



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



WSIS+20

**WSIS+20 overall review by
the United Nations General
Assembly**



WSIS+20 Side Events

Summary Report

- At UN Headquarters
- Outside of UN Headquarters
- Online

15 to 17 December 2025

Secretariat provided by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)
For any questions, contact: ungawsisreview@un.org

Side Events

Summary Report



Introduction

From 15 to 17 December 2025, an extensive series of side events took place on the margins of the WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, marking a vibrant multistakeholder engagement alongside the official 20-year review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20). These side events provided dynamic platforms to share experiences and good practices, identify emerging issues, and promote voluntary commitments aligned with the vision of a people-centred, inclusive, and development-oriented information society.

Over the course of three days, thirty-five (35) side events were convened – hosted either in person at United Nations Headquarters in New York, off-site nearby locations, or fully virtually – reflecting the diverse ways stakeholders are engaging in shaping the digital agenda. More than 70 multistakeholder co-organizers and over 130 participating stakeholder organizations contributed to a robust programme that highlighted cutting-edge issues and practical solutions at the intersection of technology, policy, and sustainable development.

Thematic discussions encompassed a broad spectrum of contemporary digital priorities, including the role of media in the digital age, digital public infrastructure, digital cooperation and ecosystems, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and strategies for digital inclusion and financing. These conversations not only complemented the official high-level meeting outcomes but also reinforced the collective commitment of governments, international organizations, civil society, private sector actors, and technical communities to advancing equitable and responsible digital transformation worldwide.

This side events summary report brings together contributions from session organizers, who were invited to synthesize the main discussions of their events, identify up to three key takeaways or calls to action, and provide any additional information or contact details to support continued engagement beyond the WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting.



Disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Secretariat. The designations and terminology employed may not conform to United Nations practice and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Organization.

Side Events

Summary Report



Protecting economic, social and cultural rights in the digital age - Spotlight on the right to food

📍 08:00 - 09:15 | 15 December 2025

Organizers: FIAN International, Third World Network & IT for Change

Held within the WSIS+20 review, this discussion examined digitalization's impact on economic, social, and cultural rights, especially the right to food. Participants analyzed digital technologies as socio-technical systems shaped by existing power relations, interrogating how digital governance intersects with structural inequalities in food systems, land, trade, and the global economy.

The conversation contrasted early digital optimism with today's reality, where digital systems often concentrate power and enable extraction. A key focus was platform capitalism, which treats data as a commons to be appropriated. In agriculture, technologies like sensors and AI convert local knowledge and ecological data into corporate assets, often without consent or benefit-sharing, creating new structural inequalities based on data control.

Evidence shows digital agricultural platforms frequently prioritize market efficiency over addressing root causes of food insecurity, displacing informal actors and worsening vulnerabilities, especially for women and small-scale food producers. FIAN International stressed that digital tools are deployed within already concentrated food systems, reinforcing corporate power through alliances between agribusiness and tech firms.

In the context of extreme land concentration worldwide, digital land registries were critiqued for often formalizing exclusion, marginalizing communities with customary or collective rights. Furthermore, turning land into a datified asset enables remote financial control, accelerating dispossession. Similarly, digital carbon markets can restrict farmer autonomy and lack transparency.

Third World Network presented an analysis expanded to global trade and investment rules, which now govern digital trade, data flows, and intellectual property, constraining states' policy space to uphold human rights. Investor-state dispute mechanisms were highlighted as a threat, allowing corporations to challenge public-interest regulations.

These trends were further situated within the rise of "geoconomics," where economic tools such as trade deals, sanctions, and export controls are used to pursue geopolitical power. Control over minerals (especially rare earth elements), data infrastructure, and supply chains has become central to global competition, with profound consequences for countries in the Global South whose resources underpin the digital economy.

Key Messages:

1. Digitalization is inseparable from struggles for food sovereignty, human and peoples' rights, climate justice and development. Spaces for contestation exist in agroecology, community governance, decentralized infrastructures and debates on data justice.
2. Increasing awareness and resistance across multiple international arenas, including biodiversity, health, and seed governance, where debates over data, benefit-sharing, and community rights are intensifying. Need of breaking out of silos and building alliances across movements for food sovereignty, digital rights, climate justice, and trade justice.
3. Digital technologies are not detached from society. If digitalization is to serve human dignity rather than deepen inequality, it must be governed in ways that address underlying power asymmetries, prioritize collective rights, and support structural transformation rather than technological fixes.



More Information:

- Side event recording
- [How Digital technologies affect the Human Rights of Peasants and Small-Scale Food Producers \(2023\) - FIAN](#)
- [Disruption or Déjà Vu? Digitalization, Land and Human Rights \(2020\) - FIAN](#)
- [Coffee and Carbon in Colombia – Human Rights Concerns at the Intersection of Food Systems, Climate Change and Data-based Technologies \(2024\) - FIAN and MAELA](#)
- [Companies Behaving Badly - Reining in corporate misconduct on human rights and the environment \(2025\) - Third World Network](#)
- [US signs trade pacts with four ASEAN nations \(October 2025\) - South-North Development Monitor](#)
- [Reconstructing an International Trade Order for the 21st Century \(October 2025\) - Third World Network](#)

Contact: Sofia Monsalve, monsalve@fian.org

Side Events

Summary Report



Global Inaugural Meeting of Global Commission for 21st Century Healthcare

📍 8:30 - 10:30 | 15 December 2025

Lead organizer: Global Commission for 21st Century Healthcare (GC2ICH)

Co-organizers: Academy of Digital Health Sciences, Disease Management Association of India

On 15 December 2025, on the sidelines of the WSIS+20 United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting, the Global Commission for 21st Century Healthcare (GC2ICH) convened its global inaugural meeting marking the first coordinated, multilateral effort to fundamentally redesign healthcare for the realities of the 21st century. Bringing together visionary leaders representing more than half of the world's healthcare workforce, the Commission confronted an undeniable truth: the world is attempting to solve 21st-century health challenges with an 18th-century system. Despite global health spending surpassing USD 10 trillion annually, nearly half of humanity remains without access to essential healthcare. Inequity, fragmentation, preventable disease, workforce burnout, and declining public trust are not anomalies, they are symptoms of a broken architecture. The deliberations moved decisively beyond diagnosis to design. A shared consensus emerged: healthcare must be rebuilt as a coherent, people-first system, one that prioritizes prevention and primary care, aligns political will with public good, and restores dignity and trust at every point of care. The Commission emphasized that technology must serve humanity, strengthening human connection rather than replacing it. At the heart of this transformation is the health workforce. The Commission called for expanded professional roles, continuous skilling, inclusive innovation, and systems that value caregivers as the backbone of resilient healthcare. Looking ahead, GC2ICH has committed to a disciplined two-year global mission to deliver actionable blueprints for governance, financing, system architecture, and monitoring & evaluation. Regional consultations and Global Health System Redesign Labs will ensure that solutions are globally informed and locally relevant. The next in-person milestone will take place at the World Health Assembly in Geneva in May 2026. This inaugural meeting marks the beginning of a once-in-a-generation global journey: to build trusted, interoperable, and sustainable health systems capable of serving 9+ billion people by 2050. History will remember this moment as the day the world chose to redesign healthcare. This meeting was organized by the Global Think Tank - Health Parliament, Academy of Digital Health Sciences and the Disease Management Association of India and the leaders of WHO, WHO Foundation, OECD, FIP, ICN, WONCA, Harvard Medical School, National University of Singapore and Quantum Biology Institute participated.

Key Messages:

1. Healthcare systems remain organized around treating illness using only negative indicators (mortality, morbidity). We must reorient toward positive health measures, prevention, and addressing social determinants including environment, food systems, and community factors.
2. Innovation cannot be a privilege for the few. Digital transformation must be human-centered, equity-designed, and trust-building. Only 40% of patients currently trust healthcare systems or feel confident managing their health. Technology should help healthcare workers provide better care, not burden them.
3. No single profession, country, or sector can fix healthcare alone. Success demands coordination among governments, multi-lateral organizations, academia, private sector, civil society, and citizens. This Commission comprises of leaders representing more than 50% of the global healthcare workforce. It will deliver a comprehensive healthcare architecture blueprint within two years, addressing governance, system design, financing, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Global Health System Redesign Labs will be conducted worldwide to generate evidence, capture diverse inputs, and inform the blueprint's development.

[More Information](#)

Contact: contact@parliament.health

Side Events

Summary Report



WSIS Action Lines: 20 Years of Implementation

📍 09:00 – 10:00 | 15 December 2025

Organizers: ITU, UNDP, UNESCO, Switzerland

The WSIS side event took place in a hybrid format on 15 December, ahead of the WSIS+20 High-Level Review by the UN General Assembly. The session brought together multistakeholder speakers, including representatives from member states, UN entities, civil society, the private sector, and youth, with participation from WSIS+20 co-facilitators. It reflected on WSIS's 20-year contribution to fostering global digital cooperation, bridging connectivity gaps, and supporting human-centered approaches to emerging technologies. Speakers highlighted the evolution of WSIS from expanding connectivity to strengthening governance, infrastructure, trust, and ethical standards, emphasizing its adaptability to emerging technologies and development priorities. They also underscored the continued relevance of WSIS Action Lines. Discussions focused on the importance of structured, actionable multistakeholder collaboration, enabling meaningful participation where stakeholders shape policies, standards, and initiatives. Key challenges include closing remaining connectivity gaps, developing digital skills, and ensuring inclusive, rights-based digital governance. The session concluded by reaffirming WSIS's relevance, demonstrating that its multistakeholder framework, Action Lines, and human-centered approach have stood the test of time, and emphasizing its role as a guiding framework for inclusive, sustainable, and equitable global digital cooperation beyond 2025.

Key Messages:

1. Inclusive Multistakeholder Cooperation: WSIS has shown that collaboration among all stakeholders is essential for shaping a digital future that serves everyone. Future digital cooperation should remain participatory and transparent, ensuring diverse stakeholders contribute to shaping policies, standards, and digital governance.
2. Bridging the Digital Divide: Despite progress over the past 20 years, many communities remain offline or underserved. Priorities include affordable connectivity, digital skills development, and access to people-centered technologies, particularly for women, youth, and marginalized groups, to ensure equitable participation in the digital world.
3. Preserve WSIS as a Foundational Framework: Over 20 years, WSIS has demonstrated its adaptability and human-centered approach, remaining a key platform for multistakeholder dialogue, global digital cooperation, and alignment with SDGs and emerging technologies, ensuring coordinated and sustained action within the UN system. The WSIS Action Lines have stood the test of time, evolving with technological change to advance development and benefit all, and stakeholders appreciate the efforts of the WSIS Action Line facilitators.

[More Information](#)

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Side Events

Summary Report



Affordable and Secure Digital Infrastructure for Media and Journalists

📍 10:00 – 11:00 | 15 December 2025

Organizers: Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD), ARTICLE 19

Co-organised by the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) and ARTICLE 19, this WSIS+20 side event took place in the context of the final negotiations on the WSIS+20 outcome document. Participants stressed that commitments to free, independent, and pluralistic media must be operationalised alongside efforts to build secure, inclusive, and affordable digital infrastructure. ARTICLE 19 outlined key provisions and gaps in the draft outcome document, noting progress on DPI and information integrity but flagging weakened human rights language and insufficient attention to media freedom safeguards, including protections related to surveillance, encryption, and platform power. DPI was framed as extending beyond services to the underlying technical layers, requiring openness, interoperability, public oversight, and multistakeholder governance. In this context, the Journalism Cloud Alliance was presented as a civil society-led initiative building a shared cloud infrastructure for investigative journalism. The initiative addresses the over-reliance on hyperscalers which increases security and surveillance risks, undermines technological self-determination, and limits accessibility and innovation due to the high costs. Such reliance on big technology companies also undermines both state sovereignty and journalistic independence. Governments and partners should support public-interest alternatives and help co-develop human rights-respecting shared infrastructure. Government representatives from the Netherlands and Switzerland shared perspectives on implementing WSIS+20 commitments at national and international levels, emphasising the role of states in supporting independent media, protecting journalists, and advancing human rights-respecting approaches to DPI. Switzerland highlighted the importance of the Rights-Respecting Digital Public Infrastructure Principles by the Freedom Online Coalition which seek to ensure that DPI is built with a commitment to fostering responsible innovation and economic growth so societies and businesses can thrive in today's digital economy, as well as national efforts to safeguard media professionals, while the Netherlands stressed the importance of international cooperation to counter disinformation and digital threats to journalism. UNDP underscored that promoting free, independent, pluralistic media and advancing secure, inclusive, affordable digital infrastructure (DPI) are not separate agendas; they are mutually reinforcing pillars of democratic, people-centred digital transformation. UNDP is building bridges between those two areas via coalition-building initiatives and efforts to ensure DPI development aligns with international human rights standards. In conclusion: meaningful implementation, multistakeholder participation, and policy coherence across global digital processes are now essential to ensure that "public" in DPI truly means public interest, and power structures are addressed so the technologies respond to diverse societal needs.

Key Messages:

1. Digital governance is central to the advancement of media freedom. Stakeholders must support public-interest infrastructure for media, including alternative and cooperative models, to reduce structural dependency on dominant technology platforms and strengthen resilient and plural journalism ecosystems.
2. Media freedom is also central for the operationalisation of the WSIS+20 vision. Through the WSIS+20 commitments, governments need to integrate media freedom, journalist safety, and information integrity safeguards into their digital governance frameworks and their national DPI strategies.
3. Media freedom can be an enabling right for all other human rights and democratic values. To that end, governments must advance human rights-respecting DPI through openness, interoperability, public interest design, and multistakeholder oversight, including alignment with human rights standards and DPI safeguards.



More Information:

- [Meeting Page](#)
- [Right Respecting Digital Public Infrastructure Principles](#), Freedom Online Coalition, 2025
- UNDP Digital, AI and Innovation Hub | [Digital Public Infrastructure](#)
- [UN DPI Safeguards Framework](#)

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Side Events

Summary Report



From Principles to Practice: Advancing Digital Public Infrastructure through Open Standards and Multistakeholder Cooperation

📍 10:00 – 11:15 | 15 December 2025

Organizers: Kingdom of the Netherlands, Internet Society

This side event examined how open internet standards and multistakeholder cooperation can be translated from high-level principles into practical, real-world impact. Drawing on cross-regional experiences from the Netherlands, Brazil, and other countries, the discussion focused on concrete mechanisms that support the deployment of safe, interoperable, and inclusive digital systems underpinning public services. The session opened with scene-setting remarks by Roman Danilyw (IETF), who highlighted how internet standards offer a proven pathway from principle to deployment. He emphasized that the Internet Engineering Task Force develops open, interoperable standards through a bottom-up, transparent, and multistakeholder process, with success measured by voluntary adoption rather than mandates. This approach has enabled the global internet to scale securely while fostering innovation. In the first round of the panel discussion, Alena Muravská (RIPE NCC), Anke Sikkema (Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Netherlands), and Renata Mielli (Brazilian Internet Steering Committee CGI.br / NIC.br, Brazil) discussed why open standards and interoperability matter for their respective communities and societies. Speakers emphasized that countries cannot operate in isolation in a connected digital ecosystem. Open standards provide the common language needed for cross-border cooperation, trust, and resilience, while ensuring that public values such as inclusion, security, and human rights are respected. Between the two panel rounds, Aafreen Siddiqui (UNDP) presented the Universal DPI Safeguards Framework. She explained how the framework supports countries in embedding safeguards for privacy, security, inclusion, and human rights into DPI by design, and shared lessons from multistakeholder data-sharing initiatives across regions. The second panel round focused on practical examples and implementation approaches. The Netherlands shared experiences with public procurement frameworks, standard-selection processes such as the Forum for Standardisation, and monitoring tools like internet.nl, which together encourage the adoption of modern internet standards across government systems. Brazil highlighted experiences with instant payment systems, multistakeholder coordination to combat spam, and domain-based solutions for smart regulation. Additional examples from countries such as the Czech Republic and India illustrated how clear policy choices, capacity building, and cross-ministerial cooperation can translate principles into secure and inclusive DPI deployments.

By linking these experiences to the WSIS+20 follow-up and the Global Digital Compact, the session showed how open standards can bridge the gap between global governance commitments and digital transformation on the ground. The discussion reaffirmed that sustained multistakeholder cooperation is essential for turning principles into practice.

Key Messages:

1. Use open standards as a bridge between policy commitments and implementation, ensuring interoperability, security, and long-term sustainability of digital systems.
2. Leverage practical mechanisms, such as public procurement, multistakeholder standard-selection, and coordinated policy approaches, to drive real-world adoption of standards.
3. Strengthen multistakeholder cooperation as a core enabler of the WSIS+20 follow-up and the Global Digital Compact, translating shared principles into measurable impact.

Side Events

Summary Report



From high-level principles to reality: a multi-UN entities partnership as a blueprint for responsible digital innovation

📍 10:00 – 11:15 | 15 December 2025

Lead organizer: United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF)
Co-organizers: UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Computing Center (UNICC)

The event convened leaders and innovators from across the UN system to demonstrate how collaboration transforms visionary principles into practical solutions. Speakers recognized that the partnership between UNJSPF, UNDP, UNICC, and other UN entities is accelerating digital transformation and setting new standards for responsible innovation. Digital identity solutions and AI governance are improving efficiency, security, and inclusiveness across the UN system.

The session's recording is available on UN Web TV:
<https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k12/k12m3u0air>.

Key Messages:

1. Partnerships are essential to sustain digital transformation, with concrete applications showcased by the UNJSPF-UNICC-UNDP partnership.
2. Emerging technology, including artificial intelligence and blockchain, can be utilized for good, and the UN is walking the talk in this regard.
3. The UN is taking bold steps to modernize its processes, and staff can be proud of the organization's commitment to ethical, forward-looking innovation.

ⓘ [More Information](#)

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UNJSPF and partners showcase responsible digital innovation at WSIS+20 side event

New York, 15 December 2025 — The United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF), in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC), hosted a high...

Side Events

Summary Report



UN in Action for Digital Cooperation

10:15 – 11:15 | 15 December 2025

Organizers: UN Group on the Information Society

The UNGIS side event, held on 15 December 2025 at UNDP Headquarters, convened UN entities, member states, and stakeholders to reflect on 20 years of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and chart the path for post-2025 digital cooperation. Speakers included representatives from ITU (Vice-Chair and Secretariat of UNGIS), UNCTAD (Chair of UNGIS), UNDP (Vice-Chair of UNGIS), UNESCO (Vice-Chair of UNGIS), UN ESCWA (Vice-Chair of UNGIS – representing UN Regional Commissions), ESCAP, Australia, Brazil, South Africa, South Korea, and APC (civil society). The discussion highlighted how UNGIS can add significant value by breaking down silos within governments and UN entities, ensuring integrated approaches across sectors and regions.

Speakers emphasized the importance of translating global commitments into actionable initiatives. ESCAP and ESCWA, shared insights on implementing WSIS principles at the regional level and fostering multi-stakeholder engagement. Australia shared its WSIS initiatives and encouraged active engagement with UNGIS. Brazil shared its initiatives that stressed investing in people, including programs promoting digital literacy and women's empowerment. South Korea presented WSIS achievements in the Asia-Pacific region, highlighting how multi-stakeholder approaches advance connectivity, emerging technologies, and data use while addressing gaps and promoting inclusive, people-centered solutions. South Africa emphasized coherent, accountable, and coordinated UN digital initiatives for the Global South, highlighting affordability, infrastructure, capacity building, technology transfer, local innovation, and whole-of-government approaches to translate connectivity into tangible development outcomes. The discussion also highlighted ITU's role as Secretariat and coordination hub for WSIS implementation, supporting integrated approaches across UN entities.

The event concluded that WSIS remains central to global digital cooperation. Its continued impact depends on inclusive, multi-stakeholder engagement, regional implementation, and integrated UN action. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen inter-agency coordination, foster innovation, and advance digital inclusion in the decade ahead.

Key Messages:

1. Strengthen UNGIS as an Inter-Agency Mechanism: UNGIS plays a central role in promoting coherent and coordinated action across the UN system on ICT and digital transformation. Strengthening its work will support integrated approaches across UN entities, enhancing the overall impact of UN digital initiatives.
2. Advance Implementation of WSIS Action Lines: Translating WSIS commitments into action at global, regional, and national levels remains essential. Efforts should focus on promoting people-centered, inclusive, and sustainable digital cooperation. As reflected in the draft WSIS+20 Outcome Document, UNGIS is recognized for its key role in advancing policy coherence and coordinating UN system-wide action on digital matters.
3. Foster Inclusive, Multi-Stakeholder Digital Cooperation: UNGIS should continue to support broad engagement across all stakeholders, including governments, civil society, the technical community, and the private sector, strengthening partnerships and dialogue that advance coordinated, people-centered, and forward-looking digital cooperation across the UN system.

[More Information](#)

Contact: UNGIS Secretariat: contact.ungis@itu.int

Side Events

Summary Report



Reflecting on IGF: Perspectives from the Leadership Panel

11:30 – 12:45 | 15 December 2025

Organizers: IGF Secretariat, Government of Norway

The WSIS+20 side event, "Reflecting on IGF: Perspectives from the Leadership Panel," convened LP members and stakeholders to examine how the IGF ecosystem has evolved since 2022 and how it can serve global digital governance after WSIS+20. Opening remarks recalled the LP's mandate to strengthen IGF visibility and strategic direction, and framed the discussion around AI, fragmentation, trust, and the importance of inclusive multi-stakeholder cooperation.

During reflections, panelists highlighted major developments, including rising participation in NRIs, expanded intersessional work, greater engagement with UN processes, and increased attention to emerging technologies. Speakers emphasized the IGF's function as a bridge between local concerns and global policy, with the multi-stakeholder model enabling more bottom-up contributions than ever before.

A notable intervention came from actor, producer, and IGF supporter Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who underscored the need for public storytelling and cultural narratives to make digital-rights and AI governance issues tangible for broader audiences. He raised the risk that public concerns remain abstract and low-salience without compelling narratives grounded in lived experience.

Looking forward, speakers stressed the need for IGF outputs to be more actionable, visible, and aligned with processes such as WSIS+20 and the Global Digital Compact, including through sustained funding, structured follow-up, better communication, and stronger inclusion of underserved and youth voices. The session closed by reaffirming the IGF as an essential forum for open, coordinated, human-centred dialogue in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Key Messages:

1. Strengthen and sustain the IGF ecosystem beyond WSIS+20 through actionable outputs and structured follow-up: Panelists repeatedly emphasized that IGF discussions must translate into clearer, accessible outputs for policymakers and communities, aligned with formal processes such as WSIS+20, the GDC, and national policy cycles. Sustained funding and expanded intersessional work were highlighted as prerequisites for impact.
2. Deepen meaningful multistakeholder and bottom-up participation—particularly through NRIs, youth, underserved regions, and grassroots actors: Participants stressed that trust, relevance, and legitimacy hinge on ensuring diverse perspectives are not only heard but integrated early in agenda-setting, session design, and policy pathways. NRIs must remain central to bridging local realities with global cooperation.
3. Use narratives and public communication to make digital governance concerns tangible to broader publics: Joseph Gordon-Levitt's intervention underscored the need to complement policy dialogue with storytelling and cultural engagement to increase awareness and salience of issues such as AI governance, platform power, and digital rights, helping communities understand real-life implications and mobilizing wider support.



More Information

Contact: Eleonora Mazzucchi, IGF Secretariat: eleonora.mazzucchi@un.org

WSIS+20 Side Events Summary Report



WSIS+20

Youth IGF Legacy: Shaping the Next Era of Internet Governance

13:00 – 14:00 | 15 December 2025

Organizers: Members of the European Parliament, European Parliament and the Youth IGF Movement

The WSIS+20 UN General Assembly side event Youth IGF Legacy: Shaping the Next Era of Internet Governance brought together Members of the European Parliament, national parliamentarians, institutional leaders, and Youth IGF representatives from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific to reflect on the evolving role of youth in global Internet governance and to look ahead to the renewed IGF mandate. Discussions highlighted the Youth IGF's transformation from an initial platform for youth participation into a structured global mechanism that equips young people with the skills, confidence, and access needed to engage meaningfully in policy processes. Youth speakers shared how participation in the Youth IGF led to concrete personal and professional transformation — from first exposure to Internet governance, to leadership roles in national IGFs, policy advisory bodies, parliaments, and international initiatives. This trajectory demonstrated how the Youth IGF can serve as a pipeline for leadership, enabling young people to move from contributors and speakers to policy actors and decision-shapers. The event underscored the Youth IGF's tangible impact at national and regional levels. Speakers from Africa, the Middle East, and Europe described how Youth IGF initiatives have influenced national discussions on connectivity, digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and AI governance, while strengthening links between youth communities and policymakers. The establishment and growth of national and regional Youth IGFs were repeatedly cited as evidence of sustained grassroots engagement feeding into global processes. Members of the European Parliament reaffirmed the value of the Youth IGF as a permanent partner within the broader IGF ecosystem, emphasizing that youth engagement must go beyond symbolic inclusion and become structurally embedded in governance processes. They stressed the importance of continuity between annual IGF meetings, stronger institutional anchoring, and clearer pathways for youth recommendations to translate into policy impact. Overall, the event positioned the Youth IGF as a mature, global convenor that connects diverse youth voices, builds leadership capacity, and contributes substantively to the future of Internet governance under the renewed IGF mandate.

Key Messages:

1. Youth IGF as a leadership pipeline: The discussion highlighted how the Youth IGF functions as a concrete pipeline for leadership, enabling young participants to evolve into policy experts, community leaders, and contributors to national and regional Internet governance processes.
2. Tangible impact at national and regional levels: Speakers demonstrated that Youth IGF engagement goes beyond global dialogue, driving real impact at national and regional levels through policy input, capacity building, and strengthened youth participation in parliaments, institutions, and governance forums worldwide.
3. Political recognition of youth contribution to Internet governance: Members of the European Parliament reaffirmed the value of the Youth IGF within the broader IGF ecosystem, emphasizing the importance of sustained youth engagement to strengthen inclusive, democratic, and forward-looking Internet governance.



More Information

Contact: www.youthigf.com

From Commitments to Action: Operationalising Human Rights-Based Governance for AI and Digital Public Infrastructure

📍 13:15 – 14:30 | 15 December 2025

Lead organizer: Freedom Online Coalition

Co-organizers: Government of Estonia, Government of the Netherlands

The Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) convened a side event under its 2025 Chairship of Estonia, in cooperation with the Netherlands, bringing together governments, civil society, and the technical community to examine how WSIS+20 and Global Digital Compact (GDC) commitments can be translated into concrete practice, particularly regarding artificial intelligence (AI) and digital public infrastructure (DPI). The session explored the persistent gap between high-level principles and real-world implementation. Participants stressed that international commitments risk losing credibility if they remain abstract and are not embedded in national and regional governance frameworks. Moving from norm-setting to delivery was framed as urgent, especially as AI and DPI are rapidly integrated into public systems and services. Interventions highlighted the human rights risks of deploying AI and DPI in contexts with weak accountability or limited oversight. While DPI can improve service access and inclusion, this potential is realised only when systems are grounded in holistic, rights-based governance frameworks. Addressing structural inequalities, unequal access to technology, and accountability gaps was deemed essential. From a technical and governance perspective, participants emphasised open, secure, and interoperable digital infrastructure, supported by multistakeholder decision-making. Policymaking must reflect technical realities and avoid ecosystem fragmentation. Capacity-building, regional coordination, and sustained investment were identified as key enablers of effective implementation. Lightning interventions reinforced these themes, calling for inclusive DPI design, legal safeguards against AI-driven discrimination, mandatory human rights impact assessments, meaningful community participation, and robust data governance frameworks. Accountability and equitable participation were highlighted as critical for ensuring that AI and DPI serve all communities. Overall, the event underscored that translating WSIS+20 and GDC commitments into practice is urgent and complex, requiring sustained political will and coordinated action. Participants reaffirmed the FOC's vital role in bridging global commitments with national implementation and advancing rights-respecting, inclusive digital governance.

Key Messages:

1. From principles to practice: WSIS+20 and GDC commitments on AI and digital public infrastructure must be operationalised through concrete national and regional action to remain credible and effective.
2. Human rights by design: AI and DPI can advance inclusion and access only if they are grounded in holistic, rights-based governance frameworks that address accountability, inequality, and power imbalances.
3. Capacity for delivery: Effective implementation of WSIS+20 and GDC commitments requires coordinated international multistakeholder action, practical governance tools, and sustained investment.

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Side Events

Summary Report



Diversité culturelle et linguistique: un levier d'inclusion numérique au service du développement

📍 14:30 – 16:30 | 15 December 2025

Organizers: Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF); Office for Digital and Emerging technologies (ODET); Group of spanish-speaking countries and group of portuguese-speaking countries

Following a workshop with the same partners held during the preparation of the Global Digital Compact, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) has led a side event on the crucial issue of cultural and linguistic diversity of digital content. With the acceleration of AI development, inclusivity and diversity of data has become even more essential to avoid bias and increased digital divide.

As there was consensus among the various speakers about the centrality of cultural and linguistic issues and the fact that the digital world and AI become less relevant and less useful when created as a monocultural and monolingual tool, the discussions focused on the challenges and the priorities in creating this diversity of data.

There is a need for an enabling environment that would include improved connectivity, relevant regulatory framework not harming innovation, proactive public institutions, trained populations and digitalization of written and oral cultural heritage.

The speakers have particularly insisted on the development of local content in local languages to ensure the usefulness of the internet for everyone, and the reaffirmation of general interest over private interest through the public control of digital critical infrastructures to prevent predatory behaviours towards data.

Digital goods and services and AI can be formidable engines of social and economic growth if the enabling environment is set right. In this context, cultural and linguistic diversity is a crucial foundation for inclusivity and legitimacy of the digital world. It should therefore become a cross-cutting principle for digital and AI governance.

Key Messages:

1. necessity to put cultural and linguistic equity as a cross-cutting principle, at the heart of digital and AI governance
2. need to develop more local digital content and more content in local languages to reinforce inclusivity of the digital ecosystem
3. need to reinforce public control over digital infrastructures, for a collective governance serving the general interest

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Side Events

Summary Report



Re-imagining Digital Cooperation for Sustainable Development: From WSIS+20 Vision to Local Action

📍 15:00 – 16:15 | 15 December 2025

Organizers: Government of Nigeria, Africa Information and Communication Technologies Alliance

The event was notable as Nigeria's first fully coordinated multi-stakeholder delegation to UNGA, bringing together government, regulators, private sector actors, civil society, academia, and the technical communities. Discussions reflected Africa's digital transformation journey since WSIS 2003/2005 highlighting progress in connectivity, policy awareness, and innovation, while acknowledging persistent structural gaps related to affordability, infrastructure financing, skills, institutional capacity, and fragmentation.

A central message was that WSIS+20 must function as a living framework, anchored in continuous follow-up, inclusive governance, and evidence-based policymaking. Speakers emphasized the pivotal role of national, sub-regional, regional, and youth Internet Governance Forums (IGFs) as practical mechanisms for translating global digital commitments into measurable development outcomes aligned with the 2030 Agenda and Africa's Agenda 2063. The discussions reinforced Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) including broadband networks, digital identity systems, trusted data platforms, and cybersecurity frameworks as foundational enablers of inclusive growth, service delivery, and regional integration. Particular attention was given to digital identity as a gateway to access financial services, social protection, education, telecommunications, and cross-border interoperability.

Key Messages:

1. Local action determines global success: WSIS+20 outcomes will only be meaningful if anchored in national and regional implementation mechanisms.
2. Multistakeholder governance is non-negotiable: Inclusive platforms such as IGFs are essential for accountability, coordination, and trust.
3. Digital Public Infrastructure is foundational: DPI underpins service delivery, inclusion, and economic integration.
4. Trust, rights, and innovation must advance together: Data protection, cybersecurity, and AI governance are central to sustainable digital economies.
5. Digital transformation is economic transformation: Effective use of ICTs can unlock AfCFTA potential and accelerate inclusive growth.
6. Skills matter as much as access: Capacity development is critical to ensuring that digitalization reduces, not widens inequality.

Call-to-Action:

1. Localize WSIS+20 commitments into actionable national and regional strategies with clear timelines and measurable indicators.
2. Institutionalize multistakeholder follow-up mechanisms, particularly through regular engagements linked to IGFs.
3. Accelerate investment in interoperable Digital Public Infrastructure as a foundation for inclusion and growth.
4. Expand public-private partnerships and innovative financing to close connectivity and affordability gaps.
5. Modernize data governance, privacy, cybersecurity, and AI frameworks to build trust and safeguard rights.
6. Leverage digital technologies to operationalize the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol and empower MSMEs.
7. Prioritize digital skills, capacity development, and policy literacy, especially for youth, women, and marginalized groups.
8. Apply inclusive digital governance models guided by NetMundial+10 principles and sandboxing.
9. Deepen regional and international cooperation to promote interoperability, harmonization, and shared learning.

Side Events

Summary Report



Digital @ UNGA WSIS+20 Edition

📍 15:00 – 18:00 | 15 December 2025

Organizer: ITU

Marking two decades since the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) established a global dialogue for the digital age, the Digital@UNGA WSIS+20 Edition convened the international digital community at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 16 December 2025. Organized by the International Telecommunication Union and the United Nations Development Programme, the event brought together representatives from government, industry, civil society, academia, the technology community, and the UN system. Participants reflected on 20 years of multi-stakeholder cooperation, welcomed new commitments, and discussed a shared vision for the digital future in advance of the UN General Assembly's WSIS+20 Overall Review.

The event examined the impact of emerging technologies, governance, and digital public infrastructure on building information- and knowledge-based societies, while reaffirming WSIS as the framework to guide digital cooperation. It also highlighted public-private collaboration to connect some of the world's hardest-to-reach communities, with the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition held as part of the programme. New Partner2Connect commitments announced during the event reflected growing engagement to accelerate universal meaningful connectivity and sustainable digital transformation, in line with the original WSIS vision.

Key Messages:

1. Reaffirm WSIS as the global framework for digital cooperation, ensuring digital innovation remains people-centred, inclusive, and focused on sustainable development.
2. Strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships, including through Partner2Connect, to accelerate universal meaningful connectivity and bring WSIS Action Lines to life.
3. Translate commitments into action, leveraging emerging technologies, governance, and digital public infrastructure to build inclusive information and knowledge-based societies.

More Information:
• [Press release](#)
• [Photos](#)

Contact: Julia Gorlovetskaya, Digital Communications Officer, ITU Corporate Communications, Broadband Commission, New York (EST)
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Side Events

Summary Report



Harnessing AI and Digital Innovation and STI for Sustainable and Advanced Agrifood Systems

09:30 – 11:30 | 16 December 2025

Organizers: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Telecommunication Union

The UNGA WSIS+20 Side Event, co-organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), focused on harnessing artificial intelligence, digital innovation, and science to advance sustainable agrifood systems. The event underscored FAO's leadership in promoting inclusive digital agriculture, tracing the evolution from basic ICTs to sophisticated, AI-driven ecosystems, and highlighted the critical role of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Dr. Vincent Martin, Director of FAO's Office of Innovation, opened the event by emphasizing the importance of keeping digital transformation human-centered and inclusive. He called for honest reflection, stronger governance, and the scaling of partnerships to achieve meaningful impact. Henry van Burgsteden (FAO) presented the Science, Technology & Innovation Portal, while Erik Van Ingen (FAO) introduced the Digital Agriculture & AI Innovation Roadmap as a blueprint for responsible innovation and digital inclusion. Roxana Widmer-Iliescu (ITU) addressed strategies for bridging the digital divide, and Tomaso Ceccarelli (Wageningen University & Digital Agri Hub) discussed connecting knowledge to action. Dr. Innocent Musabyimana (African Development Bank) shared TAAT's Pan-African model for scaling climate-smart technologies, and Dr. Benjamin Kwasi Addom (The Commonwealth) presented on building trusted, interoperable agrifood services.

Key discussions centered on bridging the digital divide, scaling climate-smart technologies, and strengthening governance frameworks. Dr. Sah Gitanjali (ITU) concluded the event by highlighting the importance of continued collaboration, alignment with WSIS+20 priorities, and maintaining momentum for Action Line C7. She encouraged participants to remain engaged and contribute to joint initiatives. The event concluded with a strong call to scale proven solutions, foster collaboration, and ensure that digital transformation benefits all—especially marginalized communities—while reaffirming the commitment to responsible innovation, ethical AI, and robust governance for resilient agrifood systems.

Key Messages:

1. Keep Digital Agriculture Human-Centered and Inclusive: Ensure that digital transformation in agriculture serves smallholders, women, youth, and marginalized communities by bridging the digital divide through targeted capacity-building and accessible infrastructure.
2. Strengthen Governance and Responsible AI Adoption: Operationalize the AI Governance Toolkit to promote responsible, transparent, and human-centered AI adoption across Member States, while leveraging FAO's Digital Agriculture & AI Innovation Roadmap and STI Portal to foster robust governance and multi-stakeholder partnerships.
3. Accelerate Innovation and Youth Empowerment: Scale up regional Innovation Hubs and Digital Villages to drive climate-smart technologies and local innovation ecosystems, and expand youth-focused programs and partnerships to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and equitable transformation.

More Information:
• [Side event recording](#)

Contact: Henry van Burgsteden, Senior Innovation Officer, FAO;
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Side Events Summary Report



Designing Community-Centric Data Governance

13:00 – 14:30 | 16 December 2025

Lead organizer: Tech Global Institute
Co-organizers: Derechos Digitales

The side event, "Designing Community-Centric Data Governance," successfully convened to challenge the dominant state-corporate data control paradigm and co-create actionable alternatives for the Global South. The session opened by framing three essential pillars for a new model: legal Stewardship to recognize communities as legitimate data custodians; inclusive Participatory Decision-Making to ensure genuine community control; and tangible Equitable Benefit-Sharing to close the value loop. Participants engaged in a hands-on, interactive workshop centered on a concrete digital health case study: the "Farm Health Initiative," which aggregates sensitive health and agricultural data from farmers but leaves control with a tech company. Working in three thematic steps, attendees designed principles for a new governance framework. Key proposals emerged, including establishing an elected community data council as a steward; implementing granular, user-managed access complemented by collective oversight; and creating mandatory benefit-sharing mechanisms, such as revenue percentages from commercial use being redirected to a community fund for healthcare subsidies or infrastructure. The exercise highlighted the necessity of moving beyond individual consent to collective governance and preventing "benefit-washing." The session concluded by synthesizing these discussions into a coherent model, emphasizing that the path forward requires translating these participatory designs into legal frameworks and regulatory enablers. The event demonstrated a clear demand and practical vision for shifting from data extraction to community empowerment.

Key Messages:

1. **Legitimize Community Stewardship Through New Legal Instruments**
The current legal binary of individual consent versus state or corporate ownership is fundamentally inadequate for governing data that is inherently collective, contextual, and relational—such as community health, agricultural, or cultural information. Policymakers must pioneer innovative legal frameworks that formally recognize communities as legitimate data stewards. This involves creating new fiduciary and trust-based structures where a designated community body (e.g., a cooperative) holds legal authority and accountability for the dataset. The core task is to define the community's legal personality in data governance, outlining its rights to grant access, set usage terms, and enforce obligations on third parties. This shift is not merely procedural; it is a foundational redefinition of data as a collective asset, requiring moves beyond conventional intellectual property and contract law to statutes that embed principles of collective agency, context, and intergenerational responsibility.
2. **Embed Mandatory Participatory Design in Governance Frameworks**
Legal recognition of stewardship is meaningless without robust mechanisms for community control. Therefore, data governance frameworks must legally mandate participatory design and ongoing oversight. Any initiative collecting or using community-scale data should involve elected data councils or assemblies, with clearly defined powers to approve data use cases, audit systems, and revoke access. These mechanisms must be designed to prevent internal power concentration and be resourced to ensure informed deliberation. This moves participation from a best-practice guideline to a non-negotiable license to operate, transforming communities from passive data subjects into active governance actors.
3. **Institutionalize Equitable Benefit-Sharing as an Enforceable Right**
The value loop must be closed legally and financially. Current models often offer vague promises of "improved services," while commercial value is captured elsewhere. We call for regulations that mandate clear, upfront benefit-sharing agreements as a non-negotiable component of any project involving community data. These models must be enforceable and auditable, specifying how monetary and non-monetary value—such as a percentage of revenue, equity, or infrastructure investment—will be returned. Benefits must be framed not as corporate social responsibility or charity, but as a derivable right arising from the use of a collective asset. This transforms data from a source of risk into a tangible source of community power and sustainable development.

Contact: Shumaila H. Shahani, Policy and Advocacy Lead at the Tech Global Institute, shumaila@techglobalinstitute.com

Side Events

Summary Report



Quantum Computing: Capacity Training for UN diplomats and International Policymakers

📍 13:15 – 14:30 | 16 December 2025

Organizers: Microsoft, South Africa

On December 16, Microsoft and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations brought together UN diplomats and senior policymakers for a capacity-building session focused on quantum computing. Minister Solly Malatsi opened the event with a keynote emphasizing that quantum's worldwide influence will depend equally on governance decisions and technological advancements. Microsoft delivered a presentation covering foundational quantum computing concepts, its applications for sustainable development, and important risks to address—particularly the urgency of transitioning to post-quantum cryptography. The discussion highlighted how ongoing collaboration among diverse stakeholders is essential to ensure that innovation in quantum technology leads to secure, inclusive, and shared progress for all.

Key Messages:

1. Societal impact: ensure that the impact of quantum technologies reaches all of humanity.
2. Risk mitigation: prioritize security while simultaneously embracing innovation.
3. Multistakeholder approach: cultivate public-private partnerships among governments, industry, research institutions, and civil society to realize the potential of quantum computing

[**More Information**](#)



Digital Development Goals as a Strategic and Action Guide for Digital Transformation: The Case of Chile

 13:15 – 14:30 | 16 December 2025

Organizers: Fundación País Digital (FPD), the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations

Chile has made significant progress in digital transformation over the last decade, particularly in connectivity, online public services, and technology adoption. In digital infrastructure, the country is a regional leader, achieving high levels of connectivity and technology use across various sectors. Despite these achievements, challenges persist, raising the risk of stagnation or loss of competitiveness. Critical areas requiring attention include: the digital skills gap, talent demand, regulatory frameworks, ecosystem security, economic strengthening, and the complete modernization of the State. The rapid pace of technological change and the demand for increased prosperity necessitate a sustained effort and a clear, coherent, and unified strategic vision to ensure effective and continuous digital transformation. In response, in 2023, the civil society organization Fundación País Digital (FPD) officially launched the Digital Development Goals (ODD – Objetivos de Desarrollo Digital) for Chile. These eight major aspirations guide FPD's work and impact, covering areas from connectivity and digital citizenship to security, education, inclusion, digital entrepreneurship and innovation, the digital economy, and the modernization of public administration. The ODD serve as a long-term strategic framework supported by multisectoral commitment to accelerate a digital transformation that maximizes technology's benefits for human development and national prosperity. For 25 years, FPD has been a key player, articulating the public, private, academic, and civil society sectors to promote Chile's digital transformation. FPD emphasizes the "multi-stakeholder" approach as essential for technological development and the prosperity of open societies. This year, within the framework of the WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting, FPD's extensive experience, vision, and the Digital Development Goals offer valuable insights from Chilean civil society to the global debate on the present and future of the internet.

Key Messages:

1. Multi-stakeholder collaboration as a driver for continuity: A central message of the event was that digital transformation must transcend political cycles. Chile's success is attributed to a 25-year multi-stakeholder model involving the public sector, private industry, academia, and civil society. This collaborative approach ensures that digital strategies remain consistent across different administrations, allowing for long-term planning and the successful implementation of large-scale infrastructure and digital services.
2. Implementation of the digital development goals (ODD) framework: The event highlighted the Digital Development Goals (ODD) as a concrete strategic framework to move from global high-level principles to actionable national policy. These eight goals—ranging from connectivity, security, digital economy and digital citizenship to education and state modernization—provide a roadmap for achieving inclusive growth. A key action point is using this framework to ensure that technology serves human development.
3. Bridging the gap through education and cultural adaptation: The dialogue emphasized that technological advancement (such as AI) must be matched by rapid cultural and educational adaptation. Participants identified the need to modernize the educational system to prepare citizens for new labor markets and to foster "digital citizenship".



More Information:

- [website | ODD](#)
- [Towards a smart country: Strategic priorities and digital transformation ideas for the present and the future](#)

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WSIS+30: What Tech Offer for an Inclusive Digital Future?

13:15 – 14:30 | 16 December 2025

Lead organizer: European Commission

Co-organizers: National Agency for Information Society of Albania; Ministry of Digital Affairs of Poland, European University Institute

The side event 'WSIS+30: What Tech Offers for an Inclusive Digital Future?' was a forward-looking exploration of how new technologies, from Web 4.0 and advanced AI to digital public infrastructure, can advance a human-centred, inclusive and rights-based digital future in line with WSIS principles. Co-hosted by the European Commission, Albania, Poland and the EUI, it brought together ministers, senior officials, UNDP and civil society. Speakers emphasised that innovation must be accompanied by safeguards for human rights, meaningful connectivity and multistakeholder governance, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The European Union presented its Tech Offer and Global Gateway, positioning the EU as a partner of choice for secure, values-driven digital transformation. Rather than simply providing technology, the EU works as a capacity-building partner through a structured three-step model: identifying partner country needs via the Digital for Development (D4D) Hub; assembling the right mix of EU industry expertise, member states and financiers working as 'Team Europe'; and focusing on concrete implementation through tailored digital economy packages. This approach has yielded tangible results, including broadband expansion and school connectivity across Nigeria, e-government and digital identity systems in Kenya, cyber-secure 5G connectivity in rural Colombia, and submarine cables connecting island communities in the Philippines, for example. High-level speakers underlined that this model combines local capacity-building with open, interoperable standards that enable inclusive global cooperation rather than fragmentation.

Albania showcased how smaller countries can use digitalisation to drive development and EU integration, with approximately 95 per cent of public services now delivered online via the e-Albania portal and an AI assistant supporting inclusive access. The country presented initiatives, including AI tools for legal approximation with the EU acquis, a forthcoming national AI strategy, an interoperable digital identity, and expansion of Smart Labs in schools. These examples illustrated how EU partnerships and strong political leadership can help countries boost digital development whilst keeping rights and inclusion at the core.

UNDP underscored DPI as the 'digital rails' for development, noting that around 70 per cent of SDG targets can be accelerated by responsible digitalisation if countries embed openness, interoperability and rights-based governance. Civil society stressed the need to protect encryption, address internet shutdowns and ensure interoperability to counter concentration of power and prevent fragmentation. Other partner countries, including Bangladesh, called for greater technology partnerships and genuine co-creation so developing countries can integrate their own DPI, digital public goods and AI into global frameworks.

Side Events Summary Report



Key Messages:

1. Operationalise partnership-based digital cooperation through structured mechanisms and concrete investment. Governments and international partners should establish and scale tailored digital economy packages that combine secure connectivity, digital public infrastructure and AI applications with capacity-building support. The three-step approach of needs identification through platforms like the Digital for Development (D4D) Hub, assembly of public and private partners, and concrete implementation through mechanisms like Team Europe offers a practical model for translating commitments into results. Significant investment and political leadership are required to connect underserved regions, link schools and communities, and build local digital talent whilst ensuring sustainable financing and long-term commitment to rights-based digital development.
2. Embed human rights, digital rights and trust as non-negotiable foundations of all digital systems. Digital transformation must be grounded in human rights, including the protection of freedom of expression, data privacy and non-discrimination, with strong safeguards against internet shutdowns and surveillance. Governments must ensure that technology deployments improve lives, enhance dignity and uphold democratic values, while respecting both individual rights and the need for public trust in digital infrastructure. Investment in digital skills for all segments of the population, including seniors and marginalised groups, must accompany the rollout of technology, ensuring that inclusion is treated as a measurable outcome rather than a slogan.
3. Strengthen multistakeholder governance and advance interoperability as a guiding principle to prevent fragmentation. Governments, international organisations, industry and civil society must collaborate through genuine multistakeholder engagement, with human rights experts and civil society voices meaningfully integrated into technical standard-setting processes and digital policy development. Interoperability should be a guiding principle for all future digital systems to counter monopoly power, prevent a fragmented internet and enable innovation. Open standards and interoperable frameworks must apply across digital infrastructure, platforms and services to ensure that developing countries can integrate their own solutions and that no single actor can control access to essential digital services.



More Information:

- [Event Page: WSIS+30: What Tech Offer for an Inclusive Digital Future?](#)
- [EU Global Gateway](#)
- [EU Digital for Development \(D4D\) Hub](#)
- [UNDP Digital Public Infrastructure \(DPI\)](#)
- [GovStack Initiative](#)
- [Data to Policy Navigator](#)
- [e-albania](#)
- [SDG Digital Acceleration Agenda](#)

Contact: Nils Berglund (Nils.Berglund@eui.eu)

Side Events

Summary Report



Doing Dynamic Digital Inclusion Locally

📍 13:15 – 14:45 | 16 December 2025

Lead organizer: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
Co-organizers: UNESCO Information for All Programme, American Library Association SDGs Task Force

Digital inclusion remains a major priority, both for the billions still offline, but also because for those counted as connected but are not yet truly able to enjoy the full benefits of the internet. Moreover, with the digitalisation of our social, economic, cultural, civic and democratic lives, the cost of being unconnected is only growing. Too often, these barriers disproportionately face those already at risk of marginalisation. Speakers underlined that top-down, tech-only solutions alone cannot provide a solution. We need a localised approach, working through actors, networks and institutions which are able to listen, understand and respond to community needs. Libraries are well placed to do this, taking a comprehensive approach to information issues. They have a strong background already in combining connectivity with skills and content access, and indeed in many settings are coordinating wider community efforts to identify and respond to digital exclusion. Post offices in the Global South and North alike have successfully transformed into hubs for digital engagement, in particular in rural areas, offering a wide variety of services that support users to operate businesses, access eGovernment services, and of course communicate. Both have particular power because they adopt a multi-channel approach, offering a variety of relevant tools and services, becoming a one-stop-shop for communities. Both can also serve as platforms and portals, giving access to other services and support. Even though their action is local, such institutions can nonetheless operate and so deliver at scale. Support for the mobilisation of entire post office networks and library systems can pay off with similarly widespread benefits. This is particularly important in poorer or remote regions, but also deprived urban areas. In addition, library and post office workers themselves need to have both the skills and support to engage in these conversations – something that cannot be taken for granted.

Key Messages:

1. Effective digital inclusion requires a responsive localised approach – purely technological, top-down methods can only take us part of the way
2. The multi-channel, locally adaptive approach adopted by libraries and post offices, offering a variety of useful services, can be particularly effective
3. We need both to mobilise library and post office staff and proactively include them in wider digital inclusion planning to realise their potential at scale

(i) More Information:

- UNESCO IFAP Issue Brief: [Empowering Libraries for an Inclusive Digital Future](#)
- [UPU Digital Panorama Report](#)
- [IFLA: A People-Centred Internet Requires Local Digital Infrastructures](#)

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Side Events

Summary Report



From Action to Impact: A Curtain Raiser to the AI Impact Summit 2026

15:00 – 16:15 | 16 December 2025

Lead organizer: Permanent Mission of India to the UN
Co-organizers: Permanent Mission of France to the UN

In an era marked by rapid technological transformation, climate challenges, and widening inequalities, commitments alone are insufficient unless they translate into outcomes that are inclusive, accountable, and scalable. Moving from action to impact means grounding principles in practical pathways, ensuring that innovation reaches those who need it most, and building systems that deliver results at population scale.

The AI Action Summit held in Paris in February 2025 was a milestone in global cooperation on inclusive and sustainable AI. The side event allowed the participants to reflect on those outcomes and to look ahead to the AI Impact Summit that will take place in New Delhi on 19–20 February 2026, which aims to move from principles to measurable impact.

Key Messages:

1. The Minister of State from India, Mr. Jitin Prasada gave an overview of India's priorities for and approaches to the Summit. He invited all Member States, UN system entities and other stakeholders to participate.
2. The French Ambassador for Digital and AI, Ms. Clara Chappaz spoke about the messages that came out of Paris and extended full support to the Summit in New Delhi.

[More Information](#)

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Designing Responsibly: Age-Appropriate Standards in the Digital Era

📍 09:00 – 11:00 | 17 December 2025

Organizers: The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering (IEEE), UNICEF, Greek Ministry of Digital Governance, for Electronic Communications and Digital Policy issues

The session discussed today's digital environment, and the significant challenges children face where online access is ubiquitous and technology evolves rapidly. The discussion focused on technical solutions, actionable pathways and government implementation actions taken to create age-appropriate digital environments for children. From the Greek national approach to safeguarding minors through legislative regulation, technological tools, such as the Kids Wallet, to data governance frameworks to address AI and children's privacy and, the numerous technical standards developed in collaboration with IEEE that enable organizations to make their products and services age appropriate compliant.

Key Messages:

1. There is a need for a uniform approach to designing products and services for children, with a standardized methodology and a clear ethical code.
2. Children's data is unique and needs to be protected through a governance framework that involves legislation, regulation, educational awareness and tangible requirements.
3. Children need to be consulted with their input considered as the digital environment continues to evolve, the requirements and mechanisms put in place to protect children need to keep pace with how they use new and emerging technology.

More Information:

- IEEE 2089™-2021, [Standard for Age Appropriate Digital Services Framework](#), informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and built upon the principles developed by the 5Rights Foundation, establishes a recommended set of processes that help enable organizations to make their products and services age appropriate, including consideration of risk mitigation and management through the life cycle of development, delivery, and distribution
- [UNICEF AI For Children Project](#) | Toward AI policies and systems that uphold child Rights
- For additional age-appropriate and child online protection materials, please see the [sessions landing page](#)

Contact: Karen Mulberry Sr. Manager Technology Policy IEEE, k.mulberry@ieee.org

Side Events

Summary Report



Empowering Trust in the Digital Future: Innovation, Security, and Sustainable Growth

11:00 – 12:30 | 17 December 2025

Lead organizer: Creators Union of Arab

Co-organizers: Arab Media Union, Creative NextGen Solutions

The event was jointly organized by the Creators Union of Arab (UN Member), the Arab Media Union (UN Member), and Creative NextGen Solution, and brought together experts and stakeholders from the fields of digital innovation, intellectual property, cybersecurity, and governance leaders.

The event focused primarily on the Intellectual Property Verification (IPV) initiative, a pioneering Arab-led project offering a global solution for protecting intellectual property in the digital environment. The initiative was presented as an integrated platform combining artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, and cybersecurity to ensure content authenticity, enhance trust, and safeguard creators' rights worldwide. Discussions highlighted the platform's technical architecture, its distinguishing features, and its potential for international scalability and cooperation with intellectual property authorities.

A second key theme addressed the challenge of building global digital trust, emphasizing the growing risks of piracy, misinformation, and rights violations in digital spaces. Speakers underscored the need for a comprehensive international framework to protect creators, noting how emerging technologies can improve transparency, traceability, and content reliability, supported by successful international practices.

The session also explored technology governance and its impact on the global creative economy, examining how AI and blockchain are reshaping creative industries and contributing to digital economic growth. The role of international organizations in supporting regulatory frameworks and sustainable digital ecosystems was emphasized.

The event concluded by reaffirming that the intellectual property protection is a fundamental pillar for protecting digital content, fostering innovation, and building a secure, trusted, and sustainable digital future for creators and societies worldwide, and the IPV Initiative has been designed to achieve these objectives and will represent a transformative step toward building a secure and sustainable digital world at the global level.

We invite all stakeholders to collaborate in this initiative.

Key Messages:

1. Advancing Trust through Integrated Digital Technologies

Key Message: Trust in the digital environment can only be sustainably achieved through the integration of artificial intelligence, blockchain, and cybersecurity solutions that ensure content authenticity, traceability, and protection of intellectual property rights.

Action-Oriented Recommendation: Member States, international organizations, and relevant stakeholders are encouraged to support the Intellectual Property Verification (IPV) initiative, as part of national and regional digital transformation strategies.

2. Strengthening Global Cooperation for Intellectual Property Protection

Key Message: The protection of creators' rights in the digital space requires harmonized global approaches and strengthened international cooperation to address piracy, misuse of content, and cross-border enforcement challenges.

Action-Oriented Recommendation: Stakeholders are invited to enhance collaboration with relevant UN entities, including WIPO, ITU, and UNDESA, to develop policy frameworks, standards, and governance mechanisms that promote transparency, fairness, and sustainability in the digital creative economy.

3. Embedding Cybersecurity as a Core Pillar of Digital Sustainability

Key Message: Cybersecurity is a foundational element for building secure, inclusive, and resilient digital ecosystems that support innovation, economic growth, and the rights of creators.

Action-Oriented Recommendation: Governments, private sector actors, and civil society are encouraged to invest in capacity-building, knowledge-sharing, and expert engagement to integrate cybersecurity best practices across digital content platforms and creative industries.



More Information:

www.ipverification.org

www.arabcreators.org

<https://www.facebook.com/Arab.creators.UN>

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Building Capacity for Trust and Security in Cyberspace

 10:00 – 11:30 | 17 December 2025

Organizers: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, International Telecommunication Union

This WSIS+20 side event explored how cyber capacity building can serve as a practical enabler of trust and security in cyberspace amid rising geopolitical tensions. Framed around the importance of implementing the UN Framework for Responsible State Behavior in the use of ICTs, the discussion highlighted capacity building as a core pillar for promoting peace, stability, and cooperation among Member States, particularly given the varying levels of cyber capacity across Member States.

Panelists examined the importance of context-sensitive approaches to cyber capacity building, drawing on experiences from multilateral, bilateral, and regional initiatives. The discussion emphasized that effective capacity building must be demand-driven, locally tailored, results-oriented, and aligned with the guiding principles agreed in the UN OEWG process, including respect for human rights, gender sensitivity, political neutrality, and respect for national sovereignty.

Speakers shared lessons learned from supporting Member States in operationalizing the UN Framework, underscoring the importance of translating normative commitments into practical implementation. Good practices discussed included fostering whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, building trust among domestic stakeholders, and strengthening international partnerships through early engagement with local actors, from the inception of capacity-building initiatives, to better understand local priorities and sensitivities and ensure local ownership and buy-in.

Key Messages:

1. To foster trust and cooperation in cyberspace, implementing the framework of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace is crucial. And capacity building is the key in this regard.
2. To uphold the cyber capacity building principles, international partners should engage with local actors and stakeholders at the very early stage of the capacity building initiatives.
3. To make the capacity building initiative sustainable it is key to invest in people, not only technology. In this regards, it is very important to prioritize skills/knowledge development (e.g., training trainers, building a computer incident response team).

Side Events

Summary Report



Roundtable on Information Integrity in an Evolving AI Landscape: Applying the UN Global Principles for Information Integrity in support of the Global Digital Compact

📍 11:45 – 13:00 | 17 December 2025

Lead organizer: U.N. Department of Global Communications

Co-organizers: UNESCO, the Delegation of the European Union to the U.N. in New York, the Permanent Missions to the U.N. of the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Zambia, Romania, Brazil

As the year tapers to a close and reflections deepen and resolutions take shape, participants gathered with hope, purpose and commitment to strengthening information integrity and continuing to make it a UN, Member State and civil society priority. The roundtable came at a moment of convergence of WSIS+20, Global Digital Compact (GDC) implementation and one year of UN Global Principles rollout, all pointing towards a safe, inclusive and trustworthy digital future. GDC is a blueprint for equitable digital transformation with information integrity at its heart. Without trustworthy information it's not possible to bridge digital divides, safeguard human rights online or ensure ethical AI development. Strengthening information integrity has become essential to continue progress towards SDG 16.10 on public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms. References to information integrity in WSIS+20 outcome document together with UN Global Principles and GDC reflected prioritization, coherence and continuity in the UN system's approach. This mention was essential to foster safe, inclusive and resilient digital environments where information integrity is preserved and science, reliable data guide public policies. Integrity of the information space is a critical dimension of societal resilience, a pillar of a coherent and well-functioning society. AI has increased the volume, sophistication and reach of mis- and disinformation online. Transparency is essential to understand how recommender systems, ranking algorithms and automated moderation tools, black boxes, largely, shape information flows. Participants reflected on ad tech, noting platforms should provide users with breakdown of account monetization, including advertisers and the income generated, and financial disincentives for disinformation. The UN Global Principles' most valuable contribution was their 'whole of life cycle' approach to addressing gender-based violence, societal harms and human rights violations in the algorithmically mediated public sphere. Libraries were highlighted as safe spaces that can serve as laboratories for information integrity and digital literacy.

Key Messages:

1. Participants underscored a multistakeholder approach to strengthening information integrity remains central to advancing a safe, inclusive and trustworthy digital future.
2. Participants recognized the need for transparency and accountability across digital platforms.
3. Participants affirmed that information integrity is critical to sustaining progress towards SDG16.10 and is a pillar of societal resilience within an AI-mediated information ecosystem.



More Information:

- [UN Global Principles for Information Integrity](#)
- [Global Digital Compact](#)

Side Events

Summary Report



Connecting The Dots: WSIS+20, IGF & Global Digital Compact

📍 13:15 – 14:30 | 17 December 2025

Organizers: 3aref.com, NTRA Egypt, RIPE.NCC, ICANN, Lebanon IGF, MITAI Lebanon

The speakers and the participants emphasized the important roles of the WSIS, Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the Global Digital Compact (GDC) to promote the global public policy dialogue on issues related to ICT and the Internet. They all agreed that the current WSIS +20 review process is different from the previous WSIS reviews in that it is the key process to set the way forward. Building on the success of the WSIS and the IGF, the WSIS architecture and the IGF multistakeholder nature can serve as the right platform to discuss and engage in policy dialogue on the GDC's issues and related matters. There is a complementarity between the WSIS and the IGF that was demonstrated over the last 20 years. This makes them both the ideal process to discuss, address and follow up, with their respective roles, the issues and activities related to the GDC. The speakers emphasized the importance of strengthening the IGF. They viewed that institutionalizing the IGF and making it permanent are right steps toward this direction. However, the IGF process and structure need to be optimized by creating a government track that allows governments to discuss policy issues and engage with other stakeholders.

The speakers believe that the Internet Governance definition as it is in the Tunis Agenda (paragraph 34) and its subsequent paragraphs explaining the socio-economics aspects and technical issues of Internet Governance cover the digital issues addressed in the (GDC). These digital issues are based on using the Internet and utilizing its resources.

The stability and security of the Internet is an important factor in connecting the dots and the technical community plays a key role in this aspect. The technical community, particularly the ICANN, is humbled with referencing its role with appreciation in the output document of the WSIS+20 review. The technical community will continue to support the IGF.

The alignment between the three dots (WSIS, IGF, GDC) needs a will among all stakeholders, capacity building and inclusiveness. Bridging the 3 dots is important for the future will be strengthened with the cooperation with the technical community.

The speakers welcomed making the IGF mandate permanent. It is a key step in moving forward. The WSIS process and the IGF will allow holistic analysis, collective learning, multistakeholder engagement as well as institutionalization which will play a key role in building policies.

Key Messages:

1. The WSIS, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and Global digital compact are connected; with the WSIS being the foundation, the IGF being the open inclusive platform and the GDC being the direction for the future.
2. Reaffirm the multistakeholder cooperation as the foundational and operational principles to ensure the meaningful participation across the WSIS, IGF and GDC. It is equally important to leverage on national and regional IGFs (NRIs) to enhance policy dialogue, strengthen cooperation among all stakeholders and encourage inclusive national/regional processes.
3. Recognize that openness, interoperability, security, and stability of the Internet are essential technical foundations for meaningful connectivity and digital transformation. These technical foundations need to be safeguarded for one global Internet and avoid Internet fragmentation by ensuring that national and digital policies remain compatible with the global nature of the Internet.

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**WSIS+20 overall review by
the United Nations General
Assembly**



More information on the WSIS+20 Review Process
can be found on the official website:
<https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/wsisis20>

For any questions, contact the Secretariat, provided
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