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Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international organizations and other stakeholders on their efforts in 2025 to implement the outcomes of the WSIS

Submission by

The Internet Society

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 29th 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.

1. Executive Summary

The Internet Society supports and promotes the development of the Internet as a global technical infrastructure, a resource to enrich people's lives, and a force for good in society. With a third of the world's population still remaining unconnected and serious risks to the Internet, such as fragmentation, cybersecurity threats, and diminishing trust, we firmly believe that it is ever more important than ever to continue working with our community, partners, and other stakeholders in shaping how the world accesses and benefits from the Internet.

In 2025, we continued working with other stakeholders locally, nationally, regionallly, and internationally to support community-centered connectivity solutions, build technical capacity, ensure access to affordable, reliable, and resilient Internet, and enhance confidence and security in the use of ICTs. These collaborative efforts demonstrate how essential the multistakeholder governance model is in advancing the WSIS vision of a people-centered, inclusive, development-oriented Information Society.

2. Overview of Trends and Experiences

Launched in December 2020, Internet Society Pulse consolidates trusted third-party Internet measurement data from various sources. Pulse examines global Internet trends to help policymakers, researchers, journalists, network operators, civil society groups, and others better understand the availability, evolution, and resilience of the Internet. For example, the Pulse data show that in the last 5 years, global Internet Exchange Point capacity has almost doubled, and there are currently 1,012 active IXPs. Additional information on the adoption of key new and enabling Internet technologies and Internet resilience can be found at: https://pulse.internetsociety.org/.

Part 3. The Internet Society's Role

The Internet Society provides extensive experience and expertise in connectivity, inclusiveness, and capacity building to sustain the single, open, globally connected Internet. In relation to the WSIS Action Lines. Our ongoing work in 2025 includes:

WSIS Action Line C1: The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development.

In 2025, we continued providing significant financial support to the IGF and the organization of the UN IGF Secretariat-recognized National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs) through the Internet Society Foundation's Internet Governance Forum (IGF) funding program. We committed $264,100 to support 37 NRIs and sponsored the Global IGF at $100,000. We also provided funding to 25 Schools on Internet Governance (SIGs) at a total of $158,780.

WSIS Action Line C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure

Community-centered connectivity. In 2025, we provided resources and support that enabled communities with Internet access challenges to independently create and sustain local connectivity solutions. Our new community-centered connectivity solution model, developed in 2025, is aimed at refugees, indigenous communities, and women-led social enterprises. As part of our ongoing grant support, we awarded ten grants to community-focused connectivity projects in nine countries. We also organized several workshops on how to build community-centered connectivity in Latin America, Asia-Pacific, and Africa.

Facilitating the development of Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) and strong local technical communities around the world to achieve a more affordable, faster, and more resilient Internet. In 2025, the Internet Society offered funds and technical assistance to build new and enhance existing IXPs and support strong technical communities through our grant programs. By the end of 2025, we expect to have supported more than 20 new and existing IXPs and 150 technical communities, and to have hosted more than 30 Peering Roadshows across Latin America, Africa, and the Asia Pacific regions.

Mapping Terrestrial Fiber Optic Infrastructure. In 2025, the Internet Society assumed a secretariat role for the Open Fiber Data Standard (OFDS). This multistakeholder effort aims to establish a global open standard for fiber optic infrastructure data and norms among operators and regulators for information sharing regarding terrestrial fiber deployments.

Measuring health, availability, and evolution of the Internet. In 2025, we continued providing valuable and actionable data and insights through Internet Society's Pulse platform. We also supported 13 fellows across the world undertaking data-driven analysis of Internet resilience or developing Internet measurement tools.

WSIS Action Line C3: Access to information and knowledge

The Internet Society Foundation's Strengthening Communities/Improving Lives and Livelihoods (SCILLS) grant program contributes to economic inclusion and increase educational opportunities by supporting individuals and communities in using the Internet more knowledgeably and skillfully. The 2025 cycle of the SCILLS program offered grants to 11 new projects in 6 countries, a total of $2.7 million.

WSIS Action Line C4: Capacity building

Empowering future Internet leaders. In 2025, we continued delivering our youth ambassador program, early career fellowship, and mid-career fellowship. After successfully launching a new Peering Fellowship supporting interconnectivity and Internet resilience in Africa in 2024, we expanded the fellows into a global program with 15 fellows from Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America this year. 2025 also marked the launch of a new Community Fellowship to support our community with hands-on advocacy skills. Our alumni network now counts 407 Internet champions equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to be future Internet leaders.

Training and e-learning. In 2025, our Learning @ Internet Society training and professional development program provided learning opportunities to over 24,000 people worldwide. We also continued our Policymaker Program, which provided training to policymakers on the Internet with a focus on the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) at three IETF meetings in 2025. We piloted a modified version of the program with 30 policymakers in Australia.

WSIS Action Line C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

Promoting encryption. In 2025, Internet Society continued advocating for strong encryption as a fundamental technology that protects societies and increases trust online. These efforts included advocacy campaigns against laws that weaken encryption, two workshops for NGOs in Europe and Africa, and Global Encryption Day. We also continued our steering committee role within the Global Encryption Coalition, an organization composed of 511 members, united by a shared commitment to promote and defend encryption.

Empowering Users. In 2025, we launched the Online Trust and Safety Program to empower individuals with knowledge and tools to protect themselves online, advocate for safety and privacy in decision-making, and provide our community with resources to enhance online safety. In its first year, we prioritized understanding community needs and mapping available trust and safety resources. We also focused on building diverse partnerships with experts, chapters, partners, and alumni to co-create innovative and accessible approaches, including the development of new digital products and tools, that help people make safer choices online.

The Internet Society remains committed to continuing its work to get access to those who need it most and help make the Internet a safe, secure, and trustworthy place for everyone to realize the WSIS vision.