CONSULTATION ON DIGITAL COOPERATION

After a first segment presenting the activities of the I&J Policy Network to more than 180 key stakeholders from Africa (see Stakeholder breakdown at the end), the second part of the Conference was dedicated to consultations on the future of the Digital Cooperation Architecture, in light of the Report of the 2019 UN High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation.

The consultation was structured around three questions: the potential combination of components of the three proposed models; ways to overcome the challenges of participation for small actors; and the role of the UN. The present report summarizes the key takeaways from stakeholder inputs and discussions, as well as the results of the live polling conducted at the end of the event.

THREE KEY MESSAGES

Connecting the numerous internet governance events and processes would foster inclusion, particularly of small actors

83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, given the proliferation of venues and processes. Notions of liaisons and connectors between processes were suggested to keep information flowing and circulate outputs from various processes. Funding participation is naturally expected, as well as encouragement to governments to strengthen national and regional IGFs.

Combining components of the three proposed approaches is strongly supported, but with a strong emphasis on the IGF+ model

73% of poll respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this recommendation. Nonetheless, the oral and written contributions even more strongly focused than in Latin America on the IGF+ model and the pre-eminent role of the UN as the space that gives less powerful governments a voice. A clear emphasis was on how the different models can strengthen accountability and transparency.

Better interinstitutional coordination is desired

Only 12% of respondents consider there is enough coordination on digital issues within the UN ecosystem (but surprisingly 21% for coordination between the UN and other IGOs). Participants were reminded that coordination structures (e.g. the UN Group for the Information Society (UNGIS) and the Commission for Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)) already exist and could be leveraged. A general call for simplicity is issued, to help actors navigate a complex ecosystem.

1These three questions were taken from a list of 17 questions shared by the German BMWi, one of the two co-Champions on the topic of Digital Cooperation Architecture.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CONSULTATION

Below are some non-attributed but significant comments (lightly edited for grammar and readability) heard during the consultation regarding the three structuring questions. They are grouped in message “clusters”, with the detailed results of the in-conference poll attached.

Question 1 - How can broader participation of government and business representatives, particularly from small and developing countries and SMEs, be ensured? Is there a role for the UN? (Q3 of the list communicated by the BMWi)

The need to take into account the architecture of power

“I wouldn’t use the term small actors. I would say less powerful or less influential. The architecture of cooperation at the moment is shaped by the architecture of power, the lack of participation and opportunity for less powerful actors. It’s not firstly a consequence of lack of networking opportunities or lack of having access to any kind of cooperation architecture component. It’s a consequence of a very unequal distribution of power and influence. If we go forward without acknowledging and confronting these unequal power dynamics between institutions and countries and stakeholder groups, the status quo will not change.”

“Connectivity, and particularly the development of the last mile is an essential prerequisite for participating in discussions on digital cooperation.”

“The IGF+ has the ability to bring in small business development associations.”

The UN as default solution to the feeling of powerlessness

“It is very challenging for developing countries to really contribute or participate in the numerous mechanisms related to digital cooperation and internet governance. That was the clear message of a study conducted in 2011 by the African Union.”

“The UN is still the only place where each government has one voice. Governments feel empowered in that space more than they do in many other spaces, particularly those without economic or political power or perceived economic and political power.”

“The role of the UN is important because governments need this place where they feel their voice is heard, where they can speak without being overwhelmed by powerful, more influential governments or powerful and more influential businesses.”

“If we are not able to participate and contribute, we will be obliged to accept everything that is coming to us. This is the start of losing our sovereignty and being diminished.”

“The alignment with the results collected in Latin America says a lot about the challenge for developing countries”

Liaisons, points of contact, connectors

“The consultation conducted in Latin America introduced the notion of value chains and the importance for the different actors to know where the output of their own processes should be sent to and where to get the inputs from the others.”

“Each group or process could have a liaison to channel its outputs to other structures.”

“The ICANN Board of Directors has liaisons and it is a very useful element for transparency and for mutual trust and understanding. Yet, more than 1000 processes create a combinatorial challenge: if each entity needs a liaison with all the others, then the capacity for people to really participate is going to be even more stretched. Would it be possible to use instead a notion of connectors or points of contact in each process so that everybody is
not forced to participate in all the activities, but they have an interlocutor, a correspondent in other processes to coordinate their discussions?”

“Irrespective of whether it is liaisons, contact points, or correspondents, they are a key component of interoperability for the architecture of networking the numerous processes that form an ecosystem. Like there is an internet way of networking (as ISOC says), there is probably an internet way of governance.”

“Creating a Tech Envoy is a good idea. The Tech Envoy can actually itself have liaisons, people connected with him/her, that can participate in the activities of various multistakeholder entities, and then bring the outputs into the Tech Envoy office which can then tidy this up and bring it to the CSTD structure.”

“A policy portal would be a good idea, where what is approved from one group could be posted. Like an open data platform whereby you get information in and you can access information on policy matters and what has been discussed.”

On the network of national and regional IGFs

“National and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs) should have a greater linkage to the IGF+ Advisory Group in order to recruit the small actors or the less powerful actors.”

“Distributed, self-organized, multidirectional and multi-stakeholder, NRIs create a space for learning but also for reporting from what happens at the global level as well as reporting up from the national level to the regional into the international.”

“There is a need to ensure the quality of the national IGF processes.”

“There is however a tension between preserving the flexibility of bottom-up and spontaneously self-organized initiatives and having a sufficient quality framework that is not uniform, but able to make the whole network of IGFs (national and regional) interoperable.”

The in-conference poll showed an extremely strong support (83%) for interconnecting the different processes and events already taking place, the number of which are only likely to increase in the future.

“Developing connections between the numerous internet governance events (thematic or geographic) would help foster inclusion, particularly for small actors”

7% Strongly Disagree
4% Disagree
6% Neither Agree nor Disagree
35% Agree
48% Strongly Agree

Note: 48% of respondents strongly agreed, which is a rare situation in such polls and a positive signal. It probably indicates a relatively clear understanding of participants of how this could be done. Still, it might also mean that people only see the IGF and NRIs as having to be more connected, overlooking the plethora of other events and processes.

Key notions here were: smaller governments fear of being overwhelmed by more powerful actors (other governments or large companies); the concept of liaisons or points of contact to facilitate circulation of information (in line with the notion of value chains raised in Latin America); the role of national and regional IGFs to report up and down the geographic levels; and the need to ensure their consistent quality, in a way that retains their flexibility.
**Question 2 - Do you see scope for combining the three models and if yes, how could this be operationalized? (Q14 of the list communicated by the BMWi)**

**On strengthening the IGF (IGF-)**

“I’ve believed in the value of the IGF and its power since its inception because it was - and can - continue to be the glue that holds all different elements together. I’m not a great believer in one single solution to all problems. Problems are very diverse and how people experience them is very diverse. They need to have the power to find their own solutions.”

“The IGF gives us this platform that operates at two levels. On the one hand, it really is bottom up, facilitating interaction between individuals from all stakeholder groups, for them to come and share their problems or ideas. But it is also a platform that allows for dialogue and interaction between institutions.”

“The IGF’s character of not being a decision-making body is important. It is a strength because it allows for more openness in speaking about problems and finding solutions in a creative way without the pressure to negotiate formal policy outcomes or decisions.”

“Support in Africa for the option of IGF Plus is one of the things coming from the interventions.”

**On COGOV**

“Unlike what some people may be thinking, the COGOV approach is not necessarily something that must be built from scratch: there is an existing network of entities and activities. Yet in a certain way it’s a double-edged sword because their proliferation itself makes it sometimes harder to coordinate.”

“We need to better understand the ecosystem of activities and structures dealing with digital issues.”

“The COGOV model puts emphasis on implementation and adherence to norms. It’s extremely important. I think we don’t have a lot of that in the internet governance ecosystem. We have quite a lot of discussion of forming norms, but we don’t complete the circle of developing norms, implementing them and monitoring the implementation.”

“There is a challenge regarding the absence of real outcomes on internet governance. Not only for the IGF, but it’s also a general question of how formalized and implementable the results are, how concrete are the solutions that come out of the different processes.”

**The Digital Commons model can help establish the internet as a global public resource**

“The Digital Commons architecture can address what I believe is probably a primary weakness in the current internet governance ecosystem: that there is no formal agreement that the internet is a global public resource and a global public good that must be multi-stakeholder operated and managed by different stakeholder groups. That is a principle that has not yet been a uniformly or universally accepted.”

**On combining models**

“Do I see a scope for combining the three models? Absolutely. I think these three models are not mutually exclusive. Maybe we don’t need to combine all aspects of these models, but we can definitely draw on them in different ways.”

“Another aspect which can be enhanced in the IGF+, is the connection with the national, regional and youth IGF initiatives. They are distributed, self-organized, multidirectional and multi-stakeholder.”
“I heard a lot in favor of the IGF+ models enriched by elements of the other models, which is on the same vein as we heard in Latin America. And it seems to be something that is in the direction of a consensus worldwide, which is very good.”

**Accountability and transparency**

“The IGF allows interinstitutional interaction in a unique way because it doesn’t take place in a closed boardroom or meeting room but in an open, transparent and inclusive arena. This can be further improved to strengthen accountability.”

“If we use the network of national and regional IGFs properly and routinely, they can also become places where accountability plays itself out. Some place where governments, business, civil society, the technical community come together annually and say, what did you do about that problem? Why has that not been addressed? How can we work together to fix these problems?”

“Democratization of decision making in public policy issues is important. We need to ensure that the models are transparent in their decision making so that the responsibilities assigned to each party and each component are clearly understood. It is a prerequisite to ensure accountability.”

The in-conference poll confirmed a **very strong support as well (73%) for combining components of the three approaches** proposed in the Panel’s report.

![Diagram: There is a benefit in combining components of the three approaches for Digital Cooperation](image)

**Note:** The distribution between respondents who agreed (46%) and those who strongly agreed (27%) probably indicates remaining uncertainties regarding how to do such combination of components correctly: connection of events and processes in Question 1 had an opposite balance (35% vs. 48%).

**Key concepts:** the IGF as also an instrument for interinstitutional dialogue; the internet as a public good; the importance of ensuring the actual implementation and enforcement of norms; and the need for transparency and mechanisms of accountability.

**Question 3 - What role do you see for the UN in the future of global digital cooperation? What would the profile, responsibilities and role of a Technology Envoy (to be appointed by the UN Secretary-General) be? (Q16 of the list communicated by the BMWi)**

There is a strong message in favor of interinstitutional coordination, but also for using the mechanisms that already exist (e.g. UNGIS, CSTD) and are often overlooked.

**A call for simplicity**

“All member States [of the African Union] cannot participate and contribute to the dialogues in internet governance because this is a complex landscape. We need a simple mechanism for anybody to just go and really contribute in a simple manner. We don’t need complicated schemes. When practicability is not really there, it becomes a political issue.”
Interinstitutional coordination

“We need to improve the current mechanisms. The UN supervising or coordinating mechanism is the best way for us as Africans to contribute specifically on the internet governance matters.”

“IGF+ is a flexible structure, which can enable interinstitutional dialogue across formal structures such as UN agencies or regional bodies of States such as the African Union. And it can also facilitate interactions between bodies such as the African Union, the European Union, the Organization of American States, or the OECD.”

“The formulation: “interinstitutional coordination” is a very interesting way to synthesize the two last polling questions. There is a distinction in that regard between coordinating others and coordinating with others.”

Using what already exists (UNGIS, CSTD, MAG, IGF)

“I have a preference for IGF+ because it is within the framework of the United Nations. In fact, it is the main global governance framework that we have right now that is recognized by all countries and all people. We need to use that as a low hanging fruit. IGF already has a MAG and the outputs of IGF have being growing substantially. So, it has to become IGF+. We can tidy it up much more and give it the necessary strength it needs.”

“In the United nation framework, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) is the focal point for the coordination of WSIS action lines. WSIS action lines have to put their outcomes into CSTD per the Tunis Agenda. Each group or process could have a liaison to channel their outputs into the CSTD.”

“It could be possible to have a permanent, standing, working group within CSTD to synthesize these outputs together. CSTD would take it off to ECOSOC and then up to the General Assembly.”

“The proliferation of groups will continue, but we should not forget that the existing governance framework around the CSTD mandate is still there.”

“The United Nations Group for the Information Society (UNGIS) is absolutely vital. It’s been around for a very long time and it does play an important role. Yet, it’s not inclusive enough. It needs to work more closely with the regional economic commissions (e.g. UNECA in Africa, ECLAC in Latin America). And I think it needs to bring existing agencies not currently involved into this process, like UN Women or the Environmental Program. Because when we talk about internet development, digital cooperation, these are very holistic areas of work.”

Looking beyond Europe

“We do not only need to see Europe and Africa but also other regions.”

“We Africans, when we talk about cooperation, especially digital cooperation, we almost exclusively look in the direction of Europe. We need to open a little bit the horizon. We need to also look towards Asia and the United States, especially to learn from the ecosystems of builders and makers in those regions, which are often at the edge of the technology and better positioned to experience the limitations and challenges of the regulations affecting these digital technologies.”

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2 The United Nations Group for the Information Society (UNGIS) is a format of the Chief Executive Board (CEB) that gathers the Heads of the various UN agencies. The CEB can meet in different formats, according to the topic, with different Agencies taking leadership according to their respective mandates. ITU and Unesco fulfill this role for UNGIS regarding the follow-up to the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) and organize the annual WSIS Forum.
Regional coordination

“A united and coordinated regional level action in Africa is important, so that the different actors and countries are not conducting separately their own international activities.”

But “the legal frameworks in the continent are disparate, with some countries having moved forward faster than others or having developed more elaborate frameworks.”

“There are disparities between some of the charters or rules that have been adopted at the level of the African continent and the national decisions that are partially or incompletely compatible with them.”

“The diversity between countries and between continents is extremely strong regarding protection of cyberspace.”

Role of the Tech Envoy

“Creating a Tech Envoy is a good idea. The Tech Envoy can actually have liaisons, people connected with him, that can participate in the activities of various multistakeholder entities, and then bring the outputs into the Tech Envoy office which can then tidy this up and bring it to the CSTD structure.”

Like in Latin America, the in-conference poll confirmed the sentiment that there is not enough coordination within the UN ecosystem: only 12% (9% in LATAM) of respondents considered that it was sufficient. The percentage of actors who disagreed or strongly disagreed was similar (61% in Africa vs. 62% in LATAM), but the percentage that strongly disagreed was higher in Africa (20% vs. 11%).

The results for coordination between the UN and other international organizations was more nuanced: on one hand, more people felt there was sufficient coordination (21% vs. only 11% in LATAM), but on the other, the strong disagreement was much higher (20% vs only 8% in LATAM).

“There is enough coordination on digital policy issues between the different agencies of the UN ecosystem (specialized or regional)”

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<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>41%</td>
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“There is enough coordination on digital policy issues between the UN and other international organizations (e.g. OECD, APEC, G7, G20, WTO, African Union, Council of Europe, OSCE, ...)”

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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Note: The relatively important proportion of “neither agree nor disagree” responses in both instances (27% and 26%, similar to the LATAM results) probably indicates a recognition that some coordination does exist. The quite even distribution regarding interactions between UN structures and other organizations would deserve more analysis.

Key concepts regarding this third question are: an aspiration to simplicity, as the number of processes overwhelms actors with limited resources; the good wording of “interinstitutional coordination”; a reminder that coordination structures (UNGIS and CSTD, not mentioned in LATAM) already exist and should be used; the disparity of levels of advancement between the different African countries; and the possible role of a Tech Envoy in coordination and the reporting workflow.
STAKEHOLDER BREAKDOWN

The Virtual Conference gathered more than 180 participants, from a diversity of stakeholder groups. The breakdown by groups of participants in the online poll is:

- Governments: 43.06%
- Civil society: 20.83%
- Academia: 11.11%
- Companies: 11.11%
- International Organizations: 8.33%
- Technical Operators: 5.56%
ONLINE SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to the virtual consultation, the full 17 questions of the questionnaire have been circulated as a survey, generating 15 responses. Some “survey fatigue” was manifest, given its length and the degree of detail of the questions. Furthermore, like in LATAM, the COGOV and DIGITAL COMMONS models were clearly less understood or attracting attention than the IGF+ model.

The comments are extensively listed in the Annex. A few points deserve to be highlighted, as they were not explicitly mentioned in the oral discussion:

- There is a digital inequality paradox: “digital inequality increases as more people connect to increasingly diverse and sophisticated technologies and services”.
- On the Advisory Group: explicit suggestions regarding the duration of mandates, the broad diversity of stakeholder groups to take into account (including UN Agencies and parliaments) and a criticism of some actors changing their stakeholder group to remain in the process. One comment also highlighted that “many recommendations already discussed regarding IGF improvements have still to be implemented” and that this should be the first priority.
- Several comments addressed the challenges of implementation of whatever norm is agreed, and in particular the limits of voluntary adoption without capacity of enforcement.
- One comment used the interesting new expression of “guardrails for digital technologies”.
- More comments than in LATAM addressed the roles and composition of the Accelerator, Incubator and Observatory, but with quite different approaches. These structures probably would have to be clarified, to reconcile the different functions identified.
- In line with the simplicity call in the oral discussion, one suggestion was for some or all of the different bodies envisaged in the IGF+ approach (Accelerator, Incubator, Observatory) to be grouped into a single one, with different Committees. This was also suggested in LATAM.
- The exact role of a Trust Fund appears unclear. Suggestions of possible use of funds naturally include support of the global IGF Secretariat, but also: “Communication to the general public to sensitize the different stakeholders”; “Research and development”; “The annual conferences” [which are currently financed by the host country]; “Local initiatives”, including “national and regional IGFs”; and the “participation of stakeholders”.
- Like in LATAM, several comments addressed possible financing sources of the Trust Fund:
  o “Businesses active in the digital space and government-collected taxes related to the digital sector”,
  o “Businesses and governments made to subscribe to an annual payment to the UN”,
  o “All stakeholders including governments, international organizations, businesses and the tech sector would be encouraged to contribute”,
  o “Developed countries and big and medium enterprises. Some oil producing countries need to contribute also. Small islands and developing countries would be exempted”,
  o “A fee to be agreed for each ISP or telecommunications services operator should be charged on the invoicing amount for internet access services”,
  o “A small percentage from data extraction – e.g. digital taxation of digital giants’ profits”.
- The role of the UN as data collector.
- One comment indicated a preference for a Digital Envoy, rather than a Technology Envoy, to “support the political prioritization of digital issues”.

3 The term guardrails refers to: “a strong fence at the side of a road or in the middle of an expressway, intended to reduce the risk of serious accidents.” This concept is rarely used in discussions of digital issues, particularly emerging technologies, and might be useful.
ANNEX – SURVEY RESPONSES

Answers are listed in the order of the questionnaire sections, even if sometimes the comments include remarks related to another question.

1. Do you support the recommendation of a multistakeholder ‘systems’ approach for cooperation and regulation that is adaptive, agile, inclusive and fit for purpose for the fast-changing digital age? To what extent is the “multistakeholder” aspect important?

As governmental representative from a developing country, I do support this approach. Participation of all actors on an equal footing at the same table is important. This should include representatives from the 5 continents of: governments, private companies, civil society, parliaments, universities, local authorities, regional internet registries, ISPs, handicapped people, women associations and youth parliaments (children under 15 years old).

They should submit a candidacy that will be selected at random by regional grouping.

Yes, we believe global governance is experiencing a shift in the conceptions of public and private – including respective roles and responsibilities – in response to the limitations of both state and neoliberal ideas reflected in public governance (Best & Gheciu, 2014). International political economy is now beginning to challenge the assumption that public and private are ‘ontologically separate domains of social life, governed by different logics and association with specific sites’, which can be seen in the focus on adjusting mechanisms for digital governance (Best & Gheciu 2014:3).

This public/private notion is not the only shift in digital governance – the necessity for alternative, or adjusted forms of digital governance is also being influenced by the contextual realities seen in the digital inequality paradox (that digital inequality increases as more people connect to increasingly diverse and sophisticated technologies and services). The digital inequality paradox is arguably one of the greatest policy challenges for nations in an increasingly globalized digital economy and society underpinned by global public goods. The intractability of the policy problem of digital inequality lies in the growing complexity and adaptiveness of global and globalized communications systems over which traditional public actors, nation states (particularly developing countries) or existing multilateral systems appear to have little control (Gillwald & Van der Spuy, 2019).

I do: the multistakeholder aspect is important and has many benefits including:

• encouraging good governance
• promoting inclusivity and equity in ICT policy and implementation.
• motivating both leaders and laggards
• helping to develop trust among groups that are usually suspicious and hostile towards each other

The “multistakeholder” aspect is important because it has the capacity to bring together common consensus of all interested parties, which ensures a commitment by all in the definition of policies that will guarantee acceptance by and compliance with citizens.

The multistakeholder approach is essential to enable more sharing of experiences and information.

Yes, it is the only way to get wider view and adoption of regulation.

The “multistakeholder” aspect is important because it adopts a bottom-up methodology. With this approach, there is a complicity in complying with policies to be adopted because it will be a result that comes from the majority.

Yes, we support to a great extent a system approach for cooperation and regulation.

Yes, it fulfills the objectives of the United Nations.

I do support the approach... multistakeholderism enables many to contribute.
Internet which has become the essential utility commodity of the world has many actors that makes it open, safe, available, and accessible. For this reason, the actors need to have a meeting point to cooperate to make it work for the good of all. It is therefore very important that the stakeholders in the Internet ecosystem partner and collaborate effectively to manage this digital tool that the world cannot do without.

I do, because it involves all interested institutions and most of the concerns can be taken in account.

Yes, because all sectors are interdependent and should be encouraged to be active and contribute their quota to ensure fast-changing/development of digital age for sustainable development. Also to end extreme poverty in small and developing countries.

The multistakeholder approach is important to promote the broad accommodation of various stakeholders and parties.

2. In what ways would a new/improved model promote actionable outcomes?

If all the stakeholders and actors in the Internet or digital policy development have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and roles in making digital policy work, the new/improved model can make it clearer how all the parts (ACTORS) would fit into the process to reduce friction, bring more legitimacy, better coordination, and cooperation among the players, providers and policy developers.

The IGF+ model is the most sustainable, because it builds on what already exists. A new imaginary model can produce more problems. We know the weaknesses of the IGF model, such as the lack of real decision-making that can be imposed upon individual actors of the ecosystem. We could remediate this in the new model that would lead to a sort of global government for digital issues with recommendations that would apply to all without exception.

A new/improved model will promote actionable outcomes, if States and regional intergovernmental bodies promote national implementation of recommendations and other agreed measures.

As we wrote in a 2019 paper (Gillwald & Van der Spuy, 2019), the governance of global public goods of the Internet in terms of issues like digital rights, cybersecurity or data governance is currently largely dealt with as distinct from the underlying infrastructure and citizens’ access to it. From a rights and public interest policy perspective, these issues need to be understood together - the protection of rights online, when the bulk of citizens are offline, cannot fulfil governments’ constitutional mandate and fails to comply with the United Nations’ recognition of access to the Internet as an enabler of sustainable development (UNGA, 2015). Discussing Internet governance narrowly in relation to the Internet’s protocol layer or the interface between infrastructure and content only risks assuming the critical infrastructure and underpinning services are universally in place to provide the ‘free, and open’ Internet’ aspired to for all. The divorcing of technical and normative communities up to this point presents a direct challenge to a reality of digital governance that can ensure just outcomes (Gillwald & Van der Spuy, 2019).

An improved model would produce implementable results.

Coordination and collection of views from all parties is critical.

A new/improved model can only promote actionable results if it is comprehensive and acceptable to all interested parties. It is recommended that this model should be simpler to adopt to avoid complications by the interested parties. Simplicity is crucial.

1. Treating common synergies across all stakeholders.
2. The model should be all-inclusive of all stakeholders from both the developed and developing countries; private and public sector as well as civil society.
3. Outcomes should be tiered with clear implementation actions at the global, regional, national and institutional level.
4. There should be a more coordinated collaboration between all the multilateral public and private agencies.
5. Standards adopted have to be accepted at the least regionally but ideally globally.
Through coordination at the local, sub-regional and regional levels.

It enables inclusiveness.

Involvement of all stakeholders strengthens the follow-up process.

A new improved model will promote cooperation between institutions, strengthen the leadership level and increase the level of the advisory group.

In 2018, African startups recorded a Year over Year growth of 108%. An improved model will help accelerate the necessary infrastructure needed for Agriculture in Africa. Digital agriculture solutions will improve the fortune of countries across Africa. Cloud Services Infrastructure and African Privacy Agreement are examples of actionable outcomes when an improved model is implemented.

3. How can broader participation of government and business representatives, particularly from small and developing countries and SMEs, be ensured? Is there a role for the UN?

I indicated earlier the broad range of groups to take into account in a multistakeholder approach. Each representative would have a non-renewable mandate of two years. We have networks of friends everywhere, including in the UN. To prevent suspicion, a random drawing by lot seems to me the best solution. Otherwise, the same actors will come back, changing status to reposition themselves. I have known people in the internet governance ecosystem as representatives of governments who came back later with a private or civil society hat. This risks appearing as a club of friends, which ultimately brings total discredit.

To ensure the largest representation of governments and companies, the various regional commissions should leverage their member states so that they help IGF initiatives in their country engage all stakeholders. The UN should provide more resources to local IGF initiatives to help them achieve their objectives.

Yes, by anchoring different multistakeholder cooperation forums in individual countries, so that they collaborate with each other to achieve the goal of sustainable development and benefits (especially future gains) associated with it.

The participation of government and business representatives would be ensured by stronger linkages of the NRIs with the UN in the IGF+ model. The relationship or linkages of the local IGFs with the global IGF will surely help recruit governments, businesses, and SMEs to participate more in the digital policy process.

Countries, especially developing and small islands, trust the UN for protection against the high and mighty, therefore the presence and the strong role of the UN are needed for any of the models to be accepted.

Digital cooperation needs to be mainstreamed in the UN functions, not to forget the existing mechanisms established by the UN on the digital policy process in the past. They should be merged and harmonized in order to have the desired results.

Multistakeholder collaboration can only be effective if government and private sector stakeholders - alongside other stakeholders - from all regions are able to participate meaningfully and equally. But to do so, resources are required that often are not available, especially in global South contexts. A mechanism should be created to ensure more equal and meaningful, as well as sustained, participation of all stakeholders.

One suggestion is using a small percentage of proceeds from data extraction processes - e.g., digital taxation of digital giants' profits - to support more equal participation in digital governance processes.

The broader participation of government and business representatives, particularly from small and developing countries and SMEs, depends in particular on the engagement of these parties and in particular the creation of a budget to cover these initiatives. The big problem is the lack of interest in the subject and in particular the lack of resources reserved for this initiative. We need to create interest at the national level.

In my opinion, the UN has a fundamental role. It should create a fund to support the expenses of these initiatives in order to guarantee a broader participation of government and business representatives, particularly from small and developing countries and SMEs. One way would be to demand in each member state an annual contribution to be fixed.
Broader participation of Government and business representatives from small and developing countries can be ensured through emphasizing participation quotas as well as availing specific fellowships for support them. The structure of the digital cooperation architecture has to be cascaded down to regional and nations to ensure that it maps accurately with the intended outcomes.

The UN has a role to play by mobilizing both the political and private sector stakeholders and creating common synergies. The UN is the uniting factor for the common goal. The UN is best placed through its global structure to mobilize funding as well.

Through identification of local actors, using the technical assistance of local structures in relation with the different public administrations.

The UN can directly invite these actors to the conversation.

By engaging them more regularly, encouraging to participate in discussions in a more meaningful way.

Small and developing countries and SMEs have many complicated issues to deal with particularly the lack of qualified people with a solid knowledge of digital development. So, the role of the United Nation is crucial for these stakeholders.

We can refer to the bodies such as observatory and helpdesk in the IGF+ model. It is through such structures that we can ensure broader participation of government and business representatives, particularly from small and developing countries and SMEs.

This could be the entrance point to the governance space and have tracks for every multistakeholder group (for example each stakeholder group can meet and discuss its particular problems prior to the annual IGF and continue their work during IGF).

The UN secretary can be a supportive body and facilitate having theses prior meetings and supporting developing countries and SMEs to participate.

The participation of small developing countries and SMEs can be promoted through the UN if the existing platforms for engagement are broadened to accommodate more developing countries.

4. What means of implementation are required for a sustainable system?

We must highlight from the onset the necessary contribution of all stakeholders to the financing of digital cooperation, to prevent financing to become a weapon for blackmail. Financing should be established per continent and according to the choices of stakeholders. But such choices must be based on a unique and transparent set of identification criteria. A cooperation Secretariat should be put in place in each continent to facilitate cooperation. To represent a stakeholder from a continent, the candidate would have to be a permanent resident on this continent for at least 10 years.

Every meeting deliberation must be recorded and the rapporteur to ensure recall of all deliberations.

Continuous technical and financial support of local structures.

Community partnerships are needed for the implementation of a sustainable system. The support of the UN only is not ideal. We need to bring more partners.

National implementation of agreed measures and recommendations are very vital to promoting a sustainable system.

A collection of tools for implementation are required. Most importantly, lessons should be learned from development and equality practitioners. For instance, implementation means will only be effective if designed and suitable for local contexts. Implementation should therefore ideally happen using local actors with local expertise.

The means of implementation necessary for a sustainable system must include:

- Human Resources;
• Financial resources;
• Public consultations;
• Dynamic structure and coordination in IGF’s at national levels.

Tiered implementation with clear actions at the global, regional, national and institutional level.

Harmonize and merge all in an inclusive manner to achieve a sustainable system. Simplify the process: the more complicated it is, the more difficult it can be sustainable.

Combine some of the proposed organs in Digital Commons Architecture with IGF+, particularly regarding the role of the UN.

Investment in infrastructure and qualified personnels and elimination of the digital gaps between developed and developing countries.

Projects conception should utilize a multi-stakeholder approach and continuous engagement, setting goals and having small wins. Local tools or technology are to be encouraged to promote inclusion; also information sharing by government, technology providers and users.

IGF+ MODEL

5. What structure, membership and responsibilities could a new Advisory Group have? What are its potential benefits compared to the current MAG?

First and foremost, adjustments should only happen once the numerous previous reports and proposals for improving the MAG have been duly considered and implemented. Many stakeholders have spent too many hours and uncountable resources providing input on how the IGF and its MAG can be improved, and many of these recommendations are yet to be implemented.

The current responsibilities of MAG should be broadened towards the adoption of recommendations that can be imposed to stakeholder groups of the global digital ecosystem. The beneficial result would be an internet effectively at the service of all without discrimination.

The Structure of the new Advisory Group should include it being directly related to the main UN activities and the coordination point for all UN Agencies dealing with IG issues. Membership should be broader than the current MAG to include mandatorily UN Agency representatives, other disciplines that are affected by the Internet development and digital policy outputs. UN should mandate countries to send representatives (NRIs) and the same for Business representatives.

The potential benefit is that the Trust would return to the IGF with the strong presence of the UN and its Agencies.

The multistakeholder structure should have an Executive Secretariat, recruited through a call for candidature, with special responsibilities defined in a performance contract. The main benefit would be independence.

A new Advisory Group must integrate more developing countries including small islands. The benefits are the attention that will be dedicated to these countries covering people over the world.

The potential benefits would be for the new MAG to be more comprehensive, that is, having more stakeholders in the process.

Bringing [in the Advisory Group] more leaders: CEOs of the leading tech companies, high level political officials, and civil society representatives. This would not only increase the relevance of the Advisory Group but we will also have a more inclusive and supported Advisory Group. This can have a positive impact on the sustainability of the model itself.

The Advisory Group could identify moments when emerging discussions in other forums need to be connected, and issues that are not covered by existing organizations or mechanisms, in order to identify focus policy issues each year.
The Advisory Group could consist of members appointed for three years by the UN Secretary General on the advice of member states and stakeholder groups, ensuring gender, age, stakeholder and geographical balance.

6. What are your thoughts on the following proposals? What structure, membership and responsibilities should each have? Cooperation Accelerator, Policy Incubator, Observatory and Help Desk?

The Cooperation Accelerator is possible if actors speak frankly and with the common interest in mind. The incubator is desirable, especially if academics are on board. Observatory and Help Desk are important to establish balance regarding availability of digital resources in the world.

But it is not necessary to have three independent entities. A single structure with three complementary committees would be ideal.

These are good proposals. The structure and composition of each entity should foster acceleration of cooperation and incubation of policies.

I find it interesting and it is recommended that it is not too complex, to facilitate the normal functioning of the IGF.

Regarding responsibilities:

- Cooperation Accelerator: Take care of all cooperation initiatives, including interested parties;
- Policy incubator: Take care of all policy harmonization initiatives discussed with all stakeholders;
- Observatory and Help Desk: Take care of the necessary support of the entire structure.

The Policy Incubator could be located inside the Cooperation Accelerator. This would lead to a two-part structure:

- Cooperation Accelerator, at the regional level, to define policies;
- Observatory and Help Desk, as an independent structure composed of experts in direct relation with the Accelerator, to assist local structures.

I think the Cooperation Accelerator is not very different from the Advisory Group if restructured to include mandatory representation and mainstreamed in the UN activities.

The Policy Incubator should be a committee in the strong advisory group, with a strong Secretariat within the New Organ.

Observatory and Help Desk is very much needed in the new model. It should be a proper institution of the new Organ different from the Advisory Group, with strong private sector and civil society representation in addition to Governments and UN Agencies representations.

I think the proposals presented in the recommendation are satisfactory for the initial phase. It will be necessary to evaluate them later to address their weaknesses, if there will be.

The responsibility of the Cooperation Accelerator will be to make links between different networks, policy events, UN processes and events and different IG fora. It could be a committee with members from NRIs, tech community, and entrepreneur community.

Policy Incubator: incubates norms and policies and initiatives of all stakeholders (not a decision-making body but a facilitator for discussion and advising on best practices and optimal rules and norms). It could be a committee from norms and standardizations groups, policy makers...

Observatory and help desk: capacity development activities, bringing on board new stakeholders (it can be run by UN secretariat).

Cooperation Accelerator: The team members could consist of varying technical background: engineers, technology providers, civil rights groups.

Policy Incubator: Decision-making bodies maintaining momentum in discussions without making legally binding decisions.

Observatory and Help Desk: To share best practices and provide an overview of digital policy issues, including monitoring trends, identifying emerging issues and providing data on digital policy.
Vitaly, the Co-operation Accelerator means that co-operation and facilitating co-operation becomes a focal area. Co-operation requires direct facilitation in any governance environment, rather than being sought through organic participation alone. Its broad inclusivity could help to ameliorate the exclusion that may arise as necessary in different operational avenues for efficacy. Perhaps most importantly, it can facilitate the forms of cooperation that can see policy solutions being implemented in a domestic context – helping to facilitate the ‘trickle down’ of effect policy decisions, with the ‘trickle up’ being facilitated by other mechanisms.

The Policy Incubator seeks to directly address one of the key criticisms of many high-level fora, which is that outcomes do not result in implementable solutions at a domestic or local level. In addition, it provides a monitoring function (though this is not monitoring in a manner that could facilitate sanction). Again, having a specific focal area for what should be a chief output of the Forum (as with the Accelerator) is a sound operational solution to challenges already experienced.

The Observatory and Help Desk could assist directly in the generation of data identified as a challenge in the area. Given the non-binding nature of this Forum, which also does not perform formal review functions, it would be a vital partner for coordinating with human rights structures of the United Nations that have direct sanction functions. It also allows for a reactive component to the IGF’s work that then does not derail the more formal agenda setting facilitated by the Advisory Group. It is essential, however, that this proposed function works closely with local partners for more effective implementation.

7. What are your thoughts on a new IGF Trust Fund? If considered, how should it look like, what expenses should it cover, and—accordingly—what annual budget would it need?

A Trust Fund is important. It should be based on stakeholder contributions determined with a predetermined collection mechanism. Resources should come from businesses active in the digital space and government-collected taxes related to the digital sector. The Trust Fund would finance: research and development, the annual Conferences, the activities of the global and regional secretariats, and the participation of stakeholders in the Forum.

A new IGF Trust Fund would help sensitizing the different stakeholders. It could cover expenses related to logistical aspects and communication to the general public.

This is timely and should be promoted.

A very good initiative. A fund could finance local initiatives.

A new IGF Trust Fund is a proposal to consider, given the pertinence of the matter.

If considered, I believe that a fee to be agreed for each ISP or telecommunications service operator should be charged on the invoicing amount for Internet access services.

This amount should be managed by the body or Secretariat that exclusively deals with IGF matters [at] National levels and we do not recommend that Governments have access to these funds.

These funds will cover all expenses related to IGF, expenses from the organization of National IGF events to regional, Continental and World initiatives.

As for the estimated value, a more accurate study would be needed to determine an estimate of the necessary budget.

If the digital policy process is restructured and mainstreamed in the UN activities, the Idea of Trust Fund would take a new shape, rules, and principles to include businesses and Governments made to subscribe to an annual payment to the UN.

IGF Trust Fund must be covered by developed countries and big and medium enterprises. Some oil producer countries need to contribute also; small islands and developing countries must be exempted.

In an interdisciplinary and system-wide approach, all stakeholders – including governments, international

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3 The actual submission is ambiguous. It says: “This amount should be managed by the body or Secretariat that exclusively deals with IGF matters National levels and we do not recommend that Governments do not have access to these funds.” We suppose it means: “This amount should be managed by the body or Secretariat that exclusively deals with IGF matters [at] National levels and we do not recommend that Governments do not have access to these funds.”
organizations, businesses and the tech sector – would be encouraged to contribute to an IGF Trust Fund.

The association of the IGF Plus Secretariat with the Office of the UN Secretary-General provides political backing to a true acknowledgment of the interdisciplinary nature of digital issues, which has thus far been significantly marred by institutional fragmentation, a lack of sufficient resources and staff with long-term (not just short, fixed-term) appointments, and policy overlap.

Developing already existing structures – such as through the IGF+ solution – is a direct acknowledgment of the need to prevent the duplication of efforts. Importantly, there are already attempts atlocalizing the IGF (such as the Youth IGFs and local IGF Chapters), which could form implementing structures, working closely in particular with the Policy Incubator.

COGOV MODEL

8. What gaps in the existing digital architecture could the COGOV model address? What are its potential benefits compared to the business-as-usual scenario? How might it interact with existing mechanisms?

The COGOV architecture decouples the design of digital norms from their implementation and enforcement. It seeks to rapidly produce shared digital cooperation solutions, including norms, and publish them for stakeholders to consider and potentially adopt.

This model could address the gap of digital cooperation.

IGF+ addresses some of the IGF’s weaknesses, such as insufficient involvement of representatives from small and developing countries.

Essentially on our reading, the Distributed Co-Governance Architecture (COGOV) borrows on agile development operational structures to promote self-organizing networks. The COGOV seeks to leverage structures for the technical communities.

[The COGOV model] complicates [the existing scenario] more.

There are digital gaps between rural and urban areas and between developed and developing countries. National IGFs need to be more active and participative.

9. What structure, membership and responsibilities could the distributed co-governance mechanism take on? How might principles governing the logical and infrastructure layers be applied in economic and social layers of governance?

Emerging from the development of technical standards, the mechanisms it therefore designs are akin more to the development of technical standards – where self-organization of experts dominates – but does not readily lend itself to the development of normative standards, which require a more considered approach to ensuring inclusivity within the operational design.

There is nothing in the design of the Digital Cooperation Networks, Network Support Platforms, or Network of Networks that specifically ensures broad participation, perhaps on the assumption that much of the decision-making will [be based on] pre-existing shared values.

A further challenge is the lack of specific mechanism to facilitate domestic implementation of solutions (although this may be met by the “offer of implementation incentives”), relying largely on voluntary adoption, but not encouraging that adoption through any particular method.

The COGOV is output focused, with less emphasis on the inclusivity of the process of developing those outputs, in a manner which prefers an expert-driven process. This expert-driven focus will present challenges, in particular for localization.

Within these expert groupings, equality between participants is presumed – which is why the COGOV structures do not currently account for methods for facilitating exchanges where there is little consensus, and
where an inequality between participants positions may be a reality.
Such a structure could, however, assist with the development of responsive solutions given the mechanics of the Digital Cooperation Networks.

10. What existing networks, if any, fit the necessary prerequisites of transparency, inclusion, multistakeholderism, to serve as pilots for COGOV?

The good example of multistakeholderism is ICANN.
Tech community (IETF) or Governments.
The Internet Engineering Task Force, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the World Wide Web Consortium, the Regional Internet Registries, the IEEE.

11. How would the COGOV Architecture contribute to the development of digital norms?

COGOV Architecture is simple and accessible for all stakeholders. That facilitates the development of digital norms.

Through its digital cooperation network body which will focus on special and emerging issues (AI, tracing APPs..).

By identifying digital governance issues, providing a ‘norm exchange’ to connect communities, and establishing clear guardrails for digital technologies.

DIGITAL COMMONS MODEL

12. What gaps in the existing digital architecture would the Digital Commons model address?

The Digital Commons Architecture is founded on a concept of the Internet as a public good, which should notionally inform much of a cooperative governance structure. The model could therefore address many of the jurisdictional and other ‘polluting of the commons’ trends that currently exist.

Expanding access to existing digital infrastructure in ending extreme poverty, to promoting inclusive economic growth and decent work.

IGF+ addresses some of the IGF’s weaknesses, such as insufficient involvement of representatives from small and developing countries.

The strong absence of the UN in the existing model of the IGF will be filled with this model.

Participation of small and developing countries and SMEs.

13. Which aspects/features of the proposed architecture should be further considered?

In the design of its agenda, it focuses on streamlining discussions from existing fora, which is meant to ensure the political buy-in for the agenda. A weakness from such an approach is that any challenge in the composition and inclusivity of those processes then influences the agenda that is set within the Digital Commons Architecture.

Similarly to the COGOV structure, but again it may be a consequence of the brevity of the outlines, there is no focus in the architecture to facilitate the domestic implementation of solutions, even through soft influences like incentives. This is often the result of a global commons vision that may at times overlook the
opportunities present in domestic law-making.

I think that the IGF principles are lacking. I recommend that the term IGF be visible in the Digital Commons Architecture.

The strong presence of the UN in the combined model.

Data and jurisdiction.

**FINAL QUESTIONS**

14. Do you see scope for combining the three models and if yes, how could this be operationalized?

This could be operationalized by collaboration between the three models. First, IGF models should interact with COGOV by updating them on their cooperation acceleration progress. This would prepare and hasten expansion of existing networks and encourage new networks based on information given by IGF. Also, Digital Commons Architecture would ensure they create dialogue around emerging digital issues and communicate related problems to be solved by multistakeholders.

Yes, I do. The combination of Digital Commons Architecture and Internet Governance Forum Plus (IGF+) with the following structure:

**Role:** Address some of the IGF’s weak points such as insufficient involvement of representatives of small and developing countries and create dialogue around emerging digital issues and communicate related problems to be solved by stakeholders. Ultimately, the architecture would ensure that digital technologies promote the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and tackle risks of social harm resulting from digital transformation.

**Composition:** It would comprise multistakeholder tracks and a small secretariat;

1) The multistakeholder tracks would consist of project-oriented and results-driven working groups which would meet all together annually and each be managed by a lead organization, i.e., a UN agency, an industry or academic consortium, or a multistakeholder forum.

2) The small secretariat which could be housed within the UN would ensure light coordination of the tracks, and the organization of the annual meeting of the tracks.

- The Advisory Group would prepare IGF annual meetings and identify focus policy issues each year;
- The Co-operation Accelerator would address the concerns of different stakeholder groups and support co-operation among existing institutions on specific issues;
- The Policy Incubator would monitor, examine, and incubate policies and norms for public discussions and adoption;
- The Observatory and Help Desk would provide an overview of digital policy issues, coordinate capacity development activities, and direct requests for help to appropriate entities.

**Funding:** Funding would be based on voluntary contributions, membership fees for private sector participation, and a dedicated trust fund for civil society and least developed countries.

Combine IGF + with the Digital Commons Architecture to create a strong UN presence in the model.

It is preferable to keep the model of the IGF.

The best way must be sort. [?] 

No, the three models have different approaches to digital cooperation.

There are 4 common points between the models: multi stakeholder and bottom-up approaches, engagement and capacity development.

But the IGF+ would be the more supported model and I don’t see a scope for combining.

Appreciating the regulation of ICTs as a public good, or the Digital Commons as regulatory space, demands solutions that do not just negotiate debates between the regulatory powers of the private versus public
sectors. Instead, these environments require digital cooperation, which must be [structurally] incorporated into the design of the architecture for governance, rather than merely acknowledged as a priority.

Within the digital governance frameworks, an additional requirement must be an understanding that there will be normative, as well as technical, governance challenges that require addressing. These normative challenges require inclusivity in the governance process for legitimacy, and for the design of locally applicable policy solutions.

The adaptations proposed to the IGF+ incorporate many of these concerns, which can be combined with aspects of the other proposed architectures. For instance, the ‘Network of Networks’ voluntary peer coordination function directly connects to recommendations for the annual forum – and highlights the need for a direct collaboration between the MAG functions and Cooperation Accelerator functions of the IGF+.

### 15. What are key shared values, principles, understanding and objectives for a global digital cooperation architecture that should be included in any possible global document on Digital Cooperation?

Existing IGF principles are sufficient in my view.

- Bottom Up approach;
- Prioritize public consultations;
- Always consider a group of multistakeholder for common understanding.

It is worth noting as an extension of Elinor Ostrom’s (1991) work on governing the commons, that in seeking to regulate the digital commons, ultimate success would rely on (amongst other areas largely addressed by the options, especially by the broad participation sought to be implemented within the Policy Incubator) ensuring that those affected by the rules and norms generated could participate in their modification and using graduated sanctions. At domestic level, this requires the policy solutions to be developed to ensure a considered focus on these mechanisms domestically.

At the level of international digital cooperation, however, the soft law focus required of such a fora will also necessitate a specific, and considered, mechanism for streamlining its policy recommendations in international hard law mechanisms. A key method for facilitating this is ensuring that strong associations to existing human rights norms are made a priority.

Local Digital Cooperation, plus Regional Digital Cooperation will feed into the global Digital Cooperation.

The UN should be the anchor.

The common value is the Multistakeholder approach.

Inclusiveness, respect, human-centeredness, human rights, international law, transparency and sustainability.

### 16. What role do you see for the UN in the future of global digital cooperation? What would the profile, responsibilities and role of a Technology Envoy (to be appointed by the UN Secretary-General) be?

The Secretary of the global IGF will have the widest powers to act in the name of the UN Secretary General in digital matters.

The profile, responsibilities and role of a Technology Envoy would sum up only in the representativeness he must have on the conduct of ICT issues in our continent and in particular in our countries. This must be a champion engaged in the matters of ICTs and in conducting them for the benefit of the continent.

If the Digital Policy Development process were mainstreamed into the UN activities, the issue of a Technology Envoy would be taken off.

I see a leadership role for the UN due to its capacity to integrate all country’s interests.
Multi-stakeholder or bilateral initiatives on specific issues. Enhancing digital cooperation will require both reinvigorating existing multilateral partnerships and potentially creating new mechanisms that involve stakeholders from business, academia, civil society and technical organizations.

The UN's foundation in human rights, and the mechanisms designed to give realization to those rights, form an important avenue for assisting to realize just outcomes that will additionally be improved by digital cooperation. The UN's spearheading of the Sustainable Development Goals helps create normative considerations that include sustainable economic considerations that are a vital source of multidisciplinary targets for the development of digital policy.

Importantly, the role of the UN as a data collector and provider should be centered as a partnership within any selected digital co-operation solution that directly addresses a key challenge in the sector.

A Digital, rather than Technology, Envoy serving from within the Office of the UN Secretary General could help support the political prioritization of digital issues identified in the background document.

### 17. Which other ideas, mechanisms and features are worth considering?

Regional balance is important.

Even by adopting other structures, I recommend that the ideas and principles of the IGF be maintained, as they have always shown integrity in the conduct of processes involving multistakeholder cooperation.

Mainstream Technology and Digital Policy Process into the UN activities. A full-fledged Agency of the UN needs to be established to take care of this important growing sector of the New World Economy (digital economy, platform economy, data economy, sharing economy, etc).

Reflection must be deeply concentrated in the small island developing countries (SMDC) participation.

Engaging Digital Companies in Africa.