

UN IGF 2022 - Lightning Talk #89 - Renewing the WSIS mandate: the Internet and its governance beyond 2025

Session context

In 2005, governments agreed, at the World Summit on the Information Society, or WSIS, a number of Outcome documents focused on the goal of achieving a development oriented Information Society. This included the Tunis Agenda, which effectively laid the ground for the multi-stakeholder model of Internet Governance, as the best way to achieve a development oriented Information Society. In December 2015, as part of the first outcomes review (WSIS+10), Member States subsequently agreed on a resolution reaffirming the initial WSIS vision of a “people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilise and share information and knowledge”. **The next review process, agreed in the former Resolution, WSIS+20, is scheduled for 2025.**

The speakers noted that the 2025 review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process is **a critical opportunity to renew support for multi-stakeholder governance of the Internet**, to endorse and, where appropriate, evolve the WSIS action lines (significantly on developmental issues) and ensure the UN IGF’s continuation as a vital forum for facilitating dialogue on Internet-related issues. The speakers also stressed that as the review approaches, **it is critical that a diverse range of stakeholders, including youth, women, those with disabilities and those from developing geographic regions, are fully included in discussions on the future of the Internet.**

Key takeaways

- **Strengthening the IGF - Discussion focused on the need to strengthen, and ensure the continuation of, the IGF, ahead of the WSIS+20 review process.** Specifically, participants highlighted the role of the new IGF Leadership Panel, which will seek to ensure that IGF discussion reaches beyond the annual global meeting, and improve existing mechanisms to ensure input from smaller organisations and the Global South is captured. Participants also agreed that **the Leadership Panel can play an important ‘connecting’ role**, helping promote the IGF’s messages to UNCTAD, ECOSOC and other UN bodies. **It will be key to further engage Governments in the IGF ahead of the WSIS+20 review process**, to ensure they appreciate and support the IGF’s role in enabling people from diverse backgrounds to come together to discuss issues related to the Internet.
- **The importance of the IGF’s national and regional initiatives (NRIs) - The IGF’s NRIs play a key role in capturing local concerns.** The IGF Secretariat toolkits were flagged as a useful resource for launching such initiatives to facilitate discussion on local issues. **The input from these initiatives will be critical to feed into the WSIS+20 review process.**
- **Bridging the digital divide - Meaningful access to connectivity should be a key focus for the WSIS+20 review process.** The importance of hosting the 2022 IGF in a developing region (on the African continent) was highlighted in that regard, as this brought further attention to regional issues including digital connectivity. Rotating where the IGF is held is critical, especially as focus on policy priorities can shift based on region.
- **Increasing private sector engagement - There is a need to encourage more private sector organisations to engage with the IGF, particularly in the lead up**

to the WSIS+20 review process. Members of the private sector and technical community that actively participate in the IGF must encourage their broader communities to deepen involvement with the annual IGF. This is particularly important to ensure that the perspective of smaller businesses is captured within discussions at the IGF.

Upcoming WSIS+20 engagement opportunities

- **CSTD meeting, 28 March - 1 April 2023:** To be discussed at the meeting - [Resolution on the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society](#)
- **WSIS Forum, 13 March - 17 March 2021:** [WSIS Action Lines for building back better and accelerating the achievement of the SDGs](#)