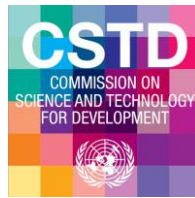




Asia-Pacific Ministerial
Conference on Digital
Inclusion and Transformation



ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific

WSIS+20: Successes, Failures, and Expectations

WSIS+20 joint open consultation, by ESCAP, CSTD, and ITU in the Asia-Pacific region: a side-event at the 2024 Asia-Pacific Conference on Digital Inclusion and Transformation

4 September 2024, 12:00 – 13:15
Congress Centre Astana, Turkistan Side Event Room
Astana, Kazakhstan

Concept Note

Background

The General Assembly (GA) resolution A/70/125, adopted on 16 December 2015, called for a high-level meeting in 2025 to review the overall implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), known as WSIS+20 Review.

The WSIS' vision is to establish a “people-centered, 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. Over the past two decades, WSIS has remained a leading example of effective digital cooperation. The WSIS Action Lines have achieved significant milestones and are instrumental in driving forward global digital development, though challenges still remain. Rapid and increasingly unpredictable ICT-based technological changes require greater agility among stakeholders for sustainable development, including the capacity to address promptly unintended consequences, such as widening inequity and human rights violations, while grasping the new opportunities arising from such changes.

WSIS+20 Joint Preparatory Process

Towards the WSIS+20 review, efforts have been made to establish a collaborative WSIS+20 review preparatory process involving all UN Agencies, including ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD, UN DESA, UN CSTD and the UN Regional Commissions. Regular meetings are organised to facilitate discussions and planning, reflecting the joint and dedicated approach towards the WSIS+20 review.

- [CSTD roadmap for the WSIS+20 review](#)
- [ITU Secretary-General's roadmap: World Summit on the Information Society \(WSIS\)+20: WSIS beyond 2025 - WSIS+20 Roadmap](#)



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- [UNESCO's roadmap towards the WSIS+20 review in 2025](#)

This joint preparatory process will ensure a collective approach to the WSIS+20 review and contribute to the UNGA overall review in 2025. Consultative meetings have been and will continue to be organized as part of this process. Please refer to [Annex 1](#) below for details.

In the outcomes of the UN General Assembly overall review on the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society ([GA Resolution A/70/125](#)), regional commissions are invited to coordinate the implementation of the WSIS at the regional level. The regional dimension of the WSIS is strengthened by the crucial role of the UN Regional Commissions, which leverage their regional expertise, networks, and resources to advance the WSIS agenda and promote the use of ICTs at the regional level.

ESCAP has supported the WSIS process through its initiatives, including organizing regional meetings that align with WSIS goals. ESCAP adopted its resolution [E/ESCAP/RES/72/10](#), mandating the ESCAP secretariat to support the member States and relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the WSIS action lines, and in particular, to hold a regional review of the implementation of the Summit action lines as part of the session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation; and coordinate United Nations agencies and partners in the regional review and follow-up towards harmonized approaches in the implementation of the Summit. ESCAP helps to ensure that regional perspectives are integrated into the global WSIS framework, driving progress towards a more inclusive and connected digital society.

Since 2006, the CSTD has been carrying out its mandate to review the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, including through annual reports of the United Nations Secretary-General and the contribution of inputs to the WSIS+10 review in the General Assembly in 2015.

For the WSIS+20 Review, the Economic and Social Council 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.

An integral part of the WSIS+20 Review is the engagement of multi-stakeholders in open consultations that the CSTD secretariat is conducting at regional and global levels. They



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include governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical and academic communities involved in ICT development, and international organizations. The launch of the open consultations took place during the 18th Internet Governance Forum held in Kyoto, Japan and further consultations so far include those held during UNCTAD's eWeek in December 2023, during the "Arab Consultative Conference on WSIS+20 Review and GDC processes" in Dubai, 22 May 2024 (jointly with ESCWA and in collaboration with the UAE) and those held during the EuroDig Forum 2024 (in partnership with the ITU, UNESCO and UNDP).

Objectives

The objective of the discussions in this side event 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 WSIS+20 Review as requested by the ECOSOC. They will also feed into the [ITU Secretary-General's roadmap: World Summit on the Information Society \(WSIS\)+20: WSIS beyond 2025 - WSIS+20 Roadmap](#) and [UNESCO's roadmap towards the WSIS+20 review in 2025](#)

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?

The discussions will provide valuable insights and recommendations on these critical issues, helping to shape the future direction of the WSIS.

Format

The event will take place from 12:00 to 13:15, in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 4 September 2024 during 2024 Asia-Pacific Conference on Digital Inclusion and Transformation. The 90-minute discussions will be moderated by Ms Gitanjali Sah, ITU and Mr Angel Gonzalez-Sanz, UNCTAD, as secretariat of the CSTD. Registration is mandatory for both physical and remote participation. A meeting link will be sent to remote participants in due course.