



**IGF 2023 High Level Session III: Looking ahead to WSIS+20 –
Accelerating the Multistakeholder Process
8 October 2023 | 13:45-15:15 JST | Kyoto, Japan
Summary Document**

Speakers

Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU); Mr. Sigbjørn Gjelsvik, Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Norway; Mr. John Whittingdale, Minister for Data and Digital Infrastructure, United Kingdom; Ms. Tripti Sinha, Chairwoman, ICANN Board; Mr. Jun Murai, Distinguished Professor, Keio University; Ms. Maria-Fernanda Garza, CEO, Orestia and Board Chair, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC); Ms. Chat Garcia Ramilo, Executive Director, Association for Progressive Communications (APC); *with contributions from* Mr. Stefan Schnorr, State Secretary, Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport, Germany; Mr. Pearse O'Donohue, Director for the Future Networks Directorate of DG CONNECT, European Commission; Mr. Antonio Pedro, Acting Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); and Ms. Barbara Carfagna, Rai Television (moderator).

Summary

Taking Stock of WSIS

The panellists discussed the successes of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) in the last two decades, including the rapid expansion of Internet access and the multistakeholder approach, which has contributed to this achievement. The open standards, open architecture, interoperability and inclusivity promoted by WSIS have also been a factor in the robust state of digital affairs today.

WSIS has evolved over the years to address the benefits and risks presented by digital change. Panellists emphasized WSIS must be kept adaptable and reactive in the face of fast-moving developments, particularly in Artificial Intelligence.

Inclusive Multistakeholder Approach

WSIS has held multistakeholderism as a fundamental principle that ensures diverse perspectives, including those of women and youth, are front and centre in shaping policies and solutions related to digital technologies. These perspectives are ever-critical within policy dialogues, especially those of youth, as technologies advance.

Addressing Digital Inequality

Digital inequality and exclusion have persisted – even if incremental progress has been made. Panellists called for keeping meaningful and equitable connectivity for all at the heart of the WSIS project. Addressing digital divides, including infrastructure, policy, and capacity divides, was identified as crucial for access.

IGF's Role

The IGF was recognized as the key platform for multistakeholder discussions on digital policy. Panellists underscored the value of IGF and its continued role in providing advice and recommendations to inform policymaking processes.

Evolution

WSIS was described as an evolving process that should continue to adapt to the changing technology and policy landscapes, especially in light of the “fragmentation of governance” risk. The framework



established by WSIS, including principles of openness, inclusivity, and multistakeholder collaboration, remains relevant for addressing future challenges and opportunities.