



German IGF-D position on the Global Digital Compact negotiations (Rev.2)

1. July 2024

The German IGF (IGF-D) welcomes that the global, open, interoperable, resilient, free and secure Internet is reaffirmed in the GDC as well as the recognition that this internet relies on multistakeholder governance in accordance with the Tunis Agenda. We applaud the inclusion of the São Paulo Multistakeholder Guidelines of the NETmundial+10 Declaration.

However, the IGF-D would have hoped to see more precise tasks for the IGF, specifically an involvement into the Follow up and the establishment of new bodies. Therefore, we would like to raise two points

1. Follow-up of the Global Digital Compact (GDC) - risk of fragmentation and duplication through new institutions

We recognize that in para 52. international governance of emerging digital technologies with a multidisciplinary and adaptable multi stakeholder approach is required. We consider the IGF a suitable platform for this endeavor.

Instead, numerous new processes and institutions for the follow-up of the GDC are proposed in paras. 54ff. With regard to these proposals, we emphasize that a precise analysis of the existing institutions and processes is first required in order to identify synergies and gaps in existing governance structures. In our view, this has not been done sufficiently to date.

We stand ready to participate in the national implementation of the Compact provided for in para. 63. Regarding any plans for the implementation, the nature of the internet and digital processes must be recognized and the efforts of the multistakeholder community, which of course also includes governments, must be mentioned. We would have hoped that instead of that the implementation of the GDC shall “build upon the processes emanating from the WSIS” (para. 67); rather, these must be harmonized. The GDC should not prejudge the WSIS+20 Review and rather take into account the discussions occurring at the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event in May 2024.

We welcome the call for the WSIS+20 review process to include the opinions of young people (para. 69), but this should also be done when implementing the GDC in line with the principle: Nothing about us, without us.

We take a critical view of the proposed International Scientific Panel on AI in para. 54a Rev.2 and an extra Annual Global Dialogue on AI Governance, particularly in view of the precarious financial situation of the United Nations. Instead, the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) should be strengthened as it

already guarantees UN system-wide coordination on digital topics. The Annual Global Dialogue on AI Governance, as well as a High Level Review of the GDC can and should be embedded in the existing IGF in order to avoid fragmentation of the discussions.

Any Declaration on progress of implementation can and should also be prepared within the framework of the IGF with the participation of the multistakeholder community. However, asking the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) to include a review into its working processes is a step into the right direction.

2. Future of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) – Opportunity and risk at the same time

We underline the perception in the [Open Letter](#) of the Technological Community stating, that “some proposals for the Global Digital Compact can be read to mandate more centralized governance.”

The future of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is currently at risk. The WSIS+20 Review and the GDC present both opportunities for a substantial further development of the IGF but also risks of fragmentation of the discussions and an increasing influence of states that are not interested in broad, inclusive multistakeholder governance.

Although the role of the IGF is recognized in para. 27 of the GDC and support for it is reaffirmed, this is indirectly undermined in the remaining chapters especially in the Follow-up & Review section. A coherent and continuous anchoring of the IGF is needed here, particularly in the follow-up and review section of the GDC. The recently concluded NETmundial(+10) conference made clear that the IGF needs better funding and should remain the central forum for the coordination of Internet governance. The GDC should lay a good basis for financing of the IGF from all sides, government as well as other donors, instead of creating new duplicative structures. Improved financing can increase the inclusivity of the IGF and provide for a democratic and bottom-up follow up and review of the GDC.

The GDC offers the opportunity to provide the impetus for further development of the IGF and to upgrade it not only financially, but also by assigning further competences to the IGF. This can be done by laying the follow-up and review in the hands of the multistakeholder community and therefore empower the IGF to take action to further develop itself and enable it to effectively provide a follow-up and review of the GDC. Furthermore, we consider the IGF's annual meeting ideal for including the Annual Global Dialogue on AI Governance. The IGF has proven itself for many years to be an excellent forum for discussions on governance in and around evolving technologies. It has global structures and mechanisms in place to welcoming input by a proposed scientific panel on AI as well as any stakeholder. The IGF's high convening power could be used to craft documents such as a potential Progress Declaration on the GDC or AI and thus further increase the IGF's contribution to



substantial Internet governance. The GDC needs to provide the necessary framework to do so but should not preempt the WSIS+20 review process in which the IGF's mandate should ultimately be renewed.

We reject any attempts to weaken the IGF as this severely undermines the multistakeholder governance model that has benefitted the world so far. In alliance with the signatories of the Open Letter, we ask that member states, the Secretary-General and the Tech Envoy seek to ensure that proposals for digital governance remain consistent with the enormously successful multistakeholder Internet governance practice that has brought us the Internet of today.

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