Overview

Against a background of unprecedented global challenges, **the 17ᵗʰ Internet Governance Forum** in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 28 November to 2 December will seek to determine concrete steps to unlock the potential of digital technology in order to build resilient and inclusive societies.

As a multistakeholder platform, the IGF— last held in Africa more than 10 years ago — will bring together governments, businesses, the technical community, civil society, and other partners to have open and inclusive discussions on how digital transformation can be harnessed to drive socio-economic development globally while protecting the environment. The Forum is an opportunity to share best practices and experiences that will help shape national and global policies on the Internet.

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the power of technology, providing billions of people with access to telemedicine, e-commerce and telecommuting. The Internet offers tremendous opportunities and can play an essential role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, 2.7 billion people remain without Internet access, perpetuating existing inequalities. 60% of the African population are offline. Globally, more men use the Internet (at 62 per cent), compared with 57 per cent of women. The increase in use of the Internet has also led to a spike in misinformation, disinformation, hate speech and cyberattacks.

The theme of this year's Forum, **"Resilient Internet for a Shared Sustainable and Common Future",** calls for collective action to connect all people and safeguard human rights; avoid Internet fragmentation; govern data and protect privacy; enable safety, security and accountability; and address advanced digital technologies.

In addition to the opening and closing ceremonies, a Parliamentary Track and a Youth Global Summit, there will also be three High-level sessions: Universal, affordable and meaningful connectivity (28 November); Digital Rights (28 November); and Digital Trust and Security (29 November).

The outputs of the Forum will also feed into consultations for the Global Digital Compact – a global framework for an open, free and secure digital future – that will be agreed on at the UN Summit of the Future in 2024.

More information about the IGF can be found on its website: https://www.intgovforum.org/en