SIDE EVENT - WSIS+20 HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY: A DRIVER OF DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR DEVELOPMENT

15 December 2025 from 2:30 to 4:30 PM
New York, UN, Conference Room 11

Interpretation available in French, English, Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese.

New York will host on December 16 and 17 a high-level event dedicated to WSIS+20.

This event will assess the twenty years since the Geneva Plan of Action and build on past results to define a vision for digital cooperation beyond 2025, with a focus on inclusiveness, sustainability, and addressing challenges such as the digital divide and the governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

This is an extremely important milestone for international digital cooperation, as WSIS+20 and its Guidelines are among the key tools for implementing the recommendation of the Global Digital Compact (GDC), adopted in September 2024.

As it did during the GDC negotiations, the OIF is mobilizing, together with other linguistic groups, to bring Member States together around the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity in digital content as a tool for digital inclusion.

The digital environment must reflect the world's reality and diversity so that the benefits of digital technologies are not reserved for a small minority of individuals and countries that are mainly monocultural and monolingual. This challenge is even more significant at a time of exponential growth in AI tools that are built from the corpus of data available on the internet.

This high-level event therefore aims to:

1) Raise awareness of the crucial role of cultural and linguistic diversity as a driver of digital inclusion;
2) Bring together the widest possible coalition of stakeholders around this issue, including Member States involved in negotiations of the architecture of global digital and AI governance;

3) Identify how this objective can be translated into concrete actions, including legally binding ones, that these same Member States could promote in the context of international negotiations.

As was the case during the GDC negotiations, this event will be organized in close cooperation not only with La Francophonie Member States that actively support this cause for diversity, but also with other interested institutional and non-institutional partners (in particular the UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies - ODET, and the ITU), as well as with other linguistic groups (in particular the Spanish-speaking, Portuguese-speaking and Arabic-speaking groups).

The program will include a high-level panel and will be intended primarily for diplomats involved in the follow-up of WSIS+20 and other mechanisms implementing international digital cooperation, but also for all other stakeholders contributing in various forums to the development of digital and AI governance. The meeting will offer interpretation (French, English, Arabic, Spanish, and Portuguese) to allow participation from all experts interested in the topic.

PROGRAM

15 December 2025. New York (UN, Conference Room 11)

2:30 – 3:00 PM: Opening remarks

- H.E. Mr. Henri Monceau, Permanent Representative of the OIF to the United Nations in Geneva and Vienna - Lead for the OIF on the Digital and AI Governance Programme
- H.E. Mr. Amandeep Singh Gill, Under-Secretary-General, Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology
- H.E. Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union *(to be confirmed)*

3:00 – 4:00 PM: Panel discussion – *What legal solutions can ensure cultural and linguistic diversity in digital content ?*

Moderator – H.E. Mr. Michel Xavier Biang, Permanent Representative of the OIF to the United Nations in New York

- H.E. Mr. Sérgio França Danese, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations
- H.E. Mr. Héctor Vasconcelos, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations
- H.E. Mr. Tareq M. A. M. Albanai, Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations
- Mr. Paul de Sinety, Delegate General for the French Language and the Languages of France – French Ministry of Culture
- Mr. Tawfik Jelassi, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information
- Mr. Henri Verdier, former French Ambassador for Digital Affairs, Director-General of the Inria Foundation (National Institute for Research in Digital Science and Technology)
- M. Gayan Peiris, Head of Data and Technology - UN Development Programme (UNDP)
- Ms. Lucia Velasco, AI Policy Lead, United Nations Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies (ODET)

4:00 – 4:30 PM: Interactive session with delegations

This panel will examine public policy frameworks at the national and international levels, as well as binding and non-binding legal mechanisms that could ensure the implementation of this diversity in digital content.