



**ECOSOC
Partnership
Forum**

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2025 ECOSOC Partnership Forum Side Event

WSIS+20: Building a digital future for all

Wednesday, 5 February 2025, 15:00–16:00 (UTC+01:00),

Organized by: ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD

Background on the event

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process has provided a robust framework for global digital cooperation, fostering partnerships among governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia, technical community, and other stakeholders. Through its multistakeholder approach, it has driven progress in harnessing digital technologies for sustainable development. The upcoming WSIS+20 review marks a critical milestone in assessing achievements, addressing challenges, and shaping future priorities. This side event underscored the vital role of the WSIS process in advancing digital transformation and highlighted the importance of the WSIS+20 review in shaping future priorities. In line with the 2025 ECOSOC Partnership Forum theme, “Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind,” the event emphasized how digital technologies serve as powerful enablers to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. The session focused on the continued relevance of the WSIS framework in supporting the implementation of the SDGs, stressing the need for ongoing collaboration to address emerging challenges. It reinforced the collective effort required to build a resilient and inclusive digital future for all.

Key Issues discussed

- The WSIS+20 review presents an important opportunity to strengthen multistakeholder governance mechanisms, building on the successes of the past two decades to address emerging digital challenges and advance inclusive global digital policies.
- Recognizing the importance of consistent, ongoing engagement in multistakeholder processes, as WSIS process in fostering multistakeholder collaboration, emphasizing the need for continuous engagement among UN organizations, governments, and other stakeholders to drive forward global digital policies and initiatives.
- The continued relevance of the WSIS Action Lines in addressing the digital divide, particularly the 2.6 billion people still offline, and the collective effort required to achieve universal and meaningful connectivity across all regions.
- The WSIS Forum's role as a crucial platform for dialogue, bringing together diverse stakeholders to discuss and align on critical issues related to digital transformation and ensuring the inclusion of all voices in shaping the future of the digital landscape.
- The importance of ensuring that digital governance processes remain complementary, avoiding duplication, and allowing stakeholders to engage meaningfully across various initiatives, including WSIS and the Global Digital Compact (GDC).
- Strengthening global digital policies to effectively leverage technological advancements for sustainable development, with attention to ethical frameworks and equitable access to emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence.
- The pressing need to close the financing gap for digital infrastructure, digital literacy, and data protection, and the challenge of securing concrete financial commitments to drive future digital development.
- The importance of standards in promoting digital inclusion, ensuring interoperability, affordability, and accessibility of ICT services, while strengthening digital public infrastructure, including cybersecurity, literacy, and data protection for all users, especially marginalized communities.

Key recommendations for action

- Utilize the existing WSIS framework, including WSIS Action Lines, to support and strengthen global digital cooperation and sustainable development.
- Encourage stakeholders to share their perspectives for the WSIS+20 review and contribute to shaping the future of WSIS beyond 2025, including through the [ITU's call for inputs on WSIS+20 review](#).
- Highlight the achievements of WSIS in the digital cooperation space and raise awareness of its multistakeholder collaboration model.
- Foster greater collaboration between Geneva and New York communities in shaping the WSIS+20 review, ensuring broad participation from global stakeholders.
- Ensure synergy between WSIS+20 review and GDC discussions.