Internet Governance Forum

2025

IGF LEADERSHIP PANEL

REPORT TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

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LEADERSHIP PANEL 2025
REPORT TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UN Secretary-General established the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Leadership Panel (LP) in 2022 with a strong mandate to promote, support, and advise the IGF. In the years since, the Panel has delivered tangible progress in bolstering the IGF's strategic direction, visibility, and resources – demonstrating how the success of one depends on the strength of the other. The panel focused on concrete actions to fulfil this mandate by providing strategic input to the IGF, raising the profile of the Forum, and increasing funding. In doing so, it also highlighted the IGF's essential capacity-building role, particularly through its global network of more than 170 National, Regional and Youth IGFs (NRIs), which locally anchor digital policy discussions and spotlight the priorities of under-represented communities.

This progress has occurred amid a rapidly changing digital environment shaped by accelerating AI deployment and its governance challenges, widening and multi-layered digital divides, growing debates over data governance and digital sovereignty, and pressures on openness and interoperability (including risks of technical and policy fragmentation). In this context of both fast-paced development and opportunity, the IGF's multistakeholder and open approach remains essential: it provides a trusted space for inclusive dialogue, practical cooperation, and coherence across stakeholder communities.

The multistakeholder model of the Leadership Panel, Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) and IGF enables their success; it ensures that they are inclusive, accountable, and crucially, relevant, when addressing the myriad challenges and opportunities for effective digital governance. This Report highlights that work and sets out recommendations for the years to come, following a renewal of the mandate in December.

Taken together, the Panel's work demonstrates the value of a strengthened IGF that can support Member States as digital issues become more complex, interconnected, and central to sustainable development.

Successes include:

- **Providing strategic direction for the IGF**: The LP's outputs and recommendations, particularly the *Internet We Want* (IWW) framework, set a forward-looking agenda for the IGF, stressing adaptability, inclusiveness, and policy relevance. It also provided high-level engagement with the IGF MAG on the Forum's agenda and emerging digital policy trends.
- **Raising visibility of the IGF and its outputs**: The LP's interventions, especially the IWW vision and priorities for the twenty-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20), helped situate the IGF more prominently within global digital policy debates. This included emphasis on the IGF's longstanding capacity development work – especially through NRIs, Dynamic Coalitions, and Best Practice Forums – which equips stakeholders with skills to participate effectively in global processes.
- **Linking the IGF to broader UN processes**: The LP has reinforced IGF's role as the natural platform for reviewing the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and for contributing to the WSIS+20 review.
- **Strengthening collaboration:** The Informal Multistakeholder Sounding Board (IMSB), requested by the WSIS+20 co-facilitators, brought together LP and MAG members channeling community input on complex topics.

- **Increasing the funding of the Secretariat Trust Fund**: Host country contributions to the annual IGF have increased, complemented by private sector funding, including a 500K USD donation for 2025.

To build on this momentum and ensure the IGF continues to deliver value, the Leadership Panel makes the following recommendations:

- **Continue the Leadership Panel and its inclusive geographic and multistakeholder representation.**
- **Adopt staggered membership terms for the Panel.**
- **Enhance funding for the IGF Secretariat.**
- **Create and measure IGF's concrete deliverables on meaningful Internet access, especially for the Global South.**
- **Integrate useful data sources into IGF work.**
- **Institute an executive track for decision-makers at annual IGFs.**
- **Establish outreach to Internet-related technical and operational organizations.**
- **Invite UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies (ODET) to enhance engagement with the IGF.**
- **Explore a liaison relationship with UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS).**
- **Leverage IGF networks for AI initiatives.**
- **Utilize the IGF to improve GDC outcomes measurement.**

Sustaining both the IGF and its Leadership Panel will be critical to maintaining informed, inclusive, and coherent global digital policy discussions in the years ahead – particularly as technologies evolve quickly, and the need for interoperable, human-centred, and sustainable governance deepens.

IGF Leadership Panel Meeting (6-7 March 2023) - Federal Chancellery Vienna, Austria

LEADERSHIP PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

[see Appendix 1 for full TOR]

The UN Secretary-General established the IGF Leadership Panel as an empowered, multistakeholder body to provide strategic advice and increase the impact and dissemination of Internet Governance Forum (IGF) discussions.

The Panel's main responsibilities include providing strategic input to the IGF, promoting its outputs, and supporting high-level engagement and fundraising efforts. Individual members serve a two-year term and are expected to attend meetings, advise on urgent issues, and actively participate in the annual IGF meeting.

The Panel is composed of ten members (two each from governments, private sector, technical community, and civil society, plus two at-large members), in addition to ex-officio members (three host country representatives, the MAG Chair, and the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology).

While the Panel is distinct from the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG)—which continues to lead the annual work program—the Panel complements the MAG by focusing on high-level input, visibility, and outreach. The Panel meets at least three times a year and is supported by the IGF Secretariat.

IGF Leadership Panel Meeting (25-27 February 2024) - Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

INTRODUCTION

a. Evolution of Internet Governance

The Internet, conceived in 1973 as a packet-switched network experiment, globally expanded after becoming commercially available in 1989. The World Wide Web's arrival in 1991 fueled a boom and bust cycle, from which hyperscale platform companies emerged. Key institutional developments include the 1998 formation of ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), which manages unique identifiers, and its separation from the NTIA in 2016.

The Internet's growth accelerated with the 2007 launch of the smartphone and the rise of social media in the 2010s. Today, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models dominate, showcasing powerful content generation capabilities.

The foundation of the Internet's success is its openness and interoperability, supported by standards bodies like the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), Internet Architecture Board (IAB), and World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Its governance is characterized by a "bottom-up" evolution of institutions, from the early Network Working Group to the creation of the IGF in 2005, following the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) and the Domain Name System (DNS) structure (implemented in 1984) further underpin its operation.

With two-thirds of the world connected via technologies like 4G/5G and subsea cables, the Internet presents a duality: unprecedented knowledge sharing alongside the rapid spread of misinformation, cyberattacks, and other hazards. The massive global dependency on the Internet necessitates increased resilience, accountability, and security, especially as autonomous AI agents introduce new concerns regarding provenance, intellectual property, and safety. The ongoing, cooperative efforts through the IGF aim to manage these risks while leveraging the Internet's immense potential for global development.

b. Emerging issues, new challenges foreseen on the horizon

In the course of its two-year existence, the Leadership Panel has encountered both achievements to celebrate and challenges to confront. The Internet continues to deliver value to billions of users, private sector entities and governments around the world. There are, however, causes for concern. The free flow of information across the Internet is becoming fragmented by route and site blocking, blocklists for electronic mail, Internet shutdowns and denial of service attacks. Data is becoming a critical resource for training AI inferencing engines and its potential monetization has triggered efforts to limit access to information. Access to trusted content increasingly comes at a cost — in other words, truth is becoming a commodity. This trend is particularly visible among younger generations, who rely almost exclusively on the Internet as their primary source of information and knowledge. In such an environment, the ability to critically assess content and distinguish fact from opinion becomes not just a skill, but a crucial element of digital literacy and democratic resilience.

Notions of Digital or Data sovereignty may lead to further Internet fragmentation. Fragmentation within global Internet governance remains a pressing concern as competing visions of digital sovereignty, surveillance, and data localisation emerge. Such divisions risk undermining the openness and interoperability that have historically defined the Internet. The challenge may be how to foster coherence while respecting legitimate variations in national and regional approaches.

Access to the Internet’s resources is not universal. Lack of physical resources, economic barriers, digital illiteracy and unreliability all contribute to uneven access and unequal opportunity to harvest

economic and social value from the Internet. The “digital divides” are wide, encompassing affordability, reliable infrastructure, accessibility for people with disabilities, gender gaps, language availability, locally relevant applications and information, among many others. Internet access methods vary from mobile as the primary tool, to pad, laptops, desktops and work stations which colour user experience of the Internet. Devices that are Internet-enabled (so-called Internet of Things) are becoming more available and useful, but may introduce security hazards.

The continued exponential growth in demand for capacity impacts not only the Radio Access Networks that provide the vast majority of Internet access today, but also places considerable strain on backhaul and international networks. Given that subsea cable systems form the backbone of this capacity, it is essential that adequate resilience is built into their design and that all efforts to ensure their proper protection are also maintained. Timely future capacity upgrades are required to these bottleneck facilities to ensure that these systems do not become the limiting factor in Internet connectivity performance.

Our dependence on the Internet highlights its own dependence on reliable electrical power and computing resources. If your mobile doesn’t work, you may have a bad day to look forward to. Resilience adds costs and may compete with efficiency. Digital literacy in all its forms has become vital to national economic and social interests. Online hazards such as phishing, deep fakes, disinformation, malware, etc, abound and users need training and tools to protect themselves. The ease with which bad information can be generated, propagated and accepted has justifiably reduced trust in Internet content and drives the need for digital literacy.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly emerging as a new means of experiencing and using the Internet. The energy demand driven by AI is growing exponentially — from a few megawatts in research labs to gigawatts on a global scale. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), electricity consumption by data centres, most of which power AI systems, is expected to double by 2026. This trend is not only a major challenge for the IT sector but also a strategic driver of energy and infrastructure transformation.

AI agents have the potential to enhance access to Internet resources by facilitating natural language dialog as a primary interface to them. Such mechanisms may also address accessibility of Internet resources for blind, deaf or illiterate users. Of equal importance is the growing need for reliable digital identity. Users need strongly authenticated credentials to ensure that others cannot take unauthorized actions on their behalf. Biometrics can be part of the solution to strong identity authentication. Cryptography is becoming essential to protect privacy and confidentiality and also to verify integrity and provenance of information found in the Internet. Quantum computing is emerging as both an opportunity to carry out rapid optimization computations and simulations of quantum processes but also to break present-day cryptographic algorithms that rely on factorization for their strength. Fortunately, new cryptographic algorithms have been developed and are being adopted to counter this threat.

The evolution of cybersecurity challenges and hybrid threats raises significant concerns within the global Internet governance ecosystem. Increasingly, cyberattacks are intertwined with disinformation and other forms of manipulation, resulting in complex risks to democratic processes and public trust. Addressing these threats requires stronger technical safeguards and the development of collaborative, multistakeholder defence mechanisms that include capacity building for countries in the Global South. At the same time, this landscape presents opportunities to strengthen collective resilience through cybersecurity frameworks that balance local realities with international best practices.

The environmental implications of digital growth, ranging from the high energy consumption of data centres to the proliferation of electronic waste, underscore the need for a more sustainable approach to digital transformation. Internet governance processes must therefore integrate climate concerns into policy design, ensuring that technological advancement aligns with global sustainability goals. Emerging opportunities exist to promote energy-efficient ICT systems, green data infrastructure, and circular digital economies. By embedding sustainability principles, we have a unique opportunity to define models of digital development that are both inclusive and environmentally responsible.

The emergence of immersive technologies, including the metaverse and Web3, introduces new dimensions to the governance of digital spaces. These innovations have the potential to transform how individuals interact, learn, socialise, and conduct business online, creating expanded opportunities for creativity, entrepreneurship, and civic participation. However, they raise complex governance questions related to privacy, identity, and equitable access. The absence of established regulatory frameworks for immersive environments presents a challenge and an opportunity (of ensuring that these new ecosystems are shaped by principles of openness, inclusion, and human rights).

IGF Leadership Panel Meeting (13-14 July 2023) – CERN, Geneva, Switzerland

c. Role of the IGF and Leadership Panel

Against this backdrop, the role of a trusted, globally representative space for dialogue is increasingly vital. The Internet Governance Forum was designed to convene diverse expertise and perspectives, enabling constructive exchange on complex and fast-moving digital issues without presupposing a single model or solution.

Its multistakeholder nature coupled with an extensive, active network of 176 NRIs allows for the surfacing of emerging challenges, the sharing of practical experience across regions, and the identification of areas where cooperation may be strengthened.

As the pace of technological change accelerates and policy approaches diverge, sustaining such a venue is essential to preserving openness, interoperability, and shared understanding across the global Internet.

The Leadership Panel was established to help support and reinforce this function, ensuring the Forum remains visible, connected, and equipped to contribute meaningfully to the world's evolving digital landscape.

FACTS PAGE

Presence in Other Regional & Global Meetings

2022-2023

AFRICA	12–14 April 2023	Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF)	Nairobi, Kenya
	22 Jun 2023	Kenya National IGF	
AMERICAS	5-8 Jun 2023	RightsCon 2023	San José, Costa Rica
	11-16 March 2023	ICANN76	Cancún, Mexico
	31 May - 3 June 2023	World Summit Awards Global Conference	Puebla, Mexico
ASIA PACIFIC	17-22 Sep 2022	ICANN75	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
	28-31 Aug 2023	NetThing / Australia National IGF & Asia Pacific Regional IGF (APrIGF)	Brisbane, Australia
EUROPE	6 Jun 2023	Vienna World Conference	Vienna, Austria
	13-15 Jun 2023	Oslo Freedom Forum	Oslo, Norway
	19-21 Jun 2023	EuroDIG (European Regional IGF)	Tampere, Finland
	12 Jul 2023	Portugal National IGF	Lisbon, Portugal

2024

AFRICA	23-25 Apr 2024	Digital Rights & Inclusion Forum (DRIF)	Accra, Ghana
	10-13 Jun 2024	ICANN8	Kigali, Rwanda
	10-12 Jul 2024	West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF)	Dakar, Senegal
	20-22 Nov 2024	Africa IGF	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
AMERICAS	1 Mar 2024	GDC Consultation	New York, USA / Online
	2-7 Mar 2024	ICANN79	San Juan, Puerto Rico
	29-30 Apr 2024	Netmundial+10	São Paulo, Brazil
	9-10 May 2024	UNDESA STI Forum	New York, USA
	8-17 Jul 2024	UN HLPF	New York, USA
	22-23 Sep 2024	UN Summit of the Future	New York, USA
	18-19 Nov 2024	G20 Summit	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
ASIA PACIFIC	21-23 Aug 2024	ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL IGF (APRIGF)	Taipei, Taiwan
EUROPE	15-19 Jan 2024	World Economic Forum (WEF)	Davos, Switzerland
	26-29 Feb 2024	Mobile World Congress (MWC)	Barcelona, Spain
	7-9 May 2024	European Economic Congress	Katowice, Poland
	9-10 May 2024	UNDESA STI Forum (EU venue participation as global)	Portugal
	15-16 May 2024	IMPACT 2024	Poznań, Poland
	13-15 Jun 2024	G7 Summit	Fasano, Italy
	17-19 Jun 2024	EuroDIG	Vilnius, Lithuania
	25–27 Nov 2024	UN Forum on Business & Human Rights	Geneva, Switzerland

2025

AFRICA	29 Apr-1 May 2025	Digital Rights & Inclusion Forum (DRIF)	Lusaka, Zambia
	22-23 May 2025	West African IGF (WAIGF)	Abuja, Nigeria
	29-31 May 2025	Africa IGF (AfIGF)	Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
AMERICAS	8-13 Mar 2025	ICANN82 (Community Forum)	Seattle, USA
	7-8 May 2025	UN DESA STI Forum	New York, USA
ASIA PACIFIC	24-27 Feb 2025	RightsCon	Taipei, Taiwan
EUROPE	20-24 Jan 2025	World Economic Forum (WEF)	Davos, Switzerland
	3-6 Mar 2025	Mobile World Congress (MWC)	Barcelona, Spain
	12-14 May 2025	EuroDIG (European Regional IGF)	Strasbourg, France
	9-12 Jun 2025	ICANN83 (Policy Forum)	Prague, Czech Republic
	25-30 Oct 2025	ICANN84 (Annual General Meeting)	Dublin, Ireland

Chronological Overview

Dec 2022 — IGF 2022, ADDIS ABABA

FOCUS AREA: Digital inclusion, Internet fragmentation, cybersecurity, data governance, emerging technology

CONTRIBUTION: Digital inclusion, Internet fragmentation, cybersecurity, data governance, emerging technology

Oct 2023 — IGF 2023, KYOTO

FOCUS AREA: AI governance, Internet fragmentation, cybersecurity, digital inclusion, human rights, digital cooperation, environment

CONTRIBUTION: Highlighted priority areas for global multistakeholder coordination, inviting views on the 'The Internet We Want' paper. Exchanged views on approaches to strengthening the IGF and enhancing its visibility

2023-2024 — THE INTERNET WE WANT FRAMEWORK

FOCUS AREA: Inclusive, universal, free, safe, human-centered Internet

CONTRIBUTION: Outlined a multistakeholder vision for the Internet and digital values that serve humanity

2023-2024 — INPUT TO THE WSIS+20 PROCESS

FOCUS AREA: Multistakeholder approach, GDC follow-up, IGF centrality, renewal, and institutional strenghtening

CONTRIBUTION: Call for the renewal of the IGF mandate and strengthening of the IGF institution as central to the WSIS framework.
Call to ensure that ongoing Internet governance and digital cooperation efforts build on WSIS structures, including the IGF ecosystem.

Dec 2024 — IGF 2024, RIYADH

FOCUS AREA: Human rights, digital inclusion, digital contribution to peace, development, and sustainability, innovation, digital governance

CONTRIBUTION: Positioned IGF as a multistakeholder driving force for a better digital future, building momentum for the implementation of the GDC
Presented a vision for good governance of digital technologies

2023-2025 — INPUT TO THE GDC PROCESS

FOCUS AREA: Multistakeholder approach, IGF renewal, institutional strengthening

CONTRIBUTION: Called for recognition of WSIS outcomes and the IGF's role as the primary multistakeholder platform, while cautioning against creating parallel UN digital processes

June 2025 — IGF 2025 LILLESTROEM

FOCUS AREA: Trust and resilience, innovation, universal access, digital rights, digital cooperation

CONTRIBUTION: Exchanged views on approaches to strengthening the IGF and enhancing its visibility, in particular in the context of the WSIS+20 review process.

Contributions to UN Digital Agenda

5 WSIS+20

1. Zero Draft Input (as IMSB)
2. Elements Paper Input
3. Elements Paper Input (as IMSB)
4. Elements Paper Input with the MAG
5. Statement in June Stakeholder Consultation

9 Global Digital Compact

1. Statement by Vint Cerf – Aug 2024
2. LP & MAG Letter to Co-facilitators – Jun 2024
3. Statement by Vint Cerf – Jun 2024
4. Open Letter on IGF Role – Apr 2024
5. Statement by Maria Ressa – Apr 2024
6. Statement by Vint Cerf – Mar 2024
7. LP & MAG Letter – Oct 2023
8. LP & MAG Letter – Jun 2023
9. LP Contribution to GDC – Apr 2023

Meetings Data

2025: 15 Virtual	2 Face-to-face	5 With MAG
2024: 15 Virtual	3 Face-to-face	3 With MAG
2023: 9 Virtual	4 Face-to-face	2 With MAG
2022: 2 Virtual	1 Face-to-face	

Leadership Panel Outreach
Public Sessions & Press Conferences

2022
Open Dialogue with the LP (IGF 2022)

2023
Leadership Panel Meets the Press (**Vienna 2023**)

Vint Cerf & Maria Ressa Meet the Press (**Geneva 2023**)

LP on The Internet We Want; Open Dialogue with the LP; Maria Ressa & 'Gbenga Sesan Meet the Press (**IGF 2023**)

2024
Leaders TalkX: WSIS towards the Summit of the Future/GDC and beyond;

Advancing the GDC Principles and WSIS Action Lines (**WSIS Forum 2024**)

Leadership Panel Session on "Internet We Want" (**IGF 2024**)

2025
IGF 2025 on "Building Digital Governance Together": The road to WSIS+20 and beyond (**STI Forum 2025**)

Leadership Panel Future Outlook for the IGF (**IGF 2025**)

Building Digital Governance Together – IGF 2025 Outcomes (**WSIS Forum 2025**)

Leadership Panel Meeting Locations

Milestone Papers

- 'Internet We Want' Framework (Sep 2024)
- Leadership Panel WSIS+20 Priorities (Mar 2025)
- Leadership Panel Outlook for IGF Future (Mar 2025)

SUCCESSES AND IMPACT

Since its inception, the LP has pursued a broad agenda of activities designed to raise the IGF's visibility and reinforce its policy relevance:

- **Strategic framing of Internet governance debates:** The Leadership Panel advanced the Internet We Want framework, encapsulating the values of an open, secure, and inclusive Internet. This framework was used to connect the IGF's deliberations with broader UN processes, including the GDC and the WSIS+20 Review.
- **Engagement with global processes:** The LP has actively engaged in the GDC negotiations, consistently affirming the IGF's role as the primary multistakeholder platform for digital governance and stressing the importance of coherence with WSIS processes. The LP prepared and shared priorities for the WSIS+20 review process, underscoring the importance of the IGF as a permanent mechanism for multistakeholder dialogue on digital cooperation.
- **Support for the IGF ecosystem:** The Panel has promoted the role of national and regional IGFs (NRIs), Dynamic Coalitions, Policy Networks and Best Practice Forums, helping to highlight their contributions as essential building blocks of the IGF ecosystem. In particular, the NRIs have been central to strengthening the IGF's capacity-building impact by mentoring new stakeholders, supporting youth engagement, and developing context-specific policy approaches that feed into global deliberations.
- **Strengthening IGF outputs:** The Panel worked to improve the visibility and policy relevance of IGF discussions, contributing statements, policy notes, and reflections that amplified the Forum's voice in international fora.
- **Engagement with governments and stakeholders:** The LP supported efforts to bring more senior policymakers and legislators into the IGF, recognizing the need for the Forum to be a space where political leaders, business, civil society, and technical experts exchange views on equal footing.
- **Outreach and advocacy:** Through high-level participation in international conferences, bilateral engagements with governments, and outreach to the private sector, the LP has sought to amplify the IGF's voice in broader policy conversations.
- **Thought leadership:** Members of the Panel have contributed to global debates on digital policy, bringing expertise and credibility that has strengthened the IGF's presence in multilateral and multistakeholder arenas. Their contributions have also underscored the importance of building capacity across regions, ensuring that digital governance debates reflect a wide and informed range of perspectives.

The Panel achieved most success in serving as a bridge between the IGF ecosystem, decision-makers, and global digital governance processes by:

- **Providing strategic direction for the IGF:** Through its outputs and recommendations, in particular the IWW framework the LP has succeeded in setting a forward-looking agenda for the IGF, stressing adaptability, inclusiveness, and policy relevance. It also provided high-level engagement with the MAG on IGF agendas and emerging digital policy trends.
- **Raising visibility of the IGF and its outputs:** The LP's interventions, especially the IWW vision and WSIS+20 priorities helped situate the IGF more prominently within global digital policy

debates. This included emphasis on the IGF's longstanding capacity development work – especially through NRIs, Dynamic Coalitions, and Best Practice Forums – which equips stakeholders with skills to participate effectively in global processes.

- **Linking the IGF to broader UN processes:** The LP consistently emphasized the IGF's role as the natural platform for implementing and reviewing the GDC and for contributing to the WSIS+20 review.
- **Informal Multistakeholder Sounding Board:** The Co-Facilitators of the WSIS+20 review invited members of the LP and the MAG to form an informal sounding board to respond to their specific questions. The IMSB met multiple times with the Co-Facs and with others to respond to this request. Among the issues discussed were digital sovereignty and enhanced cooperation, both of which are topics of considerable debate in the community.

The Leadership Panel made efforts to increase funding to the Trust Fund for the secretariat with modest success. There was a significant increase in 2025 of over $500K from private sector sources. These funds are in addition to the host country contributions to the annual IGF which have increased significantly in recent years following representations/recommendations from the Leadership Panel.

IGF Leadership Panel Meeting (13-14 July 2023) - Geneva, Switzerland

RECOMMENDATIONS

The multistakeholder operation of the IGF has been a core component of its success. The LP underscores the importance of preserving the IGF's open, inclusive, and multistakeholder nature. These principles remain central to its legitimacy, ensuring that all voices—particularly from the Global South—can inform policy dialogue. The LP further concludes that we must foster a collaborative environment that is sufficiently accountable to achieve a viable information society. It is in this spirit that the recommendations below are made.

Recommendations for the Leadership Panel

Continue Leadership Panel and its inclusive geographic and multistakeholder representation.

The LP should continue beyond its current mandate. Its extension would ensure continuity in multistakeholder leadership and maintain high-level visibility for Internet and digital governance broadly within the UN framework. The inclusive, multistakeholder and geographically diverse Leadership Panel structure has functioned well and should also be continued, working collaboratively with the MAG.

Adopt staggered membership terms for the Panel.

To balance renewal and institutional memory, the LP could introduce staggered membership terms. This would allow gradual rotation while ensuring ongoing representation from key stakeholder groups.

Recommendations for the Internet Governance Forum

Enhance funding for the IGF Secretariat.

The LP recommends targeting a funding level of approximately USD 3 million annually to ensure adequate resources for the Secretariat. This could be achieved through increased industry and stakeholder contributions, complemented by UN regular budget under a mixed financial model.

Create and measure IGF's concrete deliverables on meaningful Internet access, especially for the Global South.

The LP recommends developing measurable outputs that tangibly benefit Global South countries. Regular reporting on these deliverables would demonstrate the IGF's real-world impact and value to underserved regions. This should include leveraging NRI networks as locally rooted platforms that translate global issues into practical training and policy support.

Integrate useful data sources into IGF work.

The LP recommends integrating analytical inputs such as the UN DESA E-Government Survey and UNESCO's ROAM-X indicators into IGF processes. Using established UN and other relevant datasets would strengthen the IGF's evidence base and enhance the policy relevance of its discussions.

Institute an executive track for decision-makers at annual IGFs.

The LP proposes establishing an "executive track" within the IGF annual meeting for senior officials and policymakers. This format would invite Governments, UN agencies, private sector and other institutions to present relevant data and analysis - complementing existing Open Forum sessions - with evidence-based, decision-oriented dialogue.

Establish outreach to Internet-related technical and operational organizations.

The LP proposes IGF establish a regular liaison mechanism with Internet-related organizations. Such engagement would strengthen coherence across the global Internet governance ecosystem and support the IGF's role as a convener of diverse technical and policy expertise.

Invite ODET to enhance engagement with the IGF.

The LP suggests inviting the UN Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology (ODET) to participate in IGF sessions to exchange updates on GDC performance. Such engagement would foster regular information flow between IGF stakeholders and the UN's digital cooperation mechanisms.

Explore a liaison relationship with UNGIS.

The LP suggests that the IGF explore, with the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS), a liaison relationship that would facilitate the exchange of information and inputs. This could include conveying IGF outcomes to UNGIS and receiving annual updates on UN system digital cooperation efforts.

Leverage IGF networks for AI initiatives.

The LP proposes using IGF's global networks and NRIs to support inclusive AI governance efforts. This could include calls for papers, regional consultations, and the incorporation of local perspectives into global AI discussions. NRIs, in particular, could serve as hubs for AI governance discussions by offering context-specific inputs and facilitating exchanges that lead national-level policy readiness.

Utilize the IGF to improve GDC outcomes measurement.

The LP supports leveraging the IGF's processes and outputs to inform measurement of Global Digital Compact (GDC) implementation. The IGF's multistakeholder data and recommendations could serve as a practical tool for tracking global digital progress.

APPENDICES

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Appendix 1 - Leadership Panel Terms of Reference

[https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/terms-of-reference-for-the-igf-leadership-panel]

In line with the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and as recommended in the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, the United Nations Secretary-General has established the IGF Leadership Panel as a strategic, empowered, and multistakeholder body, to address strategic and urgent issues, and to highlight Forum discussions and possible follow-up actions, in order to promote greater impact and dissemination of IGF discussions.

The following terms of reference provide the overall framework for the IGF Leadership Panel.

Responsibilities

The Panel performs the following key functions:

- Provides strategic inputs and advice on the IGF;
- Promotes the IGF and its outputs;
- Supports both high-level and at-large stakeholder engagement in the IGF and IGF fundraising efforts; and
- Exchanges IGF outputs from the Forum with other stakeholders and relevant fora and facilitates the feeding of input of these decision-makers and fora to the IGF's agenda-setting process, leveraging relevant MAG expertise.

Individual member responsibilities

As a member of the Panel, individuals are expected to engage actively in the work of the Panel throughout the year. Specifically, each Panel member is expected to carry out the following tasks throughout the year:

- Attend the Panel's meetings. If physical presence at the onsite meetings is not possible, every effort should be made to participate online;
- Advise on emerging and urgent issues and IGF priorities;
- Participate actively in the annual IGF meeting particularly the High-Level sessions but also in other relevant sessions, and actively seek to engage other relevant high-level representatives from public and private organisations;
- Familiarise themselves with the IGF's intersessional work and all IGF relevant updates communicated by IGF Secretariat;
- Support raising awareness about the IGF and engage at-large stakeholders in its processes and debates;
- Explore new fundraising opportunities for contributions to the IGF trust fund;
- Communicate IGF outputs and update the Panel on outcomes and decisions of other processes and initiatives;
- Help promote and elevate the level of participation in the annual IGF meeting; and
- Help identify prospective host countries for future IGFs.

Membership and tenure

The Panel's members will serve a two-year term.

The selection of members will be made following a similar process as the MAG selection, with a public call for nominations from the respective stakeholder groups, with the eventual decision to be made by the Secretary-General, with due regard for regional and gender balance, following recommendations from the IGF Secretariat and the Office of the Envoy on Technology, taking into account other possible inputs as well. The nomination processes will be kept distinct from each other as separate exercises.

Panel configuration

The Panel will be composed of ten [10] Members plus the ex-officio members described below with the following configuration:

- Two [2] ministerial-level or above representatives from Governments that are Member States of the United Nations or regional intergovernmental organizations that have observer status in the General Assembly;
- Two [2] CEO-level (or deputy-level) representatives from each of the other three stakeholder groups (private sector, technical community and civil society), a total of six [6]; and
- Two [2] at-large members (distinguished or prominent persons who do not fall under above stakeholder groups).

The roles of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel will be held on an annual rotating basis amongst members, elected by members of the Panel.

Ex-officios of the Panel consist of:

- A total of three [3] senior representatives (Minister or head of agency-level) made up of the current, immediately previous, and the immediately upcoming host countries;
- The Chair of the IGF's Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG); and

- The Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology.

Meeting procedures

The Panel will meet at least three times a year, in the first quarter, the second quarter, and at the IGF annual meeting.

Relations between the Panel and the MAG

To ensure that there is no overlap between the functions of the Panel and those of the MAG, the two bodies will function as distinct entities, but with close linkages and continuous efforts to promote collaboration and cooperation within the IGF. For instance, the Panel will draw on the expertise of the MAG and IGF established networks.

Recognising the relevance of existing IGF structures and activities, the MAG will continue to lead on the IGF annual work programme and the global forum. The Panel will contribute strategic inputs to the programme-setting and support the visibility of the IGF consistent with the responsibilities and functions described above. The Panel will also provide high-level input and promote IGF outputs. This will not substitute but rather complement and support similar and ongoing efforts by the MAG.

Secretariat support

The Panel will be supported by the IGF Secretariat. Funding will come from the IGF Grant for which additional donations will need to be sourced. Funding will be in line with what is currently provided for the MAG (e.g., travel support for members from developing countries).

Panel procedures

The Panel's meetings are held under the Chatham House Rule, unless the Panel decides otherwise. They will follow pre-approved agendas prepared by the Chair, in consultation with the Panel and with the support of the Secretariat. A summary note of each meeting will be prepared and widely disseminated.

Compensation

There shall be no relationship between membership of the Panel and financial contributions to the work of the IGF. Panel members shall not receive any honorarium, fee or other remuneration from the United Nations. Some Panel members may be eligible to receive some funding to cover travel and daily subsistence costs for their participation in in-person IGF meetings, subject to prior written authorization and availability of funds and in accordance with the relevant provisions of United Nations rules governing payment of travel expenses. Where possible, it is encouraged for the Panel members to seek other sources of funding to cover their in-person participation.

Appendix 2 - Leadership Panel Membership 2022-Present

CHAIR

VINT CERF

Co-Designer of TCP/IP protocols and architecture of the Internet, Chief Internet Evangelist, Google (United States of America)

VICE CHAIR

MARIA RESSA

CEO and President of Rappler Inc., 2021 Nobel Peace Prize Winner (Philippines and United States of America)

MEMBERS (GOVERNMENT)

H.E. MR. ALKESH KUMAR SHARMA

Former Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, and Secretary to the Government (India)

H.E. MS. KAROLINE EDTSTADLER

Governor of the Federal State of Salzburg (Austria)

MEMBERS (PRIVATE SECTOR)

MR. HATEM DOWIDAR

Group CEO, e& (UAE)

MS. MARIA FERNANDA GARZA

CEO, Orestia (Mexico)

TECHNICAL COMMUNITY

MS. LISE FUHR

CEO, GÉANT (Denmark)

CIVIL SOCIETY

MR. ʻGBENGA SESAN

Executive Director, Paradigm Initiative

MEMBERS (AT-LARGE)

MR. TOOMAS HENDRIK ILVES
Former President of Estonia (Estonia)

MR. LAN XUE
Dean of Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University, and Member, Sustainable Development Solutions Network Leadership Council (China)

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

MS. CAROL ROACH
Under Secretary, Ministry of Grand Bahama (Bahamas)

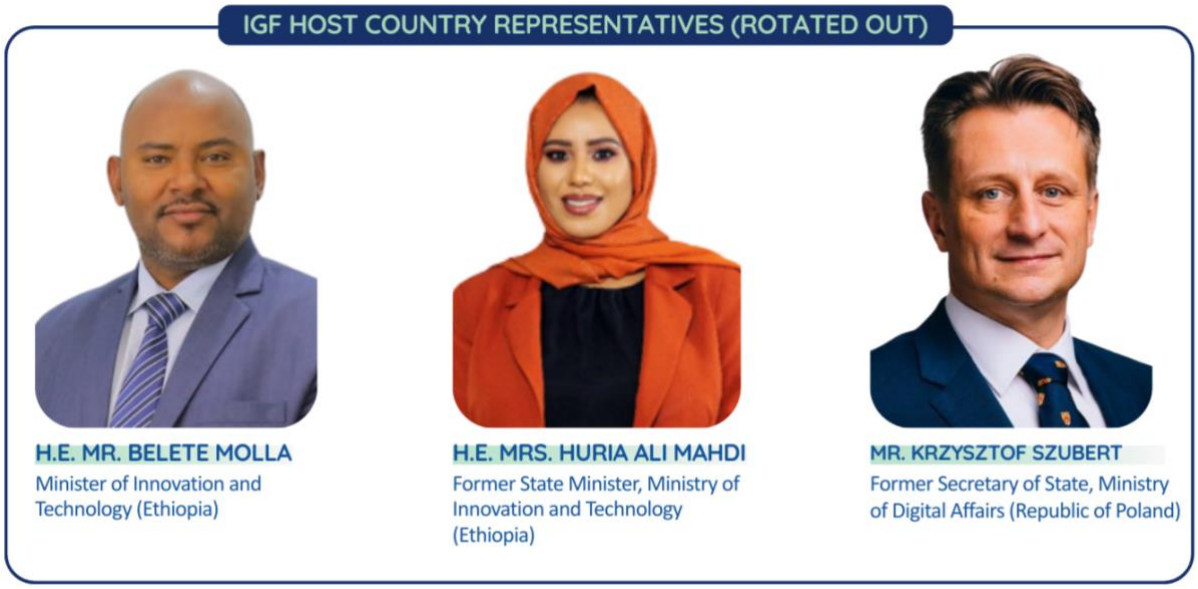
MR. AMANDEEP SINGH GILL
UN Under-Secretary-General & Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology

IGF HOST COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES (CURRENTLY SERVING)

H.E. MS. MARIANNE WILHEMSEN
State Secretary, Ministry of Digitalisation and Public Governance (Norway)

H.E. MR. AHMED MOHAMMED ALSUWAIYAN
Governor, Digital Government Authority (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

H. E. MR. TAKUO IMAGAWA
Vice Minister for Policy Coordination (International Affairs), Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) (Japan)



Appendix 3 - Brief History of Internet and Governance

The Internet has evolved over a period of more than 50 years, from its conception in 1973 to its present global reach in 2025. Begun as an experiment in the interconnection of packet-switched networks, it became commercially available in 1989. The arrival of the World Wide Web in 1991 led to a boom in investment in 1995, followed by a bust in 2000 when many startups failed to survive. Some did, such as Amazon and Google, among others. [include 1998 formation of ICANN and separation from NTIA in 2016]. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) commenced in 2003 and concluded in 2005 with the creation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which first met in Athens in 2006. By 2007, the Internet-enabled smartphone arrived in the form of the iPhone product from Apple. Social media grew rapidly in the 2010s and now in the 2020s, Artificial Intelligence applications, especially Large Language Models, dominate discussions about their facile power to generate human-level output in many modalities.

The Internet thrives on openness. Standards groups such as the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), Internet Architecture Board (IAB), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), IEEE Standards Association, among many others, have brought broad interoperability to the technical infrastructure of the Internet. Electronic mail is globally interoperable, as is the World Wide Web.

One of the most notable features of the Internet's history is the evolution of institutions created as the need for them became apparent. During its origins in the so-called Arpanet project, sponsored by the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) a Network Working Group was organized informally by the graduate students involved in developing the Host-level protocols of the Arpanet. When the Internet project began in 1973, an International Network Working Group (INWG) was organized to explore the concept of the interconnection of multiple packet-switched networks. The DARPA Internet project formed an Internet Configuration Control Board (ICCB) that later became what is now the Internet Architecture Board (IAB) which oversees the architectural evolution of the global Internet. An Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) develops standards for the Internet and an Internet Research Task Force (IRTF) explores concepts that are still too early for standardization. To manage the unique identifiers of the Internet, an Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) was set up and eventually morphed into the non-profit Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

(ICANN). A non-profit Internet Society was formed in 1992 to house the IAB, IETF and IRTF. Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) were set up in different regions to manage the assignment of Internet Protocol (IP) addresses to Internet Service Providers and other users of the Internet infrastructure. The Regional Internet Registries include the American Registry for Internet Numbers (ARIN), RIPE-NCC (Europe+), LACNIC (Latin and Central America including the Caribbean), APNIC for Asia and AFRINIC for Africa. The Domain Name System was implemented in 1984 and now there are literally thousands of domain registries (managing top level domains such as .DE, .IN, .AU, .JP, .ZA, .com, .net, .gov, .museum, .org) and a similar number of domain name registrars who register domain names with the registries on behalf of end users. There is a Root Server coalition of a dozen organizations that serve information about the name servers for all top level domain names. The creation of the IGF following the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society followed these bottom-up institution creation practices. Other standards organizations included the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the Institute for Electrical and Electronic Engineering Standards Association (IEEE-SA), Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA), the Organization for International Standardization (ISO) and the US National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST), among others, have roles to play in standardizing various aspects of the Internet's operation.

Collaborative efforts such as Wikipedia draw input from participants around the globe in many languages. Users gain access to the Internet using Ethernet, WiFi, and mobile telephony (especially 4G and 5G). Subsea fiber optic cables link continents and islands at speeds of 400 Gb/s and higher (!). Massive low-Earth Orbit satellite constellations bring access to the Internet to every part of the globe.

There are side effects to the massive adoption and use of this technology. It is estimated that two-thirds of the world's population has direct access to the Internet. This digital tabula rasa has allowed virtually anyone to share what they know with everyone else. There are positive aspects to this openness: unprecedented sharing of knowledge that is instantly searchable. But this same capacity for sharing enables the rapid distribution of misinformation, malware, ransomware, denial of service attacks, cyberbullying and a host of other bad behaviors. The duality of the Internet challenges norms and legal frameworks on an international scale.

Those with access to the Internet and its capabilities are finding a growing dependency on its successful operation, which has triggered a need for increased resilience, accountability, and agency to protect privacy, safety and security. Growing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has spawned concerns for accuracy, provenance of information, intellectual property protection, and safety, as AI "agents" populate the Internet and carry out autonomous functions on behalf of billions of users. The cornucopia of Internet functionality includes a Pandora's Box of hazards demanding coherent and cooperative responses. However, with deliberate effort on the part of all stakeholders, the Internet offers immense benefits, including towards attaining the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and national-level development efforts.

The World Summit on the Information Society and Internet Governance Forum have played a significant role in advancing these benefits and mitigating risks over the past twenty years, with the support of all stakeholders and with support from the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), the IGF Secretariat and the Leadership Panel.

Appendix 4 - Facts Page

Meetings Data

- **2025:** 15 Virtual | 2 Face-to-face | 5 with MAG
- **2024:** 15 Virtual | 3 Face-to-face | 3 with MAG
- **2023**: 9 Virtual | 4 Face-to-face | 2 with MAG
- **2022:** 2 Virtual | 1 Face-to-face

Leadership Panel Meeting Locations

Addis Ababa (Nov 2022) | **Vienna** (Mar 2023) | **Geneva** (Jul 2023) | **New York** (Sep 2023) | **Kyoto** (Oct 2023) | **Riyadh** (Feb 2024) | **New York** (May 2024) | **Riyadh** (Dec 2024 | **Lillestroem** (Jun 2025) | **New York** (Aug 2025)

Leadership Panel Outreach: Public Sessions & Press Conferences

Open Dialogue with the LP (IGF 2022) | **Leadership Panel Meets the Press** (Vienna 2023) | **Vint Cerf & Maria Ressa Meet the Press** (Geneva 2023) | **LP on The Internet We Want**; **Open Dialogue with the LP**; **Maria Ressa & 'Gbenga Sesan Meet the Press** (IGF 2023) |

Leaders TalkX: WSIS towards the Summit of the Future/GDC and beyond; **Advancing the GDC Principles and WSIS Action Lines** (WSIS Forum 2024) | **Leadership Panel Session on "Internet We Want"** (IGF 2024) | **IGF 2025 on "Building Digital Governance Together": The road to WSIS+20 and beyond** (STI Forum 2025) | **Leadership Panel Future Outlook for the IGF** (IGF 2025) | **Building Digital Governance Together – IGF 2025 Outcomes** (WSIS Forum 2025)

Presence in Other Regional & Global Meetings

2022-2023

ICANN75 | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | 17–22 September 2022

Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF) | Nairobi, Kenya | 12–14 April 2023

ICANN76 | Cancún, Mexico | 11–16 March 2023

Vienna World Conference | Vienna, Austria | 6 June 2023

World Summit Awards Global Conference | Puebla, Mexico | 31 May–3 June 2023

RightsCon 2023 | San José, Costa Rica | 5–8 June 2023

Oslo Freedom Forum | Oslo, Norway | 13–15 June 2023

EuroDIG (European Regional IGF) | Tampere, Finland | 19–21 June 2023

Kenya National IGF | Nairobi, Kenya | 22 June 2023

Portugal National IGF | Lisbon, Portugal | 12 July 2023

NetThing / Australia National IGF & Asia Pacific Regional IGF (APrIGF) | Brisbane, Australia | 28–31 August 2023

2024

World Economic Forum (WEF) | Davos | 15-19 January

Mobile World Congress (MWC) | Barcelona | 26-29 February

GDC Consultation | New York/Online | 1 March

ICANN79 | Puerto Rico | 2-7 March

Digital Rights & Inclusion Forum (DRIF) | Accra, Ghana | 23-25 April

Netmundial+10 | São Paulo, Brazil | 29-30 April

European Economic Congress | Katowice, Poland | 7-9 May

UNDESA Science, Technology & Innovation (STI) Forum | New York | 9-10 May

IMPACT 2024 | Poznań, Poland | 15-16 May

ICANN8 | Kigali, Rwanda | 10-13 June

G7 Summit | Fasano, Italy | 13-15 June

EuroDIG | Vilnius, Lithuania | 17-19 June

UNDESA High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) | New York | 8-17 July

West Africa Internet Governance Forum | Dakar, Senegal | 10-12 July

Asia Pacific regional IGF (APrIGF) | Taipei | 21-23 August

UN Summit of the Future | New York | 22-23 September

G20 Summit | Rio de Janeiro, Brazil | 18-19 November

Africa IGF | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | 20-22 November

UN Forum on Business and Human Rights | Geneva, Switzerland | 25-27 November

2025

World Economic Forum (WEF) | Davos, Switzerland | 20–24 January 2025

RightsCon | Taipei, Taiwan | 24–27 February 2025

Mobile World Congress (MWC) | Barcelona, Spain | 3–6 March 2025

ICANN82 (Community Forum) | Seattle, USA | 8–13 March 2025

Digital Rights & Inclusion Forum (DRIF) | Lusaka, Zambia | 29 April–1 May 2025

UN DESA Science, Technology & Innovation (STI) Forum | New York, USA | 7–8 May 2025

EuroDIG (European Regional IGF) | Strasbourg, France | 12–14 May 2025

West African IGF (WAIGF) | Abuja, Nigeria | 22–23 May 2025

Africa IGF (AfIGF) | Dar es Salaam, Tanzania | 29–31 May 2025

ICANN83 (Policy Forum) | Prague, Czech Republic | 9–12 June 2025

ICANN84 (Annual General Meeting) | Dublin, Ireland | 25–30 October 2025

Milestone Papers

'Internet We Want' Framework (Sep 2024) | Leadership Panel WSIS+20 Priorities (Mar 2025) | Leadership Panel Outlook for IGF Future (Mar 2025)

Contributions to UN Digital Agenda

WSIS+20 (5) Zero Draft Input *as IMSB | Elements Paper Input | Elements Paper Input *as IMSB | Elements Paper Input with the MAG | Statement in June Stakeholder Consultation

Global Digital Compact (9) Statement by Vint Cerf to GDC Consultations, Aug 2024 | LP & MAG Letter to Co-facilitators, Jun 2024 | Statement by Vint Cerf to GDC Consultations, Jun 2024 | Open Letter on IGF Role, Apr 2024 | Statement by Maria Ressa to GDC Consultations, Apr 2024 | Statement by Vint Cerf to GDC Consultations, Mar 2024 | Compact LP & MAG Letter to Co-facilitators, Oct 2023 | LP & MAG Letter to GDC Co-facilitators on Sounding Board, Jun 2023 | LP Contribution to GDC Process, Apr 2023

Chronological Overview

Date	Topic	Focus area	Contribution
Dec 2022	IGF 2022, Addis Ababa	Digital inclusion, Internet fragmentation, cybersecurity, data governance, emerging technology	Exchanged ideas on strengthening the IGF and enhancing its visibility
Oct 2023	IGF 2023, Kyoto	AI governance, Internet fragmentation, cybersecurity, digital inclusion, human rights, digital cooperation, environment	Highlighted priority areas for global multistakeholder coordination, inviting views on the 'The Internet We Want' paper Exchanged views on approaches to strengthening the IGF and enhancing its visibility
2023-2024	The Internet We Want Framework	Inclusive, universal, free, safe, human-centered Internet	Outlined a multistakeholder vision for the Internet and digital values that serve humanity
Dec 2024	IGF 2024, Riyadh	Human rights, digital inclusion, digital contribution to peace, development, and sustainability, innovation, digital governance	Positioned IGF as a multistakeholder driving force for a better digital future, building momentum for the implementation of the GDC Presented a vision for good governance of digital technologies

2023-2025	Input to the GDC process	Multistakeholder approach, IGF renewal, institutional strengthening	Called for recognition of WSIS outcomes and the IGF's role as the primary multistakeholder platform, while cautioning against creating parallel UN digital processes
June 2025	IGF 2025 Lillestrom	Trust and resilience, innovation, universal access, digital rights, digital cooperation	Exchanged views on approaches to strengthening the IGF and enhancing its visibility, in particular in the context of the WSIS+20 review process.
2023-2024	Input to the WSIS+20 process	Multistakeholder approach, GDC follow-up, IGF centrality, renewal, and institutional strengthening	Call for the renewal of the IGF mandate and strengthening of the IGF institution as central to the WSIS framework. Call to ensure that ongoing Internet governance and digital cooperation efforts build on WSIS structures, including the IGF ecosystem.

Appendix 5 - The Internet We Want

Abstract

This paper synthesizes messages from the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), based on the outcomes of previous annual meetings, intersessional work and input from the IGF community. It aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the key digital policy issues and governance challenges, mirroring the concerns addressed by seminal UN processes such as the annual considerations of the progress made on the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the WSIS+20 review and the Global Digital Compact (GDC). It sets out the desired characteristics of the Internet, ensuring that it remains a powerful tool for sustainable social, economic and environmental development and human empowerment.

The IGF Leadership Panel calls for unified action among governments, private sector, civil society, and technical and academic communities to achieve these goals. The IGF's unique convening power and multistakeholder model are crucial to foster candid discussions, incentivize collaboration and forge shared solutions for realizing a whole, open, universal, inclusive, free-flowing, trustworthy, safe, secure, and rights-respecting Internet for social development and prosperity.

This paper aims to serve as a framework for the IGF to keep track of discussions and progress made on these topics as it continues its mandate, including at its annual meetings, as well as across its intersessional work and network of national, regional and youth initiatives. This framework can also serve as a base to keep track of the good practices and achievements of the broader IGF community.

Introduction

In today's digital societies, Internet governance is critical for economic, social, cultural and environmental development. Internet governance is a crucial enabler of sustainable development, ensuring that the Internet is used in a responsible and inclusive manner, including equitable participation in the digital economy, and can contribute to promoting freedom of expression, access to information, communication, and innovation. The importance of this agenda cannot be understated in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing economic recovery, supply chain shocks, and unfolding geopolitical tensions, especially as economies worldwide are working towards a sustainable economic rebuild.

Human rights apply online as they do offline. The vision for a resilient Internet can only be achieved if premised on the principles of the UN Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Internet and other digital technologies are vital components of a sustainable future. Leaders across all stakeholder groups globally must come together and collaborate in a cohesive and inclusive manner to ensure that their actions align with existing commitments to:

- promote a human-centric Internet that ensures respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law and protects against harmful behaviours and practices;
- expand connectivity and guarantee meaningful and affordable access for everyone, everywhere;
- preserve an open, free, globally connected, interoperable, unfragmented, and stable Internet;
- unlock the value of data for development and enable data free flow with trust, while ensuring data protection and privacy, to support a truly global digital environment;
- foster a safe and secure online environment, in particular by increasing efforts to strengthen cybersecurity and to support, protect and empower vulnerable and marginalized groups,;
- facilitate collaboration for the development of new and emerging technologies that pursue the public interest in a trusted way while continuing to enable innovation and ensure human rights safeguards are preserved;
- adopt environmentally-friendly practices, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), consistent with reducing greenhouse gas emissions, e-waste, protecting biodiversity and ensuring the responsible and sustainable use of natural resources when utilising the Internet and digital technologies;
- acknowledge, support and encourage the contribution of younger generations who play a key role in the global efforts to achieve sustainability and
- uphold and promote the multistakeholder approach in the governance of the Internet.

In line with these commitments, the IGF Leadership Panel encourages all governments, private sector, civil society and technical and academic communities to come together to share this vision, define goals and targets to achieve the Internet we – as a global society – would want, and promote the necessary coordinated and effective actions at local, regional and international levels to realise this common vision. Fostering meaningful collaboration under the IGF auspices is crucial for driving shared ideas that lead to compatible and harmonized regulatory and policy approaches. This will ensure that national concerns and priorities are met, without compromising the open nature of the Internet.

We firmly believe in the multistakeholder model and the unique convening power of the Internet Governance Forum to achieve this vision and offer the following characteristics as a starting point for discussions.

The IGF Leadership Panel believes that the Internet We Want is:

1. **Whole and open;**
2. **Universal and inclusive;**
3. **Free-flowing and trustworthy;**
4. **Safe and secure; and**
5. **Rights-respecting.**

When setting policies based on these characteristics, decision-makers should keep in mind that the Internet relies on a layered governance model, where each layer represents the various uses of the Internet and the services it offers. Challenges need to be addressed in relation to the layer closest to them, understanding that many are not solely Internet-related or rely on Internet-based solutions, but are part of broader societal issues that require a holistic policy approach.

1. Whole and open

A whole, open, free, globally connected, decentralised, interoperable and reliable Internet is vital for sustainable development, the functioning of digital societies and economies, for supporting business operations worldwide, and a prerequisite to the effective functioning of public services such as education, disaster prevention, health care or various governmental services.

When properly harnessed, information and communication technologies (ICT) and digital technologies are formidable engines of innovation, competitiveness development, sustainable and inclusive digital transformation, and instruments of social, cultural, and economic empowerment for all.

This unique potential can only be fully exploited if the fundamental nature of the Internet as an open, whole, interconnected, and interoperable network of networks is preserved. The same is expressed in the commitments of the GDC to address risks of fragmentation of the Internet and refrain from Internet shutdowns.

However, at present, there is a heightened risk that policy or business decisions might fragment the Internet into siloed parts. The potential fragmentation at either the technical, content or governance layers, threatens the open, whole, interconnected, and interoperable nature of the Internet, and its associated benefits to social and economic development, while also harming human rights, including the right to privacy, freedom of expression and access to information, amongst others.

Avoiding fragmentation of the Internet requires international cooperation and a coherent governance structure, grounded, first and foremost, in existing multistakeholder mechanisms like the IGF. It entails advocating for policy frameworks that prevent discrimination in data transmission and equal access to online content, advancing interoperability standards, as well as combating measures like content blocking and restrictions on data flows which lead to digital fragmentation. Internet shutdowns, vague prohibitions of online content, and criminalization of legitimate forms of expression initiated by governments are particularly concerning threats to the open and free nature of the Internet.

We call on all stakeholders to set goals to ensure that the Internet is whole, open, free, globally connected, decentralised, interoperable, stable, unfragmented and human rights-based in support of social well-being and prosperity. A commitment not to politicise the core technical elements of the

Internet, and to refrain from the imposition of bans or restrictions which may lead to shutdowns or interference with free expression, works toward achieving this aim.

2. Universal and inclusive

This characteristic corresponds to Objective 1 of the GDC to "Close all digital divides and accelerate progress across the Sustainable Development Goals", and to Objective 2 of the GDC to "expand inclusion in and benefits from the digital economy for all".

Since its inception, the Internet has evolved from an information exchange network to the platform for sustainable social and economic development we recognise it to be today. An open, stable, and trusted Internet is vital for the effective functioning of a diverse array of services, as varied as agriculture, energy, healthcare, manufacturing, mobility or education, continuously reimagining the way people interact with their peers, businesses, and governments. However, despite the enormous progress in expanding connectivity in recent years, 2.7 billion people remain unconnected.

Connecting the unconnected and reconnecting the disconnected is not just about infrastructure and access to the Internet. Meaningful connectivity also requires focus on bridging the barriers to adoption, including creating and maintaining an enabling environment in which locally relevant content, in local languages and scripts is created, and that caters to expanding and enriching the internet ecosystem by increasing its diversity in various aspects, such as content, users, platforms, and infrastructure. This entails ensuring affordable internet access by way of strong public-private partnerships, particularly for low-income populations and rural regions, and should aim to overcome barriers to access faced by women and marginalized communities, including for those with disabilities. Related policies and tools should be designed to identify and address skills gaps, including investing in educational institutions and providing easily accessible and localised training aimed at enhancing digital literacy, particularly for developing countries. The enduring digital divides in access, application, and skills among and within countries emphasise the need for universal, affordable, and meaningful connectivity in order to reach the development potential of the Internet, ICTs, and digital technologies. Meaningful connectivity should also be secure, resilient and cost-effective.

In pursuit of these goals and of a human-centric, sustainable digitalization, all stakeholders must improve their understanding of how ICTs work in practice, including knowledge of the ICT ecosystem, the roles of the various stakeholders and relevant policy issues. Governments should work together with the international community, the private sector and all relevant stakeholders, to improve infrastructure and diversify access to the Internet. All stakeholders should strive to protect user data and privacy, and to take into account potential risks of emerging technologies.

Frameworks that enable Internet connectivity should be based on light-touch ICT policy and regulations, encourage universal access through competition and the entry of new players into the ICT ecosystem to foster the emergence of innovative products, services, and business models. Policy and regulatory mechanisms should consider the value of the entire communications and digital services ecosystem and involve engagement with all stakeholders, with a view to identify threats to an open internet. They should be non-discriminatory, technology-neutral, and supportive of innovative business models and the development of a wide range of technologies, standards, and system architectures, which may be interoperable . Successful efforts to deliver universal meaningful connectivity need to balance the needs of all stakeholders, should be grounded in evidence and data, should seek global harmonisation in terms of interoperability and standards, should be supported by multistakeholder collaboration and ongoing dialogue, should enable the effective management of

spectrum between all stakeholders (preserving the free-to-air services for emergency communication), and must facilitate investment across the entire digital value chain.

We call on all stakeholders to set goals to move towards universal meaningful connectivity for everyone, everywhere, to encourage the uptake of new technologies at need, and to address skills gaps.

3. Free-flowing and trustworthy

Cross-border data flows underpin many aspects of modern life, holding immense potential in accelerating the attainment of the SDGs. They enable the global digital economy — cloud services, remote work, workplace collaboration, management of human resources, customer relationships and supply chains. They also underpin distance learning, telemedicine, the fight against cybercrime and child abuse online, fraud monitoring and prevention, investigation of counterfeit products, and a broad range of other activities. The processing and transfer of both personal and non-personal data are integral to many of these exchanges, making trust a vital element for resilient and sustainable economic growth and recovery.

The vital role of data and cross-border data flows is also recognised under Objective 4 of the GDC to "advance responsible, equitable and interoperable data governance approaches".

However, there is an increasing lack of trust, or confidence, due to concerns that policy objectives—such as privacy, national security, consumer and human rights protection, access to data or even industrial competitiveness—would be compromised when data moves abroad. This lack of trust serves as the rationale for the adoption of an increasing number of data localisation and sovereignty measures, leading to fragmented national approaches to data governance and a growing number of restrictions that prohibit or considerably encumber cross-border data flows. Failure to address this lack of trust and to find an appropriate trust model risks impeding cross- border data flows, thereby limiting economies of scale and scope, driving inefficient, unsustainable investment, and restricting innovation. In this context, the Internet should be both user-friendly and trustworthy. However, as noted above, given its layered architecture, stakeholders should refrain from influencing the technical protocols safeguarding the confidentiality of digital communications. Any tampering with these protocols could hinder the free flow of information.

International collaboration across governments and the multistakeholder community is paramount to shaping human-centric policies that foster trust – built on privacy, security, and the protection of consumers and intellectual property rights –, promote the wide-spread adoption of digital technologies that drive development, and enable the global movement of data that supports them.

The IGF provides a space for such collaboration and sharing of ideas to establish shared norms and compatible policy approaches, ensuring consistency, interoperability and efficacy across borders. Cooperation among different stakeholders is crucial, not only for developing such interoperable policy frameworks that facilitate cross-border data flows but also to ensure that these security principles do not inadvertently limit the global, open nature of the Internet.

Policymakers must prioritize the protection of personal and industrial data while promoting the global movement of data for societal benefit. They should work to ensure that data privacy and protection laws are comprehensive and stay up-to-date, and are implemented through a risk- based approach. Implementation should be carried out in a manner that is transparent, non- discriminatory and in line with the principles of necessity and proportionality.

To build trust, governments must commit to establishing robust protections for individuals' rights; particularly the right to privacy . This commitment necessitates interoperable and contemporary enforcement mechanisms, such as end-to-end encryption, to ensure effective data protection.

Collaboration between governments, businesses, and multilateral organizations is vital for advocating for interoperable policy frameworks that facilitate cross-border data flows while maintaining high privacy standards.

By centring data privacy and people's rights in policymaking, promoting international collaboration, supporting the multistakeholder approach, and embracing privacy-enhancing techniques, we can foster a digital ecosystem that respects individuals' privacy and promotes trust in the global data economy.

We call on all stakeholders to set goals to unlock the value of data flows for sustainable development of all, and enshrine trustworthiness as the prerequisite for data sharing regimes, built around users both on and off the Internet, without limiting its open and global nature, and founded on the protection of data, IP rights and respect for human rights.

4. Safe and secure

Cyberspace is an intrinsic part of every country's development, creating enormous opportunities and enabling economic and societal growth. At the same time, the indispensable nature of cyberspace in day-to-day human activities also generates growing vulnerabilities. The same concern is recognized and discussed under Objective 3 of the GDC to "foster an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space that respects, protects and promotes human rights".

Rapid digitalisation is testing the resilience of cyber infrastructures. The escalating vulnerabilities resulting from disparate states of cyber hygiene hinder the effectiveness of countermeasures against cyber threats, threatening to thwart the potential economic impact of ICT and digital technologies.

The borderless nature of the Internet and the associated digital economy, the increased cyber- physical interdependency of IoT, disinformation and constantly evolving patterns of cybercrime make up a complex legal and operational landscape for cybersecurity and safety. Considering this, the UN Charter as well as international humanitarian and human rights law apply in cyberspace and must underpin all cybersecurity and safety practices. Furthermore, data protection safeguards play an important role in enabling effective cybersecurity.

A collective, collaborative multistakeholder approach is required to find meaningful ways and effective solutions to mitigate local, cross-border and global cybersecurity concerns. Complex cybersecurity concepts need to be translated into simple concepts and practices, making knowledge about cybersecurity more accessible and allowing for security implemented by default in applications and connected devices.

To empower and protect societies, companies and the public sector from increased cybersecurity risks, the international multistakeholder community should explore practical ways to mainstream cybersecurity capacity building (CCB) into broader digital development efforts, including by mainstreaming cyber resilience across international development programming.

These efforts must be inclusive and build on the perspectives and needs from all stakeholders, especially the most vulnerable and those from the Global Majority, including local small and medium-sized enterprises. This is also essential for building resilient societies and promoting a whole-of-society approach to dealing with threats emanating from cyberspace, especially during election times.

We call on all stakeholders to set goals to establish and implement robust frameworks for high levels of cybersecurity, and strong recommendations for legal structures, practices, and cross- border cooperation to combat cybercrime.

We call on all stakeholders to commit to supporting the effective implementation of the acquis of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace, and of international law which underpins the acquis of international peace and security in cyberspace.

5. Rights-respecting

Human rights apply equally online and offline. In accordance with international human rights law, governments are responsible for ensuring that human rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled while businesses and digital service providers are obliged to comply with all applicable laws and to respect human rights.

Human rights and sustainable development mutually reinforce one another – human rights are enablers of sustainable development while the 20230 Agenda can only be achieved through the effective realization of all human rights. These include economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights, in accordance with the principles recognised by the international community on the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation of all human rights.

Human rights are fundamental to an Internet that serves humanity and the greater good. A human rights-based approach to Internet governance is required to realize the full benefits of the Internet for all while avoiding its risks.

To that end, governments must refrain from Internet shutdowns. Any restriction of access to the Internet must be lawful, legitimate, necessary, proportional, and non-discriminatory.

Standards development organizations should introduce processes to ensure due consideration of human rights in their work, including by inviting experts from all stakeholder communities to participate in their discussions, with the aim to deliver human rights-compliant standards.

Human rights and environmental sustainability are intrinsically connected and both should be at the core of Internet governance. As we are striving to connect the next billion, human rights and environmental sustainability must be fully considered and embedded in the rules, policies, standards and practices that coordinate and shape the Internet. A human-centric digital transition that is diverse, inclusive, democratic, *and sustainable* is needed to ensure that Internet-connected technologies cause no harm to people and the environment.

We call on all stakeholders to set goals to ensure a human rights-based approach to Internet governance and to promote human rights in the digital space. This involves promoting transparency and accountability and protecting user privacy and data security, as well as implementing robust safeguards against misuse and exploitation, including measures aimed at reducing online harassment. The use of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies should be ethical and responsible, mitigating potential risks to human rights.

Multistakeholder consultations that include perspectives from all stakeholders, especially developing country stakeholders from civil society, the local private sector, independent media and individuals belonging to vulnerable or marginalized groups, are essential in achieving a rights-respecting digital space.

Stakeholders should consider how the whole of the digital governance system can better integrate human rights-based approaches and come to a common understanding of how rights frameworks can

best be included and fully implemented online. If we are to achieve the Internet we want, we have significant multistakeholder work ahead of us, including collaboration with existing and ongoing initiatives*.

Appendix 6 - IGF Leadership Panel Outlook for IGF Future

Preamble

This document aims to recommend ways to further strengthen the IGF to fully deliver on its potential. By outlining key areas for enhancement, this document seeks to support ongoing efforts to make the IGF more impactful, action-oriented, and responsive to global digital policy challenges. In particular, the document outlines **(a)** how the IGF should look like after WSIS+20, **(b)** how the IGF can be useful as part of the implementation of the WSIS+20 and Global Digital Compact outcomes, and **(c)** what the IGF needs to do to better itself to achieve the broader vision for the future of the IGF.

The IGF: a multistakeholder platform for gathering input from the global community on digital policy matters

When Internet Governance Forum (IGF) first took place in 2006 in Athens, there were 1,200 participants from 90 countries and the topics were concentrated around traditional internet-related topics like openness, security, diversity, access, and the emerging issues of the time. 10 years later, the IGF had grown to 2,000 onsite and 3,000 remote participants from 123 countries and the scope of topics broadened to embrace the digital evolution. At the same time, National and Regional IGFs (NRIs), along with internet summer schools, were thriving, with the 72 recognized NRIs comprising 17 Regional IGFs (e.g. Africa IGF, Asia-Pacific IGF, European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG), Latin American and Caribbean Internet Governance Forum (LACIGF)); 45 National Regional IGFs (NRIs) (e.g. IGFs in Kenya, the UK, the USA, Nigeria, Brazil, etc.); and 10 Youth IGFs (e.g. Youth LACIGF, Youth IGF Germany) as of 2016.

Today, 20 years later, the IGF has become a truly international powerhouse of ideas and exchanges between governments, industry, NGOs, technical community and social society. It attracts more than 10,000 participants from 178 countries dealing with all topics related to the digital age. There is no other global event that contributes to shaping discussions on Internet and digital policy issues among all stakeholders on equal footing. The IGF uniquely provides a space that values interactions, fosters understanding of different perspectives, and encourages open exchanges. It serves as an essential platform where governments, businesses, civil society, academic and technical communities come together to navigate the complexities of the digital world, ensuring inclusive and informed policymaking.

The IGF has proved to be one of the most successful global policy examination processes with stakeholders from all over the world, and the countries that are hosting the event attract and engage local stakeholders in a way few other conferences can. The number of NRIs has since grown to 140, and counting. The IGF ecosystem also hosts a powerful array of other intersessional work streams (Policy Networks, Dynamic Coalitions, Best Practice Fora) gathering experts from all stakeholder groups and covering a wide range of technical and public policy issues.

This is the foundation on which we should now build 20 more successful years and make sure that this unique forum is secured for generations to come.

A. How the IGF should look after WSIS+20

Stronger role in the UN system

What

The IGF should work more closely with UN agencies that deal with digital policy. Better coordination can increase its ability to contribute and avoid duplication of efforts, which would be a win for all the UN agencies as they get access to the IGF's diverse multistakeholder expertise, resources and input from a global community.

Why

A stronger role for the IGF will bring the insights of the NRIs and the intersessional workstreams to more UN processes and also help mainstream the successful multistakeholder model that has improved stakeholder buy-in.

How

Use the ongoing World Summit on the Information Society 20-year (WSIS+20) review process to request permanent status and not just a mandate extension for the IGF.

Clear, targeted, and effective communication of outputs

What

The IGF should deliver clearer, more targeted, and more effective communication of the outputs and messages it produces to decision-makers. This can make its work more useful to policymakers. The IGF outputs should also form inputs into the work of the NRIs who could curate relevant policy messages to member state agencies at the local, national and regional levels and then get a chance to review the outputs and bring updates to the next global IGF.

Indeed, the IGF is the ideal conduit, through the NRIs, for issues of concern to communities at the local level to be heard by policymakers at the national and global levels.

Why

There is an opportunity to strengthen the invaluable work done at the IGF, and by the NRIs, to positively influence public policies related to the Internet. This would further raise the utility of the IGF's outputs in global decision-making processes, building on the IGF's unique convening power that brings together a truly global multistakeholder community.

How

Include measurable and actionable recommendations in the output documents of IGF and NRI meetings. Use the Internet We Want (IWW) framework and the Global Digital Compact (GDC) to assess what and how to measure and do a specific follow-up every year in sessions dedicated to addressing the progress and discussing how to improve or sustain progress. Capacity building for NRI engagement in this work would be extremely beneficial.

Permanent institutional structure

What

The IGF cannot rely solely on voluntary funding. It needs to become a permanent UN body and be a supported part of the regular UN budget.

Why

The IGF has proven its value in its 20 years of functioning and added value to Internet-related policy discussions. It is time for it to become a permanent structure. Its unique function in enhancing and fostering meaningful dialogue with all stakeholders on digital cooperation should be sustained.

A stable funding model will strengthen the capacity of the IGF and its resources, especially the Secretariat, which manages the end-to-end process for the Forum, NRIs, and other activities.

How

Use the WSIS+20 review process to present the request and get the buy-in of various stakeholders, especially governments as they will play a major role in the review process.

''Internet We Want'' as a reporting framework

The Leadership Panel's paper on the ''Internet We Want'' (IWW) can be used to systematically review, report, and track progress by the IGF community on the issues discussed at the IGF. This would help pin-point areas for further action to reach the Internet We Want.

B. How the IGF can support the implementation of WSIS+20 and GDC outcomes

Ensuring stakeholder representation

The IGF brings the most ample range of voices to Internet governance and digital policy discussions and has been doing so since its inception. It is still important to strive for as many diverse stakeholders participating as possible. By the many national and regional IGFs and summer schools, IGF is the ideal vehicle for ensuring worldwide representation and discussion of the WSIS+20 and the GDC together with the other discussions ongoing in the different fora.

Legitimacy and effectiveness

As part of the implementation of the WSIS+20 and GDC outcomes, the IGF can enhance their legitimacy and effectiveness. By nature, the IGF brings transparency, open dialogue and diverse perspectives to global discussions. By enhancing IGF involvement the knowledge sharing and feedback will also be amplified in a manner that is essential for the legitimacy but also future inclusion of youth, underserved areas and other disadvantaged groups.

Avoiding duplication of efforts and creation of new structures

The WSIS+20 and GDC outcomes should leverage the IGF for their implementation. Together, and in close coordination, the IGF and the WSIS Forum should build the basis for the implementation and follow-up of the WSIS and GDC processes. This approach avoids fragmentation and duplication of efforts. It also ensures inclusivity, especially for underrepresented regions, which cannot afford to participate in the broad number of similar UN agency initiatives.

Adaptation of IGF to future needs and evolution of the Internet

The IGF may need to further adapt its operation to provide more concrete recommendations to all stakeholders, including governments. A combination of NRIs, Internet Society Chapters and participants in IGF may be able to provide useful and localized information about the use, availability, performance and utility of the Internet. Such data may be essential to inform the crafting of policies regarding the operation and use of the Internet. Balancing regulatory actions for the protection of users and maintaining the demonstrated value of an open Internet should be a major focus of IGF attention. Along these lines, the IGF and NRIs might usefully engage with member state

representatives to enhance awareness and clarity of the Internet's value and potential actions (e.g. technical and regulatory) to make it a safer and more productive environment.

There is a clear opportunity to engage the IGF and the NRIs and other Internet-aware bodies such as the Internet Society and its Chapters to evaluate the implementation of the Global Digital Compact in the countries where this is underway. It is timely to put to work the capacity of the IGF and like-minded bodies to improve the Internet ecosystem, making it a safer, more secure, affordable and sustainable infrastructure. Working with member states and their policy-making entities, the IGF can help to materially grow the benefits of the global Internet for generations to come.

C. What the IGF needs to do better itself, in order to achieve the broader vision for the future of the IGF

Reflecting on the IGF's current practices, several strengths and challenges stand out:

1. **Enhancing Transparency:**
   - Strengths: The IGF maintains open discussions with livestreams, archived sessions, and published reports.
   - Challenges: Limited clarity on how discussions influence global digital policies, leading to perceptions of limited impact.
2. **Engaging Broader Stakeholders:**
   - Strengths: Strong multistakeholder model involving governments, private sector, civil society, technical and academic communities.
   - Challenges: Ensuring equal representation of all parts of the world. There is unequal representation, including participants from the Global South[1], which affects perceived exclusiveness.
3. **Promoting Accountability and Trust:**
   - Strengths: Respected for neutrality and inclusiveness.
   - Challenges: Lack of binding decision-making power and limited feedback on the use of stakeholder inputs, affecting trust and accountability perceptions.
4. **Navigating Information Overload:**
   - Strengths: Comprehensive coverage of digital governance topics with extensive documentation.
   - Challenges: Information overload and lack of synthesis, making it difficult for stakeholders to extract actionable insights or identify key narratives.

It is important to recognize the work the IGF has already undertaken to promote open dialogue and inclusive participation. At the same time, the evolving digital landscape presents opportunities to further strengthen its impact and trustworthiness.

In this spirit, in order to achieve the vision for the IGF future, there are a few considerations to be put in place across the IGF's internal and external workstreams, notably:

1. **Communication:**
   - Develop clear communication channels and messages to demonstrate the influence of IGF discussions on international policy dialogues, including G20, G7, and UN bodies.
   - Introduce structured follow-up mechanisms to track and report on the implementation and impact of IGF recommendations, making our contributions more visible and tangible.

2. **Broaden Stakeholder Engagement and Inclusion:**
    - Explore ways to increase outreach, at global level, grassroots digital communities, youth networks, and emerging digital voices, including in the Global South, ensuring their perspectives are integrated into mainstream discussions.
    - Establish dedicated tracks or platforms to amplify underrepresented voices and foster more diverse participation.
    - National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs) are particularly crucial in achieving this. Strengthening NRIs could significantly contribute to a more representative dialogue.
3. **Accountability and Legitimacy:**
    - Implement feedback loops that show how stakeholder inputs influence IGF outcomes and global policy discussions.
    - Enhance transparency in decision-making processes could further reinforce trust and legitimacy, particularly among sceptical audiences.
4. **Improve Information Curation and Accessibility:**

With the extensive wealth of knowledge generated at the IGF, developing user-friendly summaries, infographics, and thematic reports could help distil complex discussions into actionable insights.

- Leveraging digital tools and AI-driven analytics could also enhance content curation, making it easier for stakeholders to navigate information efficiently.

The IGF is uniquely positioned to transform from a target of scepticism into a facilitator of trust, accountability, and constructive dialogue.

Appendix 7 - LP Contributions on WSIS+20

Zero Draft Input *as IMSB, Oct 2025

Elements Paper Input (1), (2), (3), Jul 2025

Elements Paper Input *as IMSB, Jul 2025

Elements Paper Input with the MAG, Jul 2025

Statement by Vint Cerf in Stakeholder Consultation, Jun 2025

Appendix 8 - LP Contributions on Global Digital Compact

Statement by Vint Cerf to GDC Consultations, Aug 2024

LP & MAG Letter to Co-facilitators, Aug 2024

Statement by Vint Cerf to GDC Consultations, Jun 2024

Open Letter on IGF Role, Apr 2024

Statement by Maria Ressa to GDC Consultations, Apr 2024

Statement by Vint Cerf to GDC Consultations, Mar 2024

Compact LP & MAG Letter to Co-facilitators, Oct 2023

LP & MAG Letter to GDC Co-facilitators on Sounding Board, Jun 2023

LP Contribution to GDC Process, Apr 2023

Appendix 9 - Joint Op-ed by Vint Cerf and Amandeep Singh Gill

A free and open internet cannot be taken for granted

Apolitical governance provides key safeguard for global users

Amandeep Gill and Vint Cerf

October 6, 2023 05:00 JST

Amandeep Gill is the U.N. secretary-general's envoy on technology. Vint Cerf was appointed by the U.N. secretary-general to chair the Internet Governance Forum Leadership Panel and was a co-designer of the architecture of the internet.

The internet is a unique and extraordinary global resource.

For almost all of us, our daily lives are now unimaginable without it. Keeping the internet open, free, secure and inclusive is literally a matter of life and death.

But how should the internet be governed given its borderless nature? Should the internet be subject to intergovernmental control by U.N. agencies or should governments leave its management to the private sector?

In many ways this is a moot question. A unique approach to the governance of the internet that involves all stakeholder groups has evolved over the years and has stood the test of time so far.

This "multistakeholder" model even kept the internet running smoothly through the COVID-19 crisis when usage surged as 1.7 billion people came online for the first time.

Collaborative multistakeholder governance of the online world was originally enshrined in U.N. practice in 2005 with the establishment of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

In this body, governments, the private sector, civil society and the internet's technology community meet on an equal footing to discuss governance policies. The IGF is complemented by a number of independent technical platforms, including the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers and the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), which determine technical aspects of internet protocols, addresses and registries.

For more than three decades, through many geopolitical twists and turns, this approach has served the world well.

As the internet grows, with more users and services, we do need to be able to adapt to fresh challenges while at the same time preserving the multistakeholder approach to internet governance.

In 1991, there were fewer than 4 million internet users, almost all in North America, East Asia or Western Europe. Today, there are 5 billion users spread widely across the globe.

At the same time, much work remains to connect the last billions in the world who are still offline and mostly live in developing countries and rural areas. Equally important is protecting users against online harms and empowering them to participate fully in the digital economy.

In a few days, representatives of civil society, the technology community, the private sector, governments and international organizations will come together in Kyoto for the annual meeting of the IGF.

The theme aptly chosen by Japan as the host nation is the empowerment of all people through the internet. Japan, as chair of the G7 AI Hiroshima Process, is also leading discussions on the governance of artificial intelligence.

Digital discussions will converge again at the U.N. Summit of the Future next September. That meeting will take up a proposed Global Digital Compact to set out the global community's shared vision for an open, free, secure and sustainable digital future for all. The Kyoto meeting will provide crucial input from the multistakeholder community for the summit.

It is vital that as the digital governance landscape evolves to address emerging challenges and opportunities, including the rise of powerful AI models, internet governance objectives and actions continue to be led by the IGF, ICANN and IETF. The moat around their apolitical structure and functioning is a safeguard that the world cannot afford to lose.

In a recent comprehensive policy paper, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for protecting the global nature of the internet and the physical infrastructure that underpins it. He underlined that the internet's long-established multistakeholder institutions need more support, not less.

This is why the secretary-general has established a leadership panel to improve and elevate the work of the Internet Governance Forum. We are both proud to serve on this panel alongside colleagues like Maria Ressa, a Nobel laureate for her work on freedom of expression, and ministers, technical experts and leaders of industry from around the world.

At the Kyoto meeting, our panel will present a vision of the internet we want for multistakeholder debate and consultation. Our goal is a human-centric internet that ensures respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law and protects against harmful behavior.

Equally, we must foster a safe and secure online environment by strengthening cybersecurity. And we must unlock the value of data for development and enable data free flow with trust, while ensuring data protection and privacy, to support a truly global digital economy.

Appendix 10 - LP Promotional Videos (in collaboration with German Corporation for International Cooperation - GIZ)

Vint Cerf - The Internet We Want

Maria Ressa - Digital Trust & Inclusion

www.intgovforum.org