

PNIF Multistakeholder Working Group of experts (MWG)  
Meeting III, 30 June 2022

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## Summary

### *Global Digital Compact*

1. The MWG discussed how the PNIF can provide a meaningful contribution to the Global Digital Compact (GDC).

It was noted that:

- the GDC is planned for early fall 2023, as a consequence, IGF2022 is the only opportunity for an IGF to provide input;
- the UN Member States decide on the GDC preparation process, including if and how to involve stakeholders, but no details are available yet;
- the 30 September deadline of [Tech Office's GDC consultation](#) is likely to be extended;
- the combined outputs of the IGF2022 meeting in December will be presented as a contribution to the GDC process;

MWG members raised that:

- a timely and meaningful GDC contribution means shifting the PNIF's initial 2-year plan and cover definitions, guidelines, and recommendations already in 2022;
- input to the GDC should be concise and concrete, and useful for governments (and stakeholders?) involved in the negotiation process;
- While providing input to the GDC is an important priority, it is not the only activity the PNIF should focus on. The PNIF should aim at compiling multistakeholder recommendations on how to counter internet fragmentation. This requires a longer iterative process.

2. The MWG discussed the potential content of a PNIF contribution to the GDC consultation. It was noted that the GDC is the opportunity to push Internet fragmentation on the multilateral policy agenda. The GDC will be an important milestone if it acknowledges that Internet fragmentation is an issue of global importance that needs to be addressed collaboratively by governments and the multistakeholder community. The PNIF should contribute concrete high level principles while indicating that it is working on more detailed actionable guidelines.

Therefore, it was suggested that a PNIF contribution covers the following:

- Clarify and scope the issue;
- Explain why Internet fragmentation is bad;
- Express that this view is shared by the multistakeholder community;
- Provide high-level principles; (
- Indicate what the IGF community expects from the GDC;
- Call upon the MSs to commit to collective action to avoid Internet fragmentation;
- Present the IGF / PNIF as the space for multistakeholder discussion on how to counter Internet fragmentation.

## PNIF work plan

3. It was stressed that in parallel to preparing the GDC contribution, the PNIF should continue its envisaged work plan (refining the definition of internet fragmentation, collecting case studies, discussing guidelines). These outputs will be valuable as complement to the GDC contribution and as reference and input for those involved in negotiating the GDC in 2023, but should aim at informing discussions on Internet fragmentation in general. It was suggested to actively identify possible entry points for PNIF outputs.<sup>1</sup>
4. It was noted that there's no consensus on what is covered under the term 'Internet fragmentation' and that the PNIF should address this as a priority. Lack of clarity around the concept is a hurdle for the discussion to mature.
5. Internet fragmentation is an issue where technical and policy level cross, the PNIF should identify and involve experts from the different levels in the discussion, reach out and drive engagement of all stakeholders.
6. To make a difference, the PNIF's goal should be to compile recommendations on how the global community can help to avoid Internet Fragmentation. Based on the yet to established definition, the recommendations should address different stakeholders active in different layers.
7. It was suggested to collect examples of government policies that risk to fragment the Internet and discuss alternative measures to the same policy issue.
8. Suggested next steps.
  - GDC consultation:
    - co-facilitators and MWG to the outline of the draft by the end of August (how to involve the community in the drafting process is yet to be discussed).
  - Definition & concepts discussion:
    - Follow up on the discussion that started on the public PNIF mailing list.
    - Plan open PNIF calls to discuss different views on Internet fragmentation and work towards a multi-layered concept.
    - Invite experts, some are already involved in the discussion on the mailing list, to help lead this exercise.
    - Launch the survey to collect initial input for the discussion.
  - Recommendations & Guidelines
    - Discussions to follow immediately after the definition & scope discussion and aim at developing guidelines by the IGF2022 meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> For example the follow to *Our Common Agenda* on shutdowns - "The United Nations stands ready to work with Governments, businesses and civil society to find alternatives to disruptive blanket Internet shutdowns and generic blocking and filtering of services to address the spread of disinformation and harmful life-threatening content, in line with international human rights law." - in which the Tech Envoy's office, the UN's communications department and UNESCO are already involved.

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Recording:

[https://intgovforum.zoom.us/rec/play/1h1MzlpA1c7dJEKOoa6buAkVu3DE6FdwR0RDrSG79LunngwaMaE48tHW8obq0DMnh1jhoiBkrf65Cmjh.g-f\\_kel3gSSq5yYv](https://intgovforum.zoom.us/rec/play/1h1MzlpA1c7dJEKOoa6buAkVu3DE6FdwR0RDrSG79LunngwaMaE48tHW8obq0DMnh1jhoiBkrf65Cmjh.g-f_kel3gSSq5yYv)

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