

Invitation to the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)



On behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres, I have the honour to invite you to the sixteenth meeting of the United Nations Internet Governance Forum (IGF), to be held in Katowice, Poland, and online, **from 6 to 10 December 2021**.

The sixteenth IGF will be hosted by the Government of Poland under the overarching theme: “**Internet United**.”. The Forum aims at bringing together participants from different stakeholder groups and some of the most prominent individuals in the global Internet governance discussion from across the globe.

While national authorities are expected to continue to apply a risk-based approach in implementing measures related to COVID-19 and international travel, preparations are being made to organize the IGF as a hybrid event, allowing qualitative participation of onsite and online to achieve the goal of making the IGF as inclusive as possible.

In response to inputs from the IGF community and from proposals relating to the UN Secretary- General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation calling for a more focused IGF, the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) has opted for using an issue-driven approach to design the IGF 2021 programme. This approach aims to contribute to the ongoing IGF evolution and strengthening, through encouraging focused discussion that delves more deeply into specific issue areas. This approach is also conducive to leading to more focused outcomes, while maintaining the IGF’s open and bottom-up character as a space for dialogue on a wide-range of issues identified during the intersessional period.

Two main focus areas and four emerging and cross-cutting areas were selected after community input:

IGF 2021 Main focus areas

- Economic and social inclusion and human rights
- Universal access and meaningful connectivity

IGF 2021 Emerging and cross-cutting issue areas

- Emerging regulation: market structure, content, data and consumer/users rights regulation
- Environmental sustainability and climate change
- Inclusive Internet governance ecosystems and digital cooperation.

- Trust, security, stability.

These focus areas reflect both challenges and opportunities brought forward by the use and evolution of the Internet and related digital technologies, from the need to put more effort into ensuring meaningful Internet access globally, to the role of multistakeholder cooperation in advancing towards a more just and equitable digital world.

In addition, the programme will be enriched by the intersessional activities: the Policy Network on Environment, the Policy Network on Meaningful Access, the Best Practice Forum on Gender and Digital Rights, Best Practice Forum on Cybersecurity, as well as by the work of 22 multistakeholder Dynamic Coalitions and 116 national and regional IGF initiatives. Building on the experience of previous years, a parliamentary track and a high-level leader's track will also be included in the meeting programme, demonstrating the relevance of Internet and digital policy issues for parliamentarians and high-level leaders from across stakeholder groups.

I sincerely hope that we will have the pleasure and honour of your participation and contribution at the sixteenth IGF, be it in Katowice or online, as well as during the preparatory and engagement phase running between September and November. The success of the IGF depends on the active involvement of stakeholders from across all groups and disciplines, and we count on your views and experiences to enrich the dialogue on some of the most pressing Internet and digital policy issues.

Mr. LIU Zhenmin

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs