

Session Outcome Document

WSIS Action Line C11: WSIS+20 in Action: Implementation, Cooperation and Review

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Facilitator of WSIS Action Line C1

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<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/314>

Key Issues Discussed

- The session positioned Action Line C11 as the place where WSIS+20 follow-up must confront one of the central challenges of the digital governance landscape: not the absence of processes, but the proliferation of them. Participants recognized that international and regional cooperation has become crowded with overlapping mandates, forums, dialogues, reporting lines and review processes. The task ahead is therefore not to create another mechanism, but to make existing mechanisms speak to each other, reduce duplication and help Member States and stakeholders navigate the system with greater clarity.
- UN DESA framed the discussion around consolidation, coherence and implementation. The original C11 mandate, adopted in 2003, focused on international cooperation, development assistance, public-private partnerships and the mainstreaming of ICTs in international and regional organizations. That mandate remains relevant, but the environment has changed dramatically. Today, C11 must operate in a landscape that includes WSIS follow-up, the Global Digital Compact, the Internet Governance Forum, the STI Forum, UNGIS, emerging AI governance processes, regional digital strategies and multiple reporting obligations. The session therefore asked how C11 can become a disciplined coordination layer rather than another item in an already complex architecture.
- A recurring issue was the need to move from rhetorical alignment to operational coherence. Participants warned that high-level language on coordination is no longer enough. Roadmaps must show what should be aligned, who is responsible, what should be measured and how stakeholders can see the effect of their contributions. Several speakers stressed that Member States and stakeholders need fewer parallel conversations and more visible pathways from consultation to implementation.
- The session also addressed the strategic role of roadmaps. Participants described the C11 roadmap as an opportunity to recalibrate digital cooperation within the UN system, connect WSIS more clearly to the broader UN development agenda, and prepare for the post-2030 context. The roadmap should not be treated as an administrative exercise. It should be a strategic instrument that clarifies priorities, timelines, institutional roles, regional needs and measurable deliverables.

- Regional cooperation emerged as a central pillar of C11 implementation. Participants emphasized that global commitments do not implement themselves at the national level. Regional bodies can help translate global mandates into practical guidance, harmonize indicators, reduce reporting burdens and support countries in adapting commitments to regional and national realities. Africa was highlighted as an important case where regional roadmaps, Agenda 2063, digital transformation strategies and WSIS+20 implementation must be brought into a coherent framework.
- The discussion also highlighted the risk of mechanical roadmap design. Participants cautioned against producing matrices that are comprehensive but lifeless. A roadmap that only maps mandates to columns will not drive implementation. It must speak to real problems, help actors prioritize and show how cooperation produces outcomes for people. Participants therefore called for a roadmap that combines strategic clarity with practical accountability.
- Meaningful participation was a major theme. Civil society and community-based actors warned that participation often remains symbolic, especially in fragmented or exclusive processes where stakeholders are placed at the margins or invited only after decisions have already taken shape. Participants stressed that C11 must place participation at the centre of implementation, not at the edge of consultation. This includes clearer pipelines from national and regional spaces into global review processes, traceable feedback loops and stronger recognition of local evidence.
- The IGF ecosystem, including National, Regional and Youth IGF Initiatives, was repeatedly identified as a vital bridge between global digital cooperation and local realities. Participants noted that NRIs can help surface issues from communities, track how concerns move from national to regional and global levels, and provide evidence on whether international commitments are producing change. The IGF should therefore be treated not only as a forum for dialogue, but as part of the evidence and implementation infrastructure of WSIS follow-up.
- Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies were discussed as both a governance challenge and a coherence test. Participants noted that AI governance is increasingly fragmented across formal and informal forums, many of which are difficult for developing countries and civil society to access. C11 can help ensure that AI-related cooperation remains connected to development priorities, capacity-building, inclusion, human rights and the WSIS vision of a people-centred information society.
- Measurement and indicators were also debated. Participants agreed that the C11 roadmap must include indicators, but cautioned that easy proxy indicators are not enough. Counting initiatives, meetings or participants does not necessarily show whether cooperation is improving policy, implementation or inclusion. Outcome-oriented indicators are needed to capture whether cooperation leads to better national policies, stronger regional coordination, reduced duplication, greater stakeholder influence and more tangible development results.
- The session also addressed the need for knowledge consolidation. Participants pointed out that the number of resolutions, processes and commitments is becoming difficult to follow even for specialists. A single, accessible knowledge base or mapping tool could help governments, civil society and other stakeholders understand what has been agreed, who is responsible and where

follow-up is expected. UN DESA's work in mapping WSIS+20 follow-up asks was recognized as an important step towards a more accountable and navigable system.

Key Outcomes of the Session

- The session produced a strong and shared diagnosis: the international digital cooperation landscape is fragmented, and C11 must now become the action line of coherence. Its value lies in helping the system consolidate, align and deliver, rather than multiplying forums or reporting requirements.
- Participants converged around the view that the C11 roadmap should be a strategic recalibration tool. It should help clarify how WSIS, the Global Digital Compact, the STI Forum, the IGF, UNGIS, regional processes and AI governance discussions reinforce one another. It should also help explain the continued relevance of WSIS within the wider UN development agenda, including the post-2030 agenda and the evolving UN reform context.
- The session confirmed that good roadmap design must balance ambition and discipline. Participants called for concrete deliverables, regionally differentiated priorities, defined timelines and measurable outcomes. At the same time, they warned that the roadmap should not become a mechanical matrix. It must remain understandable, strategic and capable of guiding action.
- There was strong support for using regional structures as translation platforms between global commitments and national implementation. Regional roadmaps, clustered indicators and alignment with existing regional frameworks can reduce duplication and help Member States focus on priorities that are relevant to their contexts. The African experience showed that regional coordination can help move from global text to national action when it is connected to existing development frameworks and reporting needs.
- The session highlighted the importance of outcome-oriented indicators. Participants agreed that measurement should move beyond counting events, inputs or participation numbers. The roadmap should measure whether cooperation changes practice: whether national policies become more inclusive, whether regional coordination improves, whether digital divides narrow, whether local evidence reaches global processes, and whether stakeholders can see the effect of their engagement.
- A clear outcome was the recognition that civil society participation must become more traceable and consequential. Participants called for formal channels from national and regional IGFs and civil society networks into CSTD, GDC and WSIS follow-up mechanisms. They also stressed that stakeholders should be able to understand how their inputs are received, reflected and used. Consultation without feedback was described as insufficient for the next phase of WSIS implementation.
- The IGF ecosystem was identified as a key implementation asset for C11. Its value lies not only in convening annual dialogue, but in connecting national, regional and global communities, surfacing emerging issues and supporting multistakeholder cooperation in practice. UN DESA's unique position, as facilitator of C11 and institutional home of the IGF, gives it a practical role in connecting these channels to formal WSIS follow-up.

- The session also confirmed the need to address AI governance through the lens of coherence. Participants noted that AI-related processes are expanding quickly and risk deepening fragmentation. C11 can help ensure that AI governance remains connected to digital development, human rights, capacity-building, regional cooperation and the broader WSIS framework.
- UN DESA presented practical next steps in the roadmap process, including the development of a draft C11 roadmap, linkages to SDGs, GDC objectives, gender equality, human rights, AI and core activities, and the preparation of an online survey to gather wider stakeholder input. This confirmed that the session was not a stand-alone discussion, but part of a structured follow-up process leading towards CSTD consideration.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

- UN DESA should position the C11 roadmap as the coherence roadmap for WSIS+20 implementation. Its purpose should be to connect mandates, simplify the landscape, reduce duplication and make cooperation easier to understand and use. C11 should become the place where the digital cooperation system learns to work as one system.
- The roadmap should avoid institutional proliferation. The guiding question should not be what new forum is needed, but which existing process can deliver, how it should be connected to others, and how its outputs can inform implementation. This approach would respond directly to Member States' repeated calls to avoid duplication.
- The C11 roadmap should include a concise map of relevant processes, mandates and review cycles. This should cover WSIS follow-up, GDC review, CSTD, STI Forum, IGF, UNGIS, AI governance processes and regional digital cooperation mechanisms. Such a map would help Member States and stakeholders understand where decisions are taken, where inputs can be made and where follow-up is expected.
- The roadmap should establish a small number of strategic priorities rather than attempt to cover everything. These priorities could include coherence across digital cooperation processes, regional implementation, meaningful participation, capacity-building, digital inclusion, AI governance coherence and measurement. Each priority should include a baseline, timeline, responsible actors and expected outcome.
- C11 implementation should be regionally differentiated. The roadmap should recognize that cooperation needs are not the same across regions. It should allow for region-specific deliverables, such as improving cross-border infrastructure, strengthening regional policy coordination, supporting regional data and indicator systems, and helping countries translate global commitments into national action.
- UN DESA should use its convening role to connect regional evidence to global follow-up. Regional commissions and regional stakeholders can help identify what is working, what is duplicated, what is missing and what countries actually need. This evidence should feed into CSTD reporting and future WSIS reviews in a structured and visible way.
- The roadmap should move from proxy indicators to outcome-oriented indicators. Instead of counting only the number of meetings, NRIs or participants, indicators should examine whether

cooperation improves policy coherence, reduces duplication, strengthens participation, supports national implementation and produces measurable development results.

- The IGF and its National, Regional and Youth Initiatives should be used as channels for implementation evidence. The roadmap should create clearer pathways for issues raised at national and regional levels to inform global WSIS follow-up, CSTD discussions and GDC-related review processes. It should also explore how to track whether issues move from local discussion to regional and global outcomes.
- Civil society participation should become traceable. The roadmap should include feedback loops showing how stakeholder inputs are received, reflected and used. This would help move C11 from consultation to co-governance and from symbolic inclusion to accountable participation.
- The roadmap should address the resource burden on stakeholders. Civil society, developing-country experts and smaller institutions cannot follow every parallel process. UN DESA should help identify priorities, consolidate information and make participation more efficient. A clearer knowledge base of WSIS+20 follow-up commitments, responsible actors and reporting timelines would be a practical contribution.
- C11 should help bring AI governance back into a development and cooperation frame. As AI-related processes multiply, the roadmap should ensure coherence with WSIS principles, human rights, capacity-building, digital inclusion and regional participation. AI governance should not become another silo detached from the broader digital development agenda.
- The roadmap should preserve the multistakeholder character of WSIS while making it more operational. It should draw from the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines, the IGF ecosystem and national and regional practices to strengthen participation that is issue-based, inclusive and connected to outcomes.
- The next step is to use the roadmap process to turn this diagnosis into architecture. UN DESA can lead by making C11 the action line that organizes complexity, connects actors and gives Member States and stakeholders a clearer path from global commitments to national and regional implementation. The session confirmed that the future of C11 is not more process. Its future is coherence, delivery and accountability.