



INTERNET
GOVERNANCE
FORUM
POLAND
INTERNET UNITED

16TH

Annual Meeting
of Internet Governance Forum

 **Katowice, Poland**

6 December 2021 to 10 December 2021





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GOVERNANCE
FORUM**
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Document Version Control

Settings	
Document Title	Global Internet Governance Forum
Project Title	Report
Document Authors	Plantina Tsholofelo Mokone
Doc. Version	V1.00
Sensitivity	Medium
Date	

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Changes to this document are summarised in the following table in reverse chronological order (latest version first).

Revision	Date	Created by	Brief description of changes
V1.00	29/11/2019	Internet Governance Coordinator	The document is a South African summary of the Global Internet Governance Forum held in Poland, Katowice.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Government representatives, the technical community, industry, and civil society assembled at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2021 to debate ways to improve digital collaboration. The Polish Government in Katowice hosted the IGF, held for the sixteenth time since its inception in 2005. The IGF occurred from 6 December 2021 to 10 December 2021 in the famous Katowice International conference centre. The underlying theme was “Internet United”.

The assembly focused on the most critical Internet and digital policy concerns, including meaningful access, digital rights, cybersecurity, and the challenges and opportunities presented by innovative technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing.

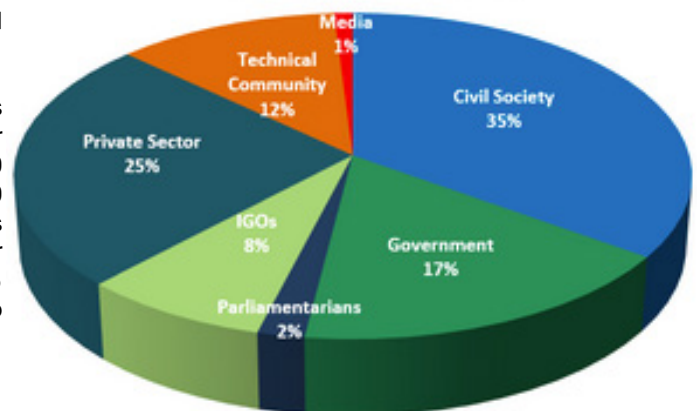


2 IGF 2021 Participation and Programme Statistics

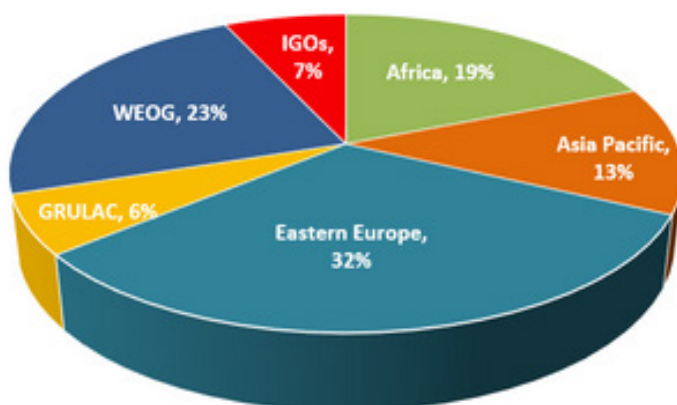
The Poland Government hosted the sixteenth annual meeting of the IGF in Katowice, Poland, from 6 December 2021 to 10 December 2021, in a hybrid style, with the overriding theme: Internet United.

The sixteenth IGF united 10,371 stakeholders from 175 nations; 2,734 individuals collected their badges at the IGF location in Katowice. Over 15,000 connections were made to sessions over 750,000 minutes throughout the summit; 67% of participants remarked they were new to the event. The gender breakdown was 52% male, 47% female, and 1% self-identified as other. Two per cent of those who registered pronounced they were members of Parliaments. One per cent of registered media representatives attended the event (Figure 1).

Participants by stakeholder group



Participants per region



Participants per gender

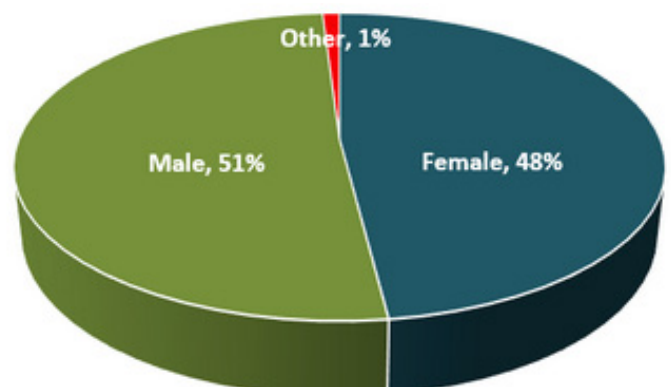


Figure 1: Participants

The conference comprised 318 sessions. Breakdowns per session type were:

- One opening session
- Eight main sessions
- Eighty-three workshops
- Thirty-five open fora
- Twenty-eight town halls
- Ten launches and awards
- Thirty lightning talks
- Six networking sessions
- Eighteen DC sessions
- Seven NRI sessions
- Seventy-two pre-events
- Nine high-level leaders track sessions
- Four parliamentary tracks
- One global youth summit
- Two BPF sessions
- Two PNs sessions
- One open mic
- One closing session



There were 39 remote hubs organised globally, with 59% in Africa, 13% in Latin America and the Caribbean, 8% in the Asia Pacific, 13% in WEOG, and 8% in Eastern Europe.

Based on the most recent HDI Index, 64% of participants were from developed nations, classed as “very high”, and 36% were from developing countries, not defined as “very high”, as shown in the stakeholder distribution below (Figure 2).

Participation of countries by Human Development Index (HDI)

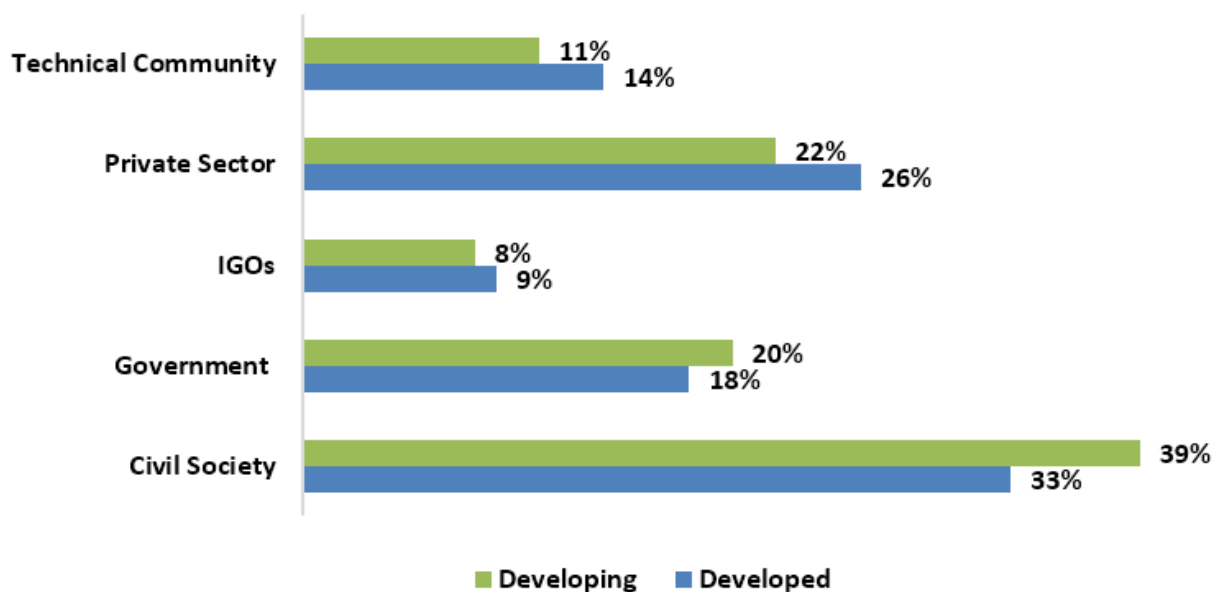


Figure 2: Participation of countries in the Human Development Index

2.1 SOUTH AFRICA'S REPRESENTATION AT THE IGF 2021

As the custodian of Internet governance in South Africa, ZADNA was represented at the Global IGF 2021 Meeting by the .ZADNA Chairperson of the Board, Ms Palesa Igoze, ZADNA Board members Ms Anriette Esterhuysen, Internet governance coordinator, Ms Tsholofelo Mokone and ZADNA ICT Coordinator, Mr Oarabile Mudongo.

Other South African representatives that attended the 16th Annual Meeting of the IGF in a personal capacity include Adv. Zanyiwe Asare – Nthatisi, the founder and CEO of Digitally Legal. Ms Baratang Miya, the founder and CEO of GirlHype, Ms Melody Musoni, the senior legal consultant at the Phukubje Pierce Masithela Attorneys.





2.2 OPENING CEREMONY

The Global IGF opened with remarks from the United Nations Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, and the President and Prime Minister of Poland (Figure 3).

United Nations Secretary-General – Mr António Guterres

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the life-changing power of the Internet. Digital technology has saved lives by enabling millions of people to work, study and socialise safely online. But the pandemic has also magnified the digital divide, and the dark side of technology: the lightning-fast spread of misinformation; the manipulation of people's behaviour; and more. We can only address these challenges united, through strengthened cooperation: by establishing clear rules to safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms; by regaining control over our data; by countering disinformation and hate speech; and by connecting everyone to the Internet by 2030. The Internet Governance Forum has a crucial role in shaping the conversation.

President of the Republic of Poland – Mr Andrzej Duda

The numerous presences here on the site in Katowice, but also online due to the current pandemic situation, only shows the significance of the digital space in present days and how important its issues are for us all. Let's be honest, if there was no Internet, we would not be able to meet in such a big number these days.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs - Mr Liu Zhenmin

The pandemic has impacted how we live, how we work and how we interact with each other. And how those unconnected are left further behind. The IGF could deliver its promise for shaping a digital future for the world -- turning the COVID-19 crisis into opportunities. Indeed, this is easier said than done, as global Internet governance is complex. But united, we can succeed, together.

Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland - Mateusz Morawiecki

For the first time in history, Poland is hosting the global Internet Governance Forum organized here in Katowice, International Conference Centre and we Poles, are honored to hold this important event and we consider it as an appreciation of our efforts and activities in the field of the digitization.

3 Summary of the IGF 2021 - High Level Exchange Panel



3.1 Global economic recovery— at which stage are we?

- The COVID-19 epidemic has wreaked havoc on people's lives and hastened the speed of the global digital transition. Typically, public policy changes take decades, but the pandemic led to increased connectedness and adoption of digital services and transactions by individuals and enterprises in domains, such as health, education, commerce, and civic involvement, in only a few months.
- The epidemic served as a stark reminder of the global digital divide. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) estimates that 37% of the world's population – or 2.9 billion people – have never used the Internet. Arduous paths to an Internet connection exist for nations with unique circumstances. Digitalisation's advantages are distributed inequitably. The epidemic demonstrated that in an interconnected globe, no community is, and no one is left behind. Vaccination advances the global economic recovery process. The World Health Organization (WHO) established the goal of immunising 40% of the world's population by the end of 2021 and 70% by mid-2022. This objective must be met for global recovery and pre-pandemic life to resume.
- Significant investments in telecommunications infrastructure are required because traffic deviated from roads and the Internet. To accommodate an online activity, the Internet must be accessible, dependable, trustworthy, and secure 24 hours a day. Investments are required in digital literacy, capacity building, education, and lifetime learning. Public-private partnerships may promote investment, financial incentives, and solutions devised in one nation reproduced in another.
- A synergistic approach to data, platform-based services, and disruptive technologies has the potential to lead the way for economic recovery and long-term growth. Assuring data privacy, security, and rights will also be crucial for the future of digital technology, particularly as developed nations' demands increase.
- International collaborations leveraging resources from several stakeholders may facilitate investments in digital infrastructure and capacity development. Global collaboration – especially public-private partnerships – must be strengthened. Rapid and adaptable regulatory adjustments are vital for a swift recovery.



3.2 Cities United: connected, green, and inclusive

- Globally, large cities confront comparable difficulties, including suburban development, economic segregation, pollution, and waste management.
- According to the United Nations E-Government Survey 2020, municipalities lag their national governments concerning e-government development. One recurring issue is the cost of connection. To solve the connection problem in 2030, fair competition, solid spectrum, Wi-Fi management and sharing, and forward-thinking about how people and organisations will connect online in 2030, are crucial.
- Through creative solutions with a strategic purpose, such as digital twins, digitalisation enables cities and communities to experience rapid development. Environmental and geographic data, and technology, may automate and optimise processes in agriculture (e.g., tractor control), construction (e.g., metering, energy efficiency), manufacturing (e.g., quality control and worker safety), and advertising. Building confidence in innovative technologies and increasing understanding is critical since some individuals are reluctant to use them owing to data and privacy concerns.
- It is critical to prevent route dependence and technology entanglement with smart city technologies. Human-centred design, continuous feedback, agility, interoperability, open data and open software are crucial design concepts ensuring digital goods and services will continue to be modular, interoperable, and replaceable.
- Cities and regions should ensure that all residents have equitable access to green spaces to enhance their life quality. Digital environmental sustainability in cities, and the contribution of digital technology to more sustainable lives, goods, and behaviours, should be a crucial design objective for the private sector.
- Numerous cities are introducing smart city technologies. Often, direction is lacking, and the international community, especially intergovernmental organisations, can assist. In impoverished locations, including indigenous firms in significant urban developments is critical. Local start-up development creates an ecosystem and a growth potential for cities.



3.3 Creating sustainable value and inclusive society – the role of digital platforms

- Everyone has the right to live, work, learn, and play in a safe and welcoming digital environment. Freedom of speech, privacy, and security are fundamental human rights extending to the digital realm.
- Digital platforms allow information discovery, human connection, and social campaigning. They are also used to propagate hatred, violence, extremism, cyberbullying, and recruitment for unlawful activities, all of which – aided by algorithms – have the potential to destabilise democratic nations over time through growing polarisation.
- To preserve an autonomous, pluralistic, secure, inclusive, and sustainable digital environment, safeguards for human rights and democracy on digital platforms are required.
- Digital platform regulation should not be laissez-faire but balanced and human-centred. Excessive regulation may provide governments with additional functions and stifle citizens' freedom of speech. Each participant in the digital ecosystem's rights and duties should be appropriately customised to their respective services (e.g., social media, videoconferencing, etc.).
- Anti-competitive behaviour may jeopardise the digital ecosystem's capacity to defend user rights. It is critical for the private sector, social network operators, search engines, ISPs, online merchants, Fintech, and other platforms to be more responsible for user-centred practices to guarantee that users have effective channels for exercising their rights and privacy.
- A need for sound methods exists in ensuring privacy and freedom of expression, online speech, censorship, and hazardous material, and providing equitable access to the Internet for everyone. Anti-violence and anti-illegal content measures are inadequate.
- On 25 November 2021, the 193 members of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) endorsed the "Recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence" in a historic global consensus. Regulating developing technologies, such as AI, is challenging. All stakeholders should, therefore, contribute to global accords.
- The private sector must be honest about its use of personal data (storage, protection, etc.) to retain confidence. They should not prioritise their own services but ensure the market is open to everybody. Businesses must be honest about their policies regarding unlawful material on platforms, including content moderation, reporting tools, and transparency reports.



3.4 How to promote inclusive and diverse innovation, investment opportunities, and corporate social responsibility in digital technologies?

- Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is critical for the private sector to fulfil its digital obligations for the greater good. CSR helps to provide a more transparent, sustainable, and equitable public connection. The private sector must be accountable and cautious about the effect of its digital activity on workers, consumers, and society.
- CSR should include private sector firms engaging in responsible business with developing countries. Developing nations should be enthusiastic recipients of technology and Internet services and should be incorporated into global production and development chains.
- Distinguishing between what is and is not acceptable in digital technology might begin with examining its influence on human rights. For example, facial recognition technology – often used by law enforcement – has a strong effect on privacy, may be controlled more severely than an algorithm that recommends one song over another on a music streaming site.
- Each action has a consequence— good and bad; this way of thinking may be used to control digital technology. Self-regulation by producers of digital technology is an inspiration, though it fails to provide the appropriate safety level. A more focused regulatory approach is required. Jointly produced proposals with all stakeholders demonstrate how to strike the correct balance between rapid and fair human-centred digital change.
- Critical is that innovation promotion and regulation function concurrently and must do so properly. Innovation must be for the more significant benefit. For instance, one of the most inventive industries is the highly regulated medical business.

3.5 Building equitable employment conditions and competencies for the future of work

- The labour market's future is set to change in several ways: a deviation from office jobs, machine operators, and other occupations towards ICT professionals; a deviation from more stable employment relationships towards independent, flexible, or freelance work without traditional social security benefits; the need to constantly update skills to keep up with technological advances; and a shift in capabilities towards more creative and complex tasks rather than repetitive and labour-intensive tasks.
- Inadequate nation growth must retain talented and skilled ICT employees. There is an acute shortage of technical experts. Technology access is often easier than finding staff capable of using it. The exodus of talent is widespread in the digital economy.
- Governments must be allies of the younger generation, developing skills, and promoting STEM education, critical for the ICT industry. They must foster the environment, essential for open research and development, to assist industry (4.0) and agriculture successfully.
- Along with STEM education, it is critical to educate young people on collaborating in teams, develop skills—particularly physical skills, immediately transferable to the real economy, value learning, and find a social purpose in their satisfying occupations. The most successful education is inclusive, interesting, and participatory. Governments must invest in critical infrastructure and retrain and certify instructors collaborating with young talents.
- More than half of the world's population, especially in Africa, remains offline; therefore, blended learning – learning both online and offline – is significant to this group. Governments must guarantee that the Internet, including the technology used to access it, is inexpensive and never shuts down through universal access initiatives. National and local education institutions, the research and development community, and others should engage in networks and customised education and access initiatives (e.g., language).

3.6 Investing in digital growth and enabling capacities – transnational and transcontinental synergies

- Digital transformation is a complicated process with significant development and economic development potential. Several factors contribute to digital development, including funding opportunities for micro-small businesses and an appropriate regulatory framework, digitisation of business and industrial processes, efficient and affordable infrastructure, continuous improvement of digital skills, and managing and integrating e-services.
- The private sector should invest in infrastructure. Governments should facilitate such investment by registering startups, establishing and attracting an innovation fund, considering tax, customs, and financial incentives for successful startups, and enacting sound policies on data access and use.
- It is critical to educate and develop future entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is also about calculated risks; the penalty of failure may be too high. Access to risk finance is more straightforward in certain nations than in others. Governments are rarely risk takers and may be reluctant to finance businesses outsourcing activities to other countries. A little more risk-taking might be beneficial to stay up with the rapidly evolving digital industry. Collaboration between the public and private sectors is necessary.
- Big data analytics - derived from various transactions, production, and communication activities - enables society to create more information and value faster. Simultaneously, data-driven innovation must significantly enhance goods, processes, organisational techniques, market development, and further investment in AI-related technology.
- A critical difficulty in dealing with sophisticated technologies is funding. It is difficult to capitalise fully on the expanding demand for goods and services. It is vital to design co-investment models that include domestic and global investors. This enables risk mitigation of a negative effect on user rights, portfolio diversification, and support for new creative business models. Factors for accelerating small company growth include flexible legal solutions developed by the public sector and readily accessible e-services and facilities for SMEs, including assistance for SME workers in e-competence.
- Many businesses lack the resources to hire advisers and consultants for digital transformation. They need policies that facilitate their access to digital transformation skills. Digital audits in businesses aid in discovering innovative technologies and efficiency advantages.



3.7 Governance models to promote inclusive and diverse business development – what stands in the way?

- The Internet is critical to the world's survival. Half of global occupations will shift because of digital transformation; more individuals are already working from home. This raises concerns about the skills required for a knowledge-based, digital economy, how to assure fair access to the Internet while ensuring that no one is left behind.
- To fully use emerging areas' creative potential and talent, it is necessary to disrupt the centralised paradigm where a few giant global firms dominate the market and absorb all regional SMEs, startups, and talent. From the start, governments must modify education, facilities, equipment, and curriculum through innovative reasoning.
- Inclusion and Internet access were approached from a paternalistic perspective. Power is concentrated in a few businesses; local players are priced out of markets; curricula are geared for passive receivers; individuals lack critical thinking about the technology they use. Significant investments in equitable access and an enabling environment for everyone's creativity are required. Rethinking public procurement

policies may also increase the number of individuals and firms participating in the market for innovation. Regulation's purpose is to empower, not to control. The Internet is a public resource and a shared benefit. It is worthwhile to investigate fair taxes and pro-competitive regulation.

- Inclusion cannot be addressed without encountering exclusion first. The digital divergence cannot be bridged without addressing poverty and gender equality—particularly on an economic level.
- Technology must mirror societal ideals. People must feel happy and secure about using it while being positioned at the centre. Governments, non-governmental organisations, and the corporate sector must collaborate in their separate responsibilities to develop multi-stakeholder solutions for human connectivity.
- Technically, the Internet's basis, such as networks, operate unregulated. There is no cost associated with Internet use. The concerns are created by the material that occurs on top of it. Various restrictions apply in different regions, impairing the Internet's functionality; for example, concerning cloud computing. Regulation disconnects individuals from the Internet. Only prudent regulation – not excessive regulation – can nudge market participants in the correct direction.

4 Outputs of the parliamentary tracker at the 16th UN Internet Governance Forum under the theme Internet United summarised

- Parliamentarians participating in the parliamentary track at the 16th UN IGF discussed the issue relating to privacy and data protection rights in the digital space, the challenges of addressing harmful content online, and governance approaches for AI systems.
- Welcoming the IGF Parliamentary Track expansion from a roundtable in 2019 and 2020 to a more comprehensive programme, including five online preparatory sessions before IGF 2021, and three topical sessions and a roundtable during IGF 2021.
- Acknowledging the role of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and the lower chamber of the Polish Parliament – the Sejm – in co-organising the IGF 2021 parliamentary track, and the support provided by the IGF Secretariat and the Department of Digital Policy in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland.
- Recalling UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/74/304, encourages strengthened co-operation between the United Nations, national Parliaments and the IPU, further recalling the outcomes of the parliamentary roundtables at IGF 2019 and IGF 2020, recommending that national Parliaments cooperate and exchange good practices in dealing with digital policy issues; the responsibility of parliamentarians was noted, to devise people-centric legal frameworks that respond to the challenges of the digital age.
- Noting the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for digital cooperation calling for more actionable outcomes of the parliamentary track at IGF, and the Secretary-General's report Our common agenda, which emphasise the importance of strengthened multi-stakeholder cooperation in addressing pressing digital policy issues in areas, such as bridging the digital divide, protecting human rights, and ensuring online safety and security.
- Noting that the technology-oriented world we live in is abundant in contradictions and divergent policy approaches, making it increasingly difficult to enact suitable and future-proof legislation for the digital space.



4.1 Promoting a digital area centred on the user

Recognise that:

- As individuals spend an increasing amount of time online, there is a clear policy obligation to ensure that the digital realm is secure. This necessitates political leadership capable of meeting the era's new challenges.
- A sizeable corpus exists of law applicable to the digital environment at the international, regional, and national levels (e.g., to combat hate speech regardless of where it occurs, online or offline). Simultaneously, the Internet and digital environment (e.g., cross-border nature, rapid dissemination of material) need unique legal procedures – a point that tech corporations often recognise.



- Legislation should be founded on principles rather than rules to withstand the test of time, Internationally and regionally, the essential human rights concepts that should govern legislation were spelt out (e.g., transparency, accountability, the rule of law). Legislation must be carefully constructed to meet the highest standards of human rights. Legislation rushed or attempted to establish comprehensive standards for certain technology risks swiftly becomes obsolete.
- The critical factor – and the issue – is that legislation be intelligent, realistic, and practicable. An inherent conflict (the certainty of how the law should be understood and implemented) exists between flexibility (the ability of the law to adapt to evolving technology) and clarity. Legislation governing the digital environment is primarily unknown to legislatures and the business sector. We are acquiring knowledge through experience.
- Parliaments should serve as facilitators, ensuring that all perspectives are heard and considered. It is past time for concrete multi-stakeholder discussions on balancing fundamental human rights, such as privacy and the right to freedom of expression and access to information, while also considering other critical values, such as consumer protection, innovation, and business freedom. Regulators and the courts must also be included from the start of these negotiations since they will play a critical role in enforcing the regulations.

Reiterate that:

- Parliaments ensure that the Internet and the larger digital environment remain accessible while also being safe and secure and for reaffirming that solutions to digital policy concerns must be human-centric and centred on users.

Recommend that:

- Legislatures consider the following factors when enacting laws governing the Internet and the digital space:
- Integrate openness and multi-stakeholder discussions into legislative processes.
- Ensure that regulatory procedures and regulations are evidence-based.
- Consider – and prevent – unintended implications of regulations. For example, incorporating human rights affect assessments into legislative processes.
- Determine whether legislation adopted at the national and regional levels will affect the global and interoperable nature of the Internet and the digital economy.
- Collaborate and exchange information with other Parliaments to (a) learn from one another and (b) contribute to regulatory coherence and interoperability at the regional and global levels.



4.2 Protection of personal information and privacy

Recognise that:

- Preserving privacy and personal data in the digital world is both critical and increasingly complicated and urges that Parliaments draft or revise laws, as required, considering the following principles:
- Using personal data by private and public entities must be guided by responsibility, transparency, proportionality, necessity, and the rule of law.
- Legislation should be mindful not only of protecting the data itself but also of protecting the individuals behind the data.
- Considering that the right to privacy is not absolute, a proper balance – with adequate checks and balances and accountability mechanisms – must be struck with other rights and public interests.

Emphasise the:

- Importance of regulatory coherence and interoperability at the regional and international level and encourage legislators to collaborate and share information to ensure the laws they draft.
- Recognise the transnational nature of the digital space
- Robustly protect individuals' rights, including in cross-border data flows
- Provide clarity and predictability to businesses operating across jurisdictions
- Containment of hazardous material

Express concern:

- About the proliferation of harmful content online, which can have a detrimental effect on democracy, human rights, and safety, and call attention to the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in addressing issues, such as:
- Online abuse directed at women, including female parliamentarians, can limit their ability to participate freely in the digital space
- Online child sexual exploitation and abuse



Recommend that:

- Parliaments ensure any legislation addressing this issue strikes a proper balance between combating harmful content and safeguarding freedom of expression and other internationally recognised human rights.
- Balances the need for swift action against harmful content and the need for due process; incorporates principles, such as transparency (e.g., on how content moderation works), judicial oversight, and appeal/redress mechanisms.

Urge Parliaments to support:

- Awareness-raising and capacity-building programmes that equip Internet users with critical thinking and media literacy skills.
- Efforts promoting professional journalism, fact-checking, and general media plurality.

4.3 Governance of artificial intelligence

Urge Parliaments to encourage:

- Domestic stakeholders to engage actively and effectively in global multilateral and multi-stakeholder processes and fora aimed at advancing ethical and human-rights-based approaches to the development and use of AI.

- Governmental actors should enter cooperation agreements with other nations to facilitate experience-sharing and technology transfer in AI.
- Domestic stakeholders should develop and deploy AI under the standards specified in papers, such as the OECD Principles for Artificial Intelligence and the UNESCO recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence.

Recognising that:

- Certain jurisdictions throughout the globe have built regulatory frameworks for AI. We urge that procedures aimed at adopting legislative methods to regulate the development and use of AI consider the following:
- Before developing regulations, it is necessary to have a firm grasp on governed and why. And a review of rules and regulations is essential to determine if they already apply to AI systems or may be altered.
- Considering what aspects of AI should be controlled holistically: evaluate not just how AI affects or may affect people and their human rights but also the larger social consequences (e.g., concerning public interest and the common good).
- When requirements for developing and using AI are established, clarity about the roles and duties for executing those requirements, and monitoring their implementation, should be provided.

- Ensuring that legislation is as flexible, nimble, feasible, and future-proof and does not hinder innovation unnecessarily.
- Consider the concepts included in global norms and frameworks for AI, such as those produced by the OECD, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO (e.g., transparency, human supervision, and accountability).

Inviting Parliaments to:

- Promote the responsible use of AI as a device for advancing sustainable development and improving government services and a device for evidence-based policymaking, where appropriate.
- Promote integrating AI into formal educational curricula and informal training programmes.

4.4 Participation of Parliaments in the IGF

- Urge Parliaments and legislators to continue strengthening their ability to approach digital policy problems and regularly exchange experiences and best practices.
- Encourage Parliaments and parliamentarians globally to strengthen their participation with the IGF and develop other mechanisms for contributing to global processes furthering digital cooperation.
- Encourage the UN DESA, IPU, and future IGF host countries to continue convening and strengthening the IGF Parliamentary Track, especially through inter-sessional events.
- Commit, as IGF 2021 legislative track participants, to communicate the outcomes of our conversations to the legislatures where we serve, to incorporate them into our parliamentary work, and build on them as we continue our participation with the IGF.







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Report by

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Domain Name Authority