



Intervention by the Association for Progressive Communications WSIS+20 Virtual Stakeholder Consultation on Rev1 (14 November 2025)

I speak on behalf of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), a global network of more than 80 organisations using digital technologies to improve lives for social, gender, and environmental justice. We are part of the Global Digital Justice Forum and the Global Digital Rights Coalition for WSIS and we support their input on Rev 1, particularly concerning human rights, and will not repeat their points here.

We thank UNDESA and the co-facilitators and their teams for their hard and productive work on a strong document.

We particularly value:

1. The recognition that **addressing digital inequality must be prioritised**. We remain concerned that this will be undermined by para 19 on the expansion of access to the internet and digital services. The use of grand averages in the text presents a distorted picture of progress and disguises the extent of digital exclusion.
2. The section on human rights. However, we feel that rev.1 weakens reference in the Zero draft to states' existing obligations under international human rights law. In particular, we are concerned about the lack of reference to the risks posed to human rights by digital technologies and how they are deployed. We believe it is paramount to strengthen text on the accountability of corporations for respecting human rights.
3. The invitation to the Secretary General to consider the establishment of a **multistakeholder task force on financial mechanisms for digital development**. **However**, we would prefer this to be a call to **actually establish such a group**, not just to consider doing so.
4. Reference to the NetMundial+10 guidelines and the reaffirmation of the multistakeholder model as central to WSIS and emphasis on integration between the WSIS framework and Global Digital Compact implementation. However, we would like to see more on how the existing WSIS architecture can contribute to GDC follow-up and implementation.
5. And finally, the extension of the IGF's mandate.

There are some aspects in the document that needs to be strengthened:

1. Mention of the WSIS action lines. They get very little attention in this document when they are at the heart of the WSIS implementation framework at country-level and its link with the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. Community networks as a means to achieve affordable broadband connectivity. They are mentioned in para 26 and we are very pleased to see this as we know from our own experience that they contribute to diversifying and growing access markets at first/last mile level is essential. But text is needed - e.g. in para 61 – to make it clear these initiatives need to be strengthened.
3. Gender equality. We would like to see clearer commitments to consider gender in all stages and aspects of implementation.
4. And finally, the need for environmental risk and impact assessments and globally-agreed reporting standards for companies. People-centred development will not be achieved if digitalisation continues to hasten the degradation of our planet and its natural resources.

Thank you for your attention.