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Remarks
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Excellencies,
Distinguished Members of Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to join you today at this IGF Parliamentary Roundtable.

Parliaments are the places where legislation is developed – including those for the Internet and the digital space. Indeed, parliamentarians are among the key actors in Internet governance, and digital policy debates.

I am pleased that the IGF is one place where parliamentarians can exchange information and good practices among themselves. And, where they can interact with other stakeholders on pressing issues related to the use, evolution and governance of the Internet and digital technologies.

The theme for this Roundtable – Legislative approaches for a user-centric digital space – is very well chosen.

When decisions are made on how to develop, make available, and regulate digital technologies, understanding how technology works, and what users need, is essential. We need technologies to be human-centric, to enable the exercise of human rights, and to make people's lives easier.

But this does not come by default.

The Internet is a great empowering tool. But it is also a complex ecosystem with risks and challenges – from misinformation and disinformation, to privacy, safety, and security concerns. Artificial intelligence, for instance, promises to help drive progress towards sustainable development. But it also raises questions of trust, ethics and bias, to name just a few.

Minimising the risks associated with digitalization – and ensuring that individuals and society at large can enjoy the benefits in an inclusive, safe, and secure manner – this is our joint responsibility.

It calls for action from all relevant stakeholders, be they:

- companies,
- governments,
- parliaments,
- the broader technical community, and
- even users themselves.

As highlighted in the Secretary-General's Roadmap for digital cooperation, and in his report on "Our Common Agenda", strengthened digital cooperation is the cornerstone of an 'open, free and secure digital future for all'. And parliaments have an important role to play.

Excellencies,

We have seen in recent years, an increasing trend of legislation being put forward in national and regional parliaments, covering issues such as:

- privacy,
- cybersecurity,
- data protection,
- content policy,
- competition and
- consumer protection.

I believe it is important to have rules and regulations in place that are aimed to tackle risks associated with the digital space, govern the behaviour or market actors, and protect rights and freedoms.

I also believe it is important to ensure that these rules are indeed, oriented towards the goal of having a 'user-centric digital space'. This is important, while balancing the various rights at stake, and providing a predictable environment for the private sector to operate.

I hope that the IGF 2021 Parliamentary Track will inspire this by exchanging good practices, and deepening cooperation among parliamentarians, on digital policy issues. I trust such cooperation will continue in the years to come, and that the Parliamentary Track will be one of the annual hallmarks of the IGF.

Before closing, I wish to thank the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the lower chamber in the Polish Parliament - the Sejm - for partnering with UN DESA in hosting the parliamentary track.

I wish you all a fruitful exchange. I look forward to receiving the outcomes of 2021 Parliamentary Track.

I thank you.
