

Session Outcome Document

WSIS Action Line C1: 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/334>

Key Issues Discussed

- The session positioned Action Line C1 as one of the decisive entry points for translating the WSIS+20 outcome from political reaffirmation into implementation discipline. Participants underlined that the next phase of WSIS cannot be limited to retrospective reporting. It must move towards forward-looking planning, with clear baselines, realistic ambition, measurable steps and a sharper understanding of what implementation actually requires in different national and institutional contexts.
- A central issue was how a future C1 Implementation Roadmap should be designed. Participants noted that C1 is deliberately broad, covering national digital strategies, the role of public authorities, multistakeholder cooperation, public-private partnerships, international cooperation, inclusive participation and institutional capacity. This breadth is a strength of WSIS, but it also creates a risk of vague reporting unless the agenda is structured into coherent clusters and practical sub-roadmaps. A roadmap was therefore described not as another reporting template, but as a bridge between commitment and delivery.
- The discussion also focused on the future of reporting to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. Participants stressed that inputs should become more targeted, result-oriented and useful for Member States. Reporting should be linked to relevant Sustainable Development Goal targets and Global Digital Compact commitments, supported by indicators and metrics, and designed with the realities of documentation limits and meeting-time constraints in mind. The strongest message was that reporting must become more candid: it should show evidence of implementation, identify gaps and capacity needs, and offer practical policy recommendations rather than repeat familiar language without demonstrating change.
- Participants emphasized that C1 implementation must be evidence-based and differentiated. Countries are not at the same stage. Some still lack digital strategies; others have outdated strategies; and others have sound strategies on paper but weak

implementation in practice. For this reason, maturity models were proposed as a useful way to reflect different starting points and guide countries towards the next practical step. This approach would allow the C1 roadmap to speak both to ambition and to reality.

- The quality of multistakeholder participation was another major theme. Participants stressed that meaningful participation is not achieved by simply ensuring that stakeholder groups are present in a room. It requires issue-driven engagement, collaboration around concrete problems, and the inclusion of actors closest to implementation. National and regional participation, including through local authorities, civil society, libraries, post offices and community-level institutions, was highlighted as essential. Gender should also be built into the goals, methods and participation choices of C1 implementation, rather than treated as an add-on.
- The session reaffirmed that an open, stable, secure, resilient and interoperable Internet remains a foundational condition for WSIS implementation. Participants stressed that the Internet's value depends on its functioning as a single global ecosystem, supported by open standards, interoperable technologies, trusted coordination and meaningful multistakeholder cooperation. Avoiding fragmentation is therefore not a technical side issue; it is a development priority.
- Artificial intelligence was discussed as a cross-cutting pressure on the C1 agenda. Participants noted that the current language and framing of C1 may need to be refreshed to reflect the realities of AI, digital public services, institutional capacity, trusted local capability and new skills requirements. At the same time, participants cautioned that updating C1 should not fragment the WSIS approach. The value of WSIS lies in its ability to connect infrastructure, governance, inclusion, capacity, access, rights, development and cooperation within one holistic framework.

Key Outcomes of the Session

- The session produced a clear implementation message: C1 must become a planning instrument, not only a reporting channel. Participants converged around the need for a roadmap that identifies where countries and stakeholders stand today, where they need to go, and what practical steps can help bridge the gap.
- There was strong agreement that future reporting to the CSTD should become more candid, evidence-based and implementation-oriented. The session identified three categories of input that would make reporting more useful: evidence of implementation rather than statements of intent; analysis of gaps, obstacles and capacity needs; and concrete policy recommendations that can inform intergovernmental discussion and practical follow-up.
- The discussion also clarified the status of the roadmap process. UN DESA recalled that no completed action-line-specific roadmaps for C1 to C11 yet exist, and that these are separate from the broader UNGIS joint implementation roadmap. Action Line facilitators are expected to develop usable roadmaps by mid-November, creating an immediate opportunity for stakeholders to provide evidence, priorities and concrete suggestions.
- Participants welcomed the idea of using roadmaps to organize broad WSIS commitments into more manageable thematic clusters. The example of a roadmap for Internet

Exchange Points under another Action Line was presented as a possible model, demonstrating how a broad WSIS commitment can be translated into a focused implementation pathway. For C1, possible clusters included national digital strategies, whole-of-government coordination, inclusive policymaking, public digital services, institutional capacity, multistakeholder participation and international cooperation.

- The session highlighted the IGF ecosystem, including National, Regional and Youth Initiatives, as an important channel for grounded input into C1 implementation. Participants noted that the IGF should not be seen only as an annual meeting, but as a year-round ecosystem that can help connect global commitments to national, regional and local realities. In this context, UN DESA's role as both C1 facilitator and institutional home of the IGF gives it a unique convening position to connect evidence from communities with formal WSIS follow-up.
- A further outcome was the recognition that implementation requires delivery actors beyond central government. Local governments, libraries, post offices, civil society organizations, community networks and Global South stakeholders were identified as practical actors that can turn national strategies into public value. Their role should be visible in the C1 roadmap if WSIS implementation is to reach people and communities rather than remain at the level of policy declarations.
- The session also recognized that the C1 agenda must be updated for the present digital environment. Artificial intelligence, digital public infrastructure, cybersecurity, meaningful connectivity and skills for human agency all require attention. However, participants emphasized that C1 should be refreshed in a way that preserves the holistic and cross-cutting nature of WSIS.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

- UN DESA should take forward the C1 roadmap as a practical implementation architecture. The roadmap should be organized around coherent thematic clusters and sub-roadmaps, each with a baseline, ambition, milestones, indicators and clear links to relevant SDG targets and Global Digital Compact commitments. It should help move WSIS from a culture of general reporting to a culture of implementation, learning and course correction.
- The C1 roadmap should use maturity models to reflect different national realities. It should distinguish between countries without digital strategies, countries with outdated strategies, and countries with strategies that require stronger implementation capacity. This would allow the roadmap to provide practical guidance that is useful to countries at different stages of digital transformation.
- Future CSTD reporting should be redesigned to reward evidence, not repetition. Contributors should be encouraged to report what has been implemented, what has changed, what remains blocked, what capacity is missing and what practice can be replicated. UN DESA, working through its facilitation role, can help set a higher standard for concise, honest and policy-relevant inputs.
- The reporting process should combine synthetic reporting with deeper issue-specific evidence. Over the two-year CSTD cycle, one part of the process could focus on broad

synthesis while another part could invite granular reporting on selected themes. Meaningful connectivity could be an early theme, examined through infrastructure, affordability, demand, skills, inclusion and user-group perspectives.

- The C1 roadmap should make multistakeholder participation more precise and more useful. Participation should be organized around issues, delivery challenges and implementation evidence, not only stakeholder categories. Gender equality, youth participation, accessibility and the involvement of developing-country stakeholders should be built into the design of the roadmap itself.
- UN DESA should draw more systematically on the IGF ecosystem, including National, Regional and Youth Initiatives, as channels for evidence and implementation feedback. These networks can help identify what is happening on the ground, where global commitments are not reaching communities, and which local practices can inform broader WSIS follow-up.
- The roadmap should explicitly recognize delivery actors that are often invisible in global reporting. Local governments, libraries, post offices, community institutions and civil society organizations are not peripheral to C1 implementation; they are often where digital inclusion becomes real. Their role should be reflected in national strategies and in the evidence collected for WSIS follow-up.
- The C1 roadmap should reaffirm the open, stable, secure, resilient and interoperable Internet as a development foundation. Preserving the Internet as a single global ecosystem should be treated as a core condition for digital inclusion, public service delivery, innovation, trust and sustainable development.
- C1 should be refreshed to address artificial intelligence and today's digital governance needs. This should include attention to skills, institutional capacity, trusted local capability, human judgement, digital public services and the relationship between AI and public governance. The update should be bold but not fragmented: C1 should remain the place where governance, inclusion, infrastructure, public authority and stakeholder cooperation are brought together.
- The immediate next step is to convert the richness of the discussion into a focused set of inputs for the C1 Implementation Roadmap. UN DESA is well placed to lead this transition from consultation to structure, from structure to reporting, and from reporting to implementation. The session confirmed that WSIS+20 has given the system a renewed mandate; the task now is to make that mandate operational.