Key takeaway from preparatory and introduction session

Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change

The world is facing an unprecedented climate and environmental emergency. In this context, digital technologies pose challenges to the environment, but they can also play a constructive role in confronting the crisis. With the spirit of COP26, IGF 2021 puts the intersection between environment and digital technology, to connect the dots between those two issues. Technology is a challenge to the environment, but also could take an important part to save environmental sustainability and to maintain people's engagement with digital technology in the safest way to environment .

We divided the key takeaways from the discussion into three part :

A. What are the negative impacts of digital technology for the environment?

- Challenge in the processing of e-waste. The tech companies and electronic products notoriously contribute to e-waste which is still difficult to recycle, especially some countries/regions that still haven't access yet into the recycle technology.
- Regarding data centers: there are several studies, but the problem is that data centers have many users far away that also have a major impact, even higher, and these externalities are hard to measure. Equivalent to extracting petrol (like data centers) that results in burning gas by cars and kitchens. Certainly companies are becoming increasingly aware of the carbon footprint of data centres; there are services by third party vendors to provide carbon offset credits for use of data and cloud infrastructure

B. What technology can do for the environment?

- Capacity building, when the cross collaboration parties provide training and technology for the global south, to help them minimize the climate change effect and to govern the datas.
- Organize data to mitigate the effect of climate change. Data could come from modern community (smart cities, IoT, satelite) and also the indigenous communities (agriculture datas, weather datas and forest mapping)
- Global responses are necessary, but the specific realities that are most impacted by the depletion of resources, pollution and destruction of ecosystems should also be considered.

C. What next?

- The struggle for environmental justice is multidimensional, multidisciplinary and strongly connected to social justice.
- It is vital to take local experiences and knowledge, particularly from the global South, into account. Only by bringing the diverse local experiences and knowledge to the forefront will it be possible to contribute to the SDG and UN 2030 agenda and to environmental sustainability.
- The IGF can contribute to building the understanding of the co-shared responsibility of the diverse stakeholders to mitigate the crisis, to monitor and assess the environmental impact of digitalisation and shape responses, including policy responses.
- Digital literacy initiative on environmental data.
- Link to human rights
- Bring local perspective/experiences that can illustrate ways to operationalise the recommendations that come from the PNE. Address the geopolitical dimension of digitalization and environmental sustainability.
- Serious focus on environmental impact assessments.
- How to bridge internet governance with the environmental sector?
- Look at the concrete models and approaches for design, production, and consumption on digital technology.
- IGF multistakeholder group should embrace human rights and environmental justice, both in local and global level.
- Commitment to building necessary sustainable digital infrastructure.