

NCUC Quarterly Webinar

Date & Time: 25 August 2025, 15:00 UTC +00

TOPIC: *“Safeguarding Digital Rights in the Face of Fragmentation: Civil Society’s Role in Shaping a Resilient Internet in the WSIS+20 Process”*

Terms of Reference

1. Background and context

As the global Internet governance community prepares for the WSIS+20 review, digital rights and Internet resilience face growing threats. Rising risks of Internet fragmentation driven by geopolitical tensions, divergent national regulations, competing technical standards, duplicated governance processes, and regional governance crises, such as the ongoing AFRINIC challenges, have become pressing concerns. In response, civil society continues to advocate for an open, secure, inclusive, and rights-respecting Internet.

Within this context, the Non-Commercial Users Constituency (NCUC) will host its first quarterly webinar to examine how civil society actors across different regions can meaningfully contribute to shaping ICANN policy and strengthening global Internet resilience through the WSIS+20 process and other governance forums. If you have not registered already, kindly use the Zoom link below to secure your participation.

2. Objectives

- Explore the implications of Internet fragmentation on civil society and digital rights.
- Discuss the role of civil society in shaping outcomes of the WSIS+20 process.
- Share regional experiences, challenges, and best practices in digital rights advocacy and Internet governance.
- Strengthen inclusive representation, especially of the **Global South**, in global digital policy debates.
- Promote multistakeholder collaboration around emerging policy challenges such as data sovereignty, DNS abuse, and content regulation.

3. Format and Agenda

The 70-minute session will include:

- **Opening Remarks** and Brief update from NCUC leadership or guest experts
- **Panel Discussion** featuring five regional speakers (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean, North America)
- **Moderated Q&A and interactive dialogue** with the audience
- **Closing Reflections** and next steps

4. Key Sub-Themes for Discussion

Speakers and participants will be invited to reflect on the following topics:

- **Internet fragmentation:** A growing challenge, at the centre of many discussions within the WSIS+20 process, influenced by geopolitical tensions, divergent national regulations, duplication of governance or fora, and technical developments.
- **Digital rights and freedoms:** Central to civil society's mission, touching on access, privacy, freedom of expression, equality, and how they are currently reflected in the Elements Paper of WSIS+20.
- **Civil society engagement:** Highlights regional strategies for meaningful civil society participation in Internet Governance, both within ICANN and in broader spaces, be they multistakeholder, such as the IGF, or primarily multilateral, such as the UN.
- **Inclusion of Global South perspectives:** Ensuring that underrepresented voices are actively engaged in discussions on globally relevant issues extending beyond governmental viewpoints and discussing AFRINIC governance challenges along with their implications for human rights and the resilience of Africa's Internet.
- **Policy intersections:** Open space for discussion on data sovereignty, DNS abuse, content regulation, and multistakeholder governance.

6. Target Audience

- NCUC, NPOC, and NCSG members
- Broader ICANN community
- Civil society and Internet governance stakeholders

- Technical / Domain Name Registries and Registrars
- Digital rights activists and organizations
- WSIS+20 participants and policymakers
- Government and private sectors

7. Expected Outcomes

- Documented regional civil society perspectives on WSIS+20 and Internet fragmentation.
- Increased awareness and dialogue around emerging digital rights challenges.
- Stronger inter-regional collaboration and knowledge-sharing.
- Strategic input for future NCUC positions and interventions in ICANN and global policy spaces.

8. Proposed Moderator / Speakers

Proposed Moderator: Stephanie Perrin, NCUC NomCom Representative.

Speakers

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| 1. Dr. Joanna Kulesza, | Europe |
| 2. Prof. Hakikur Rahman, | Asia-Pacific |
| 3. Ephraim Percy Kenyanito, | Africa |
| 4. Bruna Martins dos Santos | Latin America & the Caribbean |
| 5. Elonnai Hickok | North America |

Registration Link:

Zoom registration: https://icann.zoom.us/meeting/register/_IxNUqvFTs61vTn4nrnSvg

Contact:

Wisdom Donkor

NCUC Chair

Email: wisdom.dk@gmail.com