CSTD Open Consultation in the Latin America and Caribbean region
in collaboration with ECLAC

WSIS at 20: Successes, Failures, and Expectations

Virtual, 11:00-13:00, 5 December 2024, Santiago, Chile

Background

The United Nations General Assembly resolution A/70/125, adopted on 16 December 2015, established that a high-level meeting would be convened in 2025 to conduct a comprehensive review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes implementation, known as the WSIS+20 Review.

The WSIS vision is to establish a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society" for harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies for sustainable development. With the growing pervasiveness and rapid evolution of ICTs into digital technologies, today's information society differs greatly from what was envisaged in 2005. However, the WSIS vision still remains highly relevant. Rapid and increasingly unpredictable ICT-based technological changes require greater agility among stakeholders for sustainable development, including the capacity to promptly address unintended consequences, such as widening inequity and human rights violations, while grasping the new opportunities arising from such changes.

The Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) has fulfilled its mandate to monitor WSIS implementation since 2006, producing annual reports for the United Nations Secretary-General and contributing to the WSIS+10 review at the General Assembly in 2015.

For the WSIS+20 Review, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted the resolution (E/RES/2023/3) in June 2023. It requests the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) to collect inputs from Member States, all facilitators and other stakeholders as well as to organize, during its twenty-seventh session, in 2024, and its twenty-eighth session, in 2025, substantive discussions on the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit during the past 20 years, and to report thereon, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly.

Multi-stakeholder engagement through open consultations represents a fundamental component of the WSIS+20 Review process. The CSTD secretariat has been conducting these consultations at both global and regional levels starting in late 2023 through late 2024, working in partnership with ITU, UNESCO and UNDP, and conjunction with UN regional economic commissions. These consultations bring together governments, private sector representatives, civil society organizations, technical and academic communities involved in ICT development, and international organizations. The consultation process kicked off at the 18th Internet Governance Forum in Kyoto, Japan, followed by additional sessions during UNCTAD's eWeek (December 2023), the Arab Consultative Conference and Expert Meetings on the WSIS+20

Review and Global Digital Compact Processes in Dubai (May 2024), the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDig) Forum 2024 and the 2024 Asia-Pacific Conference on Digital Inclusion and Transformation in Astana (September 2024), as well as during the consultation in the African Region in Dar es Salaam (October 2024).

The consultation in Latin America and the Caribbean, the fifth regional consultation of the CSTD, will take place following ECLAC's Ninth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean on 7-8 November 2024. It builds upon ECLAC's coordination of the Digital Regional Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC), a process that originated as the regional input for the WSIS forum in 2003-2005.

Objectives

The objective of the discussions is to foster in-depth dialogue among stakeholders in the region on the implementation of the WSIS vision and outcomes. The discussions will also provide valuable inputs to the CSTD secretariat's synthesis report that will inform the substantive discussion at the CSTD on the WSIS+20 Review as requested by the ECOSOC. The event will focus on the following topics:

1. To what extent and how has the vision of a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society" evolved over the past 20 years since WSIS?

2. How will ongoing trends and emerging technologies, particularly AI, impact progress towards human development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? Moreover, how can these trends enable or hinder the realization of the WSIS vision?

3. What measures should be taken to advance international cooperation, including in terms of governance, to leverage emerging technologies for sustainable development in economic, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions?

4. How can the processes and forums (e.g., the IGF and WSIS Forum) emanating from the WSIS support the contribution of all stakeholders to Compact implementation?

Format

The event will take place in a virtual format. The two-hour discussions will be moderated by ECLAC representatives. H.E. Mr. Muhammadou M O Kah, Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of Gambia in Geneva, Switzerland and Chair of the 28th CSTD, will deliver opening remarks.

Registration is mandatory. A meeting link will be shared with all registered participants in due course.

For more information, please write to cstd-wsis20@unctad.org.