

I4T Knowledge Press release



PRESS RELEASE Contribution to the UN Global Digital Compact

Paris, March 11, 2024 - 45 Leading think tanks and research centers on digital and data policy from all over the world form part of the “Internet for Trust Global Knowledge Network”, with the support of UNESCO. This network aims at being a trusted interface between knowledge producers and public decision makers. It notably addresses online disinformation, hate speech. It helps regulators better address the governance of digital platforms, in order to protect freedom of expression and other human rights.

Answering the invitation to Member States, observers and stakeholders to provide input and comments during the intergovernmental negotiations on a Global Digital Compact, the I4T Knowledge Global Knowledge Network provided written input on March 8, 2024.

These are suggestions we expect will help leverage UNESCO Internet 4 Trust regulation guidelines into Global Digital principles and commitments for a positive impact on human populations.

Concerning the principles guiding digital cooperation , we suggest adding the following principles

11. Recognise interdependencies between countries which implies combined bilateral or multilateral efforts to overcome the limited reach of national regulations aimed at technology governance.
12. Promote international standardisation and governance rules that are inclusive, participative and contextual to the needs of countries but that respond to a spirit of cooperation, coordination and in keeping with all stated principles.
13. Promote the creation of crisis response mechanisms that can effectively help navigate extraordinary (force majeure) circumstances during crises (like COVID19 or a natural disaster) when usual digital cooperation mechanisms are overwhelmed by sudden global or systemic phenomena.

14. Account for climate costs and potential climate impacts, specially on vulnerable and/or marginalised groups, when developing and deploying technologies, especially AI systems.

Concerning the commitments to improve digital cooperation , we suggest adding the following actions

with regards to “ Closing the digital divides” :

- Create a multilingual internet to ensure greater access for larger populations across the world
- Promote proactive identification, anticipation and mitigation of online risks and harms, particularly for those in need of specific protection.
- Promote information integrity and address misinformation and disinformation, particularly in specific contexts such as electoral periods, emergencies, armed conflict, and crises.

with regards to “ Fostering an inclusive, open, safe, secure digital space” :

- Promote safe, secure, non-discriminatory, non-harmful uses of personal data, particularly when those uses may put vulnerable groups at a disadvantage or at risk of discrimination.
- Work towards alternative models of internet and digital technologies that do not solely rely on personal data and that minimise invasions of privacy or risks to personal data

with regards to “ Governing AI for humanity” :

- Promote alignment of regulation and the creation and adoption of international standards for governance and independent regulatory authorities as well as any global guidelines from all trusted stakeholders, and the United Nations and other international organisations, when facing design issues from global platform one-sided decisions.

Concerning the Follow up and Review of digital cooperation improvements

We consider the follow up and review as pivotal to foster change for digital, which has become a global cause just like Climate Change.

We recommend the same continuous improvement process, as used already in many UN or OECD programmes.

Such a method would require key metrics. Using digital reach metrics seems out-fashioned.

In the last decade, the number of indexes has multiplied so much.

We keep a track of them and we try to label them, according to their specific impact-tracking.

They offer a wonderful opportunity to zoom into root causes.

However, they make it impossible to zoom out and seize a global perspective of Global Digital nowadays. Especially, when trying to understand humanity-wide impacts.

We suggest designing a global index which would be as straightforward as global warming index and designing a global target which would be as operational as the Carbon budget.

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Supported by [UNESCO Internet For Trust Initiative](#)

Endorsed as a [side-event for T20 Brasil / G20 Brasil](#)