

# IGF Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation

## Contribution to the Consultation on

### the Global Digital Compact

The [Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation](#) (PNIF) is an intersessional activity of the [Internet Governance Forum](#) (IGF). This contribution to the Global Digital Compact consultation intends to complement the contribution of the IGF Leadership Panel and others that make reference to the PNIF and provide information on achieved and ongoing work.

The PNIF was established in 2022, born out of a community initiative by a multistakeholder coalition of civil society, business and technical community organizations to raise awareness of the technical, policy, legal and regulatory measures and actions that pose a risk to the open, interconnected and interoperable Internet.

Internet fragmentation is a complex issue. The many views, diverse opinions, different conceptualisations and definitions of what is and what is not internet fragmentation, or what fragmentation - in the context of the UN Secretary General's Our Common Agenda - should be avoided or addressed can hinder an open and inclusive dialogue. The Policy Network identified different understandings of internet fragmentation and sought to create a framework to conceptualise and discuss internet fragmentation, as the first step in aiding efforts to combat fragmentation.

In 2022, the Policy Network developed, through a bottom-up and collaborative approach, its [framework for discussing fragmentation](#). The overall goal of the framework is to serve as a general guiding and orienting tool for continuing the dialogue about fragmentation and bringing in more people and stakeholders, allow a more holistic and inclusive debate, and at the same time, create space for focused discussion and work towards concrete solutions, policy approaches and guidelines.<sup>1</sup>

The work of the PNIF is acknowledged in the 2022 [Addis Ababa IGF Messages](#) and the IGF's Leadership Panel in its [contribution to the GDC Consultation](#) stated: "the multistakeholder community must remain vigilant against new or developing risks of internet fragmentation. In this regard, the Leadership Panel welcomes the work done by the IGF Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation, and encourages the continuation of this work, to

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<sup>1</sup> The Framework for discussing internet fragmentation that emerged from the PNIF discussions conceptualises three key dimensions of fragmentation, each potentially driven by technical, political, and commercial developments whether intended or unintended:

- fragmentation of the user experience,
- fragmentation of the internet's technical layer, and
- fragmentation of internet governance and coordination.

support governments, private sector, civil society and the technical community to be aware of possible threats to the open internet."

In 2023, the PNIF intends to unpack the concept of internet fragmentation and collect high-level principles as well as concrete guidance and solutions for stakeholders to address fragmentation. All interested stakeholders are invited to participate in the work. We call upon the parties involved in the GDC process to make use of the PNIF multistakeholder work as a meaningful input supporting preparations for the *Summit of the Future* and the *Global Digital Compact*.

### *Links and background*

#### **Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation webpage**

- <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/policy-network-on-internet-fragmentation>

#### **PNIF 2022 output and Framework for discussing fragmentation**

- [Summary](#)
- [PNIF 2022 output report](#)

#### **PNIF [mailing list](#)**