

WSIS + 20 Stakeholder Consultation on Zero Draft

OHCHR Statement

My name is Li Zhou from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Thank you to the Co-facilitators and the Secretariat for convening this stakeholder consultation and for facilitating an inclusive process for WSIS+20, including the establishment of the IMSB which together with these consultations provides a crucial avenue for the realization of the right to participation in this important process. OHCHR supports a multistakeholder approach to the WSIS+20 process.

There are many elements that we welcome in the zero draft, which is a continuation of the centrality of human rights recognized in the Geneva Declaration and the Tunis Agenda. As a pillar of the United Nations, Human rights provides an internationally agreed legal framework that provides a common understanding of some of the issues that are being addressed in WSIS including topics that previous speakers have already brought up. From addressing discrimination and accessibility to the protection of privacy, from human rights due diligence to corporate responsibility and accountability, the UN human rights system has in recent years developed a body of knowledge that can provide a useful contribution to digital governance.

Therefore, OHCHR views WSIS+20 as the opportune moment to enhance the collaboration and exchange between the UN human rights system and the WSIS Architecture. We call for strengthening the text on human rights which we shared in written form, I would like to share three specific proposals:

Firstly, we welcome the role given to OHCHR in paragraph 130 and suggest that this can be further concretized in future revisions where OHCHR is requested to contribute to the work of all Action Lines.

Secondly, building on the Global Digital Compact which recognized the role of the Human Rights Council, this outcomes document could also further facilitate coordination by providing a link between the Human Rights Council and WSIS mechanisms, including the Internet Governance Forum.

Thirdly, OHCHR welcome the commitments in the zero draft in the section relating to human rights, we propose a concrete action for this section in the form of an annual flagship report to IGF and the Human Rights Council on human rights and the information society, bringing in analysis from the human rights system and based on engagement with stakeholders as well as national and regional IGFs.

Together, these would facilitate collaboration and exchange between WSIS and the UN human rights mechanism, living up to the commitments of Geneva and Tunis for a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society that respects and upholds the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.