

Thank you Chair. Speaking on behalf of the UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, I take the opportunity to congratulate both ambassadors on your appointment as co-facilitators of this important Review process.

Since the approval of the Pact for the Future and the GDC in September 2024, and in our role of supporting UN system coordination, ODET has learned a great deal about how the WSIS outcomes and Global Digital Compact reinforce each other and how resources can be brought to bear for efficient implementation.

Before I describe those learnings, we would also like to share with the colleagues and co-facilitators what digital cooperation looks like on the ground, from our vantage point.

The topics at the top of OSET and ODET's agendas since 2022, were hard to imagine at the time in which the WSIS was negotiated – digital public infrastructure, data governance, the safety of AI, the platform economy. The GDC engages with these topics head-on and though they are relatively new, we still need multistakeholder and international cooperation around them if we are to deliver on their potential for development. The multistakeholder approach in digital cooperation is one of the most important legacies of the WSIS process; which ODET hopes to continue.

We've also successfully engaged newer communities and networks of practice – for example, the open source community, tens of thousands of coders strong; or the burgeoning networks of AI scientists; and also volunteer fact-checkers working to fight disinformation online. They may have engaged with the UN through other channels, but they share many of the same goals as the WSIS communities for a safe, open, human-rights respecting online space. In this manner and over several years, the ecosystem for digital cooperation has been enriched and enlarged.

The GDC is an annex of the Pact for the Future — conceptually it is one part of the 6 pillared-Pact, which is meant to be multidisciplinary and therefore a holistic approach to complex global challenges. There are many entities and processes linked to delivery of the Pact, including the WSIS. The GDC recognizes the path blazed by WSIS in its preamble and several times throughout the text.

In our recent experience, we've found the GDC and WSIS are complementary. We cannot approach the challenges outlined in the GDC without first tackling challenges identified by the WSIS: for example, the call to support multilingualism made by the WSIS outcomes, rings ever true for the GDC, where, in the context of rapid LLM training, existing biases in content online are reproduced in AI. In this regard, the WSIS Review could consider refreshing the Action Lines in a manner which acknowledges the important evolution occurred over twenty years in each priority area.

We have learned a great deal about aligning the architecture of the WSIS with GDC objectives. Over the past 8 months, the EOSG lead a rigorous effort to plot out all of the milestones supporting Pact implementation over 2025-2026, across the UN system. A new Working Group on Digital Technologies, co-chaired by the ITU and ODET, welcomed the mapping of WSIS contributions to GDC implementation. These data points have been integrated to the Pact implementation effort.

We thus now have at our disposal a tracking tool for GDC implementation in real time which includes activities and existing projects from WSIS Action Lines. In these challenging times financially, we're encouraged to see how existing workstreams at ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD, the OHCHR, UNU, UNIDO, UNFPA, at ITC, UNEP, the WHO, ILO, and more! -- propel GDC implementation forward.

While many WSIS architectures and projects contribute to GDC implementation, it is important to note that there are other efforts outside of the WSIS trajectory that have important roles to play. In NY, you will be following the progress of the negotiations for an Independent International Scientific Panel and the Global Governance Dialogue on AI, which will be accountable on terms to be decided by the Member States; likewise, there are human-rights related objectives of GDC and which may be overseen by the UN Human Rights Council. The proposals made during the CSTD 28<sup>th</sup> session to integrate GDC implementation into WSIS architectures could be actionable for joint reporting on both agendas (via the WSIS progress report); for multistakeholder engagement on existing platforms (WSIS Forum, IGF, IGF NRIs); and for monitoring progress (via the WSIS Stocktaking Platform or the forthcoming UN Digital Cooperation site).

In conclusion, I would like to share with you our perception that WSIS and GDC alignment is most easily appreciated when it's in action at the local and regional level – during recent WSIS-related conferences held in Aman, Santiago and Cotonou by the UN Regional Economic Commissions, stakeholders engaged fully in dialogue on the GDC objectives I've recalled – data governance, AI. Digital cooperation proved equally determined to continue closing the connectivity gap as a precursor to putting the floor under the AI divide.

Thank you for your consideration Ambassadors, ODET looks forward to supporting your efforts towards a successful review.