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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system, international
organizations and other stakeholders on the progress made in the
implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS during the past 20 years**

Submission by

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the CSTD secretariat that will inform the substantive discussion at the CSTD on the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS during the past 20 years during its 28th annual session in April 2025, in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution E/RES/2023/3, to the CSTD to conduct such substantive discussions and to report thereon, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly.

<p>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.</p>

The Director

DIRECTORATE FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

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Chair, 28th session of the UN Commission on Science and
Technology for Development

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Dear Professor Kah,

Thank you for your invitation to OECD Secretary-General, Mathias Cormann, to contribute to the preparation of the twenty-year review report on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes, being prepared by the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD).

Although the OECD is not specifically part of the Tunis Agenda and the Tunis Commitment and therefore has no formal follow-up commitments, I would be delighted to point to relevant OECD initiatives since 2005, and particularly since 2015 that could inform the preparation of the twenty-year WSIS report. This update may also serve as a resource to support the CSTD in the implementation of the Global Digital Compact (GDC).

Over the past two decades, digital transformation has profoundly affected economies, societies, and individual lives, creating new opportunities while also presenting significant challenges. Major trends such as technology developments, the COVID-19 pandemic and the green transition have had widespread impacts on digital transformation across policy domains. In response, the OECD has taken action to promote a trusted, sustainable, and inclusive digital future through evidence-based policy analysis, global standards and multi-stakeholder engagement. The fast pace and cross-sectoral and cross-border nature of digital transformation has also posed significant challenges, leading the OECD to develop and regularly review its principles-based policy guidance and to strengthen cross-cutting and multi-stakeholder cooperation.

The OECD **Digital Economy Outlook (DEO)**, a flagship publication, has provided in-depth analysis of trends, policies and challenges, as well as new insights into the key technologies that underpin the digital technology ecosystem ([2015](#), [2017](#), [2020](#) and [2024](#)). Its most recent edition, published across two volumes in 2024 covers areas such as the growth of the ICT sector, connectivity and the next generation networks, artificial intelligence (AI), digital technology diffusion and skill needs of tomorrow, underscoring the role of policy in reaping the benefits and mitigating the risks of digital transformation.

Dialogue among countries and with a diverse array of stakeholders is essential for understanding the challenges and impacts of digital transformation. **Since 2005, the OECD has hosted three Ministerial meetings that have led to significant outcomes:** the [2008 Seoul Declaration for the Future of the Internet Economy](#); the [2016 Cancun Declaration on the Digital Economy: Innovation, Growth, and Social Prosperity](#), and the [2022 Canary Islands Declaration on a Trusted, Sustainable, and Inclusive Digital Future](#). The Ministerial meetings have highlighted the critical role of international cooperation in shaping the digital landscape and have guided the OECD's work on digital policy. For example, the 2016 Cancun Ministerial paved the way for the OECD Going Digital Horizontal Project and work on AI (see below), while the 2022 Canary Islands Ministerial saw the adoption of the landmark Declaration on Government Access to Personal Data Held by the Private Sector and the announcement of the OECD Global Forum on Technology (GFTech).

The non-exhaustive overview below outlines developments and outcomes in OECD work across key aspects of digital transformation.

Connectivity

Digital transformation relies on ubiquitous, high-quality connectivity. As more activities move online and as technology development requires faster, low-latency connectivity, bridging connectivity divides between and within countries is a foundational objective.

The OECD was among the pioneering organisations working on connectivity. In 2004, the OECD adopted the [Recommendation on Broadband Development](#), which was at the forefront of Internet policy-making and foresaw the importance of widespread and affordable broadband as a prerequisite for digital transformation. Revised in 2021 as the [Recommendation on Broadband Connectivity](#) it sets out measures to promote high-quality, equitable access for all, and provides a roadmap to encourage competition, innovation and investment, as well as broadband deployment, particularly in unserved and underserved areas.

Effective measurement and assessment are critical in addressing digital divides and enhancing the connectivity landscape. **The OECD collects a range of broadband statistics on connectivity** to inform policy decisions and makes them available through the [OECD Broadband Portal](#), a publicly available resource that is updated every six months (last updated in July 2024). **Over the past decade, the OECD has conducted over twenty-two Country Reviews** and regional of telecommunication and policy regulation, assessing the regulatory, legal and institutional framework of a country, analysing competition in communication markets, and providing tailored recommendations (e.g. Mexico [2012](#), [2017](#); Colombia [2014](#); and Brazil [2020](#); the 2016 Review “Broadband Policies for Latin America and the Caribbean: A Digital Economy Toolkit” and the [2023 report Extending Broadband Connectivity in Southeast Asia](#)).

Measuring and understanding digital transformation

Since 2017, the Going Digital project and its four phases have helped governments better understand the full range of policies needed for successful digital transformation, while showcasing the OECD's multi-disciplinary expertise. Developed in 2017-18 in the context of the first phase of the Going Digital Horizontal Project, the [Going Digital Integrated Policy Framework](#) and [Measurement Roadmap](#) encompass seven dimensions for developing and implementing fit-for-purpose policies for the digital age, and for measuring digital transformation in a comparable way across countries. Both guidance documents are currently being revised to ensure that the OECD's policy and measurement priorities remain well aligned with the rapid pace of technological development. They are complemented by the [Going Digital Toolkit](#), launched in 2017 and continually updated. Available in English, French, Arabic and Hebrew, the Toolkit provides interactive cross-country comparisons along each of the seven dimensions, to track and assess countries' state of digital development and formulate policy responses. The Framework also serves as the basis for Going Digital reviews which are comprehensive country assessments and tailored recommendations (e.g. Sweden [2018](#); Colombia [2019](#); Brazil [2020](#); and Latvia [2021](#)).

Artificial Intelligence and emerging digital technologies

AI is a powerful, general-purpose technology that has already begun to reshape economies, societies and individual lives. Since 2022, the potential benefits and risks of AI have been significantly augmented by the widespread public availability and rapid uptake of generative AI tools with dramatic implications for productivity, employment and education as well as challenges relating to information integrity and intellectual property rights, among others.

The OECD has been at the forefront of global AI governance efforts, developing standards and frameworks that promote policy interoperability. The OECD [Recommendation on Artificial Intelligence](#), the first intergovernmental standard on AI adopted in 2019, has served a global reference point for AI policymaking, promoting innovation in trustworthy AI, with humans at the centre. The rapid evolution of AI, particularly with the rise of generative and general-purpose AI, prompted the revision of the Recommendation (in 2023 and 2024). Today,

nearly 50 jurisdictions have adhered to the Recommendation, and the [European Union](#), the Council of Europe, the [United States](#), and the [United Nations](#) and others use its definition of an [AI system](#) and lifecycle.

OECD standard-setting on AI is complemented by a strong evidence base through the OECD.AI Observatory, along with stakeholder and expert engagement. The [OECD.AI Policy Observatory](#), contains more than 1000 AI policies from over 70 countries, providing the largest government-backed up-to-date global repository of AI policies, data, trends and tools. The Observatory includes information on AI investments, demographics, jobs and skills, and software development, as well as the [AI Incidents Monitor](#) and a [Catalogue of tools and metrics](#) for trustworthy AI. The [Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence \(GPAI\)](#) was conceived by Canada and France during their respective G7 presidencies in 2018 and 2019, and was launched in 2020. This year, the OECD and GPAI have joined forces to advance the implementation of human-centric, safe, secure and trustworthy AI embodied in the principles of the OECD Recommendation on AI. This integrated partnership was [announced](#) at the New Delhi Summit convened on 3-4 July 2024 bringing together OECD Members and GPAI countries on an equal footing. It welcomes new members, including developing and emerging economies, committed to the OECD Recommendation on AI.

The OECD has been an active participant in international discussions on AI governance, contributing significantly to multilateral efforts, including through regular participation in the Internet Governance Forum and engagement with the UN and its specialized agencies. In 2019, the G20 adopted human-centred AI Principles that draw from the OECD AI Principles. Since 2023, the OECD has supported the G7 Hiroshima Process launched under Japan's presidency the aim of promoting safe, secure, and trustworthy AI. The OECD has also worked with the United Nations (UN) leveraging OECD expertise and instruments to inform the WSIS reviews and the GDC. In September 2024, in the margins Summit of the Future, the UN and the OECD announced an enhanced collaboration on global AI governance. I am confident that this collaboration will help advance international AI governance in line with Objective 5 of the GDC, by bringing together the technical and analytical capabilities of the OECD and the global reach and complementary efforts of the UN to support globally coordinated AI governance.

The OECD fosters international dialogue on technological advancements and supports coordinated, values-based policy responses through the OECD Global Forum on Technology (GFTech). Holding its inaugural event "[Shaping Our Future at the Tech Frontier](#)" in June 2023, the GFTech enables multistakeholder engagement via technology-specific focus groups, including those on immersive and quantum technologies. Since its launch, the forum has hosted events and discussions centred on these emerging areas, facilitating collaborative exploration and policy development. These events included participation in the 2023 Internet Governance Forum (IGF) with a session titled "[Pursuit of a Metaverse Based on Democratic Values](#)." This session explored the role of OECD frameworks—such as the OECD Privacy Guidelines and AI Principles—in the responsible development of immersive technologies. The most recent event, "[The Human Future: What's on the Horizon](#)," held at the OECD on September 19-20, which addressed responsible and rights-oriented technology development and deployment in areas including IoT-enabled environments, virtual worlds, and digital twins, as well as human enhancement enabled through biological, neuro or other technological applications on the horizon.

Data governance and data flows

Digital transformation of key sectors has accelerated the generation, collection, and use of data, underscoring their value but also accentuating challenges related to responsible access and sharing of data, especially across borders. OECD policy analysis and standards **guide governments and stakeholders on how to reap the benefits of data openness and maximise the cross-sectoral benefits of data sharing while protecting rights and interests.** Key examples include the [1980 OECD Privacy Guidelines](#), the first internationally-agreed privacy principles and today the global standard for the protection of personal data; the [2021 OECD Recommendation on Enhancing Access to and Sharing of Data](#), which sets out principles that help to maximise the cross-sectoral benefits of data while protecting rights and interests; the [2022 Declaration on Government Access to Personal Data Held by Private Sector Entities](#), seeking to promote trust in cross-border data flows by clarifying how national security and law enforcement agencies can access personal data under existing legal frameworks; and the [2016 the OECD's Recommendation on Health Data Governance](#), which aims to guide governments in setting the necessary frameworks for enabling the availability and use of personal health data to unlock its potential. It also provides a roadmap toward more harmonised approaches to health data governance.

To advance inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement to identify and address pressing concrete issues of cross-border data flows, in December 2023 the OECD convened [the DFFT Expert Community](#). The Expert Community, which advances the G7 ambition of an institutional arrangement for partnership on DFFT, consists of 300 multi-disciplinary experts from more than 40 countries, representing over 220 organisations from governments, regulators, businesses, academia, civil society groups, and international organisations. It focuses on three themes aiming to advance concrete solutions to cross-border data flow challenges: Cross-border payments and data flows, privacy enhancing technologies (PETs) in a cross-border context and enhancing legal transparency around data rules.

Digital Security

The OECD's approach to digital security, rooted in risk management, aims to identify effective policy tools that address economic and social challenges limiting optimal digital security. Since the 1990s, the OECD has led international cooperation on cybersecurity, focusing on its economic and social dimensions rather than purely technical or law enforcement aspects. These efforts include policy guidance such as the [1997 Guidelines for Cryptography Policy](#), which went through a revision process in 2023; and most recently the 2022 OECD Policy Framework on Digital Security which encompasses the OECD Recommendations on [Digital Security Risk Management](#), [Digital Security of Critical Activities](#), [Digital Products and Services](#), [National Digital Security Strategies](#) and the [Treatment of Digital Security Vulnerabilities](#). This Framework charts the economic and social dimension of cybersecurity, highlights the OECD approach to digital security policy and guides policymakers in developing digital security policies on the basis of the OECD Recommendations.

The OECD [Global Forum on Digital Security for Prosperity](#) provides an international multi-stakeholder setting to discuss policy approaches to digital security. Since its launch in 2018, the five editions of the Forum focused on cutting-edge digital security issues, including digital security and innovation, resilience post-COVID-19, AI and the Internet of things, and digital security supply chains.

I hope this information is useful in the preparation of the twenty-year review report. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the materials referred to above or our work on digital policy more broadly.

Kind regards,



Jerry SHEEHAN