

Consultation Entry on the WSIS+20 Zero Draft

Submission by Wikimedia Germany

Dear Excellencies, Co-Facilitators,

On behalf of Wikimedia Germany, an NGO with 113.000 members, advocating for free knowledge, we thank the co-facilitators for their inclusive and transparent approach throughout the WSIS+20 process. We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Zero Draft and wish to highlight areas of particular relevance to Wikimedia's mission of fostering knowledge equity, multilingual access, and participatory knowledge creation.

What We Welcome

- **Digital public goods** (para. 20): Wikipedia is officially recognized as a [Digital Public Good](#), serving humanity and contributing to the common good around the world. We welcome the strong language on open-source software, open standards, and open content as digital public goods.
- **Multilingualism and digital divides** (paras. 28-31): Wikipedia exists in over 300 languages and provides knowledge across regions. We underline the need for multilingual access and digital literacy to support the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Human rights** (paras. 77-93): Collaborative and volunteer knowledge projects can only exist, if the reaffirmation of human rights apply online and offline. Therefore, it is critical to the very existence of Wikipedia and similar projects safeguarding collaborative knowledge projects. We particularly value paragraph 88's explicit call to refrain from undue restrictions such as Internet shutdowns, unlawful surveillance, and censorship.
- **Permanent Internet Governance Forum** (para. 115): We support the decision to make the IGF permanent and value the emphasis on its intersessional work and NRIs (paras. 113-118).

Areas for Improvement

1. Knowledge Commons and Public Interest Resources

We would like to see the word “developing” gone in the first sentence of paragraph 20, because the DPGs described here already exist. Furthermore, in the second sentence, behind “DPG include”, we would like to explicitly mention **“knowledge commons”** such as Wikipedia, Wikidata, and Wikimedia Commons as essential infrastructure for equitable access to knowledge. These projects exemplify how open licensing, volunteer work, and public digital infrastructure contribute to the vision of WSIS.

We recommend strengthening **Action Line C3** by evolving it into an **Action Line on Access to Information, Knowledge, and the Digital Commons**, as proposed in our earlier input on the Elements Paper.

2. Multistakeholder Participation

We welcome reaffirmations of multistakeholder principles (paras. 3, 104, 120). However, some sections, such as on national strategies (para. 43), remain overly state-centric. Wikimedia urges recognition that **volunteers and knowledge communities** are stakeholders in their own right and require meaningful access to policy processes. Clearer safeguards against exclusionary double structures are needed, as we noted previously.

3. Human Rights and Safeguards for Collaborative Projects

The strong human rights language (paras. 77-93) must be preserved. To ensure practical impact, the outcome should explicitly acknowledge that **collaborative, volunteer-driven projects** rely on legal certainty and protections for freedom of expression, privacy, and open licensing. Without these safeguards, well-intentioned regulations risk harming the public interest.

4. Follow-Up and Accountability

We welcome the proposals for monitoring and reviewing the process (paras. 129-130, 139-147). To build legitimacy, however, WSIS+20 must ensure that stakeholder contributions are **integrated transparently** into clear follow-ups, avoiding the pitfalls of parallel UN processes such as the GDC. We reiterate our call for **clear accountability mechanisms and timelines**, including sustainable funding for underrepresented groups and volunteers, as outlined in our earlier submission.

Conclusion

The Zero Draft provides a strong foundation. To fully realize the WSIS vision, we urge the co-facilitators to:

- Explicitly recognize **knowledge commons** alongside digital public goods,
- Safeguard **the multistakeholder approach** by ensuring volunteer and community participation,
- Preserve and operationalize strong **human rights protections**,
- Embed **accountability, transparency and follow-up mechanisms** that ensure transparency and sustainable support.

Wikimedia Germany is ready to contribute further to ensure that WSIS+20 delivers on its promise of openness, equity, and meaningful participation in the digital age.

Thank you.