



# IGF 2023 Summary

*Eighteenth Meeting of Internet Governance Forum*

*8-12 October 2023*

*Kyoto, Japan*

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# Glossary

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BPF Best Practice Forum

CSTD Commission on Science and Technology for Development

DC Dynamic Coalition

DPIDG Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government

GDC Global Digital Compact

IGF Internet Governance Forum

IoT Internet of Things

ITU International Telecommunication Union

MAG Multistakeholder Advisory Group

NRI National, Regional and Youth Initiative

PN Policy Network

PNMA Policy Network on Meaningful Access

PNIF Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation

PNAI Policy Network on Artificial Intelligence

LP Leadership Panel

UN United Nations

UN DESA United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNOG United Nations Office at Geneva

WG (MAG) Working Group

WG-WSP Working Group on Workshop Processes

WG-Strategy Working Group on IGF Strategy

WSIS World Summit on the Information Society

# Internet Governance Forum

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The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a global multistakeholder platform that facilitates the discussion of public policy issues pertaining to Internet governance.

The IGF was one of the most important outcomes of the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that mandated the United Nations Secretary-General to convene the Forum on 18 July 2006.

The existing mandate of the IGF as set out in paragraphs 72 to 78 of the Tunis Agenda was extended for a further 10 years in a resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 16 December 2015, (70/125), 'Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society.

Institutionally, the IGF is supported by the IGF Secretariat, which is administered by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). The programme of the annual IGF meeting is developed by its Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), whose members are appointed by the UN Secretary-General. An IGF Leadership Panel, with members also appointed by the Secretary-General, supports IGF strategic improvements since 2022.

So far, eighteen annual meetings of the IGF have been hosted by various governments.

The nineteenth annual IGF meeting will be hosted by the Government of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh.

# Foreword

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The Internet has become an integral part of our daily lives, revolutionizing the way we communicate, work, learn, and access information. It has broken down geographical barriers, enabling global connectivity and the exchange of ideas at a disruptive scale. This transformative power has not only ushered in a new era of innovation, economic growth, and societal advancement, but has also brought about unprecedented challenges such as cyberthreats, privacy concerns, and persistent digital divides.

To harness the benefits and address those challenges effectively, effective governance of the Internet is essential. Over the past 18 years, this has been carried out through the multistakeholder model of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which involves inclusive dialogue and collaboration among governments, businesses, civil society, technical communities and international organizations. This approach ensures that digital policies and regulations are both inclusive and adaptable to the rapidly evolving digital landscape, promoting a secure, equitable, and innovative digital ecosystem that we aspire to positively impact our lives.

It is this vision that guided the convening and deliberations of the 18<sup>th</sup> annual IGF meeting in Kyoto. At its opening, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, reminded us of the importance of multistakeholder cooperation and its past achievements in times of geopolitical tensions, proliferating crises, and widening divisions; and that it is critical that the global community continues to work together and harness digital technologies for sustainable development, peace, and prosperity.

Hosted by the Government of Japan, the Forum was a great success, with a record number of participants from 175 countries and across all continents of the world. 11,145 stakeholders actively participated, out of those 6,279 in person in Kyoto, in 355 distinctive sessions nested under the Forum's overarching theme: The Internet We Want – Empowering All People. We were joined by more than 100 Ministers, Parliamentarians and Chief Executives, and thousands of stakeholders from all levels representing the diverse IGF community. The Forum saw an increase in industry participation and engagement of stakeholders especially from the Asia Pacific region, as well as result-oriented capacity development programmes for parliamentarians and youths.

The success of the Forum was evident in this Summary Report and the Kyoto IGF Messages, across the eight themes of AI and emerging technologies; avoiding Internet fragmentation; cybersecurity, cybercrime and online safety; data Governance and trust; digital divides and inclusion; global digital governance and cooperation; human rights and freedoms; and sustainability and environment. The Forum sent out calls for the global community to do more such as to close the digital divide, respect the standard of openness and interoperability, and create frameworks for the engagement of the judiciary.

The success would not have been possible without the immense support of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group and the Leadership Panel of the IGF. The Forum also benefitted tremendously from the close partnerships with many UN agencies, international and regional organizations, and the network of over 165 national and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs), as well as multiple intersessional activities such as the policy networks, best practice forums and dynamic coalitions.

With the Internet and digital technologies increasingly shaping our economies and societies, it is crucial that all stakeholders support policymakers in shaping a digital landscape that reflects peoples' aspirations, and secures their rights, including the respect for privacy. Drawing from its proven records, the IGF will continue its efforts to involve more parliamentarians and policymakers in the discussions and will also fully embrace youth engagement to ensure the long-term sustainability of the IGF.

Moving forward, I believe that the outcomes of the Kyoto IGF, including from its High-level, Parliamentary, and Youth tracks, will provide useful inputs for the framework of the Global Digital Compact, which will be discussed and agreed upon among Member States at the 2024 Summit of the Future.

Let us work together in advancing and shaping our digital future at the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the IGF in 2024, to be hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh.

**Mr. Li Junhua**

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs**

# Foreword

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On behalf of the host country for the 18th Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Kyoto, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all participants from multi-stakeholders such as governments, international organizations, companies, engineers, academic communities, and civil society. It was my greatest pleasure to contribute to this historic success with welcoming many guests. I would also like to show my gratitude to the United Nations and all those who have been involved in the leadership of the IGF over the past 18 years for their preparation to bring about success.

The overarching theme of this meeting is “The Internet We Want - Empowering All People.” Under this theme, more than 300 sessions were organized to have a fruitful discussion to ensure that no one is left behind and that all people can enjoy the benefits of the internet. Without the active engagement of various stakeholders and tradition of the IGF, this meeting could have not achieved a great success.

Participation of diverse stakeholder groups is the core value of the IGF, which enabled lively discussions on a wider range of issues related to the internet from different perspectives. Over the five days from 8 to 12 October 2023, more than 9,000 guests including online from all over the world participated the meeting, along with the highest number of in-person attendees (6,279 participants). Besides the energetic debate in each session, many people enjoyed their conversation grabbing a coffee in the hallway and posted their experience with a photo on social media tagging #IGF2023. Such physical and virtual exchanges we experienced in Kyoto will certainly inspire us and provide bonds of friendship that will last for years to come. As expressed in the main theme, the internet has greatly contributed to connecting people together.

The internet has been an indispensable infrastructure for daily lives and economic and social activities, and has served as the foundation of democracy, providing access to diverse forms of expression, knowledge, and news from around the world. It is significant that the basic philosophy of the IGF embraces an open, inclusive and democratic process. When discussing ever-evolving topics on the internet, multi-stakeholder approach in all dialogue brings the source of fruitful outcomes.

In the IGF, Japan, as the host country, made contribution to better Internet via multi-stakeholder approach. Generative AI was a major topic at this meeting and the High-Level Panel provided a lively discussion with Prime Minister’s attendance. I am convinced that this session deepened our awareness about the risks of generative AI, and it will become a step forward to share its possibilities. The outputs and messages from the meeting will surely form the basis of further development in each of the issues.

In addition to the sessions, I hope you enjoyed exhibitions of the IGF Villages as well as hospitality events such as tea ceremony and Kimono where guests could experience Japanese traditional culture. I also hope you explored Kyoto, the host city with its rich history, and that your stay in Japan was enjoyable. I sincerely look forward to your next visit to Japan.

Lastly, I am confident that the IGF will continue to be the world’s leading forum for discussion on a wide range of issues related to the internet, believing that its community will grow for a better world.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Junji Suzuki**

**Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan**

# IGF 2023 at a Glance

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In 2023, the forum held its 18th annual meeting in a hybrid format, hosted by the Government of Japan in Kyoto. Under the overarching theme [The Internet We Want - Empowering All People](#), the meeting featured discussion on some of the most pressing Internet and digital policy issues, from access to the Internet and human rights, to Internet fragmentation, cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies.

The [IGF 2023 Multistakeholder Advisory Group](#) (MAG), with members appointed by the UN Secretary-General from all stakeholder groups, supported the planning of the 18th annual IGF meeting. The [IGF Leadership Panel](#) worked throughout the year and gathered in Kyoto to exchange views on approaches to strengthening the Forum and enhancing its visibility.

When	8-12 October 2023 Japan, Kyoto and online
IGF 2023 in Numbers	11,145 stakeholders registered from 92% of UN member states 6,279 onsite participants from 178 countries 3,000+ online participants 355 sessions
Overarching Theme	The Internet We Want - Empowering All People
8 Themes	AI & Emerging Technologies Avoiding Internet Fragmentation Cybersecurity, Cybercrime and Online Safety Data Governance and Trust Digital Divides and Inclusion Global Digital Governance and Cooperation Human Rights and Freedoms Sustainability & Environment
IGF Tracks	Thematic Area Tracks - IGF community sessions IGF High-Level Leaders Track IGF Youth Track IGF Parliamentary Track IGF Intersessional Work IGF Newcomers Track



## IGF 2023 Quotes

The meeting opened with remarks from the Prime Minister of Japan and the United Nations Secretary-General, followed by remarks from experts from different stakeholder groups.

*“For nearly two decades, this multistakeholder cooperation has proven remarkably productive – and remarkably resilient in the face of growing geopolitical tensions, proliferating crises, and widening divisions. Your work is more important than ever.*

*We need to keep harnessing digital technologies enabled by the Internet to help deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, take climate action, and build a better world.”*

**Mr. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General**



*“I believe that by bringing together participants from all over the world, from different perspectives and bringing together their wisdom through a multistakeholder approach, we can maximize the benefits of the Internet while reducing risks. I think that the overarching theme of this year's meeting, "The Internet We Want – Empowering All People," is an expression of our strong commitment to realize an inclusive Internet that leaves no one behind and to explore the sustainable future of human beings.”*

**Prime Minister of Japan, H.E. Mr. Fumio Kishida**



*“The Internet that is free and undivided will lead to free, prosperous and democratic future. I am hopeful, confident that this meeting in Kyoto will lay the foundation for that future. Japan wishes to make contribution to this meeting as a host.”*

**H.E. Mr. Suzuki Junji, Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan**

*“ Models of Internet governance are on the rise around the world, where the state is at the centre and information flows are controlled and filtered. Rather than spreading knowledge of two people, the Internet sometimes feels like a tool to extract knowledge about people. A tool that divides and where disinformation spreads, diminishing trust in our governance systems and in each other. The exponential growth of AI heralds a great opportunity for human advancement but also a major risk if we don't learn our lessons and act very, very swiftly. But just as Kyoto has managed to do, our multistakeholder community can preserve the purity of the past, while addressing the challenges of modernity. ”*

**Ms. Vera Jourova, Vice President for value and transparency European Commission**

*“When it comes to innovative regulation, we need to move from a world of regulate and innovate or innovate and regulate to innovative regulation... Let's make sure that during IGF23, we open up the dialogue and the cooperation to deliver the Internet that we all need and deserve, empowering all people, and we look forward to welcome you to deliver cohesive and collective action and impact and consensus on this agenda in IGF Riyadh 24.”*

**H.E. Mr. Abdullah Alswaha, Minister, Minister of Communications and Information Technology of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

*“ The world is turning to digital technologies to tackle our most pressing global challenges. One number captures the significance of this moment more, I think, than any other. That's the percentage of sustainable development goal targets that directly benefit from these technologies. The ITU puts this number at 70%. It's a major takeaway of the SDG digital acceleration agenda that we launched with UNDP during the SDG digital event that was held in New York just prior to the UNGA high-level week.”*

**Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General, International Telecommunications Union**

*“Cybersecurity is one of the areas that we should work together to deal with the other user of the Internet technology as well. But at the same time, with the proper use of the technology of the Internet, we can work together for the ethical use of the internet as well. So, I hope this opportunity we all get together with a multistakeholder people to discuss about the future of the internet governance, then we hope that this Kyoto meeting is going to be one of the startup time for the future ethical use of the internet environment.”*

**Mr. Jun Murai, Dean of Graduate School of Media and governance, Keio University**

*“ At this forum, we have been tasked with contemplating the Internet we want, empowering all people. While diverse backgrounds and cultures envision this future, a Universal Design emerges, an Internet that is open, accessible and inclusive, ultimately empowering all individuals... I would urge you to keep some past principles sacred as we look to the future. One of the foundational principles upon which the internet is constructed are open standards, open architecture, interoperability and I would add two more to the list: an open mind and imagination. It is these principles that the technical community sacredly embraced which served us well and created the amazing transformation that the Internet is and the transformations that the Internet itself has enabled, indeed it has changed our lives in the most remarkable of ways.”*

**Ms. Tripti Sinha, Chair, ICANN Board of Directors**

*“The impact of the Internet has never been more significant than it is today. IGF plays a central role as a facilitator and the forum for important discussions, for governments, civil societies, the academic sector, the technical community, and the private sector.”*

**H.E. Mr. Sigbjorn Gjelsvik, Minister, Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development of Norway**

*“ We are articulating the Internet we want. But we won't get it unless we figure out how to get there. And so, I want to strongly urge the IGF participants to start thinking more about how we will achieve the objectives that we have already articulated in the Internet we want, which the Leadership Panel has also expressed what we believe is a consistent view with regard to that subject. But we now must focus on how to get there. And that should be the outcome of the IGF meetings in Riyadh next year and in the future as well.”*

**Mr. Vint Cerf, Chair, IGF Leadership Panel**

*“Negotiating the Budapest convention taught us the importance of a multistakeholder approach when regulating the digital world with public authorities, of course, but also civil society, the private sector, and technical and professional organizations taking part. All their experience is needed and we depend on them. I know that the Internet Governance Forum has embraced that inclusive approach. That is why we have been so supportive of it, ever since its early days as the World Summit on Information Society 20 years ago.”*

**Mr. Bjorn Berge, Deputy Secretary-General, Council of Europe**

*“The law-making process ends with the judiciary. Everything you are discussing in parliament with think tanks remains more or less theoretical, until a judge gives briefest life to it by saying this is the correct interpretation. It would be very sad for your process to fail to take off simply because a judge who is supposed to decide about an aspect of Internet governance uses a few minutes to strike out an entire application because they do not understand. And for your information, the judges never said that they do not know. You must say the honorable judge has slipped into error. So, please don't allow us to slip into error. Kindly facilitate ... a track for the judiciaries.”*

**Mr. Eliamani Laltaika, Judge, High Court of Tanzania**

# IGF 2023 Highlights

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## Hybrid IGF

The 18th IGF was held as a fully hybrid meeting, with participants joining onsite, in Kyoto, and online. With the overall objective of making participation in the meeting meaningful and inclusive for all attendees, the hybrid format included several features:

- Through the [IGF website](#) serving as a primary entry point, all online participants, including those with active roles of speakers/moderators/rapporteurs were able to participate and contribute as those participating onsite.
- A [3D Venue](#) was created as an equivalent to the onsite venue. As onsite participants, the online participants also had the opportunity to enter the meeting rooms and connect to the participating platform.
- The [IGF Village](#) booths, hosted by over 80 organisations at the venue, had their online equivalents.
- [Remote hubs](#) facilitated the participation of those unable to travel.
- [Bilateral meetings](#) could also be organised with online participation.
- A dedicated [website landing page](#) and adjusted [mobile app](#) were also made available to support easier navigation of the IGF 2023 content.



## Involvement of UN Agencies

The Forum saw over 40 entities from the UN system, represented both as organisers and speakers in many sessions.

## Focus on Youth

To effectively engage youth, a dedicated [IGF 2023 Youth Track](#) was designed and implemented throughout the year. In cooperation with all Youth IGF coordinators, as well as international youth-focused organisations, the track was designed and delivered through four capacity development workshops hosted in conjunction with [regional IGFs](#), namely [EuroDIG](#) in Finland, [Youth LACIGF](#) in Colombia, [APrIGF](#) in Australia and [African IGF](#) in Nigeria, as well as a [IGF 2023 Global Youth Summit](#) at the 18th IGF in Kyoto. The track focused on unpacking various digital transformation policy aspects and engaged over thousands of young people.

## Thematic Approach

The IGF 2023 themes were aligned closely with the areas the community prioritised through a traditional public call and reflective of the priorities the Secretary-General set for the Global Digital Compact. The programme's structure aimed to encourage focused discussion that delves more deeply into specific issue areas thereby potentially leading to more focused outcomes.

## Capacity Development

Throughout 2023, the IGF Secretariat has been engaged in a series of [capacity development activities](#), including organising workshops, providing grants to NRIs, supporting youth engagement and schools of

Internet governance, providing travel support for IGF 2023 participants and remote hubs. Specifically, capacity development included several activities:

Workshops organised in conjunction with the NRIs, to foster cooperation and develop capacity. Among these, some specifically were organised as part of the youth and parliamentary tracks.

Training sessions for IGF 2023 session organisers and participants, focused broadly on explaining mechanisms of hybrid participation.

[Newcomers session](#) for orienting first time IGF participants.

Grants support to 15 [NRIs](#) and 5 [remote hubs](#) serving communities from developing countries.

[Travel support](#) to 125 participants coming from developing countries.

## **Leadership Panel and Follow-up to the Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda**

Continuous efforts are invested to improve the IGF, in line with its mandate. This also includes responding to the UN Secretary-General's [Roadmap for Digital Cooperation](#) and [Our Common Agenda](#). The Secretary-General appointed the [Leadership Panel](#), as a strategic high-level multistakeholder body. The 15-member Panel continued its work in 2023 through regular online meetings and three in-person meetings, hosted during the IGF open consultations and MAG meeting in March in Vienna and in July in Geneva, as well as in September in New York, hosted at the margins of the UN General-Assembly High Level Week. At the 18th IGF in Kyoto, the Panel members met with many other initiatives and organisations and engaged with the community through two open town halls. This enabled the Panel to present and discuss their joint paper on ['The Internet We Want'](#), outlining a vision for the Internet and digital values that serve humanity. The town halls also provided a platform for the Panel to collect input on their accomplishments thus far and to receive suggestions to guide their future work.

The IGF continues to plan its contribution modality to the Secretary-General's proposed [Global Digital Compact](#) on norms, principles and values. The IGF 2023 Messages, reflecting key takeaways from the forum's discussions, are expected to broadly inform the community including the GDC development process.

Continuous efforts are invested in advancing long-term sustainability of the forum. In this regard, the next host countries are being explored, as well as new partnerships and cooperation approaches.

## **IGF 2024**

During the ceremonial part of the 18th annual IGF meeting, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced it will host the IGF 2024 annual meeting in Riyadh.

To plan the 19th annual IGF meeting in 2024, following the public call for nominations, the Secretary-General appointed a Chair and eleven new members to its IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group. The [list of 2024 MAG](#) members and its Chair is available at the IGF website.

## **Communications**

A press briefing was held on Day 1, Monday 9 October, with the IGF Leadership Panel Vice-Chair Maria Ressa and Panel Member 'Gbenga Sesan to present the Panel's vision paper on the 'Internet We Want'. The briefing was attended by Japanese and international media onsite and online. The IGF was [announced](#) by the UN Secretary-General's spokesperson during the daily noon briefing at UN Headquarters on 9 October.

Daily [media wrap-ups](#) were also produced and distributed to IGF-accredited journalists, the IGF main press mailing list and media lists at the UN Secretariat through the Department of Global Communications. Wrap-ups were made publicly available on the IGF website.

The 18th IGF, supported by the hashtags #IGF2023 and #InternetWeWant, was featured across UN social media channels - IGF channels as well as those of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and UN Secretariat.

Week-of media monitoring showed that the IGF was covered in a very high number of major Japanese media outlets, including NHK, Nikkei, Yomiuri Shimbun, Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi and Kyoto, in print and broadcast. It appeared in international outlets such as Politico, Deutsche Welle, La Stampa, EU Reporter and Devex. Services in Indonesia, Georgia, Nigeria, Hungary and other countries also picked up IGF-related stories.

A press kit was prepared via [Trello](#), containing [fact sheets on IGF](#), a main [media advisory](#), essential details about the meeting, access to [photos](#) and [videos](#) and contact information in case of interest in interviews. Opening and closing press releases were issued.

Also via [Trello](#), communications materials were shared with the IGF's session organisers to enhance the promotion of their sessions, from thematic cards, to social media guidance, powerpoint templates and high-resolution logos.

All sessions were streamed and transcribed. The high-level and main sessions were interpreted in six official UN languages and Japanese as the language of the Host Country.

## IGF 2023 Themes

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The headline of this year's Forum is *The Internet We Want - Empowering All People*. This title symbolises a vision for the Internet that emphasises inclusivity, accessibility, and empowerment for everyone everywhere.

The community-led sessions, including MAG-organised main sessions, as well as sessions organised by hundreds of other stakeholders, were built around the eight [IGF 2023 sub-themes](#) (selected on the basis of a public call for issues). Stakeholders were invited to submit session proposals under one of the eight themes:

- **AI & Emerging Technologies**
- **Avoiding Internet Fragmentation**
- **Cybersecurity, Cybercrime and Online Safety**
- **Data Governance and Trust**
- **Digital Divides and Inclusion**
- **Global Digital Governance and Cooperation**
- **Human Rights and Freedoms**
- **Sustainability & Environment**

Over 800 [session proposals](#) were received, reviewed and evaluated for final adoption into the IGF 2023 programme.

The final output of the rich Forum's discussions feeds into Kyoto IGF Messages.

## Kyoto IGF Messages

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The [Kyoto IGF Messages](#) provide a high-level overview for decision-makers of the most current thinking on key Internet governance and digital policy issues. They are sourced directly from over 300 sessions held during IGF 2023. Session organisers were invited to self-identify key takeaways at the end of their session as input for these messages. A set of draft messages, curated by the IGF Secretariat, are published for community review.

The final IGF 2023 Messages are published as part of the annual meeting's outcomes and annexed to this Report.

## IGF 2023 High-Level Leaders Track

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Co-organised by the [Host Country](#) and [UN DESA/IGF Secretariat](#), the [IGF 2023 High-Level Leaders' Track](#) engaged experts and leaders from all stakeholder groups into discussions on a series of important digital policy issues. The track saw participation of eighteen ministers and vice-ministers. Overall, eighty-seven high level experts took part in the track, with more than thirty in an active role.

The sessions of the high-level leadertrack were held on:

- Understanding “Data Free Flow with Trust” (DFFT\_
- Evolving Trends in Mis- and Dis-information Looking ahead to WSIS+20: Accelerating the Multistakeholder Process
- Access & Innovation for Revitalising the SDGs
- Artificial Intelligence

These sessions, interpreted into six official UN languages and broadcasted live, set the foundation for the subsequent main high-level sessions, treating the meeting’s subthemes in a cross-cutting way. The purpose of the track was to gather leaders from across the stakeholder spectrum, including governments, in dialogue and knowledge exchange on issues that require critical multistakeholder and multidisciplinary effort to resolve. The track also identified areas of greater potential for digital technologies to support sustainable development objectives. The main takeaways from the high-level leaders track are integrated in the

Kyoto IGF Messages and its [summaries](#) are available online.

## IGF 2023 Youth Track

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The [IGF 2023 Youth Track](#) was composed of four capacity development workshops and a Global Youth Summit, all focused on a safe digital future. It was designed and co-organized by the Youth IGF coordinators, IGF Secretariat and several international youth-focused organisations.

### Capacity development workshops

Four capacity development workshops were hosted in conjunction with the [regional IGFs](#) ([EuroDIG](#) in Finland, [Youth LACIGF](#) in Colombia, [APriIGF](#) in Australia and [African IGF](#) in Nigeria), focusing on particular aspects of cybersecurity and trust such as youth mental wellbeing, human rights, Artificial Intelligence and cybersecurity capacity development.

### IGF 2023 Global Youth Summit and Messages from Youth

The four workshops feed into the final activity of the track, the [IGF 2023 Global Youth Summit](#), a traditional IGF session which facilitates dialogue between youth and senior stakeholders. Youth from all five regions of the world engaged in a dialogue with senior experts from different backgrounds and countries. More details about the IGF 2023 Youth Track and the Summit are available on the [dedicated page](#). All discussions are consolidated in [Messages from Youth](#) available at the IGF website and below.

## Messages from the Youth

*Messages emerged from the IGF 2023 Global Youth Summit hosted in Kyoto on 8 October 2023.*

### Empowering Youth in the Digital World

- Young people deserve secure and inclusive online environments that prioritize their safety and well-being. Empowering youth with digital skills and knowledge is essential for protecting their rights and privacy in the digital era.

### Collaboration and Engagement

- Collaboration and engagement with youth in shaping digital policies are crucial steps towards a safer online experience for all. Defining the right framework for online safety is a collective effort involving all stakeholders.
- Engaging young people actively in cybersecurity efforts is essential, as their familiarity with the digital age brings valuable insights and opportunities.

### Global Perspective and Multistakeholder Approach

- Different countries have adopted various approaches to ensuring safety online, but there is a need for a global perspective that transcends individual interests of businesses and centres people’s safety as a key objective. A multistakeholder approach is essential to establish international standards for online safety, engaging diverse voices and expertise.

## Education and Awareness

- Empowering youth with knowledge is key to online safety.
- Educating parents and educators on how to safeguard children online is equally vital.
- Balancing online safety is not just about security but also about preserving privacy and digital freedom.

## Cybersecurity Awareness

- Cybersecurity awareness should permeate all levels of society, including education and curriculum. Teaching essential skills like software updates, strong password creation, recognizing phishing attempts, and data backup is crucial.

## Stakeholder Participation

- Stakeholder participation is crucial in addressing complex issues related to online safety and privacy. Multistakeholder approaches, including involvement from civil society, industry, and government, are essential.

## Balancing Individual Privacy and Cybersecurity

- Balancing individual privacy and ensuring robust cybersecurity measures is a complex challenge that requires a smart and thoughtful approach. Online safety should not be used as an excuse to restrict speech or impose broader agendas.

## Youth as Influencers

- Young people have a significant opportunity to influence the development of policies in the digital realm. Their active involvement in discussions and debates can shape the future of the Internet and related technologies.

## Overcoming Barriers to Youth Participation

- Barriers to youth participation, especially in the Global South, should be addressed, including visa rejections, limited access to education, and unequal technology access.

## Investing in Youth

- Investing in young people is an investment in the future of the Internet governance space and the global community.

# IGF 2023 Parliamentary Track

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Building on the past years' experience, the IGF focused on further strengthening its [Parliamentary Track](#), in particular through expanding a set of intersessional activities dedicated to fostering inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation on key digital policy issues. The engagement was done at regional levels throughout the year by cooperating with the regional IGFs. Below is an overview of activities undertaken in 2023.

## Parliamentary track at regional IGFs

To foster meaningful engagement with members of parliaments from different regions, the IGF Secretariat cooperated with regional IGFs. At the [Asia Pacific regional IGF](#) hosted in Australia and [African IGF](#) hosted in Nigeria, parliamentarians from respective regions gathered to discuss digital issues of interest such as data protection and privacy, cybersecurity, regulation of AI, disinformation and others.

## Parliamentary Track at IGF 2023

During the IGF meeting in, over 70 parliamentarians from 38 countries, as well as the European Parliament and the Pan-African Parliament, got together - on site and online - to exchange experiences and interact with other stakeholders on [issues related to trusted Internet](#). Over four very rich and engaging sessions, parliamentarians highlighted the importance of multistakeholder cooperation for empowering legislators to make informed decisions.

A firm interest was expressed by many parliamentarians to continue and strengthen their engagement with the IGF, take part in national and regional IGF initiatives, and consider the work carried out in these fora as resources to inform their parliamentary discussions and activities.



These and other messages are reflected in an [output document](#) which is intended to inform parliamentary action in the years to come.

## IGF 2023 Parliamentary Track Output

### Shaping digital trust for the internet we want

*We, parliamentarians taking part in the Parliamentary Track at the 18th UN Internet Governance Forum, with the theme The Internet We Want - Empowering All People,*

*Welcoming* the expansion of the IGF Parliamentary Track to include regional IGF initiatives to bring together parliamentarians to cooperate and exchange good practices in dealing with digital policy issues,

*Acknowledging* the role of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in co-organizing the IGF 2023 Parliamentary Track, as well as the support provided by the IGF Secretariat,

*Taking note* of the United Nations Secretary-General's policy brief *A Global Digital Compact – an Open, Free and Secure Digital Future for All*, which sets out, among others, objectives relating to: digital trust and security; data protection and empowerment; and agile governance of AI and other emerging technologies,

*Concerned* by several recent trends in the digital space, including the fragmentation of the internet; the negative effects of disinformation on peace and regional and global stability; failures to develop and deploy technology in a trusted way and according to our shared values; and the potential growing digital divide alongside the rapid development of technology,

*Underscore* the need for a strong legislative and regulatory framework that:

1. has the objective of preserving human dignity in the digital space;
2. is in line with international human rights obligations and the principle of proportionality;
3. protects against harmful uses of technology;
4. focuses on outcomes to be achieved rather than on specific technologies;
5. is developed through an open and participatory process, including the participation of women, young people and marginalized groups;

*Recognize* the importance of a multistakeholder and whole-of-government approach to digital policy-making, as well as the need for constant dialogue between parliament, government, regulators, the private sector, the technical community and civil society;

*Affirm* that, to be effective in the digital space, legislation needs to be interoperable across national and regional jurisdictions, and thus:

1. *welcome* international and regional instruments such as the African Union's Data Policy Framework and the development of the Artificial Intelligence Act by the European Union;
2. *acknowledge* the role that such instruments can play in furthering international and regional cooperation;

*Call for* a human-centric approach to data governance, putting users, including marginalized groups, at the centre, and giving them more control and transparency over how their data is collected and processed, including by:

1. identifying and applying common principles regarding data governance;
2. providing an enabling environment for a more positive use of data through regional frameworks, as the Internet knows no national borders;

Also call for agile governance of artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies, with objectives that ensure transparency, reliability, safety and human control in the design and use of AI and put transparency, fairness and accountability at the core, and:

1. *caution* against the risk that AI will increase digital divides due to a lack of available data in certain regions and cultures of the world and therefore requires greater democratization and localization based on high quality local data, which is, in turn, based on a robust data governance framework;
2. *support* the idea of establishing regulatory sandboxes to develop and test legislation relating to AI;
3. *underscore* the need for continual capacity building for parliamentarians to understand the different aspects of AI, the various use cases, and the impacts and effects that the technology has on society;
4. *request* that the IPU support global dialogue within the parliamentary community on AI governance and regulation;

Further call for media literacy, awareness raising and capacity development within society to combat mis- and disinformation, including by:

1. promoting content moderation and fact checking of information on social media platforms;
2. developing laws that promote access to information;
3. acknowledging the importance of cross-border regulation for accountability beyond national borders;
4. following a multistakeholder approach to involve judiciary, prosecutors and ministries;

Invite parliamentarians to share knowledge, experiences and the work carried out at the IGF with relevant parliamentary bodies and fellow members, as well as information about existing and new legislative initiatives which are contributing to increased trust in the digital space at a national and regional level;

Encourage parliamentarians to strengthen their engagement with the IGF and extend their participation to national and regional IGF initiatives and *call upon* the IGF to connect parliamentarians to relevant IGF stakeholders in order to inform, as relevant, their work on digital policy issues;

Request that the IGF further develop the Parliamentary Track to facilitate exchanges between parliamentarians and other IGF stakeholders on digital-related issues.

## IGF 2023 Intersessional Work

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In between annual meeting of the Forum, the IGF community works on a range of issues through three main types of intersessional fora – Policy Networks (PNs), Best Practice Forums (BPFs) and Dynamic Coalitions (DCs).

### Policy Networks

The [Policy Network \(PNs\)](#) are dedicated to identifying status quo and current issues including the policy gaps, existing capacity and conditions, local specificities, good and bad practices and possible ways forward through actionable activities led by identified implementation parties.

- [Policy Network on Meaningful Access](#), created a space for a multistakeholder public discussion on urgent matters related to connectivity, digital inclusion and digital capacity development to influence policy change towards achieving meaningful and universal Internet access, aligned with the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation and Sustainable Development Goals.
- [Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation](#) focused on furthering the discussion on technical, policy, legal and regulatory actions that may pose a risk to the open, interconnected and interoperable Internet and start a dialogue on how to avoid and address different dimensions of internet

fragmentation.

- [Policy Network on Artificial Intelligence](#), explored ways to strengthen the multistakeholder approach to global AI governance, and protect the environment and human rights in the era of generative AI.

## Best Practice Forums

The [Best Practice Forums \(BPFs\)](#) provide a platform to exchange experiences in addressing Internet policy issues. The objective is to collect existing and emerging good practices from community experience. BPFs are open, bottom-up and collective processes to produce community-driven outputs. BPF outputs intend to contribute to an understanding of global good practice, and to serve as a resource to inform policy discussions, standards development, business decisions, as well as public understanding, awareness, and discourse.

- [Best Practice Forum on Cybersecurity](#) explored cyber incidents, norms, and the impacts at the human-level with the aim to connect and present the voices of those most affected to those developing policies and norms.

## Dynamic Coalitions

[Dynamic Coalitions](#) (DCs) are open, multistakeholder and community-driven groups dedicated to an internet governance issue or set of issues. They emerged at the first IGF meeting in 2006. Currently there are [28 active dynamic coalitions](#) focused on topics such as Internet rights and principles, innovative approaches to connecting the unconnected, accessibility and disability, and child online safety. The activities of the DCs are coordinated by the [Dynamic Coalition Coordination Group](#) (DCCG) with aid from the IGF Secretariat.

Out of 28 DCs recognized in total, at IGF 2023, [24 DCs held individual sessions](#) to discuss Internet policy issues within their focus and present their work. A DC main session on the theme *The Internet we want* showcased how coalitions can contribute to the development of the Internet that is conducive to human rights.

## National, Regional and Youth IGF Initiatives

National and Regional IGF Initiatives (NRIs) are organic and independent multistakeholder networks that discuss issues pertaining to Internet Governance from the perspective of their respective communities, while acting in accordance with the main principles of the global IGF. To date, 162 NRIs are recognized by the IGF Secretariat.

At the 18th IGF in Kyoto, over 100 NRIs co-organized five sessions, including three thematic collaborative sessions, main session and a coordination session. Specifically, the main session focused on good data governance, while the coordination session looked into ways to strengthen the NRIs network to contribute to a more inclusive and resilient IG(F) ecosystem including through active participation in WSIS+20 and GDC processes. The collaborative sessions unpacked local specificities on Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity and digital inclusion. More information about the NRIs sessions is available at the [IGF website](#).

## Other Sessions Accommodated in the IGF 2023 Programme

The IGF 2023 Programme, in addition to the above mentioned tracks, accommodated several other types of sessions, including:

- [High-Level Sessions](#) organized by the Host Country and the UN;
- [Main Sessions](#) organized around priority issues related to the IGF 2023 programme sub-themes by members of the MAG;
- [Workshops](#) as community-organized multistakeholder interactive sessions;
- [Open Forums](#), sessions organized by governments, treaty-based international organisations, and global organisations with international scope and presence, with operations across regions, dealing with Internet governance issues;

- [Town Halls](#), sessions organized by entities dealing with Internet governance issues of international scope;
- [Launches and Awards](#), sessions to present and discuss Internet governance-related academic and/or research initiatives or outputs such as research or think tank work, book launches and similar;
- [Lightning Talks](#), brief, to-the-point, prepared presentation on a specific Internet governance issue;
- [Networking Sessions](#), gatherings of stakeholders interested in a same or similar issue; icebreaker sessions; social gatherings; gatherings of people and organisations from a particular region, stakeholder group, or area of activity;
- [DC Sessions](#), as collaborative sessions organized by multistakeholder teams of different DCs;
- [NRIs Sessions](#), as collaborative sessions organized by multistakeholder teams of NRIs coming from different regions;
- [Pre-events](#), sessions hosted on the day before the IGF official programme begins (8 October).

A number of [social events](#) were organized by the Host Country as well as other participating stakeholders.

## Best Practice Forum on Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity events and the experiences of first responders and those most affected provide valuable input for those involved in high-level cyber policy discussions and the development of cyber norms. At the end of the day, these policies and norms must make a difference in the lived experience of the people directly affected by or responding to incidents.

The IGF Best Practice Forum on Cybersecurity (BPF Cybersecurity) in 2021 found that the cyber norms we have today would have helped mitigate many of the notorious cyber events of the past ([IGF 2021 BPF Cybersecurity, The use of norms to foster trust and security](#)). This analysis also uncovered a missing nuance in norms and policy that could be obtained from deeper stakeholder involvement and the experiences of those most affected. As part of its [activities in 2022](#), the BPF explored how storybanking can help to better understand events and lifting voices of those directly involved.

This year, the [BPF Cybersecurity 2023](#), based on the previous work, evaluated cybersecurity events with the objective to present first-person experiences and narratives from those affected as victims or first responders to policy and norms developing deliberations, so that high-level policy decisions are grounded in reality. The BPF asked the community, via an open survey, what cyber incidents it is most concerned about and then selected a shortlist of events for a deeper analysis by volunteer groups. The [BPF draft findings](#) (Oct 2023) were discussed at the [BPF session at the IGF 2023](#) annual meeting in Kyoto (12 October).

The following cases have been explored: *2022-2023 Black Axe cyber criminal activities*, *2022 ransomware incidents in Costa Rica*, *2021 Medibank incident*, *ransomware incidents in the Pacific in 2021-2023*, and the *2020 Solarwinds breach*.

Observations and trends that emerged from the analysis.

- Discussions around major cyber incidents often revolve around the technical, financial, legal, and intergovernmental consequences. However, the opportunities and challenges presented across the cyber ecosystem ultimately lie with the public, whether individuals or societies affected directly by a cyber incident or through the resonating impacts of an incident. (e.g. impact on human services, privacy and data concerns, flow-on effects and impact of cyber incidents beyond the technical or service delivery space).
- Regardless of any attributions in the cases examined, there are clear norms that could be directly applied to prevent, respond, or mitigate the impacts of the incidents explored. (e.g. interstate cooperation on security, respect for human rights, cooperation to stop crime and terrorism, respond to requests for assistance, report ICT vulnerabilities, cyber capacity building).
- Cyber capacity building is the most prominent theme across the incidents explored, with the need for further cyber capacity building activities made clear and in many cases acted upon.
- More significantly however, many of the incidents explored showcased the positive impact of previous cyber capacity building activities on economies' and organisations' ability to respond to the incidents themselves. (e.g. established networks of trust and information sharing, or trainings that allowed and facilitated local teams to be able to respond).

Concluding remark

The BPF work saw early themes developing across the cases examined. It is, however, still very much a starting point for wider investigation seeking to ground discussions of international norms in real incidents

and inform them on the wider impacts cyber incidents can have on the everyday lives of citizens, regardless of State or non-state involvement.

The Report of IGF 2023 Best Practice Forum Cybersecurity “Lessons from cybersecurity events to inform cybersecurity policy and norms deliberations” is available at the [IGF website](#).

## Policy Network on Artificial Intelligence

[The Policy Network on Artificial Intelligence](#) (PNAI) was launched in May 2023 to address policy matters related to AI and data governance. PNAI fostered AI dialogue and provided a platform for stakeholders and changemakers in the AI field to share their expertise and insights and contribute to the global AI policy discourse. In the first five months, PNAI held [seven open online meetings](#) each attracting on average 60 participants. In addition to synthesizing knowledge in the PNAI community, the Policy Network heard eight invited expert speakers representing for example Aligned AI startup, the OECD, UNESCO, UNDP, SOAS Centre for AI studies, and African Center for AI and Digital Technology. PNAI meetings were supported by numerous sub-group calls and working discussions that took place between the meetings.

During summer 2023, PNAI developed [a report and recommendations on AI and data governance](#) through exploration and multi-stakeholder discussions in the community. Three thematic areas that are central to fostering responsible AI development globally were selected as key topics for the report: Interoperability of global AI governance; AI and gender & race; and; AI and environment. In addition, PNAI [set as its goal](#) learning from, and elevating AI governance frameworks, principles and policies being developed in and for the Global South. Four open thematic sub-groups took the lead in drafting the report. The sub-groups reported regularly on their progress and sought advice in the main PNAI calls. The draft PNAI report was shared with the wider IGF community for comments in September 2023. Finally, the report was finalized and discussed in the IGF 2023 annual meeting.

## Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation

Internet fragmentation is a complex issue. The many views, diverse opinions, different conceptualisations and definitions of what is and what is not internet fragmentation and what should be avoided or addressed - including in the context of the UNSG’s “*Our Common Agenda*” - can hinder an open and inclusive dialogue, and the identification of common guidelines and principles.

The IGF Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation (PNIF) raises awareness of - intended or unintended - effects of technical, policy, legal and regulatory actions on the basic features of the internet as an open, interconnected and interoperable network of networks, and provides a framework for a multistakeholder dialogue on what risks and causes of fragmentation should be addressed and how. The PNIF discussions and [output document](#) contribute to providing increased clarity about the diverse causes of fragmentation, their interrelation, impacts, and a common understanding of when fragmentation is most harmful and should be avoided. As such, the PNIF findings can feed into discussion between policymakers and stakeholders, in particular, but not exclusively in the framework of the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and Summit of the Future process.

The “*PNIF Framework for Discussing Internet Fragmentation*” which the PNIF constructed from community discussions in 2022 conceptualises three key dimensions of fragmentation:

*Fragmentation of the Internet user experience,*

*Fragmentation of the Internet’s technical layer, and*

*Fragmentation of Internet governance and coordination.*

Political, commercial and technical developments may have an impact on one or more of the dimensions of internet fragmentation, while the framework as well captures potential relationships and overlap between the dimensions.

In 2023 the three key dimensions of the Framework were further unpacked by separate work streams that worked on:

- Identification and prioritisation: Identify which types of fragmentation and related actions pose the highest risks and should be addressed or avoided, and,
- Prevention and addressing: Define practices, guidelines and principles to prevent or address fragmentation.

Three intersessional webinars gathered community views to further unpack fragmentation and inform drafting teams that then compiled a [PNIF discussion paper](#) that was published on 15 September to serve as input for the IGF 2023 annual meeting in Kyoto. The thematic webinars focused on Internet governance and coordination ([PNIF webinar 1, 16 May](#)), Internet user experience ([PNIF webinar 2, 24 May](#)), and the Internet technical layer ([PNIF webinar 3, 27 June](#)).

Feedback received on the PNIF discussion paper and the exchanges at the [PNIF session at IGF 2023](#) (10 October, Kyoto) helped to shape the PNIF output for 2023.

Throughout the PNIF activities recommendations for addressing internet fragmentation emerged.

*Recommendations for addressing fragmentation of Internet governance and coordination.*

1. Do not introduce duplication within the internet governance landscape.
2. But, improve coordination between existing internet governance bodies.
3. To avoid siloed public policy discussions regarding Internet governance, all Internet governance bodies must be fully inclusive to stakeholders and enable meaningful multistakeholder participation.
4. Existing global Internet governance bodies should engage with national governments to promote inclusive policymaking.

*Recommendations for addressing fragmentation of the Internet technical layer.*

1. Recognise that there are critical properties of the internet/public core that require multistakeholder protection.
2. Measure to monitor the extent and nature of different types of technical fragmentation as the internet evolves.
3. Critically assess and avoid technical proposals (in standards and technology development) which reduce interoperability or otherwise would take the Internet away from the properties and design principles which have led to its success.
4. Protect the multistakeholder approach.
5. Promote inclusive policymaking that integrates consideration of technical expertise/impact of policies on critical properties of the internet, while protecting innovation.

*Recommendations for addressing fragmentation of the Internet user experience.*

Adherence to the following *principles* will contribute to addressing identified harms resulting from fragmentary behaviours:

1. *Equality principle* - Every user should - as a starting point - be able to access what was intended to be made publicly available, in the same manner.
2. *Enhancement principle* - Measures to enhance the user experience by making it more relevant, meaningful, understandable, secure, or accessible, and that are requested by the users themselves (...) should not be considered as "bad" fragmentation that contravenes the first principle, notwithstanding the potential effects on uniformity.
3. *Impact assessment principle* - Any measure - whether by governmental, private sector, or technical actors - that may have a directly intended effect (...) to diminish or render ineffectual the first principle, must be evaluated prior to its introduction or implementation to ensure that such a measure is proportionate, addresses a legitimate harm, is respecting of human rights, and follows democratic procedures with multi-stakeholder involvement.
4. *Harmonisation principle* - Fragmentation that may be driven by diverse national regulatory or legislative approaches to protect the human rights or legitimate interests (...) can be avoided through cooperation and multilateral instruments (informed by multi-stakeholder consultation) that set globally-applicable baseline standards and protections of those rights and interests, (...).
5. *Free Choice principle* - No user of the Internet should be coerced or unduly incentivised to use a particular platform, technology, or service provider - especially in order to provide or access content, resources, applications or services on the Internet that would not have otherwise been made possible or available to them (...). Users should be able to choose the applications, instruments and service providers that they use and should not be subject to unfair conditions deriving from dominant market positions, lock-in and network effects.

The recommendations are not carved in stone but intended as valuable input for further stakeholder discussion. The report identified areas for further research, and the identification of best practices. Testing and socialisation of the recommendations and practices in an inclusive stakeholder setting can be important in the context of the GDC process and upcoming WSIS+20 Review. The PNIF could serve as such a soundboard.

## Policy Network on Meaningful Access

The work of the Policy Network on Meaningful Access (PNMA) has focused on agreed three overarching thematic streams: Connectivity (Infrastructure & Business Models), Digital Inclusion through a citizen-centric approach (accessibility & multilingualism: local services and contents in local languages based on local needs and resources), and Capacity Development (technical skills training).

Since 2022, the PNMA has actively contributed within and outside IGF communities to identify a certain number of good practices and policy solutions towards meaningful access, and retain them as possible models to be applied in other regions of the world. Stakeholders from different groups joined this enterprise: government, international organisations, academia, private actors, non-profits, and local or language-based communities. In this aspect, it is important to note that the PNMA builds upon the efforts of the late Best Practices Forum on Local Content (BPFLC), which started the identification of such relevant solutions. The [PNMA 2022 Output Report](#) features a collation of selected cases for each of the above-mentioned focus areas.

During the 2023 Process, the PNMA expanded its analysis of said experiences with implementation and problem-solving of the issues previously raised. By building a [repository](#), the network could explore reasons on why practices have or have not expanded, why digital divides persist, and which structural issues repeat themselves in different scenarios. Throughout the online monthly deliberations and the plenary discussion held in Kyoto, the community shared examples of how we are working towards better local content and languages online, improved meaningful connectivity, and the use of non-Latin alphabets, amongst other areas. Being the 18th IGF hosted by a country which uses an example of said alphabet, the PNMA had a unique opportunity to explore the topic and delve in the realm of International Domain Names (IDN).

The [2023 PNMA Process](#) was supported by a follow-up survey for monitoring the implementation and scaling of the featured 2022 cases along the last year; a review of the key policy issues raised in the 2022 output report; and a new selection of good practices recommended by the community. Additionally, the policy network encouraged conversations about the intersessional work and ways of collaboration with other IGF areas (e.g., Dynamic Coalitions), the Leadership Panel, and institutional partners such as the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA); International Telecommunications Union (ITU); Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN); and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Finally, the PNMA community wishes to open a multistakeholder public debate under these actions to influence policy change and the upcoming Global Digital Compact (GDC), in addition to the WSIS+20 and IGF+20 processes.

## DCs Outcomes and Outputs

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### Charter of the Dynamic Coalitions

Dynamic Coalitions finalized and published this year their Charter. The Charter outlines the principles and common guidelines of the Dynamic Coalitions, such a basic principles, obligations, membership governance, and mission and vision of the DCs.

The Charter will be reviewed every year to reflect new realities that impact DC's operations, a better understanding of the DC's needs, and evolving policy landscapes, and to address any outstanding issue of concerns that members have towards the Charter or the operating procedures of the DCCG.

### DCs at IGF 2023

At IGF 2023, 24 DCs held individual sessions to discuss Internet policy issues within their focus and present their work. A DC main session on the theme The Internet we want – Human Rights in the digital space to accelerate the SDGs showcased how coalitions can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals and the development of the Internet that is conducive to human rights.

The DC main session had five panelists, each with an expertise from a different Dynamic Coalition, showcasing the DCs' work around an Internet, which is:

1. Whole and Open
2. Universal and Inclusive

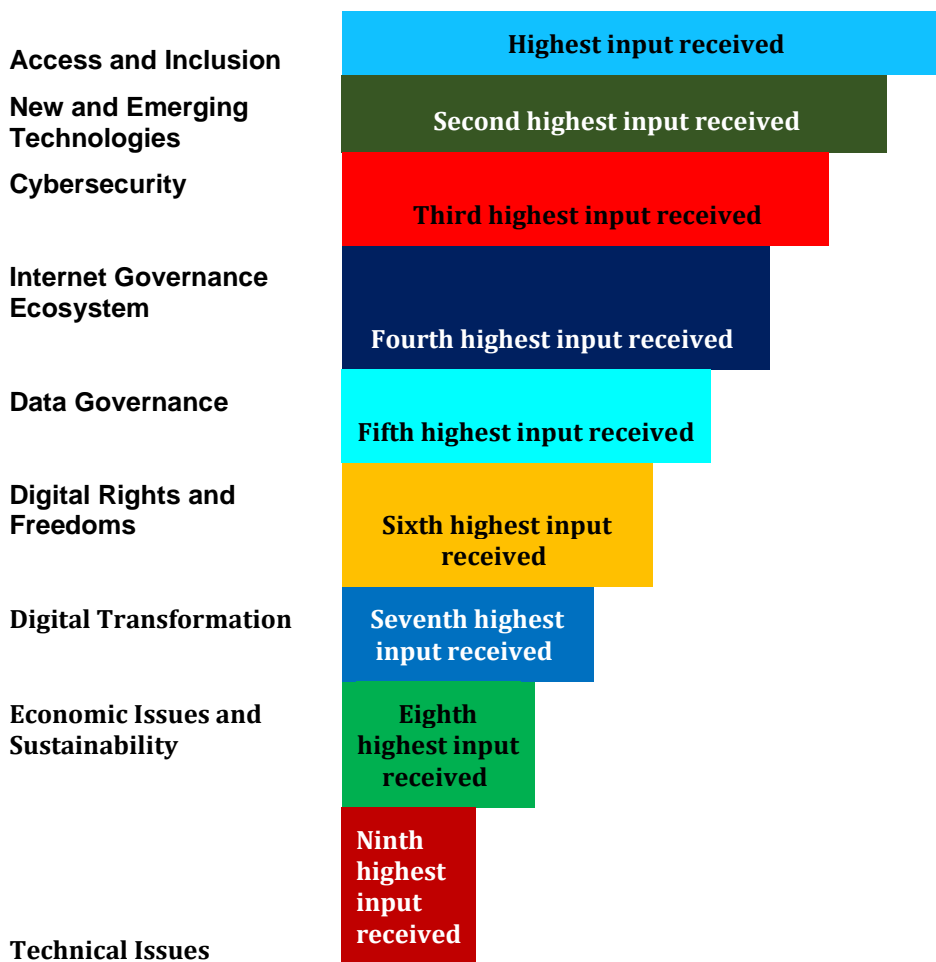
3. Safe and Secure
4. Rights-respecting
5. Free-flowing and trustworthy

The open floor discussions enabled other DCs to come forward and any other stakeholders interested in DCs' activities around the topic of the Internet We Want.

## NRIs Discussion Priorities in 2023

Until early November 2023, 93 national, regional, sub-regional and youth IGF initiatives (NRIs) held their annual meetings, marking a decrease of two meetings compared to the previous year.

It is an established procedure that the NRIs annual programmes are developed in a bottom-up manner through public calls for inputs issued to all stakeholders of their targeted communities. Usually, issues received are clustered within thematic discussion areas, subject to further consideration by the NRIs multistakeholder organising committees. In order to understand global Internet governance issues' priorities, the IGF Secretariat analyses digital policy discussion areas through agendas of the NRIs annual meetings hosted during the mapped time period. Below is an overview of the 2023 discussion areas gathered across 88 NRIs annual meetings for the 2023 IGF cycle.



### Internet governance discussion priorities

By looking into the substantive orientation of the NRIs annual meeting programmes, it is evident that several discussion areas emerged as priorities across the majority of the NRIs. This year, the biggest number of discussions developed around the area of access and inclusion, closely followed by concepts related to new and emerging technologies on par with issues related to cybersecurity area.



When comparing the substantive priorities to those of 2022, a noticeable shift in priorities becomes apparent. In contrast to the previous year, where discussions primarily centred around cybersecurity and the Internet governance ecosystem, this year, the predominant narratives have placed a higher emphasis on access and inclusion, as well as on the exploration of new and emerging technologies.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the majority of the issues discussed within the thematic clusters exhibit a crosscutting nature, often discussed in tandem with one another, contingent upon the context in which they are presented.

Examining the specific topics addressed within the **access and inclusion** thematic cluster, it is evident that many NRIs gave precedence to aspects of capacity development, digital literacy, and skill-building, rather than solely focusing on the technical aspects of connectivity. Furthermore, beyond broadly categorizing their session panels as discussions on access and digital inclusion, numerous NRIs delved into the digital inclusion of specific vulnerable groups, including women and girls, migrants, youth, and individuals with disabilities.

The 2023 NRIs agendas also featured a presence of issues related to **new and emerging technologies**. Among these, the most prominently addressed subjects revolved around the governance and regulation of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

A closer examination of the specific discussion areas within the **cybersecurity** domain reveals a spectrum of topics. These range from broad concerns shared by countries in various regions, encompassing existing cybersecurity policies, to more specialized discussions honing in on cybercrime and safeguarding critical Internet infrastructure. Additionally, the ongoing humanitarian crisis has left its mark on this domain, elevating discussions pertaining to cyberwarfare as a significant priority.

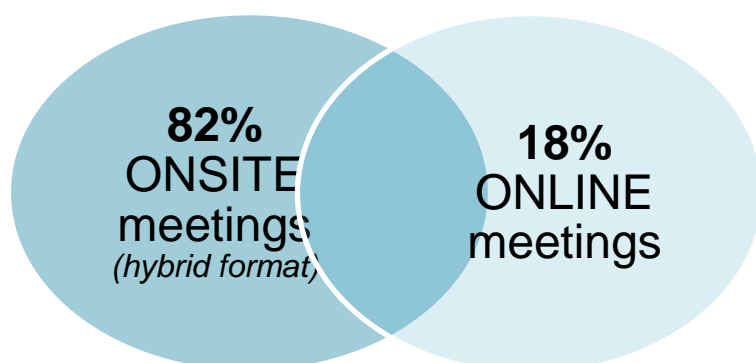
Approximately half of the NRIs discussions held this year were centered around frameworks and processes for deliberating and determining **Internet governance** matters. These discussions predominantly revolved around the multistakeholder model, its significance, and strategies for its enhancement. This emphasis is unsurprising, considering the ongoing context of the WSIS+20 renewal and negotiations for the Global Digital Compact.

Many NRIs maintained a strong focus on **rights and freedoms** as a top priority. In terms of issue representation, the trends closely mirrored those of the previous year's agendas, with an emphasis on upholding human rights in the online sphere, exploring digital identity concepts, and particularly addressing the challenge of combatting misinformation and disinformation in the digital realm.

In contrast to the previous year, the NRIs' agendas featured a notably stronger representation of topics related to the **economy**. These discussions predominantly centred on themes such as the regulation of the platform economy, opportunities within the job market, safeguarding consumer interests, and assessing the state of the digital economy at the local level. Notably, there was significant overlap in discussions within this domain and those concerning AI regulation and its repercussions on employment markets.

Discussions regarding **data** spanned across various other analysed domains this year as well. Among these, the most prevalent topics encompassed data privacy and security, the seamless flow of data, and the utilization of data for fostering innovation.

In contrast, certain themes received less attention with distinct sessions dedicated to **technical and operational matters**, as well as concerns related to the **environment and sustainability**. Among those who addressed these themes, the focus was on exploring how digitalization can be harnessed to promote sustainability and protect the environment. On a more **technical** side of the Internet, discussions touched upon Internet fragmentation, as well as routing security, DNS abuse and conditions necessary for universal acceptance.

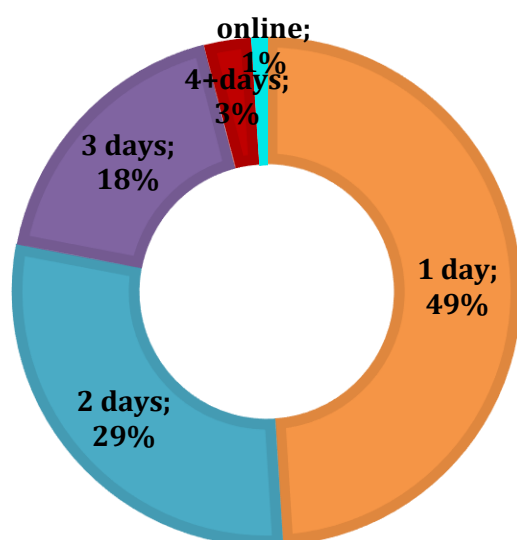


## Meeting Formats

The trend observed in the previous year persisted, with the majority of meetings being held in a hybrid format. Among the 93 NRIs meetings conducted last year, 91 embraced an onsite gathering supplemented by an online participation component, while two meetings, the Myanmar Youth IGF and Afghanistan IGF, were exclusively hosted online.

In terms of the duration of these meetings, approximately 49% of NRIs annual meetings spanned a single day, while 28% extended over a period of two days. Meetings lasting for three days accounted for 18%, while a smaller percentage, 3%, hosted meetings spanning four or five days. It's noteworthy that a majority of these meetings were organized on consecutive days, although a few adopted a different approach by spacing sessions throughout the year.

This year's trend also saw NRIs engaging in intersessional activities between the annual IGF meetings. Specifically, over 24% of the NRIs that organized meetings in 2023 were actively involved in these intersessional endeavours, which manifested in diverse forms. These initiatives included the establishment of Internet governance schools, the implementation of dedicated capacity development programs tailored for children, youth, and women, as well as the launch of publications, among other engagements.



The majority of meetings, comprising over 78%, were hosted in capital cities. However, there was a notable increase in meetings held outside of capital cities, accounting for more than 20%. This represents significant growth compared to the previous year, with an additional eight NRIs meetings opting for locations beyond the capitals. These are: Youth Benin IGF (Abomey-Calavi), Poland IGF (Wrocław), Canada IGF (Montreal), Tanzania IGF (Dar es Salaam), EuroDIG (Tampere), Youth Asia Pacific IGF (Brisbane), Asia Pacific regional IGF (Brisbane), Croatia IGF (Opatija), Youth India IGF (Guwahati), Quebec IGF (Montreal), Kazakhstan IGF (Almaty), Central Asian IGF (Almaty), Chile IGF (Temuco), Pacific IGF (Brisbane), Lusophone IGF (São Paulo), Youth LACIGF (Cartagena), East African IGF (Arusha), Brazil IGF (Minas Gerais) and Burkina Faso (Bobo-Dioulasso).

The average participation across all NRIs meetings in 2023, indicates that over 15,000 stakeholders directly participated in the IGF-like discussion processes around the world.

# Annex A: IGF 2023 Statistics

## Breakdown of Registrations

The 18th IGF annual meeting gathered 6,279 onsite participants coming from 178 different UN member states and over 3,000 online participants. Below are the breakdowns by stakeholder and regional groups.

<b>By Stakeholder (%)</b>	Government: 16%	Intergovernmental Organisation: 6%	Civil Society: 24%	Private Sector: 37%	Technical Community: 14%	Press/Media: 2%	Children: 1%
<b>By Region (%)</b>	African Group: 8%	Asia-Pacific Group: 57%	Eastern European Group: 3%	Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC): 7%	Western European and Others Group (WEOG): 20%	Intergovernmental Organisation: 5%	

Compared to IGF 2022, this year's IGF doubled the number of participants coming from the private sector (+11%) and saw an increase in press and media participation (+1%); as well as an increase in representation of stakeholders from Asia Pacific (32%).

<b>By Gender (%)</b>	Female: 38%	Male: 61%	Other: <1%
<b>By Newcomers (%)</b>	Newcomers: 67%		

<b>Youth (&lt;30 years old; Percentage)</b>	Youth: 18%
<b>Members of Parliaments (Percentage)</b>	Parliamentarians: 2% from 38 countries

## Global South Support

Estimated 1,725 stakeholders benefited from support

- 15 grants to NRIs
- 5 grants to Remote Hubs
- 125 received Travel Support

## Remote Hubs

35 [remote hubs](#) at IGF 2023 from 24 countries

Represented 5 regions

- 60% from Africa

## Sessions

355 [sessions](#) at IGF 2023

- 23% from Asia Pacific
- 11% from Latin America and Caribbean
- 0% from Eastern Europe
- 6% from WEOG

- 1 Opening Session
- 1 Opening Ceremony
- 6 Main Sessions
- 78 Workshops
- 58 Open Forums
- 20 Town Halls
- 21 Launches and Awards
- 44 Lightning Talks
- 23 Networking Sessions
- 24 DC Sessions
- 3 NRI Collaborative Sessions
- 45 Pre-Events (Day 0 Sessions)
- 5 High-level Leaders Track
- 4 Parliamentary Track sessions
- 1 Global Youth Summit
- 1 BPF Sessions
- 3 PN Sessions
- 3 other sessions
- 1 Open Mic
- 1 Closing Ceremony

## Media

The meeting's live stream service attracted close to 10,000+ views<sup>1</sup>. Over 70% of viewers were between 18 and 44 years of age. Livestream was mostly viewed in Japan (+53%), followed by Indonesia, India, United States and Saudi Arabia.

One press briefing was held and five daily [media wrap-ups](#) were also produced and distributed to IGF-accredited journalists, the IGF main press mailing list and media lists at the UN Secretariat through the Department of Global Communications.

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<sup>1</sup> Exact figure under processing.

Thousands of stakeholders interacted with the 18th IGF hashtags #IGF2023 and #InteternetWeWant<sup>2</sup>.

Week-of media monitoring showed that the IGF was covered in a very high number of major Japanese media outlets, including NHK, Nikkei, Yomiuri Shimbun, Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi and Kyoto, in print and broadcast. It appeared in international outlets such as Politico, Deutsche Welle, La Stampa and EU Reporter. Services in Indonesia, Georgia, Nigeria, Hungary and other countries also picked up IGF-related stories.

A press kit was prepared via [Trello](#), containing [fact sheets on IGF](#), a main [media advisory](#), essential details about the meeting, access to [photos](#) and [videos](#) and contact information in case of interest in interviews. [Opening](#) and [closing press releases](#) were issued.

## Preparation

IGF 2023 preparation

- 40 Members of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG)
- 2 Open Consultation and MAG Meetings
- 35 Virtual MAG and MAG-WG meetings
- 2 MAG Working Groups and 6 Main Session Preparatory Groups

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<sup>2</sup> Precise statistics will be made available in a few days.

# Annex B: Documentation and Process

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## IGF 2023 Outputs

IGF 2023 outputs, including IGF 2023 messages, session reports, press releases, and IGF participant statements, can be found at the IGF website <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2023-outputs>.

All the logistics for IGF 2023 are available at the IGF 2023 Host Country website <https://www.soumu.go.jp/igfkyoto2023/en/>.

## IGF 2023 Session Reports, Recordings and Transcripts

Reports <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/igf-2023-reports>

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Transcripts <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/igf-2023-transcripts>

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Recordings <https://www.youtube.com/user/igf/videos>

## IGF 2023 Intersessional Work

The community-led [intersessional activities](#) that occur throughout the year offer the IGF community the opportunity to work on substantive and concrete longer-term projects in the field of Internet governance:

### Policy Networks (PNs)

Internet Fragmentation (PNIF) <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/policy-network-on-internet-fragmentation>

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Meaningful Access (PNMA) <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/policy-network-on-meaningful-access-pnma>

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/policy-network-on-artificial-intelligence-pnai>

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### Best Practice Forums (BPFs)

Cybersecurity <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/bpf-cybersecurity>

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### Dynamic Coalitions (DCs)

The activities of the 28 DCs are coordinated by the [Dynamic Coalition Coordination Group \(DCCG\)](#).

Accessibility and Disability <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-accessibility-and-disability-1>

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<b>Blockchain Technologies</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-blockchain-technologies-0">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-blockchain-technologies-0</a>
<b>Children’s Rights in the Digital Environment</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-childrens-rights-in-the-digital-environment">https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-childrens-rights-in-the-digital-environment</a>
<b>Community Connectivity</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-community-connectivity-0">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-community-connectivity-0</a>
<b>Core Internet Values</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-community-connectivity-0">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-community-connectivity-0</a>
<b>Data and Trust</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-data-and-trust-dc-dt">https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-data-and-trust-dc-dt</a>
<b>Data Driven Health Technologies</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-data-driven-health-technologies-dc-ddht">https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-data-driven-health-technologies-dc-ddht</a>
<b>Digital Health</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-digital-health">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-digital-health</a>
<b>DNS Issues</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-dns-issues-dc-dnsi">https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-dns-issues-dc-dnsi</a>
<b>Environment</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-environment-dce">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-environment-dce</a>
<b>Gender and Internet Governance</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-gender-and-internet-governance">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-gender-and-internet-governance</a>
<b>Innovative Approaches to Connecting the Unconnected</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-innovative-approaches-to-connecting-the-unconnected-0">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-innovative-approaches-to-connecting-the-unconnected-0</a>
<b>Internet and Jobs</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-internet-jobs-dc-jobs">https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-internet-jobs-dc-jobs</a>
<b>Internet of Things</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-the-internet-of-things-0">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-the-internet-of-things-0</a>
<b>Internet Rights &amp; Principles</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-internet-rights-and-principles-1">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-internet-rights-and-principles-1</a>
<b>Internet Standards, Security and Safety</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-internet-standards-security-and-safety-dc-iss">https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-internet-standards-security-and-safety-dc-iss</a>
<b>Internet</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dc-on-internet-universality-indicators-dc-iui">https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dc-on-internet-universality-indicators-dc-iui</a>

<b>Universality Indicators</b>	
<b>Network Neutrality</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-network-neutrality-1">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-network-neutrality-1</a>
<b>Platform Responsibility</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-platform-responsibility">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-platform-responsibility</a>
<b>Public Access in Libraries</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-public-access-in-libraries-1">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-public-access-in-libraries-1</a>
<b>Schools of Internet Governance</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-schools-of-internet-governance">https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-schools-of-internet-governance</a>
<b>Small Island Developing States in the Internet Economy</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-small-island-developing-states-in-the-internet-economy-dc-sids">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-small-island-developing-states-in-the-internet-economy-dc-sids</a>
<b>Sustainability of Journalism and News Media</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-the-sustainability-of-journalism-and-news-media-dc-sustainability">https://www.intgovforum.org/content/dynamic-coalition-on-the-sustainability-of-journalism-and-news-media-dc-sustainability</a>
<b>Youth Coalition on Internet Governance</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/youth-coalition-on-internet-governance-1">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/youth-coalition-on-internet-governance-1</a>
<b>Dynamic Teen Coalition</b>	<a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-teens">https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-teens</a>
<b>Dynamic Coalition on Blockchain Assurance and Standardization</b>	<a href="https://intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-blockchain-assurance-and-standardization-dc-bas">https://intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-blockchain-assurance-and-standardization-dc-bas</a>
<b>Dynamic Coalition on Data and Artificial Intelligence Governance</b>	<a href="https://intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-data-and-artificial-intelligence-governance-dc-daig">https://intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-data-and-artificial-intelligence-governance-dc-daig</a>
<b>Dynamic Coalition on Open Educational Resources</b>	<a href="https://intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-open-educational-resources-dc-oer">https://intgovforum.org/en/content/dynamic-coalition-on-open-educational-resources-dc-oer</a>



## National, Regional and Youth IGF Initiatives (NRIs)

National, Regional and Youth IGF Initiatives (NRIs) are organic and independent formations that are discussing issues pertaining to Internet Governance from the perspective of their respective communities, while acting in accordance with the main principles of the global IGF.

The status of NRIs in 2023:

- 162 NRIs recognised in total
- 100+ NRIs represented at IGF 2023
- 7 more countries/regions have established IGF processes since IGF 2022

Below are the sources to find more information about the NRIs and their work:

**About the NRIs**      <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/national-and-regional-igf-initiatives>

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**National IGFs**      <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/national-igf-initiatives>

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**Regional IGFs**      <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/regional-igf-initiatives>

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**Youth IGFs**      <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/youth-initiatives>

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**Preparatory work of the NRIs**      <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/nris-collaborative-work>

## IGF 2023 Preparatory Process

The IGF meeting programme is prepared by the MAG and the IGF Secretariat over the course of the year. Key decisions on the programme are taken in the face-to-face meetings as well as regular virtual meetings of the MAG leading into the IGF.

Following a traditional approach, the process was triggered by a public call for inputs which helped identification of the main themes. These were developed by the MAG based on input and contributions submitted by the community. The programme for IGF 2023 was then built around the eight main sub-themes which were prioritised through the public call and aligned with the themes of the Global Digital Compact.

Key elements of the preparatory processes included:

- A call to [Take Stock of IGF 2022 and Suggest Improvements for IGF 2023](#) was open until 16 January 2023. The contributions were summarised in a [synthesis output document](#).
- A [call for thematic inputs](#) was open until 31 January. The [list of received inputs](#) and an [analysis](#) are available.
- The MAG identified main themes during its first MAG meeting and open consultations.
- A [call for session proposals](#) was open until 24 May, inviting all stakeholders to consider applying for the type(s) of session that best fit their interests.

In addition to the overall collective work, the MAG worked on particular segments of the Forum's preparations to advance the overall process through its working groups:

**Working Group on IGF Strategy (WG-Strategy)**      <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/working-group-on-igf-strengthening-and-strategy-wg-ss>

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**Working Group on Workshop Process (WG-WSP)**      <https://www.intgovforum.org/content/working-group-on-workshop-review-and-evaluation-process-wg-wrep>

# Annex C: IGF 2023 Donors

The IGF project and its Secretariat is funded through donations from various stakeholder groups. While host countries bear the majority of the costs associated with holding the annual IGF meeting, the IGF Secretariat's activities are funded through extra-budgetary contributions paid into a multi-donor Trust Fund administered by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). Annex C: IGF 2023 was primarily funded by the Host Country – the Government of Japan, as well as the Trust Fund and in-kind support.

In 2023, the following donors supported the IGF:

	European Commission		Government of Finland
	Government of the Netherlands		The Internet Society Foundation
	Tides Foundation		Number Resource Organization (NRO)
	Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)		European Registry for Internet Domains (EURid)
	Meta		APNIC Foundation
	AT&T		Government of Switzerland
	The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH		Internet Governance Forum Support Association

# Annex D: Kyoto IGF Messages

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## IGF MESSAGES

This document is a summary of points raised during the 18th annual Internet Governance Forum meeting hosted in Kyoto, Japan from 8 to 12 October 2023.

Discussions at the Forum focused on the overarching theme of *The Internet We Want – Empowering All People*. Sessions were organised within eight subsidiary themes which were concerned with:

- Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies
- Avoiding Internet Fragmentation
- Cybersecurity, Cybercrime and Online Safety
- Data Governance and Trust
- Digital Divides and Inclusion
- Global Digital Governance and Cooperation
- Human Rights and Freedoms
- Sustainability and Environment

The draft IGF Messages in this document emerged from the many sessions held within these themes.

The views and opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Secretariat. The designations and terminology employed may not conform to United Nations practice and do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Organization.

## OVERARCHING ISSUES

Many sessions during the Forum discussed the contribution which the Internet and digital technologies can make to supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Attention to the role which digital technologies can play in achieving the SDGs has intensified, particularly in those areas that are currently lagging behind delivery schedules following the COVID-19 pandemic. Emphasis was placed during the Forum on access and infrastructure, the governance of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, the need to develop digital skills, ethical behaviour in the production and use of digital technologies (including issues of e-waste, data protection and cross-border data storage), and the need to bridge the gender digital divide and promote increased participation of women in technology and leadership roles.

Many sessions discussed the issues that are proposed for inclusion in the Global Digital Compact that is being prepared ahead of the United Nations Summit of the Future scheduled for 2024, including the role of the IGF as a source of multistakeholder expertise for the Compact and its outcomes. The forthcoming twenty-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society, which is scheduled for the General Assembly in 2025 and will review the IGF's mandate, was also considered.

The IGF Leadership Panel presented a paper on *The Internet We Want* proposing broad principles for the future development of the Internet, on which it invited views from the IGF community.

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

## Theme

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a powerful and transformative technology. It is difficult to think of a sector that is not already affected and may not be transformed by its rapid development and scope, including growth in productivity, and the consequences of rapid change arising from this in economy, society and culture.

Recent developments are remarkable and pose new challenges as well as opportunities. In the past year, the emergence of generative AI and its applications has entered people's everyday lives and discussions.

Many people are concerned about the implications of this for human society and the environment, in both the short and longer terms. Global multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation are needed to ensure that AI is developed and applied responsibly.

The applications and impact of AI transcend national boundaries. Most AI policy discussion, development and analysis, however, is currently focused in and on the Global North. Opportunities and impacts for the Global South need to be more thoroughly understood and prioritised.

## Messages

### Global cooperation

- We can only realise AI's potential to benefit everyone through collective global efforts that draw on the wide range of views of policymakers, technologists, investors, businesses, civil society and academia from all countries and regions. High-level global governance dialogues and curated expert groups need to be balanced with inclusive dialogues that are open to all.
- Collaboration between global AI policy and governance fora and initiatives is needed to prevent fragmentation of efforts and inconsistent policy approaches. Developing and sharing best practices will be important and must include perspectives from the Global South. Governments in the South need to increase attention to responsible and safe development of AI within their countries, developing policies and strategies based on building blocks that include connectivity, digital literacy and cybersecurity.
- Multistakeholder consideration of digital governance should not be confined to experts but should find ways to engage and build on the experience of all people. An inclusive approach would ensure that diverse perspectives contribute to shaping policies that affect the broader population.

### Governance

- AI and other emerging technologies should be developed and used in ways that respect human rights, democratic values and the rule of law. AI systems should be inclusive and privacy-respecting by design. The processes to develop AI technologies themselves, as well as AI policy, governance frameworks and regulation should be transparent and inclusive.
- Considerable progress has been made in developing global AI principles, including in the context of the G7 Hiroshima AI process that was initiated by the Government of Japan. We now need to move from developing ethical guidelines and principles to operationalizing AI governance.
- Concerted effort should be put into translating AI principles into actionable measures and effective implementation. Our efforts to operationalise globally shared values should be flexible enough for measures to be readily adaptable to diverse local and cultural contexts.
- AI standards, guidelines, self-assessment mechanisms and codes of conduct are important, and regulation is also necessary for effective AI government. There is an urgent need to clarify the responsibilities and accountability of all parties in the AI development lifecycle and define the necessary safeguards.
- It is essential to strengthen mechanisms of oversight and to track the implementation and impact of AI policies and plans that have already been agreed.

### Human rights and development

- The increasing deployment of AI in our societies can empower and connect people but could also further discrimination and deepen digital divides. AI innovation should respect human rights and the rule of law.
- If harnessed safely and responsibly, AI could help the world community to revitalize progress towards achieving the SDGs. We need to raise the level of ambition around this and employ new technologies to address the complex problems that we face. At the same time, we should be careful not to get carried away with AI's future promise but to root AI discussions and applications in global and local realities.

- It is crucial to involve communities and people with diverse backgrounds in the development of AI technologies. We need to build relevant technical, social and legal expertise. Cooperation can only grow if there is shared understanding of AI concepts and terms.

### **Generative AI**

- Generative AI has shown that it can improve efficiency and accelerate innovation, but we also need to address and prioritise questions concerning the impact that this rapidly developing technology may have on human rights and democratic institutions across the world, including in the Global South.
- Policymakers need to take an inclusive approach to understanding AI impacts. Vulnerable groups that interact with generative AI should be proactively engaged in discussions about governing this new technology.
- All stakeholder groups should work together to protect and preserve truth. Disinformation and misinformation powered by generative AI (for example in the form of deepfakes) can obscure or change perceived reality. Promoting reliable information is vital, especially in the context of elections.
- It is important to accelerate the development of technologies that detect and identify AI-generated content. These efforts can help mitigate the risks associated with deep fakes and generative AI, promote responsible data use, and contribute to a more secure and trustworthy digital environment. Labelling AI-generated content will allow consumers to make more informed decisions and choices. Innovative interdisciplinary approaches are needed to develop the necessary approaches.

# AVOIDING INTERNET FRAGMENTATION

## Theme

There is widespread agreement within the IGF community about the value of a global, unfragmented Internet as a platform for human activity. Internet openness is considered instrumental in fostering the enjoyment of users' human rights, promoting competition and equality of opportunity, and safeguarding the generative peer-to-peer nature of the Internet.

Concern has been expressed, however, that divergence in the structure of the Internet may lead to fragmentation that could endanger connectivity and reduce the functionality and value of the Internet. A wide range of political, economic, and technical factors can potentially drive fragmentation. Concerns have also been raised about the effects of growing fragmentation of the Internet user experience, and about competition and lack of coordination between Internet governance processes and entities.

While legal, regulatory and policy approaches necessarily differ around the world, active coordination across international boundaries is vital to ensuring that fragmented approaches do not threaten the global reach and interoperability of the Internet. Global cooperation and coordination can identify early warning signs, mapping the impact of policies and other developments, and preparing to address the implications of such trends. A multistakeholder approach is widely considered to be that best suited for assessing, evaluating and monitoring the potential unintended consequences of measures that affect the Internet.

## Messages

### Multistakeholder participation

- The single global Internet is widely considered the bedrock of activity that is undertaken on it. The risks and potential impact of a fragmented Internet are, however, understood in different ways by different stakeholders in countries that have diverse Internet environments. There is a need to explore common ground and work towards a shared understanding of the issues in order to identify and collaborate on appropriate responses across these different contexts.
- The multistakeholder community should develop policy approaches and regulatory principles that are conducive to the continued evolution of a global and interoperable Internet. These approaches should avoid unnecessary limitations on the use of data and adverse impacts on the infrastructure of the Internet, while local data regulations should respect open and interoperable protocols. It should be possible to protect the legitimate interests of the general public and governments while avoiding Internet fragmentation and digital protectionism.
- States and other stakeholders may wish to explore the use of modular agreements to institutionalise dialogue and cooperation on Internet and digital economy issues, including those relevant to fragmentation. Developed countries should explore ways to facilitate developing countries' participation in such arrangements in order to advance digital development and attenuate the risk of Internet fragmentation.

### The Global Digital Compact and WSIS+20 review

- The Global Digital Compact provides an opportunity to reassert the value of an open interconnected Internet within the context of the UN Charter, the Sustainable Development Goals and the exercise of human rights.
- It is important that the Compact should provide an opportunity for the technical community to engage constructively with government stakeholders and thereby bridge gaps between technical and policy perspectives. Using overly technical narratives in non-technical politicised discussions risks diluting trust in the Internet's technical layer and interoperability.
- The multistakeholder community should foster a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities surrounding content creation, access to information, and open Internet by re-evaluating the past, envisioning the future, and engaging in constructive dialogue.
- Ahead of the WSIS+20 review, the IGF community should look forward and seek to identify what the Internet could or should look like in twenty years' time and what actions are needed today to shape a positive vision for the future. Stakeholders should discuss the continued role of the Internet as a global network, identify potential risks associated with the splintering of the Internet and raise awareness about the perils of fragmentation and the need for collective action.

# CYBERSECURITY, CYBERCRIME AND ONLINE SAFETY

## Theme

The benefits of the Internet for economic development and social welfare cannot be fully realised without trust and security. Consideration of these aspects is integral to the development of safe, secure access to the Internet. It should reflect respect for human rights, openness and transparency in policymaking, and a multistakeholder approach that serves the interests of end-users.

Cybersecurity and cybercrime are important, sometimes overlapping but also distinct areas of public policy that require serious attention and the development of expertise. Cybersecurity – which seeks to protect the Internet’s critical infrastructure, services, applications and devices from real and potential threats – is a central challenge for Internet policy. Cybercrime, meanwhile, poses an increasing threat to Internet users, with a long and growing list of types of harm that includes phishing, identity theft, Internet frauds, cyberstalking and online scams. Cyberattacks can also impact critical non-digital infrastructure including health systems and energy networks.

The international community should explore practical ways to mainstream cybersecurity capacity-building in broader digital development initiatives. Tensions between the desire to advance digital transformation and the need to enable effective cybersecurity pose challenges in enabling a safe, secure online environment and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Existing international agreements need to be translated into feasible actions.

Governments and policymakers should ensure that legal responses to criminal and terrorist use of the Internet safeguard the rule of law and human rights, take freedom of expression fully into account and demonstrate transparency and accountability.

## Messages

### Governance

- Governments should recognise the value of open, security-related Internet standards and use procurement processes to make their digital and digitally-enabled systems secure by design.
- The use of AI and machine learning may offer ways of strengthening cybersecurity and resilience. However, that use must be responsible and sustainable. Ethical principles can provide guidelines to help cybersecurity developers and users understand, assess and consider the application of these new technologies. Such principles are best developed in global multistakeholder discussions and should emphasise human control, transparency, safety, and privacy.
- Policy choices concerning cybersecurity, cybercrime and online safety are complex. Encryption, for example, is for some a privacy service but for others essential to guarantee freedoms of opinion and expression as well as other human rights. Anonymity has been a feature of much Internet activity and applications but can be abused to cause harm to other users. Examples like these suggest the need for systems that foster accountability while protecting expression and other rights. Layering identity levels may be one way in which such systems might develop.
- Policy choices may have effects that extend well beyond their intended objectives and beyond the jurisdictions, countries and regions in which they are introduced. Due to the interconnected nature of the Internet, strengthening or weakening a service in one region may have a comparable effect on all users, where the impact of policy choices is not constrained by borders.
- The United Nations could do more to analyse the development of standards and regulations for the assessment of emerging technologies, share knowledge and best practice, and provide a platform for multi-stakeholder exchanges on how to develop common principles for emerging technologies. This could help to ensure that we have the right institutions in place to translate principles into binding standards and regulations.

### Child safety

- All stakeholders should treat the best interests of children as a primary consideration. Addressing vulnerability and acknowledging the developing capacities of children across all areas of work related to digital development and Internet governance is essential if we are to ensure an inclusive, safe and secure online world – particularly for children who now make up a third of global Internet users.
- Children have the right to safe, inclusive age-appropriate digital spaces in which they can explore, learn and play. Data, evidence and knowledge-sharing are critical to placing children’s safety and rights at the heart of global digital agendas including those concerned with cybersecurity and child online safety.



- States should ensure that consideration of children rights is integrated throughout legislation and regulation, rather than only in specific instruments, with reference to General Comment 25 to the Children's Rights Convention on children's rights in relation to the digital environment.
- Safety by design requires investment in child online safety across the entire ecosystem, with a particular focus on the capacities of low- and middle-income countries, as well as more upstream and collaborative action.

### **Gender-based violence**

- Gender-based violence online deters many women and girls from taking full advantage of the benefits of the Internet. Policymakers need to develop multilayered strategies to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence that are grounded in human rights, evidence-based and can be applied to local contexts in partnership with communities and civil society organizations.

### **Cyber norms**

- Informed discussions around cyber policy, norms and incidents require a comprehensive approach that considers dynamics across the entire ecosystem. When exploring the impact of norms on cyber incidents, it is not only important to examine them in relation to the cause, response, mitigation, and recovery of an incident, but also to consider consequential impacts across the ecosystem, including at the human level.
- The opportunities and challenges presented by the digital ecosystem empower and impact individuals and communities. Grounding efforts to improve cyber resilience at the individual, societal, economic, and even international levels would benefit from a full appreciation of the consequential impacts of policy decisions, norms, and incidents.

# DATA GOVERNANCE AND TRUST

## Theme

Data have become critical resources in the digital age and are being generated and stored in ever-greater volumes as a result of developments in digital technology, including AI and the Internet of Things. Existing legislative and regulatory frameworks at national, regional, and international levels are often insufficient to keep up with the pace of change in technology and applications.

Data flows are crucial to international cooperation in many fields including scientific research, law enforcement, and national and global security. The effective use and sharing of data on a global scale can help overcome shared challenges and the threats posed by cascading crises such as pandemics and climate change. Greater coherence is needed on a global level to achieve a balanced approach in which data work for people and the planet, including environmental sustainability.

Data can generate both commercial profit and social value. However, the benefits of a data-driven economy have so far been unevenly distributed. Many are concerned that individuals, and developing countries, have been and may remain primarily providers of data rather than beneficiaries. While the management of data is often highly concentrated, data poverty is also a significant problem, especially in local communities and among vulnerable population groups.

Lack of data privacy and inadequate data protection undermine trust in data management. Data flows and data exchange should take place without compromising the privacy of personal data. This can sometimes be sacrificed in the processes of data exchange, between the gathering of information and its application, with intentional and unintentional risks to trust and security.

## Messages

### International initiatives

- To make the power of data work for development, we need to establish trusted and secure ways to share data across borders. Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT) is now widely discussed as a framing concept for the development of international data management and cross-border data flows.
- Principles and practical measures are needed to develop the concept of DFFT and establish common ground for data transfer that can facilitate the leveraging of data for development while addressing concerns about data privacy and data sovereignty. It is critical that developing countries participate fully in discussions concerning cross-border data flows and that the modalities for these reflect their needs and concerns.
- The African Union's Data Policy Framework has paved the way for a common continental approach to deriving strategic value for sustainable development from African data, and has shaped continental debates about more equitable data governance practices. Implementation of the Framework at national levels will be crucial in enabling African countries to take full advantage of the opportunities from cross-border flows and digital economy development within Africa's Free Trade Continental Area.

### Data management and capacity-building

- Governments and regulatory bodies should work together to develop and implement comprehensive privacy regulations for private surveillance in public spaces. These regulations should address data control, transparency in data sharing, and protection of human rights. Collaboration amongst stakeholders will help to ensure proper oversight and enforcement of these regulations to safeguard individual freedoms.
- Questions of data management, ownership and control are increasingly important. Civil society organisations, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders should collaborate on research and advocacy efforts, with the aim of unravelling the flow of data and holding both private surveillance companies and government authorities accountable for data management.
- Public-private data partnerships (which may require cross-border data sharing) have tangible benefits in times of discontinuity or crisis, but building trusted relationships requires time and often relies on informal relationships and intermediaries. Standard operating procedures and modalities for data interoperability would be helpful in bringing such collaboration forward.
- It is important to develop the capacity of policymakers, regulators, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders to participate meaningfully in discussions about data management at global, regional, and national levels.

# DIGITAL DIVIDES AND INCLUSION

## Theme

It is estimated that some 2.6 billion people - or one third of the world's population – are not yet users of the Internet. There are substantial digital divides between and within regions, countries and communities and there is a significant gender digital divide in many countries. Many lack access to domain names and email addresses in their native language. Groups that are disadvantaged economically, socially and educationally also tend to be disadvantaged digitally.

Addressing these gaps in access, including the quality of access, is a central issue in building an inclusive Internet. The goal of digital inclusion is to level up the online environment so that everyone can embrace equitable digital development and socio-economic growth.

Meaningful access includes much more than connectivity. ICT infrastructure alone will not bridge digital divides, nor can online inequalities be addressed without understanding and responding to their relationship with offline inequalities. To achieve true value access must be inclusive, useful, sustainable, affordable and linked to digital literacy opportunities that respond to users' circumstances, skills, needs and priorities.

Policies and practices to promote access need to address the risk of leaving behind the most vulnerable, including those with disabilities, minority and refugee communities, sexual and gender minorities, older people, and those living in poverty or remote and rural areas. These communities need to be able to access goods and services both offline and online.

## Messages

### Meaningful connectivity

- As connectivity has increased, discussion of digital divides has shifted from coverage to usage, including the range of services available to users and their ability to access services in their native languages. Meaningful universal connectivity – which can be defined as the opportunity for everyone to enjoy a safe, satisfying, enriching, productive and affordable online experience – is increasingly seen as a fundamental enabler of human rights as well as economic and social development.
- Meaningful, universal connectivity is critical for enabling digital transformation and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Achieving it will require policymakers to embrace the concept as a policy goal, set indicators and targets for its measurement and achievement, and include it in national digital strategies, policies and implementation plans.
- Good quality data on all aspects of universal and meaningful connectivity are essential to inform and monitor digital policies, establishing the nature and severity of digital divides and identifying priority targets for policy interventions. Steps need to be taken to ensure such data are available to policymakers.
- Innovative policy and regulatory approaches are important in reaching unserved and underserved communities. Non-traditional financing approaches can support and build networks, including community networks, in areas with little or no connectivity. Libraries and other public services can provide connectivity to marginalized communities and individuals.

### Digital Inclusion

- Overcoming digital divides requires access to be available to all within society. Governments and businesses should take steps to ensure accessibility for those with disabilities, for those with limited literacy and language skills and other marginalised groups.
- Digital inclusion depends on a multilingual Internet, and achieving a multilingual Internet depends on Universal Acceptance (UA). UA should therefore be promoted through collaboration and coordination. To connect communities that mainly communicate in oral forms, the Internet will need to adapt or create non-text-based communications, such as audio and video files/messages, transcription of alphabets and other intuitive forms of exchange. The online dominance of the Latin alphabet also needs to be challenged in order to facilitate access and usage by users of languages that use other alphabets.
- Open Education Resources (OER) have an important role to play in raising awareness and digital literacy skills. Governments and other stakeholders should help to ensure the quality of teaching and learning experiences by providing inclusive and accessible OER. Educational resources developed with public funds should be made available as OER, and more investment sought from both public and private sources.

- The development of initiatives for access and inclusion must be inclusive of target communities. Locally relevant and purpose-driven content is important for inclusion and requires incentives and funding to be sustainable, from production to distribution.

### **Capacity Development and leadership**

- A holistic approach to capacity development is important for achieving sustainable and meaningful connectivity. Digital and media literacy skills are needed to enable full participation in online activity, including access to quality services and the capacity to deal with cybersecurity challenges. Technical skills are needed to understand emerging technologies and identify useful applications.
- ICT leadership amongst minority groups should be encouraged, reducing technology bias and improving localisation of services and products across different regions and communities.

# GLOBAL DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND COOPERATION

## Theme

A positive vision for the future of the Internet has to consider many different strands and values concerned with sustainable development, human rights, access and openness, transparency and the rule of law, as well as technical considerations. This can best be done in an inclusive multistakeholder manner, where the interests of all actors can be addressed.

While the Internet contributes to social, cultural and economic growth, questions of governance, accountability, trust and access persist. As the Internet cannot be dealt with from a one-dimensional perspective, collaborative, equitable and inclusive Internet governance is imperative and requires well-structured coordination and consolidation. Dialogue between those concerned primarily with the Internet and those concerned primarily with other economic and public policy domains is essential in order to achieve best outcomes.

Monitoring of the impacts of Internet and other digital developments is also critically important to identifying opportunities, risks and ways of addressing these that are consistent with sustainable development and human rights.

The sustainability of the Internet governance ecosystem requires the involvement and engagement of young people, who are the next generation of users, experts and leaders. Given the rapid pace of technological change, it is important to build the capacity of future generations in all countries at all levels.

## Messages

### Digital governance

- Debates on digital governance increasingly recognise the symbiotic relationship between governance of the Internet and broader governance of economies and societies in the digital age. While the Internet remains a core component of the digital society, these discussions should extend to broader concerns, including the ways in which digital technologies impact society, issues such as data rights, AI ethics, and the broader digital ecosystem. The challenges of digital governance transcend the traditional boundaries of Internet governance, and it is important to view them holistically.
- Digital governance rests on a number of fundamental or foundation issues. Emphasising these ensures that the digital governance ecosystem is grounded in principles that have stood the test of time. By addressing core challenges such as data privacy, digital rights, cybersecurity and infrastructure development, the digital governance community can create a more resilient and secure foundation for the evolving digital age, which can respond more effectively to challenges of the moment.

### Multistakeholder participation

- Diverse participation promotes a comprehensive understanding of the complex issues surrounding digital governance. Ensuring that a wide range of perspectives is represented in the digital governance dialogue is therefore crucial. This extends beyond gender, nationality and stakeholder participation to encompass a broad spectrum of voices, including those from legislative and judicial branches of government. Inclusivity should ensure that no single group dominates the conversation and that all voices are considered when shaping the future of Internet governance.
- The multistakeholder model has been a defining characteristic of Internet governance, allowing a diverse range of stakeholders, including governments, civil society, businesses, and the technical community, to participate in decision-making, facilitating both inclusivity and collaboration and promoting a balanced and fair approach to addressing the challenges of the digital age.
- Multistakeholder processes have seen success and increasing use over the last two decades. The multistakeholder community has evolved since WSIS and the range of different interests represented within stakeholder grouping has increased. It is important that Internet governance and international processes such as WSIS+20 reach beyond referencing the importance of multistakeholderism and shape modalities that include stakeholder mapping, welcome diverse participation and draw on diverse expertise. Innovative channels for contributions should be considered, with particular emphasis on the value of broadening engagement by individuals and under-represented stakeholder groups and countries.
- Businesses play a crucial role in the digital ecosystem. Their involvement is vital in addressing the complex challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age. They also have a wider

responsibility to contribute to shaping digital governance, contributing expertise on issues such as cybersecurity, data governance, and digital inclusion.

- Businesses have an interest in a stable and secure digital environment that fosters innovation and growth. While they seek profitability and market growth, they should also recognise that digital governance must also serve the broader public good.

### **The role of the IGF**

- The IGF's evolution from discussing solely Internet governance to addressing a wider range of digital governance issues reflects the dynamic nature of the digital age.
- The IGF's visibility and profile need to be raised, through an effective outreach strategy, if it is to continue serving as a hub for constructive dialogue and collaboration, attract new stakeholders and engage diverse groups in shaping the future of Internet governance.
- To address the complex and multifaceted nature of Internet governance, entities like the IGF need adequate funding and resources. Sufficient funding is needed to support research, operational activities and the coordination of stakeholders. Without proper resources, critical initiatives and projects may go unrealised, impeding the development of ideas and initiatives in global digital governance.

# HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

## Theme

Access to the Internet should be accessible and safe for all. It should respect the civil, economic, social and cultural rights set out in international rights agreements, including human rights treaties and other relevant rules of international law. It is important to improve the monitoring and implementation of digital rights at all levels, building on national and global mechanisms.

The Internet provides a crucial opportunity for access to information and expression as described in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Governments should avoid recourse to Internet shutdowns because of their negative impact on both human rights and economic welfare. The Internet also provides opportunities for enhancing rights to education, as part of broader policies for educational improvement.

Concerns are widespread about disinformation and misinformation, the use of online services for criminal activity, child abuse, hate speech and interference in election and legal processes. Regulatory approaches to these and other challenges are under discussion in many countries and fora. Outcomes should be consistent with the full range of human rights set out in international rights agreements, standards and norms.

Artificial Intelligence needs to be developed and deployed in ways that allow it to be as inclusive as possible, non-discriminatory, auditable and rooted in democratic principles, the rule of law and human rights. Concerns are increasingly expressed about risks associated with AI, including surveillance and the automation of decision-making. These should be addressed in multistakeholder fora in the context of sustainable development and human rights.

## Messages

### Governance and rights

- Human rights and dignity should be at the centre of governance frameworks for digital technologies, including AI, addressing risks and threats in respect of data privacy and surveillance, freedom of expression and assembly, manipulation and hate speech, disinformation and misinformation.
- Governments have the responsibility to ensure that human rights are implemented in practice, both online and offline. To do so effectively, they need to invest in training and capacity-building of policymakers, judges and other legal professionals.
- Policymakers need to improve their understanding of Internet technologies, the infrastructure underpinning them, their modalities and business models if they are to make informed policy decisions and design appropriate regulatory frameworks. Greater transparency on the part of businesses and other stakeholders can help to achieve this.
- It is important to acknowledge the interconnection of local and global issues and to ensure representation and access to digital policy discussions for those communities and sectors that will be most affected by them.
- Technology is not confined by geographic boundaries. Laws and regulations governing the use of technology in areas such as encryption should be consistent with international standards and norms concerned with privacy, freedom of expression, due process and access to information.

### Access to information

- Discrepancies in data access (particularly in the Global South) and potential conflicts between international and local regulations limit the capacity of research, analysis and reporting about the impact that digital platforms have on society, including their impact on journalism and news media.
- High quality journalism is an effective medium against the impact of disinformation but faces an uncertain future. More work needs to be done to strengthen independent journalism, particularly in countries with a high incidence of disinformation.
- Governments should avoid recourse to Internet shutdowns, which impede the free flow of information and threaten human rights and democratic processes, particularly during election periods. While some governments lack the tools, knowledge, digital literacy and access to the wider multistakeholder community to address issues of concern through effective content moderation, shutdowns do not address the root causes that need to be addressed but undermine rights and prosperity.
- The information space plays an increasing role in conflicts. Digital risks and restrictions on the free flow of information can harm civilians in conflict zones. Digital companies have become important actors in conflict and often find themselves in extremely challenging circumstances, having to ensure

safety of staff and deal with demands made by belligerents. Alongside their responsibility to respect human rights and humanitarian law, they should be guided by the principle to minimise harm during conflict.

### **Misinformation and disinformation**

- Misinformation is defined as the unintentional spread of inaccurate or false information, while disinformation is deliberately falsified content specifically designed to deceive. These pose significant challenges for public policy within society as a whole as well as in the digital sector.
- Governments need to work together with technology companies and civic actors around a shared set of values to address the changing nature of misinformation and disinformation as technology evolves. Communities need to be empowered with the digital literacy tools and training to identify false content.
- Synthetic information or content is media manipulated from its original meaning or appearance for whatever purpose. Generative AI makes the production of synthetic information faster and easier with potentially adverse consequences for political processes, including elections, where disinformation by malicious actors can mislead and subvert democratic outcomes.
- A more nuanced approach to disinformation is called for, which should focus not only on social networks or digital platforms but also consider the wider media landscape. More empirical research is needed to assess the risks of disinformation for political activity and democratic process.
- There is not one global solution against disinformation that works in every instance or context. It is unlikely that governments will agree on how best to address it. However, it should be possible to work towards a common set of principles to guide policy development, building on human rights and access to information.

### **The role of businesses**

- Private companies can play a crucial role in securing human rights and have a responsibility to the societies in which they operate to respect rights in their business practices. This requires careful and effective risk assessment, monitoring of their impact on human rights, and due diligence in their delivery and supply chains when designing, developing and using digital technologies, including AI.
- Digital businesses would benefit from greater guidance on what it means for them to respect international human rights and humanitarian law. A multistakeholder approach (including international organisations, humanitarian actors, digital companies, and human rights organisations) can help to fill gaps in understanding on how they can contribute to ensuring rights and freedoms.



# SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

## Theme

Digital technologies can contribute towards environmental protection and the mitigation of environmental harms, but also have significant adverse environmental footprints that need to be addressed.

Digitalisation can provide tools and devices that help to monitor, mitigate and adapt to climate change – for instance by using digital technologies to evaluate consequences of actions already taken, monitor emission and pollution levels, and develop new approaches in other economic sectors that will be more sustainable. Areas of beneficial application of digitalisation include (among others) environmental data, food and water systems.

However, current levels of exploitation of some scarce resources used in digital and other new technologies, including rare earth elements, are known to be unsustainable. Extraction of resources critical for digitalisation is also associated with biodiversity loss and water stress. At the other end of the digital lifecycle, more than 50 million tonnes of e-waste are generated globally each year, little of which is currently recycled.

Urgent action is required concerning the digital sector's carbon emissions, which are substantial, growing and projected to grow further as the Internet of Things and AI become more widespread.

Environmental impacts arise at all stage of the digital lifecycle, including manufacturing, infrastructure, data storage, analysis and computation, usage by organisations and individual, and disposal. Increased attention is being paid to the potential for a more circular digital economy, including measures to improve energy efficiency, extend the life of digital devices, foster sustainable production and consumption, encourage reuse and recycling, and recover scarce resources.

## Messages

### The relationship between digitalization and the environment

- Discussions about digital transformation and climate change are still held overwhelmingly in separate silos, and there can be misunderstanding of the links between digital technology and the environment. It is important to make the link between digital technology and environment more widely understood, in particular by building a stronger interface between decision-making bodies concerned with digital development and environmental sustainability at both national and international levels. The achievement of an inclusive and environmentally sustainable digital society is critical to the achievement of the SDGs.
- Digital and environmental transitions should be consistent and mutually sustainable, not least because digital policies that are not environmentally sustainable will not be sustainable in any other sense. Responding to this requires progress from high-level discussion towards clear standards, regulation and action by all stakeholders.
- Environmental experts should discuss the challenges they face with technologists in order to identify practical ways in which digital technology might facilitate sustainability. It is important that digital approaches reflect the real circumstances in which they are to be deployed, including cost, connectivity, reliability and maintenance constraints. What is appropriate in one context is very often inappropriate in others.
- The IGF's community of NRIs can play a useful part in linking digital and environmental issues at global and national levels.

### Addressing environmental challenges

- Digital technologies can contribute to better understanding of the environmental problems facing the world community. The large volumes of data now generated by digital services and the scope and scale of AI-powered analysis can complement environmental monitoring systems to enable better targeting of policies and interventions to reduce environmental impacts and support mitigation of and adaptation to the impact of climate change.

### Addressing the digital environmental footprint

- Digital technologies have significant adverse environmental impacts which are particularly concerned with the exploitation of scarce resources, energy consumption and climate change, and the generation and dumping of electronic waste. All stakeholders have a responsibility to minimise these impacts.
- The adoption of principles of environmental sustainability by stakeholders within decision-making processes will be critical to enabling a just green transition. Such principles should be incorporated

in the design of national digital strategies, business models and practices, and the design and deployment of networks, devices, applications and services.

- Environmental responsibility in the digital sector should be increased. Efforts in greening the digital sector must reach beyond data centres to cover the entire value chain. Governments and international bodies should collaborate to mandate responsible production, usage, and disposal of electronic devices. Penalties for non-compliance and incentives for eco-friendly practices are crucial for accountability and driving sustainability.
- Standards play an important part in setting the framework within which digital products and services are deployed within societies. Standard-setting bodies should consider environmental impacts in their decision-making processes, reflecting the need for products and services to reduce their use of scarce resources and minimise energy consumption and carbon emissions. Businesses should commit to the use of environmentally responsible standards in product and service development.

### **A circular digital economy**

- There is increasing interest in transition towards a more circular digital economy, characterised by more efficient use of scarce resources, increased use of renewable energy and improved energy efficiency in networks and devices, more selective data storage, increased longevity and adaptability of digital devices (including repair and re-use) and better management of devices at their end of life.
- Recycling and recovery of scarce resources have a vital role to play in the environmental management of digitalisation. Levels of recycling – particularly of toxic chemicals and scarce minerals – must be increased to ensure the safety of individuals and long-term security of supply, and the international trade in electronic waste should be regulated to protect the interests of recipient countries, particularly in the Global South.
- Information on environmental choices should be easily accessible to all individuals. Digital businesses should be transparent about the environmental impact of their products and services and provide information to consumers. Governments can adopt sustainable procurement policies to encourage more sustainable product development.

### **AI and new technologies**

- Environmental and climate considerations need to be incorporated into the development of AI. We need to ensure that AI does not create more problems than it solves and mitigate its impact on climate. The environmental efficiency of AI should be carefully and transparently evaluated. Capacity-building, information-sharing and support for sustainable, local AI ecosystems should be promoted.
- Governments and the private sector should fund research in renewable energy, eco-friendly hardware and efficient cable-laying and satellite deployment. Financial support and incentives can fuel the development of impactful, environmentally conscious approaches, paving the way for a greener digital future.