

**Informal Interactive WSIS stakeholder consultations on the Zero-Draft
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<https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/wsisis20/octconsultations>

William J. Drake
Director of International Studies
Columbia Institute for Tele-Information
Adjunct Professor, Columbia Business School

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Internet governance section of the WSIS+20 Zero Draft. I would like to make three textual suggestions.

First, paragraph 103 begins by reaffirming the working definition that addresses the who, what and how of Internet governance. This is especially important today as there have been some discussions of late that could erode the collective understanding of the nature and boundaries of Internet governance. For example, it has been asserted that Internet governance primarily pertains to the underlying infrastructure, or that it is cleanly distinct from digital governance, especially data and AI governance, when in fact there are very substantial overlaps between these domains. These assertions have sometimes been invoked to suggest that our existing institutions are too narrow in scope and hence must be changed, or that new institutions for digital governance must be created.

But in fact, during the WSIS process 20 years ago, the international community came to a clear consensus that Internet governance pertained to both the Internet and its use in online activities, and that is why we agreed on a “broad” rather than a “narrow” definition. Hence, to help limit unproductive debates about changing our existing institutions or creating and potentially duplicative new ones, why not add a second clarifying sentence to paragraph 103, such as:

“This definition covers both the Internet’s infrastructure and its use in online data and information-based activities.”

Second, paragraphs 104 and 107 say that we should address and reject Internet fragmentation and call for cooperation, but it does not suggest any particular actions to these ends. Many similar intergovernmental declarations have been made previously without having any discernable impact on the incidence of fragmentation and without eliciting significant international cooperation on the matter. To add weight to the words, why not amend the second sentence of paragraph 107 to say something like,

“We affirm the need to promote focused and sustained international dialogue among governments and stakeholders in the Internet Governance Forum and other appropriate international venues in order to help identify and mitigate the risks of Internet fragmentation.”

Third, paragraph 108 says that we will continue to follow the WSIS outcomes in relation to enhanced cooperation. As this vague term has already yielded many years of disagreement and deadlock, it is unclear what exactly is being proposed to continue. Why not clarify it’s contested who and where aspects by amending the sentence to say,

“enhanced cooperation among governments and stakeholders in existing institutions.”

After all, it is in inclusive settings that cooperation has been most successfully enhanced.

In closing, I add my voice to all those who have stated that the Internet Governance Forum should have a permanent mandate with regularized funding, and that all WSIS intergovernmental deliberations and decisions should be fully transparent and documented. Thank you again for this opportunity to speak.