

29 July 2025

**Item 19: Economic and environmental questions:
(b) Science and technology for development**

Introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels, including the 20-year review thereof

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to present the Secretary General's report on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels, including the 20-year review.

The year 2024 was marked by the Summit of the Future and the adoption of the Global Digital Compact. In the Pact, the international community reaffirms its support for the role of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions in advancing sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights. The GDC emphasizes the importance of a multilateral platform for global digital cooperation, building on frameworks established at WSIS, including the IGF and the WSIS Forum, and the need for agile and flexible governance that responds to rapid changes in the technological environment. In this context, the report stresses two aspects relating to the WSIS:

- Affordable and meaningful connectivity
- Digital and environmental governance

On the first point, in recent years, increasing attention is being given to affordable and meaningful connectivity – connectivity that allows users not only to have occasional access to the Internet, but also to benefit from reliable, high-quality access that enables them to improve their lives.

On the second aspect, the need for robust digital governance has grown significantly—particularly in response to the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and its

growing impact on daily life. Furthermore, the international community is increasingly recognizing the interlinkages between digital development and environmental sustainability. As noted by UNCTAD in its Digital Economy Report 2024: Shaping an Environmentally Sustainable and Inclusive Digital Future, greater attention must be paid to digital and environmental governance—particularly in promoting sustainable consumption and production that aims to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.

The report concludes by calling for closing digital divides and ensuring inclusive access; strengthening digital governance frameworks; and aligning even more closely digital development with the Sustainable Development Goals. These could be taken up at the General Assembly’s review on WSIS+20.

Mr. President,

Given that the focus of this year’s substantive discussion at the WSIS session was progress made in the follow up implementation of the WSIS outcomes in the past 20 years (WSIS+20), allow me to also take this opportunity to briefly present the report prepared by UNCTAD as secretariat of the CSTD, which was used as the background paper for the discussion among the WSIS multistakeholders and recommended by the 28th session of the CSTD to serve as as an input to the General Assembly’s preparatory process for its WSIS+20 review this December. The report entitled “*Implementing World Summit on the Information Society Outcomes: A Twenty-Year Review*” has incorporated inputs gathered from the WSIS multistakeholders, as requested by ECOSOC, through extensive consultations that the secretariat organized from September 2023 to February 2025. It also took into account the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future, especially the Global Digital Compact. The report provides:

- An assessment of the changes that have taken place since WSIS, particularly since WSIS+10, in critical aspects of the Information Society.
- A review of stakeholders’ perceptions of both the successes and ongoing challenges since WSIS, along with progress in implementing its outcomes, and
- Key priorities for the future of WSIS.

Adopting a forward-looking approach, the report is structured around six chapters dealing with digital inclusion; the digital ecosystem; the digital economy; sustainable development; human rights and ethical dimensions of Information Society; and digital governance.
