WSIS+20 Stakeholder Consultations: Feedback on the WSIS+20 Zero Draft CTU SUBMISSION

The Caribbean Telecommunications Union has reviewed the text of the WSIS+20 Zero Draft and offers the following feedback with special emphasis on incorporating or strengthening of provisions that are of particular importance to Caribbean and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in further refinements of the WSIS+20 Review report.

Areas Where the Zero Draft Reflects Caribbean/SIDS Concerns

- Digital Divide & Inclusion: Strongly addressed in paragraphs 11–13, 23–28, with specific mention of rural, remote, and underserved communities, and SIDS.
- Multistakeholder Participation: Reaffirmed throughout, especially in paragraphs 3–5, 120–121, and IGF sections (paragraphs 103–118).
- Cybersecurity & Misinformation: Covered in paragraphs 62–65, with emphasis on capacity-building and multistakeholder cooperation.
- Environmental Impacts of ICTs: Addressed in paragraphs 49–54, including e-waste, energy consumption, and sustainability.
- Gender & Intersectionality: Paragraphs 13 and 92 highlight gender digital divides and the need for inclusive participation.
- Youth & Marginalised Groups: Paragraphs 14, 93, and 117 mention youth, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented communities.
- Digital Public Infrastructure & Goods: Paragraph 20 supports investment in digital public goods and infrastructure.
- AI Governance & Capacity Building: Paragraphs 97–102 include AI research and fellowship programs focused on developing countries.
- Internet Governance & IGF Strengthening: Paragraphs 103–118 affirm IGF's role and propose making it a permanent UN forum.
- Human Rights & Privacy: Paragraphs 77–90 emphasize rights online, privacy, and ethical tech use.

Partial or Missing Coverage of Caribbean/SIDS Concerns

- Digital Sovereignty: Mentioned indirectly (e.g., data governance, paragraph 94), but not framed as a right or priority for small states.

- Local Content & Linguistic Diversity: Paragraph 30 mentions multilingualism, but lacks emphasis on Caribbean languages and cultural preservation.
- SIDS-Specific Needs: SIDS are mentioned (paragraphs 4, 105), but not consistently treated as a distinct category with tailored strategies.

- Funding & Fiscal Constraints: Financial mechanisms are discussed (paragraphs 71–76), but without specific reference to high-debt SIDS or their unique constraints.

- Monitoring & Evaluation: Paragraphs 132–138 propose indicators and progress reports, but CTU's call for standardised metrics and regional tracking could be strengthened.

- Youth Mainstreaming: Youth are acknowledged, but not mainstreamed across all WSIS+20 processes as CTU recommends.

- Underrepresentation in AI, Standards, and data Governance - SIDS have minimal voice in global AI governance, standard-setting, and data governance processes. This limits the region's ability to shape ethical frameworks, interoperability rules, and safeguards that affect small states. The Zero Draft has the opportunity to explicitly call for the systematic inclusion of SIDS in global standard-setting and AI governance processes; support regional hubs and South-South cooperation to build negotiating and technical capacity.

- Cyber Legislative and Institutional Gaps –Expand Action Line C4 (capacity building) to include dedicated cyber capacity-building programmes for SIDS, establishment of regional CSIRT networks, and model cyber legislation frameworks.

Additional Provisions Not Fully Reflected
- Hosting WSIS events in underrepresented regions – Not mentioned.

- Institutional linkages between WSIS, GDC, and Pact for the Future – Some alignment is noted (paragraphs 122, 140), but not deeply integrated.

- Discussion on "Information Society" vs. "Digital Society" terminology – Not addressed. Some examination and clarification of the UN's interpretation of these terms would be desirable for building global consensus on the report's scope and provisions going forward, and particularly related to the evolution of the Internet Governance Forum.

Summary
The Zero Draft does a commendable job of addressing many of the Caribbean's and SIDS concerns—especially around inclusion, infrastructure, cybersecurity, and multistakeholder governance. However, greater specificity is needed in areas like SIDS vulnerabilities, digital sovereignty, local content, and funding mechanisms tailored to small states.