



September 2019

Comments of Mercari, Inc. regarding the Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation

Mercari, Inc. appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. We support efforts made by the UN Secretary-General and members of the Panel to promote the open and stable Internet for all.

Background on Mercari, Inc.

Mercari, Inc. is a popular Japanese company operating a CtoC online marketplace in Japan and the United States to create value in a global marketplace where anyone can buy and sell. We have been contributing to global, regional, and national Internet Governance Forums as venues for multi-stakeholder discussions on Internet-related public policy issues by organizing workshops or driving communities to take part in the above discussions as a member of the so-called program committees from the perspectives of digital economy and trade as well as emerging technologies.

While in the Report there are various aspects of digital cooperation to which we can contribute by this submission, we wish to focus our comments on the following three points; 'the inclusive digital economy and society,' 'the global digital cooperation', and 'multi-stakeholder participation and transparent process.'

1) The Inclusive Digital Economy and Society

It is highly important that when it comes to digital cooperation, it should have a developing countries-centered perspective to achieve inclusive growth by using digital technologies and then accomplish Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, it should be borne in mind that digital cooperation should not be overlapped with discussions and measures under existing frameworks. For example, Japan hosted the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Trade and Digital Economy¹ this year and G20 Ministers shared the concept of 'Society 5.0' which is to achieve a human-centered digital future society and took up various fields including, but not limited to digital infrastructure, digital literacy, bridging the digital gender divide, inclusion of SMEs and entrepreneurs, and inclusive design for people at all ages /persons with disabilities

¹ "G20 Ibaraki-Tsukuba Ministerial Meeting on Trade and Digital" 10 Jun. 2019, https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2019/0610_003.html. Accessed 30 Sep. 2019.

as priority areas which is necessary to implement 'Society 5.0' globally. Further, as to the digitalization of developing countries/regions including Africa, since many development organizations and public-private stakeholders have made great contributions, it is quite important to collaborate with those activities, not overlap with them.

2) The Global Digital Cooperation

On the other hand, with regard to discussions on how digital cooperation should be and its mechanism, it is indispensable to enhance 'multi-stakeholder' Internet governance in such a way to make the most of the current IGF structure while bearing in mind the overlap with existing frameworks, as many countries pointed out during a follow-up meeting. Therefore, we should seriously consider the relevant discussions at the upcoming IGF Berlin 2019 and other future opportunities.

3) Multi-stakeholder Participation and Transparent Process

Paragraph 72 of Tunis Agenda for the Information Society² which was adopted in World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2005 provides the various mandates of the IGF. Among those mandates, 'I. (p)ublish its proceedings' is important. While the definition of 'proceedings' is not in Tunis Agenda, IGF processes should be more transparent in the context of the appointment of MAG members as well as the selection of a wide variety of session proposals other than workshop proposals which MAG members are supposed to select through multi-stakeholder dialogue in order to ensure the legitimacy of the IGF.

As well, paragraph 77 of Tunis Agenda provides that '(t)he IGF would have an oversight function and would not replace existing arrangements, mechanisms, institutions or organizations, but involve them and take advantage of their expertise. It would be constituted as a neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process'. Taking into account this provision, we strongly request the transparent processes of discussions and adoption of this Report with the possibility of multi-stakeholder participation. In this regard, we agree that the necessity of improving the IGF mechanism to enhance the multi-stakeholders by including more diverse stakeholders and reflect their voices into the actual ICT policy. We also have high hopes that the UN Secretary-General and the Panel members will consider further discussion which will be held at the main session 'Internet Governance and Digital Cooperation'³ at IGF2019 in Berlin.

² "WSIS: Tunis Agenda for the Information Society - ITU." 18 Nov. 2005, <https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html>. Accessed 30 Sep. 2019.

³ "Internet Governance and Digital Cooperation - IGF 2019 - Sched." <https://igf2019.sched.com/event/SU0L/internet-governance-and-digital-cooperation>. Accessed 30 Sep. 2019.