Written Submission to the IMSB-led Virtual Stakeholder Consultation on WSIS+20 Revision 2 (Rev2)

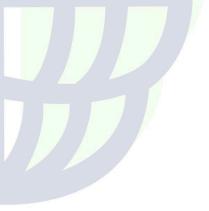**From:** Shumaila Shahani, Tech Global Institute
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The Tech Global Institute welcomes the opportunity to comment on Revision 2 of the WSIS+20 outcome document. We acknowledge the positive integration of several stakeholder concerns, particularly the explicit call for social media and surveillance technology companies to respect human rights (Para 75), the operational focus on women's economic agency (Para 11), and the affirmation of a human-centric approach to technology (Para 13).

However, our analysis reveals that the text has been weakened in critical normative areas while simultaneously constraining the means for implementation. This combination risks rendering our shared ambitions unachievable. We therefore urge the following specific amendments:

1. Operational Safeguards: We previously called for the integration of "fundamental rights impact assessments" and the "precautionary principle." Rev2 recognizes risks in Para 13 but fails to mandate these concrete tools, leaving a critical gap between principle and implementation.

Para 13: We recognize that the pace and power of emerging technologies are creating new possibilities but also new risks for humanity, some of which are not yet fully known. **In accordance with the precautionary principle, we commit to taking proactive and proportionate measures to anticipate, prevent, and mitigate these potential harms, especially where scientific understanding is incomplete or the consequences could be severe or irreversible.** We recognize the need to **systematically** identify and mitigate risks and to ensure human oversight of technology in ways that advance sustainable development and the full enjoyment of human rights. **To this end, we**~~We further~~ underscore the importance of **fundamental rights impact assessments,** applying a human-centric approach throughout the lifecycle of digital technologies, including their **conception,** design, **research,** development, deployment**, and** ~~use.~~**, monitoring, and decommissioning.**

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2. Digital Public Goods: The removal of the "do no harm" principle from the definition of Digital Public Goods is a significant normative regression. This principle is a non-negotiable ethical safeguard, essential to prevent harm and ensure technology serves people and the planet. We urge its reinstatement in Paragraph 17.

> Para 17. We acknowledge that developing digital public goods and digital public infrastructure are critical drivers of inclusive digital transformation and innovation and recognize the need to increase investment in their successful development with the participation of all stakeholders. Digital public goods include open-source software, open data, open artificial intelligence models, open standards and open content that adhere to privacy and other applicable international laws, standards and best practices**, and are developed and deployed with a commitment to do no harm to people and the planet**. We recognize that there are multiple models and definitions of digital public infrastructure, and we recognize that each society will develop and use shared digital systems according to its particular priorities and needs.

3. Systemic Constraints on Financing: The conditioning of new initiatives in Para 66 on "existing resources" and "ongoing mechanisms" institutionalizes a lack of ambition and precludes the scaled investment required to bridge digital divides. The mandate for the task force on financial mechanisms must explicitly allow for the consideration of new, innovative, and scaled-up models.

> Para 66: We invite the Secretary-General, ~~within existing mandates and resources and~~ in coordination with WSIS action lines facilitators and other relevant United Nations entities, to consider the establishment of a task force to examine **new and** future financial mechanisms for digital development, building on and complementing ongoing financing initiatives and mechanisms and involving all stakeholders, including multilateral financial institutions and other development partners, and to report on its outcomes to the 81st session of the General Assembly in 2026.

4. State Surveillance: We previously expressed deep concern about the weakening of language on surveillance. While the addition on corporate accountability in Para 75 is welcome, the text remains silent on state conduct, creating a dangerous accountability gap. The prohibition of "mass surveillance" and the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality must be reinstated.

> Para 75: We stress the importance for all Member States, and stakeholders as appropriate, to promote universal, free, open, interoperable, safe, reliable and secure use of and access to the Internet by respecting and protecting human rights**, including by ensuring that any surveillance measures are lawful, necessary, proportionate, and non-arbitrary,** and by refraining from Internet shutdowns**, mass surveillance,** and measures that target Internet access.

5. Anchoring the Digital Agenda in the SDGs: The digital transformation is not an end in itself. We urge reinstating a clear, overarching link to the 2030 Agenda to ensure this process serves our highest collective goals.

> **Proposed New Paragraph (to be inserted in the Declaration's overarching principles):** "We reaffirm that the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and this review process shall be closely aligned with and directly contribute to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals."

Conclusion: Revision 2 makes welcome progress on corporate accountability but takes a severe step back on state accountability, normative ambition, and financial feasibility. The proposed amendments are the minimum necessary to correct this course and deliver a framework that can genuinely close divides and build the equitable future we have all committed to building. We are committed to working with you for a stronger, actionable final text.

Respectfully submitted,

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About Tech Global Institute
Tech Global Institute is a digital rights nonprofit headquartered in Ontario with a mission to advance equity of communities in the Global Majority on the Internet. Through evidence-based research, policy advocacy, and South-South coalition-building, we aim to strengthen design and governance accountability of technologies that have an impact on underserved communities, and amplify marginalized voices and realities in policy decision-making at a global level. More information about us can be found on our website: www.techglobalinstitute.com