

Presented by Maria Ressa on behalf of the IGF Leadership Panel – GDC Consultation, 24 April 2024

Thank you to the Ambassadors of Sweden and Zambia for the opportunity to speak. As Vice-Chair of the Internet Governance Forum Leadership Panel, I am pleased to share these comments on the Panel's behalf. They complement a statement from the IGF's Multistakeholder Advisory Group that you will also hear today.

Among our first impressions of the Zero Draft was appreciation for the scope of this text, its concrete and measurable goals, and its strong emphasis on human rights and multistakeholderism. It is critical to see that an open and inclusive multistakeholder approach and human rights anchored in international law are recognized in the draft as cross-cutting principles, underlying each of the Compact's objectives, commitments, and actions.

As you know, the IGF will soon enter its twentieth year. It has undergone a remarkable evolution. Participants in the IGF's meetings have numbered 10,000 in the last years and over 170 national and regional initiatives exist today – meaning that for nearly every country in the world, there is a local IGF operating.

Through its annual meetings and intersessional activities, it has encompassed the full policy spectrum, from digital divides, emerging technologies, mis- and disinformation and cybersecurity, to digital impacts on the environment. Semantic nuances aside, all the issues within the GDC have been discussed at the IGF, which covers all aspects of so-termed digital governance and "Internet governance".

Only a few weeks ago, an independent research organization found that the IGF has had "lasting" direct impacts on digital policy development and has been pivotal for centering the views of young people and the Global South. What could be more important at this moment than listening to the next generation of citizens, to the global majority, and turning their perspectives into actionable policy?

Thank you to the Zero Draft for recognizing the IGF's achievements. Our panel members wish to reinforce the value of the IGF's bottom-up, inclusive, multistakeholder mechanism which makes it highly suited as a key contributor to GDC monitoring and follow-up.

It is because of how closely aligned the GDC is with the IGF and other specialized mechanisms . that we strongly recommend engaging as much as possible with existing bodies and evolving them as needed, including consideration of a specialized role for the IGF in GDC follow-up.

In this vein, the Panel and IGF colleagues stand ready to contribute the convening power, wealth of knowledge and expertise of the IGF network to the follow-up on the full array of the GDC's commitments, to collaborate with and strengthen existing frameworks and entities like WSIS, ITU, UNESCO and UNDP, and support the GDC's harmonization with these.

Thank you very much.