The Brazilian Internet Steering Committee - CGI.br Inputs to the Global Digital Compact

GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPACT

Brazilian Internet Steering Committee – CGI.br

April 28th, 2023



Inputs to the Global Digital Compact

INTRODUCTION

The Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br)¹ congratulates the call for inputs to the Global Digital Compact. As a multistakeholder Committee dealing with de development of the Internet in Brazil, we support initiatives that contribute to the Internet governance ecosystem as a whole and seek to actively participate in diverse processes that try to build multistakeholder consensus driven solutions. This document presents CGI.br's contributions to the Global Digital Compact, following a tradition of consistent and reiterated participations in international discussions.

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Proposals presented in each of the topics defined by the consultation:

1. Connecting all people to the Internet, including all schools

a) Core Principles:

- Internet access must be universal so that it becomes a tool for human and social development, thereby contributing to the formation of an inclusive and nondiscriminatory society, for the benefit of all;
- Access to the Internet and digital infrastructure should be affordable;
- Access and connectivity should be meaningful in all levels;
- The fair, rational, equitable, and efficient allocation and use of radio spectrum and satellite orbits are essential and key to connectivity;
- Schools are key spaces to be focused by public policy processes in order to advance meaningful access and connectivity;
- Multistakeholder dialogues and south-south cooperation are key to advance the connectivity infrastructure and access landscape.

b) Key Commitment/ Pledges/ Actions:

- The fair availability of radio spectrum and satellite orbits to provide connectivity all over the world might be targeted by the specialized United Nations body, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU):
- Stakeholders should commit to initiatives to develop and foster digital literacy and the critical use of technologies, including in education;
- Digital capacity building initiatives should gain more focus and resources, as a tool to drive sustainable development;
- Stakeholders should work together to build, improve and expand available digital Infrastructure;
- Digital divide continues to be a persistent and serious issue in several parts of the world and should be tackled by collaborative frameworks between States and the multistakeholder digital ecosystem;
- In the context of the data economy it is crucial to tackle the challenge of the increasing use of technological platforms in education by consolidating frameworks for the fair governance of infrastructure and data, with transparency, accountability and safeguards for users' rights;
- The increasing use of technology in education should continue to be incentivized in a critical approach, by the promotion of digital literacy and also policy frameworks to protect user data, and to raise awareness of impacted people.

2. Avoid internet fragmentation

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- Bear in mind that there are principles that must be preserved to maintain a global open and equally accessible Internet environment, taking into account that other discussions may benefit from a coordinated action. The global network needs some level of uniformity necessary to its smooth and fair operation to all. However, at the same time, the world also needs to preserve the sovereignty and diversities of States and peoples. These are not incompatible expectations and may walk together towards a more valuable and cooperative global digital ecosystem;
- The stability, security and overall functionality of the network must be actively preserved through the adoption of technical measures that are consistent with international standards and encourage the adoption of best practices;
- Free access to information and services is a fundamental right and should be guaranteed for all groups and peoples.

b) Key Commitment/ Pledges/ Actions:

- States should seek collaboration in order to further shared frameworks that enable countries to safeguard their sovereignty as well as cooperate in common matters, being able to deploy solutions that enable legal interoperability in the global level;
- All stakeholders should prevent and mitigate any actions to break or negatively alter the uniformity and cohesiveness of the Internet that may fragment the network and pose negative effects to societies and users, due to the unequal access to services, goods and information by populations in different countries;
- States should commit to protect core values and the core functions and technologies that shape the global Internet as a unique, open, democratic space to promote human development, following previous important processes and documents, such as the NETmundial declaration, the principles of the Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace, and others;
- States should avoid any shutdowns and blocking to services and information offered through the Internet, especially when these shutdowns and blockings harm fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression and freedom of association.

3. Protect data

- People's privacy and personal data protection should be guaranteed in all levels and actions, and by all stakeholders, and should be also integrated to national frameworks;
- In an evolving global landscape of more efforts to access cross-border user data of different types, there should be a fair balance between legal interoperability and the protection of users;
- Coordinated global efforts towards regulatory harmonization of privacy and data protection should have a human-centered approach and focus on the benefit of individuals worldwide.



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b) Key Commitment/ Pledges/ Actions:

- States should cooperate with other stakeholders to enhance capacities to guarantee privacy and protection of personal data;
- States should share information and best practices to fight data exfiltration and exploitation by malicious actors;
- States should increase confidence-building measures and pursue strategies to make cross-border data sharing more efficient and fair at all levels;
- States and the multistakeholder digital ecosystem should cooperate in order to address conflict of jurisdictions and legislations, as so to provide a global fullfledged set of protections to users.

4. Apply human rights online

a) Core Principles:

- Human rights must apply both online and offline;
- The protection of human rights on the digital realm depends on the maintenance of an open and safe Internet;
- Adequate application of human rights online also depends on consistent transparency and accountability frameworks;
- The application of human rights online should take into account diversity and minority groups' specificities, and aim to be inclusive;
- Capacity building on accessibility and diversity issues such as gender and race inequalities is key to consolidate the application of Human Rights online.

b) Key Commitment/ Pledges/ Actions:

- States should work together with all stakeholders to consolidate shared norms, principles and frameworks for the safeguarding of human rights on the Internet and the global digital ecosystem as a whole;
- Efforts should especially focus on the protection of minorities and promotion of rights for women and girls, indigenous and black communities, LGBTQIA+ groups, older people and people with disabilities, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups.

5. Accountability for discrimination and misleading content

- Disinformation and misleading content need to be recognized as elements which may lead to the decrease of trust on the Internet and digital technologies;
- Transparency and Accountability measures should take political and cultural realities into account in order to build consistent frameworks;



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- The fight against discrimination and misleading content should be a multistakeholder coordinated effort and take into account all the diversity of issues, actors, and regions;
- States have an important role to play regarding minimal cross-industry rules that should be defined in a multistakeholder and transparent way and adopted by private actors in a willingly and smooth manner;
- Artificial Intelligence technologies and the use of algorithms have added complexity to the process of identifying and distinguishing between human action and those originated from automated systems;
- As a general principle, actions to counter illicit activity on the Internet should firstly aim at those directly responsible for such activities, in accordance with national frameworks and legislations.

b) Key Commitment/ Pledges/ Actions:

- Intermediary liability rules should aim at the updated dynamics of the Internet but still protect its core characteristics, such as the protections to online freedom of expression, access to knowledge and others;
- Hate speech and extremist and violent content should be tackled, as well as misinformation and content that threatens democracy, with fair and reasonable frameworks that mitigate risks and negative impacts, at the same time that protect Internet core benefits;
- Continued multistakeholder dialogues on these topics should be permanently sought to leverage proposals and solutions.

6. Regulation of artificial intelligence

a) Core Principles:

- Artificial Intelligence should be recognized as an emergent technology that has a true potential to transform multiple social dynamics in both positive and harmful ways;
- As a disruptive technology, Artificial Intelligence needs to be leveraged to drive the evolution of the digital ecosystem with innovation and responsibility;
- A holistic, ethically responsible and human-centered approach should guide discussions about Artificial Intelligence and its implementation and impacts.

b) Key Commitment/ Pledges/ Actions:

- The development and use of Artificial Intelligence should be undergone through multiple governance debates, within multistakeholder dialogues, in order to expand views on its study, development, deployment, and risks' mitigation, and also caring for the protection of fundamental rights;
- Such dialogues should consider permanent review of capacities needed to overcome challenges that may arise;

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 Concepts such as ethics, privacy and security by design, as well as consistent transparency and accountability mechanisms should be considered as core values to embed within Artificial Intelligence development, standardization, and governance.

7. Digital commons as a global public good

a) Core Principles:

- The Internet and the digital ecosystem should continue to be framed as a key tool to foster global social development;
- The use of the Internet must be driven by the principles of freedom of expression, individual privacy and the respect for human rights, recognizing them as essential to the preservation of a fair and democratic society;
- Internet governance must be exercised in a transparent, multilateral and democratic manner, with the participation of the various sectors of society, thereby preserving and encouraging its character as a collective creation;
- Cultural diversity must be respected and preserved and its expression must be stimulated, without the imposition of beliefs, customs or values;
- Internet governance must promote the continuous development and widespread dissemination of new technologies and models for access and use;
- Filtering or traffic privileges must meet ethical and technical criteria only, excluding any political, commercial, religious and cultural factors or any other form of discrimination or preferential treatment;
- All action taken against illicit activity on the network must be aimed at those directly responsible for such activities, and not at the means of access and transport, always upholding the fundamental principles of freedom, privacy and the respect for human rights;
- Digital inclusion and access to information / knowledge should be regarded as important tools for social development, in a human-centered perspective;
- Open Internet and open interoperable digital technologies are key to the development of multiple and globally available services and goods.

b) Key Commitment/ Pledges/ Actions:

- Internet, ICTs, and digital infrastructure and tools in general should be in the center
 of multistakeholder discussions when it comes to advance processes such as the
 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the SDGs;
- Digital platforms may actively take measures to tackle recognized illicit content on the Internet, taking into account their capabilities and responsibilities within the scope of their networks and activities, as well as business models.

8. Other areas



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Specify area: Global cooperation and relationship with other processes and arenas

- There is a need to reinforce open and inclusive multistakeholder dialogues to build solutions for digital cooperation, following the success of the history of Internet governance as a multistakeholder ecosystem;
- The Internet Governance Forum IGF is a valuable forum for the discussion of "public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet", as mandated by the Tunis Agenda, promoting cooperation among different actors in a global perspective. The IGF could have a more prominent role in the follow-up of the GDC, for instance on the continuous assessment of results obtained by countries and other relevant stakeholders regarding the GDC goals. The National and Regional IGFs would build a formidable network of resources to help in this task;
- The Internet Governance Forum may play the role of a convergent arena for digital policy debates, being the main space for the discussions over the Global Digital Compact debate and implementation. To enable that, the IGF may benefit from some improvements, many already envisioned by previous processes such as the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation and the IGF Plus model. For example, the IGF could be framed as a permanent digital cooperation arena, thus needing adequate human and financial resources. Other than that, it is very important to improve inclusion and diversity in the participation of stakeholders, professional fundraising structures to enable long-term planning, and more tangible outcomes such as policy-oriented activities that can deliver policy recommendations and concrete solutions for digital issues worldwide. Additionally, as discussed during the digital cooperation debates, the IGF needs more channels for cooperation and new modes for disclosing information, as well as outreach and engagement practices able to reach diverse stakeholders, including policy and decision-makers;
- We believe in the importance of the Internet Governance Forum to achieve better understanding between stakeholders in order to advance Internet governance and the digital agenda worldwide. It is of utmost importance to preserve and evolve this arena in terms of improving policy discussions, recommendations, and also means for governments and other stakeholders to be able to collect ideas, information and concrete solutions for the most pressing digital issues of our time, especially in light of recent discussions and processes such as Digital Cooperation and the Global Digital Compact, or even the WSIS+20 Review. The IGF is a very important space for stakeholders to meet and discuss in order to advance these and other important digital agendas. We hope the Global Digital Compact take that into account;
- We believe in the importance of having a stable, trustworthy and resilient digital infrastructure, technically backed by a strong network of experts and a diversity of



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stakeholders as means for advancing and strengthening the local ecosystems, and also to protect human rights and fulfill demands of human and technological resources:

- Environment, sustainability and climate change are rising hot topics within the global digital agenda. There is a need to foster a digital technologies' ecosystem to contribute to the mitigation of climate change effects and to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals agenda;
- In line with the Brazilian Computer Society SBC's Manifesto "Digital Technologies for the Environment"², we believe in the need to foster national robust digital policies and a coordinated global strategy in order to tackle climate challenge and to contribute to the green economy transition, grounded on a transdisciplinary approach to define a new vision of knowledge above disciplines.

b) Key Commitment/ Pledges/ Actions:

- The Global Digital Compact and other related initiatives should always build upon previous very well succeeded processes, such as WSIS, NETmundial, the HLPDC, and others, and have the Internet Governance Forum as a key arena for debate and cooperation;
- It is also of utmost importance that the GDC moves along with discussions for the WSIS+20 review, in order to avoid overlapping and contradictions between them;
- The Internet Governance ecosystem and the digital environment in a broader sense follow a fast changing dynamic, and it is difficult to keep all their elements at the same pace. It is necessary to find a balance between, from one side, demands for participation, representation and diversity, and from the other side, rules, norms, work plans and clear terms of reference that help the model to reach the goals sought by the ongoing proposed process;
- The WSIS process and all its elements are very important for the developments in the digital ecosystem as a whole, being a core guidance for thinking of how to improve cooperation in the field. In this sense, the second review of the WSIS mandate is also approaching quickly and it is very important for us to reflect on how to appropriately advance the work done since the last review in 2015. One of the great concerns is how to fit in this review a reflection upon emerging technologies that grew in relevance since the last review. WSIS mandate should take into account the digital ecosystem and its developments, also framing that in a scalable way that can fit brand-new issues and challenges, and also means for cooperation. The Global Digital Compact could be tailored to also reflect these issues observed in the WSIS process, in a way that ensures full consistency between the two processes and do not preempt the WSIS+20 review;
- Ever expanding digital technologies and services also have a significant impact on climate change and the sustainability agenda, and this must be addressed on a holistic basis. It is also very important to recognize that, despite improvements in

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recent years, large digital divides still exist, both within and between countries, and also between men and women. We note that divides are often closely linked to education levels and existing inequalities, and we recognize that further divides can emerge in the future because of new technologies, thus slowing sustainable development for all. Billions of citizens in the world still need to be connected, and many more to have a meaningful and affordable connection to the Internet and to digital technologies and services. We must also recognize that differences in individuals' capabilities to both use and create content and services on the Internet represent a knowledge divide that perpetuates inequality;

- We must not forget the main characteristic that led the evolution of the Internet throughout its history: innovation. The Internet and the digital ecosystem must be preserved and leveraged as a key catalyst for innovation as the basis for development, addressing past, present, and future concerns and technologies, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and so on, in order to extract benefits for people and drive the development of our world with responsibility, fairness, equality, and opportunities for all. All these aspects are also key when looking ahead to the Global Digital Compact, but also to bear in mind the importance of the Digital Agenda to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Seconding the proposals from the above mentioned Manifesto from the Brazilian Computer Society SBC, we highlight the importance of defining robust digital technology policies that enable openness, integrity and interoperability of systems, as well as greater global cooperation on the field;
- Creation, promotion and expansion of funding initiatives for Research and Development in digital technologies for the environment is key to advance the Sustainable Development Goals, including with relation to emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.