



ORAL STATEMENT

UN Global Digital Compact

Informal Consultations with Member States and Stakeholders

February 13, 2024

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- The Global Network Initiative, GNI, appreciates the opportunity to engage in this consultation and thanks the co-facilitators and relevant UN bodies for providing this opportunity.
- GNI's perspective is informed by over fifteen years of experience in fostering multistakeholder collaboration and accountability to advance the GNI Principles on Freedom of Expression and Privacy, which guide tech company decision-making around freedom of expression and privacy.
 - GNI members include over 95 leading digital rights and press freedom groups, technology companies, investors, and academics from every region of the world. This includes companies like Microsoft and civil society organizations like Article 19, as well as others represented here today, and we associate ourselves with their contributions.
 - At the core of GNI's mission, governance, and work is a commitment to the inclusion of a broad diversity of voices and views and a shared belief in the values and principles established in international human rights law.
 - We strongly encourage the co-chairs of the intergovernmental process, Member States, and all actors contributing to the multistakeholder technology track to ensure that the process of developing the Global Digital Compact reflects this approach.
 - To that end, we would like to make three high-level recommendations:
- First, the GDC and the Summit for the Future must center and reinforce the international human rights framework. This framework has successfully guided the international community's efforts to address shared, global issues for seventy years, including its work over the last few decades on Internet governance.
- Second, strengthen digital cooperation: GNI, its members, and other stakeholders who participated in the deep dives underlined the importance of using a truly multistakeholder approach to collaboration through the GDC and other relevant UN processes. Multistakeholder engagement is a foundational principle in the history of



global Internet governance that should be at the core of any additional efforts to set international norms and standards.

- Third. avoid duplication of efforts: The GDC must ensure that whatever processes are implemented to carry forward work by the UN and its specialized agencies on critical digital issues acknowledge and build on the work that has already been done and is being done under the WSIS process, including the Internet Governance Forum, that it is grounded on human rights, and that it is truly inclusive and multistakeholder in both principle and practice.
- In closing, and in line with the first points, we would like to underscore that collaboration has been and continues to be core to the successful development and expansion of the Internet as a shared, open, interoperable, global resource. The Compact should acknowledge this and ensure that efforts by the UN going forward emphasize meaningful, multistakeholder engagement and cooperation. This means that the UN should acknowledge, participate in, and support existing non-governmental work in and around internet governance. Examples of such work include the work of the technical community, academia, and civil society-organized events such as National and Regional IGFs, RightsCon, the Digital Rights & Inclusion Forum, the Forum on Internet Freedom in Africa, and the upcoming NetMundial+10 convening that will take place April 29-30 in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Thank you.