A Note from **our GNI Board Chair**



2025 was a year of tremendous change and challenge as international conflict continued to seep through borders, and governments sought control over the lives of people both physically and in the digital space, even in places where human rights have long been taken for granted. At the same time, drastic budget cuts have impacted civil society and academia, who responded with nimble adjustments and hardened resolve.

This report reflects that resolve among GNI and our members, highlighting collective accomplishments across our core pillars of consensus-based policy advocacy, shared learning, and independent accountability that prioritizes improvement over time in real-world contexts. Furthermore, we created space for the decisive incorporation of multistakeholder artificial intelligence (AI) governance into the center of our work. Realizing the strength in and the need for greater community development, GNI hosted more Learning activities this year than ever before, supported the travel of over 40 civil society and academic participants to a wide range of summits and Internet policy forums, and brought our Members' Meeting and Annual Learning Forum to Latin America for the first time.

The admission of 19 new GNI members strengthened our belief in the enduring value of multistakeholderism. Further evidence for the utility of candid, cross-stakeholder engagements came from the first six company assessments of GNI's fifth assessment cycle, and the third annual European Rights and Risks Stakeholder Engagement Forum, which brought together a wide range of company, civil society, and academic experts to examine company risk assessments.

GNI's Policy work responded to questions of global governance in the technology and human rights landscape, and helped shape national developments on topics like encryption, cybercrime, and government surveillance reform. Throughout the World Summit on Information Society 20-year review (WSIS+20), GNI and its partners helped ensure that the Internet's foundational governance structure stayed grounded in multistakeholder participation and human rights. At the domestic level, GNI spoke out on developments including the reauthorization of section 702 of the U.S. Foreign Intelligence Service Act, and rapidly evolving regulatory regimes for online safety and content governance across dozens of jurisdictions.

Our Learning activities this year continued to provide spaces where members collaborate to make sense of a shifting landscape through detailed conversation with trusted peers across stakeholder groups. GNI incorporated our members' work and inputs into working groups, live-issue calls, conference workshops, and broader projects in order to platform under-represented perspectives and thoughtfully illuminate a range of perspectives on a wide range of issues.

Our fifth assessment cycle marked an important evolution of our accountability framework. By implementing changes agreed to as part of GNI's broader governance reforms, we significantly expanded member involvement in company assessments, which were previously limited to board members. The six assessments conducted this year drew 49 participants, including 27 non-company participants not represented on the GNI Board.

The surge in release and use of AI tools in 2025 saw governments racing each other and the market to steer the regulation, funding, and deployment of AI systems. GNI participated in a range of processes and discussions focussed on promoting nuanced, rights-respecting approaches to AI governance. GNI's Policy Brief on Government Interventions in AI, published in October and building on the work of our multistakeholder AI Working Group (AIWG), maps how five different types of government action can influence the AI value chain at the infrastructure, development, and deployment levels to either advance or undermine freedom of expression, privacy, and non-discrimination. In parallel, GNI and the Centre for Communication Governance at the National Law University Delhi (CCG) launched a new Multistakeholder Approaches to Participation in AI Governance (MAP-AI) project, supporting a network of Global Majority AI experts and voices whose perspectives too often go missing from these convenings.

The subject-matter contributions, relationships, and determination of our members; the diligence of our board; the vision and purpose of our staff; and the funding provided by our donors are all essential to the advancement of our shared goal of protecting freedom of expression and privacy online. We remain incredibly grateful for every one of those contributions.

We hope you will read this report closely, and that it will invite you to engage with GNI's work in whatever way makes sense for you: as a partner, a funder, a member, or simply an informed onlooker in a rapidly changing landscape.

Vicky Bowman

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Independent Chair

