

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
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**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

United States of America

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U.S. Intervention

Review of the 20-year implementation of WSIS outcomes

April 9, 2025

Good morning, excellencies, and colleagues.

Over the past two decades, the WSIS framework has demonstrated the transformation potential of digital technologies and the development of a global information society to empower all people. WSIS catalyzed and shaped rapid digital transformation around the world, including connecting the unconnected, spurring economic growth and prosperity, and demonstrating the application of digital technologies to benefit all areas of life. The technological achievements that have taken place in that time period – from broadband networks, to mobile Internet and e-commerce – speak to the innovation and prosperity ushered in by the WSIS framework.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the CSTD Secretariat for playing an important role in the stock taking part of the WSIS review and for producing an in-depth report. The report captures the success of the WSIS Framework, which centers on the multistakeholder system of Internet Governance and respect for human rights. As the report emphasizes, the WSIS framework has enabled an open, interoperable, secure, and reliable internet. The report also underscores how the WSIS framework enabled people to exercise their rights online as they do offline and progresses the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The United States would like to highlight the following with regard to the report. The WSIS+20 Review, as an independent framework, should focus on the review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes, not the connection to

other processes. The United States has made clear that we will no longer affirm the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a matter of course, and this process should not link itself with programs like these that are inconsistent with state sovereignty. Regarding general references to climate change, we suggest the WSIS process focus on its actual goal of ensuring digital technologies can usher prosperity for people around the world. We strongly support protecting women and girls, defending their rights and promoting women's empowerment, but cannot endorse any work or programming that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion policies that stigmatize or demean people because of their race or sex.

Going forward, the United States supports an open, transparent, and participatory process to conclude the WSIS+20 Review. In this process, we must protect the key ingredient in the success of WSIS: the multistakeholder model. WSIS should continue to support UN agencies in fostering collaboration between stakeholders across public and private sectors, the technical community, and civil society. WSIS should advocate for frameworks that support voluntary guidelines and best practices, allowing for many perspectives and rapid technological advancements. Otherwise, we risk encouraging a regulatory approach centralized in the United Nations that decreases sovereignty and hindering progress and innovation.

Twenty years ago, we could not have envisioned the technology we use every day now. And we would be hard pressed now to project the breakthroughs of the next twenty years. The drafters at the Geneva and Tunis conferences had the foresight to make the action lines broad, technology neutral, and flexible enough to address new and emerging technology issues. We should not alter their good work.

Another monumental success in the first twenty years of WSIS has been the work of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to ensure that all stakeholders –

including the engineers, entrepreneurs, and innovators that run the Internet – are part of the global conversation about this Internet. This is critical to ensure the vibrancy and impact of the Internet does not fall victim to top-down governmental regulation and bureaucratic inertia that stifles innovation and attempts to restrict human rights. We call for the UN to extend the mandate of the IGF when it expires later this year and strengthen its work as a bottom-up, multistakeholder fora to discuss Internet public policy issues.

Lastly, we encourage coherence among the range of UN processes working on digital technologies, including from the Global Digital Compact and 20 years of WSIS implementation. This alignment can help ensure the UN works effectively towards closing digital divides without duplication of effort or additional budget obligations.

Thank you and we look forward to continuing to work with all stakeholders as we move through the WSIS+20 overall review.