

Statement by the Digital Opportunities Foundation, Germany to the
WSIS+20 Informal Stakeholder Consultations, July 29, 2025

Dear Excellencies, Co-facilitators and distinguished participants we are grateful for the opportunity to give our input. As a civil society organisation we would like to comment on the WSIS +20 review process as follows.

As it was the case in 1989 when the UN-Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the General Assembly it is also nowadays necessary to ensure the rights of children as an especially vulnerable group are respected, protected and fulfilled in the digital environment. The UN-Committee on the Rights of the child have acknowledged the important role digitalisation plays in nowadays children's lives and therefore have adopted the General Comment No.25 on Children's Rights in the Digital Environment in 2021.

In the era of digitalisation these last four years– although a short period of time – are a phase of very fast development and technical innovation. With generative AI, quantum computing and Virtual Reality we are on the threshold to a new and augmented digital environment, the metaverse is laying ahead of us and children will be its earliest inhabitants. These developments have to be taken into account for the WSIS +20 review process in order to give sustainable and reliable guidance to the future progress and adhere to human rights.

From a child rights perspective we consider the reference in para 6 of the elements paper to the rule of law being essential for building a human-centred information society as crucial and we welcome the emphasis on the need to foster an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space that respects, protects and promotes human rights. In this regard we underline the need to uphold the UN-CRC as a cornerstone of a human rights based approach.

The Information Society holds huge potential for children to exercise their rights. We welcome this is addressed in para 46, 49 and 54. In addition, we suggest to amend para 46 as follows: **To ensure children's best interests and their personal integrity in the digital environment their rights to protection, provision and participation must be respected and fulfilled in a balanced approach not prioritising one right over another.**

We also welcome the reference to the multistakeholder approach in para 57 to 64 and suggest to amend para 59 in line with the UN-CRC Art. 12 as follows: **Children's perspectives shall be presented either by themselves or by child rights advocates to ensure their views are given due weight in Internet Governance.**

On behalf of Digital Opportunities Foundation, Jutta Croll, Chair of the Board,
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