

**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. Tawfik Jelassi  
Assistant Director-General, UNESCO  
on Implementation of WSIS Outcomes by UNESCO

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Distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

Thank you for this opportunity to join you here today on behalf of UNESCO and reflect on WSIS implementation and the path forward.

Before I start, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD).

For two decades, UNESCO has played a central role in WSIS, acting as coordinator, facilitator, and implementer. Alongside ITU, UNCTAD, and UNDP, we have ensured multi-stakeholder coordination of WSIS Action Lines, led six of them, and executed concrete activities aligned with our mandate.

I am proud that UNESCO's effort to advance access to information and knowledge shows tangible results. Since 2002, Access to Information laws have risen from 48 to 140, recently enacted in Cabo Verde, Namibia, Qatar, and Zambia, enhancing transparency and accountability. In addition, our Internet Universality ROAM principles have supported over 40 countries in shaping rights-based, open, and inclusive digital policies. Beyond information societies, we champion knowledge societies that empower individuals and communities.

UNESCO has also expanded digital learning access through initiatives like the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Educational Resources, the Digital Transformation Collaborative, and the Global Skills Academy, in partnership with ITU and UNICEF.

As we approach WSIS+20, the Summit of the Future and the Global Digital Compact highlighted the need for global cooperation. WSIS therefore has a crucial role in prioritizing digital inclusion, bridging technological gaps, and fostering trust. Ensuring responsible AI use and countering disinformation remain key priorities. Gender equality must also be at the heart of digital transformation, ensuring that all individuals have equal opportunities to benefit from and contribute to the digital future.

WSIS+20 is a unique opportunity to rethink digital governance, aligning with the Global Digital Compact and Sustainable Development Goals. Avoiding duplication and fostering globally coordinated policies is essential.

As Abraham Lincoln wisely said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." It is our collective responsibility to shape digital transformations that serve the public good.

Key upcoming events—including UNESCO's Conference on AI and Digital Transformation, the Internet Governance Forum, and the WSIS+20 High-Level Event—will play a pivotal role in defining this future. Addressing critical gaps in AI governance, data protection, digital infrastructure, gender equality, and environmental sustainability will be essential. At the same time, strengthening WSIS's adaptability, visibility, and funding is imperative to ensuring its continued relevance and impact.

Let us reaffirm our commitment to building an inclusive, ethical, and rights-based digital future—one that empowers all and leaves no one behind.

Thank you for your attention.