

**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

H.E. Mr. Alberto Rodrigues da Silva
Secretary of State for Modernization and Digitalization
Portugal

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



Intervention of the Secretary of State for Modernisation and Digitalisation at the 28th CSTD Annual Session

“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”

Palais des Nations, United Nations

Geneva, April 9th

Dear Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address you today as we reaffirm Portugal’s commitment to a digital future that we envision as inclusive, universal, secure, and sustainable.

In this era of remarkable technological progress, Portugal remains fully aligned with the **core values of the European Union** and with internationally recognised **principles of digital development**.

We hold the deep conviction that **digital transformation** should serve as a powerful **enabler** of **social inclusion and economic development**. To that end, we must work collectively to ensure an **open, secure, and interconnected Internet** —one digital environment that respects and safeguards **fundamental human rights**, such as **privacy, freedom of expression, and equal access for all**.



1. International Initiatives

Looking back over the past two decades, since the **World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003**, we have witnessed extraordinary progress in digital policy and technological transformation. This journey has been marked by shared ambition and global collaboration.

Initiatives such as **Europe's Digital Decade 2030** have been instrumental in enhancing connectivity, promoting innovation, and empowering citizens and businesses across our societies.

At the global level, the **International Telecommunication Union's Connect 2030 Agenda** has played a vital role in promoting **digital inclusion**, particularly in developing countries, by encouraging access to **safe, affordable, and resilient digital infrastructure**.

Moreover, the **United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** continues to underscore the transformative power of technology in advancing the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. In this regard, the **Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development** has made a significant contribution to expanding global broadband access, narrowing the digital divide, and fostering both economic and educational opportunities worldwide.

These achievements show that when digital progress is guided by **inclusive, ethical, and human-centred principles**, it becomes a powerful force for sustainable transformation and global well-being.

2. Portugal's Commitment

In this respect, Portugal's commitment to digital rights has been further reinforced by two landmark declarations:

First, the **Portuguese Charter of Human Rights in the Digital Age** (*Law No. 27/2021*), adopted in May 2021, establishes a pioneering legal



framework to safeguard **fundamental rights** in digital contexts for all Portuguese citizens.

Second, the **Charter of Rights and Principles in Digital Environments**, signed last July by Portugal and the other Member States of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), reinforces a shared vision for a rights-based, inclusive digital future.

Both charters place **human dignity, freedom, equality, and solidarity** at the core of the digital age. They also highlight the importance of ensuring that digital policies protect fundamental rights and promote inclusivity—not only within Portugal but across the wider Portuguese-speaking community.

By embracing these principles, Portugal reaffirms its belief that digital transformation must serve the public good, contributing to a fair, inclusive, and sustainable digital society for all.

3. Global Digital Compact and Portugal's Stance

Despite the significant advances made, we must acknowledge that **critical challenges persist**. In this context, the **United Nations' Global Digital Compact (GDC)** represents a unique and strategic opportunity to align global efforts and bridge the WSIS+20 review with the **Sustainable Development Goals**.

The GDC rightly emphasizes the need for a **more inclusive and accessible digital environment** built upon universal connectivity, the protection of digital rights, and the promotion of **responsible innovation**.

Within the UN System, **Portugal claims for coordinated, strategic, and multilateral approaches to digital and technology innovation** grounded in shared values and meaningful dialogue. It is essential to avoid fragmentation and duplication and instead promote **coherence and collaboration**.



However, we believe that digital transformation can only be truly effective if anchored in a **global strategy rooted in common values**, such as **peace, inclusion, and equity**.

Portugal strongly supports **multi-stakeholder partnerships**, bringing together governments, the private sector, civil society, or academia. These alliances are fundamental to addressing digital divides and achieving sustainable digital development.

We must continue to place **digital accessibility and human rights at the centre** of all international digital initiatives to ensure that **no one is left behind**.

Portugal is doing its share: as part of our 2030 Development Cooperation Strategy, which prioritizes digital transformation for inclusive and sustainable development, we are organizing, the second edition of the UN-Portugal Digital Fellowship, taking place in May 2025. This capacity-building programme was designed to support Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in benefiting from digital innovation.

Strategic alliances between nations and international institutions—including within UN system, such as **ITU**—are key to building a more **resilient, ethical, and inclusive global digital ecosystem**.

4. Conclusion

In closing, this event, the **WSIS+20 review**, is a key opportunity to **reaffirm our shared commitment** to a digital future that should be **inclusive, ethical, rights based and human-centred**.

Portugal calls for deepened dialogue among all stakeholders and for enhanced **international cooperation** to ensure that digital



technologies remain a **force for good**—advancing peace, prosperity, and sustainable development.

We remain fully committed to supporting global efforts in favour of responsible innovation and upholding the human rights, and the advancement of shared digital progress.

Together, let us work toward a digital future that shall be fairer, more accessible, and truly beneficial for all of us.

Thank you