

Written Submission to the WSIS+20 Zero Draft Consultation

Focus Area: Artificial Intelligence

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General Comments

I would like to commend the Co-Facilitators and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) for organizing this inclusive consultation process and for the comprehensive *Zero Draft* of the WSIS+20 outcome document.

I particularly welcome the inclusion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) under paragraphs 97 to 102 of the *Zero Draft*, which reaffirms the approach to international governance of artificial intelligence for the benefit of humanity as articulated in the *Global Digital Compact*. The recognition of the need to strengthen capacity building, enhance coordination, and establish scientific cooperation is both timely and essential.

However, as the text evolves, there is an opportunity to strengthen the articulation of AI governance, ensuring it becomes more coherent, transparent, and inclusive through institutional mechanisms that foster accountability, interoperability, and trust across all regions.

AI Governance and the Concept of AI Worthiness (Paragraphs 97–98)

Paragraph 97 rightly acknowledges the transformative nature of artificial intelligence and its potential impacts on labour, the environment, human rights, and information integrity.

However, the current wording refers to the “potential negative impacts” of AI, which presumes a scientific conclusion about the direction of those impacts.

It would be more appropriate to replace “negative” with a formulation such as “potential impacts and associated risks”.

This adjustment would align the text with the ongoing work of the forthcoming Independent International Scientific Panel on AI (paragraph 102), whose mandate is precisely to provide objective, evidence-based assessments of AI’s impacts and risks before such determinations are made.

Paragraph 98 appropriately reaffirms the Global Digital Compact's vision for an international governance approach to AI for the benefit of humanity.

To operationalize this vision, the Zero Draft should highlight the need for AI governance frameworks that measure and guide the trustworthiness of AI systems in the same way Internet governance transformed a fragmented network into a global public infrastructure.

This can be achieved through the principle of AI Worthiness; the state of developing and operating artificial intelligence systems that are trustworthy, transparent, compliant, and aligned with human and ethical values. AI Worthiness reflects how transparently, safely, and ethically AI systems are designed and deployed, and how effectively they serve the public interest.

Member States and stakeholders are encouraged to recognize that AI governance must be understood from two interconnected dimensions:

- **The technical dimension of data governance**, ensuring interoperability, transparency, and data integrity across AI systems, consistent with paragraph 94 on responsible and interoperable data governance; and
- **The policy and societal dimension**, ensuring that AI advances human welfare, equality, and shared ethical principles in line with the Pact for the Future.

Together, these two dimensions can serve as the foundation for a human-centred and trustworthy AI ecosystem.

In line with paragraph 55 of the Pact for the Future, which highlights the opportunity to advance the international governance of artificial intelligence through scientific understanding, interoperability, capacity building, and accountability, the implementation of this commitment could be supported through measurable indicators.

These indicators could assess national and international progress on AI governance and readiness across four Worthiness pillars that align with the Pact's priorities:

- Talent and Research;
- Governance and Standards;
- Compute, Infrastructure, and Industrial Ecosystem;
- Adoption and Public Value.

Incorporating these AI Worthiness pillars within the WSIS+20 framework would provide a structured, evidence-based mechanism to monitor progress on AI governance, in harmony with the Global Digital Compact and the follow-up to the Pact for the Future.

Institutional Innovation: The Need for Agentic Internet Governance (Paragraphs 99–102)

Paragraphs 99 to 102 appropriately focus on leveraging existing UN system-wide capacities, establishing an AI Research Programme, launching an AI Capacity-Building Fellowship, and convening a Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

While these are commendable steps, the *Zero Draft* could be strengthened by also addressing institutional innovation in AI governance. As AI systems evolve into autonomous agents operating across networks, governance must extend beyond data and research coordination to include agent-level accountability.

We already see the technical foundations of the Agentic Internet emerging through standards such as MCP, A2A, A2P, and the proposed ANS protocol. These enable autonomous AI agents to operate and communicate. What is missing is a global governance layer, an institutional mechanism ensuring that innovation built atop these protocols remains open, interoperable, and accountable.

In this context, I propose that the WSIS+20 outcome document encourage exploration of an “ICANN for AI Agents” a multistakeholder coordination body that could:

- Oversee transparency, identity, and accountability standards for autonomous systems;
- Facilitate interoperability among AI agents across borders;
- Uphold the principles of openness, inclusivity, and multistakeholder participation; and
- Serve as a trust anchor for the emerging Agentic Internet.

Just as ICANN became the institutional layer that enabled global innovation atop the Internet Protocol (IP) and the Domain Name System (DNS), a similar framework could enable innovation while preserving trust and accountability across AI ecosystems.

A reference to such institutional exploration could be inserted after paragraph 102, ensuring continuity with the Internet governance principles reaffirmed in paragraphs 103–118.

Proposed Additions to the Zero Draft

1. **Amend Paragraph 98** to include language on developing *institutional mechanisms for trustworthy AI governance*, including multistakeholder approaches to interoperability, transparency, and accountability.
2. **Amend Paragraph 99** to emphasize *institutional innovation* alongside capacity-building, recognizing that sustainable AI governance requires both technical competence and organizational infrastructure.
3. **Insert a new paragraph after Paragraph 102**, reading:

We encourage Member States and all stakeholders to explore the establishment of multistakeholder mechanisms to coordinate transparency, identity, and accountability standards for autonomous and agentic systems, modeled on successful Internet governance structures, in order to ensure openness, interoperability, and trust in the emerging Agentic Internet.

4. **Cross-reference AI governance** in the section on *Internet Governance (Paragraphs 103–118)*, ensuring that lessons from ICANN and the IGF are applied to AI and other emerging technologies.

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence has become a defining force of our era, much as the Internet was two decades ago. The WSIS+20 process offers a rare opportunity to institutionalize trust in the development, deployment, and governance of AI.

By incorporating the principles of AI Worthiness and Agent-Level Governance into the Zero Draft, and by extending WSIS's proven multistakeholder framework to emerging AI ecosystems, the United Nations can ensure that artificial intelligence, and the evolving Agentic Internet, advance human welfare, transparency, and sustainable development for all.

I thank the Co-Facilitators and the WSIS+20 Secretariat for their leadership and for the opportunity to contribute to this important review process.