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**ORAL STATEMENT**

*\*Check against delivery*

United Nations, New York Headquarters  
WSIS+20 Informal Consultation

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Excellencies, colleagues, thank you for this opportunity to contribute to this WSIS+20 Informal Consultation. We particularly thank the co-facilitators for holding this space for all of us stakeholders to convene.

Access Now is a grassroots to global civil society organization working at the intersection of technology and human rights. We are also a member of the Global Digital Rights Coalition for WSIS and endorse the initiatives delivered by the Coalition to date.

Deploying artificial intelligence and automated decision-making, without adequate safeguards, can facilitate human rights violations, exacerbate existing societal power imbalances, and create new risks such as AI-powered surveillance and biometric and behavioural profiling, all which disproportionately affect marginalized people and communities.

We therefore make the following four recommendations with respect to the Zero Draft:

First, and foremost, the Zero Draft must be grounded in international human rights law and standards, including explicit references to the International Bill of Rights, thematic human rights treaties, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The Zero Draft should reaffirm and create a formal role of the OHCHR who has led research and initiatives at the intersection of technology and human rights, including on artificial intelligence, for over a decade.

Second, the Zero Draft should affirm that any interference with the right to privacy must be strictly necessary and proportionate, prescribed by law, and undertaken in pursuit of a legitimate aim.

Third, the Zero Draft should reassert the responsibilities of the private sector to respect human rights and to conduct human rights impact and human rights due diligence assessments throughout the technology lifecycle. Building on the precedent found in the first UN General Assembly resolution solely dedicated to artificial intelligence, the Zero Draft should call on states and other stakeholders to refrain from or cease the use of artificial intelligence systems that are impossible to operate in compliance with international human rights law or that pose undue risks to the enjoyment of human rights.

Finally, we underscore the need to avoid duplication particularly regarding global initiatives on AI governance. The Zero Draft should recognize that the mandate of the IGF has evolved into the world's most inclusive forum for broader digital governance. We therefore echo various calls today from both

governments and other stakeholders to institutionalise the IGF as a permanent structure with dedicated and sustained funding. The continued existence, and stability, of the IGF is crucial for its future as a multistakeholder platform which bridges stakeholder communities and regions, and connects different internet and digital policy processes.

In conclusion, we revert your attention to our written contribution. Thank you.



**Access Now** (<https://www.accessnow.org>) defends and extends the digital rights of people and communities at risk. As a grassroots-to-global organization, we partner with local actors to bring a human rights agenda to the use, development, and governance of digital technologies, and to intervene where technologies adversely impact our human rights. By combining direct technical support, strategic advocacy, grassroots grantmaking, and convenings such as RightsCon, we fight for human rights in the digital age.

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