



DECLARATION
of the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications
on the preparation for the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes
of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2025

We, Heads of the Communications Administrations – Members of the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications and Members of the Commonwealth, as well as representatives of international organizations, governments, business, civil society, academic and technical communities,

I. Assessment of the Current Situation

recognizing that over the 22 years since the start of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process, digitalization has deeply penetrated all spheres of societal life at the international, national, regional, local, and individual levels, significantly impacting sustainable development by transforming industry, agriculture, education, healthcare, business, and public administration,

noting that the world's dependence on information and communication technologies (ICTs) continues to grow, and responsible state behavior in the use of ICTs is of critical importance for maintaining international peace and security,

recognizing that ICTs are becoming increasingly integrated into all spheres of life, we emphasize the importance of coordinated efforts and responsible behavior by all stakeholders, including international organizations, governments, businesses, civil society, academia, and the technical community, to ensure the safe and mutually beneficial use of these technologies,

acknowledging that the adoption of new ICTs such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, cloud computing, blockchain, and broadband wireless technologies enabling global connectivity has integrated not only large corporations but also small and medium-sized businesses and individual entrepreneurs into the digital economy, unlocking their economic potential and fostering commercial activities in new formats,

being convinced that one of the key enablers of sustainable development remains the advancement of accessible, secure, and inclusive telecommunication/ICT infrastructure to achieve universal digital inclusion, and recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the critical importance of ICTs in sustaining all societal processes,

recognizing that an open, global, interoperable, reliable and secure Internet serves as a foundation for enhancing the well-being and development of individuals, societies and our planet, while also accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals,

mindful of the goal to build an inclusive, open, sustainable, equitable, safe and trustworthy digital future for all,

recognizing that digital development has revealed not only new opportunities but also new challenges and risks for the international community in its efforts to ensure universal inclusion in the digital economy, eliminate wealth and gender inequality, integrate digital

development and environmental sustainability, and address cybersecurity threats, including cybercrime,

emphasizing the significance of international information security as a key element of the regional security system,

noting the importance of developing financial support mechanisms and refraining from the application of unilateral economic, financial and trade measures that are inconsistent with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, particularly in ensuring access to telecommunication and ICT technologies and related services and applications, as well as reducing the cost of Internet access for developing countries, especially the least developed countries, with a view to bridging the digital divide between the Global South and the Global North,

taking into account the potential of ICTs to address environmental protection challenges, including through the development of environmentally sound technologies, the application of ICTs for climate change adaptation and mitigation, the promotion of sustainable use and conservation of natural resources, and the preservation and protection of biodiversity and other environmental protection domains,

mindful also that the more effective and sustainable functioning of agricultural production requires the application of advanced ICTs for its automation and comprehensive mechanization,

reaffirming the belief that ICTs contribute to the achievement of inclusive education through the provision of educational tools, teacher training and professional skills development, and enhance the current capabilities of scientists both in obtaining up-to-date scientific information and in enhancing professional communication, and their introduction into science, and stimulate the emergence of new forms of research organization, which are essential components in the production of new knowledge,

being confident that cultural diversity and cultural identity, linguistic diversity and local content constitute not only essential conditions for the development of the information society as a whole, but also form the foundation for advancing modern intelligent systems being deployed worldwide, enhancing their applicability, user-centric orientation and, consequently, their contribution to improving people's quality of life,

recognizing the urgent need to ensure information security, combat cybercrime in all its forms, protect personal data and the inviolability of private life, and enhance trust and security in the use of ICTs, against the backdrop of pervasive digital penetration into all spheres of human life,

reaffirming in this regard the central role of the United Nations, particularly the Open-ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies 2021-2025, in the global negotiation process on international information security,

welcoming the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime and calling upon all Member States of the United Nations to sign and ratify the instrument to facilitate its earliest possible entry into force,

recognizing the role of mass media in facilitating global access to and exchange of information, we regretfully note that in today's world they are increasingly being used as instruments of public opinion manipulation,

emphasizing the need for special attention to identifying risks and threats posed by new technologies to the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly incitement to violence, racism and hate crimes targeting ethnic and religious groups, as well as the spread of disinformation, and supporting in this context the WSIS vision of building a “people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society”, with particular focus on protecting human rights in the digital space,

observing the direct correlation between technological advancement and healthcare quality, particularly how healthcare technology adoption enables teleconsultations for patients and medical staff, secure inter-institutional patient data exchange, remote physiological monitoring, and real-time surgical oversight, thereby enhancing service quality, significantly improving operational efficiency, reducing patient costs, and fostering healthy lifestyle practices,

supporting the substantial efforts undertaken and being implemented by the overwhelming majority of countries to meet the global indicators for growth in ICT connectivity and access to the use of ICTs,

noting with satisfaction that the majority of countries worldwide have adopted digital development strategies and are transitioning to digital economies, thereby establishing the technical and regulatory foundations for advancing a “people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society”

being convinced that the collective will and commitment of the entire international community and all WSIS stakeholders are essential to achieve the goals and objectives established through the WSIS process,

reiterate our commitment to the provisions and principles set out in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, which remain fully relevant today, noting, however, that much remains to be done to implement them and to achieve the goals and objectives of the WSIS process based on them,

II. Foundation for Joint Efforts

bearing in mind that the WSIS Action Lines set out in the Geneva Plan of Action serve as a key framework for advancing progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), addressing eleven key areas where technology is a key enabler for sustainable development,

considering that the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society focuses on financial mechanisms to bridge the digital divide, Internet governance and related issues,

considering the adoption of the Global Digital Compact (GDC), whose implementation should not replace or contradict the processes established pursuant to the final documents of both phases of the WSIS,

emphasize that the development, transfer and use of ICTs in any given state should be carried out in strict compliance with national legislation as well as international law,

encourage international and regional cooperation among all stakeholders to reduce the digital divide by, inter alia, providing real assistance to developing countries in terms of financing ICT development and applications, affordable technology transfer and digital literacy, with priority attention to the special needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups,

note the need for full implementation of the WSIS Action Lines taking into account the proposals contained in Section II “Further Improvement of the Action Lines” of the WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS beyond 2015 (WSIS+10 High-Level Event, Geneva, 2014) to support the achievement of the SDGs by 2030,

call for the implementation of the provisions of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, including the rights and responsibilities of stakeholders with regard to public policy issues pertaining to the Internet,

recognising the development of digital governance, we stress the importance of continuous improvement and cooperation among all stakeholders to adapt to new challenges and opportunities,

believe that the structure and parameters of digital governance will be of key importance in the subsequent long-term system of geopolitical and economic relations,

note the importance of taking into account the complementary nature of international processes aimed at expanding and improving the use of telecommunications/ICTs to support the achievement of the SDGs by 2030 and beyond,

see an urgent need to harmonise the processes of the WSIS, SDGs and GDC, as well as the International Telecommunication Union and the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development and taking into account the interests of all stakeholders, not only transnational companies, in the Internet governance system, while clearly harmonising the efforts of their secretariats and avoiding duplication of efforts,

advocate against the practice of adopting documents similar to existing ones, but of a declaratory nature, while focusing on the implementation of already agreed documents noting the necessity to increase the level of coordination of efforts between the New York and Geneva headquarters in initiating and implementing global processes,

support the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the WSIS Forum on an annual basis beyond 2025:

a) by focusing their discussions: for example, the WSIS Forum could review the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action on an annual basis, while the Internet Governance Forum discussions should provide a basis for informed decision-making on Internet-related issues within the framework of the Tunis phase of the WSIS;

b) by holding them according to common schemes and agendas at the regional level, with the results being heard at the global level, so that the outputs of global events are as informed and fair as possible in representing the views of developed and developing countries,

note with satisfaction and support, as Members of a regional telecommunication organization of the International Telecommunication Union, its leadership role in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and its high-level engagement in this activity, as the lead facilitator in the implementation of key WSIS Action Lines for an increasingly

digitalised world: C2 (Information and communication infrastructure), C4 (Capacity Building), C5 (Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs) and C6 (Enabling environment), as well as a co-facilitator of a number of other important WSIS Action Lines.

III. Looking Ahead

noting that digitalisation has become a key aspect of societal development, necessary to effectively address emerging challenges, and that new and emerging digital technologies create and provide the necessary conditions for human and individual development, regional and international cooperation is key to a secure, stable and innovative digital future and to overcoming emerging regional and international challenges,

being convinced that in this context attention should also be paid to the younger generation, assistance and support for vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities and special needs and older persons,

being convinced that the application of telecommunication/ICT technologies should be human-centred and humanistic, respecting human free will in decision-making, the right to choose and the preservation of intellectual capacity, and that responsible behavior by States in the use of ICTs will become increasingly important in the interests of international peace and security, with the participation of other stakeholders in the process,

recognise that stakeholder cooperation is the foundation for an inclusive, safe and secure digital space and should be flexible and adaptable to the rapidly changing digital landscape,

call upon all stakeholders to take this Declaration into account in the preparation of the vision for WSIS beyond 2025.