

ORAL STATEMENT

**Check against delivery*

United Nations, New York Headquarters
WSIS+20 Virtual Stakeholder Consultation

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Excellencies, colleagues, thank you for this opportunity to contribute to this [WSIS+20 stakeholder consultation](#). We thank the co-facilitators for their coordinated efforts.

Access Now is a grassroots to global civil society organization working at the intersection of technology and human rights. We are also a member of the Global Digital Rights Coalition for WSIS (GDRC-WSIS), a collective of civil society organisations from the Global Majority and Global North working to advance human rights and multistakeholderism in the WSIS+20 review process. Our response to the three questions posed today are therefore grounded in the shared priorities of the GDRC-WSIS Coalition.

Over the past 20 years, the WSIS architecture — particularly the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) — has demonstrated the value of open, inclusive, transparent multistakeholder discussions on global internet governance and digital technologies. While the diffusion of digital technologies has created many opportunities, it has also facilitated human rights abuse. Today, targeted surveillance, internet shutdowns, and online censorship continue to prevent people and communities at risk from exercising their rights. The WSIS+20 review process serves as a crucial opportunity to collectively review and implement the existing WSIS action lines and outcomes in accordance with international human rights law in order to safeguard against such human rights abuse.

We identify **three priorities** regarding the implementation of WSIS outcomes.

- First, while WSIS acknowledges human rights, implementation of WSIS outcomes could be strengthened by promoting a human rights-based, people-centric, and multistakeholder approach. This includes ensuring that the review and implementation of the WSIS action lines and outcomes are: anchored in international human rights law; promote rights-respecting regulations; and formally recognise the role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Second, WSIS+20 offers an opportunity to renew and strengthen the multistakeholder approach to global internet governance and digital technologies as enshrined in the Tunis Agenda and re-affirmed by the Global Digital Compact. The São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines should be promoted and implemented to create more open, transparent, accessible, equitable and inclusive policymaking at all levels.
- Finally, we must strengthen the WSIS vision, and its institutions such as the IGF, beyond 2025. This includes ensuring the continued existence, funding, and overall effectiveness of the IGF.

The fragmentation of internet governance and rise of new digital governance bodies, including on cybercrime, AI, and counter-terror, risks excluding crucial voices. Cooperation through the WSIS

mechanisms can enhance coherence in governance by preventing the WSIS institutions from being subsumed into or diluted by other digital governance processes and ensuring the continued existence and effectiveness of the IGF. New global digital frameworks, such as the GDC, should be implemented through the WSIS architecture to avoid the risk of separate duplicative processes.

In conclusion, we would like to revert your attention to the two joint statements mentioned by Global Partners Digital. First, the [Eight Practical Recommendations for an Inclusive WSIS+20 Review](#). Second, the [Five-Point Plan for an Inclusive WSIS+20 Review](#).

Thank you.



Access Now (<https://www.accessnow.org>) defends and extends the digital rights of people and communities at risk. As a grassroots-to-global organization, we partner with local actors to bring a human rights agenda to the use, development, and governance of digital technologies, and to intervene where technologies adversely impact our human rights. By combining direct technical support, strategic advocacy, grassroots grantmaking, and convenings such as RightsCon, we fight for human rights in the digital age.

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