Joint Contribution (Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon) on the WSIS+20 Review Zero Draft

We thank the Co-Facilitators for their diligent efforts in preparing the Zero Draft and for ensuring an inclusive, transparent, and participatory process. We also acknowledge the wide range of contributions received from stakeholders and commend the CSTD for its role in supporting this review.

Our joint contribution, submitted by Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, reflects our collective commitment to ensuring that the WSIS vision continues to guide digital transformation in a people-centred, inclusive, development-oriented, and rights-based manner. We present in this document two complementary inputs: a **general contribution on the Zero Draft (Section I)** and a **dedicated contribution on Internet Governance (Section II)**, given its central importance to the WSIS process and the future of digital cooperation.

I.   General Contribution on the WSIS+20 Review Zero Draft

Preamble

We welcome building on the WSIS+20 review conducted by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in April 2025, as well as the outcomes of the Internet Governance Forum held in Norway in June 2025 and the WSIS+20 Forum held in July 2025. We commend the breadth of stakeholder contributions and the numerous constructive inputs provided in this regard.

We welcome the reaffirmation of the Pact for the Future (2024) and the Global Digital Compact, as well as the reaffirmation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Introduction

We propose referencing the NETmundial+10 São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines as a useful framework for collaboration, consensus-building, and decision-making.

We endorse the Zero Draft points on: Reaffirming the WSIS vision of a *people-centred, inclusive, development-oriented Information Society*; Committing to multistakeholder cooperation with emphasis on developing countries inclusion; Stressing the right to development, trust, transparency, and an inclusive, open, safe, and secure digital space; Recognising persistent digital divides, gender gaps and the rights of the child and of persons with disabilities; and Acknowledging the opportunities and risks of emerging technologies.

Information and Communications Technologies for Development

We recommend encouraging the alignment of Digital Development Funds and platforms to pool resources for ICT infrastructure and innovation projects in developing

countries, supporting capacity development and technology transfer in line with WSIS Action Lines.

We endorse the Zero Draft points on: ICTs being central to achieving the SDGs; Acknowledging persistent divides and inequalities, between and within countries, in access, affordability, digital skills, and local content; and Calling for strengthened cooperation, enabling policy frameworks, and investment in digital public goods and digital public infrastructure.

Bridging Digital Divides

We recommend acknowledging the specific vulnerabilities of crisis-affected and fragile economies, and calling for special support measures, including concessional financing and regional partnerships, to safeguard connectivity, build capacities, and advance inclusive digital transformation.

We endorse the Zero Draft points on: Noting progress in broadband and mobile coverage but highlighting stark divides; Acknowledging concerns regarding gaps between high- and low-income countries in terms of proportion of people using the Internet; Calling for universal, meaningful, and affordable access; Stressing affordability of entry-level broadband and devices; Prioritising local content, multilingualism, and digital literacy; and Urging financing mechanisms to connect the unconnected.

The Digital Economy

We encourage the development of interoperable regional digital payment systems and digital identity frameworks to support cross-border trade and regional integration.

We endorse the Zero Draft points recognizing the centrality of the digital economy to trade, growth, and services; noting risks of concentrated market power; emphasising inclusion of MSMEs, women-led businesses, and developing countries; supporting enabling environments for digital finance and e-commerce; and acknowledging both the opportunities and risks of digitalisation, including automation and AI.

Social and Economic Development

We recommend recognising the role of digital financial inclusion tools in strengthening resilience across economies and encouraging the retention of digital talent in developing economies through innovation hubs and remote work opportunities.

We endorse the Zero Draft points that highlight the role of ICTs in education, healthcare, public services, and participation; address impacts on culture and wellbeing; raise concerns about misinformation; and call for equitable, safe, and inclusive rights-based digital development across all sectors.

Environmental Sustainability

We encourage greater technology transfer and financing to support developing countries in adopting renewable-powered data centres and green network infrastructure.

We endorse the Zero Draft points, recognising the role of ICTs in monitoring climate change and improving efficiency; noting environmental costs, such as energy use, emissions, e-waste, and the extraction of rare minerals; calling for global standards on sustainability, recycling, and circular economy practices; and suggesting the establishment of reporting mechanisms on the environmental impact of ICTs.

Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs

We affirm the role of ICT in peacebuilding, particularly with respect to building trust in institutions, countering misinformation and addressing risks of emerging technologies, most importantly in countries facing humanitarian crises.

We endorse the Zero Draft points on: Reaffirming the rights of women and children; Emphasising confidence and security-building in ICTs while safeguarding privacy; and Calling for frameworks that nurture trust, innovation, and consumer protection

Artificial Intelligence

We propose the establishment of a UN AI research programme and an AI capacity-building fellowship focused on developing countries.

We endorse the Zero Draft points on: Recognizing AI's transformative potential and risks; Calling for human oversight, ethical deployment, and risk mitigation; and welcoming existing initiatives such as the Independent Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

Internet Governance

We are offering a dedicated contribution focusing on Internet governance in Section II of this document. Please refer to section II for comments on the Internet Governance section of the Zero Draft.

The Development of the WSIS Framework

We call for stronger synergies among the WSIS, the 2030 Agenda, the Pact for the Future, and the Global Digital Compact to avoid duplication of resources and processes, particularly with respect to follow-up and implementation.

We endorse the Zero Draft points on: Reaffirming that multistakeholder participation has been crucial to the success of the WSIS implementation framework; Reaffirming the principle of sovereign equality of all States; and Recognising the importance of aligning the implementation of the WSIS, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact, building synergies between them to ensure their effective implementation and avoiding wasteful duplication of resources and decision-making processes.

Monitoring and Measurement

We propose the inclusion of the following paragraph under the section on monitoring and measurement, highlighting the work of the International Telecommunication Union on WSIS Stocktaking:

We recognize the WSIS Stocktaking platform, maintained by the International Telecommunication Union, as an essential mechanism for monitoring and measuring progress in the implementation of WSIS outcomes. By providing data, analysis, and examples of best practices, the platform strengthens evidence-based policymaking and supports the development of inclusive digital societies. We encourage all stakeholder groups to continue contributing to and utilizing this platform to enhance global follow-up and advance sustainable development goals.

Follow-Up and Review

We recommend establishing regional review mechanisms, including annual stocktaking exercises, to feed into the global review process systematically. This would support integrated implementation and follow-up of both the GDC and the WSIS Action Lines, leveraging the depth and reach of IGF intersessional work and its National and Regional IGF initiatives (NRIs).

We endorse the Zero Draft points on: Embedding WSIS+20 outcomes into UN structures (ECOSOC, CSTD); Linking WSIS+20 follow-up to SDGs and GDC cycles; and Encouraging regular reporting, monitoring progress, and developing a roadmap with indicators.

II. Dedicated Contribution on the Internet Governance Section of the WSIS+20 Review Zero Draft

Given the significance of Internet Governance, and its long-term implications for the future of the Information Society, we (Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon) are offering this dedicated contribution on Internet governance, which remains at the heart of the WSIS vision, **to complement our general contribution on the WSIS+20 Zero Draft** (section I of this document). It reflects our collective position on Internet governance and the role of the IGF as a cornerstone of inclusive and effective digital cooperation.

We welcome, for further drafts, retaining the following points from the Zero Draft, inclusive of the new additional language underlined below:

103. Reaffirming the working definition of Internet governance in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, <u>which we believe has stood the test of time and continues to be broad and agile, encompassing the constantly evolving digital landscape</u>.

104. Recognizing that the management of the Internet, as a critical global facility <u>for inclusive and equitable digital transformation, includes both multilateral and multistakeholder processes that are transparent and inclusive</u>, with the full involvement of Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, technical and

academic communities, and all other relevant stakeholders in accordance with their respective roles and responsibilities. In this respect, we believe the NETmundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement provides a solid foundation for shared global principles of collaborative digital governance. We further reaffirm that effective Internet governance must preserve the open, free, global, interoperable, reliable, secure, resilient, safe, and unfragmented nature of the Internet.

105. Recognizing that measures are needed to ensure broadened and more effective participation by stakeholders from developing countries and under-represented groups, particularly African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states.

107. Reaffirming the need to promote global cross-border cooperation among all stakeholders to prevent, identify and address risks of fragmentation of the Internet.

108. Reaffirming that Internet governance should continue to follow the provisions set forth in the outcomes of the summits held in Geneva and Tunis, with the participation of all governments on equal footing.

111. Calling on Member States and other stakeholders, in their respective roles and responsibilities, to cooperate in order to achieve the vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Digital Society.

112. Applauding the successful development of the Internet Governance Forum, which provides a unique platform for multistakeholder discussion of Internet governance issues, including emerging issues, as reflected in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

113. Welcoming the evolution of the Internet Governance Forum from an annual meeting into an ecosystem that includes a wide range of intersessional and other activities, and particularly the emergence of more than 170 National and Regional Internet Governance Forums.

114. Recognising the successful steps that have been taken since the ten-year review of the World Summit to improve the working modalities of the Internet Governance Forum, increase and broaden participation of governments and other stakeholders, particularly from developing countries and under-represented groups, build stronger relationships with other digital discussion fora, and enable more substantive outcomes. We call for these measures to continue to improve, particularly to deliver more actionable outcomes and secure more sustainable funding for the Forum and request the Forum to report annually on progress towards their implementation to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

115. Supporting the decision that the Internet Governance Forum shall be made a permanent forum of the United Nations.

116. Calling upon the Forum to report on outcomes of its annual meetings and intersessional work to relevant UN entities and processes, in particular, the UN Group on Information Society and all relevant UN agencies, Action Line Facilitators, the Commission

on Science and Technology for Development and the WSIS Forum to duly take Internet Governance Forum outcomes into account in their work and proceedings.

117. Calling upon the Forum to <u>further</u> enhance its working modalities, including by reinforcing its intersessional work and supporting national and regional initiatives, and to apply innovative, open, inclusive, transparent and agile collaboration methods. We emphasize the need to broaden participation of all relevant stakeholders, with particular attention to underrepresented communities as well as Governments and other stakeholders from developing countries.

118. Calling for the strengthening of the Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum, to enable it to continue its development, implement further improvements, and support the work of National and Regional Internet Governance Forums and intersessional activities. We invite the Secretary-General to make proposals concerning future funding for the Forum, <u>through consultations with the wider Internet Governance community</u>.

We also offer the following point as a new additional language:

<u>We call for stronger integration of National and Regional IGFs into global IGF processes, ensuring that their recommendations and outputs are systematically reflected in annual reports.</u>

We reiterate our support for a permanent mandate of the Internet Governance Forum, as a cornerstone of the Information Society, essential to safeguarding the open, global, interoperable, and unfragmented nature of the Internet. We look forward to the inclusion of more detailed modalities in the next draft to make the IGF a permanent forum of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our strong support for the WSIS+20 process and the Zero Draft as an inclusive framework that reflects both multilateral cooperation and multistakeholder engagement, which must continue to evolve in line with the WSIS principles, while addressing persistent and emerging challenges. We remain committed to constructive engagement in the WSIS+20 review process and to ensuring that the voices and needs of developing countries are fully reflected in the final outcome.