



Internet Governance Forum Leadership Panel calls for reaffirmation of the Multistakeholder Model in the Global Digital Compact

The Leadership Panel of the UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF) held its second in-person meeting in Vienna following an initiative by its Austrian member with a call on UN member states to reaffirm the Multistakeholder Model of Internet Governance in the Global Digital Compact.

Internet Governance, as defined and envisioned by the Tunis Agenda – namely a shared responsibility of different stakeholder groups including governments, the private sector, civil society, technical community and academia – has provided both venue and vocabulary to discuss the rapidly evolving challenges and opportunities in our digital ecosystems. While legal, regulatory and policy approaches will differ around the world, it is vital to ensure that such diverse approaches do not impede the global reach and interoperability of the open Internet.

The Leadership Panel seeks to exercise an ambassadorial role in relation to the IGF, amplifying the relevance and timeliness of the Forum in global policy discussions, while leveraging tangible contributions from the vast expertise and documented messaging of the IGF community. To this end, the Panel agreed this week on its work plan and expected deliverables under four workstreams: (i) awareness raising and outreach, (ii) inputs to IGF and liaison with the MAG, (iii) funding, and (iv) substantive policy guidance on global policy developments, including a first immediate output on the Global Digital Compact consultation.



The members of the Leadership Panel expressed their support for the objective to find common ground on a future Global Digital Compact. This process provides a unique opportunity for governments to reaffirm the fundamental importance of an open, free, globally connected, stable, unfragmented, safe and trustworthy Internet, based on the UN Charter, and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and human rights. This process requires a strong involvement of all stakeholders. The IGF can play an important role in this regard.

The Internet and the digital technologies it supports has rapidly become one of the most defining features of our everyday lives: the way we study, work, do business, consume content or connect with our communities. It enables the global digital economy and is transforming essential social services, such as education and health care, as well as the ways in which people interact with their governments. The Leadership Panel reiterated its firm belief of the unique power of the Internet for inclusive social and economic growth.

At the same time, the Leadership Panel noted that this transformation comes with challenges for which people all around the world seek functional and straightforward solutions. These solutions can only be provided if governments, the private sector, expert communities, technical communities, academia and civil society work together. The IGF proves an ideal platform for such a multistakeholder approach.

Governments jointly with other stakeholders, in their respective roles, should therefore strengthen the role of the Internet Governance Forum as a unique platform in the UN system that brings all relevant actors



together and can function as a key facilitator for new initiatives and strengthened international cooperation.

The Leadership Panel of the UN Internet Governance Forum has been appointed by the UN Secretary-General to a two-year term and consists of 10 members, plus 5 ex-officio members, from governments, the private sector, the technical community and civil society. It is tasked with giving strategic advice to the Internet Governance Forum.