



Bangladesh  
Internet  
Governance  
Forum



## **The Bangladesh NGOs Network Radio and Communication (BNNRC) Submission to the WSIS Zero Draft Consultation process in collaboration with the Bangladesh Internet Governance Forum (BIGF) and Pact for Future, Bangladeshi CSOs Initiative (BCI)**

**3 October 2025**

We would like to sincerely thank the WSIS+20 Co-Facilitators for the kind invitation, which has given us the opportunity to share our proposal on behalf of the Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC), the Bangladesh Internet Governance Forum (BIGF), and Pact for Future, Bangladeshi CSOs Initiative (BCI).

At the outset, after two decades of implementing the WSIS Action Lines, we recognise the tremendous opportunities presented by widespread connectivity, enhanced mobility, user-friendly interfaces, and emerging transaction channels. These advancements encourage us to expand government services beyond traditional online and mobile platforms.

**The essential objectives of the WSIS mandate have yet to be fully realised, as outlined in the Geneva Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda for Action.**

It's concerning to see the emergence of a significant aspect of the digital divide, which is unfolding alongside our access to information and knowledge. Unfortunately, this divide appears to be widening each day, rather than improving. It's essential for us to acknowledge this challenge and collaborate to find solutions that enable everyone to benefit from the digital world.

The Access to Information and Knowledge sector is now fully commercialized and entirely dominated by the corporate sector, as observed after 20 years. Therefore, where are the voices of underserved communities in Access to Information and Knowledge? But voices need to be heard. This situation is regrettable for us, given our two decades of collaboration with the corporate sector.

We wholeheartedly support the points raised in the submissions by the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD), the Global Digital Rights Coalition for WSIS (GDRC-WSIS), and the Global Digital Justice Forum. Together, these perspectives form a strong foundation for our ongoing dialogue.

The current version of the Zero Draft reflects considerable progress in addressing many of the issues raised during previous consultations. We appreciate this advancement and believe it is essential to preserve key language in the Outcome Document.

BNNRC values the collaborative spirit of the co-facilitators throughout the multi-stakeholder consultation process. To promote an inclusive dialogue, we suggest that the co-facilitators organize a targeted consultation focusing on community media development, media professionals, and digital development. This initiative would align with the WSIS's people-centred approach and emphasise the importance of digital development in our work.

There is a pressing opportunity to enhance the WSIS Forum to better address both longstanding and emerging challenges. Such an improvement would facilitate the exploration of potential solutions and support localisation efforts, while also fostering active engagement with the **UN Resident Coordinator (RC) at the country level.**

**Currently, a notable gap appears to exist between the UN Resident Coordinator's office and the issues concerning WSIS and the IGF at the country level. Strengthening this link could foster greater collaboration and enhance the effectiveness of our initiatives.**

What is urgently needed is a permanent, reinforced, and even stronger WSIS and IGF Secretariat, with sustainable funding at both the Secretariat and country levels through three areas.

**Develop a localised action plan that aligns global WSIS** commitments with national priorities. We need a central reporting system from the UN.

**Capacity Building and Awareness** (Promote ICT education and digital skills. Encourage the use of ICTs for inclusive development & run awareness campaigns on the benefits of an information & knowledge society.

**Create a multi-stakeholder engagement platform** that facilitates regular consultations, shares progress updates, and fosters innovation and collaboration

In the following pages, we propose ways to strengthen the current text by referencing relevant UNGA resolutions, many of which are already reflected in the Zero Draft.

Thank you for considering our suggestions.

We look forward to collaborating further to create a robust and inclusive digital development.

Sincerely,



**AHM Bazlur Rahman**

Chief Executive Officer, Bangladesh NGOs Network Radio and Communication (BNNRC), & Executive Coordinator, Pact for the Future, Bangladesh CSOs Initiative

## WSIS+20 Zero Draft

SI	WSIS+20 Zero Draft	Our Proposal
	<p><b>Para 3.</b> We reaffirm the value and principles of multi-stakeholder cooperation and engagement that have characterized the World Summit on the Information Society process since its inception, and recognise that effective participation, partnership and cooperation of Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organisations, the technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders, with balanced representation of all countries has been and continues to be vital in developing the Information Society, including the implementation of Summit outcomes.</p>	<p>We call attention to Paragraph 31 of the WSIS Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, which emphasizes that the strength of global digital governance and cooperation lies in the active participation of all stakeholders—both developed and developing countries—each contributing through their unique roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Building on this foundation, Paragraph 6 of the UN Global Digital Compact reaffirms our shared commitment:</p> <p>“As Governments, we will actively collaborate with the private sector, civil society, international organizations, and the technical and academic communities, along with all other stakeholders, to work together towards realizing the digital future we aspire to create.”</p> <p>This collaborative spirit remains essential for advancing an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable digital landscape for all.</p>
	<p><b>Para 6.</b> We welcome the tremendous growth in connectivity and development of the Internet, social media and other applications that has taken place since the World Summit. These improvements have enhanced the ability of governments, businesses, civil society and other organisations and individuals to develop and deploy applications and digital resources that can play a central role in driving economic growth, social development and innovation.</p>	<p><b>We call to</b> accelerate progress toward achieving <b>universal, meaningful, and high-quality connectivity</b>. While encouraging advances have been made, significant gaps remain—particularly in Bangladesh and across the South Asian region. Bridging these divides is essential to ensure inclusive development and guarantee that no community is left behind.</p> <p>At the same time, a <b>connectivity paradox</b> persists: Internet access, though indispensable, does not automatically translate into meaningful participation in the digital economy and society. Without affordability, digital skills, safety, and relevant local content, connectivity risks reinforcing existing inequalities rather than reducing them.</p> <p>To overcome this challenge, we must prioritize not only the expansion of access but also the creation of <b>pathways for genuine digital</b></p>

		<p><b>inclusion.</b> This requires investing in affordable infrastructure, promoting digital literacy, advancing gender-responsive strategies, and ensuring safe and trusted online spaces. By building these enabling conditions, we can move closer to a digital future that is equitable, empowering, and transformative for all.</p>
	<p><b>Para 7</b> We note that the widespread availability of the Internet has transformed traditional structures of public discourse. This has had significant impacts on societal behaviour, policy-making processes and the dynamics of information reliability and public trust.</p>	<p><b>We call to</b> recognize that the <b>attention-economy-driven models of social media</b> present both significant opportunities and serious risks for user engagement, particularly among young people. While these platforms can foster community, creativity, and civic participation, they also heighten concerns about addictive behaviors, algorithmic manipulation, and the spread of gender-based violence, abuse, and hate speech.</p> <p>To address these challenges, it is essential to <b>promote healthier online interactions</b> and critically examine the influence of algorithmically mediated content. Restoring values of <b>pluralism, diversity, and inclusivity</b> in our media landscape not only upholds the communicative and epistemic rights of individuals, but also reinforces <b>trust in public institutions</b> and strengthens the <b>integrity of electoral processes</b>.</p> <p>Moving forward, encouraging constructive dialogue, investing in digital literacy, and developing <b>effective, rights-based regulatory frameworks</b> are crucial steps toward building a digital public sphere that is safer, more inclusive, and genuinely empowering for all.</p>
	<p><b>Para 17.</b> We are convinced that information and communications technologies have demonstrated great potential to contribute to advancing human welfare and prosperity and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Their rapidly increasing capabilities and growing pervasiveness have enabled tremendous growth in the range of applications for development</p>	<p><b>We call to</b> establish an <b>annual multi-stakeholder review and planning meeting</b> dedicated to assessing progress on the integration of <b>Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)</b> in achieving the <b>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b> at both the regional and national levels. Such a platform would serve to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Evaluate progress and gaps</b> in ICT-driven SDG implementation.</li> </ul>

	<p>deployed by governments, the private sector and other stakeholders, creating new opportunities to improve productivity, prosperity and quality of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Facilitate knowledge exchange</b> among governments, civil society, private sector, academia, and development partners.</li> <li>• <b>Align regional and national strategies</b> with global digital commitments and the Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041.</li> <li>• <b>Strengthen accountability and coordination</b> to ensure ICTs effectively drive inclusive and sustainable development.</li> </ul> <p>By institutionalizing this process, stakeholders can ensure that ICT integration remains strategic, evidence-based, and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities in the digital age.</p>
	<p><b>Para 18</b> We are deeply concerned, however, that the capacity of these technologies to support development remains constrained by digital divides and inequalities between and within countries, regions and communities. A third of the world's population still does not make use of the Internet, while many people with access make little use of it for reasons that include lack of affordability, limited content including content in locally relevant languages, and limited digital skills. Strengthened international cooperation and enabling policy environments are required to address gaps in access and affordability, digital skills, financing and technological resources.</p>	<p>We call to prioritize the enhancement of ICT education and the cultivation of digital skills as foundational pillars of inclusive and sustainable development. A progressive, forward-looking program should be implemented that leverages ICT as a vital enabler for achieving equity, empowerment, and innovation.</p> <p>In parallel, national awareness campaigns must be launched to effectively communicate the advantages of building an information and knowledge society, ensuring that citizens, institutions, and communities understand and embrace the opportunities of digital transformation.</p> <p>By strengthening ICT education, promoting lifelong digital skills, and fostering public awareness, countries can accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while ensuring that digital technologies contribute to inclusive growth, social resilience, and the realization of a just and knowledge-driven society.</p>
	<p><b>Para 20</b> We acknowledge that developing digital public goods and digital public infrastructure are critical drivers of inclusive digital transformation and innovation and recognise the need to increase investment in their successful development with the participation of all stakeholders. Digital public goods include open-source software, open data, open artificial intelligence models, open</p>	<p><b>We call to recognize that NGOs play a vital role</b> in delivering essential services, fostering community resilience, and advancing inclusive development. Yet, their <b>infrastructure and digital capacities</b> are often overlooked within the frameworks of <b>Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)</b> and <b>Digital Public Goods (DPGs)</b>. It is essential to <b>acknowledge and integrate NGOs' infrastructure, networks, and resources</b> into these systems. Doing so would</p>

	<p>standards and open content that adhere to privacy and other applicable international laws, standards and best practices and do no harm, empower societies and individuals to direct digital technologies to their development needs and can facilitate digital cooperation and investment. Resilient, safe, inclusive and interoperable digital public infrastructure has the potential to deliver services at scale and increase social and economic opportunities for all. We recognise that there are multiple models of digital public infrastructure, and we recognise that each society will develop and use shared digital systems according to its particular priorities and needs.</p>	<p>expand their effectiveness, enhance service delivery, and extend digital benefits to underserved and marginalized communities. Such recognition would not only empower NGOs but also <b>strengthen the inclusiveness, resilience, and impact of digital public infrastructure</b>, ensuring it truly serves the public good and leaves no one behind.</p>
	<p><b>Para 32</b> We call on governments, multilateral development banks, relevant international organisations and the private sector to develop financing mechanisms and incentives to connect the unconnected to the Internet and to improve the quality and affordability of connectivity.</p>	<p><b>We call to</b> take real and concrete initiatives to advance <b>affordable, universal, and inclusive connectivity</b> by strengthening financing mechanisms and fostering innovative approaches. Key priorities include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Public Financing Mechanisms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Universal Service Funds (USFs) / Social Obligatory Funds:</b> Governments should deploy USFs and similar mechanisms to expand connectivity for low-income individuals, ensuring affordability and access to vital digital services.</li> <li>• <b>Subsidies &amp; Vouchers:</b> Provide direct subsidies for low-income households to cover internet access, or introduce vouchers to reduce the cost of devices and data packages.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Blended Finance Models</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs):</b> Utilize concessional loans, blended finance, and guarantees to reduce investment risks for broadband expansion in underserved areas.</li> <li>• <b>Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):</b> Strengthen joint initiatives where governments support core infrastructure (e.g., national fiber backbone), while private operators deliver affordable last-mile connectivity.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Private Sector Incentives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tax Incentives:</b> Offer reduced tax rates or import duty exemptions for</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

		<p>companies investing in rural connectivity and affordable devices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Spectrum Pricing Reforms:</b> Provide discounted spectrum licenses to operators that commit to serving underserved or rural areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. International and Regional Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Global Connectivity Fund:</b> Encourage international organizations (e.g., ITU, World Bank, UNDP) to pool resources for financing community networks and digital inclusion initiatives.</li> <li>• <b>Cross-Border Cooperation:</b> Facilitate shared infrastructure across countries, especially for landlocked and remote regions, to lower costs and extend coverage.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Community and Innovative Solutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Cooperative Networks:</b> Empower local cooperatives, NGOs, and grassroots actors to establish and manage small-scale, affordable internet services.</li> <li>• <b>Low-Cost Technologies:</b> Expand the deployment of innovative technologies—such as satellite broadband (e.g., Starlink, OneWeb), TV white space spectrum, and aerial platforms (balloons, drones)—to connect hard-to-reach populations.</li> </ul>
	<p>Para 40.</p> <p>We note that digital technologies have had significant impacts on employment, including changes in workplace environments and training requirements, opportunities for more flexible working and the emergence of digital labour platforms, and that automation, robotics and artificial intelligence are expected to have further substantial impacts on employment opportunities, including the displacement of some professional, clerical and manual types of work.</p>	<p><b>We call to</b> harness the transformative potential of <b>Automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Decarbonization</b> in shaping the future of work.</p> <p>While these transitions bring challenges—such as job displacement in traditional industries like the Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector—they also open pathways to <b>new opportunities in digital, technological, and green economies.</b></p> <p>By embracing innovation and sustainability, and by investing in <b>reskilling, upskilling, and workforce transition programs</b>, we can ensure that workers are not left behind but instead are empowered to thrive in emerging industries.</p> <p>This approach can foster a more <b>dynamic, inclusive, and resilient job market</b> that drives both economic growth and environmental sustainability.</p>

	<p>Para12.</p> <p>We are concerned that there remain critical digital divides between and within countries in access to and use of digital technologies. These constrain the achievement of WSIS goals, restrict the achievement of economic and social development, threaten to increase social and economic inequalities and may be exacerbated by new technological developments. Bridging them requires measures concerned not just with connectivity but with the affordability of networks and devices, the availability of relevant content and services in local languages, and the development of digital skills, literacy and capabilities.</p>	<p><b>We call to acknowledge that developing countries continue to face significant challenges due to limited infrastructure for digitalization and data processing. These constraints hinder their ability to fully harness the transformative opportunities of the digital economy and limit their participation in global value chains.</b></p> <p><b>As emphasized in Paragraph 8(f) of the UN Global Digital Compact (GDC):</b>  <b>“Equitable and meaningful inclusion in the digital economy requires addressing existing concentrations of technological capacity and market power.”</b></p> <p><b>Our collective cooperation must therefore focus on building digital infrastructure, enhancing data capabilities, and ensuring fair access to technology and markets. By fostering an environment where the benefits of digital collaboration are shared equitably, we can work together to reduce structural inequalities and accelerate the comprehensive achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).</b></p>
	<p>Para13.</p> <p>We reaffirm that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and their full, equal and meaningful participation in the digital space, are essential to close the gender digital divide and advance sustainable development. Our cooperation will empower all women and girls, encourage leadership of women, mainstream a gender perspective and counter and eliminate all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology</p>	<p>We call to urge social media platforms to integrate feminist techno-design principles and to prioritize women’s human rights in their algorithmic frameworks and content moderation policies. Such measures are critical to ensuring that technology serves as a tool of empowerment rather than harm.</p> <p>The WSIS+20 Outcome Document should explicitly recognize that the design choices of mainstream social media platforms can unintentionally amplify sexual and gender-based violence. By acknowledging this connection, we can press for more responsible, transparent, and rights-based digital practices.</p> <p>To effectively combat Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV), governments must actively collaborate with NGOs, civil society organizations (CSOs), and academic institutions. This multi-stakeholder approach can generate innovative, evidence-based solutions and foster safer, more inclusive online environments for all.</p>
	<p>Para 14.</p>	<p><b>We call to shift the narrative on access and inclusion away from an individualized</b></p>



	<p>We are committed to addressing the access and specific information and technology challenges facing children, adolescents and young people, the elderly, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and marginalised communities, and to the needs of future generations.</p>	<p><b>framing of deficits</b> and toward the <b>structural foundations of exclusion</b> embedded in today's digital innovation paradigm. The current <b>Big Tech-led information society model</b> generates disproportionate benefits for a few while perpetuating exploitation and exclusion for the many.</p> <p>To build a genuinely equitable digital society, we must focus on <b>systemic transformation</b>—addressing power asymmetries, market concentration, and governance gaps that continue to marginalize vulnerable communities.</p> <p>This requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rebalancing digital governance frameworks</b> to limit exploitative practices and ensure accountability of dominant platforms.</li> <li>• <b>Promoting alternative models of innovation and ownership</b> that center communities, public interest, and social justice.</li> <li>• <b>Ensuring meaningful participation of marginalized groups</b> so they can belong on equal footing in shaping the digital future.</li> </ul> <p>Only through a <b>structural overhaul</b> of the current paradigm can we move toward a digital society where opportunities and benefits are shared fairly, and all individuals—particularly those from underrepresented communities—can participate fully and equally.</p>
	<p>Para 15.</p> <p>We recognise that the pace and power of emerging technologies are creating new possibilities but also new risks for humanity, some of which are not yet fully known. We recognise the need to identify and mitigate risks and to ensure human oversight of technology in ways that advance sustainable development and the full enjoyment of human rights.</p>	<p>We call to seize the WSIS+20 Review as a critical opportunity to build upon established international standards—such as Human Rights Council Resolution 48/4 and the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights—both of which underscore the urgency of considering a moratorium, and where necessary, a ban on AI tools that fail to comply with international human rights law.</p> <p>The precautionary principle must guide this process, reminding states of their duty to approach emerging technologies with caution, especially where there are reasonable indications of serious risks to human rights, public health, or the environment. Crucially, this responsibility applies even when data remains inconclusive or uncertainties persist about cause-and-effect relationships.</p>

		<p>By embedding precaution, accountability, and rights-based safeguards into AI governance frameworks, the global community can ensure that technological progress does not come at the expense of human dignity, safety, or justice. While interpretations of the precautionary principle may vary, the definition provided in Principle 15 of the 1992 Rio Declaration is widely acknowledged and serves as practical guidance for the development and application of international law. It encourages states to adopt a precautionary approach to protect the environment, asserting that in the face of threats of serious or irreversible damage, a lack of full scientific certainty should not impede cost-effective measures aimed at preventing environmental degradation.</p> <p>Additionally, it is essential to recognize that while human oversight of technology is a vital component, it must not replace the need for institutional processes that ensure transparency and public accountability.</p>
	<p>Para18. We are deeply concerned, however, that the capacity of these technologies to support development remains constrained by digital divides and inequalities between and within countries, regions and communities. A third of the world's population still does not make use of the Internet, while many people with access make little use of it for reasons that include lack of affordability, limited content including content in locally relevant languages, and limited digital skills. Strengthened international cooperation and enabling policy environments are required to address gaps in access and affordability, digital skills, financing and technological resources.</p>	<p><b>We call to end the practice of state-imposed internet shutdowns and restrictions in conflict zones</b>, as these measures undermine fundamental rights and have far-reaching consequences for daily life.</p> <p>Such shutdowns disrupt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Work and Education:</b> Limiting communication and access to digital platforms needed for employment, remote learning, and knowledge exchange.</li> <li>• <b>Healthcare:</b> Hindering access to vital medical information, telemedicine, and emergency services, thereby endangering patient outcomes.</li> <li>• <b>Financial Stability:</b> Blocking digital banking and mobile money transactions, with severe consequences for individuals' livelihoods and local economies.</li> <li>• <b>Free Expression and Civic Participation:</b> Curtailing opportunities for advocacy, community organizing, and the ability of journalists to report freely.</li> <li>• <b>Humanitarian Aid:</b> Obstructing the flow of life-saving information and support to populations in need.</li> </ul>

		<p>Internet access is not a privilege but a <b>lifeline</b> in times of peace and crisis. Restrictions that deny this right exacerbate inequalities, silence vulnerable communities, and weaken trust in institutions.</p> <p>Governments and international bodies must <b>uphold the principle of uninterrupted, secure, and affordable connectivity</b>, ensuring that access to the internet is safeguarded as a fundamental enabler of human rights, development, and humanitarian response.</p> <p>Access to essential information and humanitarian assistance may be severely restricted, posing challenges to the well-being of affected populations. Additionally, the ability of journalists to report and investigate issues is adversely impacted, which can hinder transparency and accountability within society. Overall, the ramifications of these internet restrictions are profound, affecting the rights and quality of life of individuals in the affected regions.</p>
	<p>Para 20.</p> <p>We acknowledge that developing digital public goods and digital public infrastructure are critical drivers of inclusive digital transformation and innovation and recognise the need to increase investment in their successful development with the participation of all stakeholders. Digital public goods include open-source software, open data, open artificial intelligence models, open standards and open content that adhere to privacy and other applicable international laws, standards and best practices and do no harm, empower societies and individuals to direct digital technologies to their development needs and can facilitate digital cooperation and investment. Resilient, safe, inclusive and interoperable digital public infrastructure has the potential to deliver services at scale and increase social and economic opportunities for all. We recognise that there are multiple models of digital public infrastructure, and we recognise that each society will develop and use shared digital systems according to its particular priorities and needs.</p>	<p>We call to draw upon the principles outlined in Paragraph 15 of the UN Global Digital Compact, which underscore the importance of transparency, safety, and security in the design and governance of digital systems that serve society as a whole.</p> <p>By prioritizing these elements, we can foster greater public trust, strengthen accountability, and ensure that robust safeguards are in place to protect human rights in the digital age.</p> <p>This rights-based approach will help create a secure, inclusive, and trustworthy digital environment, where technological progress advances the common good and benefits everyone—leaving no one behind.</p>

	<p>Para 24.</p> <p>We are particularly concerned by persistent gender digital divides. Only 77 per cent of women aged ten and over worldwide use a mobile phone compared with 82 per cent of men, while only 65 per cent of women are using the Internet compared with almost 70 per cent of men. Women and girls are also under-represented in education, employment and other areas of digital activity. All stakeholders have a part to play in addressing and rectifying these gender digital divides.</p>	<p><b>We call to dismantle the structural barriers</b> that continue to hinder the <b>full and equal participation of women and girls in the digital sphere</b>. Connectivity alone is insufficient. In many contexts, women’s digital autonomy is undermined by male-mediated access to devices, surveillance, or outright restrictions within households. At the same time, systemic challenges—such as the amplification of <b>sexism, misogyny, gendered disinformation, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV)</b>—actively suppress women’s voices and curtail their political and civic presence online. This proposed language builds upon and reinforces existing <b>UN commitments</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/78/213</b> reaffirms the importance of ensuring women’s and girls’ equal access to and participation in science, technology, and innovation, including through digital literacy and skills development.</li> <li>• <b>ITU WTDC Resolution 37 (para. 1)</b> underscores that bridging the digital divide requires particular attention to gender equality.</li> <li>• <b>UN Global Digital Compact (para. 11(g))</b> explicitly calls for closing the gender digital divide by ensuring access to digital technologies, advancing participation in STEM and leadership roles, and strengthening online safety.</li> <li>• <b>CSW67 Agreed Conclusions (para. 58)</b> emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to create safe, inclusive, and enabling digital environments for women and girls.</li> </ul> <p>By anchoring action in these commitments, we can move beyond rhetoric to implement <b>systemic, gender-responsive strategies</b> that guarantee women’s and girls’ <b>equal rights, safety, and agency online</b>. This is essential not only for achieving digital equality but also for strengthening democracy, human rights, and sustainable development.</p>
	<p>Para 28.</p> <p>We are determined to ensure the achievement of universal meaningful and affordable access to the Internet and digital services, including the availability</p>	<p><b>We call to recognize that the prevailing market-driven approach to connectivity has failed to deliver affordable, universal access</b>. Regulatory and licensing frameworks have too often prioritized <b>spectrum auction revenues</b></p>

	<p>of networks offering higher capabilities, the affordability of access, data and devices, the availability of content and services that respond to users' priorities and needs, the extent to which these are multilingual, and the capabilities and resources required to make effective use of them, including information literacy, and to ensure that no one will be left behind in the Information Society.</p>	<p>and incentives for next-generation technologies, while overlooking the <b>public value of connectivity as a fundamental enabler of human rights and sustainable development</b>. This vision must be <b>recalibrated</b>: connectivity should be treated as a <b>public good</b>, requiring <b>greater public investment, inclusive regulatory reform, and policy interventions</b> that underwrite universal and affordable access.</p> <p>At the same time, <b>community-centred connectivity initiatives</b> have emerged as innovative, bottom-up responses to persistent digital divides. Rooted in the needs and agency of local communities, these models provide <b>context-sensitive, affordable, and sustainable access</b>—demonstrating their crucial role in complementing both state-led and commercial approaches. <b>Scaling and supporting such initiatives</b> is essential to ensure that no one is left behind in the digital age.</p> <p>We are determined to achieve <b>universal, meaningful, and affordable access</b> to the Internet and digital services. This requires:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Guaranteeing the right to information</b> by improving access and upholding the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds.</li> <li>2. <b>Expanding networks and infrastructure</b> with higher capabilities to reach underserved and remote areas.</li> <li>3. <b>Ensuring affordability</b> of access, data, and devices, particularly for marginalized groups.</li> <li>4. <b>Promoting inclusive digital content and services</b> that respond to users' needs, are multilingual, and culturally relevant.</li> <li>5. <b>Strengthening digital skills, literacy, and capabilities</b> to enable safe, effective, and meaningful use of digital technologies.</li> <li>6. <b>Ensuring no one is left behind</b> in the Information Society, with targeted strategies for women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities.</li> </ol> <p>We further affirm that access must be <b>safe, secure, and respectful of mental health and well-being</b>. To this end, we call on <b>digital technology companies and social media</b></p>
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		<p><b>platforms</b> to strengthen the <b>transparency and accountability</b> of their systems—covering terms of service, content moderation, recommendation algorithms, and the use of personal data in local languages. This will <b>empower users</b> to make informed decisions, exercise free and meaningful consent, and participate more equitably in the digital age.</p>
	<p>Para 30.</p> <p>We reiterate the need for the development of local content and services in a variety of languages and formats that are accessible to all people and recognise the vital importance of multilingualism to ensure the linguistic, cultural and historical diversity of all nations. We commend the work that has been done since the World Summit to extend the multilingual nature of the Internet, including the introduction of Internationalised Domain Names, and urge all stakeholders to ensure that the Internet and digital services become fully accessible to all, including Indigenous Peoples and speakers of minority languages.</p>	<p><b>We call to establish universal standards for localization</b> and promote a <b>truly multilingual Internet</b> as a cornerstone of accessibility and meaningful connectivity for the majority of the world’s population.</p> <p>Without systematic integration of <b>local languages across platforms, applications, and digital services</b>, digital access remains incomplete and exclusionary.</p> <p>A multilingual Internet is not only a matter of technology—it is a matter of <b>human rights and equity</b>. It safeguards <b>linguistic and cultural diversity</b>, empowers individuals to <b>participate effectively in digital economies</b>, and strengthens <b>inclusive and democratic digital governance</b>.</p> <p>By embedding multilingualism into the digital ecosystem, we can ensure that connectivity becomes <b>meaningful, participatory, and transformative</b> for all communities, leaving no one behind in the Information Society.</p>
	<p><b>Para 31.</b></p> <p>We reiterate the need for all users of the Internet and digital services to develop the capabilities and capacities, including media, information and digital literacy skills, to develop and make more extensive use of information and communications technologies.</p>	<p><b>We call to move beyond digital and media literacy</b> and invest in fostering <b>data and AI literacy</b> that extends well beyond technical skilling.</p> <p>People must be equipped not only to use digital tools, but also to <b>critically engage with the Internet and emerging technologies</b>—to evaluate the promises and risks of data and AI innovation, and to understand their implications for <b>individual rights, community well-being, and democratic governance</b>.</p> <p>Such literacy must also include <b>awareness of mechanisms for accountability, redress, and reparation</b>, empowering individuals not only as <b>users and consumers</b>, but as <b>informed rights-holders and active participants</b> in shaping a fair, inclusive, and trustworthy digital society.</p>

	<p>Para 35.</p> <p>We recognise that equitable and meaningful inclusion in the digital economy requires efforts to tackle concentrations of technological capacity and market power in order to ensure that the benefits of digital cooperation are fairly distributed and do not exacerbate existing inequalities or impede the full achievement of sustainable development.</p>	<p><b>We call to address the governance gaps in the digital economy</b> that have entrenched the monopolistic power of transnational digital corporations, concentrating wealth and influence in ways that stifle competition, limit innovation, and exacerbate global inequalities. These imbalances undermine <b>equity and fairness</b>, restrict <b>meaningful market participation</b>, and weaken the capacity of States and communities to shape <b>inclusive, rights-based digital futures</b>.</p> <p>Without stronger <b>international cooperation</b> and <b>accountable governance frameworks</b>, the unchecked dominance of a few corporations threatens <b>democratic oversight, digital sovereignty, and the recognition of the Internet as a global public good</b>.</p> <p>Bridging these governance gaps is essential to building an <b>open, fair, and people-centred digital economy</b>—one that safeguards rights, promotes inclusive innovation, and ensures that the benefits of digital transformation are shared equitably across all societies.</p>
	<p>Para 36.</p> <p>We note that financial services have evolved rapidly to take advantage of the capabilities of digital transactions, and that Internet banking, cashless payments and mobile money systems have changed the ways in which many businesses and customers now interact, increasing ease of access to financial services for many who were previously excluded. We will support developing countries, in line with their national circumstances and priorities, in creating enabling domestic environments for development of digital financial services for all.</p>	<p><b>We call to confront the risks posed by poorly regulated digital financial services</b>, particularly in the expanding <b>FinTech sector</b>, which too often enable <b>exploitative lending practices</b> instead of advancing genuine financial inclusion.</p> <p>Key concerns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of <b>data-driven and AI-powered credit scoring</b> systems that can systematically <b>exclude those most in need</b>, reinforce social and gender biases, or trap vulnerable users in cycles of unsustainable debt.</li> <li>• <b>Predatory interest rates and opaque lending terms</b>, which exploit information asymmetries and place disproportionate burdens on low-income borrowers.</li> <li>• <b>Weak consumer protection frameworks</b>, which leave individuals without meaningful avenues for redress.</li> </ul> <p>Addressing these challenges requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing <b>robust regulatory frameworks</b> that prioritize fairness, transparency, and user protection.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring <b>algorithmic transparency and accountability</b> in credit scoring and lending practices.</li> <li>• Embedding <b>consumer safeguards and redress mechanisms</b> that protect users from exploitation.</li> </ul> <p>Only through such reforms can <b>digital financial services</b> serve as tools of empowerment—advancing <b>equitable development, financial inclusion, and resilience</b> for marginalized communities rather than deepening inequality.</p>
	<p>Para 38.</p> <p>We are encouraged that growing use of digital services has created opportunities for enterprises in all countries, including micro, small and medium enterprises, to provide digital services to serve both domestic and export markets. We welcome the work of United Nations agencies and development partners to support small businesses in developing countries, including businesses led by women, to take advantage of these opportunities, and urge all stakeholders to foster an open, fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory digital environment that enables micro, small and medium enterprises to thrive, including appropriate financial support and access to capital.</p>	<p><b>We call to</b> recognize that the <b>Internet—once envisioned as a global commons beyond geopolitical rivalry—has become a highly centralized marketplace</b> dominated by a small number of powerful technology corporations. <b>Big Tech now controls much of the platformized Internet’s infrastructure</b>, frequently neglecting principles of <b>fairness, transparency, and accountability</b>, with harmful consequences for workers, consumers, and smaller digital actors.</p> <p>At the global level, <b>international regimes on trade, intellectual property, taxation, and financialization remain skewed in favor of economically powerful countries</b>, advancing a neoliberal agenda that undermines the policy space of developing nations. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trade agreements and trade secret claims</b> are increasingly used to restrict states’ ability to effectively govern <b>AI systems</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Base erosion and profit-shifting practices</b> by transnational digital corporations deprive countries in the <b>Global South</b> of vital fiscal revenue needed for <b>public investment and inclusive development</b>.</li> </ul> <p>In this context, the use of the term “<b>non-discriminatory</b>” is problematic. While in trade law it implies equal treatment for national and transnational actors, its uncritical application in digital governance risks <b>misinterpretation</b>—potentially endorsing the view that <b>states cannot regulate their domestic digital economies</b>. Such framing undermines <b>national sovereignty, equitable regulation, and the pursuit of inclusive digital futures</b>.</p> <p>To build a fairer digital order, global governance must empower states—especially in the Global South—to <b>exercise their regulatory authority</b>,</p>



		ensure <b>fiscal justice</b> , and reclaim the <b>Internet as a public good</b> that advances equity, accountability, and sustainable development.
	<p>39.</p> <p>We recognise that information and communications technologies have contributed significantly to the development of agriculture, enabling productivity improvements in large-scale food production, through precision targeting of resources and production cycles, and supporting small-scale and subsistence farmers to access information, expertise and capital.</p>	<p><b>We call to</b> confront the limitations of the <b>mainstream agritech paradigm</b>, which—dominated by a handful of corporations and countries—has failed to deliver on the promise of <b>food sovereignty for all</b>. Current trajectories prioritize <b>value extraction</b> at the distribution and logistics ends for lead firms, rather than advancing <b>productivity, resilience, and livelihoods at the cultivator level</b>.</p> <p>For meaningful course correction, it is essential to <b>increase public investment in digital agricultural ecosystems</b>, at both the global and national levels. Such investment must prioritize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Open, inclusive, and farmer-centred innovations</b>, designed to strengthen smallholder productivity and resilience.</li> <li>• <b>Equitable access to digital tools, platforms, and agricultural data</b>, ensuring that small-scale farmers are not excluded from innovation.</li> <li>• Alignment of agricultural technologies with the goals of <b>food security, environmental sustainability, and food sovereignty</b>, rather than extractive market imperatives.</li> </ul> <p>By reorienting agritech toward <b>farmers and communities</b>, we can build agricultural systems that are <b>just, sustainable, and resilient</b>—laying the foundation for inclusive rural development and genuine food sovereignty.</p>
	<p>Para 40.</p> <p>We note that digital technologies have had significant impacts on employment, including changes in workplace environments and training requirements, opportunities for more flexible working and the emergence of digital labour platforms, and that automation, robotics and artificial intelligence are expected to have further substantial impacts on employment opportunities, including the displacement of some professional, clerical and manual types of work.</p>	<p><b>We call to</b> urgently address the <b>uneven impact of digital technologies on employment</b>, which carries particularly severe consequences for workers in <b>informal and precarious jobs</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AI-driven automation</b> threatens large-scale job displacement in low-skill sectors such as manufacturing and logistics, disproportionately affecting <b>vulnerable populations—including women and workers in developing countries</b>.</li> <li>• The <b>AI industry itself depends on underpaid and precarious labor</b>, often outsourced to the Global South, where workers remain invisible within global</li> </ul>

		<p>supply chains and lack mechanisms for grievance or redress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On <b>digital labor platforms</b>, workers face irregular income, poor working conditions, lack of social protection, limited skills utilization, and restrictions on freedom of association and collective bargaining.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>platformization of work</b> further exacerbates risks of <b>labor exploitation, work intensification, blurred employer accountability, greater information asymmetries, and algorithmic discrimination</b> against marginalized groups. These challenges underscore the urgent need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Robust governance frameworks</b> that establish accountability across global supply chains and platforms.</li> <li>• <b>International labor standards</b> that ensure fair wages, safe conditions, and recognition of workers' rights.</li> <li>• <b>Social protections and collective bargaining mechanisms</b> adapted to the realities of platform and AI-mediated work.</li> </ul> <p>Only through <b>inclusive, rights-based governance</b> can the future of work in the digital economy be fair, equitable, and sustainable—ensuring that technology serves people, rather than exploiting them.</p>
	<p>44. We recognise that digitalisation has enabled new ways of providing education and training in schools, higher and adult education including innovative educational approaches such as distance learning, open educational resources and online courses. We are concerned, however, that the benefits of digitalisation are still not available to many children and young people as a result of digital divides in connectivity and educational facilities. We reaffirm our commitment to connecting every school to the Internet by 2030.</p>	<p><b>We call to recognize critical connectivity</b> as a cornerstone of equity and inclusion. Critical connectivity refers to <b>uninterrupted and reliable access</b> that sustains essential services and core public systems—where any disruption carries the risk of severe societal harm. As <b>education increasingly transitions into digital modes</b>, ensuring such connectivity is no longer optional but <b>fundamental to guaranteeing the right to education for all</b>.</p> <p>The <b>UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education</b>, in her <i>Report on Artificial Intelligence in Education</i>, acknowledged the transformative potential of AI to <b>improve learning outcomes and strengthen educational management</b>. At the same time, she raised pressing concerns regarding:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Data privacy risks</b>, especially for children and young learners.</li> <li>• The persistence of the <b>digital divide</b>, which exacerbates inequality in access to education.</li> <li>• The <b>privatization and platformization of education</b>, which risks undermining education as a <b>public good</b> and weakening public accountability.</li> </ul> <p>Ensuring <b>critical connectivity</b> must therefore go hand in hand with safeguarding <b>education as a fundamental human right</b>—through rights-based policies, robust data protections, and equitable digital infrastructure that empower all learners, rather than reinforcing existing divides.</p>
	<p>Para 45.</p> <p>We also recognise that digitalisation has enabled new ways of addressing health and medicine by facilitating dissemination of public health information, including information on reproductive rights and protection against communicable diseases, remote diagnosis to support local health workers, improved analysis of health data and improvements in clinical practice.</p>	<p>We call to safeguard healthcare as a fundamental human right against the risks posed by a market-first model of digital health. When profit-driven logics dominate, the core values of trust, care, and sensitivity—essential to healthcare delivery—are at risk of being undermined.</p> <p>A data-maximalist approach, which centralizes vast repositories of sensitive health data, creates profound vulnerabilities. Patients are increasingly exposed to cyberattacks, data breaches, and privacy violations, threatening their dignity, safety, and well-being.</p> <p>At the same time, the integration of privately owned, opaque, and unilaterally controlled AI solutions into healthcare raises serious concerns:</p> <p>Risks of material harm to patients due to untested or biased systems.</p> <p>Unfair liability burdens placed on frontline care providers, while technology developers evade responsibility.</p> <p>Erosion of accountability, safety, and equity within public health systems.</p> <p>To protect health as a public good, digital healthcare must be guided by a rights-based, transparent, and accountable framework—ensuring that innovation strengthens, rather than</p>

		undermines, the principles of equity, trust, and universal access that define healthcare.
	<p>Para 46.</p> <p>We note that information and communications technologies have had substantial impacts on diversity of cultural expression and development of the cultural and creative sectors. We urge all stakeholders to recognise the importance of ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage and access to recorded information in the digital environment.</p>	<p><b>We call to</b> recognize that a crucial element of <b>AI model training</b>, particularly for <b>large language models (LLMs)</b>, involves the use of <b>complete and exact replicas of original works</b>. These datasets draw not only on <b>copyrighted materials</b>, but also on knowledge in the <b>public domain</b>, including <b>traditional knowledge commons and cultural art forms</b> that often lack formal intellectual property protections.</p> <p>The <b>enclosure of such commons</b> to build <b>proprietary, closed AI systems</b> is deeply unjust. It <b>privatizes collective knowledge</b> while excluding <b>artists, communities, and traditional knowledge holders</b> from recognition and benefits. This dynamic risks <b>reproducing historical patterns of appropriation and inequity</b>, rather than advancing innovation that is inclusive, equitable, and respectful of cultural rights.</p> <p>To ensure AI development serves the <b>public good</b>, it is imperative to establish <b>fair governance mechanisms</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect <b>knowledge commons and cultural heritage</b> from exploitative appropriation.</li> <li>• Guarantee <b>fair benefit-sharing</b> with creators, communities, and knowledge holders.</li> <li>• Promote <b>open, transparent, and accountable AI models</b> that advance equity and justice.</li> </ul> <p>Only by addressing these injustices can we ensure that <b>AI innovation truly benefits all of humanity</b>, while safeguarding the rights and dignity of those whose knowledge underpins these technologies.</p>
	<p>Para 48.</p> <p>We remain concerned, however, that equitable delivery of social and economic development programmes and opportunities is hampered by digital divides, particularly in countries and communities where access is constrained by poor connectivity and lack of affordability. More attention is required to digital inclusion and digital literacy, capacity building and financial mechanisms in order to achieve greater</p>	<p><b>We call to</b> confront the <b>biases and exclusions embedded in AI systems</b>, which render them not only less useful, but in many cases <b>harmful</b>, even when technically accessible. As highlighted by the <b>Global Partnership on AI (GPAD)</b>:</p> <p><i>“AI models lack diverse representation and perpetuate knowledge and other types of exclusion, resulting in epistemic injustice: the exclusion of knowledge, cultures, and languages.”</i></p>

	<p>impact and ensure progress towards the achieving Sustainable Development Goals</p>	<p>Regional consultations with <b>Indigenous communities</b>, conducted as part of the GPAI study, underscore how <b>dominant AI development models</b> often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clash with <b>local knowledge systems</b> and cultural practices.</li> <li>• Reinforce <b>existing social hierarchies</b> and structural inequalities.</li> <li>• Are constrained by limited resources and capacities in many regions.</li> </ul> <p>To address these challenges, greater investment is required in <b>digital public infrastructure—particularly at the data and AI innovation layer</b>. Such investment is essential to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce <b>digital inequality</b> by ensuring equitable access to AI tools and ecosystems.</li> <li>• Foster <b>inclusive, locally grounded innovation</b> that reflects diverse cultures, languages, and epistemologies.</li> <li>• Ensure that AI contributes meaningfully to the achievement of the <b>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>, rather than reinforcing patterns of exclusion.</li> </ul>
	<p>Para 53. We recognise the need to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, including sustainable lifestyles, and circular economy approaches. We call on governments and the private sector to develop global standards for the design of sustainable digital products as well as for reuse, repair and recycling.</p>	<p><b>We call to ensure that a just and sustainable digital transition</b> addresses the <b>energy-intensive methods of current AI development</b>, which are driving growing ecological pressures. Aligning <b>digital innovation with climate and sustainability goals</b> requires a fundamental <b>re-evaluation of scale</b>.</p> <p>By prioritizing <b>decentralized, locally rooted approaches to AI</b>, we can reduce dependence on large, centralized models that demand vast computational resources. This shift can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minimize environmental impacts</b> and carbon footprints.</li> <li>• <b>Enhance community resilience</b> by fostering context-specific and resource-efficient AI solutions.</li> <li>• Ensure AI development is <b>better tailored to the diverse needs of communities</b>, while respecting <b>planetary boundaries</b>.</li> </ul> <p>Harnessing <b>localized, sustainable AI solutions</b> offers a pathway to build a <b>more adaptive, responsible, and equitable framework for innovation</b>—one that advances both <b>societal objectives and environmental stewardship</b>.</p>

	<p>Para 55.</p> <p>We acknowledge the importance of a positive enabling environment for investment, innovation and technological development in enabling the development and implementation of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society.</p>	<p><b>We call to uphold the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB) Data Principles</b>, which emphasize that maximizing the value of data requires creating an <b>enabling environment for its use and reuse</b>. These principles highlight the importance of <b>appropriate access, responsible use, and equitable reuse of data</b>, affirming that:</p> <p><i>“This principle includes providing equal access to the benefits of data and the related technologies, devices and tools. It also envisages educating and empowering individuals, communities and organizations to produce or co-create, work with, inform decisions with, derive benefits from, and understand data effectively.”</i></p> <p>These principles make clear that data must be treated not only as an <b>asset</b>, but also as a <b>shared resource</b>—one whose benefits are <b>fairly distributed</b> and whose capacities are strengthened <b>across all levels of society</b>.</p> <p>By embedding these values in governance frameworks, we can ensure that data serves the <b>public good</b>, empowers individuals and communities, and drives <b>inclusive and sustainable development</b>.</p>
	<p>Para 56.</p> <p>We recognise that science, technology and innovation are integral to digital development, and that rapidly growing capabilities of digital technologies have contributed greatly to research and development across all scientific fields, enabling researchers to explore complex problems using methods that were unavailable before the Summit. We recognise the importance of ensuring that stakeholders in all countries are able to play a part in digital innovation.</p>	<p><b>We call to confront the consolidation of data power</b> among a handful of countries and corporations, which—combined with stark disparities in digital infrastructure and persistent skills gaps—poses a major barrier for developing countries to realize the dividends of digital transformation.</p> <p>For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Infrastructure inequity:</b> While <b>North America hosts nearly three data centres per million people, South Asia has only 0.8 per million</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Corporate concentration:</b> Nearly <b>65% of the global cloud computing market</b> is controlled by just three firms—<b>Amazon, Google, and Microsoft</b>—placing critical infrastructure in the hands of a few transnational actors.</li> <li>• <b>Skills shortages:</b> Studies show that <b>Bangladesh and South Asia face severe challenges</b> in meeting the growing demand for digital and AI-related skills, while also struggling to retain skilled professionals—hindering</li> </ul>

		<p>their ability to move up the digital value chain.</p> <p>This dynamic risks <b>deepening global digital inequality</b>, leaving many countries increasingly <b>dependent on external actors</b> for infrastructure, platforms, and talent.</p> <p>To counter these imbalances, international cooperation must prioritize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Decentralizing digital infrastructure</b>, including investments in regional data centres.</li> <li>• <b>Diversifying cloud ecosystems</b> to prevent monopolistic control.</li> <li>• <b>Strengthening national and regional skills ecosystems</b>, ensuring that talent is cultivated, retained, and empowered locally.</li> </ul> <p>Only through such measures can digital transformation become <b>equitable, sustainable, and inclusive</b>, serving the interests of all countries and communities.</p>
	<p>58.</p> <p>We note the importance of legal and regulatory frameworks concerned with the deployment of digital services including those concerned with market structure, digital transactions, data protection and data privacy, consumer rights and intellectual property, human rights and environmental impacts.</p>	<p><b>We call to</b> emphasize the importance of establishing <b>transparent, independent, and non-discriminatory legal and regulatory frameworks</b> to guide the deployment and governance of digital services. Such frameworks must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address <b>proportional taxation, licensing fees, and access to finance</b>, ensuring fairness and equity.</li> <li>• Enable <b>public-private partnerships, multi-stakeholder cooperation, infrastructure-sharing models, and community-based approaches</b> to foster inclusive connectivity.</li> <li>• Respond to challenges of <b>market concentration, digital transactions, data protection and privacy, consumer rights, intellectual property, human rights, and environmental impacts</b>.</li> <li>• Be backed by <b>effective sanctions and accessible remedies</b> to protect individuals against violations and abuses in the digital context.</li> </ul> <p>We recall the adoption of <b>UN General Assembly Resolution 78/213 (22 December 2023)</b>, which sets out principles and actions for <b>promoting and protecting human rights in the context of digital technologies</b>. We commit to <b>respect, protect, and promote human</b></p>

		<p><b>rights in the digital space</b>, recognizing the need for <b>accountability and effective measures</b> to prevent, mitigate, and remedy adverse human rights impacts of digital technologies.</p> <p>We further reaffirm that <b>international human rights law must be upheld throughout the entire life cycle of digital and emerging technologies</b>—from design and development to deployment and use—so that users can <b>safely benefit from innovation</b> while being <b>protected from violations, abuses, and all forms of discrimination</b>.</p>
	<p>Para 89.</p> <p>We express deep concern regarding the development of technologies and practices that facilitate surveillance that may jeopardise the right to privacy. We call on Member States to ensure that targeted surveillance technologies are only used in accordance with the human rights principles of legality, necessity and proportionality, and that legal mechanisms of redress and effective remedies are available for victims of surveillance-related violations and abuses.</p>	<p>We call to express deep concern over the development and use of surveillance technologies and practices that threaten or undermine the right to privacy. We urge all Member States to refrain from, and cease, the use of surveillance technologies that cannot be operated in full compliance with international human rights law.</p> <p>Targeted surveillance must only be carried out in strict accordance with the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality, and must be accompanied by robust oversight mechanisms, avenues for redress, and effective remedies for victims of violations and abuses.</p> <p>We further call on Member States to review and reform their laws, procedures, and practices related to the surveillance of communications, interception, and the collection of personal data—including forms of mass surveillance. Such reviews must aim to uphold the right to privacy and related human rights, and to guarantee the full and effective implementation of States’ obligations under international human rights law.</p>
	<p>Para 90.</p> <p>We underscore the need to respect the independence of media, including digital media. We express particular concern about increased threats to the safety of journalists. In this context, we reaffirm that digital transformation must serve to</p>	<p>We call to underscore the importance of respecting the independence of all media, including digital media, and express deep concern at the rising threats to the safety and security of journalists. We reaffirm that digital transformation must advance—not restrict—fundamental rights and freedoms.</p>



	<p>uphold and advance, not restrict, fundamental rights and freedoms. We emphasise the crucial importance of safeguarding journalists, media workers, whistleblowers, human rights defenders and other civil society actors, who are increasingly targeted through digital means. 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.</p>	<p>We emphasize the urgent need to safeguard journalists, media workers, whistleblowers, human rights defenders, and civil society actors, who face growing targeting and reprisals through digital means. In the digital age, the availability and use of encryption and anonymity tools are essential to secure communications, protect the confidentiality of sources, and enable the free and safe exercise of journalistic and civic work.</p> <p>In this context, we urge Member States to refrain from interfering with the use of such technologies and to ensure that any restrictions are in full compliance with international human rights law. We further call on all stakeholders to prevent and respond to both online and offline threats—including harassment, intimidation, unlawful surveillance, and arbitrary detention—that are linked to the legitimate activities of media and civil society actors.</p>
	<p>Para 91.</p> <p>We recognize that digital and emerging technologies can facilitate the manipulation of and interference with information in ways that are harmful to societies and individuals, and negatively affect the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. We will work together to promote information integrity, tolerance and respect in the digital space, as well as to protect the integrity of democratic processes. We will strengthen international cooperation to address the challenge of misinformation and disinformation and hate speech online and mitigate the risks of information manipulation in a manner consistent with international law.</p>	<p><b>We recognize that digital and emerging technologies can facilitate the manipulation of information in ways that harm individuals and societies, undermine human rights and fundamental freedoms, and obstruct progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).</b></p> <p>We therefore underline the importance of <b>free, independent, pluralistic, and diverse media</b>, and of ensuring <b>access to independent, fact-based information</b> as a safeguard against <b>disinformation and misinformation</b>. <b>We commit</b> to working together to promote <b>information integrity, tolerance, and respect</b> in the digital space, and to protect the <b>integrity of democratic processes</b>. To this end, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen <b>international cooperation</b>—including with technology companies, national human rights institutions, and civil society—to address misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech online.</li> <li>• Ensure that measures to mitigate risks of information manipulation are implemented in full compliance with <b>international human rights law</b>, particularly the right to freedom of expression and opinion.</li> </ul>

		<p>We further <b>encourage online platforms and social media companies</b> to review their <b>business models</b> to ensure that their <b>design, development, and operations—including data collection, processing, and algorithmic systems—are aligned with the purposes and principles of the United Nations</b>. Business practices must <b>prioritize transparency, accountability, and human rights</b> to build public trust and foster an inclusive and safe digital environment.</p> <p>Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. We emphasize the importance of human rights due diligence, particularly in relation to algorithms and ranking systems that may amplify disinformation and hate speech, in line with international human rights law.</p>
	<p>Para 81.</p> <p>We commit 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 human rights due diligence and establishing effective oversight and remedy mechanisms.</p>	<p><b>We commit</b> to establishing <b>robust safeguards</b> to prevent and address the <b>adverse impacts on human rights</b> arising from the use of digital and emerging technologies, and to protect individuals against <b>violations and abuses in the digital space</b>.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting <b>regular and comprehensive human rights impact assessments</b> to identify and mitigate risks at all stages of technology development and deployment.</li> <li>• Ensuring <b>human rights due diligence</b>, supported by strong and independent oversight mechanisms.</li> <li>• Providing <b>accessible, transparent, and effective remedy mechanisms</b> to guarantee accountability and redress for those whose rights are infringed.</li> </ul> <p>By embedding these safeguards, we can ensure that digital innovation is <b>rights-based, accountable, and aligned with international human rights law</b>, enabling technology to advance human dignity, justice, and inclusive development.</p>
	<p>Para 83.</p> <p>We recognise the responsibilities of all stakeholders in this endeavour. We call on the private sector and all relevant stakeholders to ensure that respect for human rights is incorporated into the conception, design, development, deployment, operation, use, evaluation</p>	<p><b>We recognize</b> the shared responsibilities of all stakeholders in shaping a digital future that advances human dignity and justice.</p> <p><b>We call on the private sector and other relevant actors</b> to ensure that <b>respect for human rights</b> is fully integrated across the <b>entire life cycle of digital technologies—from conception, design, and development to</b></p>

	and regulation of all new and emerging digital technologies and to provide for redress and effective remedy for the human rights abuses that they may cause, contribute to, or to which they may be directly linked. We also call on the private sector to apply the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.	<b>deployment, operation, use, evaluation, sale, procurement, and regulation.</b> Embedding <b>human rights due diligence, transparency, and accountability</b> at every stage is essential to ensure that digital technologies serve the <b>public good</b> , safeguard rights, and foster <b>trust and inclusivity</b> in the digital society.
	New Para	<b>We call for the allocation of sufficient, predictable, and sustainable financial resources to the WSIS Secretariat, the IGF Secretariat, and related country-level processes.</b> Ensuring stable and adequate resourcing is essential for their: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Effective functioning</b>, with the capacity to fulfill their mandates.</li> <li>• <b>Inclusivity</b>, enabling meaningful participation from all stakeholders, particularly from developing countries and marginalized groups.</li> <li>• <b>Impact</b>, by supporting evidence-based policy dialogue, capacity-building, and the localization of global commitments.</li> </ul> Without sustained investment, these critical platforms risk being constrained in their ability to deliver on their mandates. Strengthened and reliable financing will enable them to remain <b>credible, inclusive, and responsive mechanisms</b> for shaping an equitable digital future.
	New Para:	<b>We call for the strengthening and enhancement of the WSIS Forum</b> so that it can more effectively address both <b>longstanding and emerging challenges</b> in the digital landscape. Such improvements should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Facilitate deeper exploration of solutions</b> to persistent and new issues.</li> <li>• <b>Support the localisation of WSIS outcomes</b>, ensuring they translate into meaningful national actions.</li> <li>• <b>Promote active engagement with UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) at the country level</b>, thereby creating stronger linkages between <b>global processes and national implementation</b>.</li> </ul> By reinforcing the WSIS Forum in this way, it can serve as a more <b>responsive, inclusive, and impactful platform</b> , bridging the gap between global commitments and local realities, and

		advancing the vision of an <b>equitable information society for all</b> .
	New Para:	<p><b>We call attention to the current gap between UN Resident Coordinator (RC) offices and the WSIS and IGF processes at the country level.</b> This disconnect limits the ability to align global digital cooperation agendas with <b>national priorities and implementation efforts</b>.</p> <p>Strengthening this link would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster <b>greater collaboration</b> between global digital policy processes and local development strategies.</li> <li>• Enhance <b>coherence and coordination</b> across UN system activities at the country level.</li> <li>• Improve the <b>effectiveness and inclusivity</b> of digital cooperation initiatives, ensuring that they respond to local contexts and benefit communities on the ground.</li> </ul> <p>By bridging this gap, we can ensure that WSIS and IGF outcomes are not only global commitments but also <b>practical enablers of national development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>.</p>
	New Para	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>We call for the establishment of a permanent, reinforced, and adequately resourced WSIS and IGF Secretariat, supported by sustainable funding</b> at both the Secretariat and country levels. To ensure impact, this should be advanced through three key areas:</li> <li>2. <b>Localised Action Plans</b></li> <li>3. Develop national action plans that align <b>global WSIS commitments</b> with <b>national priorities</b>.</li> <li>4. Establish a <b>centralised reporting system</b> coordinated through the UN to monitor progress and share best practices.</li> <li>5. <b>Capacity Building and Awareness</b></li> <li>6. Promote <b>ICT education and digital skills</b> for all, with particular attention to women, youth, and marginalized groups.</li> <li>7. Encourage the use of ICTs for <b>inclusive and sustainable development</b>.</li> </ol>

		8. Conduct <b>awareness campaigns</b> on the benefits of an inclusive information and knowledge society. 9. <b>Multi-stakeholder Engagement</b> 10. Create platforms for <b>regular consultations, progress updates, and collaborative innovation</b> . 11. Foster inclusive dialogue among <b>governments, private sector, civil society, academia, and technical communities</b> , ensuring balanced participation across all regions. 12. A permanent and well-resourced Secretariat will ensure that WSIS and IGF processes are <b>sustainable, inclusive, and action-oriented</b> , bridging global commitments with national realities and driving progress toward a more equitable digital future.
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## Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) in the WSIS Process: 2000–2025

For over two decades, the **Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)** has been a leading actor in advancing the **WSIS Action Lines** and promoting the **localization of the UN IGF process** in Bangladesh. Through advocacy, policy engagement, and multi-stakeholder cooperation, BNNRC has consistently amplified the voices of civil society and promoted ICTs as enablers of sustainable development.

### BNNRC’s Role in WSIS and IGF Processes

- Since **2000**, BNNRC has aligned its interventions with the **World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)** process.
- It has worked closely with the **UN system, the Government of Bangladesh, academia, private sector, media, and civil society** to promote ICT4D and an inclusive information society.
- **BNNRC’s leadership** has been recognized globally: it has received the **WSIS Prize seven times** (2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2023, and 2025) as both a **winner and champion**, for contributions to **media development, digital development, information integrity, and ICT4D**.

### National-Level Contributions

- In **2002**, BNNRC’s advocacy led to the formation of the **Bangladesh Working Group on UN WSIS**, officially declared by the Government of Bangladesh in the **Extraordinary Gazette (02 October 2002)**.
  - **AHM Bazlur Rahman**, CEO of BNNRC, served as co-founder of the Working Group.
  - **Mr. Reza Salim (BFES)** acted as Secretary, and **Syed Margub Morshed**, former BTRC Chairman, as Convenor.
  - The **BTRC hosted the Secretariat** and provided technical cooperation.

- This Working Group became a **platform for governments, UN bodies, international organizations, private sector, media, and civil society**, addressing ICT policies and turning the digital divide into opportunities for all.

### **BNNRC's Demonstrated Impact**

- Following the **WSIS Plan of Action**, BNNRC initiated **projects, consultations, and innovations** to achieve the indicative WSIS targets, advancing Bangladesh's progress toward the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** and the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- Since **2006**, BNNRC has hosted the **Bangladesh Internet Governance Forum (BIGF) Secretariat**, operating as an **extra-budgetary initiative** supported by voluntary contributions from stakeholders at home and abroad.
- BNNRC also played an active role in **Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS)** during WSIS, highlighting the importance of communication rights in building inclusive digital futures.

### **International Recognition and Engagement**

- BNNRC has been **accredited by the UN Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on ICT security (UNODA)** from 2001–2025.
- Since 2022, BNNRC has been mobilizing the **UN Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda, the Global Digital Compact (GDC), and the Summit of the Future**, through the **Bangladesh Initiative for Connecting, Empowering & Amplifying Voices** on these processes.
- As part of the **WSIS+20 review process**, BNNRC has:
  - Participated in the **Global Digital Justice Forum (GDJF)**.
  - Signed on to the **Global Partners Digital (GPD) initiative**.
  - Submitted the **20-Year Reporting Template** on behalf of civil society in Bangladesh.
- Since its inception, BNNRC's leadership has participated in **WSIS high-level tracks**, with CEO AHM Bazlur Rahman regularly contributing as a **speaker at the WSIS Forum**.

### **Expanding Roles and Partnerships**

- Since 2024, BNNRC has hosted the **Pact for the Future – Bangladeshi CSOs Initiative (BCI)**, reinforcing its role in connecting local voices to global digital policy processes.
- Its consistent recognition as a **WSIS Prize Winner and Champion** underscores BNNRC's **commitment, innovation, and leadership** in building a **people-centred, development-oriented information society**.

### **Conclusion**

From **2000 to 2025**, BNNRC's sustained engagement in the WSIS process demonstrates how **civil society leadership can shape national, regional, and global digital cooperation agendas**. Its work—spanning advocacy, institution-building, and grassroots innovation—continues to position Bangladesh as an active participant in the global effort to create an **inclusive, equitable, and rights-based information society**. | [ceo@bnnrc.net](mailto:ceo@bnnrc.net) | <https://www.bnnrc.net>