

**United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)
Twenty-eighth Annual Session**

Updated Note on World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) +20 discussion

Wednesday, 9 April 2025, 10.00-18.00 (Geneva time)
Room XIX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

Background

General Assembly (GA) resolution A/70/125 adopted on 16 December 2015 at the occasion of WSIS+10 review decided that a high-level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) would be held in 2025, involving the input and participation of all stakeholders, including in the preparatory process, to take stock of progress on the outcomes of the World Summit and identify both areas of continued focus and challenges. It recommended that the outcome of the high-level meeting should be an input into the review process for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) has been mandated by the ECOSOC and the General Assembly to review and assess annually, since 2005, progress at the international and regional levels in the implementation of WSIS action lines, recommendations, and commitments; share best and effective practices and lessons learned and identify obstacles and constraints encountered, actions and initiatives to overcome them, and important measures for further implementation of WSIS outcomes; and promote dialogue and foster partnerships. In 2015, the CSTD submitted a comprehensive systematic report on WSIS+10, serving as a major contribution to the General Assembly's WSIS+10 review.

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. The CSTD also adopted its roadmap for WSIS+20 review at its 26th annual session in 2023, which includes a request for the CSTD secretariat to prepare, with inputs from multistakeholders, a comprehensive report on the 20 years' implementation of WSIS outcomes for discussion at the 28th annual session of the CSTD.

Following the ECOSOC resolution and the CSTD roadmap, the CSTD secretariat has completed input gathering from multistakeholders through various means: an online questionnaire circulated in September 2023, two global open consultations in October and December 2023, 5 regional open consultations in 2024, and 5 focus group discussions on 5 themes (i.e. the digital impact on environment; the digital economy; e-government; children in the digital environment, and women's rights under WSIS) in the first quarter of 2025. Written inputs from the WSIS action line facilitators and other key stakeholders were also sought in the autumn 2024.

The secretariat has prepared [a comprehensive report](#) as background information for the WSIS+20 discussion at the 28th annual session.

- o It assesses the changes that have taken place since WSIS, particularly since WSIS+10, in critical aspects of the Information Society.
- o It reviews stakeholders' perceptions of the successes and ongoing challenges emerging from experience since WSIS: opportunities and risks, and priorities for the future development of the Information Society;
- o It adopts a progressive and forward-looking approach, focusing not only at the present but, more importantly, on the future, and take into account the results of the Summit of Future held in September 2024, in particular the Global Digital Compact.

The report was circulated and uploaded to the website on 19th March. The secretariat will organize an informal briefing about this report on 27th March. A live listen audio link has been provided for remote participation. The briefing will not be intended to open discussions on the report, but to briefly walk through the report.

Objective

The discussions on WSIS+20 aim at contributing inputs to the General Assembly's review on WSIS+20, by reaching findings on the achievements, challenges, and lessons learned since WSIS, the emerging trends and future priorities and identifying recommendations for the WSIS to better contribute to sustainable development and leave no one behind. The outcomes of the discussions are expected to be reflected in the CSTD annual resolution on WSIS, which will be submitted to the General Assembly, via ECOSOC.

Format of the session

The session will begin with a briefing from Ambassador Ekitela Lokaale, Co-facilitator of the intergovernmental consultations on modalities for the overall WSIS+20 review by the General Assembly and Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN at New York. Mr. Tomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General of ITU, will then present ITU's implementation of WSIS outcomes. He will be followed by Mr. Amandeep Gill, Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Digital and Emerging Technologies, who will share his perspective, through a video speech, on implementation of the Global Digital Compact and the WSIS process. Finally, participants will hear UNESCO's implementation of WSIS outcomes by Mr. Tawfik Jelassi, Assistant Director-General, UNESCO (Video speech).

Afterwards, the secretariat will introduce the Annual Report of the Secretary-General briefly and present in more detail the Secretariat's report on WSIS+20.

As there won't be a separate session on reporting of WSIS implementation in 2024, the moderator will, after the secretariat's presentation, open the floor to all participants for discussions that will take place during both the morning and afternoon sessions, focusing on the 20-year review of WSIS outcomes. Stakeholders wishing to report their work in 2024 are encouraged to combine it into their interventions on WSIS+20. Discussions will center around five themes that will be taken up one after another.

The morning session will cover three themes:

- Theme 1: Development of Information Technology since WSIS
- Theme 2: Implementation of WSIS outcomes
- Theme 3: Inclusiveness of WSIS implementation

The afternoon session will cover two themes:

- Theme 4: Digital Governance
- Theme 5: Future Priorities of WSIS

Guiding questions for discussion

Member States and participants at the 28th CSTD may consider the following guiding questions to facilitate the discussions on each theme.

Theme 1: Development of Information Technology since WSIS

- How have advancements in digital technologies and services since WSIS influenced economic, social, and governance structures worldwide?
- What major challenges and disparities remain in the deployment and accessibility of emerging technologies and the digital economy, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT), across different regions?
- How can international cooperation and policy frameworks ensure that future digital developments align with sustainable development goals and human rights principles?

Theme 2: Implementation of WSIS outcomes

- To what extent have the WSIS Action Lines and targets facilitated meaningful progress toward a people-centered, inclusive, and development-oriented Information Society?
- How have international governance mechanisms, such as the WSIS Forum and the Internet Governance Forum, contributed to shaping digital development policies and their implementation?
- What lessons from the WSIS+10 review should be considered to enhance the effectiveness of the WSIS+20 review in addressing evolving digital challenges?

Theme 3: Inclusiveness of WSIS implementation

- What strategies have been most effective in bridging digital divides, particularly in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and marginalized communities?
- How can gender equality in digital access and participation be strengthened to ensure that women and girls benefit equitably from digital opportunities, particularly in education and employment?

- What role should governments, private sector stakeholders, and international organizations play in fostering an equitable and inclusive information society beyond WSIS+20?

Theme 4: Digital Governance

- How have WSIS frameworks and governance mechanisms, such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and WSIS Action Lines, contributed to shaping global digital governance, and what improvements are needed for WSIS+20 review?
- What role should WSIS play in addressing emerging internet governance challenges, including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, data sovereignty, and digital rights?
- How can WSIS implementation and follow-up processes (Tunis Agenda), be strengthened to ensure more effective multistakeholder participation as well as enhanced international and regional cooperation?

Theme 5: Future Priorities of WSIS

- How should the WSIS+20 review process align with global initiatives such as the Global Digital Compact and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to remain relevant in a rapidly evolving digital landscape?
- What adjustments are needed in WSIS mechanisms and Action Lines to address new technological trends and policy challenges over the next decade?
- How can WSIS outcomes be better integrated into national and regional digital strategies to ensure continued progress beyond 2025?

Supporting documents

- Report of the Secretary-General: Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels, including the 2—year review thereof:
https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/a80d62_en.pdf
- Report of the secretariat on WSIS+20, link to be provided after 17 March.
- Other documents are available on the website of the CSTD:
<https://unctad.org/meeting/commission-science-and-technology-development-twenty-eighth-session>