



UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies' Written Input to the Zero Draft of the WSIS+20 Outcome Document

We congratulate the Co-Facilitators for circulating the Zero Draft.

The Zero Draft is a balanced text, and the wide breadth of consultations with Member States and stakeholders testifies to the commitment of the Co-Facilitators to an open and transparent process.

We praise the decision to build on previous WSIS milestones and on the Global Digital Compact in areas such as Internet governance, human rights, online safety, creating enabling environments, and sustainability.

The language on upholding the multistakeholder model is appropriate. The efforts to extend the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum and strengthen its secretariat support are important for a successful outcome.

Below are a few suggestions from our Office on how the WSIS+20 Review outcome text could be strengthened further. These will focus on substantive and architectural issues, including follow-ups:

Substantive issues

- **Human rights:** The *Human rights and ethical dimensions of the Information Society* section borrows extensively from the GDC. The language on human rights is ambitious and welcome. However, it should not be used to water down the commitments of the GDC which cross-referenced in the segment (these include, but are not limited to GDC para 8 (c) and (d), 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 47).
- **Artificial intelligence:** The scope of the WSIS+20 Zero Draft is comprehensive in its consideration of important developments in the technology landscape. By introducing sections on data governance and artificial intelligence, the text departs from the 'technology-neutral' approach of the WSIS.

The new proposals at paras 100 and 101 must be grounded in the Global Digital Compact. They should not duplicate or preempt the follow-up to the Secretary-General's Report on Voluntary Innovative Financing Options on AI Capacity-Building, requested by Member States at para. 63 of the GDC and delivered on 2 July 2025 (A/79/966).

Follow-ups:

- **Para 141:** the request to "strengthen the agility, efficiency and effectiveness of UNGIS [...]" including by expanding its membership" is timely and welcome.

The UN must have structures that are appropriate to tackle both the internal and external challenges. The paragraph could be further elaborated by calling for the endowment of UNGIS with a permanent secretariat, within existing resources.

Both actions could be accomplished by a request to the Secretary-General to establish UNGIS within the CEB (as occurred in the Tunis Agenda, endorsed by the General Assembly).

The text could be rephrased as follows:

"We request the UN Secretary-General to strengthen the agility, efficiency and effectiveness of UNGIS [del] as the United Nations system's inter-agency stewardship mechanism for advancing policy coherence and programme coordination on digital matters, including by arranging for a permanent secretariat within existing resources and expanding its membership with further United Nations entities [...]"



- **Para 142:** The request to UNGIS to “develop a joint implementation road map, to be presented to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development at its twenty-ninth session in 2026, to integrate the Global Digital Compact commitments into the World Summit architecture” is redundant and could be counterproductive to the objective of avoiding duplication between the GDC and WSIS.

First, UNGIS has already produced a [detailed mapping](#) of how GDC commitments align with WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs. The document formed the basis of the subsequent Annex to the ‘GDC Implementation Map’ delivered by the Working Group on Digital Technologies (within the Pact for the Future Steering Committee).

This GDC Implementation map is annexed to the SG’s annual progress report on the regional and international implementation of the WSIS, [implementation map](#) released by the CSTD pursuant to paragraph 71 GDC on 31 July 2025. By mapping out existing UN projects and WSIS mechanisms relative to each GDC paragraph, the GDC implementation map greatly advanced the objective of ‘aligning’ both agendas and bringing clarity to their interrelation.

Second, the proposal of integrating the GDC commitments into the WSIS architecture may challenge the integrity of the Pact. Several GDC actions and milestones have been assigned or taken up by UN entities with accountability mechanisms outside of the WSIS architecture.

Rather than achieve clarity on the relationship between the two agendas, the proposal for this third ‘mapping’ could result in more confusion.

The WSIS+20 outcome document could rather encourage all UNGIS entities to further develop the document annexed to the GDC implementation map by adding individual and detailed milestones until 2027. Many UN entities have already done this exercise through strategic planning or by explicitly identifying how they contribute to the delivery of GDC and WSIS Action Lines.

If the paragraph is to be retained, we suggest deleting the second sentence and rephrasing the first as follows:

*“We note with appreciation the **WSIS-GDC-SDGs** matrix prepared by the United Nations Group on the Information Society **and the implementation map of the Global Digital Compact which aligns the actions and commitments of the Global Digital Compact** against existing **United Nations** structures, mechanisms and activities” [end para]*

- **Para 144 and 145:** We suggest deleting the paragraphs.

They constitute a peculiar inversion, where a political agreement adopted at the highest political level, reporting to the General Assembly (Global Digital Compact), is subsumed into a technical agreement adopted at the ministerial level, reporting to ECOSOC (WSIS and its Action Lines).

Implementation of the GDC is already underway in all its areas. Coordination at the UN level is happening through the Pact of the Future Steering Committee, chaired by the UN Secretary-General

The review and follow-ups to the Global Digital Compact will be determined by a GA process under the modalities outlined in para 74.