IGF17 AND COUNTING
The 17th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) opens today with speeches from the host government, the UN Secretary-General and other stakeholder representatives. During the week, around 200 sessions will explore almost every aspect of the Internet. Thousands of participants have registered online and offline. The Forum’s multistakeholder character will be to the fore with participants from all parts of the Internet’s expanding ecosystem, and all regions. This year’s theme seeks a Resilient Internet for a shared sustainable and common future. Sub-themes explore aspects of the Secretary-General’s proposed Global Digital Compact (see below). High-Level and Parliamentary tracks are exploring policy priorities. Policy Networks and Best Practice Forums will report on the work they are doing. And the IGF’s Leadership Panel will make its debut at an annual meeting (see Page 3).

Towards the Compact
This year’s key themes are focused on the UN Secretary-General’s proposed Digital Compact. Those five themes are:

- Connecting all people and safeguarding human rights
- Avoiding Internet fragmentation
- Governing data and protecting privacy
- Enabling safety, security and accountability
- Addressing advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI).

The Compact aims to set out ways in which all stakeholders can shape our digital future for the common good. It will be one of the main inputs to a Summit of the Future to be held by the United Nations in 2024.

Each IGF draws up ‘key messages’, built from session summaries and consultation with participants. This year’s forum will feed into the development of ideas and principles within the Compact. Every session in Addis Ababa, therefore, presents opportunities for IGF participants to contribute to shaping the way forward.

Your Daily Bulletin
This daily bulletin will be published by the Secretariat – in French and English – on each day of the four-day IGF. Copies will be available online each morning, giving snapshots of what happened yesterday and what’s to come today, brief notes on aspects of the Forum, and a copy of the schedule for the day’s events. Look out for the QR codes around the building.
Day Zero
Day Zero’s not part of the formal four-day programme of the IGF, but it’s been a big part of the Forum for many years. It’s a day for special sessions that add to the formal programme, with more chances to explore ideas and exchange views.

High Level Leaders event
There was a full auditorium for the High-Level Leaders sessions on Day Zero. Panels of industry leaders and policymakers from across stakeholder communities gave their views on some of the most important issues on the Internet.

The morning panel focused on meaningful access to infrastructure, services and information – responding to the UN Sustainable Development Agenda’s focus that ‘no-one should be left behind.’

Speakers addressed issues of connectivity and affordability, digital skills and online content, value creation and empowerment. They reflected on the way the COVID-19 pandemic showed the potential for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to enable resilience in crisis, but also revealed inadequacies in existing policy and the need for more investment.

They stressed the role of multistakeholder partnerships in maximising the potential benefits of connectivity. There was a special focus on African initiatives.

Afternoon sessions looked at the relationship of digital rights with other areas of human rights, the expression and protective rights of marginalised communities, the responsibilities of different stakeholders concerning information and disinformation, and regulatory issues relating to these challenges. Final discussions addressed Internet shutdowns and the power structures associated with digitalisation, including those around the theme of ‘digital colonialism’.

IGF Women Summit
The IGF Women Summit was held on the afternoon of Day Zero, putting gender at the forefront of discussions at the Forum. Topics ranged widely, including the need for improved data, especially in Africa, to increase understanding of Internet developments to the importance of addressing digital violence against women.

Women’s roles in online business and online leadership were emphasised, along with the importance of participating in the development of the Global Digital Compact, as a framework for improvement of women’s lives and digital societies.
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Giganet
The annual symposium of academic network Giganet – the Global Internet Governance Academic Network - has been part of IGF Day Zero for many years.

Over 100 Internet scholars gathered, many online, to discuss 14 papers on three themes – the contested governance of Internet infrastructure, diplomacy and participation in Internet governance, and differing perspectives on data governance.

Discussions enabled speakers to address sovereignty, privacy and artificial intelligence (AI) as well as physical infrastructure, the architecture of the Internet and regulation.

Other events
The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) set out ‘best practices and recommendations for digital inclusion through resilient infrastructure’ at a publication launch during Day Zero. ITU is launching five reports with recommendations on connectivity and digital inclusion, focused on ITU priorities in health, education, job creation, digital connectivity and the needs of vulnerable persons.

UNESCO’s ROAM-X framework and Internet Universality Indicators are being used by multistakeholder communities in over forty countries to explore national Internet environments. They focus on rights, openness, access, multistakeholder participation, inclusion and development. Researchers shared experiences and considered the framework’s evolution in a changing world.

The Leadership Panel
This year’s IGF sees the debut of the Forum’s Leadership Panel, which has been established following the UN Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation.

Chaired by Internet pioneer Vint Cerf, with Nobel prize winner Maria Ressa as vice-chair, its fifteen members will provide high-level input to the IGF, promote its outputs and liaise with other international agencies to build the Forum’s profile.

The Panel will hold an open session with IGF participants on Wednesday.
What to look out for

The IGF is more than an annual event. Much work is done throughout the year in intersessional dialogues and national and regional events. Two Policy Networks have been working on Internet fragmentation and on meaningful access. They will be reporting on Wednesday and Thursday respectively.

Best Practice Forums have explored cybersecurity, gender and digital rights. Their sessions are on Thursday and Friday.

More than twenty Dynamic Coalitions bring stakeholders together to consider themes of common interest, from rights and principles to accessibility and digital health. Many of these have sessions during the week. More than 150 national, regional and youth IGFs - known in the IGF as NRIs - promote Internet discussion within their communities. It’s hard to do justice to the quality and diversity of NRI discussions, but a sample from last year’s events can be found when they report on Friday morning.

The final day

The last day of the Forum is an important stepping-stone. Draft Key Messages from Addis Ababa, summarising session outcomes, will be presented before online consultation on a final text. Before the Forum closes, there will be an opportunity for all participants to comment on the way the week has gone: what’s worked and what’s been less successful, and what might be done next year.
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In the Village

Each IGF is complemented by its Village – a space for stakeholders to exhibit and participants to make connections with them. Don’t miss the chance to see what’s to be found there.

The time and place to socialise

IGF’s aren’t all about work. There’s also time to network and to socialise, and the host government invites you to three events it’s putting on to help you do so.

On Tuesday evening, you are invited to an Ethiopian Night in Friendship Park starting as the Forum ends at 6pm. Shuttles will be on hand to take you to the Park.

On Wednesday, it’s Ethiopian Festival Day from 3pm to 9pm, back in the Park.

And on Thursday, you’re invited to a reception at the Conference Centre, starting as the session ends and rolling on to 9pm. There will be dancing, and shuttle buses to take you back to your hotel.
DAY 1: Tuesday 29 NOVEMBER 2022

11:00-13:00 OPENING CEREMONY

12:45-13:45 BREAK

13:50-15:50 HIGH LEVEL LEADERS SESSION III

16:20-17:50 IGF 2022 UN OPEN FORUM