

# Remarks by WACC General Secretary, Philip Lee, at the WSIS+20 Leaders TalkX, Geneva, 9 July 2025



WACC and its partners around the world work to advance communication rights and media freedoms as fundamental to just, democratic, inclusive, and peaceful societies.

Looking back on two decades of actions aimed at creating an equitable information society, we must confront the reality that millions of people are still excluded – not just from digital access, but also from meaningful participation in the systems that shape knowledge, governance, and power.

It's a simple truth that: **Without communication justice, there can be no equitable sustainable development.**

Civil society, especially in the Global South, is being increasingly silenced – not only by political repression, but by the collapse of international aid and shrinking funding streams. Digital technologies are dominated by the Global North, and digital platforms are used to amplify some voices while marginalizing others.

At this critical juncture, WSIS+20 is formulating bold proposals to rethink understandings of development, to elevate national actors, and to increase accessibility, affordability, and accountability. WACC and its partners welcome these calls. But **none of this transformation is possible without confronting the colonial, racist, and sexist legacies embedded in the control of information and knowledge, and in the development of digital technologies – including Artificial Intelligence.**

We believe that communication must be recognized not merely as a tool for development, but as a *right* – central to human dignity, agency, and justice. With that in mind, we call for:

- **Media regulation** that genuinely serves the common good, not just market or state interests.
- **Media ecosystems**, where community-led voices are not just supported, but prioritized.
- **Democratic data governance** that respects people's sovereignty over their own information.
- **New public and non-profit ownership** of digital infrastructure that upholds the public good.
- **A fair global knowledge regime**, where truth is not dictated by power.
- **A realignment of the global digital economy and its financial architecture** based on principles of fairness, inclusivity, and accountability.

WACC urges WSIS+20, UN agencies, Member States, and digital actors to listen to the voices of ordinary people and to respond radically to their concerns. If the next 20 years are to deliver on the promise of just and inclusive digital societies, then communication rights must no longer be a footnote to governance discussions – they must be foundational.

**Can we imagine a world in which communication ecosystems serve people, not profit or power?**  
If we can, then we must act decisively to build it.