

# WSIS+20 Review

## Overview

- **Event:** WSIS+20 Review
- **Year:** 4th Quarter of 2025
- **Organized by:** United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
- **Purpose:** Assess progress since the last review (WSIS+10 in 2015) and identify future focus areas and challenges; and decide, among other, whether to extend the existing mandate of the Internet Governance Forum.

## Historical Context

- The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was held in two phases; in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005. With the advent of the Internet becoming widely available, governments wanted to understand its impact on society and its potential to drive digital transformation across the globe with an aspiration that no one should be left behind. Furthermore, understand the role of governments and other stakeholders in Internet governance.
- WSIS resulted in consensus outcomes that were pivotal for Internet governance, most notably that Internet governance involves governments and other stakeholders including the technical community.
- **WSIS Framework:** Established through the 2005 Tunis Agenda in which U.N. Member States committed to a multistakeholder model (MSM) for Internet governance, and gave the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) its mandate, among others. The role of the technical (including ICANN) and other communities are further endorsed through the WSIS framework.

## Key Outcomes of WSIS+10

- **Outcome:** Reconfirmed the Tunis Agenda and the WSIS framework. Emphasized the importance of MSM in Internet governance, extended the IGF mandate for another 10 years, and explicitly recognized the technical community as a distinct stakeholder.
- **ICANN's Role:**
  - Provided factual and neutral information during 2015 negotiations.
  - Member States recognized “...that the management of the Internet as a global facility includes multilateral, transparent, democratic and multi-stakeholder processes, with the full involvement of Governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations, technical and academic communities and all other relevant stakeholders in accordance with their respective roles and responsibilities.”

## Future Considerations

### Internet Governance Forum (IGF):

The future of the IGF is to be decided in the WSIS+20 Review. Some Member States may use this as an opportunity to push for replacing the multistakeholder IGF with a multilateral forum of some kind, which by default cannot be as inclusive as the IGF.

### MSM:

Using the argument that the MSM of IG is no longer effective to address digital challenges and the future of the Internet, some Member States may advocate for a multilateral model, potentially to be addressed in the WSIS+20 Review.

### Potential Impact on ICANN:

- Changes in the Internet governance model could have some impact on ICANN's mission.
- Questions may arise again regarding the way ICANN works as well as its role in the MSM of IG.

## Support for and Criticism of the Multistakeholder Model of Internet Governance

### ✓ Support for the Multistakeholder Model (MSM) of Internet Governance (IG):

The Outcome Document of WSIS+10 acknowledged the importance of the full involvement of various stakeholders, including governments, private sector, civil society, international organizations, and technical and academic communities in the management of the Internet. Over the years, the MSM has proven its adaptability because all these stakeholders are involved in the discussions and drafting of the Internet policies.

### ✗ Criticism of the MSM of IG:

Some U.N. Member States believe the model is not functioning well enough, and that the governments need to play a stronger role in the digital domain.

## Conclusion

- ★ The WSIS+20 Review in 2025 has the potential to be a very important step in the development of the MSM of IG, with significant implications for the IGF, and even ICANN's Mission. The outcomes of the Review could reshape global digital cooperation and Internet governance.
- ★ ICANN believes that the MSM of IG is the foundation for an open, secure, and interoperable Internet. It is an important mechanism when considering the management of a resource as vital as the global Internet – especially the technical underpinning of the Internet.
- ★ Preserving and improving the MSM, as enshrined in the 2005 Tunis Agenda and reconfirmed in the WSIS+10 Outcome Document ensures that relevant stakeholders will continue to work together to ensure that the Internet will continue to grow as an invaluable and trusted resource available to everyone.