National and Regional Initiatives
IGF Iraq - Kurdistan

Subject: Draft Input on the Role of NRIs in WSIS+20

National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs) have proven to be one of the most impactful pillars of the Internet Governance ecosystem. They bridge global processes with local realities, ensuring that every country, community, and region has a voice in shaping digital futures.

Through the NRIs, the Internet Governance Forum in Iraq and Kurdistan has enhanced digital literacy, built trust, and created tangible impact on the ground. For example, IGF Kurdistan collaborated with TikTok and the Ministry of Interior to raise awareness and counter honor-based violence online—an initiative that not only saved lives but also built stronger collaboration between government, civil society, and private sector actors.

Official recognition of NRIs, such as that granted by the IGF Secretariat and WSIS, has enabled these initiatives to work hand-in-hand with governments, ministries, regulators, and local stakeholders. In the Kurdistan Region, despite the challenge of not being a UN Member State but functioning with autonomy, recognition empowered the IGF to convene ministers, parliamentarians, telecommunication companies, civil society, and entrepreneurs—helping local communities to be heard on global stages.

The impact has been remarkable. After the official recognition of IGF Kurdistan as an NRI in 2024, the initiative successfully engaged the Minister of Transport and Communications, civil society leaders, and the private sector, leading to unprecedented government endorsement and support.

Similarly, during IGF 2024 in Riyadh, IGF Kurdistan created a diverse delegation of 18 figures—including ministers, government officials, consulates, telecom companies, civil society representatives, entrepreneurs, and founders. This experience demonstrated the power of NRIs to bring together stakeholders from different sectors under one umbrella and link them directly to the global policy dialogue.

To further strengthen the role of NRIs and maximize their contribution to WSIS and IGF processes, we respectfully request:

1. **Official Annual NRIs Meeting,** A structured annual platform, recognized in the WSIS agenda, to allow NRIs to exchange best practices, showcase outcomes, and coordinate their work.
2. **Internship and Fellowship Programs for NRIs,** Dedicated capacity-building opportunities to empower NRI coordinators and teams, enabling them to engage more effectively with governments, major stakeholders, and international organizations.

3. **Enhanced Recognition of NRIs in Global Agendas**, A stronger presence of NRIs in WSIS and IGF agendas to reflect their unique role as connectors between global processes and local realities.

We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the IGF Secretariat for continuously facilitating this platform, for their unwavering support to NRIs, and for enabling us to grow stronger together as part of the global IGF community.

NRIs are a voluntary effort, yet they have consistently assisted governments, private sector actors, and civil society in addressing pressing digital challenges. With greater support and recognition, NRIs can continue to serve as trusted platforms where multistakeholder dialogue translates into local action and lasting impact.