

AP* Meeting: Discussions on WSIS+20 Zero Draft

AP* (pronounced: *AP Star*) is a community of Asia Pacific (APAC) Internet organisations. The AP* Meeting is a bi-annual, invite-only, gathering attended by leaders of the APAC Internet organisations and recognized industry veterans. Its purpose is to facilitate coordination and cooperation among members on technical operations and global Internet issues related to the functioning of the Internet in the APAC region.

This document provides a summary of discussions on the Zero Draft of the **World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20) Review**, held at the AP* Meeting on 18 September 2025 in Da Nang, Viet Nam.

It does **not** represent consensus positions of all participating organisations and experts. Rather, it is submitted as a summary of the discussion, offering insights that may be useful for the WSIS+20 discussions. The specific sections of the Zero Draft discussed were:

- Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for Development
- Bridging Digital Divides
- Financial Mechanisms
- Internet Governance

We would also like to indicate our appreciation to **Informal Multistakeholder Sounding Board (IMSB) members Jennifer Chung and Amrita Choudhury**, who joined the meeting remotely and helped facilitate the discussions with AP* organisations.

Information and Communications Technologies for Development & Bridging Digital Divides *[Note: These topics were discussed collectively]*

- As AP* organisations are focused on infrastructure coordination, our discussions focused on implementation aspects of improving digital public infrastructure in a multistakeholder approach.
- The participants generally agreed that the development of digital infrastructure is based on market or user-driven demand, where profits for private sector investment would be a key consideration for project viability and project initiation in practice.
- The gaps in digital public infrastructure are mostly concentrated in areas where the industry deems commercially unviable to develop and require government and multilateral systems to cooperate.
- To bridge the gaps in digital infrastructure development, where the industry deems commercially unviable, and hence, the digital divide including the gender divide, it is critical to first bridge the cooperation and information gap between the intergovernmental bodies (where non-commercial funding might be available) and the multistakeholder/industry bodies (where we could better coordinate the development on the ground). Some examples of regional multistakeholder/industry organisations could be:

- Internet Society (ISOC) APAC has extensive network to identify gaps and digital divides in digital public infrastructure;
- Asia Pacific Internet Exchange (APIX, the association of Internet Exchange Points in APAC region), could help facilitate a lower cost connection exchange; while APNIC (APAC Network Information Center) and APNOG (APAC Network Operator Groups) consists of relevant industry players to discuss deployment and cooperation.
- Intergovernmental organizations such as the Asia Pacific Telecommunity ([APT](#)) could be used to bridge funding gaps, working with delivery partners on connectivity projects.
- Every jurisdiction faces a different challenge on developing digital public infrastructure. Better coordination and information sharing within and between the intergovernmental bodies and industry players through existing multistakeholder bodies would be critical to identify the gaps and create effective solutions.
- The bridging of public infrastructure/goods gaps needs to be paired with providing meaningful and affordable Internet, as well as building digital literacy and capacity. A multilingual Internet with local content is key. Training for more to engage in Internet standards-making is also important.

Specific commentary on the Zero Draft text–

- Participants appreciated the references of Global Digital Compact (GDC) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to link digital infrastructure development to other United Nations processes. However, comments were made that it is essential to link them to the Action Lines to encourage more practical actions.
 - As we progress, it is key to focus on what has been implemented, as well as on tracking and reporting of our achievements.
 - It may also be helpful to include what has WSIS accomplished in the past 20 years.
- The Zero Draft currently only “acknowledges” (paragraph 20) the importance and need to increase investment of digital public goods and infrastructure – the commitment level towards the multistakeholder community on this aspect can be stronger.
- The Zero Draft does not include commitment from governments to the global multistakeholder governance of the Internet in the case of conflicts/war, which is an increasing risk for the resilience of the Internet.

Internet Governance & Financial Mechanisms [Note: These topics were discussed collectively]

- Participants applauded the Zero Draft’s recognition of the multistakeholder approach as central to Internet governance.
- There was broad support for the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as a permanent forum.

- Discussions focused on how to strengthen the IGF, particularly regarding sustainable funding.
 - Although the private sector was recognized by the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG, 2005) as one of the three main stakeholder groups, its current participation in the multistakeholder model remains limited. This lack of engagement is seen as a gap and a barrier to sustainable funding. Engaging with the private sector by governments alongside other stakeholders to increase participation and support to the IGF may address funding issues.
 - For private sector contributions, business viability matters. A concurrent push towards enabling digital economies (e.g., e-commerce, e-agriculture) could increase private sector incentives to invest in Internet governance processes.
 - Topics that are catered for private sectors in the IGF agenda, as well as participation from high visibility/publicity representatives (e.g. social media companies, celebrities) might encourage private sector participation.
- Participants discussed what encompasses “enhanced cooperation”, noting the need for more clarity on the term and whether all stakeholders would be included in the process.