Advancing Global South Priorities: Textual Proposals for the WSIS+20 Zero Draft on Digital Sovereignty, Equitable AI, and Human Rights-Anchored Governance

Executive Summary: Anchoring the WSIS Vision in Global South Development Imperatives

The twenty-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20) presents a pivotal opportunity to ensure that global digital governance frameworks are centered on the development needs, rights, and aspirations of the Global South. The analysis asserts that digital transformation for African nations and other developing countries must prioritize **Digital Sovereignty**, specifically by counteracting data extractivism and technological dependency which risk replicating colonial-era power imbalances.

This expert input delivers comprehensive textual proposals across the eight thematic areas specified for the WSIS+20 Zero Draft. Key themes include: transforming connectivity metrics to capture genuine usage and affordability (**Universal Meaningful Connectivity** or UMC) ; establishing mechanisms like

Provenance by Design to secure collective data rights and indigenous knowledge ; mandating equitable access to compute and investing in resource-efficient AI models, such as

Small Language Models (SLMs), to bridge the pervasive **Multilingual Divide** ; and moving global ethical discourse toward enforceable, rights-anchored accountability frameworks, encapsulated by

FATER (**Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, Ethics, and Rights-respecting**). Finally, the recommendations address the persistent financing gap by advocating for the institutionalization of dedicated financial mechanisms for the Global South, such as the

Global Fund on AI Capacity Building or the revival of the **Digital Solidarity Fund**, ensuring predictable resource mobilization.

I. Introduction and Foundational Principles

Reaffirmation and Contextualization of the WSIS Vision

The current Zero Draft of the WSIS+20 outcome document appropriately reaffirms the commitment to establishing a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society" while upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This

commitment is strongly complemented by the Global Digital Compact (GDC), which outlines a shared goal for an "inclusive, open, sustainable, fair, safe and secure digital future for all".

To operationalize this vision in a manner meaningful to the Global South, the mandate must explicitly anchor the digital agenda in the full spectrum of international human rights law, notably incorporating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Furthermore, the responsibility of the private sector in this context must be reinforced through explicit adherence to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). This comprehensive approach ensures that digital policy supports economic and social rights, rather than focusing solely on civil and political rights.

The proliferation of high-level global frameworks, including the WSIS outcomes, the GDC, the Pact for the Future, and the African Union (AU) Continental AI Strategy , risks implementation fragmentation. For implementation to be effective and regionally relevant, the Zero Draft should recognize this risk and mandate specific synergy. The AU Continental AI Strategy offers crucial regional depth, emphasizing unified national approaches, policy harmonization, and data governance. It is necessary to mandate a joint implementation roadmap between the WSIS Action Lines and the GDC objectives, prioritizing the integration of continental strategies like the AU framework for immediate regional action.

Defining Digital Sovereignty and Development-Centred Transformation

African nations must approach AI deployment based on a rigorous assessment of their domestic strategic priorities, infrastructural strengths, and unique political and socioeconomic contexts. Policy development must actively resist what has been termed "regulatory annexation," which involves the uncritical importation of foreign technological standards and legal frameworks that may fail to resonate with local realities. Embedding African norms and communitarian ethos is essential for ensuring that digital governance is culturally sustainable.

Digital Sovereignty, in this context, extends beyond simple national control over regulatory frameworks. It serves as a necessary policy defense against **digital colonialism** —a structural process where the concentration of AI development in the Global North leads to systemic data extraction and embedded bias. The consequence of this concentration is that developing nations are treated primarily as a source of raw data (a "data mine") rather than as co-creators and beneficiaries of the resulting technologies. Sovereignty requires policy that ensures African data assets are protected by appropriate legal and licensing frameworks, such as the Noodl License in Kenya, which respects communal rights and prevents exploitation. The explicit integration of language promoting the prioritization of African-led LLMs, such as South Africa's InkubaLM, and other open-source models like those championed by Masakhane, is necessary to build technological resilience and foster creation over consumption.

II. Information and Communications Technologies for Development (ICT4D)

Addressing the Multidimensional Digital Divide

The scale of the digital divide remains a significant impediment to achieving the WSIS vision. Data indicates a critical disparity: internet usage in high-income countries (93%) is approximately three-and-a-half times higher than in low-income countries (26.5%). Furthermore, the divide manifests acutely within countries, where urban internet access (estimated at nearly 83%) severely outpaces rural access (less than 50%).

These gaps are structural, compounded by issues of affordability, lack of relevant local content, and deficits in digital skills. Simple metrics focused on network coverage alone are therefore inadequate. The core operational concept for tracking progress must shift from basic connectivity to

Universal Meaningful Connectivity (UMC). UMC requires that digital experiences be not only accessible but safe, satisfying, productive, and affordable. This unified approach intrinsically links investments in infrastructure (WSIS Action Line C2) with capacity building (C4) and cultural relevance (C8). Measurement efforts must explicitly adopt UMC as the primary metric, ensuring all indicators are disaggregated by linguistic representation and socioeconomic status to effectively monitor and tackle the "usage gap".

Promoting Technological Equity and Infrastructure Resilience

ICT4D must prioritize investments that sustain locally-driven digital ecosystems, especially in developing countries facing funding, technical, and institutional constraints. This means actively supporting the development of

Digital Public Goods (DPG)—open-source software, open data, open AI models, and open standards—as these are crucial drivers of inclusive digital transformation.

A prerequisite for resilient digital transformation is addressing the fundamental concentration of global resources. Connectivity is reliant on foundational resources such as the radio frequency spectrum and satellite orbits. The proliferation of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) broadband constellations, often dominated by companies domiciled in the Global North, creates power asymmetries that directly impact access and control in the Global South. The WSIS+20 outcome must explicitly affirm the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) principle of equitable access to these essential orbital and spectrum resources for developing countries. Language should be included to ensure that the deployment of digital infrastructure promotes equitable spectrum and orbit access, aligning this technical governance issue directly with ICT4D objectives.

III. Bridging Digital Divides and Addressing the Multilingual Crisis

The Multilingual Divide as a Safety and Performance Crisis

The global AI ecosystem suffers from a profound **Multilingual Divide**. Current Large Language Models (LLMs) are overwhelmingly trained and optimized for a handful of globally dominant languages, leaving thousands of languages underrepresented due to resource scarcity, low data discoverability, and socio-economic factors.

This linguistic disparity is a crisis of safety and performance. Models trained on culturally and linguistically skewed data often underperform when used in low-resource languages, demonstrating Western-centric biases and, critically, exhibiting higher rates of generating harmful or irrelevant content for languages such as Hausa, Igbo, and Urdu. This structural deficiency directly undermines the WSIS goal of a people-centered Information Society.

The sheer computational and financial cost associated with training massive LLMs further exacerbates this divide, trapping developing nations in a "low-resource double-bind". A more practical and equitable solution lies in encouraging the development of

Small Language Models (SLMs). SLMs are resource-efficient, requiring far less computational power and running efficiently on affordable hardware, making them inherently more scalable for the Global South. SLMs, often distilled from larger models or fine-tuned on targeted datasets, offer a promising, low-energy path to equitable language capability for indigenous communities. Policy must therefore actively encourage investment and technology transfer towards developing and distributing open-source SLMs and foundational models customized for local needs.

Countering Cultural Erasure and Epistemic Injustice

The underrepresentation of African languages, epistemologies, and indigenous knowledge systems in global training datasets leads to systemic biases and risks cultural erasure. Initiatives like Masakhane, Lelapa AI in South Africa, and Digital Umuganda in Rwanda actively seek to reverse this trend by creating African-owned, culturally relevant datasets.

For the WSIS+20 outcome document to uphold the importance of multilingualism and linguistic diversity , policy must transition beyond mere calls for digitization. It must affirm the principles of

Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS), granting indigenous peoples autonomy and control over their data within AI development contexts. This approach is crucial because Indigenous Peoples often reside in vulnerable regions and their collective knowledge is easily exploited. The principle mandates supporting the participatory inclusion of local and indigenous communities in all phases of AI development, ensuring that African ways of knowing are integrated into technological systems rather than erased by them.

IV. Data Governance and the Crisis of the AI Data Commons

Digital Sovereignty as a Data Protection Imperative

Responsible, equitable, and interoperable data governance is foundational to fostering development, protecting human rights, and enabling economic growth. The AU Data Policy Framework aims to establish a continental blueprint for managing personal, non-personal, industrial, and public data, seeking regulatory harmonization across Africa.

The increasing reliance on foreign-owned cloud infrastructure for data storage and processing, exemplified by the proliferation of hyperscale data centers , creates profound vulnerabilities to data exploitation, reinforcing digital colonialism.

Furthermore, the integrity of the AI data ecosystem itself faces a crisis. Audits of AI training corpora reveal a "rapid crescendo of data restrictions" on the open web, driven by content creators limiting AI use via outdated mechanisms like the Robots Exclusion Protocol (REP), first introduced in 1995. This "Consent Crisis" has led to significant restrictions (Terms of Service restrictions now affect up to 45% of critical corpus tokens), disproportionately impacting open science, academic research, and smaller, Global South-based AI developers. The decline of the open data commons results directly from the inadequacy of existing web protocols to govern sophisticated AI training use cases. A critical intervention is required to standardize consent protocols that are machine-readable and specifically address AI training, replacing the antiquated REP with modern governance mechanisms.

Operationalizing Provenance by Design and Communal Consent

The perpetuation of biases and harms against vulnerable groups stems directly from the reliance on low-quality, limited, and nonrepresentative data. Addressing this requires mechanisms that transcend traditional individual privacy rights, moving towards the recognition of collective data rights.

Provenance by Design is a crucial approach that mandates tracking and documenting data sources, their ethical context, and ownership throughout the AI lifecycle. This technical framework is essential for enforcing legal and ethical standards and countering exploitative extraction. Given that African knowledge systems and cultural artifacts often constitute shared or communal assets, the Western-centric model of GDPR-style individual consent is structurally insufficient. Policy should mandate a model rooted in the

Ubuntu philosophy ("Humanity towards others"), which prioritizes collective well-being and demands demonstrable **Communal Consent** and **Equitable Benefit-Sharing** mechanisms when utilizing shared cultural heritage or indigenous knowledge. This provides a concrete, culturally relevant model for data justice, countering digital colonialism. The Zero Draft must propose the integration of this

Provenance by Design framework, requiring mandatory provenance audits for high-risk datasets and models, aligning with African ethical philosophies and legal mechanisms such as the Noodl License.

V. Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs

Mandating Human Rights Due Diligence and Accountability

Confidence and security in ICTs (WSIS Action Line C5) cannot be achieved through voluntary adherence to principles; they require enforceable, rights-based governance. The global proliferation of sophisticated surveillance technologies, including spyware, facial recognition, and biometric systems, often provided by private firms (dual-use technology), has been implicated in human rights violations, including in countries like Uganda and Zimbabwe. This reality necessitates binding Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) obligations on corporations involved in the development and distribution of these tools.

The urgency of this threat requires stronger action than just due diligence. Certain technologies, particularly those used for mass surveillance or remote real-time biometric recognition in public spaces, may be fundamentally incompatible with international human rights law. Given the high risk of unregulated deployment by state actors in the Global South , the WSIS+20 outcome should endorse the position that technologies deemed impossible to operate in compliance with human rights law, or those posing undue risks, must be prohibited. This aligns with calls from UN human rights bodies for a moratorium on such technologies. The Zero Draft should commit Member States to refrain from deploying mass surveillance, spyware, and biometric systems that violate international human rights law.

Ensuring Digital Resilience and Sovereign Infrastructure

Sovereign AI requires sovereign, resilient infrastructure. Although Africa has over 140 operational data centers, concentrated in regional hubs like Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria , reliance on foreign cloud infrastructure remains a vulnerability. The African Digital Compact (ADC) provides a cooperative vision for an "open, free and safe digital sphere" , but its success depends on robust, locally controlled physical infrastructure.

High-density hyperscale data centers often pose issues related to single points of failure, high energy consumption, and environmental impact. Resilience, particularly in the Global South where power shortages are common, must prioritize decentralized, sustainable, and local solutions. The large-scale investment in renewable energy-powered infrastructure, such as Kenya's geothermal data center campus, offers a critical model for mitigating power instability and environmental impact, thereby strategically linking security (C5) with E-Environment objectives (C7). Investment in decentralized, green-powered edge computing and regional data hubs is essential to enhance resilience, reduce environmental harm, and ensure data generated in Africa remains under African control.

VI. Human Rights and Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society

Operationalizing the FATER Framework and Challenging Algorithmic Laundering

Ethical governance requires a foundation of accountability, transparency, and explainability, grounded in core human rights principles such as privacy, non-discrimination, and dignity. The ongoing transition in digital rights discourse is from the principles of

FATE (Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, Ethics) to **FATER (incorporating Rights-respecting)**, signaling the necessity for enforceable legal obligations over voluntary adherence.

The reliance on AI systems in sensitive sectors poses serious risks, as illustrated by the South African Mavundla case, where an LLM provided unreliable legal analysis, demonstrating the risk of using AI without adequate digital competence. A deeper systemic problem is

algorithmic laundering, whereby discriminatory decisions are masked as objective outputs of technology. The "Talent Trek" case study demonstrated how a community challenged such a system and, through collective governance, realized

doubled production output while maintaining ethical standards. This powerfully demonstrates that accountability does not constrain innovation; rather, FATER is a critical asset for risk mitigation and organizational performance. The Zero Draft must mandate the integration of FATER principles, specifically requiring mechanisms to detect and redress algorithmic laundering and ensure collective governance rights for affected communities.

Protecting Vulnerable Groups: Children and Gender Equity

Children and youth are critical stakeholders, representing approximately 30% of global internet users. AI systems pose acute psychological, developmental, and exploitation risks to minors. Furthermore, persistent gender digital divides are exacerbated by Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TfGBV), while women remain underrepresented in digital access (65% of women use the Internet versus 70% of men).

To ensure the rights of the child are protected—as mandated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the best interests of the child principle —and to achieve genuine gender mainstreaming , specific mandatory mechanisms are essential. The Zero Draft must mandate and enforce compulsory

Child Impact Assessments (CIAs) and **Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs)** for all high-risk AI systems deployed in public services or targeting vulnerable populations. These mandatory assessments shift the regulatory focus from reactive mitigation to proactive, rights-embedded design *before* technology deployment.

VII. Artificial Intelligence

Enhancing Equitable AI Governance and Compute Infrastructure

The Global South faces the "low-resource double-bind," where simultaneous scarcity of data and compute resources amplifies challenges for local AI progress. Africa contributes only about 3% of global AI talent. AI governance must therefore prioritize facilitating equitable access to the

computational resources necessary for innovation. The development of Africa's first AI Factory (Cassava Technologies/Nvidia) in South Africa, slated for continental expansion, is a necessary step towards building this foundational capacity.

The international community has established the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance as crucial platforms for scientific understanding and policy discussion. For these institutions to benefit the Global South effectively, the Zero Draft must ensure two core conditions: First,

equitable geographic representation in all leadership roles and expert membership, ensuring policymakers and researchers from developing countries lead the agenda. Second, the provision of

dedicated capacity building resources, including fellowships, research grants, and logistical support, is vital to overcome financial and technical barriers to meaningful participation.

Promoting Open Science, FOSS, and Technology Transfer

The widespread adoption of **Free and Open Source Software (FOSS)** and Open Science principles is a powerful lever for digital empowerment in the Global South, offering an affordable alternative to costly proprietary software and fostering local skill development.

However, the promotion of open models must be carefully balanced against the threat of intellectual property (IP) and copyright exploitation. Commercial AI systems frequently ingest content and data without attribution or equitable compensation. The Zero Draft must therefore emphasize technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, actively promoting open standards and FOSS, while simultaneously integrating language that requires appropriate protection of IP rights and copyright against unauthorized, exploitative ingestion by commercial AI systems.

VIII. Financial Mechanisms

The Persistent Failure of Digital Financing

Despite the critical role of ICTs in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, financing for digital equity remains fragmented, under-resourced, and poorly coordinated. Funding gaps persist across infrastructure, skills development, and AI readiness in developing countries. The history of the WSIS process, notably the failure of the 2003 UN Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) to establish a dedicated fund, highlights a persistent systemic deficit in digital financing architecture. This deficit prevents the Global South from making the necessary scale of investment.

The urgency of closing the digital and AI divide necessitates a fundamental shift away from relying solely on voluntary contributions or fragmented private investment. The scale and cost of equitable AI development require a mandated, innovative approach. The Global South has historically championed such mechanisms, such as the original **Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF)** proposal, which, though acknowledged in the Tunis Agenda, was never fully institutionalized.

The need now is for a dedicated, institutionalized financial mechanism that employs blended financing models (e.g., public-private partnerships, reforms to Universal Service Funds) and coordinates regional strategies. The Zero Draft must call for the establishment of a dedicated mechanism, such as the

Global Fund on AI Capacity Building (as discussed in the GDC) or the institutionalization of the DSF, embedded within the UN framework, to ensure predictable funding for equitable compute access, capacity building, and African-led AI research.

IX. Monitoring and Measurement

Evolving Metrics for Equitable Digital Development

Monitoring progress must evolve beyond simple access statistics to capture actual digital engagement, capability, and the equitable distribution of benefits. Global frameworks, such as the GDC, already call for disaggregated data collection—by income, sex, age, language, and geographic location—to accurately map and address learning and access gaps.

The necessity is to adopt a unified methodology for measuring **Universal Meaningful Connectivity (UMC)**, going beyond technical performance to assess affordability, linguistic relevance, and digital literacy. Furthermore, monitoring must extend to capturing failures in ethical governance and security (C10/C5). This requires the development of human-centric metrics (FATER principles) that measure

algorithmic harm (e.g., assessing bias against vulnerable groups) and evaluate the readiness and effectiveness of national AI and data governance frameworks, particularly where regional fragmentation persists (as indicated by the ITU's G5 benchmark showing SIDS and LLDCs often fall into "limited" tiers).

X. WSIS+20 Zero Draft Text Proposals (Thematic Table)

The following proposals are submitted for inclusion in the WSIS+20 Zero Draft. The proposals are designed to incorporate the principles of FATER, Digital Sovereignty, and Universal Meaningful Connectivity, explicitly addressing the structural challenges and developmental imperatives identified across the Global South. Proposed text for *amendment* is marked with **bold additions**, while proposals for *new* paragraphs are presented in full.

Table of Proposed WSIS +20 Zero Draft Textual Inputs

Theme	**Paragraph / Location**	**Text Proposal (Addition or Amendment)**	**Supporting Reference(s)**
Information and communications	Para 17 (Amendment)	We are convinced that information and communications technologies have demonstrated great potential to contribute	

Theme	Paragraph / Location	Text Proposal (Addition or Amendment)	Supporting Reference(s)
technologies for development		to advancing human welfare and prosperity and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Their rapidly increasing capabilities and growing pervasiveness have enabled tremendous growth in the range of applications for development deployed by governments, the private sector and other stakeholders, creating new opportunities to improve productivity, prosperity and quality of life, **provided that a development-centered digital transformation is implemented, prioritizing technological resilience, local innovation, and addressing the root causes of digital dependency.**	
Information and communications technologies for development	New Para 18 *bis* (Following Para 18)	We emphasize the urgent need for a balanced approach to **safeguarding data rights and public interest**, including **appropriate protection of intellectual property rights and copyright against unauthorized ingestion by commercial AI systems** to prevent exploitative data extraction and violation of community intellectual assets.	
Bridging digital divides	Para 12 (Amendment)	We are concerned that there remain critical digital divides between and within countries in access to and use of digital technologies. These constrain the achievement of WSIS goals, restrict the achievement of economic and social development, threaten to increase social and economic inequalities and may be exacerbated by new technological developments. Bridging them requires measures concerned not just with connectivity but with **Universal Meaningful Connectivity (UMC)**, 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.	

Theme	Paragraph / Location	Text Proposal (Addition or Amendment)	Supporting Reference(s)
Bridging digital divides	Para 30 (Amendment)	We reiterate the need for the **prioritization, creation, and funding of culturally relevant local content** and services in a variety of languages and formats that are accessible to all people and recognise the vital importance of multilingualism to ensure the linguistic, cultural and historical diversity of all nations. We commend the work that has been done since the World Summit to extend the multilingual nature of the Internet, **including supporting resource-efficient tools such as Small Language Models (SLMs) and open-source corpora for low-resource languages,** and urge all stakeholders to ensure that the Internet and digital services become fully accessible to all, including Indigenous Peoples and speakers of minority languages.	
Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs	Para 62 (Amendment)	We reaffirm that strengthening confidence and security in the use of information and communications technologies is a crucial driver for innovation and sustainable development. We reaffirm that building confidence and security in the use of information and communications technologies should be consistent with human rights, **and stress the imperative for all stakeholders to implement mandatory Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) across the entire technology lifecycle, including the supply chain of dual-use technologies.**	
Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs	New Para 89 *bis* (Following Para 89)	We call upon all Member States and other stakeholders to refrain from or cease the use of new and emerging technologies, **including biometric surveillance systems, spyware, and predictive policing systems**, that are fundamentally impossible to operate in compliance with international human rights law or that pose undue risks to the enjoyment of	

Theme	Paragraph / Location	Text Proposal (Addition or Amendment)	Supporting Reference(s)
		human rights, **and ensure stringent accountability for state and non-state actors engaged in arbitrary or unlawful surveillance.**	
Financial mechanisms	Para 74 (Amendment)	We note that the Sevilla Commitment... recognised that closing the infrastructure gap in critical sectors... will greatly improve access to essential services... 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, to support countries in their design of digital infrastructure, its financing models and impact assessment. **We further call for the establishment and institutionalization of a dedicated, sustainable financing mechanism, such as a Global Fund on AI Capacity Building (GDC Para 63) or the Digital Solidarity Fund, to sustainably fund equitable compute access, capacity building, and African-led AI research.**	
Human rights and ethical dimensions of the Information Society	Para 81 (Amendment)	We commit to establish appropriate safeguards to prevent and address any adverse impact on human rights arising from the use of digital and emerging technologies and protect individuals against violations and abuses of their human rights in the digital space, including through human rights due diligence and establishing effective oversight and remedy mechanisms. **This must be anchored in the FATER (Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, Ethics, and Rights-respecting) framework, explicitly mandating mandatory Child Impact Assessments (CIAs) and Gender Impact**	

Theme	Paragraph / Location	Text Proposal (Addition or Amendment)	Supporting Reference(s)
		Assessments (GIAs) for high-risk AI systems.	
Human rights and ethical dimensions of the Information Society	New Para 87 *bis* (Following Para 87)	We stress the importance of moving beyond individual privacy rights to recognize and protect **collective rights and communal data assets**, ensuring that communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples, have demonstrable autonomy and equitable benefit-sharing from the utilization of their knowledge systems in AI training, thus preventing **algorithmic laundering** and reinforcing human dignity.	
Data governance	New Para 94 *bis* (Following Para 94)	We call for global action to counteract data extractivism and promote **Digital Sovereignty**, specifically through **Provenance by Design** standards. These standards must require verifiable documentation of data source, ethical context, and **Communal Consent** for datasets derived from shared knowledge or cultural heritage, aligning with national and regional data policy frameworks, including the African Union Data Policy Framework.	
Artificial intelligence	Para 97 (Amendment)	We note the significant developments that have taken place in the Information Society with the emergence in the public sphere of artificial intelligence... and also acknowledge concerns about the potential negative impacts on employment, labour, the environment, human rights and information integrity. **We emphasize the urgent need to close the structural Multilingual Divide in AI development, promoting distributed and open-source models, training on locally sourced, culturally-relevant corpora, and ensuring equitable access to high-performance compute infrastructure for developing countries.**	
Monitoring and measurement	Para 69 (Amendment)	We call on all stakeholders to promote digital literacy and awareness-raising	

Theme	Paragraph / Location	Text Proposal (Addition or Amendment)	Supporting Reference(s)
		efforts to empower individuals, especially those in vulnerable situations, to understand and exercise their data protection and privacy rights... **We recognize the urgent need to move beyond simple access metrics by adopting a unified methodology for measuring Universal Meaningful Connectivity (UMC) and digital participation, disaggregated by linguistic representation, socioeconomic status, and digital literacy level, enabling the monitoring of algorithmic harm and digital equity.**	
Process Recommendation	New Para on WSIS+20 Follow-up	We request the Secretary General and Co-Facilitators to ensure the follow-up implementation of WSIS+20 and the GDC includes **equitable geographic representation** in all subsidiary bodies, particularly the CSTD Working Group on Data Governance and the UN AI institutions, and mandate the provision of **dedicated financial resources for Global South stakeholder travel, translation, and participation logistics** to overcome systemic barriers to meaningful engagement.	

Conclusion and Recommendations for the Future of Global Digital Cooperation

The WSIS+20 review must serve as a pivot point for global digital cooperation, moving decisively away from fragmented, voluntary commitments toward legally and financially robust frameworks that prioritize the development objectives and human rights of the Global South. The continued reliance on outdated technical standards, the persistent failure to fund digital equity adequately, and the structural inequities embedded in the AI data ecosystem represent clear threats to the WSIS vision of an inclusive Information Society.

The proposals submitted, rooted in African and Global South expertise, emphasize that technological progress must be judged by its social and cultural compatibility, its adherence to the FATER framework, and its capacity to foster genuine **Digital Sovereignty**. By adopting

these strong textual changes, the WSIS+20 outcome document can effectively align with the AU Continental AI Strategy and the Global Digital Compact, ensuring that digital cooperation translates into predictable action, equitable resource distribution, and tangible benefits for developing nations.

Key Final Recommendations to Shape the Zero Draft:

1. **Institutionalize Digital Financing:** Mandate the immediate establishment and sustainable funding of a dedicated financial mechanism, such as the Digital Solidarity Fund or the Global Fund on AI Capacity Building, to ensure predictable resource mobilization for critical infrastructure and capacity development in the Global South.
2. **Enforce Rights-Anchored Accountability (FATER):** Require Member States to implement and enforce the **FATER** framework, specifically mandating **Child Impact Assessments** and **Gender Impact Assessments** for all high-risk AI systems to proactively mitigate algorithmic bias and protect vulnerable populations.
3. **Secure Data Sovereignty through Provenance:** Adopt **Provenance by Design** standards, necessitating verifiable documentation of data source, ethical context, and **Communal Consent** for datasets derived from collective knowledge, directly addressing data extractivism and intellectual property threats.
4. **Close the Multilingual/Compute Divide:** Prioritize investment in and technology transfer towards resource-efficient, open-source **Small Language Models (SLMs)** and foundational AI models trained on diverse, locally sourced corpora, coupled with equitable access to high-performance compute infrastructure across Africa.
5. **Mandate Meaningful Participation:** Require the UN Secretariat to provide dedicated funding and logistical support for Global South stakeholder travel, translation, and participation in all digital governance fora, ensuring that the principle of multistakeholderism translates into genuine, influential co-creation.

Best regards,

‘Kayode Akanni

Executive Director,

Knowledge House