WSIS+20 Forum

Internet Society's Contribution to the Open Consultation Process

15 February 2024

Through the Official Submission Form, all stakeholders are encouraged to actively engage in the OCP with a view to developing the event program, collect inputs to identify gaps in the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action and the WSIS Action Lines and contribute to the WSIS+20 review process.

Please share your suggestions for innovations that could be introduced in the structure and program of the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event.

We appreciate the crowdsourced nature of the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event program, in that the engagement of governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, the technical community, and intergovernmental organizations in the preparatory process ensures shared ownership and continual improvements of the forum. In addition, this Open Consultation Process (OCP) ensures the agenda and program of the event will be built based on contributions submitted by the community.

We celebrate that several innovative session formats, such as open space talks, thematic workshops, and country workshops were introduced in the event last year to foster more participatory and collaborative exchanges. We further suggest the addition of sessions that showcase expertise, inspire actions, and encourage dialogue such as lightning talks, round tables, and unconference sessions. We're supportive of innovations of this nature as long as they make sessions more dynamic and conversations more meaningful.

While we celebrate the participation of a wide range of stakeholders –which have enabled an increased diversity of messages shared during the event– we kindly encourage finding a balance that would allow the sessions to possess adequate multistakeholder representation while allowing increased interaction among the participants to foster meaningful discussions. For example, we would suggest not having sessions with a high number of speakers, as that only allows for very limited interaction. Sessions with smaller numbers of speakers allow for more dialogue and interaction.

The WSIS Forum is a UN global platform for multistakeholder implementation activities, information exchange, creation of knowledge, sharing of best practice, and to foster partnerships to advance development goals. Please suggest how the WSIS Forum can enhance its alignment with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) , taking into account the outcomes of the UNGA Overall WSIS Review (A/RES/70/125).

Building on the WSIS Forum's longstanding tradition as a multistakeholder convener to share best practices and knowledge, and to foster partnerships, we envision a strong emphasis on WSIS action lines C2 (Information and communication infrastructure), C4 (Capacity Building), C5 (Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs), and C6 (Enabling environment). By convening a wide range of stakeholders, the WSIS Forum is one of the best-suited spaces to foster multistakeholder partnerships.

Please suggest key topics and themes that should be included in the High-Level Segment of the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event. These topics and themes should aim to maximize the impact and relevance of the Forum in light of current trends, while also considering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Overall WSIS Review conducted by the United Nations General Assembly.

- Bridging the digital divide using innovative solutions, such as Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Satellites
- Economic costs associated with Internet shutdowns. The Pulse NetLoss Calculator Per Country offers a compelling view on this topic: https://pulse.internetsociety.org/netloss
- Building local capacity through training trainers to ensure long-term, sustainable knowledge growth.

Please propose some ideas on format to make the High-Level segment more dynamic and interactive.

We kindly encourage increasing the interaction among the participants by enabling conducive formats, such as roundtables, or unconference formats, in which an opening statement would be allowed, but agile dialogue would be strongly promoted. Striking a balance between the duration of the segments and the number of speakers is also recommended.

How can local, national and regional activities as well as innovative cross-sectoral partnerships for implementation, become more visible at the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event?

We propose wider promotion of such activities in partnership with relevant agencies and organizations, such as the Internet Society's global network of chapters. There are message boards and mailing lists where information can be shared with targeted communities by geography and interest areas.

How can we ensure more equal participation in the parallel workshops at the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event?

Workshop organizers should be encouraged to ensure intersectional diversity in their panels. Reducing the number of parallel sessions (and avoiding repetition of topics) may help.

What are the main achievements in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines in the past 20 years?

C1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development*
N/A

C2. Information and communication infrastructure*
N/A

C3. Access to information and knowledge*
N/A

C4. Capacity building*
N/A

C5. Building confidence and security in use of ICTs*
N/A

C6. Enabling environment*
N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-government*
N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-business*
N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-learning*
N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-health*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-employment*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-environment*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-agriculture*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-science*

N/A

C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content*

N/A

C9. Media*

N/A

C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society*

N/A

C11. International and regional cooperation*

N/A

What are the key challenges in implementing the WSIS Action Lines and what areas that have not been adequately captured by the framework of the existing 11 WSIS Action Lines that would need to be addressed beyond 2025?

C1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development*

N/A

C2. Information and communication infrastructure*

N/A

C3. Access to information and knowledge*

N/A

C4. Capacity building*

N/A

C5. Building confidence and security in use of ICTs*

N/A

C6. Enabling environment*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-government*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-business*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-learning*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-health*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-employment*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-environment*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-agriculture*

N/A

C7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life — E-science*

N/A

C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content*

N/A

C9. Media*

N/A

C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society*

N/A

C11. International and regional cooperation*

N/A

What are the key emerging issues and trends in the field of ICTs for development that should be taken into consideration for the WSIS+20 review?

Internet shutdowns

The escalating trend in Internet shutdowns, which started some years ago, remains a major concern. It is becoming an increasingly common policy for governments to intervene and shut down the Internet at the national or sub-national level for primarily political objectives. The Internet Society believes Internet shutdowns harm societies, economies, and the technical infrastructure of the global digital economy. We are therefore working to encourage governments and decision-makers everywhere to support policies that keep the Internet on and resilient as the foundation for modern economies that provides people with and to give people the opportunity for a more prosperous and secure future. Internet shutdowns constitute a major risk for many businesses and investors, including those who are building infrastructure and/or developing services.

Looking ahead to WSIS+20 and beyond, what is your vision for the future of the WSIS process and its role in shaping the global digital agenda?*

The WSIS process provides opportunities for stakeholders to take stock of the key trends, challenges and opportunities posed by the current digital landscape. It also facilitates assessment of the WSIS Action Lines and their framework in close collaboration with the UN Agencies involved.

We are keen to see the WSIS process remain a strong multistakeholder process that provides guidance for all stakeholders on addressing opportunities and challenges posed by the current Internet landscape, including universal connectivity and creating trustworthy online environments.

We look forward to the multistakeholder outcome on vision of WSIS beyond 2025, to be developed during WSIS+20 Preparatory Phases and submitted to the Summit of the Future in 2024 and endorsed during the High-Level Meeting at UNGA in 2025

Would you like to recommend a high-level speaker for the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event?*

Yes

Please provide the details of any speakers you would like to recommend.

Sally Wentworth, Managing Director, Internet Society.

Would you like to request a thematic workshop during WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event?*

Yes

Please specify the topic of the workshop.

- Helping inform data-based policy-making decisions through Pulse Country Reports
- Community-centred solutions to connect the unconnected
- Capacity building for emerging leaders to protect the Internet.

Would you like to request an exhibition space at the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event?*

No.

Please specify the theme of your stall.

N/A

Please specify any requirements for your stall.

N/A

Would you like to sponsor a coffee break or reception at the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event?*

No

WSIS Forum is extrabudgetary and every year we raise funds to defray the operational costs through partnerships. Would you be interested in sponsoring and being the digital transformation partner of the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event?

Yes

Please suggest visible partnerships that might strengthen the implementation of WSIS 2025 and beyond.

Leveraging the Internet Society's Pulse platform to inform decision-making by all stakeholders when promoting activities that advance WSIS Action Lines. Pulse Country Reports provide specialized information to identify gaps to be addressed.