

Africa Regional Consultation on the WSIS+20 Outcomes Implementation
Addis Ababa, 1 July 2026

Speech at the opening session by Ms. Isabelle Lois, Vice Chair of CSTD

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to address you, on behalf of CSTD, at this important Africa Regional Consultation.

We are at a pivotal juncture. The WSIS+20 review, concluded at the United Nations General Assembly in December 2025, reaffirmed the enduring relevance of the WSIS vision and extended its mandate to 2035. It also strengthened coherence between WSIS and the Global Digital Compact. For Africa, this renewed global commitment arrives at a moment of both significant opportunity and pressing challenge.

The UN Secretary-General's recent report on WSIS implementation presented to the 29th annual session of CSTD in April 2026, to which UNECA provided inputs, underscores that Africa has been making steady progress in expanding connectivity, digital services, and innovation ecosystems, supported in part by UNECA and other regional actors. At the same time, it emphasizes that the continent continues to face some of the world's widest digital divides, particularly in infrastructure, affordability, digital skills, and access to frontier technologies, limiting its full participation in the evolving digital economy.

The General Assembly resolution on the WSIS20 review outcomes calls on regional commissions to support respective regions' countries in translating global commitments into concrete action through enhanced technical cooperation, capacity-building, and coherent implementation frameworks. I would like to warmly commend UNECA, the Government of Ethiopia, and all partners for convening this timely and forward-looking meeting. Building on the momentum of the 2025 Africa Regional Review on WSIS, this consultation reflects an important shift—from dialogue and assessment to practical implementation. The outcomes of this consultation will be instrumental in shaping Africa's digital future and strengthening its voice in the global implementation of WSIS+20 and the Global Digital Compact.

On the CSTD side, its 29th annual session held last April highlighted several priorities that resonate strongly in the African context.

Firstly, the importance of **digital public infrastructure** by scaling up investment;

Secondly, the need to ensure **equitable access to emerging and frontier technologies, such as artificial intelligence and data**, alongside governance approaches that reflect national circumstances and development needs.

Thirdly, the critical role of **financing, capacity-building, and multi-stakeholder partnerships** to enable countries to move from ambition to implementation. In this regard, we

must deepen partnerships and bring together governments, the private sector, civil society, academia, and the international community, to mobilize the resources, innovation, and expertise required.

Fourthly, the imperative to enhance monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track progress, share lessons, and support transparency and accountability. At its next annual session in 2027, CSTD expects to hear reporting from the WSIS action line facilitators, including UNECA, on developing targeted and result-oriented implementation road maps for their respective action lines, linking them with relevant SDG targets and GDC commitments, including potential targets, indicators and metrics to facilitate monitoring and measurement. It also expects the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, after conducting a systematic review of existing indicators and methodologies, in cooperation with action line facilitators and with the support of the UN Statistical Commission, to report its findings.

Excellencies, dear participants,

Allow me to share with you an important development at CSTD. In response to the General Assembly's resolution on WSIS+20 review outcomes, CSTD, at its latest annual session, significantly streamlined and improved its WSIS resolution in respect of strengthening implementation, cooperation, and reporting. Moreover, CSTD decided to review its WSIS resolution on a biennial basis starting in 2028, unless otherwise agreed. It further decides to continue undertaking its annual review and assessment of progress made in implementing the WSIS outcomes.

In closing, I wish this consultation a great success and look forward to UNECA and other stakeholders will come to the next and future CSTD annual sessions to share African's experiences.

Thank you!