

## IGF Dynamic Coalition on Community Connectivity (DC3)

### Declaration on Community connectivity

#### Preamble

Over three billion people do not have access to communication infrastructure, and most people in rural and non-profitable areas, which the first represent 48% of the global population, are unlikely to realise the benefits of access in the near term. There is no business case for extending coverage based on the current operational models of traditional network operators and alternative strategies may face nearly-insurmountable regulatory hurdles.

While the Internet access playing field has opened in several countries, concerns about vertical integration, privacy breach and net neutrality violations have become increasingly concrete. In order to reverse these trends and reclaim the pivotal role of the commons in networks, it is necessary to create the technology, policy and regulatory frameworks that empower communities and local entrepreneurs to solve their own connectivity challenges and create new opportunities in a social and sustainable fashion. Bottom-up strategies that embrace net neutrality and diversity in the ~~last-mile~~ first square mile can truly empower individuals, allowing everyone to play an active role in making connectivity affordable and easily accessible. We already know that increase the access with quality, impacts positively in GDP and reflects in local economic growth and quality of life in the illuminated areas.

#### 1. Connectivity

Connectivity is the ability to reach all endpoints connected to the Internet without any form of restriction on the data-packet exchanged, enabling end-users to run any application and use any type of service via any device. Connectivity is the goal of the Internet.

#### 2. Community Network

Community networks are a subset of crowdsourced networks, structured to be open, free, and neutral. Such networks rely on the active participation of local communities in the deployment and management of the shared infrastructure as a common resource, owned by the community and operated democratically. Community networks can be operationalised, wholly or partly, through local private sector entities or public administrations and are characterised by:

- a) collective ownership: the network infrastructure is owned by the community where it's deployed;
- b) social management: ~~the~~ a third network infrastructure is governed and operated by the community;
- c) open design: the network implementation details are public and accessible to everyone;

- d) open participation: anyone is allowed to extend the network, as long as they abide the network principles and design.
- e) free peering: community networks offer free peering agreements to every network offering reciprocity.
- f) free transit: community networks allow their free peering partners free transit to destination networks with which they also have free peering agreements.
- g) technologies and software based on open standards are preferred
- h) security and privacy are components of network design and operation

### **3. Community Network Participants**

Community network members have to be considered active participants and, as all Internet users, have to be considered both producers and consumers of content, applications and services. Notably, community network participants:

- a) have the freedom to use the network for any purpose as long as they do not harm the operation of the network itself, the rights of other participants, or the principles of neutrality that allow contents and services to flow without deliberate interference;
- b) have the right to understand the network and its components, and to share knowledge of its mechanisms and principles;
- c) have the right to offer services and content to the network, while establishing their own terms;
- d) have the right to join the network, and the obligation to extend this set of rights to anyone according to these same terms.

### **4. Policy Affecting Connectivity and Community Networks**

National as well as international policy should facilitate the development of connectivity and the deployment of community networks. Notably, national as well as international policy should

- a) be designed considering the impact on connectivity, with particular regard to individuals' human rights to freedom of expression and privacy;
- b) lower barriers that may hinder individuals' capability to create connectivity;
- c) allow the exploitation of existing unlicensed spectrum bands for public-interest purposes and consider the growth of unlicensed spectrum bands considering the needs of community connectivity.