

Oral Statement for Intervention at WSIS+20 Informal Consultations on October 13, 2025

By Jenna Fung

1. Thank you, distinguished co-facilitators and colleagues for this opportunity to bring youth voices into this important discussion.
2. My name is Jenna Fung, Managing Director at NetMission.Asia, and today, I speak on behalf of the 70 APAC youth leaders who signed a Joint Letter for our written submission to the Zero Draft.
3. At the heart of our message is this: **Youth are not just beneficiaries of the digital age, we are co-creators of its future.**
4. And to make that future **just and sustainable**, *bridging digital divides, advancing capacity development, and upholding human rights* are not separate goals. They are the foundation that keeps youth **structurally included** in digital governance and policymaking. Without this foundation, youth engagement remains symbolic rather than systemic.
5. Across the Asia Pacific region, young people face **deep and layered inequalities**: *between urban and rural communities, genders, and generations; between dominant and local languages; and between those who can afford access and those still waiting for it.*
6. **Our voices too often enter after decisions are made, when youth perspectives should be shaping those decisions from the start.**
7. That is why **nearly 70 youth leaders from 18 APAC economies came together** to craft a joint letter to call for **youth to be recognized as a distinct stakeholder group**, not as an afterthought, but as equal partners in building our future together.
8. Our message is simple: **youth don't just need a seat, we're here to help build a stronger, sturdier table for all who come after us.** One that can carry diverse voices, and make room for those who'll inherit the world shaped by our decisions today.
9. Today I'd like to put forward three key calls to action:

10. **First, bridge divides with diversity in mind.** Access must go beyond connectivity to include linguistic, cultural, and gender equity. The Internet should speak our languages and reflect our realities.
11. **Second, invest in capacity development that empowers, not just trains.** Youth are ready to serve as innovators, researchers, and community builders. But we need **clear, structural pathways into governance**. Including **young leaders in national delegations** and establishing a **Youth Advisory Council** ensures capacity building leads to leadership, not dependency. These are not symbolic gestures — they are structural commitments to intergenerational justice and sustainable digital development.
12. **Third, embed human rights and sustainability in digital innovation.** Responsible innovation must consider environmental impact, equity, and meaningful participation of marginalized youth, especially from Pacific Island nations and conflict zones.
13. APAC Youth's contribution to WSIS+20 in the past month proved that when youth are meaningfully included, we don't just enrich the process, we redefine inclusion and show that **we can build consensus, propose solutions, and uphold multistakeholder principles** across borders.
14. **The future of digital governance is not something we inherit, it is something we build, together, across generations.** Youth must not be passengers, we must be partners shaping the decisions that will define the world we, and the generations after us, will live in.
15. Thank you once again and we appreciate the chance to add our voices into this important conversation today.