



WSIS+20 INTERACTIVE STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION

June 10, 2025

Input by Child Online Africa on behalf of children

Child Online Africa calls for the **explicit inclusion of children and young people below the age of 18** in all digital governance processes. As active users and consumers of digital technologies, their voices, rights, and lived experiences must inform the design, governance, and regulation of the digital ecosystem. These inputs is informed by the consultations we have had with children over the last two or so years.

The WSIS framework must evolve to recognize that **children are not merely passive beneficiaries** of digital policies but they are stakeholders whose agency must be respected and whose perspectives are vital to building a fair, inclusive, and future-oriented digital society.

We propose the following points to be considered:

1. **Inclusive Digital Governance:** Digital governance must be **intergenerational**, recognizing that children and adolescents are among the fastest-growing digital user groups. Yet, their participation in shaping the digital future remains minimal. WSIS principles of multistakeholder participation must be applied to ensure that children meaningfully contribute through child-friendly, safe, and accessible mechanisms to digital policy-making at all levels.
2. **Digital Inequality:** Children face unequal access to connectivity and digital literacy, especially in the global south. Bridging this gap requires not only infrastructure but **inclusive policy frameworks** that address the specific needs of young users. Education, socialization, and civic participation has moved online, therefore excluding children from digital governance risks perpetuating a future of deepened inequality.
3. **Child-Centered Data Governance and Online Safety:** Data governance frameworks must include strong safeguards for children's data and **ensure transparency and accountability** from technology companies and governments alike. This includes the enforcement of child-specific data protection standards and regulations that reflect children's rights to privacy, safety, participation, and development.
4. **Human Rights-Based Approach Including Children's Rights:** A holistic human rights-based approach to digital governance must **fully incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** and General Comment No. 25 on children's rights in relation to the digital environment.
5. **Education and Digital Literacy for Empowerment:** Digital literacy should be recognized as a fundamental enabler of child **empowerment**. Education systems and community programs must be equipped not only to teach digital



+233 303 962 200
+233 272 001 006
+233 242 305 666



email@childonlineafrica.org



www.childonlineafrica.org



P. O. Box AN 7466, Accra - North, Ghana
The Orange Zone, Gate 32-30, Accra Sports Stadium
Digital Address: GA-111-8662

skills but also to empower children to participate confidently in shaping digital norms and policies that impact their lives.

6. **Environmental Justice and Future Generations:** Children are inheriting the consequences of today's environmental decisions. As digital technologies expand, environmental and digital sustainability must be addressed together, with children's voices included in decisions affecting their future.
7. **Strengthening Platforms for Child Participation:** Child Online Africa supports a strengthened Internet Governance Forum (IGF) an **IGF Plus** that provides space for **safe and structured child participation**. We urge WSIS to establish specific pathways that enable and encourage children's engagement across all digital governance mechanisms, including the WSIS Forum and Global Digital Compact follow-up processes.

At COA, we believe in order to achieve the WSIS vision of a people-centered and inclusive Information Society, children must be recognized not just as a vulnerable group needing protection, but as **rights-holders and change-makers**. Child participation is a cornerstone of democratic and equitable digital governance.

For more information and clarification, please contact:

Awo Aidam Amenyah – Executive Director (Awo@childonlineafrica.org)

AL.Dr Justina Asafu-Adjaye – Advisory Board
(justina.asafu@childonlineafrica.org)