Link to page: https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2025/OfficialSubmissions/Form

The form is copied below for easier internal reference.

- **Submission deadline: Friday, 21 March 2025**

Official Submission Form

Through the Official Submission Form, all stakeholders are encouraged to actively engage in the OCP with a view to develop the event programme, collect inputs to identify gaps in the implementation of Geneva Plan of Action and the WSIS Action Lines, and contribute to the WSIS+20 review process.

Suggestions for the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025

Innovative Ideas: What new ideas or changes would make the event structure and programming more impactful?

We value innovative session formats, such as open space talks, thematic workshops, country workshops, and "unconference," that were introduced to the event in previous years to encourage participatory and collaborative exchanges. To ensure effectiveness, we suggest that, no matter the format, sessions must showcase expertise, inspire actions, and encourage dialogue. Specifically, we encourage the use of data-driven success stories that showcase the impact that stakeholders have on advancing the WSIS Action Lines. Such stories would foster inter-stakeholder deliberations while inspiring multistakeholder collaboration. We support innovations of this nature as long as they make sessions more dynamic and conversations more meaningful.

We also appreciated the various youth-led sessions at the event last year. These sessions let young leaders share their experiences, challenges, and innovative ideas for advancing the information society in connection with the WSIS Action Lines. To further amplify grassroots voices, the event could have a grassroots innovation spotlight to provide a platform for local and community-driven ICT initiatives to present their work and gain visibility.

We celebrate the participation of diverse stakeholders that enriches the event. However, we encourage balancing multistakeholder representation with opportunities for meaningful interaction. Having more inclusive sessions and fewer speakers per session can enhance dialogue and foster better discussions.

The event's structure and programming should ensure that all stakeholders leave with a clear understanding of how their contributions have helped advance the WSIS Action Lines and what concrete steps can be taken next. Such a framework should be flexible enough to accommodate the implementation of relevant Global Digital Compact (GDC) commitments as that process progresses. To facilitate tangible outcomes, there could be action-oriented breakout groups. For instance, small breakout groups can be organized after high-level discussions to draft action plans or policy recommendations based on the topics discussed. Since various comments and commitments will be made at the event, there should be a place that tracks and showcases commitments made to ensure accountability and transparency.

Alignment with the SDGs: How can the WSIS+20 High-Level Event better support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? What new strategies should be considered in light of the UNGA WSIS+20 Review?

The WSIS+20 High-Level Event could better support the SDGs by having a clear, agreed-upon framework that maps each WSIS Action Line to corresponding SDGs, showcasing how ICTs enable progress across all 17 SDGs. The framework could be paired with the data-driven success stories stakeholders would use during the event to anchor it to tangible benefits for people.

The Internet and ICTs, in general, play a vital role in helping the world meet the SDGs, guided by the WSIS Action Lines. It is essential for stakeholders to recognize how, for instance, community-driven initiatives provide marginalized groups with access to ICTs.

In this context, we recommend enhancing the alignment between the most impactful WSIS Action Lines focusing on connectivity and capacity building, and relevant SDGs, in particular:

WSIS Action Line C1: The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in promoting ICTs for development and SGD 17 (Partnership for the goals) to facilitate multistakeholder partnerships for implementing WSIS Action Lines related to sustainable development.

WSIS Action Line C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure and SGDs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) to increase the synergy between the efforts to grow sustainable connectivity and support innovation, infrastructure development, and economic growth.

WSIS Action Lines C3: Access to Information and knowledge, C4 "Capacity building" and SDG 4 (Quality Education) to ensure inclusivity and equity in quality education and to facilitate opportunities for

lifelong learning, SDG 5 (Gender Equality) specifically, Target 5.8: Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women, and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) for universal access to information.

WSIS Action Line C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs is a cross-cutting issue crucial to many SDGs. In particular, we suggest enhancing its alignment with SDGs 4 (Quality education), 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and 17 (Partnership for the goals).

Key Topics for the High-Level Segment: What are the most pressing global issues or emerging trends that should be highlighted during the High-Level Segment to stay relevant and impactful?

To effectively advance the WSIS vision, we must engage in collective action, fully utilizing the contributions of each stakeholder and the strength of our community. Global inequality and the erosion of trust in the Internet represent two critical global issues that the high-level segment must address.

We firmly believe that the Internet serves as a potent equalizer, expanding opportunities for individuals to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. The high-level segment should focus on tracking success stories linked to efforts aimed at connecting the 2.6 billion people who remain unconnected to the Internet and on providing data-driven reports concerning the actions taken by all stakeholders to ensure that the Internet remains open and globally connected.

Also, we believe that trust in the Internet is declining. People are concerned about safety and security online, for themselves and others. One way the high-level segment can help is by exploring data-driven initiatives that demonstrate how stakeholders are promoting capacity building, enabling people to make safer online choices, and ensuring that the Internet is secure and trustworthy.

Considering that the WSIS action lines have guided the progress towards an inclusive digital future, we should sharpen their focus and align them with the Global Digital Compact's commitments to ensure they remain relevant and actionable. In that context, the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event is a unique opportunity to leverage the collective expertise of all stakeholders to inform how to sharpen the focus of the WSIS action lines. The NETmundial+10 outcome document <https://netmundial.br/pdf/NETmundial10-MultistakeholderStatement-2024.pdf> provides a list of actionable recommendations to improve the multistakeholder participation needed to plan and execute such an exercise, which would be useful to inform the WSIS+20 review.

Format for High-Level Segment: What interactive formats could make the High-Level Segment more dynamic and engaging?

As mentioned previously, sessions must showcase expertise, inspire action, and encourage dialogue, no matter the format. As such, we encourage the use of data-driven success stories that showcase stakeholders' impact on advancing the WSIS action lines. This will facilitate the exchange of best

practices among stakeholders to orient the multistakeholder model toward meaningful and traceable results.

Visibility of Local and Cross-Sectoral Initiatives: How can we better highlight local and cross-sectoral efforts during the event to inspire wider participation?

N/A

Inclusive Participation: How can we design the parallel sessions to ensure diverse and balanced participation?

The NETmundial+10 outcome document provides guidelines for multistakeholder collaboration, consensus-building, and decision-making, emphasizing principles of inclusivity and equity. Specifically, it articulates that all stakeholders should be treated "fairly and equitably, considering their respective needs, capacities, realities, and vulnerabilities." Furthermore, it underscores the importance of open, inclusive, and transparent processes and the need to ensure meaningful participation for all.

While these principles apply to governance processes as a whole, they also apply to how inclusive events are designed. Indeed, the design of the parallel sessions at WSIS+20 HLE could benefit from these principles. To ensure these principles are upheld, we recommend that the parallel sessions' program explicitly acknowledge the existing power asymmetries among stakeholders and empower them by offering timely information, technology resources, and capacity-building initiatives to participate effectively, meaningfully, and sustainably, aligning with the core tenets outlined in the NETmundial+10 outcome document. This includes, but is not limited to, providing accessible formats for documentation, ensuring language diversity, and facilitating pre-session briefings to prepare participants.

WSIS Action Lines Stocktaking

Please refer to the [WSIS+20 Review Action Lines: Milestones, Challenges and Emerging Trends beyond 2025](#) documents prepared by the WSIS Action Line facilitators.

What are the main achievements in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines in the past 20 years?

C1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

As an indispensable element of the multistakeholder model, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has become the main mulitstakeholder platform for reinforcing cooperation by reducing barriers between

different stakeholder groups and facilitating dialogue and exchange of information on all levels: global, regional, national, and local.

On another note, 2.6 billion people still live without Internet access, cut off from the opportunities it offers and the ability to connect with resources during challenging times. Conventional models of providing Internet service can't reach people everywhere, but complementary connectivity models, specifically those where communities actively participate in building and managing their own Internet infrastructure—often referred to as community-centered connectivity—have proven to be highly effective ways to bridge the digital divide. In recent years, the community networks movement has grown, with more and more people pointing to them as a solution to bridge the digital divide in places ranging from South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to Argentina and the United States, to Thailand and Pakistan.

Government support to make critical resources available is indispensable, as access to radio spectrum is vital, and licensing and interconnection requirements and fees need to be adjusted for small networks. We have worked with dozens of governments around the world to help them see the benefits of creating an enabling environment for those with diverse needs.

For example, in December 2018, Zimbabwe's Posts and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (POTRAZ) provided free spectrum for a pilot community network project with an investment of $45,000 USD. They have since introduced more innovative licensing regimes for the use of the 2.4GHz and 5GHz spectrum that cater to the needs of community networks. This demonstrates that with relatively modest investments and flexible regulatory frameworks, governments can significantly accelerate the expansion of community-driven connectivity.

C2. Information and communication infrastructure

C2 provides the basis for growing, developing, and sustaining connectivity and access and empowering communities to create their own solutions. Besides the support for community-centered connectivity mentioned above, also noteworthy is the growth of Internet Exchange Points (IXPs). IXPs, which are facilities enabling direct interconnection between Internet players, enhance the speed and reliability of Internet connections and reduce the expense of moving Internet traffic between networks. These IXPs have led to faster, more dependable Internet and more affordable Internet access for users globally, particularly in developing countries.

The Internet Society has contributed significantly to the deployment of Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) worldwide, reducing costs and improving local Internet performance. By allowing traffic to remain local rather than traveling over expensive international links, IXPs are at the core of creating a vibrant local Internet ecosystem.

The Internet Society works to expand IXPs around the world. To establish a functional IXP, a range of essential components are required, including network switches and routers for directing traffic, servers

for processing data, a neutral and secure physical location, reliable power sources, effective cooling systems, robust security measures, and, crucially, a skilled technical community of experts to operate and maintain the facility. We work with communities to improve local Internet infrastructure by providing equipment, technical trainings, and strengthening trust and cooperation between the people who build the Internet.

These examples show the importance of multistakeholder participation in addressing the challenges. For example, a more inclusive access was possible thanks to the enabling environment established by governments and regulators, the considerable investment of the private sector and the active contributions and capacity building efforts from all other stakeholders.

C3. Access to information and knowledge

N/A

C4. Capacity building

Capacity building plays a crucial role in achieving global connectivity that enriches people's lives. Its significance should not be overlooked, particularly in relation to Action Lines C1 and C2, as well as the implementation of other aspects of WSIS outcomes.

This is why, at the Internet Society, we have expanded our Empowerment programs in recent years. For instance, our training and e-learning program has offered learning opportunities to more than 10,000 community members and supporters in 2024. To allow for scaling and to ensure sustainable delivery of training at the local level, we have identified 150 local tutors and trainers across the region to deliver our courses. Course topics include Community Networks, Routing Security, Internet Governance, Privacy, and Network Operations.

The Internet Society also offers fellowships and youth leadership programs to equip decision-makers, technical experts, and influencers with the knowledge they need to be stronger advocates for an open, globally-connected, secure, and trustworthy Internet.

C5. Building confidence and security in use of ICTs

The slide deck on Action Line C5 highlights in the opportunities section that the "UN remains critical fora for cyber discussions as well as technical collaboration." While we agree that the discussions at the UN are crucial, we would like to highlight the importance of other fora, especially those relying on multistakeholder efforts. The same section calls for "enhanced private sector engagement" without mentioning the efforts of other stakeholders.

There are various examples of efforts towards implementing this Action Line, which illustrate the multistakeholder collaboration in action. For instance, the Mutually Agreed Norms for Routing Security (MANRS) initiative, is a global, community-driven initiative to improve the security and resilience of the

Internet's global routing system that uses the Border Gateway Protocol (BGP). MANRS was initially created by a small group of network operators and staff of the Internet Society who recognized the need to join forces to improve the system. A decade after its establishment in 2014, MANRS has grown from nine original operators to a community of more than 1,000 participants. The MANRS community comprises network operators, Internet exchange points (IXPs), content delivery networks (CDNs), cloud providers, and equipment vendors committed to taking action and reducing common routing threats.

We, therefore, suggest that the review of Action Line 5 better recognizes the multistakeholder nature of efforts to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs. This aspect could be clearly highlighted by mentioning a variety of fora and efforts in addition to the UN efforts and by emphasizing the role of the technical community, civil society, and academia. Furthermore, we recommend that the review include specific calls to action for fostering greater collaboration between these diverse stakeholder groups. This could involve promoting open standards development, supporting capacity-building programs, and establishing mechanisms for ongoing dialogue and knowledge sharing. By embracing a truly inclusive multistakeholder approach, we can collectively strengthen global cybersecurity and ensure a safer, more resilient Internet for all.

C6. Enabling environment

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-government

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-business

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-learning

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-health

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-employment

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-environment

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-agriculture

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-science

N/A

C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

N/A

C9. Media

N/A

C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

N/A

C11. International and regional cooperation

N/A

What are the key challenges in implementing the WSIS Action Lines and what areas that have not been adequately captured by the framework of the existing 11 WSIS Action Lines that would need to be addressed beyond 2025?

C1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

N/A

C2. Information and communication infrastructure

N/A

C3. Access to information and knowledge

N/A

C4. Capacity building

N/A

C5. Building confidence and security in use of ICTs

N/A

C6. Enabling environment

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-government

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-business

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-learning

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-health

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-employment

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-environment

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-agriculture

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-science

N/A

C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

N/A

C9. Media

N/A

C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

N/A

C11. International and regional cooperation

N/A

09.What are the key emerging issues and trends in the field of ICTs for development that should be taken into consideration for the WSIS+20 review?

We believe that technology is a means to achieve the main goal of the WSIS: to build a people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented Information Society. While looking at emerging digital trends and technologies is important, the WSIS process should focus on people and how the Internet improves their lives, because each day without Internet access is a day of lost opportunity. In this regard, as long as a third of the world population is still not connected, building capacity to provide and sustain meaningful connectivity should be the priority. In the context of WSIS, the topics related to emerging technology should always focus on relevant action lines, especially those related to connectivity and sustainable development, be it growing the connectivity or closing emerging digital divides that new technology creates.

The Internet is an essential global tool and a space for innovation, growth, and transformation. It will continue delivering on its promise to improve the lives of people, communities, and society as a whole as long as we ensure even connectivity and access to the Internet and preserve its critical properties and the model of its governance. Any future vision of WSIS should rely on the ability of all stakeholders to work collaboratively in the Internet Governance ecosystem to address emerging challenges and take new opportunities. By protecting the Internet and its governance model, we can make sure that the WSIS of tomorrow will remain people-centered and inclusive while continuing to enable sustainable economic and technological development around the globe.

Session Request

Are you interested in organizing a session at the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025?

Yes

Please provide the title of your proposed session

Community-centered connectivity: Empowering local champions to expand Internet access for all

Please specify the organiser(s) of your proposed session.

Internet Society

Please provide a brief description of your proposed session, including speaker names and their affiliations, and the session format.

The WSIS vision that "everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge" remains an unmet goal. Steady but uneven progress in global Internet connectivity highlights the digital divide's disparities and disproportionately leaves women, migrants, and Indigenous people behind, thanks to major gaps in Internet availability and affordability between, as well as within, countries. This session will use data-driven stories to delve into our capacity-building efforts that target these marginalized groups and explain how community-centered connectivity is a vital way to connect the unconnected in every region.

Proposed speakers:

Ms. Charity Ncube, Lecturer, Solusi University, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Mr. Carlos Baca Feldman, Capacity Building and Training Programs Lead, Rhizomatica, Mexico

Ms. Joyce Dogniez, Vice President, Empowerment and Outreach, Internet Society Foundation

Format:

Open forum/panel

The WSIS Secretariat may merge sessions with similar themes due to a high number of session requests. If necessary, are you open to merging your session with similar proposals?

No

Please note, selecting to opt out of merging your session will lower the chances of your request being accepted.

Exhibition Request

Would you like to request an exhibition space at the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025?

Yes (We will have a booth as part of our sponsorship)

Please specify the theme of your stall.

Internet Society's global community is made up of thousands of energetic, enthusiastic, and committed individuals, organizations, and volunteers. They are an unstoppable force and they motivate us in all we do.

Our booth will be a space where our community can gather during the event to discuss how we can keep the Internet a force for good: open, globally connected, secure, and trustworthy. It is also a space where non-community members can learn more about our work and the many ways they can join the Internet Society and support our mission.

Please specify any requirements for your stall.

We would like to have a screen, if possible, apart from the basic setup provided.

We appreciate receiving more details of the setup and everything we can order for our booth, so we can decide if we need something else.

Sponsorship

Would you like to sponsor a coffee break or reception at the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025?

No

The WSIS Forum relies on extrabudgetary funding each year to cover operational costs through strategic partnerships. Would you like to become a sponsor and serve as the digital transformation partner for the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025?

Yes

Can you suggest any partnerships or collaborations that could enhance the implementation of WSIS 2025 and beyond?

N/A