

High Level Internet Governance Exchange
Day Zero of the XIVth Internet Governance Forum of the United Nations
Berlin, 25 November 2019
Chairman's Summary

Today, on the eve of the XIVth United Nations Internet Governance Forum, more than 100 ministers and high-ranking representatives of international organisations, business, civil society and the technical community came to Berlin to discuss the future of the Internet. The Internet is having an ever greater impact on all aspects of our economy and society, and is becoming an ever more important factor for growth and prosperity.

The Internet Governance Forum, which was established by the United Nations in 2006, is based on a multi-stakeholder approach and therefore provides an ideal forum for discussions about the future of the Internet. I personally saw to it that we are able to get numerous representatives from the Global South involved in these discussions. Germany and the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, in particular, will continue to promote and support the Internet Governance Forum moving forward.

The participants discussed along the lines of the three main issues of this year's IGF and had a broad understanding about the following themes, which are *inter alia* based on the Geneva Messages 2017 and the Paris Call 2018:

I. Data Governance

Digitalisation and MSMEs

Many participants agreed that the interconnection of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and the Internet have to be taken progressively into account by stakeholders and decision-makers. The most important opportunities and challenges for MSMEs are listed in the document attached (Internet Governance and SMEs), that is being presented by the Host Country on its own responsibility.

Free Flow of Data and its challenges

There was a broad convergence about the principle, that cross-border flow of data, information, ideas and knowledge generates higher productivity, greater innovation, and improved sustainable development. At the same time, it was recognized that the free flow of data raises certain challenges. By continuing to address challenges related to privacy, data protection, intellectual property rights, and security, we can further facilitate data free flow and strengthen consumer and business trust.

Human Rights and non-discrimination

Participants had a general understanding that Human Rights are of a universal nature and must be respected both online and offline. The specific rules governing Internet content at regional or national level must be designed in accordance with universal Human Rights. Many participants lined out that Human Rights are based on democracy, the rule of law, human dignity, freedom, equality, non-discrimination and solidarity.

II. Security, Safety, Stability and Resilience

Safeguarding the global Internet

Participants agreed that the core technology underpinning the structure of the Internet must remain open. Governments and non-government stakeholders are aware of the fact that any action that will damage the general availability of the Internet or the integrity of its core structure shall be avoided.

Security and trust, data sovereignty and data autonomy

The interconnected global world must respect each individual's privacy so that individuals will trust that their personal or corporate data is perfectly secure. This requires technical action, but also redundancy and well-functioning competition so that there is no dependency on just a few individual suppliers or service providers.

III. Inclusion

Access

Participants agreed that access to the internet must be improved both by means of expanding the infrastructure and of reducing disparities. Digital technologies ought to be used in order to combat global disparities regarding prosperity and incomes. It has been made clear by many participants that every individual should gain access to the internet by 2025 at the latest.

Sustainable Development Goals in the digital age

There was broad agreement amongst participants, that the global information society must be inclusive and seek to foster development. Digital technologies shall be employed to make a substantial contribution to the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Digital technology for education and child-rearing is a particularly promising field. At the same time, it is also important that even young children should acquire media literacy skills.

As Chair of the High Level Meeting, Germany, the Host Country, declared that it will strengthen the multi-stakeholder approach and support the IGF by providing a total of \$1,000,000 over the period of its mandate, which expires in 2025. The Host Country would like to encourage all high-ranking participants to also make a contribution to put financing for the IGF on a sustainable footing.

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