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WSIS ACTION LINES FACILITATORS MEETING: WSIS + 20
MULTISTAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PROCESS

ROOM A

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2023/Agenda/Session/342>

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>> GITANJALI SAH: Hello? Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We will begin the WSIS Action Lines Facilitators Meeting in a minute. We are just getting our virtual participants online as well. We have a couple of virtual facilitators who are joining us. First, you will see that we have different UN agencies representing different WSIS Action Lines which provides a framework to the WSIS Process. They represent several UN agencies, ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD, UNDESA, FAO, UNESCO, implementing several UN agencies. So we will start the session in a second. We do have our UNESCO representative there as well, so Bonu, maybe you can join us here.

Okay. Can remote participation confirm that we have our remote panelists online?

Excellent. Thank you very much.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for joining us today for the WSIS

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2023/Agenda/Session/342>

Action Lines Facilitators Meeting. This meeting is actually the core essence of the WSIS Forum, and pursuant to certain mandates in the WSIS Outcome Document. The UN WSIS Action Lines Facilitators meet every year to provide you a summary of what they have achieved within the year, what were the key challenges, and what are the key recommendations for the respective action lines.

So, we work with more than 16 UN agencies in implementing the WSIS process, and in coordination with more than 32. We have the core Action Line Facilitators here with us today, who will talk about not only what they have achieved, but as the plans for the WSIS + 20, multistakeholder consultations that happened here and what we can contribute to the WSIS Forum.

Before we begin, I would like to invite the DSG, Mr. Tomas Lamanauskas so please provide a context of the Action Line Facilitation Meeting.

>> TOMAS LAMANAUSKAS: Thank you very much, Gitanjali. Hello, everyone, for this last day of WSIS in this intensive week. I was just told that today is also the National Day of Sleep, so I think a lot of us slook looking forward to tomorrow celebrating it.

Indeed, happy to open this WSIS Facilitator Ox Lines meeting with you. Over the past year we made great strides in advancing WSIS Action Lines and I'm sure today we'll hear a bit more about that as well.

We have seen significant progress in the areas of infrastructure development, cybersecurity, e-government, e-commerce, and many others. However, we've also faced a lot of challenges be as well that require our attention and cooperation.

And we still need, and that's all this says, that we still need to redouble our efforts to ensure the benefits of digital technologies are shared by all and that no one is left behind.

As I think in this Forum, we so many times use that word, rereally need to make sure that it is used to rescue the agenda, or as some prefer to accelerate the agenda as well.

WSIS Lines are indeed very relevant still in that regard, helping governments, international organization, and private sector to implement, correct policies, strategies, and approaches needs to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. They also serve as a reminder of the importance of cooperation across the public and private sectors, as well as Civil Society, regionally, and internationally.

Also, as we approach the WSIS + 20 Review, it is important with more than -- it's more than important than ever to reflect now on the progress made since the WSIS inception, and to identify the areas where the further action is still needed.

This is essential that we work together to build a more inclusive and equitable information and knowledge society that benefits everyone.

So, today's meeting is indeed to assess the general progress made within those action lines, and identify measures to strengthen the WSIS implementation process, especially in the context of WSIS + 20 Agenda, as well as I understand this meeting also today provides an inputs to the High-level political Forum theme on accelerating recovery from the coronavirus disease and implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and we should again with digital playing the key role.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us work together to make sure that WSIS Lines remain a driving force for progress and I look forward to hearing more from facilitators about the great achievements. I'm sure I'm also wishing you all a great discussion today. Thank you very much, Gitanjali, back over to you.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much, Tomas. Just to let our Action Line Facilitators know that their interventions will be timed, and we have our bell keepers ready, Basel, can you show them the bell? Okay. (Laughing). It's three minutes per intervention, and of course their longer summaries will be uploaded online for all of you to read about the details.

So, I'll start with C1, which is Deniz from UNDESA who has three action lines actually, C 1, C7, and E environment which he also co-facilitates, e-government facilitated with ITU and other partners, and C11. So Deniz, can you provide us with an overview of the key achievements, challenges, and what remains to be done in the three action lines that you are facilitating?

>> DENIZ SUSAR: Thank you. Thank you, Gitanjali. I know I have three minutes so I will talk about three things, and I hope the audience later can look at our detailed reports.

The first one is e-government, and basically as part of the United Nations e-government survey, we organized a facilitation session and we had 20 -- more than 20 speakers in one hour, so everyone spoke less than 3 minutes. I will go back and watch the recording again. We asked how we can improve e-government assessment. We

looked at 193UN nation portals, and if we can use AI, Chat, et cetera, for the assessment. The feedback that I got, of course main points. It's very difficult to capture public/private services. For example, if a government is partnering with the private sector such as the bank, how do we capture this service? Or it's very also difficult to capture AI, which is in the background because our unit of study is the portal. Or ethical dimensions or privacy issues, how do we capture these? These were all highlighted as input by speakers. And another one was immersive technologies, metaverse and et cetera. This was on e-government.

The second thing I will talk about is Internet governance forum as part of C11, we organized an outreach session this morning. The next meeting of the IGF will take place in Kyoto, Japan, 8/12, October and our advisor group chose the theme as Internet for All, Empowering All. So there is a lot of preparatory work going on for IGF, so I invite all of you, again, to follow that.

The last one is partnership on measuring ICT for development. Again, this is part of C11. We looked at together with ITU and UNCTAD in the steering committee of how we can use ICT indicators to measure progress in SDGs.

The Tech Envoy was also in our Opening, and he highlighted many important points. Some of the things that came from the session is like how do we close the gap between the statistical offices, who collect official data, and then there is this new technology of Big Data. And also how do we do more capacity building in collection of data in developing countries.

In the interest of time, I stop here and back to you.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you, Deniz. We would like to move to Action Line C2 represented by Walid ICT infrastructure. And so Walid not to focus just on the session, the online action line facilitators, but the overall achievements all through the year and what are our plans for the future in ICT infrastructure? Over to you, Walid.

>> WALID MATHLOUTHI: Thank you, Gitanjali. It's really nice to be here and reporting back on the Action Line C2. So, obviously on infrastructure, it's been an interesting couple of years with the pandemic and COVID. We've seen an acceleration in network infrastructure deployment and available capacity. Many of the providers and the Internet service providers have ramped up and are trying to build infrastructure and make network capacity

available for the additional demand.

However, we're noticing at the same time, that the available capacity is not spread or used or available in an equitable way. It's more focused on dense areas, it's not really inclusive. So, we're noticing an increasing issue in inclusion for network usage and for infrastructure availability in the rural areas. So in one hand, the infrastructure increased, the capacity is available, but on the other hand the usage that we are assuming for that infrastructure is not quite there, and it is not spread equitably.

We are also ramping up efforts in collecting data about infrastructure comprehensively and trying to make the infrastructure data available all across the board, particularly for nontraditional investors to bring in more capital to solve the lack of infrastructure in rural areas.

Also, we've noticed more harmonization in spectrum and in spectrum usage for access networks particularly IMT technologies, so 4G, 5G, spectrum harmonization, and spectrum management support. We had supported several administrations by helping them manage more efficiently the spectrum. We have implemented in place 3Ts particularly in the African Region for harmonizing cross-border interference and making the usage of spectrum much more efficient to provide better connectivity.

The last piece I wanted to also report back on is as ITU is involved also with GIGA jointly with UNICEF, we're helping connecting schools, and we've been successful in connecting several thousand schools recently in the past couple of years, and we're collecting more and more data about like the location and the status of connectivity in the different schools that we're able to reach.

What remains to be done is to attract more investment in the rural areas to bridge like the gaps and to have much more insights on the existent infrastructure and the remaining gap.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much, Walid. We'll move to UNESCO, Action Line C4, Access to Information.

>> Thank you. Action 33 focused this year on the UNESCO policy guidelines for development and promotion of the governmental public domain information and the essence of the session was to gather inputs for how these could help strengthen the international frameworks to access to information, and how this could be implemented. Also, there was a focus on which were the barriers and the

conditions that would enable people from marginalized communities or special needs communities should be taken into account in this regard.

So some of the focus was given also to the efforts to ensure that, you know, special communities or particular communities like Indigenous Communities, Persons with Disabilities, for enabling status to increase efforts to eliminate barriers for access to information, and how to ensure the digital platforms are enabling true ICT solutions to implement ICT access information laws. And taking into account the special needs of these communities, and how to could we establish independent and impartial oversight mechanism with report with point to monitor access to information laws. That would be ensuring and enabling to report on how the needs of, special needs of people or marginalized groups are taken into account. Yeah.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much. We would like to move to Halima C4 and capacity building. Capacity building has been a cross-cutting theme for years across all Action Lines, so what have been your efforts towards improving capacity building at a national, regional, and international level? Over to you, Halima.

>> Halima: Thank you very much. As you already mentioned, capacity development was discussed across many sessions throughout the meeting this year, and what we have observed is that the shifts -- or that there is a shift in the focus of the discussions which is moving from the opportunities and challenges that were brought about by digitization of jobs, or the proliferation of e-applications. And the discussions are now shifting to more in-depth use of technologies and skills development and training, specifically.

We saw a number of sessions where the use of AI in education was being discussed and focusing on the use of immersive technologies and data to design individualized learning pathways as well as the development of life-long learning pathways as well.

We saw maybe just to start with what we have been seeing in terms of the outcomes of most of these sessions, is that some of the areas have continued to be emphasized, such as the need for collaboration in advancing digital skills, the digital space continues to emerge, and people still need digital skills that are evolving to make sense of their environment.

We realize that we also require systems that enable the learners to enable their own learning and drive it.

These are just a few of the challenges that we are seeing emerging in these sessions.

Of course, the use of AI is also shaping the nature of conversations between policymakers and educators, and also between the educators themselves and the learners. Moral obligations are being placed on those that use immersive technologies and AI in education to Spain what data is being collected from the learners and what this data is being used for.

This, of course, is providing an opportunity because it is becoming easier to individualize learning because we have access to a lot of data that allows us to understand learner behaviors. On terms of what we're doing on the ground, Gitanjali, as ITU we have two major initiatives, which is the academic training centers, and we continue to develop skills at an advanced level through these initiatives in different countries. We have ATCs in about 14 countries at the moment.

And on the literacy level, we have ATCs in 13 countries across the world who are focusing on digital skills and literacy development. Of course, there are a number of other activities that our colleagues can take a look at, and we have detailed information in this in the ITU Academy Platform, so I do invite you to visit the platform at www.ituacademy.int. Thank you, Gitanjali.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much, Halima. We'll move to Action Line C5, building confidence in the use of -- I will pass you the mic. So Preetam, cybersecurity has been one of the main discussions all through the year and during the WSIS Forum as well, and some of the key issues that came across was digital resilience, security in space, ICT infrastructure not only online but as offline, so what are your key take aways and plans for implementation of activities in this space?

>> PREETAM MALOOR: Thank you, Gitanjali. As you have already summarized, you know, this year's WSIS Forum, you know, we've also noticed in other places, you know, the conversation is not just on, of course you know, ran somewhere, malware attacks, threat against data, of course those conversations are happening with, you know, with a lot of seriousness, but we're also seeing conversations around the security of satellite communications, or you know the concerns about subsea cables, the security of subsea cables. A lot of conversation around space communications, and you know it's quite interesting, you know, we are at the point when it comes to space communications because we have new actors coming in, many,

many new stakeholders coming in, a lot of services being delivered, especially broadband services, IoT coverage. So while there are, you know, many opportunities there and people are getting more and more aware of the challenges.

So, you know, we are looking at this -- this whole area under the broader umbrella of digital resilience. So this year at the WSIS Forum Action Line C2, my colleague Walid, and C2 is also, ITU is also the facilitator for C2, and C2 and C5 came together to organize a conversation on digital resilience with a particular emphasis on space.

Other than that, you know, there are obviously ongoing concerns and dialogue on new and emerging technologies such as AI, Chat GPT4 was released a couple of days ago, you know, and there is a lot of mystery around that, you know, so demystifying these technologies and understanding it properly is something that is happening in different fora.

Of course, Web 3.0 technologies, metaverse is another area of discussion. You know, so there is a lot going on. Of course, what is the ITU doing as the Action Line Facilitator? Our role is to bring different stakeholders together to develop a common understanding on the challenges and the opportunities, and also to come up with solutions. So just as an example, a couple of weeks ago, you know so there was a new group on the metaverse that was set up under ITU-T, the standardization part of the ITU. In December the group met for the first time in Riag, March 6 to 8, 600 people, 600 different stakeholders to discuss some of these different areas on the metaverse.

AI for Good Summit happening obviously later this year doing a deep dive into AI, broader conversations on impact of these technologies and development is happening at the WSIS Forum. You could see many, many different sessions that focused on this. Having said all of this, at the ITU we're also, you know, our main focus is on capacity building, so we are helping countries develop their own national strategies on cybersecurity. You know, we are helping countries coordinate through CyberDrills -- (bell) -- we have the global cybersecurity index which gives us a snapshot of how prepared a country is and how they can improve, child online protection, we are focusing on all of that and will continue to do that through multistakeholder cooperation. Thank you.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you, Preetam. We move to Action Line C6, creating an enabling environment for a seamless ICT ecosystem. I think we have Carmen from ITU online? Carmen, the floor is yours.

>> CARMEN PRADO-WAGNER: Thank you, Gitanjali. I will share with you a little of what we did during our discussion yesterday. We focused on the next generation of regulations for sustainable digital transformation. And the discussion focused on the application of the right policies, regulatory and economic incentives to ensure deployment of resilient digital infrastructure in rural and isolated areas, and also at the same time, to promote the adoption of emerging technologies.

It was not that change is needed in the ICT policy and regulation frameworks to create an inclusive and conducive enabling environment. Therefore, there is a need for strategies and regulation that bridges silos and breaks through in ins layer tee. We need to develop a formal language based object consultations and evidence and we need to reframe -- to reframe operationalize the policy agendas and we need to skill up again.

It was the occasion also to launch the fourth edition of the Global Digital Regulatory Outlook 2023 which takes in mind the latest trends, tensions, and possible solutions and strategies to leverage from the country's review the outputs that we had from the country's review that gives more ideas and recommendations to policymakers and regulators.

And in the framework of ITU activities, the application of the unified framework for assessing the state of readiness of ICT policy, legal and governance frameworks for digital transformation based on the based benchmark and ICT regulatory tracker is being implemented, so we are working on that and we are going to share all of this information with members. We are ready to work on that. And of course we will continue the discussions during the next global symposium for regulators, GSR-23 to be held in Egypt from 5 to 8 of June, 2023.

Our theme will be -- we continue to be regulation for access to enable digital future so that the discussion will continue there. Thank you very much, Gitanjali.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much, Carmen. We move on to our WSIS Action Line C7, e-business. We have UNCTAD representing also UPU and ITC. Welcome, Scarlett. We did hear a lot about the digital -- about including women in the digital economy in many of your sessions, so Scarlett, over to you to talk about it a bit more.

>> SCARLETT FONDEUR GIL: Thank you, Gitanjali. Yes, this year the UNCTAD, ITC and UPU co-facilitator of C7e-business Action Line focused on women, enabling women in e-business, and although it seems narrow as a focus, I

think this year we thought after COVID-19, after data told us that the gender digital divide seemed to worsen rather than improve, and since famously women hold up half of the sky I think was said, we needed to focus on how to help this half of the population better access opportunities, especially as digital entrepreneurs, as designers and creators of value in an evolving digital economy that we are increasingly dependent on.

So, we invited several digital entrepreneurs from different parts of the world, and I invite all of you that didn't get a chance to listen in to our session to look for the recording because it was extremely interesting to hear how they are faced, especially with obstacles in terms of skills, digital skills, but as business skills with obstacles to access finance for digital entrepreneurship, which is not only exclusive to women but women seem to face slightly more hurdles in the developing world. And also the value that they have found in role models and networking in order to move forward in digital entrepreneurship. And as you might know, UNCTAD, UTC and UPU are also members of an e-trade for all initiative which has a program called e-trade for women, and one of the main outcomes of that program is a roster of women advocates for e-trade. These ladies put a lot of their own time to teach other women, share their experiences with other women, and to help them to see a path forward in terms of growing as digital entrepreneurs.

We really think that we will continue to support digital entrepreneurship among women in the future because we do have a lot to offer. Thank you.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much, Scarlett. We'd like to move on to Action Line C7 of e-learning. We have to begin the closing ceremony at 3:00, so I would like to request the Action Line facilitators to stick to their time.

We believe Zeyep from Paris is online, Zeyep, can you hear us and can you please share with us the key takeaways and challenges and opportunities in e-learning over these years? Over to you, Zeyep.

>> ZEYNEP VAROGLU: Thank you very much. I'll be very concise. Basically the key takeaway is there are issues that were really not on the forefront of vocabulary in the area in 2003 which are now actually focuses of the discussions and I'm talking about openly licensed material, openly licensed content. And the session that we had was also a reflection of discussions that had been going on for several years. It's on the in plain essence,

content for learning, and the word learning is redefined to be not just the traditional K-12 or tertiary education context, but learning overall in a life-long learning process. And in this regard, our discussions focused on Open Educational Resources, and contribution to learning, of course in traditional education systems, but as in terms of, for example, learning for the implementation of the SDGs, learning for adults, learning in different subject areas.

At the same time we spoke, there was a link to ongoing processes, so this is a reflection of something that's going on within, and especially since COVID I think it's been a big push going on here within the UN System, so this is reflected in the transforming education part in which the call for action in Action Track 4 which was on digital learning had a specific mention and push towards the UNESCO Open Educational Resources Recommendation of 2019 which is the only UN instrument, and the first one, of course it's the only one, that focused on learning and technologies.

The second one is, of course, the roadmap for digital cooperation where there is a discussion about digital public goods and the importance of having open learning content. And the whole point of this is not just that it's open learning content, but that it's learning which is co-created through different stakeholders inputs within a system that is interoperable, and in this regard I just want to call out here that in the session, in the high-level session, we also have the inclusion of IFLO the international federation for librarians and this is a very significant point because it's about creating knowledge together and contributing to a knowledge commons that is for the achievement of the SDGs.

In terms of challenges, I think the greatest challenge is the understanding of what's really happening by governments and by stakeholders in terms of the added value of actually having open licensing and to share knowledge. It's not just free online resources we're talking about here. It is not just free online resources. This is -- these are resources which are available on an open license, and this allows for co-creation, this allows for --

>> GITANJALI SAH: Pardon me, Zeyep, we are on a very tight schedule, so we have informed all of the stakeholders that the entire summary will be available online, and also in the form of a booklet which we will submit to the High-Level Political if you can as we do

every year. Thank you so much, Zeyep. We would like to move from Derek from e-health, WHO. Derek, are you here with us maybe virtually because we don't see you here in the room.

Okay, so my colleagues inform me that we cannot see Derek in the virtual room as well. We will move on to e-environment and our colleague Vanessa from ITU is here with us today. However, ITU is working with several colleagues from WMO, from UNEP and B convention and various other stakeholders working in the area of e-environment. Vanessa, can you update us on some of your key activities and some of your plans for the upcoming months? Over to you, Vanessa.

>> VANESSA GRAY: Thank you very much. Yes, I would like to say a few words about the growing work that's going on in the area of green digital transformation because I think it's really important for us to better monitor, understand, and address the environmental impact that a growing information society has. For example, in the area of electronic waste, we know that as more people join the global information society, and you know we have access to digital tools and services, we also produce more electronic waste, and this is a topic we're very interested in and we do a lot of work. We support countries to produce better e-waste statistics and to develop their policies, and also happy to say that this year together with UNEP and UNITAR we'll be publishing the latest newest e-waste monitor with data for all countries.

Also, of course, very important topic is climate change, and there similarly, we need to understand that the ICT industry that a growing information society has on the environment. What we're doing is we're focusing a lot on understanding what the role of the ICT industry in reducing their GHG emissions, reducing the use of electricity and emissions, and again we're working also together with the ITU study groups, ITU-T study groups, developing standards, and monitoring GHG emissions from the ICT industry.

One other very important initiative I wanted to mention is the new early-warning for all initiative that was launched exactly a year ago on March 22 but the UN Secretary-General and this is a climate adaptation initiative that recognizes the fact that, you know, the number and the frequency of natural hazards is on the rise, and that we need to help countries to adapt.

So the objective of this initiative is to ensure

that by 2027, so within only 4 years, we are able to protect every person in the world with an early-warning system. And so we're working on this together with WMO, with UNDRR, and also IFRC, and the role of ITU here is to highlight the importance of warning dissemination and communication to reach the communities at risk. So, we're again, working with different partners. But one of the things that we're highlighting is the importance of mobile networks because we know today three out of four people in the world own a mobile phone, and so this is a really critical tool to reach people that are at risk, and unfortunately too few countries today still use mobile early-warning systems, so this is something that we're promoting here. Thank you.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much, Vanessa. We'll move on to WSIS Action Line C7, which is e-agriculture. And facilitated by FAO, so we have Thembani joining us today and you've been telling us that ICTs have a key role in enabling food security and also that there is no wastage of food so that no one goes hungry in today's time, of course, so can you please elaborate on that and share some of your projects with us.

>> THEMBANI MALAPELA: Yes. Thank you very much for reciting this. It's a bit of a big challenge. FAO is taking this challenge head on. We have met a number of policy integrations and working together at a UN level. I will highlight three points. We're working with the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development and Strategic Digital Cooperation by making sure that we're leaving no one behind, and ensuring that connectivity gets to all of our farmers. We're working also with the Tech Envoy. We're also working within Rome Call for AI ensuring that technology doesn't leave farmers behind. We believe that digital technology applications can create a very good impact if they are applied correctly, and they can have a direct impact on small holders and also our producers, which means fisheries and also foresters.

Having said that, our session at this WSIS focused on some of these platforms, and we talked about how these platforms can be used for to facilitate the transformation of agrofood systems and to solve a number of agrofood system related challenges, talking about food waste and loss, talking about a situation by early warning systems of our farmers, and how can we embrace these technologies to ensure that the agriculture or challenge is not widening and that we can increase productivity from our producers.

So the session did focus on what we call digital for impact. FAO is going digital. FAO will not divide. We don't want to divide, but at the same time we want to go very digital. We're working closely with a new strategy which is the Science and Innovation Strategy to see how we can intertwine digital actions and see how we can bring innovation to ensure that we bring small holder farmers at the front of this. So two products that repromoted in our session was farmers Hand in Hand Initiative and Digital Villages, the village-level and country-level interventions that allow data, allow technologies reach the hands of the farmers and that allow us to track the food production, and also hopefully see whether we can track issues such as food waste and loss, and also what we promote called Farm to Folk value chain activities through various digital issues.

We still have a future challenge of ensuring that technologies don't throw away our farmers out of the equation. We still have to see how we can have an impact, a social impact in using these technologies and ensuring that no one goes hungry. I think this is our viewpoint.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much, Thembani. Also we're joined by our Action Line Facilitator for e-science, Banu and of course there are a lot of discussions about open science and collaboration amongst different stakeholders, especially scientists, academia, policymakers, and others, ensuring that e-science has an impact on achieving the SDGs as well. So what were your, you know, what were the key projects that you've been undertaking for these few years, and what are the challenges that you see there?

>> BANU: Thank you very much, Gitanjali. It's always a pleasure. There are a couple of things, you know, that we have started, and I think you know our assess am is pretty much like for the last couple of years talking about, you know, how the data related to scientific experiments should be made open. So this year we primarily focused on why openness of data is not the sole condition to advance e-science. And so this is something that we had a focus.

In this one we work in several projects, and we have started to see and perhaps this will be an input to our colleagues who are looking at e-environment, there are so many sensors that are being deployed all across the world for scientific experiment that soon we will see an e-waste problem related to all of these unused sensors. So this is -- this may be one of the things that our colleagues at

e-waste should start considering.

The other thing is, you know, we also looked at how scientific data are collected and aggregated. And we have started to realize that there is a lot of disinformation that is happening as a result of aggregation of data and how it is spread, and we particularly look at, you know, how this is happening in climate change and also the way issues and data is being presented across the world and primarily the reporting of IPC and IRS and we found that a couple of things need to be improved from the openness of data perspective.

We have primarily looked at two issues. One to look at how the disinformation is spreading, number one. Number two is we are also trying to look at what will be the role of multistakeholderism? That is a primary driving of these activities forward.

And then we came up with an age-old and kind of revived agenda that there are lots of garbage going in so lots of garbage going out. We will have to somehow, you know, to be a little more disciplined on the way the data goes in and how and what kind of data goes released as scientific experimented data to the public for their mass consumption.

So these were a couple of things, and capacity building is one of these, you know, that we had also discussed. And one thing that, you know, one thing that we have said is that it's not that openness of data or openness of scientific data is the concern here but perhaps openness of scientists as well is a major concern that we have to deal with. Thank you so much, Gitanjali.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much, Banu. You spoke about e-waste and our colleague Vanessa is working on e-waste quite extensively. I think it would be good for you to connect on that aspect. Thank you so much. We'd like to move on to UNESCO again, for Action Line C8 culture. We had a great collaboration on the decade of indigenous languages last year, and we hope to continue with different elements in the Action Lines promoting your activities within the WSIS process.

>> Thank you, Gitanjali. Indeed, the collaboration with WSIS in this respect, it's very successful, and this year we have started from a major achievement of last year in the last pillar of the year with the happening or hosting of the Montacolt a ministerial conference that has an output that comes with a ministerial declaration by 150 Ministers of culture, and to declare culture as a public good. That's a major event.

And so culture is not -- it's a good which is not a value, it's not exclusive and we have to take extra steps to make culture as exclusive as possible and give benefits of culture in global ways.

So in this sense, the governments have requested to take action and so to ensure the protection and promotion of culture, and even more so in the digital environment. So, that was the, say, the essence of the discussions done in the Action Line this year. And the discussion went on in a sense to make an understanding that the culture has a different meaning to many different kinds of stakeholders, so there is a large diversity of themes that could be taken through the cultural diversity lens, and so there is also some action that could be done in the WSIS in the future to actually underline which themes can be actually addressed through this action line and with participation by different stakeholders that are in the WSIS process.

So, and casual diversities are essential for humankind, and the sum of the discussions took on also on the reference to the monolingual status call of the Internet as present, and so the need for more linguistic diversities in the cultures.

So things like skills for culture operators was also mentioned, the importance of capacity building, and the access also to digital, so contextualization of digital cultural platforms in the local realities so to be able to foster and enable, actually, the local content producers to use the digital platforms for raising visibility and the market of all the digital content.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much, Davede. I'll move to Action Line media, a very important Action Line. We have Anna with us from UNESCO. Anna, you were initially telling us about the key challenges in the Action Line of media, so please can you share it with the audience and some of the initiatives UNESCO has taken to address those.

>> ANNA: Thank you very much. For UNESCO, one of the key challenges that we're looking for in the media right now has to do with disinformation, misinformation, and how this is impacting also the way that we participate actively in society and how the structures of society are working. So, in this session, what we intended was to consult and build in a multistakeholder community to continue the consultation process that UNESCO started in September last year on the guidelines for regulating digital platforms. We changed to serve as a tool for regulators and Member States in the regulatory process on

regulating the structures and processes related to content moderation and creation.

So, the guidelines aims are to deal with information that is illegal according to human rights standards and with information related to misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech. But it also tries and pushes for safeguards for freedom of expression and information. So the session here was very useful because all of this community of practice let us know how we can actually balance within the guidelines, the different questions that we still have and that had been raised during the consultations, such as how we can actually ensure multistakeholderism during the regulatory cycle, how and which companies are digital platforms should be the ones that mean the scope of this guidelines for regulating digital platforms, what kind of granularity or how detailed should be a guideline prepared by UNESCO during this consultation process, and what -- at what level should be the granularity in order to create a way -- a thing that would not be future proof. There were many questions and a lot of good inputs that were received. I will say for us that the most important thing is that these guidelines and this initiative were fitting to the WSIS + but as to fit into the wider process of our common agenda and the digital compact and new code of conduct.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much, Anna. We have Doaa from UNESCO Paris waiting for us very patience enterally. Doaa, I think you can -- you can hear us because you joined us right at the beginning. So what is the major focus of UNESCO in terms of promoting ethical dimensions of digital technologies? Who are your key partners in this process and can you share some of the challenges you have been facing? Over to you, Doaa.

>> DOAA ABU-ELYOUNES: Thank you very much. Good afternoon. This year our focus on ethics centered around the implementation of the recommendation on the ethics of AI that was adopted by 193 Member States in November 2021. So, this year our work focused on its implementation and developing tools for helping Member States to move from principles to practice, to concrete actions on delivering on this mandate related to the recommendation.

So the two main tools that we developed are the readiness methodology which is a macro-level tool that will help countries to assess where they stand in terms of their regulatory status, social policies, economic, it's multidimensional tool, so countries will be able to know

where they stand and what are the gaps that need to be filled in order to implement AI ethically and responsibly.

The second tool we're developing is second tool impact assessment which is a micro-level that assesses specific algorithms that are in line and with the policies and values laid out in the recommendations, so we use it also as an entry-point of procure am and offer to countries as a tool to incorporate in their procurement policies for purchasing AI-based systems, and then also that way tapping into the knowledge that exists in the private sector.

We see ethics as an important force for governing AI because it incorporates all the agreed upon standards, legal standards on human rights and fundamental freedom, an also values and principles that did not make their way yet into binding principles, so that's why we put the focus on ethics. In our work, of course, the readiness assessment, ethical assessment that I mentioned, ethics is at the core and they aim to ensure ethical AI. We're currently working with more than 20 countries on implementing those tools, piloting them, and gathering feedback. The panel that we did yesterday as part of WSIS was exactly to facilitate and engage -- engage with people from private sector, Civil Society, and this is kind of the interdisairty and mode and spirit we wish to emerge on tech following. Thank you.

>> GITANJALI SAH: Thank you very much. We apologize to Zeyep in Paris, and there was a technical problem out here and we weren't able to hear your conclusion, but Zeyep, of course, we have these virtual meetings in April and May, and we'll make sure that there is an opportunity to listen to you again.

So, thank you very much to all of our UN agencies working so hard to implement the WSIS Action Lines for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We heard from them so many challenges, opportunities, and key trends in the respective Action Lines, and we look forward to working closely with them and other stakeholders involved in the process. Thank you very much. We will begin with the Closing Ceremony in just about two minutes. Thank you.

(Applause).

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