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Remarks
Press Conference of 16th Internet Governance Forum

Poland, 7 December 2021, 11.40-12.10 hrs

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be here, alongside the Prime Minister of Poland, His Excellency Mateusz Morawiecki.

As you know, we have just concluded the Opening Session of the 16th annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum.

We are inspired by the guidance of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and the President of Poland, His Excellency Mr. Andrzej Duda. On behalf of the United Nations, I extend my gratitude and thanks to the Host Country, the Government of Poland.

We are also inspired by the diverse views and perspectives of various leaders in the intergovernmental, business, civil society, and youth communities. They have actively contributed to the preparation and organization of the Forum.

Planning for the Katowice IGF has taken place for well over a year now.

The logistics have been carefully considered in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the new variants. Emphasis has been placed on providing a safe, secure environment that complies with, and goes beyond epidemiological protocols.

We are aware that many, unfortunately, are not able to travel to Katowice to join us in-person. Nevertheless, the Katowice IGF's hybrid format allows us to have meaningful participation for all - regardless of whether one joins onsite in Katowice, or online from any other part of the world.

It is, indeed, a testament to the agility of the hybrid format that we are able to seamlessly move forward, with this important annual event, while global circumstances are changing.

Ongoing registration for the Forum shows over 6,000 stakeholders participating.

These thousands of participants – from different disciplines and regions – are about to engage in over 200 dialogues, and provide insights on key global trends in digital public policy.

You can expect engaging debates on:

- digital divides,
- digital cooperation,
- rights and freedom online,
- emerging regulations for the digital space,
- environmental sustainability and
- cybersecurity.

Prominent experts and leaders are actively taking part in a dedicated high-level leaders' track. Among the topics of discussion are:

- Global economic recovery;
- Smart and sustainable cities;
- User rights and digital platforms;
- Future of work; and
- Corporate social responsibility.

Later today, we will hear from parliamentarians from around the world, on possible legislative approaches for a user-centric digital space. Indeed, the IGF is a place for inspiring and impacting decision makers.

At the end of this week, we will release “IGF Messages”. These will outline policy priorities and solutions that have emerged here - and that can only emerge here - in this unique multistakeholder space.

Let me conclude by highlighting the theme of this IGF, “Internet United”. Together, through a multistakeholder, multi-diplomacy and multi-generational approach, we will shape a better digital future.

Together we will ensure that the Internet Governance Forum will better support digital transformation, in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

I thank you.
