Informal Interactive Stakeholder Consultation on the Overall Review by

the General Assembly of the Implementation of the Outcomes of

the World Summit on the Information Society

Virtual - UN Headquarters, New York

9-10 June 2025

President's Summary

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 70/125, the President of the General Assembly convened an Informal Interactive Stakeholder Consultation on 9–10 June 2025. The consultation aimed to collect the views of all relevant stakeholders—civil society, academia, the private sector, and the technical community—as inputs for the intergovernmental negotiations leading to the WSIS+20 outcome document, to be adopted at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly in December 2025.

Chaired by co-facilitators Ambassador Ekitela Lokaale of Kenya and Ambassador Suela Janina of Albania, the consultation opened with strong commitments to multistakeholder inclusion, transparency, and rights-based governance. Remarks from the Office of the President of the General Assembly and senior digital policy advisors emphasized the need to situate WSIS+20 as both a reflection on progress and a platform for institutional transformation to address emerging digital challenges.

Structured discussions examined priority areas including digital divides, platform governance, human rights, environmental sustainability, AI and data governance, and inclusive digital infrastructure. Stakeholders offered forward-looking proposals aligned with the WSIS Action Lines while also calling for structural reforms and accountability mechanisms to ensure meaningful, equitable digital transformation. The following summary reflects the key themes, insights, and recommendations emerging from this consultation.

Opening Segment

The WSIS+20 stakeholder consultations opened with addresses from the co-facilitators, Ambassadors Ekitela Lokaale of Kenya and Suela Janina of Albania, organized under the auspices of the Office of the President of the General Assembly (OPGA). Ambassador Janina highlighted that the consultations aim to foster open, inclusive dialogue to shape the WSIS+20 Elements Paper and ensure stakeholder perspectives are meaningfully integrated into the intergovernmental process. Both co-facilitators emphasized that WSIS+20 review offers a valuable opportunity to strengthen global digital cooperation for the future, beyond merely reflecting on past achievements. They acknowledged challenges such as digital disparities, institutional complexities, and geopolitical dynamics, inviting participants to share constructive and innovative ideas. They also reaffirmed the commitment to an inclusive, transparent WSIS+20 process, guided by the core WSIS principles of human rights, equity, and multistakeholder collaboration.

On Day 1, Mr. Igor Fung, Chief of Cabinet to the President of the General Assembly, opened the consultations on behalf of the OPGA with a strong endorsement of stakeholder centrality. He emphasized that non-governmental expertise is not symbolic but essential, and described WSIS+20 as a critical opportunity to reaffirm a rights-based digital future. He also distinguished WSIS+20 from the Global Digital Compact, framing it as a foundational process that must stand on its own while contributing to broader UN digital efforts.

On Day 2, Ana Faministrum, Senior Digital Policy Advisor, expanded on this vision by calling for coherence across digital governance tracks, including GDC, IGF, and WSIS. She highlighted the need for trust-building between actors, transparency in drafting processes, and a shared normative direction rooted in equity, sustainability, and universal human rights. Her remarks emphasized that WSIS+20 must deliver not only political declarations, but institutional commitments capable of transforming the digital future into one that is just, inclusive, and participatory. The OPGA's dual interventions signaled sustained leadership at the highest levels and a clear intention to elevate stakeholder voices as co-creators of the WSIS+20 outcome.

UN Stocktaking

The WSIS+20 stakeholder consultations were informed by substantive contributions from across the UN system. The allusion to the review of CSTD 20-Year Review Report emphasized the four core findings: the exponential acceleration of technological change; the persistence of deep digital divides; the importance of multistakeholder governance; and the need to update the WSIS Action Lines to reflect contemporary risks and opportunities—including AI, data sovereignty, and platform concentration. The report was framed as a key reference point for the Elements Paper and forthcoming negotiations.

Other UN bodies contributed distinct but converging insights. UNESCO highlighted the importance of information integrity, cultural and epistemic diversity, and media literacy, proposing global safeguards for platform governance and content accountability. ITU reaffirmed its leadership on connectivity infrastructure and technical standards, emphasizing their foundational role in digital inclusion, and UNDP stressed the inclusion of digital ecosystems to achieve SDGs. A shared thread across agency inputs was the need for rights-based, cross-border, and cross-sector coordination—anchored in public-interest mandates. Collectively, these contributions reinforced WSIS+20 as a strategic opportunity to realign system-wide digital cooperation with contemporary challenges and stakeholder priorities.

Key Issues

Major topics identified included:

Issue 1: The Digital Economy & Social and Cultural Development

Stakeholders emphasized the need for WSIS+20 to address inequities in the digital economy, particularly the concentration of technological power among a few entities. They highlighted how proprietary systems and data governance models exacerbate disparities between developed and developing regions. Calls were made for open-source, community-driven digital infrastructure to foster inclusive innovation and entrepreneurship. Cultural and linguistic exclusion were noted as

barriers to participation, with concerns that dominant-language AI systems marginalize local and minority cultures. Stakeholders advocated for protections to preserve cultural diversity in digital systems, including through AI safeguards. Public digital goods in areas like education and health were seen as vital for social equity. WSIS+20 was urged to prioritize structural reforms, localized content, and equitable governance to ensure diverse, people-centered digital economies and cultures.

Issue 2: Environmental Impact

Environmental sustainability was a key focus, with stakeholders urging WSIS+20 to integrate climate considerations into digital policy frameworks. The energy-intensive nature of data centers and digital infrastructure, along with e-waste, was flagged as contributing to ecological harm. Calls were made for mandatory environmental impact assessments for digital projects, particularly in climate-vulnerable regions, and for treating green digital infrastructure as a public good. Stakeholders also highlighted the potential of digital technologies for environmental monitoring and climate justice advocacy. Proposals included global cooperation on e-waste management, standards for green tech design, and circular supply chains. WSIS+20 was seen as an opportunity to align digital governance with sustainability goals, ensuring the Information Society respects planetary boundaries.

Issue 3: Bridging Digital Divides

Bridging digital divides was a central concern, with stakeholders noting that over one-third of the global population remains offline, disproportionately affecting rural areas, women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups. Beyond connectivity, challenges include affordability, digital literacy, and access to relevant content. Stakeholders called for clear, accountable targets for universal, meaningful connectivity, defined by quality, affordability, and usability. Equity indicators disaggregated by gender, geography, and disability were proposed to track progress. Financing barriers prompted support for innovative public funding mechanisms. Localized, multilingual digital literacy programs were emphasized,

particularly for emerging technologies like AI. WSIS+20 was urged to treat digital inclusion as a social justice imperative, embedding guarantees for equity in its outcomes.

Issue 4: The Digital Ecosystem & Digital Public Goods and Infrastructure

Stakeholders stressed the need for an inclusive, rights-based digital ecosystem grounded in public interest infrastructure. Concerns were raised about market concentration and proprietary platforms prioritizing profit over equity. Strong support emerged for digital public goods, such as open-source software and community networks, to promote inclusion and human rights. Proposals included regional innovation hubs and publicly accountable infrastructure reflecting local governance and cultural contexts. UN agencies highlighted the role of digital public infrastructure in education and health. Stakeholders urged WSIS+20 to rebalance the digital ecosystem through multistakeholder governance, sustainable financing, and infrastructure that prioritizes public value and digital solidarity.

Issue 5: The Enabling Environment & Building Confidence and Security in the Use of ICTs

A trusted enabling environment was seen as essential for the Information Society, with stakeholders expressing concern over surveillance, misinformation, and algorithmic bias eroding trust. Calls were made for secure, inclusive policy frameworks that protect freedom of expression, privacy, and vulnerable communities. Proposals included public oversight of algorithms, robust data protection laws, and community-based online safety measures. UN agencies emphasized rights-respecting cybersecurity, particularly for children and health systems. WSIS+20 was viewed as a chance to embed transparency, accountability, and resilience in digital governance, ensuring ICTs foster trust and inclusion.

Issue 6: Data Governance & Artificial Intelligence

Data governance and AI were critical concerns, with stakeholders noting that AI and data infrastructures concentrate power in a few entities, reinforcing global

asymmetries. Concerns included algorithmic bias, data extractivism, and lack of consent in AI model training. Calls were made for human rights-based data governance, including data commons and transparent AI development. Proposals ranged from algorithm audits to participatory risk assessments, with emphasis on cultural and linguistic representation in AI systems. UNESCO's ethical AI framework was praised, but stakeholders urged WSIS+20 to embed enforceable safeguards across Action Lines, prioritizing justice, transparency, and public benefit in AI and data governance.

Issue 7: Capacity Building & Financial Mechanisms

Capacity building was identified as a key gap, requiring investment in localized skills and knowledge ecosystems. Stakeholders called for intergenerational, community-centered digital literacy programs, particularly for AI and data governance. Financing was a major concern, with criticism of market-driven models that overlook local needs. Support emerged for transparent, multistakeholder-governed funding mechanisms, such as global development funds, targeting underserved communities. Proposals included regional investment platforms and alignment with SDG-linked digital goals. WSIS+20 was urged to treat capacity building and financial mechanisms as structural imperatives for inclusive digital transformation.

Issue 8: Human Rights and Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society & Development of the WSIS Framework

Human rights were reaffirmed as foundational, with concerns about rising censorship, surveillance, and civic space restrictions. Stakeholders called for WSIS+20 to embed commitments to freedom of expression, privacy, and children's online safety, alongside platform accountability and adherence to UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The WSIS framework's relevance was acknowledged, but its operationalization was seen as lagging behind digital complexities. Proposals included updating Action Lines, aligning with human rights bodies, and linking to the Global Digital Compact. WSIS+20 was

urged to make the ethical vision of the Information Society actionable, ensuring digital transformation upholds dignity and justice.

Issue 9: Monitoring and Measurement & The WSIS Action Lines and WSIS Forum

Effective monitoring was deemed essential for accountability, with stakeholders calling for updated WSIS Action Lines to address AI, platform governance, and sustainability. Proposals included equity and rights-based metrics, transparent reporting, and disaggregated data to track inclusion. The IGF was supported as a key platform for monitoring, with calls for a permanent mandate and stable funding. Stakeholders emphasized that monitoring must reflect lived realities and power dynamics, not just technical metrics. WSIS+20 was seen as an opportunity to strengthen multistakeholder feedback mechanisms and ensure Action Lines remain relevant.

Issue 10: Internet Governance

Internet governance was a core focus, with strong support for the multistakeholder model and the Tunis Agenda's principles of inclusivity and collaboration. Concerns were raised about diluted multistakeholderism and threats from geopolitical tensions and corporate dominance. The IGF was endorsed as a vital platform, with proposals for a permanent mandate, stable funding, and stronger regional IGFs. Calls were made for clear coordination between IGF, CSTD, and the Global Digital Compact to avoid duplication. WSIS+20 was urged to reinforce democratic, rights-based internet governance, ensuring an open, secure, and inclusive internet through enhanced multistakeholder participation.

Next Steps / Conclusion

Stakeholders expressed strong expectations that the WSIS+20 review should deliver tangible institutional, normative, and financial outcomes, beyond merely reaffirming past principles. There was widespread support for a clear, time-bound roadmap leading to the December 2025 High-Level Meeting, with several speakers advocating for mechanisms to track how stakeholder inputs are

incorporated into successive drafts of the outcome document and elements paper. Many emphasized that WSIS+20 should act as a catalyst to unify fragmented digital governance efforts under a shared, inclusive, and rights-based vision, while remaining distinct from and complementary to the Global Digital Compact and other parallel processes.

The co-facilitators, in collaboration with the OPGA, reaffirmed their commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the review process. They positioned WSIS+20 as an opportunity to recalibrate the digital governance architecture to address contemporary challenges, particularly those driven by emerging technologies, deepening inequalities, and institutional fatigue. Closing interventions reflected a shared sense of urgency and ambition, emphasizing that WSIS+20 should deliver not only a vision but also an actionable pathway for digital governance that prioritizes equity, coherence, and shared responsibility.