

submission by the Islamic Republic of Iran to WSIS+20

October 3, 2025

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

The Islamic Republic of Iran appreciates the efforts made during the WSIS+20 review process and extends its best wishes for success to the facilitators in their endeavors.

Although some progress has been made toward the objectives of the WSIS, we find ourselves reviewing the WSIS at a time when we are not only far from fulfilling the goals outlined in its documents—particularly closing the digital divide and establishing a global framework for Internet governance—but also facing new challenges and opportunities due to the rapid development of digital technologies and artificial intelligence.

In this regard, Iran would like to present its views and observations on WSIS, along with proposals for the improved advancement of WSIS+20, as follows:

The World Summit on the Information Society must retain its central role in the architecture of global digital governance from a developmental perspective. It should consistently function as multilateral framework rooted in the fundamental principles of international law, national sovereignty, and the rights and interests of the public. WSIS+20 must be characterized by inclusivity and provide an equal role for governments by developing a framework within WSIS to facilitate more active and meaningful participation of developing countries in advancing emerging technologies.

The development-centric nature of WSIS necessitates substantial involvement from developing countries, grounded in structural empowerment, technology transfer, and the provision of sustainable and guaranteed financial resources through institutionalized implementation mechanisms. At WSIS+20, the diverse national realities, capacities, and levels of progress must be acknowledged, allowing each country to implement the agenda in alignment with its national policies, laws, priorities, and ethical and legal frameworks. It is also important to establish a mechanism for developing evaluation indices and systematically reviewing the outcomes of WSIS.

Regarding the relationship between WSIS and GDC, it is crucial to uphold the precedence and priority of WSIS over GDC. References to the Global Digital Compact in the WSIS+20 process areas, such as data governance and artificial intelligence, should be clearly articulated to avoid conflicts with the principles outlined in WSIS documents, to avoid normative inflation and Prevent any deviation towards commitments outside of the international consensus in the digital realm.

multi-stakeholder model, the current multi-stakeholder model within the WSIS process faces several challenges and criticisms. One primary issue is the unclear definition of stakeholder roles. Although WSIS outcomes are designed for governments to take the lead, stakeholders are expected to participate primarily in a consultative capacity. Another concern is that dominance within the

multi-stakeholder approach has largely been held by powerful entities, such as major technology companies and certain governments. Furthermore, the global private sector is heavily concentrated in a limited number of countries, resulting in the underrepresentation of voices from developing and least developed nations and digital colonization and monopolization. These concerns must be adequately addressed in WSIS+20.

On digital financing, developed nations and international financial institutions have not sufficiently fulfilled their responsibilities to help close the digital divide, improve access to ICTs, create digital opportunities, and harness the potential of ICTs for development by providing financial resources as outlined in the outcomes of the WSIS—particularly paragraph 3 of the Geneva Plan of Action and paragraphs 61 and 66 of the Declaration of Principles. Consequently, there is an urgent need for a more effective digital financing mechanism to support developing countries in advancing the Information Society. In this context, it is crucial to establish binding international frameworks to regulate the obligations of developed nations and major technology companies regarding artificial intelligence. Additionally, a fund should be created under the auspices of the United Nations, supported by contributions from developed countries and large technology corporations. This fund should be dedicated to initiatives such as upgrading digital and artificial intelligence infrastructure, fostering digital skills, and generating local content in developing countries.

Regarding structural and restrictive measures, given the need of developing countries for access to technology and financial resources, it is crucial to establish mechanisms that eliminate barriers and constraints imposed by some countries on other, including unilateral coercive measures. These restrictions hinder the application of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, thereby exacerbating the digital divide. Such barriers present significant challenges to achieving the vision outlined in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Iran calls on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish a reporting mechanism to prevent unilateral coercive measures (UCM) by certain countries in the field of ICT. Otherwise, the pursuit of global information society development objectives, digital progress, and efforts to bridge disparities will face considerable uncertainties.

on internet governance, we emphasize the need to maximize the participation of developing countries in decisions related to Internet governance, ensuring that their interests are represented, as well as in development and capacity-building efforts (TUNIS AGENDA, Para. 65). We recognize that all governments should have an equal role and responsibility in international Internet governance and in maintaining the stability, security, and continuity of the Internet. Furthermore, we acknowledge the necessity for governments to develop public policy in consultation with all stakeholders (TUNIS AGENDA, Para. 68). In light of the Tunis Agenda's perspective on the Internet and the mechanisms outlined in paragraphs 69 and 71, which advocate for enhanced cooperation, we request that this enhanced cooperation be advanced as an institutional framework.

On the accountability and responsibility of transboundary technology companies, it is essential to prevent the exploitation of technology for misuse and ensure responsibility and accountability of big digital platforms for their actions and behaviors. It is vital to create a framework within WSIS+20 to ensure that digital technology and artificial intelligence is used exclusively for peaceful purposes. Islamic Republic of Iran calls Secretary-General of the United Nations establish an international working group to discuss the principles, norms, and rules governing the responsible behavior of large technology companies and cross-border digital platforms. Additionally, it would

focus on to create a secure, safe, healthy, regulated, and ethical digital space while preserving the rights and legitimate freedoms of users.