

Consultation WSIS Forum 2026 event programme¹.

Suggestions for the WSIS Forum 2026

Taking into account the WSIS+20 Review Outcome Document Resolution adopted by the UNGA

- 1. In light of the discussions held during the WSIS+20 review process, and the Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly, which themes or issues should be prominently featured at the WSIS Forum 2026?**

Among the topics that should be highlighted at the WSIS Forum 2026 are: 1). AI governance, from a rights-based perspective. This entails stressing that human rights and fundamental freedoms must be respected, protected, and promoted throughout the life cycle of artificial intelligence systems deployed by Member States and other stakeholders. 2). Human oversight of technologies throughout their entire life cycle, applying a human-centered approach to the design, development, deployment, and use of digital technologies. 3). Effective gender mainstreaming. 4). Private-sector accountability, since big tech companies concentrate significant power in digital ecosystems, strengthening commitments to hold them accountable, ensuring effective remedies, and establishing clear due diligence obligations remain crucial 5). Bridging digital divides, with a specific focus on closing the persistent gender digital gap. 6). Ensuring meaningful connectivity by achieving universal and affordable access to the Internet and digital services, which means refraining from imposing restrictions on the free flow of information and ideas, for example through internet shutdowns and online censorship. 7). Multi-stakeholder cooperation and engagement, building on the São Paulo Guidelines for Multi-stakeholder Engagement agreed upon at NetMundial+10, and reinforcing the need for meaningful and balanced participation of all stakeholders in the governance of the Internet and other digital technologies. 8). The environmental impacts of digital technologies, addressing issues such as data centers' water consumption, their greenhouse gas emissions and energy footprints. 9). Emerging technologies and digital labour, addressing the impact of digital technologies on employment and workers, especially those in informal and precarious jobs such as in the gig economy.

- 2. The WSIS Forum is recognized as an important platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue sustaining the work of Action Lines facilitators: What new ideas or changes to the format, structure, and programming of the WSIS Forum would make the event more impactful?**

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As we pointed out in the last consultation for shaping the 2025 WSIS Forum, the event structure and format could be enriched by regional dialogues to align stakeholders' priorities, addressing contextual differences and fostering an inclusive approach to Internet governance. Thematic working groups could be formed to enable focused discussions, experience sharing, and actionable recommendations. The forum could be an opportunity to launch awareness campaigns to inform stakeholders about the importance of their participation. The forum structure and program should continue to promote multi-stakeholder collaboration and dialogue, while ensuring a stronger presence and meaningful participation of stakeholders from the Global Majority and other underrepresented groups. Flexible and inclusive scheduling must accommodate various time zones and regions to enable meaningful stakeholder engagement. Additionally, intersectional diversity should be prioritized in all sessions, with particular attention given to including women and underrepresented communities to ensure a broad range of voices in internet governance processes. To ensure an inclusive and equitable WSIS Forum, prioritizing Global Majority participation is key. This means ensuring Global Majority individuals' representation on panels, considering their workshop proposals, and supporting travel and visa costs. Finally, forum discussions must lead to tangible outcomes and actionable commitments for implementation beyond the high-level event.

3. What emerging or underrepresented topics should the WSIS Forum 2026 address?

Among the topics that remain underrepresented in the WSIS+20 Review Outcome Document Resolution, and that should be prioritized at the 2026 WSIS Forum, we wish to highlight the following three: 1). Gender inclusion in digital governance: we recognize the progress reflected in resolution with key references to gender equality and gender-based violence. However, important gaps remain. To ensure an inclusive, rights-based, and gender-responsive digital future, gender must be systematically integrated across all WSIS structures, especially the Action Lines. Addressing this topic also entails recognizing differentiated impacts and risks of ICT faced by gender-diverse persons or other marginalized groups. 2). Cultural and linguistic diversity in digital technologies: Internet and other digital technologies hold a big potential to build identity and enable the communication of diverse cultural content. However, many cultures and languages remain excluded from digital governance, risking the marginalization of citizens from different cultural backgrounds and exacerbating barriers to meaningful access to technology. It is therefore essential to ensure that digital technologies serve as tools for inclusion rather than instruments that deepen exclusion. 3). The impact of emerging technologies, such as AI, on labour: AI industry often depends on underpaid and precarious labor, primarily in the Global South, where workers lack access to effective redress mechanisms due to the opacity of global supply chains and the systemic invisibility of their contributions.

4. Please provide suggestions on the formats of dialogue and showcasing you would you like to see more of at WSIS Forum 2026?

Interactive formats that encourage meaningful participation could be adopted, prioritizing inclusive session modalities like hybrid formats that ensure global access to discussions. For instance, interventions should be evenly distributed across sectors, promoting equal participation and reducing hierarchical divides. Sessions should feature balanced multistakeholder representation and foster greater interaction among participants to enable substantive discussions. Regional dialogues and thematic working groups are also essential to identify shared goals and address specific challenges effectively.

5. What are the most pressing global issues or emerging trends that should be highlighted during the High-Level Segment to ensure relevance and impact, and what interactive formats could be used to make this segment more dynamic and engaging?

Among the most pressing global issues are: 1). AI use in the public sector: The growing adoption of AI in public services and decision-making often lacks transparency, disproportionately targets groups in vulnerable situations, risks privacy rights, and exacerbates inequalities and the global digital divide. 2) Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV): its manifestations in the context of emerging technologies such as deepfakes require urgent attention. Gender lenses must be integrated across the WSIS process to promote gender-responsive governance and policies. 3). Information disorders: These are increasingly recognized as a global threat to democracy and human rights. It is urgent to hold online platforms and social media companies accountable by requiring transparency, and accountability specially considering the need to address their business models. Due Diligence is key, which must include scrutiny of how algorithms amplify disinformation and misinformation. 4). Cybersecurity and cybercrime frameworks to target human rights defenders: The rapid rise of censorship and the shrinking of civic space, supported in legal frameworks that restrict freedom of expression and association, is undermining democracy worldwide. Attention must be paid to the global deterioration of civic space and its impact on multistakeholder forums. This includes addressing the threats faced by civil society in carrying out their work safely and sustainably, including their participation in international forums. 5). The incorporation of technologies by governments for surveillance and intelligence purposes: In nearly all cases, this integration takes place without prior discussion of its impact on human rights, without conducting impact assessments, and without disclosing the characteristics and architecture of the technologies in question. It also proceeds without transparency regarding their capabilities and risks, or the companies that manufacture them, and without establishing adequate monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

6. Considering that the WSIS Forum will take place alongside the AI 4 Good Global Summit and the inaugural Global Dialogue on AI Governance, how do you think the discussions at the Forum can contribute to these discussions, and vice versa?

Coherence between the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and key AI governance arenas, such as the AI for Good Global Summit and the inaugural Global Dialogue on AI Governance, must be ensured to avoid duplication and to enhance synergies, efficiencies, and overall impact. As we have stated in various contributions throughout the WSIS+20 review process, we call on the United Nations Group on the

Information Society, within its existing mandates and resources, to prepare a joint implementation roadmap. This roadmap should aim to strengthen coherence between WSIS and related processes such as the Global Digital Compact, promoting a unified and resource-efficient approach to digital cooperation that avoids duplication and maximizes synergies across the United Nations system. It is also crucial to keep civil society's meaningful participation at the core of multistakeholder forums such as WSIS, the AI for Good Global Summit, and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance. This includes avoiding overlapping calendars, which limits the participation opportunities of organizations with fewer resources and from underrepresented regions. Likewise, participatory processes must be designed to have a real impact, through recurring opportunities to provide feedback and help shape the agenda of governance spaces.

7. Cross-Sectoral Initiatives: How can we better highlight cross-sectoral efforts during the Forum to inspire wider participation?

To enhance cross-sectoral collaboration, the WSIS Forum could actively engage with the regional initiatives of the IGF. By leveraging the existing networks and outcomes of the IGF's regional initiatives, the WSIS Forum can build on prior work, foster meaningful partnerships, and strengthen collective efforts to tackle critical internet governance issues. Additionally, the WSIS process should continue to implement the recommendations developed by a cross-stakeholder community and articulated in the “Five-Point Plan and Eight Practical Recommendations” to help drive an open, transparent and meaningfully inclusive process during implementation. These recommendations seek to ensure inclusiveness and meaningful stakeholder engagement within the WSIS structure. They draw on existing guidance on multistakeholderism and meaningful participation, such as the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines, to support their implementation.

8. Regional Engagement: How could WSIS Forum 2026 better reflect regional, national, and local perspectives?

We reiterate the need for greater articulation between national and regional forums and Global IGF. This alignment would ensure that priorities are addressed in a context-specific manner, as regional approaches provide valuable platforms for identifying shared goals and challenges unique to different areas. Furthermore, regional efforts can amplify the voices of diverse communities, particularly those from the Global Majority, ensuring their concerns are effectively represented and addressed at the global level. It is key to ensure strong connection between regional and global dialogues to avoid duplication of work and foster better coordination of efforts across different levels of governance.

WSIS Action Line Roadmaps

9. How can the WSIS Forum advance the key outcomes of the WSIS+20 Review in 2025, and what do you see as the key areas of implementation that the WSIS Forum should take forward, including in relation to the Global Digital Compact and other global digital discussions?

The 2026 WSIS Forum can advance the key outcomes of the WSIS+20 Review by fostering dialogues and sessions around the following priority areas: 1). Reaffirmation of the commitment to a people-centered, inclusive, right-based and development-oriented information society. 2). Prevention and avoidance of internet fragmentation. 3). Promotion of alternative connectivity models, including community networks, as part of broader efforts to address persistent digital divides. 4). Reaffirmation of the 2030 Agenda in Internet governance. 5). Gender equality should be positioned as a central theme throughout the program and the forum's agenda, including through the introduction of gender indicators and gender impact assessments across all action lines. 6). Reinforcement of inclusive, transparent, and effective multistakeholder Internet governance.

Furthermore, the Forum should strengthen implementation roadmaps for the WSIS Action Lines, including the development of potential targets, indicators, and metrics to facilitate monitoring and measurement as part of its main discussions, while advancing toward clarity on the roles of facilitators. These roadmaps must maintain coherence with those emerging from the Global Digital Compact and the AI Global Dialogue, ensuring a unified and resource-efficient approach to digital cooperation that avoids duplication and maximizes synergies across the United Nations system.

10. How can the WSIS Forum be leveraged to implement the WSIS Action Lines through concrete, coordinated actions that address emerging digital trends and global priorities?

The following question addresses this in detail for each WSIS action line.

11. Please list emerging digital trends and global priorities to be highlighted in the WSIS Action Line roadmaps:

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

Among the most pressing global priorities within this action line, we highlight the challenges faced by Global Majority civil society in digital governance, challenges that impede truly inclusive international cooperation informed by local and regional needs. This is especially critical considering that civil society is currently experiencing the continuous shrinking of civic space through legal and institutional tools approved by States in Latin America and around the world. These measures endanger civil society's very existence, antagonize its work, and create obstacles to its functioning. At the same time, governments are purchasing, deploying, and using emerging technologies without prior discussion of their impact on human rights, without conducting impact assessments, and without establishing adequate monitoring and accountability mechanisms. This opens the door to potential –and already documented– human rights harms, including systemic exclusion, discrimination, surveillance, and privacy violations.

C2. Information and communication infrastructure

Within this action line, it is a priority to adopt effective and concrete policies and strategies for internet access and meaningful connectivity, developed in consultation with individuals and organizations from all sectors and territories. Such policies must be designed taking into account the differentiated needs required to guarantee stable, affordable, and rights-based internet access in rural and hard-to-reach areas. They should also establish specific, actionable, and adequate targets for broadband deployment in rural and indigenous communities. Such policies should involve the coordination of efforts across sectors to ensure the availability of electricity as a foundation for connectivity, prioritizing clean and sustainable energy sources.

C3. Access to information and knowledge

It is critical to address the impacts and threats of information disorders within this action line. In this context, it is urgent to hold online platforms and social media companies accountable by requiring human rights due diligence on their products. This includes mandating transparency reports and scrutinizing how algorithms and specific products related to artificial intelligence amplify disinformation and misinformation, particularly in electoral contexts.

C4. Capacity building

Within this action line, it is essential to promote capacity-building initiatives that enables local communities to maintain and manage ICT infrastructure, thereby fostering local ownership and supporting digital skills development. Community networks are a prime example of such.. Additionally, it is crucial to promote sustained, human rights-based, and gender-responsive digital literacy strategies so that women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ groups can engage with the internet and digital technologies autonomously, safely, responsibly, and independently. This will help bridge the digital divide, which is not only about the lack of available internet infrastructure but also about the quality, information, and know-how needed to make internet access useful, safe, and beneficial for users. It is essential that capacity-building is not limited to the technical level but rather integrates knowledge with the social aspects of digital technologies and their impact on the preservation of democratic values.

C5. Building confidence and security in use of ICTs

A priority for building confidence in the use of ICTs is ensuring democratic participation in digital governance. We underscore the critical role of civil society in advancing a people-centered approach to ICT development, use, and governance, bringing community priorities such as privacy, data protection, transparency, and accountability to the forefront. It is also urgent to make progress in the design of people-centered cybersecurity strategies, with a specific focus on women and gender-diverse individuals. This would help ensure that cybersecurity policies are not only inclusive but also fair and respectful of the

realities and needs of all groups, considering the differentiated impacts that digital threats have on individuals and their rights.

C6. Enabling environment.

Transparent, independent, and non-discriminatory legal and regulatory frameworks are essential, encompassing areas such as proportional taxation, licensing fees, access to finance, and the facilitation of public-private partnerships. These frameworks should promote multi-stakeholder cooperation, infrastructure-sharing models, and community-based approaches to the deployment of digital services. They must also address market structure, existing concentrations of technological capacity and market power, digital transactions, data protection and privacy, consumer and intellectual property rights, and human rights and environmental impacts, including effective sanctions and appropriate remedies. Crucially, these frameworks must protect individuals against violations and abuse of their human rights in the digital context. Governments, in collaboration with stakeholders, should be encouraged to formulate enabling ICT policies that foster entrepreneurship, innovation, and investment, aligned with the protection of people's well-being and human rights.

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

Within this action line it is key to address the use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence in the public sector, which is accelerating quickly in Latin America and around the world. Driven by narratives of optimizing and making State processes more efficient, governments have promoted the adoption of AI-based systems to support management and decision-making in essential sectors such as health, justice, education, employment, child protection, access to welfare programs, and citizen security, among others. This adoption has significant implications for the exercise of fundamental rights, implications that, in most cases, remain unaddressed by States and disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including migrants, ethnic and racialized communities, women, gender diverse groups, and others.

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

No comments

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

This action line must consider the growing wave of bans on the use of mobile devices in classrooms, measures gaining traction in countries that are reversing previous efforts to expand access to technology in education and to strengthen the skills of teachers and students in the critical use of and engagement with digital tools. At the same time, we are witnessing a global trend toward the implementation of age verification systems across the Internet. In this context, child protection is often presented as a

justification to extend identity controls to all users, even in applications that are not considered high-risk. This trend can have considerable impacts on access to technology for learning and educational purposes.

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

No comments

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

Within this action line, it is important to recognize the growing erosion of fundamental labor protections in the context of work automation, platform work, and AI value chains, trends that disproportionately affect workforces in Global Majority countries. Workers on digital labor platforms, for example, face significant challenges related to the regularity of work and income, working conditions, access to social protection, freedom of association, and the right to collective bargaining. Moreover, the increasing “platformization” of work raises serious concerns about further labor exploitation, intensified work demands, weakened employer accountability for workers' rights, greater information asymmetry between employers and workers and the potential for automated or semi-automated discrimination against specific segments of the workforce. Regulatory efforts in the region have focused on the misclassification of platform workers, whether as dependent or independent, without comprehensively and effectively addressing the digitally mediated nature of their activities. This includes, for example, the algorithmic management of their work and considerations regarding data protection and privacy.

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

A priority in this action line roadmap should be consider the role and impact of increasing data centers, which provide the physical backbone for artificial intelligence's continued growth. Running non-stop, they consume enormous quantities of electricity, water and electricity to sustain operations and cooling systems. Big Tech companies often identify Global Majority countries as prime locations for accessing these resources at low costs, with limited regulatory oversight; even in some countries, such as Chile and Brazil, existing environmental impact regulations have been weakened in the name of 'innovation' enabling data centers to be installed in the territories easily. The environmental and social costs are alarming, especially since water diverted for cooling becomes unavailable for human use.

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

A trend that should be considered in this action line are the strategic partnerships between agribusiness corporations and tech industry leaders that are generating growing concern, especially among farmers and indigenous communities. Emerging research highlights risks of increased dependency, the commodification of traditional collective knowledge linked to agriculture, and a potential rise in environmental degradation.

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

We already commented on this in the WSIS+20 review consultation

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

Within this action line, it is crucial to integrate a human rights framework, particularly a cultural rights approach, into the development and deployment of ICTs. Grounded in the principles of universality, indivisibility, non-discrimination, equality, and participation, this approach would ensure that emerging technologies respect cultural diversity, promote linguistic inclusiveness, and prioritize the needs of underrepresented communities throughout their design and use. It is also essential to guarantee the meaningful participation of all affected communities in technology-related decision-making that affects cultural rights. This is fundamental to safeguarding traditional creative expressions and Indigenous knowledge systems from unauthorized or inappropriate use by ICTs.

C9. Media

We already commented on this in the WSIS+20 review consultation

C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

We already commented on this in the WSIS+20 review consultation

C11. International and regional cooperation

Within this action line, it is crucial to acknowledge that inequalities between States and the current geopolitical dynamics result in different levels of presence and capacity to influence negotiation spaces related to technology governance. In this context, a priority should be the full inclusion of developing country governments in the WSIS process, which requires capacity building and financial resources to ensure that the demands of all regions are duly addressed.