



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

# World Summit on the Information Society – 20 Year Review

January 2025

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The World Summit on the Information Society, or WSIS, is a United Nations process focused on global digital governance and development. The original WSIS high level meetings in 2003 and 2005 adopted a common vision to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilise and share information and knowledge.

The 11 WSIS action lines have supported the Internet to become a remarkable success story – a tool of global social and economic development. Institutionally the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), a key output of the WSIS, saw 11,000 attendees recently meet to discuss Internet public policy. The IGF has fostered over 190 national and regional initiatives which bring together all stakeholders in local and regional development discussions. Over 15,000 WSIS related projects have been registered, and billions of users have been connected to, and educated about, the Internet over the last 20-years. The Internet is now a tool of global communication, education, business and trade, and supports numerous technologies.

An ambitious, positive approach to WSIS+20 is needed to ensure all countries and citizens can continue to benefit from the digital world. With 2.6 billion people still unconnected to the Internet, WSIS+20 provides the opportunity to redouble our efforts to close digital divides and address emerging challenges and opportunities.

For WSIS+20 to be successful, all voices must be heard. We are interested in your experience to help inform an evidence-driven approach to the WSIS+20 process. By leveraging the expertise and experience of all, we can enable everyone to maximise the benefits of the Internet and other digital technologies.

## WSIS Action Lines (Areas of Focus)

- 1) The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development, including the Sustainable Development Goals
- 2) Information and communication infrastructure, including accessibility; affordability; assistive technologies; digital inclusion; enabling and competitive environment; connectivity; Internet exchange points; satellite networks; infrastructure investment; and universal access/service
- 3) Access to information and knowledge
- 4) Capacity building and development for ICT and the Internet
- 5) ICT and online security including authentication; consumer protection; countering misuse, spam and cyber-crime; cyber-security; data protection; data security; network security; privacy; and cyber incident-handling and response
- 6) Enabling environment including online Consumer protection; dispute settlement; domain name management; E-commerce; E-government; intellectual property; and Internet governance
- 7) ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life including for disaster recovery; E-applications; E-agriculture; E-business; E-commerce; E-employment; E-environment; E-government; E-health; E-publishing; E-science; E-waste and sustainability
- 8) Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content
- 9) Media, including online safety
- 10) Ethical dimensions the Information Society, including human rights
- 11) International and regional cooperation including financing for development

## For your advice:

### *Digital Divides and Sustainable Development*

1. To what extent does your country consider the last 20 years of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process created improved economic and social outcomes for your citizens, businesses and society?
2. What are your country's goals for digital transformation and development? How might global action better support these goals?
3. What are your top priorities where your country considers global action through WSIS+20 would further close or eliminate digital divides?
4. Does your country consider there is sufficient global resources to close the digital divides, and if not, who might be able to further contribute (and what) to address any resource gaps?

### *Global Digital Governance*

5. The WSIS establishes a process of multistakeholder governance, which enables governments, the private sector, technical community, civil society and academia to participate equally in governance discussions. Is the multistakeholder model delivering the outcomes your country expects and do you consider your country's voice is heard?
  - a. If not, why do you consider this is the case?
6. The WSIS establishes the Global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to discuss Internet public policy and exchange best practices, which has been mirrored at the regional and local levels. What is your country's experience with the IGF? Are there aspects of the IGF model which could be improved?
7. The WSIS assigns roles and responsibilities to various parts of the UN system to deliver on the 11 WSIS action lines. What is your country's experience with UN system coordination of online and digital issues? Do you have views on how UN coordination of online and digital issues could be made more effective, efficient, accountable or transparent?
8. Does your country consider it has sufficient opportunity to influence how the global Internet functions? Are there any areas of concern with the technical management of the Internet?

### *Public Policy*

9. What would your country describe as your key areas of concern, or 'pain points', in:
  - a. global public policy issues pertaining to the Internet?
  - b. domestic public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, which global action might help address?

### *Next Steps*

10. Would you be open to further conversations and working with Australia towards a shared ambitious, positive and proactive outcome for the WSIS+20 process?

## Continue the Conversation

### **Australia's Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts**

- Ian Sheldon, Director, Internet Governance – [ian.sheldon@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:ian.sheldon@infrastructure.gov.au)
- William Lee, Assistant Director, Internet Governance – [william.lee@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:william.lee@infrastructure.gov.au)