



INPUT TO THE WSIS+20 ZERO DRAFT

International Telecommunication Union

I. Proposed Amendments to the Zero Draft (in blue text)

Taking into account inputs and feedback from various stakeholders, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) presents the following proposed amendments and additions to the WSIS+20 Zero Draft for consideration.

- *Para 19. We recognise the work of the United Nations Group on the Information Society to develop a matrix aligning the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Digital Compact, [which formed the basis of the Global Digital Compact Implementation Map, annexed to the United Nations Secretary-General's Report on WSIS Review, submitted to the Economic and Social Council in July 2025](#), and urge all stakeholders to align these commitments in their work for digital development.*
- *Para 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 recognize the work done through the Giga initiative by ITU and UNICEF to connect every school in the world to the internet](#). We reaffirm our commitment to connecting every school to the Internet by 2030.*
- *Para 54. We recognise that an inclusive and integrated approach is needed to enable policymakers to align digital and environmental policies at all levels, thereby enhancing the global community's ability to address complex and interdependent global challenges. We urge all stakeholders to cooperate in leveraging digital technologies for sustainability while minimising their negative environmental impacts, promoting sustainability across the life cycle of digital technologies, including context-specific measures to increase resource efficiency and to conserve and sustainably use natural resources, and to ensure that digital infrastructure and equipment are sustainably designed to address environmental challenges in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. [The Green Digital Action initiative, facilitated by the ITU, can serve as a framework to support implementation of the environmental dimensions of the digital transformation](#).*
- *Para 63. We commend the significant efforts that have been taken by governments, the private sector, civil society and the technical community, to build confidence and*

security in the use of digital technologies and to protect infrastructure, services, transactions and other digital activity from the rising threat of cyberattacks *as well as physical risks to the infrastructure.*

- *Para 74. We note that the Sevilla Commitment, the outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development held in July 2025, recognised that closing the infrastructure gap in critical sectors, including information and communications technologies, will greatly improve access to essential services, employment opportunities, economic growth and sustainable development. We reaffirm the call in the Sevilla Commitment for coordinated investment in digital infrastructure, including digital public infrastructure, and digital public goods, and international collaboration between governments, development partners and private sector actors, **leveraging platforms such as the ITU-UNCTAD Digital Infrastructure Investment Catalyzer**, to support countries in their design of digital infrastructure, its financing models and impact assessment.*
- *Para 99. We emphasize the importance of leveraging existing resources within specialized agencies, funds, programmes, other entities, bodies and offices, and related organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to improve capacity building efforts on artificial intelligence, including through using appropriate inter-agency mechanisms, **such as the Inter-Agency Working Group on Artificial Intelligence**, conducting research, mapping and analysis, reporting on progress and challenges in this field, and leveraging their resources and expertise to provide tailored assistance.*
- ***New Para (Under section ICT for Development new para 20)** - We recognise the importance of the WSIS Stocktaking database as the global platform for collecting and showcasing digital and ICT-related projects and initiatives that implement the WSIS Action Lines, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Global Digital Compact. We urge all stakeholders to continue contributing to it, and the International Telecommunication Union to continue maintaining and enhancing the database which was first established in 2004.*
- ***New Para (Under section ICT for Development new para 21)** - We encourage all stakeholders to actively contribute and regularly update information on their initiatives in the WSIS Stocktaking database while supporting efforts to enhance the database through the development of tools that strengthen data analysis and generate strategic insights.*
- ***New Para (Under section Building Confidence and Security in the use of ICTs new para 66)** - We welcome the efforts of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in building confidence and security in the use of ICTs, in particular through initiatives such as the Child Online Protection (COP) programme, which promotes the safety and empowerment of children and youth in the digital environment, as well as the*

establishment of the International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience to strengthen the security and resilience of critical global infrastructure. We further commend ITU's work in developing international standards, providing capacity-building, and fostering multistakeholder collaboration to enhance cybersecurity and ensure that the digital space remains safe, inclusive and trustworthy for all.

- ***New Para (Under section Environmental Impacts new para 53) - We welcome the COP29 Declaration on Green Digital Action and encourage the implementation through the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism and the Green Digital Action initiative.***
- ***New Para (Under section Development of the WSIS Framework new para 127) - We encourage Member States and stakeholders to continue supporting the mobilization of adequate and sustainable voluntary resources for the annual organization of the WSIS Forum, recognizing its role as the leading multistakeholder platform for dialogue, partnership-building, stocktaking and review of WSIS Action Lines.***

II. Context and Contributions

ITU as the UN specialized agency for digital technologies, welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the WSIS+20 review process. Over the past twenty years, ITU has been at the forefront of global cooperation, enabling partnerships and fostering digital transformation in alignment with the WSIS outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ITU resolved at its Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis in 1998 ([Resolution 73](#)) to hold a World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and place it on the agenda of the United Nations.

ITU served as the Secretariat for the two-phased Summit held in 2003 (Geneva) and 2005 (Tunis). This was endorsed by the UN General Assembly ([Resolution 56/183](#)), which also accorded the ITU a lead role in cooperation with other interested organizations and partners.

Building on two decades of leadership and collaboration

ITU welcomes the Zero Draft's recognition of the WSIS Forum in paragraph 126, as a key mechanism for advancing inclusive digital development cooperation and reviewing progress on the WSIS Action Lines. Hosted by ITU and co-organized annually by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, and UNCTAD, in collaboration with more than 50 UN partners, the WSIS Forum has grown into the world's leading multistakeholder platform for digital for development and emerging technologies. Over the past 17 years, and with the participation from over 160 countries, the Forum has welcomed more than 50,000 stakeholders, including representatives from governments, international organizations the private sector, the technical community, civil society, and academia. WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025 outcomes and highlights are available [here](#).

The WSIS Forum plays a pivotal role in shaping a shared vision and actionable roadmap for the WSIS Action Lines. Through capacity-building, enabling partnerships, and facilitating the

exchange of best practices worldwide, the Forum significantly advances implementation of WSIS Action Lines. Its inclusion in the Zero Draft represents an important acknowledgment of the Forum's essential contribution to the broader digital development framework.

WSIS Stocktaking and WSIS Prizes

The Zero Draft appropriately highlights the need for evidence-based monitoring and impact assessment. In this context, ITU continues to maintain and improve the [WSIS Stocktaking](#) database, which serves as a global repository of ICT-related initiatives aligned with the WSIS Action Lines, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the objectives of the [Global Digital Compact \(GDC\)](#). To date, the database has collected over 19,000 digital projects submitted by stakeholders worldwide, fostering transparency, knowledge sharing, and informed policy development.

ITU has organized the WSIS Prizes contest since 2012, which has given recognition to excellence and innovation. With over 9,000 submitted projects and initiatives, 252 winners and 720 champions recognized to date, the WSIS Prizes have attracted hundreds of thousands of stakeholders through its submission and online voting phases, reaching millions of people through the promotion of its outcomes and celebrations of winners and champions. The WSIS Prizes Winners 2025 projects are available [here](#).

The Prizes showcase initiatives that advance digital infrastructure and connectivity, e-government, health, education, accessibility, environmental sustainability, disaster resilience, and community networks. They also highlight efforts that build capacity in underserved communities, promote ethical and responsible technology use, apply emerging technologies such as AI for development, foster cultural and linguistic diversity, and empower women and girls—contributing directly to inclusive digital transformation and sustainable development.

Following feedback and input from various stakeholders, stronger references to the WSIS Stocktaking database and WSIS Prizes are encouraged in the Zero Draft. References to the WSIS Stocktaking and WSIS Prizes are also outlined in the [ECOSOC Resolution E/RES/2025/18](#) on the *Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society*.

Information and Communications Technologies for development

ITU serves as the permanent secretariat and the rotating Chair and Vice-Chair of the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS), an inter-agency mechanism to coordinate substantive policy issues facing the United Nations system's implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

ITU co-leads with the UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies the Working Group on Digital Technologies (WGDT), an inter-agency group supporting the implementation of the GDC and chapter 3 of the Pact for the Future. It is one of several working groups under the UN Steering Committee for Pact implementation, which is chaired by the UN Secretary-General.

Under ITU's leadership, the WGDT developed [the GDC Implementation Map](#), building on [the WSIS-2030 Agenda-GDC matrix](#), which was created by the UNGIS. The GDC Implementation Map responds to the request in paragraph 71 of the GDC. It outlines the implementation framework, including a shared vision, collaboration mechanisms, phased strategy, available resources, and monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as [detailed UN system initiatives](#) supporting the GDC and key milestones identified by the WGDT toward the High-Level Review of the GDC scheduled to take place during the eighty-second session of the UN General Assembly. This work is further aligned with [ECOSOC Resolution E/RES/2025/18](#) on the *Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society* on para 133: "Recommends further that, as an outcome of the World Summit 20-year review, the United Nations Group on the Information Society be tasked with developing a joint implementation road map, to be presented to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its twenty-ninth session, to integrate the Global Digital Compact commitments into the World Summit architecture, ensuring a unified approach to digital cooperation that avoids duplication and maximizes resource efficiency."

Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

As digital transformation accelerates, cybersecurity must be recognized not only as a governance and capacity issue but as a strategic enabler of trust, stability, and resilience essential for sustainable development. While the current Zero Draft emphasizes capacity building and cooperation, it should also highlight the importance of proactive cyber risk management, continuous threat intelligence sharing, and the development of resilient, secure digital infrastructure.

This includes strengthening digital resilience, which enables digital systems and services to withstand, adapt to, and recover from a wide range of disruptions, including cyber threats, technical failures, and natural hazards. Resilience must be embedded across the digital ecosystem to ensure long-term reliability and trust.

Key to this effort is the protection of critical global infrastructure, such as submarine cables, which serve as the backbone of international connectivity. The [International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience](#), established by ITU in partnership with the International Cable Protection Committee, contributes to this work by promoting dialogue and collaboration on potential ways and means to improve the resilience of this vital infrastructure that powers global communications and the digital economy.

In its role as WSIS Action Line Facilitator C5: Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs, ITU is mandated to advance these priorities by driving the development of international cybersecurity standards, coordinating global cooperation among Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), and delivering practical tools and frameworks to strengthen national cyber incident preparedness and response. ITU's approach goes beyond traditional capacity building by fostering innovation, facilitating multistakeholder engagement, and

supporting efforts to mobilize sustainable resources that address the evolving cyber threat landscape.

Key ITU initiatives include the [Global Cybersecurity Agenda](#), which offers a comprehensive framework for international cooperation; the establishment and support of regional and national CERTs to enhance incident response capabilities; and the development of standards and best practices for secure infrastructure and cyber risk management.

Recognizing cybersecurity as a strategic priority will enable the international community to better safeguard digital infrastructures, protect users, and maximize the benefits of the digital economy and promote digital progress that is safe, inclusive, and sustainable, particularly for developing countries. ITU is committed to supporting capacity building, standards development, and coordination efforts to assist countries in addressing emerging risks and fostering a secure digital future for everyone.

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

ITU underscores Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) as a foundational pillar for equitable digital economies and societies. DPI, covering digital identity, payments, and data governance—enables universal access to public services and drives trust and inclusion. ITU is actively advancing DPI through initiatives such as the African Digital Public Infrastructure Blueprint, developed in collaboration with United Nations partners and regional organizations to support countries in building interoperable and scalable digital infrastructure. ITU's joint efforts with [Giga](#) initiative and partnerships like the OpenWallet Forum further promote DPI applications in education, digital payments, and data governance, all contributing to the development of inclusive and equitable digital economies worldwide.

Environmental impacts

In parallel, ITU calls for integrating environmental sustainability into digital development through the [Green Digital Action \(GDA\)](#) framework. The GDA offers a practical, scalable approach to measure, report, and reduce the environmental footprint of digital technologies across their lifecycle. ITU collaborates with international partners and stakeholders to facilitate the adoption of sustainable digital practices, supporting efforts to align digital transformation with global climate goals. The recent COP29 Declaration on Green Digital Action further reinforces the importance of these efforts, encouraging implementation through mechanisms such as the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism.

Financial mechanisms

While the Zero Draft addresses financing and references the Sevilla Commitment, there is an opportunity to highlight ongoing, concrete instruments critical to closing digital infrastructure gaps. To support coordinated investment efforts, reference to the UNCTAD–ITU Digital Infrastructure Investment Catalyser could strengthen this section as it serves as a practical platform bringing together UN agencies, multilateral development banks, investors, and the private sector to enhance information sharing, address investment barriers, and mobilize resources for resilient and inclusive digital infrastructure.

Social and economic development

Youth are not only beneficiaries of the Information Society but critical drivers of innovation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive growth. As digital natives, young people bring fresh perspectives, creativity, and technical skills that are essential for advancing the social and economic development goals of the WSIS process.

ITU has made young people a high priority in its projects and ongoing activities for many years. As avid and creative users of ICTs, young people are often key contributors to building an inclusive Information Society and bridging the Digital Divide. The ITU supports and encourages youth-led innovation through initiatives like ITU Generation Connect, the [WSIS Youth Special Track](#), the [Giga initiative](#), the [ITU Young Professionals Programme](#) and [ITU 160 Gender Champions](#).

Artificial intelligence (AI)

ITU has been at the leading edge of artificial intelligence since 2017 with the aim of identifying practical AI applications to solve global challenges and contributing to universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation. ITU has developed over 470 AI standards published or in progress, driven by its broad membership and collaborations with ISO, IEC, and partners within the World Standards Cooperation (WSC). Coordination also extends to other standards bodies and UN agencies. The adoption of Resolution [101 \(New Delhi, 2024\)](#) further emphasizes ITU's recognized role in establishing trusted AI standards.

At the heart of ITU's efforts is the AI for Good platform, with its annual summits in Geneva, led by ITU and supported by over 50 UN partners, which aims at identifying innovative AI applications, building skills and standards, and advancing partnerships to solve global challenges. Furthermore, ITU co-chairs the UN [Inter-Agency Working Group on AI](#) and the AI Subgroup of the Working Group on Digital Technologies, promoting UN system-wide coordination and policy coherence on AI in its support to Member States and other stakeholders, as well as implementation of the GDC.

The role of the Private Sector in the WSIS Process

Since the inception of the WSIS, the private sector has played a critical role in shaping, deploying, and innovating the digital technologies that underpin the Information Society. The Zero Draft includes references to the private sector. There are valuable opportunities to further highlight the role of the private sector across key areas such as the Digital Economy, Social and Economic Development, Enabling Environment, and Capacity Building. Private sector involvement is both evident and essential, offering significant potential for collaboration and impact.

Monitoring and measurement

The Zero Draft's recognition of ITU's work within the Partnership for Measuring ICT for Development is appreciated, as it has been fundamental in advancing reliable indicators and data for the Information Society.

In line with the request in paragraph 129 of the Zero Draft for Action Line facilitators to develop implementation roadmaps with targets, indicators, and metrics, the need to strengthen the overall monitoring of WSIS Action Lines through a robust, results-oriented framework is underscored. A framework with clearly defined targets and indicators is welcomed for measuring progress and supporting effective, evidence-based policymaking.

Looking Ahead: Strengthening commitment and collaboration for WSIS+20 and Beyond

As the global community marks the WSIS+20 milestone, ITU recognizes this as a key opportunity to reaffirm and deepen our collective dedication to leveraging digital technologies as powerful catalysts for sustainable development. ITU remains steadfast in ensuring that WSIS outcomes and Action Lines continue to deliver tangible impact, fully aligned with the ambitious objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

The WSIS Process should continue evolving as an inclusive multistakeholder mechanism that engages governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia, and technical community to advance digital cooperation and foster inclusive progress. Strengthening coordination and ensuring practical implementation of WSIS Action Lines remain essential, particularly in integrating the Global Digital Compact within this framework, supported by clear and measurable indicators of progress.

The annual WSIS Forum stands as the leading global platform for open, inclusive multistakeholder platform for engaging in discussions on digital development issues and emerging technologies, and ITU is committed to continued impact, engagement and policy coherence. Similarly, the WSIS Stocktaking Database is more than a repository, it is a critical tool for experience sharing, evidence-driven decision-making and innovation.

ITU supports the continued role of the UNGIS as the inter-agency coordination mechanism on digital issues within the UN system and acknowledges the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), established through WSIS, as a platform for discussing the internet governance.

The implementation of the GDC can be effectively advanced through the established WSIS framework, helping to ensure system-wide coherence and complementarity. This aligns with the recently adopted [ECOSOC Resolution E/RES/2025/18](#) on the *Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society*, which states: “Recognizing the importance of integrating the implementation of the Global Digital Compact commitments into the World Summit architecture in order to avoid duplications and ensure a cohesive and consistent approach to digital cooperation”.

Together with Member States, UN partners, and stakeholders across sectors, ITU is committed to accelerating progress toward a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient digital future for all.