent with

countries' obligations under international human rights law. *"We call on Member States to review their procedures, practices and legislation regarding the surveillance of communications, their interception and the collection of personal data, including mass surveillance, interception and collection, with a view to upholding the right to privacy and other human rights by ensuring the full and effective implementation of all their obligations under international human rights law."**

* A/RES/69/166, para. 4(c)

See also: WSIS+10, para.46

3. **Op. 74.** We underscore the need to respect and protect the independence and diversity of media, including digital media, which are essential to maintaining information integrity and access to reliable and accurate information. We emphasise the importance of safeguarding journalists, media workers, human rights defenders, and other civil society actors. *"We acknowledge that, in the digital age, encryption and anonymity tools have become vital to freely exercise their work and their enjoyment of human rights, including to secure their communications and to protect the confidentiality of their sources. We urge Member States not to interfere with the use by journalists and media workers of such technologies and to ensure that any restrictions thereon comply with the obligations of States under international human rights law."** We call on all stakeholders to prevent and respond to online and offline threats, including harassment, mass surveillance, and arbitrary detention linked to their legitimate activities. We call for reliable and accurate information. We emphasise the importance of safeguarding on all stakeholders to strengthen independent and public media, support media workers, and ensure the conditions that allow journalism to operate freely, sustainably, and in the public interest without harassment, surveillance or arbitrary detention linked to their legitimate activities.

* A/RES/78/213, op.15. 17

See also: WSIS+10, para.45, GDC, para. 35

We take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the co-facilitators and to UN DESA for ensuring that the WSIS+20 Review process has remained open, transparent, and inclusive.

Sincerely,

The GFMD Team