

First IGF 2025 Open Consultations

5 February 2025

[Transcript] Statement from UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies – ODET

Good morning everyone. I hope you are doing well. I am Isabelle DOA from the new Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, based in Geneva. Many of you may already know me. Selena and Changai asked me to say a few words about Global Digital Compact implementation and how the IGF family and community around the world could contribute to its follow-up and implementation.

I will briefly explain how implementation planning is progressing so far, and then suggest two ideas for consideration by the IGF in this pivotal year.

Since the Summit of the Future, the Secretary-General and his Cabinet in New York have established a steering committee that oversees Pact for the Future implementation. The purpose of this steering committee is to focus the energies of the UN system on following up on several of the Pact's most ambitious objectives and to ensure delivery in a comprehensive, multistakeholder and visible way. The committee is intended to guide around 50 UN agencies toward a more orderly and coordinated implementation of the Pact across its six pillars, including climate change, youth, financial institution reform, peace and security, and digital technologies, among others.

Smaller working groups have been established around each of these pillars. A Working Group on Digital Technologies has been formed across UN agencies to monitor, support and advance Chapter 3 of the Pact on science and technology, as well as its annex, the Global Digital Compact. This working group is co-chaired by ODET, formerly OSET, and ITU, with vice-chairs including OHCHR, UNESCO, UNDP and UN Trade and Development, among others. Additional agencies may be added as vice-chairs as implementation progresses.

The group operates across several levels of action. Most of the paragraphs in the Global Digital Compact and Chapter 3 are primarily addressed to Member States, which articulate objectives they intend to pursue. In these cases, the UN can provide support, research capacity, coordination and resource connections to assist Member States. A second category of paragraphs assigns specific tasks to the UN system itself, requiring agencies to organize and deliver concrete results over the next two to three years. One example is the working group on data governance. Another is the proposed study on the impact of misinformation and disinformation on the SDGs, which will require system-wide collaboration to produce a comprehensive assessment.

From the IGF perspective, an important next step for the Working Group on Digital Technologies is to open participation to stakeholders from other sectors. Over the past four months, the focus has been internal: organizing across the UN system, identifying tasks and resources, and clarifying responsibilities. The next phase is to open implementation to stakeholder participation and contributions.

A key entry point for this will be the Global Digital Compact implementation map. This was one of the concrete tasks assigned to the Secretary-General, and work over the past four months has focused on developing its concept and securing resources. During the IGF in Riyadh, stakeholders asked how they could get involved, share information and identify partners. These questions have helped shape the implementation map so that it responds to those needs.

The Working Group on Digital Technologies will soon present how the implementation map will function. It is intended to be user-friendly and to allow stakeholders worldwide to share information and identify partners working on issues related to Chapter 3 and the Global Digital Compact. It should support coordinated, coherent and comprehensive implementation over the next two and a half years, leading to the high-level review of the Global Digital Compact at the 82nd session of the General Assembly.

Let me now turn to two concrete ideas for engagement with the IGF community.

First, regarding the Global Digital Compact provisions that relate directly to the IGF, we expect that existing IGF governance mechanisms, such as the MAG, will continue to advance these commitments and report progress to the Working Group on Digital Technologies. UN DESA, as a member of the working group, together with the IGF Secretariat, would serve as the main conduit for information.

Second, we would like to explore whether national and regional IGF initiatives could support Member States in implementing Global Digital Compact commitments at the national and regional levels. For example, a Member State may be aware of the Global Digital Compact and its commitments but may seek guidance on where to begin implementation. National and regional IGF initiatives, with their knowledge of local conditions and stakeholder networks, could help identify priorities and support implementation planning.

We have been discussing with UN Resident Coordinators the possibility of developing blueprints for national and regional implementation of the Global Digital Compact. Local IGF structures could play an important role in shaping these blueprints. During the upcoming implementation phase, we hope to partner with interested national and regional initiatives to develop example templates and pilot national-level dialogues to identify priority areas for collaborative implementation.

A second area of collaboration relates to the implementation mapping process. Once the implementation map is launched, we would like to ask national and regional IGF initiatives to help circulate requests for information and encourage contributions. We also intend to coordinate with the WSIS process, including the WSIS stocktaking platform, to avoid duplication and ensure that information requests are streamlined and manageable for stakeholders. The usefulness of the implementation map will depend on the quality and breadth of data it receives, and broad participation will make it more effective.

These are two initial areas where we would welcome collaboration with the IGF community on Global Digital Compact implementation.

I see there are a few questions, so I will stop here. Thank you very much for your attention.