CCAOI™
Representing the ecosystem of Internet - Bharat Model

CCAOI Statement to the UN Informal Interactive WSIS Stakeholder Consultation (WSIS+20) held on 29th July, 2025 (10:00-13:00 EDT)

Excellencies, Thank you for this opportunity and organising this stakeholder discussion.

On behalf of CCAOI a civil society organisation working in Internet and digital policies in India, I would like to provide my comments on the impact of AI on environment and sustainability

As we look toward the future of digital cooperation, it is crucial to address a pressing but often overlooked issue which is the environmental footprint of artificial intelligence.

While AI promises innovation, it comes at a cost. Generative AI models like GPT-4 rely on energy-intensive data centres. Each prompt consumes significantly more electricity than a standard web search. According to the International Energy Agency, a single AI query can use up to ten times more electricity. Many data centres also rely on water-intensive cooling systems, placing additional stress on already scarce resources.

This growing environmental impact is not evenly distributed. Benefits from AI are global, but environmental burdens are often local disproportionately affecting developing countries. This creates a sustainability and equity gap we must urgently address.

WSIS+20 must lead the way by placing environmental sustainability at the core of digital governance. We suggest 5 measures/principles that can be promoted by WSIS:

1. **Promote energy-efficient servers and improve cooling systems in data centres.**
2. **Promote the use of efficient AI algorithms through pruning, quantization, and knowledge distillation.**
3. **Promote prioritisation of efficiency in the AI training phase, which consumes the most energy.**
4. **Mandate and promote responsible e-waste management for AI hardware.**
5. **Call for a shift in AI infrastructure towards renewable and low-carbon energy sources.**

Additionally, WSIS+20 should support the development of global sustainability standards covering energy use, water consumption, carbon intensity, and circular product design. We also urge the adoption of a **Green AI by Design** approach, making environmental considerations integral to AI model development and deployment.

Finally, let us reframe how we measure progress in AI not just by speed or scale, but by **energy saved, water preserved, and emissions reduced.**