

The Leadership Panel of the Internet Governance Forum and its Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group welcome the first draft of the Global Digital Compact as a solid basis for discussion. We commend Ambassadors Anna Karin Eneström of Sweden and Chola Milambo of Zambia and their teams for developing such a comprehensive text.

We have the pleasure of sharing with you our views on the draft, building also on our previous correspondence with the co-facilitators, with respect to the role and function of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in relation to the implementation of the Global Digital Compact and achieving its goals and commitments.

The IGF is **the primary global platform for multi-stakeholder discussions and consensus-building on internet/digital policy and cooperation**. Over 9000 people attended the most recent IGF in Kyoto, Japan (6000 in person and 3000 online) and as many as 9000 are anticipated to attend in person in the 2024 IGF in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. More than 170 self-starting National and Regional Internet Governance Forums all over the globe, as well as Policy Networks, Best Practice Forums and Dynamic Coalitions carry out intersessional work between the annual IGF meetings. This demonstrates the IGF's extensive global network and convening power, connecting actors with diverse perspectives **from grass-roots to the highest political levels**.

An estimated 70% of new value created over the coming decade will be based on digitally-enabled business models. In order to truly benefit from this potential and leverage it for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, **we must protect the Internet**. The Internet's governance only works if it reflects the Internet itself: open, distributed, interconnected and global. This can only be achieved by adopting multi-stakeholder approaches to all conversations about digital issues.

However, the current draft of the Global Digital Compact makes an unhelpful distinction between Internet governance and the governance of technologies built on or facilitated by or facilitating the Internet. The Tunis Agenda wisely defines Internet governance as governance off and on the internet, related to “principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet.” This definition corresponds to the technical realities: the governance of any new technology that uses or enables the Internet should not be thought of in isolation from the governance of the Internet.

The current draft also implies shifting responsibility away from the multistakeholder community, and creating new bodies under the umbrella of the United Nations. Centralizing the follow-up and review process of the Global Digital Compact exclusively in the United Nations in New York would de facto mean to sacrifice the role, knowledge and experience of the diverse multi-stakeholder community, including grassroots civil society actors, technical community and academic experts and small businesses, especially those from developing countries. Furthermore, these decisions risk an unnecessary duplication of existing, well-established processes. This threatens to fragment

coherent multi-stakeholder contributions to Internet governance policy development and is antithetical to the goal of the GDC.

We therefore appeal on states to:

- Recall the definition of internet governance as agreed in the Tunis agenda and give credit to IGF as a forum that has been discussing the full array of Internet related policy issues, including emerging technologies, since 2006.
- Establish a role for the IGF in the GDC review process. The Internet Governance Forum, with its extensive network, is ideally placed to periodically and comprehensively assess the implementation of the GDC and ensure broad and inclusive multi-stakeholder input to the discussions of the General Assembly or any other intergovernmental body that would ultimately adopt implementation reports and recommendations.

We remain ready to support you in this important endeavour of negotiating the final text of the Global Digital Compact. Likewise, we are at your disposal to provide any clarifications.

Sincerely Yours,

Vint Cerf, Chair, IGF Leadership Panel

Carol Roach, Chair, IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group