International Chamber of Commerce

Considerations on the Zero Draft of the WSIS+20 Outcome Document

Preamble

We welcome the language in the preambular paragraphs of the Zero Draft and commend in particular the recognition of multistakeholder collaboration and partnerships in paragraphs F and G. We value the acknowledgment of contributions from all stakeholders, as well as the importance of drawing on established review processes and global multistakeholder fora. This provides a solid basis for strengthening collective action toward an inclusive, resilient, and secure digital future.

Introduction

We welcome the reaffirmation in paragraph 3 of the multistakeholder principles that have underpinned the WSIS process from its inception. This recognition of the essential roles of governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical and academic communities, and other stakeholders is critical to sustaining and strengthening the realization of the WSIS vision.

We value the emphasis in paragraphs 4 and 5 on the practical importance of ensuring inclusive participation by all stakeholders, especially developing countries, in global digital policy discussions. The focus on addressing barriers and building the necessary institutional and human capacity represents a constructive and forward-looking way to advance the WSIS vision.

We welcome the recognition in paragraphs 6–8 of the transformative impact of digital technologies and their contribution to sustainable development, balanced by paragraphs 12–16, which acknowledge persisting divides and the need to address barriers to meaningful and affordable access. We propose to further strengthen paragraph 12 by underlining that bridging digital divides requires not only extending coverage, but also addressing barriers to usage; and to reinforce paragraph 13 by highlighting the importance of addressing the unique barriers to usage that women and girls face such as restrictive social norms and gaps in literacy and digital skills.

We particularly value the call for an enabling environment that supports innovation, protects consumer rights, nurtures digital talent and skills, promotes fair competition and entrepreneurship, and builds trust in the digital economy. We encourage that this enabling environment also explicitly recognize the importance of protecting intellectual property, which underpins innovation.

We further appreciate the strong commitment in paragraphs 9–10 and 15 to human rights, grounded in international human rights law, and the recognition of both the opportunities and risks arising from emerging technologies.

At the same time, we would suggest refining the use of certain terms. To ensure the broadest possible alignment among stakeholders, we would encourage the use of terms that enjoy wide and consistent recognition across the international community. For example, while concepts such as "equity" and the "right to development" seek to capture genuine and pressing concerns, their interpretation may vary among different actors. Language focused on "inclusion," "balance," and "commitments to advancing sustainable development consistent with international human rights obligations" may provide clearer common ground while fully reflecting the spirit of these paragraphs.

Overall, we view the introduction section as a constructive framing of the WSIS+20 outcome document, striking a balance between celebrating progress, acknowledging persistent challenges, and reaffirming the importance of inclusive and rights-based digital transformation for the realization of the WSIS vision.

Original text	Proposed edit	Comment/rationale
12. [...] 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.	12. [...] While Bbridging them requires measures to extend coverage it must also address barriers to usage such as , 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.	We propose to strengthen the message of the paragraph by further clarifying that extending coverage alone is not sufficient to close digital divides. Meaningful access also requires addressing barriers to usage, including affordability, relevant content, and digital skills. This framing better reflects the WSIS vision, ensuring connectivity translates into real opportunities for participation and development.

13. 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 [...]	13. 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. Efforts to close the gender digital divide must address the unique barriers to usage that women and girls face such as restrictive social norms and a lack of literacy and digital skills. Our cooperation will empower [...]	We propose to reinforce the message of the paragraph by emphasizing the existence of unique barriers women and girls face. This strengthens the paragraph by linking gender equality not only to access but to meaningful participation, reinforcing the WSIS commitment to inclusion and sustainable development.
16. [...] advancing digital inclusion requires a predictable and transparent enabling environment that encompasses policy, legal and regulatory frameworks that support innovation, protect consumer rights, nurture digital talent and skills, promote fair competition and digital entrepreneurship, and enhance consumer confidence and trust in the digital economy.	16. [...] advancing digital inclusion requires a predictable and transparent enabling environment that encompasses policy, legal and regulatory frameworks that support innovation, protect intellectual property and consumer rights, nurture digital talent and skills, promote fair competition and digital entrepreneurship, and enhance consumer confidence and trust in the digital economy.	We propose the addition of intellectual property protection to underscore its role in fostering innovation. This would complement the existing focus on consumer rights, fair competition, digital skills, and trust, providing a more complete foundation for a predictable and supportive digital ecosystem.

Information and communications technologies for development

We welcome the concrete and positive recognition in paragraph 17 of the important role of the private sector, alongside governments, civil society, and other stakeholders, in leveraging ICTs for development. The paragraph appropriately highlights how collaboration among all stakeholders can create opportunities for all and advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We welcome the recognition in paragraph 18 that enabling policy environments are essential to address existing gaps. We recommend further strengthening this paragraph by refining the language describing the coverage and usage gaps.

Paragraph 19 rightly underscores the importance of alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Digital Compact. Encouraging stakeholders to coordinate their efforts enhances coherence, reduces duplication, and ensures that digital development initiatives are inclusive and impactful.

We welcome the recognition in paragraph 20 of the importance of digital public goods and digital public infrastructure. To ensure these initiatives fully support innovation, investment, and inclusive digital development, the scope and design of digital public goods should be clarified in ways that facilitate sustainable implementation and maximize positive impact across societies.

Original text	Proposed edit	Comment/rationale
18. […] 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.	18. […] A third of the world's population still does not make use of the Internet, despite many of the unconnected people living in an area served by broadband infrastructure. At the same time, 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 coverage, usage, and affordability, digital skills, financing and technological resources.	We propose to strengthen the message of the paragraph by further clarifying that meaningful access requires addressing both coverage and usage barriers.
20. […] Digital public goods include open-source software, open data, open artificial intelligence models, open	20. […] Digital public goods may include open-source software, open data, open artificial intelligence models, open standards and open	We propose to strengthen the message of this paragraph by highlighting innovation, investment, and societal impact alongside inclusive digital

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. […]	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~~ and their design and scope should maximize innovation, investment, and societal impact while facilitating inclusive digital development and sustainable implementation. […]	development, and clarifying that public goods should not only be accessible but also support sustainable, scalable, and meaningful outcomes. This framing emphasizes that the design and scope of digital public goods should be intentional in maximizing their positive effects and ensures alignment with development objectives while encouraging effective, impactful deployment across diverse contexts.

Bridging digital divides

We welcome the recognition in paragraph 22 of the role of the private sector alongside public investment in the growth of ICT infrastructure and services since the World Summit. This underscores the critical role of the private sector in driving the expansion of connectivity, fostering innovation, and delivering digital services that reach communities around the world.

We strongly support the robust language in paragraphs 24–26 highlighting persistent gender digital divides, the digital inclusion needs of persons with disabilities, and the particular challenges faced by other disadvantaged or vulnerable groups. Addressing these divides is essential to ensuring that no one is left behind and to promoting an inclusive, people-centered Information Society.

We also value the recognition in paragraph 28 of the need to address both connectivity and usage gaps, and in paragraph 32 of the importance of financing mechanisms and incentives to expand meaningful and affordable access. Emphasizing these measures across multiple dimensions - coverage, usage, affordability, skills, and relevant content - is critical to bridging digital divides in a sustainable manner.

At the same time, we suggest a small clarification in paragraph 29. While the objective of the paragraph is commendable, attention should be paid to avoiding potential misinterpretation during implementation that might inadvertently lead to unsustainable regulation or underinvestment.

Original text	Proposed edit	Comment/rationale
29. We are committed to achieving entry-level broadband subscription costs that are accessible to the widest section of the population.	29. We are committed to achieving the affordability of entry-level broadband subscription costs so that they are accessible to the widest section of the population, taking into account the need to ensure sustainable investment and continued expansion of high-quality connectivity.	We suggest clarifying the message of this paragraph so that it avoids potential misinterpretation during implementation that might inadvertently lead to unsustainable regulation or underinvestment.

The digital economy

We welcome the recognition in paragraphs 36 and 38 of the importance of enabling environments for digital financial services in developing countries and for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). These references appropriately highlight the role of supportive policy, regulatory frameworks, and access to capital in fostering inclusive economic growth and digital entrepreneurship.

We also note positively the language in paragraphs 37–39 emphasizing the beneficial impact of digital technologies across all economic sectors. Recognizing how ICTs enhance productivity, create new markets, and expand opportunities for domestic and export trade underscores the transformative potential of the digital economy for businesses of all sizes.

At the same time, paragraph 35 could benefit from more precise and balanced language. While supporting a competitive and diverse digital economy is an important objective, care should be taken to avoid interpretations of this paragraph that might inadvertently lead to unsustainable regulation, protectionism, or structural remedies that could undermine investment, innovation, competition, and cross-border business.

Original text	Proposed edit	Comment/rationale
35. 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.	35. We recognise that ~~equitable and~~ meaningful inclusion in the digital economy benefits from fostering a more distributed technological landscape and healthy market competition ~~requires efforts to tackle concentrations of technological capacity and market power~~ in ~~order to~~ ways that ensure ~~that~~ the benefits of digital cooperation are ~~fairly distributed~~ widely shared, ~~and do not exacerbate~~ help reduce existing inequalities, and support ~~or impede the full achievement of~~ sustainable development, while also promoting innovation and sustainable investment across borders.	We suggest clarifying the message of this paragraph so that it avoids potential misinterpretation during implementation that might inadvertently lead to unsustainable regulation, protectionism, or structural remedies that could undermine investment, innovation, competition, and cross-border business.

Social and economic development

We welcome the balanced language in this section, which highlights both the positive contributions of ICTs and the remaining challenges.

Environmental impacts

We welcome the recognition in paragraph 49 of the positive contributions of digital technologies to environmental sustainability, including enhanced monitoring, early warning systems, efficient resource use, and more effective delivery of public services. We encourage maintaining a balanced framing in further iterations of the text that acknowledges both environmental risks and the opportunities for digital innovation to advance sustainability, helping to ensure that measures support environmental objectives while promoting continued investment and technological progress.

The enabling environment for digital development

We welcome the recognition in paragraphs 55–57 of the critical role that a positive enabling environment plays in fostering investment, innovation, technological development, and the bridging of digital divides. These paragraphs appropriately highlight the importance of science, technology, and innovation in advancing a people-centred, inclusive, and development-oriented Information Society, and underscore the value of identifying and implementing best and emerging practices to support education, innovation, and investment frameworks.

Paragraphs 59 and 61 constructively call for predictable and transparent policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks, as well as sharing of best practices, and for the CSTD to provide demand-driven policy advice, technical assistance, and capacity-building to establish enabling environments. These elements are critical for ensuring that all stakeholders, including developing countries, can effectively participate in digital development.

At the same time, we encourage drafters to maintain a balanced approach as the language in this section evolves throughout the drafting process. We stand ready to provide guidance on clear and balanced wording that ensures that measures support digital development while preserving flexibility for innovation, investment, and inclusive participation.

Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

We welcome the balanced language in this section, which highlights the role of confidence and security in ICTs as a driver for innovation and sustainable development (paragraph 62), recognizes the efforts of all stakeholders in strengthening cybersecurity (paragraph 63). The emphasis on the need for targeted capacity building, knowledge sharing, and multistakeholder cooperation (paragraph 65) is also welcome, particularly in supporting developing countries to strengthen cybersecurity governance and align with international norms.

At the same time, we encourage careful attention as the language in this section evolves in subsequent drafts to ensure that it does not inadvertently create duplication or overlap with processes under the UNGA First Committee.

Capacity development

We welcome this section, which appropriately emphasizes the critical role of capacity development in closing digital divides.

Financial mechanisms

We welcome the balanced approach to this section, which appropriately recognises the importance of private sector investment and the role of enabling environments in fostering sustainable ICT infrastructure, services, and digital skills (paragraphs 71–75).

At the same time, we encourage careful attention as the language in this section evolves in subsequent drafts, so that it maintains clear and constructive wording and reflects practical approaches to supporting digital development and bridging divides keeping in mind flexibility for diverse national contexts and financing models.

Human rights and ethical dimensions of the Information Society

We welcome the significant progress reflected in this section, which places human rights at the centre of the Information Society and explicitly references existing human rights instruments. The text appropriately underlines the obligations of states to protect human rights, while also recognizing the role of the private sector in respecting these rights throughout the life cycle of digital technologies, in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Data governance

We welcome the reaffirmation of the approach to data governance as adopted by the Global Digital Compact. We take note that paragraph 96 refers to the establishment of the CSTD working group on data governance mandated by the Global Digital Compact. We urge that the WSIS+20 outcome document, when referring to the mandate of this working group, retains the same formulation as expressed in paragraph 48 of the Global Digital Compact to avoid any confusion and ensure consistency, clarity, and full alignment between the WSIS and the Global Digital Compact frameworks.

Original text	Proposed edit	Comment/rationale
96. We note the establishment of a working group of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to engage in a comprehensive and inclusive multistakeholder dialogue on data governance at all levels as relevant for development, including the development of recommendations towards equitable and interoperable data governance arrangements, which may include fundamental principles of data governance arrangements.	96. We note the establishment of a working group of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to engage in a comprehensive and inclusive multistakeholder dialogue on data governance at all levels as relevant for development, including the development of follow-up recommendations towards equitable and interoperable data governance arrangements, which may include fundamental principles of data governance arrangements at all levels as relevant for development; proposals to support interoperability between national, regional and international data systems; considerations of sharing the benefits of data; and options to facilitate safe, secure and trusted data flows, including cross-border data flows as relevant for development (all SDGs).	When referring to the mandate of this working group, the same formulation as expressed in paragraph 48 of the Global Digital Compact should be retained in order to avoid any confusion and ensure consistency, clarity, and full alignment between the WSIS and GDC frameworks.

Artificial intelligence

We welcome the reaffirmation of the Global Digital Compact approach to AI governance and the emphasis on capacity building, particularly efforts to strengthen expertise and inclusive participation in developing countries.

Internet governance

We support the reaffirmation of the working definition of Internet governance in the Tunis Agenda regarding its multistakeholder nature as noted in paragraph 103 and the call for greater participation and engagement of all stakeholders in Internet governance discussions in paragraph 105. We also welcome the emphasis on improving the coordination of the activities of international and intergovernmental organisations and other stakeholders concerned with Internet governance noted in paragraph 110, as well as the recognition that many initiatives have arisen since WSIS to facilitate dialogue, experience sharing, and cooperation among governments and all stakeholder groups in paragraph 111.

We welcome that the draft takes note of the evolution of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) into a broad ecosystem, including intersessional activities, national and regional IGFs, and leadership initiatives, which provide a unique multistakeholder platform for discussion of Internet governance and related digital policy issues (paragraphs 112–114). We support proposals to make the IGF a permanent UN forum, to enhance its working modalities, and to strengthen its Secretariat (paragraphs 115–118). At the same time, we note that the IGF is currently presented with a focus primarily on Internet governance matters. Given its evolving role, future drafts may benefit from clarifying how the IGF can continue to facilitate discussion not only on Internet governance but also on related digital policy issues.

The development of the WSIS framework

We welcome the calls to ensure that the WSIS framework continues to evolve in close alignment with the Global Digital Compact (paragraph 119) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (paragraphs 122 and 128). We strongly support the reaffirmation of the values and principles of multistakeholder cooperation in paragraph 120, consistent with the WSIS+10 outcome document and the GDC.

We recognize the WSIS Forum as a central platform for multistakeholder dialogue and collaboration on the WSIS Action Lines, and support its annual continuation as noted in paragraph 126. We also support the proposals to strengthen the Action Lines by requesting facilitators to develop clear implementation roadmaps, with potential targets, indicators, and metrics (in paragraph 129), integrating gender equality as a cross-cutting priority (in paragraph 131) and involving further relevant UN agencies, such as OHCHR in the work of implementing the action lines (paragraph 130).

Monitoring and measurement

We take note of this section, in particular the focus on strengthening monitoring and measurement to support evidence-based policymaking, including alignment with the SDGs.

Follow-up and review

We welcome the reaffirmation of the multistakeholder approach to WSIS follow-up as expressed in paragraph 139.

We also welcome the emphasis on ensuring convergence between the implementation of WSIS outcomes and the Global Digital Compact as noted in paragraph 140, including the upcoming high-level review in 2027 to assess progress in alignment.

We support the continued work of UNGIS as a platform for multistakeholder dialogue and coordination, including the expanded involvement of relevant UN entities such as ODET, OHCHR, and UN-Women, and the provision of multistakeholder advice to its work as suggested in paragraph 141.

We also note positively the alignment of the follow-up and review processes with the SDGs, including the submission of this resolution as an input into the 2030 Agenda review as suggested in paragraph 147, and encourage continued efforts to ensure coordination across WSIS, GDC, and broader UN processes to enhance efficiency, coherence, and impact.