

Session Outcome Document

Smart City Leaders' Talk

Global Cities Hub

28 May 2024, 13.30-14.30

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Agenda/Session/229>

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Digital tools for human rights-based sustainable smart city development
- principles of building people-centered smart cities
- crucial aspects of digitalization and smart city development at implementation phase
- right balance between technology-driven process and people-centered approach
- complexity of smartness: people, economy, infrastructure, governance, etc.
- how an inclusive international governance framework can make sure that smart city development benefits all and leaves no one behind,

Towards WSIS+20 and WSIS beyond 2025, please share your views on the emerging trends, challenges, achievements, and opportunities in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines to date (5-8 bullets)

- By connecting LRGs to the work of the ITU, Mayors and city representatives have contributed to strengthening the multistakeholder dimension of WSIS, which is one of its defining features.
- LRGs have competencies in key areas of digitalization, including the different layers of smartness: people, economy, infrastructure, governance.
- The contributions by local and regional governments are mostly link to WSIS action lines C1 - the role of governments and stakeholders in promoting ICT for development.
- Smart city leaders emphasized the importance of capacity building (WSIS C4) by identifying gaps in capacity of local government staff and areas that require improvement to accelerate digitalization of local services.
- The question of protection of data from the citizens and the ethical use of AI in cities are high on the agenda of local leaders, reflecting on action line C10 - ethical dimensions of the information society.

Tangible outcomes (such as key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, commitments, figures, and success stories (3-5 bullet points))

- Highlighting different aspects of smartness, including but not limited to fulfilling human rights, strengthening social inclusion, advancing climate adaptation and resilience, as

well as presenting successful smart city projects was important to inform and influence policy making and regulatory processes.

- Discussing how innovation, digitalization and ICT can help cities, communities and their leaders address challenges related to urbanization – like citizens’ digital literacy, climate adaptation and resilience, modernizing and delivering municipal services, promoting equal access, etc. – can ignite new ideas and forge new partnerships.

Actionable plan and key recommendations (2-5 points)

- We need to provide a dedicated space to Local and Regional Governments in general and Smart City Leaders in particular to give rise to a more inclusive multilateralism and better access to digitalization for everyone, everywhere.
- Given their proximity to the population, their knowledge of the local contexts, their capacity to work through a multi-stakeholder approach, LRGs can contribute to the renewed framework for global digital cooperation with a vision to build people-centric, inclusive, and development-oriented information and knowledge societies.
- The dialogue between international organizations (ITU, OHCHR, UN-Habitat) and LRGs is crucial to develop the right global policies which can be successfully implemented at the national and local level. A mindful matching of technology’s offers and the citizens’ real needs is the only successful and sustainable way forward.
- Applying a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is conducive to a better outcome. It benefits both States and LRGs in addressing the challenges of digitalization and harnessing its potential at all levels. Therefore, we recommend facilitating a better involvement of LRGs that would also help ITU and the international community to better understand the challenges on the ground.

Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2025 (WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event) (one paragraph)

Based on previous fruitful commitments of Local and Regional Governments to the WSIS process and their significant contribution on key issues of importance for their populations, the Global Cities Hub suggests that States consider a more formalized engagement of LRGs in the future by creating a permanent ‘Forum of Smart City Leaders’ as a platform for mayors and city leaders to explain the several layers of smartness of a city and community (people, infrastructure, economy, governance, etc.), voice their daily needs and concerns, present their recommendations for whole-of-government efforts, and contribute to global policy-making.