

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-seventh session  
Geneva, 15-19 April 2024**

**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  
level**

Statement by

European Union

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## **CSTD, 27<sup>th</sup> session**

### **High-level panel on 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 level & Discussion on WSIS+20 review**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024, 10h – 13h**

#### *Statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States*

The European Union firmly believes in the necessity of forging clear and robust links between the review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the Global Digital Compact, to ensure synergies while avoiding duplications.

The Zero Draft of the GDC, as presented by the co-facilitators, recognizes the importance of existing frameworks and renews the commitment to the vision of WSIS and the Internet Governance Forum. It underscores the critical role of WSIS in the GDC's implementation, advocating for the adaptation of WSIS action lines to reflect the Compact commitments. The EU welcomes this approach as a starting point.

Moreover, the Draft highlights the intrinsic connection between digital policy, human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While we value the inclusion of a Human Rights cluster in the Draft, the European Union calls for a greater prominence on Human Rights throughout the document. In the same vein, environmental sustainability should be considered throughout the document. Furthermore, we believe that the GDC must highlight the critical role of inclusive and sustainable digital transformations as a key mechanism for development. Similarly, more emphasis on the multi-stakeholder model is crucial. The multi-stakeholder approach transcends simple coordination. It is imperative that the GDC actively acknowledges and enhances the multistakeholder governance structures already established. These elements are indispensable enablers for achieving the SDGs and facilitating a successful and sustainable digital transition for the benefit of all.

On Artificial Intelligence, the Zero Draft sets forth detailed and ambitious objectives. The EU seeks further clarity on their overall added value, feasibility and funding implications at the UN level. Within the contexts of both the GDC and WSIS, we advocate for the recognition of a balanced, technology-neutral, and risk-based approach to the governance of AI and other emerging technologies. This should include leveraging and building upon existing international processes and outputs. We stand open to discuss options for establishing an International Scientific Panel on AI.

Overall, the Zero Draft is a welcomed substantive contribution to our shared objectives, and the link between GDC and WSIS is key. We take note of the ambition of the follow-up section, which explicitly builds on existing processes and institutions and links GDC implementation to the WSIS process. At the same time, the zero draft proposes the creation of multiple new entities and processes within the GDC framework. As a general principle, the EU does not support new entities and processes that duplicate or erode existing ones. Instead, our primary focus should be on leadership, coordination, synergy-building, and, if required, the adaptation of existing structures to ensure proper follow-up and review of the GDC. Our main priority should be on

defining a strong and meaningful role for the IGF, the WSIS Forum, and the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) in the GDC follow-up and implementation process.