



Oxfam Written Inputs to WSIS+20 Zero Draft

October 2025

Introduction

As a global organisation that fights inequality to end poverty and injustice, Oxfam welcomes the Zero Draft's explicit commitment to "a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society" (para. 1) anchored in international law, including international human rights law (paras. 9 and 77-93) and reference to key international standards like the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (para 81). We also commend the strong commitment to "an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space" (para. 10), including continued commitment to "bridging digital divides" (paras. 12, 13 and 21-32) with acknowledgment of the needs of specific rights-holders such as all women, children, adolescents and young people, the elderly, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and marginalised communities (para. 14) - although further efforts are needed to align the text with equality and non-discrimination principles (see table below). We note with enthusiasm the decision to make the Internet Governance Forum a permanent forum of the United Nations (para. 115), recognising its ecosystem of intersessional work and National and Regional Initiatives, and requesting the Secretary-General to develop proposals for future funding. Likewise, we

support the call on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to “play a part in the facilitation and assessment” of all Action Lines (para. 130) - provided this is accompanied by concrete proposals for appropriate strategies and adequate resourcing to guarantee meaningful multistakeholder participation and connection between different Internet and digital policy processes such as the implementation of the Global Digital Compact and the continuation of WSIS.

Oxfam remains committed to participating in the ongoing evolution of the WSIS+20 review process and subsequent initiatives, and submits the following language proposals for the Zero Draft in line with our own vision, mission and policies.

Table with language proposals

Current text	Proposed text	Explanation
13. We reaffirm that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and their full, equal and meaningful participation in the digital space, are essential to close the gender digital divide and advance sustainable development. Our cooperation will empower all women and girls, encourage leadership of women, mainstream a gender perspective and counter and eliminate all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology.	13. We reaffirm that gender equality and the empowerment of all women, girls and people of diverse SOGIESC , and their full, equal and meaningful participation in the digital space, are essential to close the gender digital divide and advance sustainable development. Our cooperation will empower all women and girls, encourage leadership of women, mainstream a gender perspective and counter and eliminate all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology.	We would argue for a more explicit statement that includes “all genders and sexual orientations” or something to that effect, as “women and girls” ends up often being a proxy for a lot of power-down gender groups. This is addressed in our response to the elements paper, available here .
27. We are particularly concerned that digital divides between and within regions and countries, and within societies, and the rapid pace of development of digital technologies,	27. We are particularly concerned that digital divides between and within regions and countries, and within societies, and the rapid pace of development of digital technologies, may exacerbate economic and social	We welcome the focus put on digital divides and recommend being more explicit about taking a human rights and inequality informed approach to technology that can help address such

may exacerbate economic and social inequalities.	inequalities. We acknowledge the importance of taking a human rights and inequality informed approach to continue to address and mitigate these digital divides.	divides and the underlying structural barriers driving digital inequality.
29. We are committed to achieving entry-level broadband subscription costs that are accessible to the widest section of the population.	29. We are committed to providing a baseline amount of free internet access to ensure basic connectivity for and implement tiered pricing structures where essential internet services are affordable.	We see no reason why the lowest-income populations should pay for access at all. These are communities surviving on a bare minimum daily income, making difficult choices every days about how to pay for essential needs for themselves and their families. If internet access is key to unlocking opportunities and lifting these communities out of poverty, paying for internet access cannot become yet another potential sacrifice made in favor of food, shelter, education or health care.
40. We note that digital technologies have had significant impacts on employment, including changes in workplace environments and training requirements, opportunities for more flexible working and the emergence of digital labour platforms, and that automation, robotics and artificial intelligence are expected to have further substantial impacts on employment opportunities, including the displacement of some professional, clerical and manual types of work.	40(b). We also acknowledge concerns about the incursion of digital technologies into existing or emerging labour markets to maximise productivity and profit, often at the expense of workers in the most vulnerable or marginalised situations.	The framing of this seems to overlook issues at the intersection of technology and labour rights. The case of the platform economy and the rise of so-called gig work provide many examples of how the incursion of digital technologies into existing or emerging labour markets often serves as a way of facilitating or justifying the continued or further exploitation of already vulnerable workers, thus representing a potential violation of these workers' right to safe and fair

		<p>working conditions and social protection. In addition, the rise of automated or AI-based workplace management tools have been shown to allow employers to surveil, control and penalise workers with greater ease and fewer avenues for redress, replicating patterns of bias against groups who are already at a disproportionate risk of discrimination in the workplace, including racialised and gendered minorities, people experiencing poverty, and people with disability. We would argue for an additional point in this section addressing these concerns.</p>
<p>69. We recognise the need to build digital literacy in order to empower individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to identify reliable information that will help them to access opportunities and improve their quality of life, and to protect themselves against misinformation and abuse. We call on all stakeholders to promote digital literacy and awareness-raising efforts to empower individuals, especially those in vulnerable situations, to understand and exercise their data protection and privacy rights, make informed choices about their personal</p>	<p>69. We recognise the need to build media, information and digital literacy in order to empower individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to identify reliable information that will help them to access opportunities and improve their quality of life, and to protect themselves against misinformation and abuse. We call on all stakeholders to promote media, information and digital literacy and awareness-raising efforts to empower individuals, especially those in vulnerable situations, to understand and exercise their data protection and privacy rights, make informed choices about their</p>	<p>In line with existing commitments under the Global Digital Compact, we recommend referring to “media, information and digital literacy” as encompassing the skills and knowledge that people need to safely and critically interact with content online and digital technologies.</p>

data and take appropriate steps to safeguard their online security and privacy.	personal data and take appropriate steps to safeguard their online security and privacy.	
72. We recognise that harnessing ICTs for development and bridging digital divides will require further sustained investment in infrastructure and services, capacity-building, promotion of joint research and development and transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, with public as well as private investment.	72. We recognise that harnessing ICTs for development and bridging digital divides will require further sustained investment in infrastructure and services, capacity-building, promotion of joint research, engagement with civil society and affected communities , and development and transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, with public as well as private investment.	The indispensable role of civil society in addressing digital divides for marginalised communities should be emphasised and merits additional technical and financial support.
84. We acknowledge the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' ongoing efforts to provide, through an advisory service on human rights in the digital space, upon request and within existing mandate and with voluntary resources, expert advice and practical guidance on human rights and technology issues.	84. We acknowledge the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' ongoing efforts to provide, through an advisory service on human rights in the digital space, upon request and within existing mandate and with voluntary resources , expert advice and practical guidance on human rights and technology issues.	We welcome this acknowledgement but note that OHCHR's additional capacities may require dedicated resources and the document should not preclude this, especially in light of the call included in para. 130.
88. We stress the importance for all Member States, and stakeholders as appropriate, to promote universal, free, open, interoperable, safe, reliable and secure use of and access to the Internet by facilitating international cooperation aimed at the development of media and information and communications facilities in all countries, by respecting	88. We stress the importance for all Member States, and stakeholders as appropriate, to promote universal, free, open, interoperable, safe, reliable and secure use of and access to the Internet by facilitating international cooperation aimed at the development of media and information and communications facilities in all countries, by respecting and protecting human rights and by refraining from undue restrictions,	In light of recent and ongoing humanitarian crises, moments of political tension and war in numerous countries where a lack of safe access to digital tools, internet shutdowns, and mis- and disinformation campaigns online have been weaponised against civilians, we strongly suggest that the document emphasises that blanket shutdowns should never be imposed,

and protecting human rights and by refraining from undue restrictions, such as Internet shutdowns, arbitrary or unlawful surveillance or online censorship.	such as Internet shutdowns, arbitrary or unlawful surveillance or online censorship. Blanket shutdowns in particular inherently impose unacceptable consequences and should never be imposed.	in line with recommendations included in the Report of the Office of the United National High Commissioner for Human Rights 50/55.
92. We stress the importance of ensuring that women and girls can participate in and contribute to society at large on equal terms and without discrimination, particularly in the realms of economic and political participation, and reaffirm that the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in the digital age is critical to achieving gender equality and women empowerment, sustainable development, peace and democracy. We commit to enhance and protect women's and girls' rights online and address the problems caused by inequality, discrimination and gender-based violence.	92. We stress the importance of ensuring that women, girls and people of diverse SOGIESC can participate in and contribute to society at large on equal terms and without discrimination, particularly in the realms of economic and political participation, and reaffirm that the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, girls and people of diverse SOGIESC in the digital age is critical to achieving gender equality and women empowerment, sustainable development, peace and democracy. We commit to enhance and protect women's, girls' and gender and sexual minorities' rights online and address the problems caused by inequality, discrimination and gender-based violence.	We would argue for a more inclusive statement that encompasses "women, girls and people of diverse SOGIESC" to avoid an implicit binary treatment of gender and rendering invisible the struggles of marginalised groups throughout the world who are identified as gender non-conforming or of diverse sexual orientation (commonly referred to in the international development community as SOGIESC).
97. We note the significant developments that have taken place in the Information Society with the emergence in the public sphere of artificial intelligence, which significantly advances the pace and scale with which artificial intelligence is expected to have an impact on many aspects of human societies, and also acknowledge	97(b). We stress the importance for all Member States, and other stakeholders as appropriate, to prevent harm to individuals caused by artificial intelligence systems and to refrain from or cease the use of artificial intelligence applications that are impossible to operate in compliance with international human rights law or that pose undue risks to the enjoyment of human rights, unless and	We would argue for an additional point in this section in line with General Assembly resolutions 78/213 of 19 December 2023 on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of digital technologies.

concerns about the potential negative impacts on employment, labour, the environment, human rights and information integrity.	until the adequate safeguards to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms are in place.	
105. We recognise the need to promote greater participation and engagement in Internet governance discussions of Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders from all countries. Measures are needed to ensure 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.	105. We recognise the need to promote greater participation and engagement in Internet governance discussions of Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders from all countries. Measures are needed to ensure 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. To this end, we reaffirm the principles for Internet governance and digital policy processes set out in the NETmundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement.	We recommend including an explicit reference to the NETmundial+10 Multistakeholder Statement which provides concrete suggestions for promoting greater participation and engagement in Internet governance discussions. This could also be included in the later section on 'The development of the WSIS framework' and particularly in paras. 120 and/or 121.