

Global Partners Digital Statement to WSIS+20 Virtual Stakeholder Consultation

*Delivered by Ellie McDonald, Policy and Advocacy Lead
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Excellencies, colleagues, I'm Ellie McDonald and I am speaking on behalf of Global Partners Digital. I'd like to begin by thanking the co-facilitators and the secretariat for your hard work on the zero draft and commitment to making this an open and inclusive process.

From the outset, GPD, together with others in this community, has called for a strong multistakeholder approach, publishing a [Five-Point Plan](#) and [Eight Recommendations](#) with concrete ideas for how to embed multistakeholder principles.

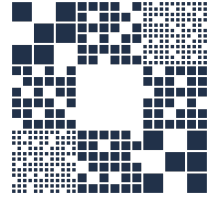
Yesterday, alongside 55 organisations and 34 individuals, we launched the [Ten Steps](#), offering guidance for how the UN and governments can further strengthen inclusivity and legitimacy in the intergovernmental phase. We hope our recommendations are useful, and stand ready to support their implementation.

Turning now to the Zero Draft: GPD is a member of the Global Digital Rights Coalition for WSIS (GDRC-WSIS) and our intervention is based on its [submission](#).

Overall, this is a strong draft, with many elements to be defended. We particularly welcome the language on human rights, gender mainstreaming, multistakeholder cooperation, the permanence of the IGF, and the alignment between WSIS, the GDC, and the 2030 Agenda. These are important foundations that should be maintained.

At the same time, we believe some areas should be strengthened:

- More work is needed to translate existing human rights commitments into clear action. For example:
 - References to **human rights due diligence** should clarify that this is a critical tool for states *and* the private sector to meet their existing obligations and responsibilities.
 - The text should reaffirm that certain **technologies and their uses are prohibited under international human rights law**, and **explicitly**



condemn Internet shutdowns, other forms of network interference, and mass surveillance.

- International human rights law safeguards should be **applied consistently** throughout the text, including to discussions of digital public goods and digital public infrastructure, AI and data governance.
- The **role of the OHCHR should be further consolidated** and **other UN human rights mechanisms integrated**, in the manner proposed by the OHCHR in their statement.
- Some adjustments are also required to reinforce the WSIS foundations of **distributed and multistakeholder governance**. For instance, we recommend revising the language in paragraph 118 to ensure a **transparent and community-driven consultation** on the IGF's future funding.
- We also support the recommendation to establish a **dedicated WSIS taskforce** to explore and propose sustainable financing mechanisms.

The GDRC-WSIS submission provides clear proposals, grounded in existing UN language, to give effect to our recommendations.

In closing, the Zero Draft provides a strong foundation. With thoughtful improvements, we think it can deliver what's needed for a people-centered and inclusive digital future.