

# **Building an Economic Justice Playbook for WSIS+ 20: An Expert-led Dialogue**

**Side Event at the Commission on Science and Technology for Development's 27<sup>th</sup> Session**

**17 April 2024, 9:00- 10:00 am Geneva Time**

**Room XXII, Building E of the Palais des Nations**

**Organized by IT for Change, India**

## **Concept Note**

### **Background**

The event will bring together experts from civil society, academia and research institutions to enable a wide ranging audience, including policymakers and advocates for global justice, engage in a structured dialogue. The session will aim to generate a positive agenda for the WSIS 20 year review milestone in 2025. <https://unctad.org/topic/commission-on-science-and-technology-for-development/wsis-20-year-review>

### **Key focus**

The WSIS (2003 and 2005) marked an important point of departure for envisioning an information society that is people-centred and development oriented. Yet, twenty years into the digital epoch, we stand at a cross roads. The digital arena and its constituent artefacts - connectivity, platforms, data, AI - are a highly contested terrain, with their gains accruing disproportionately to powerful actors in the geo-economic and geo-political landscape. The rules in the digital arena are shaped by a political economic regime that is skewed against the majority world. From international trade and IP rules to taxation, and financing, international economic law impinges on local possibilities for transformative change. Despite legal measures and policy changes for market regulation and data governance at national and regional levels, the international status quo is far from fair and just. We need to reboot the vision of the information society. How can public and social value be (re)centred in the digital society? What would it take to make issues of economic justice paramount in the WSIS+20 agenda? How can multilateral governance move towards longer term institutional frameworks commensurate with the aspirations of the majority for global democracy?

These are some questions that the expert-led dialogue will address.

## **Format of the event**

The dialogue will proceed in 3 rounds.

### **Round 1 - Score card round** (all speakers - 4 minutes each)

Are current policies able to address challenges that confront us – what has worked and what hasn't?

### **Round 2 - Vision quest round** (some speakers - 3 to 4 minutes each)

What should our policy visions factor in? What are some concrete, positive agenda for global digital justice?

### **Round 3 - Brass tacks round** (some speakers - 3 to 4 minutes each)

How do we get to a path that is more just? What would multi-constituency action for a new digital internationalism look like?

We will aim to have inputs from panelists and then allow time for discussions from the floor.

Expert speakers who will make submissions to trigger wider discussion include:

- Anriette Esterhuysen, Association for Progressive Communications
- Neth Dano, ETC group
- Joe Westby, People vs Big Tech
- Abdul Muheet Chowdhary, South Centre
- Moderator - Anita Gurusurthy, IT for Change