

**INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)**

**Geneva, Switzerland
17 November 2025**

**Progress Report by the Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Data Governance as Relevant
for Development at All Levels**

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
--

Progress Report by the Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Data Governance as Relevant for Development at All Levels

Statement by:

H.E. Mr. Muhammadou M.O. Kah,
Interim Chair of the CSTD and Vice-Chair of the Working Group

Commission on Science and Technology for Development,
2025-2026 Inter-sessional Panel
Monday, 17 November 2025

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Colleagues

It is my honor to present this progress report on behalf of the Working Group on Data Governance as Relevant for Development at All Levels.

As many of you are aware, the Working Group on Data Governance (WGDG) is established under the directive of the United Nations General Assembly's Resolution A/RES/79/1, as articulated in Paragraph 48 of Annex 1 on the Global Digital Compact.

Since its establishment early this year, the Working Group has made steady and meaningful progress in laying the groundwork for our collective efforts to advance inclusive, equitable, and development-oriented data governance.

First, I am pleased to report that the Working Group is composed of 27 state members and 27 non-state members. The non-State members consist of representatives from the academic community, the business sector, civil society, and the technical community. This balanced composition reflects our commitment to inclusivity, geographical balance, diversity of expertise, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

In addition, intergovernmental and international organizations that expressed interest in joining the Working Group have been accepted as observers. Their engagement ensures that our discussions are informed by the broad perspectives and experiences of the international community.

Second, the Working Group has successfully held three formal meetings to date. The first meeting took place in May 2025, the second in July 2025, and the third in September 2025. We will convene the fourth meeting starting tomorrow, 18 November, in this same room.

At these meetings, members and observers engaged in substantive discussions about the fundamental issues at the core of the group's mandate, and have shared experiences, best practices, and ideas to guide our future work.

Third, the group has finalized its terms of reference and work plan, providing a clear framework to guide our activities and deliverables. Most importantly, members agreed to establish a set of intersessional work tracks, each co-facilitated by representatives from both state and non-state members. These tracks focus on key dimensions of data governance as relevant for development, as follows:

1. Fundamental principles of data governance at all levels;
2. Proposals to support interoperability between national, regional, and international data systems;
3. Considerations for sharing the benefits of data in an equitable and development-oriented manner; and
4. Options to facilitate safe, secure, and trusted data flows, including cross-border data flows, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In relation to this, I am pleased to note that members and observers have actively contributed input to each of the intersessional tracks. To date, we have received submissions from 64 members and observers, reflecting not only their strong interest in the work of the Group and underscoring the importance of data governance as a global policy issue.

The Working Group remains open to engaging further with experts outside the Group, as well as through regional consultations, to foster deeper and more substantive discussions.

Distinguished delegates

Looking ahead, the Working Group on Data Governance will focus on several key milestones over the coming year to ensure structured progress and alignment with the expectations of the General Assembly when it mandated the CSTD to convene the group. In this regard, the group's meeting later this week will consider, among other items, the next steps in the preparation of its progress report to the General Assembly.

In addition, the third call for inputs will be circulated in the coming weeks, and the final draft of the synthesized inputs will be presented at the fifth meeting of the Working Group which is planned for February 2026.

After the Working Group will prepare its report to the twenty-ninth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, scheduled from 20 to 24 April 2026.

I am confident that the continued active participation and engagement of all members and observers will be crucial to the success of the Working Group. Our deliberations in the coming months will provide an important opportunity to shape the substance of our discussions, to identify areas of convergence, and to recognize and better understand our divergences.

I thank all members, observers, and the Secretariat for their continued dedication and constructive spirit, and I look forward to our discussions in the days ahead.

Thank you.