

**COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT
(CSTD)**

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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international
organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2023 to
implement the outcomes of the WSIS**

Submission by

World Wide Web Foundation

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General 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 levels" (to the 27th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

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World Wide Web Foundation's Contribution to 2023-2024 WSIS Outcomes

Attention: Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) on the implementation of outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

Care of: Ms. Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director of UNCTAD's Division on Technology and Logistics and Head of the CSTD Secretariat

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Part One: *An executive summary of activities undertaken by all stakeholders, progress made, and any obstacles encountered.*

Since the last WSIS in 2023, the Web Foundation reported on the work of our Women's Rights Online Network, publishing Gender and ICT Policy Playbook, advocating gender-responsive ICT policy, and an assessment of digital platform responses to online gender-based violence: <https://webfoundation.org/research/gender-and-ict-policy-playbook/>; <https://webfoundation.org/research/strengthening-accountability-for-online-gender-based-violence-one-year-later/>

Since then we have run an analysis of data, policies, organizations, and legislation that are designed to prevent and counter online and gender based violence: <https://techlab.webfoundation.org/ogbv/overview> We have found that there is no shared definitions of Online Gender Based Violence meaning that neither point in time nor longitudinal data about the prevalence and severity of OGBV in any country or region is available. We also found that there is little guidance to tech companies on policies they should employ, little clear guidance to legislatures on laws they should enact, and there is a gap in any data on perpetrators and their experiences and motivations to perpetuate online gender based violence. Also too we recognize that many companies launch new products and features and request public acknowledgement, but there does not exist a definitive evaluation that is representative of variety of contexts and needs, and which may be represented a global network of gender justice and digital rights organizations, specifically Women's Rights Online. We have focused our work on specific topics of preventing and countering Online Gender Based Violence including with Dr. Carolina Are on the problems of Malicious Flagging: <https://techlab.webfoundation.org/blog/malicious-flagging> , and through our support to the Women's Rights Online network are actively working on running Technology Policy Design Labs to address the gaps we have found: perpetrator data, tech company policies, legislation guidance, globally relevant ontology, and evaluation framework on tools and products.

We have built out a playbook for any organization to run one of our Technology Policy Design Labs to be able to build out their own engagement, proposals, and commitments on preventing and countering Online Gender Based Violence or on any topic of relevance to a more open, safe, trusted, and empowering web: <https://techlab.webfoundation.org/playbook>

Part Two: *A brief analytical overview of trends and experiences in implementation at the national, regional and international levels and by all stakeholders, highlighting achievements and obstacles since WSIS and taking into account the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This could include information on the facilitation process of implementation, monitoring and cooperation among stakeholders.*

In our analysis we found that many of the data collected and available about the experience of Online Gender Based Violence is solely from the survivors perspective, lending to a situation where there is a single experience of being harassed, trying to report and receive a response, and navigating how to reengage and live safely online. The gap is evident that there is little to no information collected about perpetrators of online violence, and without understanding this issue and engaging with this side of the equation we are fundamentally missing a necessary component of preventing and countering violence online.

We also found that tech companies regularly task civil society leaders to provide low-cost or free labor to advise whether an account should be deplatformed or kept online. There exists a large unfunded network of labor supporting the functionality of the tech platforms, and the experts take up this role because many in their networks' livelihood relies on being able to have a presence on these platforms.

A gap related to how tech platforms, governments, and the UN engage experts and stakeholders occurs in how companies consult or "consult" civil society leadership. The trend is to engage one organization at a time or identify a set of organizations that are determined as representative, ask questions based on the company, government, or UN's framing, and then share their own version of an analysis of what civil society has said or has advised. The Global Digital Compact follows this process as 7,000 civil society organizations have been engaged but only a small set of inputs are made publicly available. Without an independent coalition of gender justice and civil society organizations, platforms, governments, and multi-lateral institutions are stuck in extractive practices of gathering and filtering information from civil society leaders.

An additional gap is in ontology of OGBV terms. Even within the United Nations there are different terms used to describe Online Gender Based Violence, Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence, Technology Facilitated Violence Against Women, Online Violence Against Women, and so forth. This lack of alignment allows bad behavior to go unidentified, and the problem is compounded in attempting to translate to multiple languages and contexts. In our experiences, our data shows that depending on the question female journalists in Paraguay are harassed 40% of the time, and female journalists in Bangladesh have 100% experienced targeted harassment. The delta can only be explained in the definitions used and the methodology for collecting information.

Final gaps identified include any guidance to tech companies on what policies they should adopt and how to develop them, and similarly guidance to legislatures on what laws to develop and adopt and particularly how to navigate these in the context of other interests such as the Freedom of Expression community.

Part Three: *A brief description of: (a) Innovative policies, programmes and projects which have been undertaken by all stakeholders to implement the outcomes. Where specific targets or strategies have been set, progress in achieving those targets and strategies should be reported. (b) Future actions or initiatives to be taken, regionally and/or internationally, and by all stakeholders, to improve the facilitation and ensure full implementation in each of the action lines and themes, especially with regard to overcoming those obstacles identified in Part Two above. You are encouraged to indicate any new commitments made to further implement the outcomes.*

Primarily the efforts to address these trends and gaps are through work with the Women's Rights Online network to engage these topics through the multi-stakeholder collaborative Technology Policy Design Lab process, and share the process and findings publicly. Add to, the toolkit for running a TPDL is consistently refined and shared so that other organizations can execute this process on their own. That work will continue and is shared at: <https://techlab.webfoundation.org/>. Additional support for continue topics is being explored and welcomed.

In addition, Web Foundation are engaging with Women's Rights Online and a network of gender organizations to share the gender and Global Digital Compact guidance and have shared 10 principles to support and inform the GDC goals informed by civil society.