



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## **IGF Consultation: Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation**

Australia thanks the IGF for the opportunity to provide written comments on the recommendations of the High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation convened by the UN Secretary-General relevant to Global Digital Cooperation and the IGF.

Australia supports in-principle the recommendation to create the IGF Plus, and welcomes further discussion of the proposal. Multi-stakeholder mechanisms based on participative processes including governments, private sector, civil society, academia and diverse users maintain and improve the stability and resilience of the Internet. Multi stakeholder Internet governance that is inclusive, consensus-based, transparent and accountable underpins an open, free and secure Internet, on which our economies and societies rely. Increased multi-stakeholder collaboration and contribution will enable more agile responses to digital and technological issues affecting our future productivity and prosperity.

Australia queries the practicality of implementing some the initiatives proposed in the report to further international digital cooperation, and whether they are adequate and appropriate responses to address the issues identified. It would also be useful to have a clearer view of what the IGF Plus would add, in terms of outcomes, beyond what the IGF as it stands is already achieving.

The report of the High Level Panel flags that it is not its intention to duplicate existing mechanisms for multi-stakeholder consultation, however many features of the proposed Policy Incubator replicate work already being done by existing multi stakeholder NGOs (for example, the Internet & Jurisdiction Policy Network).

Similarly, the proposed Observatory and Help Desk mimics the functions of other initiatives, including the 24/7 networks, UNODC SHERLOCK Portal, UNIDIR Cyber Policy Portal, World Bank Toolkit, UNCTAD Repository, et al. Australia queries whether the breadth of issues proposed under the umbrella of the Observatory and Help Desk are appropriate to the mandate of the IGF and matched to its existing resources.

Australia encourages frank discussion about the viability of a new body based upon voluntary contributions to the IGF Trust Fund.

Australia anticipates constructive discussion of the report of the High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation at the upcoming IGF 2019 Meeting, and the recommendations therein relating to the IGF Plus.