

# WSIS+20 Zero Draft Comments



Submitted by: Global South Actors

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**Acknowledging** the WSIS+20 Review Process and the various engagements that the Co-Facilitators have led to date;

**We commend** the Co-facilitators for the in-depth consultations and consideration of diverse stakeholders leading to the WSIS+20 Zero Draft.

**Cognisant** of the commitments to the Geneva Declaration of Principles, the Geneva Plan of Action, the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, which are echoed in the WSIS+20 Zero Draft;

**We**, the organisations and actors from the Global South, welcome the Zero Draft, which has extensively underscored the need to bridge the digital divides, promote a fair data economy, and uphold human rights.

**While** we applaud the WSIS+20 Zero Draft for promoting human rights, the role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Global Digital Compact, multistakeholderism, and a permanent mandate of the Internet Governance Forum;

**Now, therefore**, this submission highlights critical areas of focus and sets out pertinent recommendations.

### 1. Information and Communications Technologies for Development

Text Proposal	References
<p>We recommend adding the following to paragraph 20;</p> <p>We urge governments to prioritise and increase investment and funding towards the development of digital public goods and digital public infrastructure, especially in developing countries. We strongly recommend that any prioritisation of investment in digital public infrastructure explicitly includes safeguards for human rights, accountability, and participatory decision-making to prevent</p>	<p><a href="#">Global Digital Compact (GDC)</a> (par.17 (e) and (f))</p>

<p>such harms through mechanisms such as conducting human rights impact assessments.</p> <p>We encourage the formation of partnerships that bring together governments, the private sector, civil society, technical and academic communities, and international and regional organisations to design, launch, and support initiatives that leverage digital public goods and digital public infrastructure to advance solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals.</p>	
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## 2. Bridging digital divides

We welcome the determination to bridge the digital divides, addressing the achievement of universal meaningful and affordable access to the Internet and digital services, including the availability of networks offering higher capabilities, the affordability of access, data and devices, the availability of content and services that respond to users' priorities and needs, the extent to which these are multilingual, and the capabilities and resources required to make effective use of them, including information literacy, and to ensure that no one will be left behind in the Information Society. In emphasis, we present that

Text Proposal	References
<p>Paragraph 22:</p> <p>We welcome the acknowledgement of public and private sector collaborations since the World Summit. We propose, adding as follows:</p> <p><i>In addition, we also acknowledge the role of other stakeholders such as civil society actors in promoting the advancement of ICT development, especially within underserved communities.</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Global Digital Compact (GDC)</a> (par.6)</p>
<p>Paragraph 24.</p> <p>We propose in the last part '<i>All stakeholders have a part to play in addressing and rectifying these gender digital divides</i>' particularising the need for public and private sector actors taking meaningful steps to bridge the gender digital divides. The language of playing a part needs to be strengthened with a</p>	<p><a href="#">GDC/NETmundial Multistakeholder Statement</a> (par.3)</p> <p><a href="#">UN General Assembly A/RES/78/213</a></p>

<p>particularisation for policy and regulatory measures to achieve digital inclusion. In addition, we propose the following:</p> <p><i>We highlight the need for multistakeholder approaches to bridging gender digital divides, ensuring that strategies to promote digital inclusion are cognisant of gender.</i></p>	
<p>Paragraph 25.</p> <p>We propose phrasing that is more precise, or, in addition, the following:</p> <p><i>We recommend adequate measures that ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in shaping interventions that promote their access to information and communications technologies and the internet, including meaningful budgetary action that ensures that persons with disabilities have access to assistive digital technologies. To this end, we urge all stakeholders to include persons with disabilities in the development and implementation of national strategies for digital connectivity.</i></p>	<p><a href="#">A/RES/78/195</a> (par.23)and <a href="#">Tunis Agenda</a> (par 90(c).</p>
<p>Paragraph 28</p> <p>We recommend adding the following:</p> <p><i>We urge the concerted use of universal access approaches, such as Universal Service Access Funds, to progressively realise universal access for all. We also urge the financial support for community-centred connectivity initiatives and other local-led strategies to enhance affordable access to information and communications technologies and the Internet.</i></p>	<p>GDC/<a href="#">Tunis Agenda</a> (par.73)</p>

### 3. Financial mechanisms

Language Proposal	References
<p>We propose adding to this part the following;</p> <p><i>We recommend investing in and deploying resilient digital infrastructure, including satellites and local network initiatives, that provide safe and secure network coverage to</i></p>	<p><a href="#">GDC</a> (par.10(c))</p>

<i>all areas, including rural, remote and “hard-to-reach” areas, and promote equitable access to satellite orbits, taking into account the needs of developing countries. We further urge promotion of universal access at affordable rates and at sufficient speeds as well as reliability to enable meaningful use of the Internet.</i>	
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#### 4. Human rights and ethical dimensions of the Information Society

Language proposal	References
<p>Paragraph 77.</p> <p>We propose the inclusion of the right to privacy as a key human right. This is also in line with its mention in Paragraph 89 of the Zero Draft. We propose its inclusion as italicised below:</p> <p>We recognize that human rights have been central to the vision of the World Summit on the Information Society and that information and communications technologies have shown their potential to strengthen the exercise of human rights, enabling access to information, <i>the right to privacy</i>, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association.</p>	<p><a href="#">GDC</a> (par.14 and 46), WSIS+20 Zero Draft (par. 89).</p>

#### 5. Data governance

Language proposal	References
<p>97. <i>We recognize that over the past 20 years, the massive use of data, including personal data, has shaped behaviors and affected the lives of different societies, politically, socially, and economically, in both positive and negative ways. Data has taken on a new dimension in both individual and public life,</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 23 July 2024 E/RES/2024/14</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Seizing the opportunities of safe, secure and trustworthy artificial</a></li> </ul>

<p><i>not only identifying people but also determining access to services, benefits, and tools essential for a dignified life in a digitalized society. We encourage States and the international community to adopt a data justice approach, where data governance should be subordinated to the objectives of social justice, the reduction of inequalities and structural discrimination, and the strengthening of local capacities, in line with the SDGs.</i></p>	<p><a href="#">intelligence systems for sustainable development</a> A/78/L.49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">UN Data Strategy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">How to make data work for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</a></li> </ul>
<p><i>98. We reiterate the importance of regulatory frameworks implemented by States, such as personal data protection laws, and their role in fostering responsible data governance in dialogue with other public policies. We note that the twenty-year context of the World Summit presents conflicts between data protection regulatory frameworks and trade agreements, and we recognize that such measures should be complementary, not opposed, with human rights and consumer protection being duly respected.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">International data governance: pathways to progress</a> - CEB/2023/1/Add.2</li> <li>• <a href="#">Data for development</a> - UNCTAD</li> <li>• <a href="#">How to make data work for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</a></li> </ul>
<p><i>99. We call on States and international organizations to ensure that developing countries, marginalised communities, and Indigenous peoples have not only access but also decision-making power over how the data that affects them is collected, processed, and used, including in AI systems, by recognizing and respecting their knowledge, territorial rights, and own forms of governance, while ensuring their full and informed participation.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">International data governance: pathways to progress</a> - CEB/2023/1/Add.2</li> <li>• <a href="#">Data for development</a></li> </ul>
<p><i>100. We reiterate the role of open and inclusive data for public policies, SDG monitoring, and crisis response, always respecting the principles of justice, privacy, and participation.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 23 July 2024</a> E/RES/2024/14</li> <li>• <a href="#">Data for development</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Report on the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS during the past 20 years</a></li> </ul>
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## 6. Internet governance

Language proposal	References
113. We welcome the evolution of the Internet Governance Forum from an annual meeting into an ecosystem that includes a wide range of intersessional and other activities. We particularly welcome the emergence of more than 170 National and Regional Internet Governance Forums, which have enhanced multistakeholder discussion of relevant issues in all continents, many sub-regions and a majority of Member States. <i>[new text] We reiterate the need, however, of greater articulation between the National and Regional Forums with the Global Internet Governance Forum.</i> We also welcome the establishment by the Secretary-General of the Forum's Leadership Panel.	<a href="#">Report on the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS during the past 20 years</a>
115. We decide that the Internet Governance Forum shall be made a permanent forum of the United Nations, <i>[new text] fulfilling a central and coordinating role among the different processes of global digital governance, particularly within the United Nations system. We reiterate the scope defined for the Internet Governance Forum in the Tunis Agenda, where both issues of Internet governance, in its narrower sense, and digital governance, in its broader sense, are already encompassed, including artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.</i>	<a href="#">UN's Global Digital Compact</a> (par. 28) <a href="#">Tunis Agenda</a> (par.72)
118. We call for the strengthening of the Secretariat of the Internet Governance	<a href="#">Tunis Agenda</a> (par.73)

<p>Forum, to enable it to continue its development, implement further improvements and support the work of National and Regional Internet Governance Forums and intersessional activities, and invite the Secretary-General to make proposals concerning future funding for the Forum. <i>[new text] We also reiterate the need to strengthen its organizational evolution, allowing it to be a bridge between multilateral governance processes with the multistakeholder community, preserving flexible modalities of self-organization and its multistakeholder composition.</i></p>	
<p>119. We note the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines, agreed upon at NetMundial+10, and reinforce the need for meaningful engagement of all stakeholders in multilateral and multistakeholder processes of digital policy-making.</p>	<p><a href="#">Report on the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS during the past 20 years</a></p>

## 7. Monitoring and measurement

Some gaps exist in addressing how the specific goals outlined in the WSIS outcome document will be implemented in practice. Fully presenting an implementation plan enhances the measurability of WSIS objectives.

The above comments represent the collective position of the following signing organisations.

### Signing Organisations

1. Paradigm Initiative (PIN)
2. Knowledge House (KHA)
3. Tech & Media Convergency (TMC)
4. Data Privacy Brasil
5. DUKINGIRE ISI YACU (DIY)
6. Freedom Forum (Nepal)
7. Pollicy
8. Centre for Artificial Intelligence Ethics and Governance in Africa (CAIEGA)
9. Digital Access
10. Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA)
11. KICTANet



12. Tech Global Institute
13. Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET)
14. PROTEGE QV
15. Fundación Multitudes
16. Research ICT Africa
17. Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF)
18. Media Rights Agenda (MRA)
19. Rudi International
20. Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria
21. Youth and Society (YAS)
22. Consortium d'Appui aux Actions pour la Promotion et le Développement de l'Afrique (CAPDA)