**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
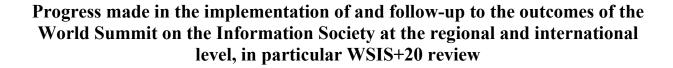FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD), twenty-eighth session**
Geneva, 7-11 April 2025

**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, in particular WSIS+20 review**

Statement by

Mr. Amandeep Gill
Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Digital and Emerging Technologies
on Implementation of the Global Digital Compact and the WSIS process

Distinguished Vice-Chair of the CSTD, Mr. Peter Major,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen.

It is my great pleasure to address this message to you today as the Commission on Science and Technology for Development reflects on progress made in the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society. A twenty-year anniversary is a moment to celebrate the many results achieved and milestones along the way. It's also a moment to take stock of lessons learned; to relinquish old strategies and identify new ones through which we can meet the challenges ahead.

Allow me to recognize the CSTD Secretariat for their report on the results of the year-long consultation with stakeholders which provides an excellent basis for discussion of the WSIS at 20 years.

The report sets the tone for us to be sincere and bold in this important exercise which takes place as the UN marks its 80th anniversary with the "UN80 Initiative" – through which UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres likewise invites the entire UN family to adapt our actions so we can meet present and future challenges, with greater efficiency and impact for stakeholders.

Let us aspire that the WSIS+20 Review dovetail with the UN80 Initiative by delivering a renewed framework for dialogue and action that is people-centred, as it was twenty years ago -- and fit-for-future.

I would like to say some words about our efforts to implement the Global Digital Compact, and how our progress provides insight into the important complementarity between the WSIS and GDC, and their architectures.

Immediately following the Summit of the Future in September 2024, Secretary-General Guterres tasked us with making arrangements to support Member States in the follow-up to all commitments of the Pact for the future, including its annex, the GDC.

Over the past six months, myself and Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin of the ITU, have co-chaired a new Working Group on Digital Technologies, which now brings together 35 agencies spanning all SDGs; and whom, jointly have delivered an ambitious workplan which offers monitoring and support for implementation of GDC.

The vice-chairs of the new working group -- which include the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNU, DESA and a regional economic commission – are driving forward those tasks assigned to the UN-system by the GDC, across all 5 objectives of the Compact. In six months, we are encouraged by results – for example:

- the establishment of terms of reference and selection of the members for the Working Group on Data Governance by the CSTD, which will begin their deliberations as early as May 2025;

- the formation of multistakeholder coalitions to pursue the Global Principles for Information integrity, spearheaded by the Department of Global Communications, in partnership with UNESCO and more than 12 agencies.
- Notably, the start of consultations and negotiations for an International Independent Scientific Panel on AI; and a Global Governance Dialogue on AI. Within the next few weeks, Member States will advance towards a first draft of the modalities for these ground-breaking architectures in governance of AI.

As we've progressed, existing initiatives across the UN system are either leading or linked to GDC implementation in a dynamic fashion. Existing forums such as IGF 2024 in Riyadh, was an important milestone where we debated, for example, the human rights of women and girls in the AI age. The UNESCO ROAM-X principles (and indicators for internet universality) were re-introduced on that occasion, now incorporating certain GDC themes.

It is no easy task to process let alone visualize all of this information; and I've only given just a few examples. There are thousands of contributions occurring around the world, to GDC implementation.

In the next few months, we expect to deliver a tool for navigating the dynamic realm of digital cooperation.

The GDC implementation map was tasked to the Secretary-General in paragraph 70 of the Compact, as a support to monitoring and tracking progress. ODET, UNCTAD and UNIDO have jointly developed a concept for the GDC implementation map existing as an online platform which can track and visualize the efforts of Member States, stakeholders and UN entities who bring their energy and resources to the global effort for digital cooperation.

Our aim is that the map serves the needs of the navigators – not only those of the cartographers!

- For those who want their efforts to be accounted for in this global movement, the map should make visible individual projects and initiatives from all stakeholders.
- For those who are seeking resources and best practice, the map should provide timely information on initiatives and pathways to potential partners.

The prototype of the map – which we expect to introduce during the upcoming STI Forum -- will pull in open source information from across the internet and data from existing dashboards. Much of this information is currently available – but it is siloed by topic, region, agency, or agenda. The GDC map will thus pull it together in order to make visible actions across the five pillars of the Compact, identify potential gaps in time to fill them, and connect the navigators.

We hope to work with Member States, with the WSIS and IGF networks, and all stakeholder groups to capture information on how each of you are contributing to GDC objectives, in a second phase of the map, starting this summer. The map will rest on the collaboration of existing initiatives, including those linked to the WSIS, and will require the support of the entire UN system – thus we are carefully aligning all efforts, with more news to follow soon.

ODET looks forward to working with all of you in this exciting phase and stands ready to support the process as we advance towards the successful conclusion of the WSIS Review at end 2025.