

WSIS Open Consultation Process Submission

In light of the discussions held during the WSIS+20 review process, and the Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly, which themes or issues should be prominently featured at the WSIS Forum 2026?

The themes identified below draw upon the outcomes of the project *Shaping the WSIS+20 Review for a Unified Internet Multistakeholderism (SWUIM)* spearheaded by the Global Network Initiative (GNI) and Global Partners Digital (GPD). The project aimed to support the WSIS+20 Review process through rigorous research and multistakeholder dialogues, conducted in collaboration with ten civil society partners across eight countries. The insights presented here are informed by the project's research, including two key publications:

- [*The Road to WSIS+20: Key Country Perspectives in the Twenty-Year Review of the World Summit on the Information Society*](#)
- [*Looking Back: Tracking National Positions in the WSIS+20 Review*](#)

Key themes include:

1. Global Governance

- **Institutional Alignment:** Defining how WSIS integrates with newer frameworks, specifically the Global Digital Compact (GDC).
- **The Future of the IGF:** Strengthening the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum as the key global venue for multistakeholder policy dialogue.
- **Digital Sovereignty & Cooperation:** Addressing the "North-South" technology gap and fostering inclusive participation from the Global Majority in decision-making processes.

2. Connectivity & Access

- **Meaningful Connectivity:** Moving beyond basic access to focus on meaningful access, infrastructure affordability, multilingual content, and universal connectivity.
- **Capacity Building:** Prioritizing digital literacy, education, and skill-building to ensure populations can thrive in a digital economy.
- **Financing for Development:** Establishing concrete mechanisms to fund digital infrastructure and capacity building in emerging economies.

3. Human Rights

- **Foundational Protections:** Continuing to deliberate on how to center human rights and international human rights law as the foundation of digital development.

- **Emerging Risks:** Addressing threats to human rights, including privacy, freedom of expression, and information integrity, fueled by restrictive digital laws, overly broad governmental mandates, and exacerbated during times of conflict.
- **Business & Human Rights:** Implementing key frameworks like the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to address challenges like data exploitation and digital colonialism.

4. Data, AI, & Emerging Technologies

- **Inclusive and rights-based AI:** Ensuring that human rights are embedded in the lifecycle of AI, that the development and diffusion of the technology is equitable across regions, and that inclusive approaches to AI begin with addressing challenges around connectivity and the digital divide.
- **Public Infrastructure:** Promoting Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), Digital Public Goods (DPG), and data governance, connecting and building on the work of the CSTD.
- **Cybersecurity:** Framing cybersecurity as an enabling condition for digital development and ensuring that efforts related to cybersecurity and cybercrime are grounded in human rights.

5. Equity, Labor, & Sustainability

- **Closing the Inequality Gap:** Using the WSIS platform to empower women, youth, and persons with disabilities, with a specific focus on ending gender-based violence facilitated by technology and promoting the accessibility of digital technologies by design.
- **The Digital Workforce:** Protecting labor rights and promoting "decent work" within the evolving digital and gig economies.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Mitigating the environmental impact of digital transformation while leveraging technology for environmental sustainability.

The WSIS Forum is recognized as an important platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue sustaining the work of Action Lines facilitators: What new ideas or changes to the format, structure, and programming of the WSIS Forum would make the event more impactful?

The WSIS Forum should be action-oriented and focused on implementing the WSIS+20 outcomes. Broadly, the WSIS Forum should be informed by the NetMundial+10 principles. Approaches to make the WSIS Forum a more impactful space include:

Format:

- **Action-oriented workstreams:** Shift from large panels to smaller, curated workstreams focused on implementation of the WSIS+20 outcomes.

- **Organic sessions:** Build in flexible time for participant-led sessions that address urgent, real-time issues that were not necessarily part of the original agenda.
- **Bridging regional to global:** Deliberately and consistently integrate input from regional WSIS consultations into the global Forum.
- **Cooperation and collaboration:** Create space to explore North-South, South-South, and stakeholder collaborations.

Programming:

The Forum should emphasize action-oriented and solution-based conversations around key areas in the WSIS+20 outcome document, such as

- Strengthening the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), including shaping the governmental track, exploring mechanisms to strengthen intersessional work, and highlighting the critical role of National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs) in ensuring that global policy remains grounded in local realities.
- Streamlining WSIS with the Global Digital Compact and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including through the development of implementation road maps.
- Building human rights and gender equality into the WSIS Action Lines.
- Ensuring the private sector respects human rights in line with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- Building different capacity-building mechanisms related to artificial intelligence.
- Developing mechanisms for sharing data between countries to advance progress on the SDGs
- Highlighting the importance of ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage, including digital content, and promoting access to cultural resources.
- Sharing experience on the enabling environment and supporting the development of demand-driven policy guidance, technical assistance, and capacity building.
- Exploring risk mitigation and redress measures to counter and address online harms while protecting and upholding human rights.
- Exploring financing mechanisms for digital development.
- Establishing safeguards to prevent and address adverse impact on human rights arising from the use of digital and emerging technologies.

What emerging or underrepresented topics should the WSIS Forum 2026 address?

It will be useful for the WSIS Forum to emphasize identifying and exploring solutions to persistent inequalities across countries, regions, and communities, as well as protecting human rights as overarching themes across topics and focus areas.

Please provide suggestions on the formats of dialogue and showcasing you would like to see more of at WSIS Forum 2026?

See above

What are the most pressing global issues or emerging trends that should be highlighted during the High-Level Segment to ensure relevance and impact, and what interactive formats could be used to make this segment more dynamic and engaging?

See response to question 1.

Considering that the WSIS Forum will take place alongside the AI 4 Good Global Summit and the inaugural Global Dialogue on AI Governance, how do you think the discussions at the Forum can contribute to these discussions, and vice versa?

Having WSIS, AI for Good, and the Global Dialogue hosted during the same week presents a unique opportunity to build coherence and ensure that these spaces reinforce and complement one another. Each Forum fills a unique role:

- **The WSIS Forum** and framework focus on digital development, and their key strength lies in their multistakeholder structure, which brings together the private sector, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities, and youth, as well as the WSIS Action Lines, which focus on leveraging digital technologies for development. Importantly, the WSIS+20 Outcome Document articulated strong commitments to human rights and international human rights frameworks. The WSIS Forum can help underscore the centrality of human rights for AI for Good and the UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance. While AI governance often focuses on high-level risks, WSIS can ensure that these discussions are grounded in real-world examples surfaced by the diversity of stakeholders it brings together, and that they focus on fundamental challenges such as connectivity and the digital divide. WSIS also provides an important multistakeholder framework for inclusion and for national-to-global implementation that the Global Dialogue can use to ensure its governance frameworks are informed by bottom-up voices and implementable at the regional and national levels.
- **AI for Good** is focused on technical solutions specific to AI, as well as an entrepreneurial and innovation-focused approach. It can identify ways to leverage AI to address challenges identified in WSIS and provide technical evidence for AI governance. For example, if WSIS identifies a gap in E-Health, AI for Good can showcase tools that can address this challenge.
- **UN Global Dialogue** was established to “enable artificial intelligence to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and to closing the digital divides.” It has the potential to translate the challenges, approaches, and solutions discussed at WSIS and AI for Good into governance frameworks and to inform and shape AI governance in line with the WSIS action lines. It also has the opportunity to provide the

political backing that WSIS has sometimes lacked. The Dialogue can turn the best practices and approaches shared at WSIS into global norms. The Dialogue should use the WSIS Forum's multistakeholder model and convening power to ensure that civil society and the technical community have robust roles in agenda setting and outcome negotiation.

Finding ways to enable cross-pollination between the Forums will be important. For example, the Independent International Scientific Panel could present its findings to the WSIS communities. As per the WSIS Outcome document (section 85), the mapping report of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Artificial Intelligence, in consultation with the action line facilitators, will be presented at the Global Dialogue. This report could also be presented to WSIS communities.

Cross-Sectoral Initiatives: How can we better highlight cross-sectoral efforts during the Forum to inspire wider participation?

Cross-sectoral efforts during the forum can be highlighted through:

- **Real-world problem solving:** Shift the focus from sessions centered on action lines to organizing programming that incorporates action lines around sessions dedicated to tackling real-world problems.
- **Multistakeholder sessions:** Emphasize multistakeholder and cross-sectoral sessions when evaluating session proposals. Specifically avoid sessions composed solely of ministers or a single stakeholder group.
- **Coherence in programming:** Ensure session topics and focus flow cohesively.
- **Time for partnership building:** Shift the focus from back-to-back panels to allocating time to develop and strengthen partnerships among stakeholders.
- **Cross-sectoral WSIS Prizes:** Specifically identify cross-sectoral projects in the WSIS Prizes to increase their visibility in the High-Level Track.

Regional Engagement: How could WSIS Forum 2026 better reflect regional, national, and local perspectives?

The WSIS Forum can better reflect regional, national, and local perspectives by:

- **Regional meetings:** Instead of requiring all stakeholders to travel to Switzerland, host concurrent regional meetings.
- **National strategies:** Create a dedicated space to showcase national strategies that leverage the opportunities of information and communications technologies for social and economic development, and ensure they do not get lost in high-level ministerial statements.

- **Financial, technical, and institutional constraints:** Address these constraints to participation. This can range from providing travel and visa support to individuals from underrepresented communities to ensuring the program's language accessibility.
- **Sessions from underrepresented communities:** Prioritize sessions led by indigenous communities and underrepresented communities.
- **Leverage learnings from local IGFs:** The Internet Governance Forum has a robust network of National, Regional, and Youth Initiatives. The outcomes from local and regional IGFs held in early 2026 can inform the WSIS 2026 agenda.
- **Regional work:** Showcase the work of regional commissions and organizations as it relates to WSIS.

Regional and National WSIS initiatives: Would you be interested in organising or hosting a regional or national WSIS Forum?

TBD

Preparatory Events: Will you organise or host any preparatory events towards the WSIS Forum 2026?

Please provide details of the preparatory events.

How can the WSIS Forum advance the key outcomes of the WSIS+20 Review in 2025, and what do you see as the key areas of implementation that the WSIS Forum should take forward, including in relation to the Global Digital Compact and other global digital discussions?

In December 2025, the UN General Assembly adopted the WSIS+20 Outcome Document, which reaffirmed the WSIS vision to 2035. In particular, it will be important that the WSIS Forum takes the following outcomes forward:

- Strengthening the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), including shaping the governmental track, exploring mechanisms to strengthen intersessional work, and highlighting the critical role of National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs) in ensuring that global policy remains grounded in local realities.
- Streamlining WSIS with the Global Digital Compact and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including through the development of implementation road maps.
- Building human rights and gender equality into the WSIS Action Lines.
- Ensuring the private sector respects human rights in line with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- Building different capacity-building mechanisms related to artificial intelligence.
- Exploring financing mechanisms for digital development.

- Establishing safeguards to prevent and address adverse impact on human rights arising from the use of digital and emerging technologies.

How can the WSIS Forum be leveraged to implement the WSIS Action Lines through concrete, coordinated actions that address emerging digital trends and global priorities?

The WSIS Outcome Document articulates several commitments related to the WSIS Action Lines. The WSIS Forum will be a key moment to discuss progress and approaches for these commitments, including:

- **Sustainable Development Goals:** Review of the Action Lines and ensuring their continued relevance to the World Summit vision and their contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- **Human rights and gender equality:** Integrating protecting, promoting, and respecting human rights into the implementation of all action lines and action line facilitators to address gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.
- **WSIS, GDC, and SDGs:** Progress on developing implementation roadmaps linking action lines to the SDGs and the GDC commitments.
- **Capacity Building:** Action line facilitators to share experience on the enabling environment and support the development of demand-driven policy guidance, technical assistance, and capacity building.
- **AI:** The Inter-Agency Working Group on AI, in consultation with the action line facilitators, will map existing UN system-wide capacity-building initiatives, identify potential gaps, and present them at the Global Dialogue and WSIS.
- **IGF:** Action line facilitators to take IGF outcomes into account in their work.
- **Indicators and methodologies:** Reporting on progress towards reviewing existing indicators and methodologies for the Action Lines to be reported to the CSTD.

Please list emerging digital trends and global priorities to be highlighted in the WSIS Action Line roadmaps

- C1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
- C2. Information and communication infrastructure
- C3. Access to information and knowledge
- C4. Capacity building
- C5. Building confidence and security in use of ICTs
- C6. Enabling environment
- C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-government
- C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-business
- C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-learning

- C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-health
- C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-employment
- C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-environment
- C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-agriculture
- C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-science
- C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content
- C9. Media
- C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society
- C11. International and regional cooperation

Session Request

Are you interested in organizing a session at WSIS Forum 2026?

Yes No

Please note, this form is for a single session request. If you have multiple session proposals, please fill out a separate form for each one.

Please provide the title of your proposed session: From Negotiation to Implementation:
Reimagining the IGF in the WSIS+20 Era

Please specify the organiser(s) of your proposed session: Global Network Initiative and Global Partners Digital

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

Format: Panel discussion

Description:

The adoption of the WSIS+20 outcome in December 2025 represented a critical moment for global digital cooperation. The substantive breadth and depth of this document, together with its adoption by consensus, illustrate the importance and resilience of WSIS's unique multilateral and multistakeholder approach. The **Internet Governance Forum (IGF)** is a critical part of what holds the WSIS community together and a source of its enduring support. The international community's focus has now shifted from high-level negotiation to practical implementation, and the IGF will be central to this transition. As the Internet and AI become critical components of more-and-more sectorally and regionally diverse initiatives and discussions, the IGF is well positioned to serve as a central node for multistakeholder dialogue, enabling transparency, inclusion, and trust across these efforts.

This session brings together a diverse, multistakeholder panel of experts from the Global South and North to explore the operational realities of the IGF's newly introduced **governmental track**, the mechanisms for strengthening **intersessional work**, and the critical role of **National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs)** in ensuring global policy remains grounded in local realities.

Key Discussion Themes

- **The Governmental Track:** How can we integrate formal governmental participation without compromising the IGF's fundamental multistakeholder nature?
- **Intersessional Impact:** Strategies for transforming the IGF from an annual "talking shop" into a continuous cycle of policy development and output.
- **The NRI Pipeline:** Strengthening the link between national/regional IGFs and the global forum to ensure a truly bottom-up flow of information.
- **Resource Mobilization:** Addressing the financing and capacity needs required to support an expanded IGF mandate.

Learning Objectives

1. **Analyze** the specific structural changes introduced by the WSIS+20 outcome and their immediate impact on the IGF.
2. **Evaluate** the risks and opportunities of the new governmental track in the context of maintaining a multistakeholder, open, and inclusive internet.
3. **Identify** actionable pathways for civil society and the Global South to lead intersessional work and influence global digital standards.

Relevant Special Tracks

Please select the Special Track(s) relevant to your proposed session. You can select up to 2 options.

Accessibility

Capacity Building and Digital Skills

Cybersecurity

Developing and Least Developed Countries

Digital Health

Emerging Technologies and Innovation

Environment

Financing Mechanisms for Digital Development

Indigenous Peoples and Cultures

Media

Older Persons

Sports

Women and Girls in Digital



Youth
Other (specify below)