

Microsoft's Input to the Global Digital Compact Consultation

Introduction

Microsoft's mission to empower every person and every organization on the planet has never been more urgent. We need to deliver innovation that helps drive economic growth. But as we drive growth, we must also commit to creating a future for everyone. To do this, we focus on supporting inclusive economic growth, protecting fundamental rights, creating a sustainable future, and earning trust.

We believe <u>digital technologies can be a positive force in the world and accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals</u>. However, we know that no one company, industry, or country can solve these challenges alone. That is why we work across sectors and borders to foster collective action and amplify impact, driving progress faster and farther than we could on our own.

Microsoft was therefore glad to have the opportunity to respond to a public consultation on a proposed Global Digital Compact that the UN Secretary-General hopes will "outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all."

The <u>consultation</u> invited comments on seven areas identified in paragraph 93 of the Secretary-General's <u>Our Common Agenda report</u>. It also invited respondents to suggest another area of focus that the Compact could have. For all these areas, the UN wanted to hear views on:

- core principles that all governments, companies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders should adhere to;
- key commitments to bring about these specific principles.

This consultation response shares Microsoft's initial contribution to this important exercise to leverage the perspectives and expertise of stakeholders on the path toward a Global Digital Compact to be adopted by all UN Member States. We look forward to continuing to engage in discussions as they evolve.

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Reaffirm the commitment to connect all people to the internet, including all schools

Core principles

The Global Digital Compact should acknowledge that affordable access to meaningful connectivity is now a necessity and should be considered a fundamental human right.

Broadband is the electricity of the 21st century, fueling economic and social opportunities, whether improving outcomes in education and healthcare, starting or growing a small business, providing access to clean drinking water, or adopting ecologically sustainable and financially successful farming practices. As noted by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) "[a]chieving universal and meaningful digital connectivity - the possibility for everyone to enjoy a safe, satisfying, enriching, productive and affordable online experience - is key for enabling digital transformation."

However, for billions of people around the world, these opportunities remain out of reach simply because they can't access or afford a high-speed internet connection. ITU data show that 2.7 billion people—or one third of the world's population—remained unconnected to the internet in 2022, either because it's not available or they cannot afford it. In addition, 770 million people lack access to electricity, and a billion more have only sporadic, unreliable access to electricity—a prerequisite for powering networks and devices. These challenges disproportionately impact the less developed regions of the world, but they also persist in developed markets.

The freedom to learn and interact with the world requires access to the global network that today shapes human communication. For every person on the planet to reach their full potential, access to meaningful connectivity must be recognized as a fundamental human right in order to drive inclusive economic opportunity and accelerate efforts to close the global digital divide once and for all.

For connectivity to be meaningful, both access to the internet, and the devices used to access it, need to be affordable. In addition, people need to be equipped with the necessary digital skills to use connectivity, as a foundation for empowerment and digital transformation across the world. This should include skills and training necessary for pursuing in-demand jobs, including in the important field of cybersecurity and in relation to Al.

To achieve this vision, governments, international organizations, companies, civil society organizations, and others must all be involved. We support the <u>UN's set of aspirational targets for 2030</u> to help prioritize interventions, monitor progress, evaluate policy effectiveness, and galvanize efforts around achieving universal and meaningful connectivity by the end of the decade, including to reach 100 percent of households and schools with internet access by 2030.

Another important target is digital gender parity, with ITU data continuing to show a gender gap in internet use. Gender equality, besides being a fundamental human right, is essential to achieving peaceful societies, with full human potential and sustainable development, as well as to spur productivity and economic growth.

As our primary contribution to these goals, Microsoft has expanded our Airband initiative through new partnerships with local and global partners to extend internet coverage to 250 million people globally by the end of 2025, including 100 million people in Africa. Accomplishing these aggressive goals will need to leverage public-private partnerships, such as Microsoft's agreement with Liquid Intelligent Technologies in Africa, which will involve middle-mile broadband providers, local ISPs for last-mile connectivity, energy partners, international organizations, and local governments. It is also vital to use all available technologies to deploy networks and fill in the gaps of the hardest to reach communities—Microsoft's approach is to use technologies based on what is best for a particular community, whether that is fixed wireless, satellite, TV white spaces, fiber, or Citizens Broadband Radio Service (CBRS). To enable Microsoft and others to make these great strides, we call on governments, regulators, and international organizations to promote and enact policies that allow for and encourage the building of networks that leverage a hybrid mix of technologies.

Microsoft has also made a number of commitments in relation to skilling, notably a commitment via the ITU's P2C initiative to train and certify 10 million people with in-demand digital skills by 2025, and an initiative across 26 countries to increase cybersecurity skills for women and job seekers. As a part of that, Microsoft is partnering with the OECD in support of a detailed study that analyzes the cybersecurity skills gap and presents strategies to grow cybersecurity workforces through secondary education and training.

Avoid internet fragmentation

Core principles

The Global Digital Compact should recognize the importance of trusted cross-border data flows and regulatory harmonization as indispensable tools to support growth, innovation, and cybersecurity.

Governments have a vital interest in protecting the privacy, safety, and security of their citizens. Managing the flow of data and sensitive information across borders is an important tool in ensuring these protections. However, isolating data within physical borders can effectively fragment the internet, preventing individuals, businesses, and governments from realizing the full economic and societal benefits of digital transformation. And as jurisdictions develop different approaches to content regulation, users in different countries may have differing access to information, with consequent impacts on the free flow of ideas and communications between countries.

Individuals rely on data flows to access health, education, and other essential services, particularly in communities with limited local services, where digital services can enhance inclusion. Organizations of every size and in every corner of the world depend on the flow of data across borders to deliver these services. Data enables innovation, productivity, and economic development by enabling trade and the exchange of knowledge on a global scale. Data flows also foster cooperation between countries on common challenges such as climate change and disaster response.

Cross-border data flows strengthen cybersecurity and provide resilience to destructive attacks, as demonstrated in Microsoft's report on early lessons from the war in Ukraine. Cyberattacks are often transnational and fast-moving, so cybersecurity requires swift and effective data sharing on a global basis and the ability to disburse digital assets into a global cloud. Preventing such data transfers hampers necessary international coordination and can lead to greater threats to security and privacy.

Governments should therefore support international legal frameworks that enable trusted cross-border data flows; resolve conflicting laws related to data access, privacy, safety, and sovereignty; and allow governments to request data through a transparent process that abides by internationally recognized rule of law and human rights standards. Regulatory harmonization, the development of standards, and international legal frameworks are key to resolving potential conflicts and securing strong data protection and the free flow of information.

Microsoft advocates for laws, regulations, and international agreements that keep data safe and respect sovereignty. This includes support for the development of strong, interoperable national privacy laws that engender customer trust. We also support the development of practical, risk-proportional, and harmonized approaches to content regulation.

In 2022, Microsoft and other cloud service providers committed to <u>Trusted Cloud Principles</u> to protect the rights of our customers. In setting out these principles, we seek to partner with governments to resolve international conflicts of law that impede innovation, security, and privacy, and to establish and ensure basic protections for organizations that store and process data in the cloud. There are three fundamental tenets that could be enshrined in the Global Digital Compact:

- We recognize the interest of governments around the world in protecting the safety, security, privacy, and economic vitality of individuals and organizations
- We recognize that international human rights law enshrines a right to privacy
- We recognize the importance of customer trust and customers' control and security of their data

Microsoft also supports multilateral efforts to facilitate transnational data flows, such as the <u>OECD Declaration on Government Access to Personal Data Held by Private Sector Entities</u>, as well as bilateral and regional agreements and mechanisms that foster trusted data flows. The OECD Declaration was a major achievement that builds an important foundation for other international agreements which will help governments protect public safety and national security while maintaining trust in global technology.

Rules governing international data transfers should be aimed at ensuring that personal data remains sufficiently protected, no matter where it goes. Criteria and requirements for international data transfer mechanisms should be designed to tackle specific risks to data with thoughtful and purposeful rules, rather than broad restrictions that may not be necessary in a given circumstance. These mechanisms should be regulated in ways that promote good data protection behavior by the controllers and processors that have been entrusted to protect and respect data subjects' personal data.

Protect data

Core principles

The Global Digital Compact should underline the important principles of transparency, consumer empowerment, corporate responsibility, and strong enforcement.

Privacy is a fundamental human right, and strong data privacy laws are vital for safeguarding it. This right is more important than ever with the growth in the volume of data in our world and its importance in our lives. This growth in the collection and use of personal data has heightened concerns about its protection. To build trust in technology, we need strong data privacy laws that place accountability where it belongs—on the organizations that collect, store, and process data.

As the number of privacy laws increases, so does the importance of interoperability. Clear, consistent rules across jurisdictions reduce compliance complexity, promote accountability for responsible data practices, and help ensure that everyone's privacy is protected regardless of location.

Creating a framework of trust—both for government action and corporate accountability—should begin with these four principles:

- Transparency about how companies collect, use, and share personal information.

 Consumers should understand what data companies have and how they will interact with it.
- **Consumer empowerment,** which guarantees the right of individuals to access, correct, delete, and move personal information.
- Corporate responsibility that requires companies to be good stewards of consumer information.
- **Strong enforcement** through regulators that have sufficient authority, tools, and funding to enforce legal requirements and take meaningful action.

Key commitments to bring about these core principles

Microsoft believes the following four principles should also be taken into account by the private sector in relation to protecting data.



1. Companies should be transparent about the data they collect and how they use it

Microsoft demonstrates transparency through the <u>Microsoft Privacy Statement</u>, which explains the personal data Microsoft processes, how we process it, and for what purposes. Our biannual <u>digital trust reports</u> share how Microsoft responds to government and law enforcement requests for user data and user requests to remove content. In addition, the biannual <u>Microsoft Privacy Report</u> describes changes to our data collection including any new requirements.

2. Companies should empower customers to control their data

Acknowledging the global relevance of the rights at the heart of the GDPR, we believe these rights should apply to all our customers wherever they live. Microsoft enables all our customers around the globe to control the data we collect through our <u>privacy dashboard</u>.

3. Companies should protect customer data

Microsoft does not give any government direct or unfettered access to data, and we will not disclose it to a government except as customers direct or where required by law. We also make legal commitments to defend customers' data. Our Defending Your Data program ensures that requests by all governments for our commercial and public sector customers' data meet expectations that access is necessary and proportionate. We challenge—including in court if necessary—inappropriate government access requests, and we provide redress to our customers' users who may be affected. Microsoft also offers robust protections for customers, including:

- Strong encryption of data in transit and at rest in <u>Azure</u>, <u>Office 365</u>, and <u>Dynamics 365</u>.
- Azure Confidential Computing, a fully encrypted runtime environment for processing.
- <u>Customer Lockbox for Azure and for Office 365</u>, which helps customers manage access to their data and track activity through audit logs.
- Managed Encryption Keys, which enables customers to use their own encryption keys to protect data within <u>Azure</u> and <u>Microsoft 365</u>.

4. Companies should support regulation

<u>Microsoft supports strong privacy regulation</u>, and we encourage greater dialog between technology companies, governments, and other stakeholders on meaningful guardrails for data protection.

Apply human rights online

Core principles

The Global Digital Compact should underline the importance of international human rights laws, principles, and norms, which set out duties and responsibilities to guide the actions of governments, companies, and others.

The online and offline spheres in today's world are inextricably intertwined. Online technologies should be used for the good of humanity, to empower and protect everyone, and to leave no one behind—online or offline. We believe that people, organizations, and societies will only use technologies they trust, and they will only trust technologies that respect their rights and advance human dignity, agency, and wellbeing.

To that end, governments, companies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders should be guided by international laws, principles, and norms, including the <u>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</u>, the <u>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</u>, the <u>International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights</u>, and the work of the <u>United Nations on good governance and the rule of law</u>.

Key commitments to bring about these core principles

As set out in the <u>Microsoft Global Human Rights Statement</u>, respecting human rights is a core value of the company. It is inseparable from our mission to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more with our technologies.

We conduct due diligence to assess the impact of our technologies on human rights. We look to international principles and norms such as the <u>UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights</u> to guide our diligence. We use what we learn from stakeholders to challenge our thinking, develop and refine our policies and practices, mitigate risks, and improve our technologies and how we provide them to fulfill our commitment to human rights.

In relation to exercising human rights due diligence, it is important to note the roles of both governments and companies. Under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, companies have a responsibility to respect human rights and should conduct human rights due diligence to assess the impact of their technologies on human rights.

In fulfilling the state's duty to protect human rights, many stakeholders are encouraging governments to commit to conduct, and in practice conduct, timely human rights due diligence (HRDD) and human rights impact assessments (HRIAs) when the state (1) regulates digital technologies and/or (2) deploys digital technologies. They also encourage governments to incorporate timely, meaningful, and transparent multistakeholder consultation in such HRDD and HRIAs.

Finally, to put international human rights laws, principles, and norms into practice in digital technologies, governments, companies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders should commit to multistakeholder dialogue and collaboration to share knowledge, perspectives, ideas, and solutions, and forge consensus on how digital technologies could and should be used in a society that protects and advances human rights.

Accountability criteria for discrimination and misleading content

Core principles

The Global Digital Compact should call for stronger international norms to protect against malicious information operations and create a standard of behavior for nation-state information campaigns.

Microsoft is committed to helping people use technology to overcome discrimination, exclusion, or oppression. Ongoing information operations pose a threat to health, safety, and democracy, eroding trust in critical institutions by creating doubt, distrust, and dissent in targeted, marginalized, or underserved communities. The ability for our adversaries to create cyber-enabled information operations through technological advances has increased the scope, scale, and efficiency of campaigns. The Global Digital compact should encourage further clarity regarding what's intended by "discrimination" particularly in the context of a healthier information ecosystem and the impact of information operations.

Microsoft is dedicated to supporting a healthy information ecosystem that empowers every person and organization where trusted news and information thrive. Microsoft's June 2022 <u>Early Lessons from the Cyber War report</u> established the Information Integrity Principles that outline how we approach information operations:

- Freedom of expression: We will respect freedom of expression and uphold our customers' ability to create, publish, and search for information via our platforms, products, and services.
- Authoritative content: We will prioritize surfacing content to counter foreign cyber-influence
 operations by using internal and trusted third-party data on our products.
- **Demonetization:** We will not willfully profit from foreign cyber-influence content or actors.
- **Proactive efforts:** We will proactively work to prevent our platforms and products from being used to amplify foreign cyber-influence sites and content.

Microsoft also created a national security whole-of-society approach to counter these information operations, which we call "The Four Ds":



- **Detect:** Hunt, track, and investigate foreign perpetrators of information operations.
- **Disrupt:** Leverage threat intelligence to disrupt cyber-influence operations.
- **Deter:** Seek to strengthen and extend international norms to protect against the impact of these operations and create a standard of behavior for nation-state information campaigns.
- **Defend:** Build consumer-facing technology with information integrity as a key principle and foster innovation and research to enable more responsible technology.

Microsoft is developing tools and multistakeholder partnerships to combat the ongoing plague of information operations. For instance, we have partnered with trusted third parties like NewsGuard to empower our product teams to take additional actions to promote authoritative information and provide a more trusted experience to our customers. In addition, Microsoft is a founding member of the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity (C2PA), which launched an open-source content provenance standard in 2022. Microsoft recently announced a new provenance platform to authenticate images with our partners at Truepic.

We are increasingly analyzing the intersection between cyberattacks and influence operations. In June 2022, Microsoft published the aforementioned intelligence report Defending Ukraine: Early Lessons from the Cyber War and a follow-up report in March 2023 on ongoing cyber-enabled Russian operations. These reports unveiled detail about sophisticated and widespread Russian foreign influence operations being used to undermine Western unity and bolster Russian war efforts.

An important element in ensuring information integrity is fostering information literacy and access to trusted sources of information. Beginning in July 2022, we have been donating in-kind advertising space across Microsoft platforms to promote information literacy campaigns and help online users develop tools and skills to consume information critically and analytically. In 2022, Microsoft partnered with the News Literacy Project to launch three ad campaigns across Microsoft platforms, which garnered over 70 million ad impressions by Microsoft users. In addition, Microsoft has partnered with Verified, an organization cofounded by the United Nations and Purpose, to fund the development and dissemination of a Spanish-language course focusing on increasing awareness of disinformation tactics and tools and building skills in vulnerable audiences in Latin America. Often communities without access to local news sources are further marginalized and possibly susceptible to targeted information operations. That is why support to independent trusted sources of local news is critical. Microsoft recently announced an investment in the viability of newsrooms across the world with our partners at InterNews and USAID.

Regulation of artificial intelligence

Core principles

The Global Digital Compact should call on governments, civil society, and industry to come together to ensure that laws, norms, and standards are in place to guide responsible and ethical use of Al.

Al presents huge opportunities for society, offering the potential to help address major societal challenges and drive breakthroughs in productivity, healthcare, scientific discovery, and sustainability. However—like every technology before it—some will turn this advance into both a tool *and* a weapon, and there are risks that must be addressed.

Transformative technologies like AI require new rules of the road. Proactive, self-regulatory efforts by responsible companies will help pave the way for these new laws, but not all organizations will adopt responsible practices voluntarily. Countries and communities will need to use democratic lawmaking processes to engage in whole-of-society conversations to ensure that people are protected.

Informed by our internal work to identify and address AI risk, we believe regulation should be:

- Risk-based: focusing resources and safeguards on the highest risk applications.
- Outcomes-focused: setting out what regulated actors must achieve rather than how they achieve it will help frameworks remain relevant and effective in the face of rapid developments in AI technology and responsible AI practice.
- Adaptable and aligned to international norms and standards: aligning to
 international norms and standards, including the important work of the OECD, so that
 organizations can collaborate across borders and the benefits of this technology can
 be spread as broadly as possible.

Key commitments to bring about these core principles

Although the potential of AI is significant, there are concerns that AI may undermine information integrity, exacerbate bias and inequality, and harm jobs, education, and the environment. As a company developing and deploying this technology, Microsoft is committed to working with others to ensure AI is:

- built and used responsibly and ethically
- · advances international competitiveness and national security, and
- serves society broadly, not narrowly



We support multistakeholder efforts to advance responsible AI, including the Rome Call on AI Ethics and UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, both important initiatives that can help realize the important principles outlined above.

Microsoft continues to build out our <u>responsible Al program</u>, investing in research, policy, and engineering so that our systems are designed to perform fairly, accurately, and safely. Advancing transparency and ensuring humans remain accountable for the performance of Al systems is core to this work. So too is ensuring that our Al work continues to build on our strong foundation in privacy, security, accessibility, and digital safety.

Microsoft's <u>Al for Good program</u> provides technology and resources to empower organizations working to solve global challenges to the environment, humanitarian issues, accessibility, health, and cultural heritage. This includes work related to preparedness for disaster response and the use of satellite data imagery to enable sharing of information with governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

We will continue to <u>share what we learn</u> and seek feedback from our stakeholders. A recent example of this is our publication of Microsoft's <u>Responsible Al Standard</u> (that guides how teams at Microsoft build and use Al), <u>Impact Assessment template</u>, and <u>guide</u>.

Digital commons as a global public good

Core principles

The Global Digital Compact should recognize that opening, sharing, and collaborating around data can help us make better decisions, improve efficiency, and tackle some of the world's most pressing societal challenges.

Making trusted digital resources more accessible to all members of society is a key factor in providing broad and equitable access to the opportunities of modern technology.

Many of the big societal challenges of our time, from climate change to the COVID-19 pandemic, are too vast and too complex for any single stakeholder to address alone. There is a synergistic effect in sharing ideas. This is particularly the case for data, which can become considerably more valuable when combined with other datasets leading to new, unexpected insights. We believe that everyone can benefit from sharing digital resources in a manner that facilitates and strengthens collaboration across stakeholders to make better decisions, improve efficiency, and gather new insights.

Microsoft has adopted the following principles to inform how we open and share data in a responsible way:

- Open and accessible: It should be open to anyone in the community who wants to advance work and initiatives in support of addressing societal challenges.
- **Encouraging use and collaboration:** Digital goods should be easy to find, easy to share, and easy to use.
- **Empowering:** Open data models, standards, open source software, and other digital assets should be selected with the purpose of empowering community stakeholders, and they should be accompanied by content and opportunities to develop the talent of the community.
- **Secure:** Security controls should be employed to ensure that data and tools are operationally secure where desired, that sovereignty is maintained where required, and that governance structures are in place to maintain trust across stakeholders.
- **Protecting privacy:** The community stakeholders should have tools and processes in place to help organizations protect individuals' privacy and identify potential risks.



To ensure the benefits of opening, sharing, and collaborating around data, we have made commitments in the following five areas:

- 1. Open data: The amount of data in the world is growing exponentially, but access to the potential value from this data is not. Focus on improving access to data is needed to help address the looming data divide where a small number of companies and countries have access to the majority of the data that fuels today's technological advancements. As such, we will continue our Open Data Campaign, enable access to data sets that can help address societal challenges, and deepen our collaboration around data with others. This includes collaboration around open data and digital public goods—we all have a role in advocating for, and contributing to, curated libraries of open data and open source GovStack digital public goods.
- 2. **Tools to make data usable:** Easy access is required for data resources to serve as a global public good, but making data accessible is not sufficient. To facilitate the adoption and use of open data, we will provide tools to make it easier to curate, share, and consume data in a manner that is aligned to data standards and is secure, privacy-respecting, and intuitive.
- 3. **Open source software:** Microsoft has a long history of supporting the open source community and will continue to provide tools for people to share and use open source software on GitHub as well as to make a wide range of our own internal solutions and projects available as open source projects. We strongly believe that partnerships are necessary to accelerate open source GovStack digital public goods.
- 4. **APIs and services:** Microsoft makes a wide range of APIs, services, models, and technical infrastructure available for the worldwide developer community to use. We also provide no-code and low-code capabilities that allow a much broader range of people and skills to engage with technologies like AI.
- 5. **Skilling and learning:** We provide skilling and learning programs that are free or affordable, readily accessible, and adapted to fit the context of learners in many cultures. We commit to providing in-kind digital advisory services and technical assistance through a dedicated Tech for Social Impact Digital Development program focused on LDCs.

Microsoft also published <u>A new Open Data for Social Impact Framework</u>, which builds upon initial lessons learned from our Open Data Campaign, and includes practical recommendations on how to apply these lessons to an organization's data strategy.

Other areas: Multistakeholder and multidisciplinary approaches to digital cooperation

Core principles

The Global Digital Compact should recognize the value and importance of multistakeholder approaches to digital cooperation, including in the manner in which the Compact itself is developed.

Many of the most pressing global challenges can only be addressed effectively through multistakeholder action. International cooperation among governments is vital. However, it needs to be combined with inclusive initiatives that bring in the perspectives, ideas, and resources of civil society and private sector organizations to collaborate on solutions.

One of the most significant transformations since the UN was established has been the advent of the internet and the use of digital technologies. Multistakeholder models for digital cooperation are now largely accepted as important for informed policymaking in many intergovernmental organizations and by at least some national governments. Microsoft welcomes the Secretary-General's embrace of multistakeholderism and digital cooperation.

It is also important to face up to the challenges and opportunities presented by digital transformation in a multidisciplinary and cross-cutting way, which means ensuring a breadth and diversity of expertise and experience are brought to bear. This is not just about involving stakeholders from outside government; it is also about working sensibly across governments, as well as between UN agencies and international organizations, to avoid working in silos. For example, this means involving both those responsible for sectors that can benefit from digital transformation and those involved in ensuring the underlying connectivity needs of this digital transformation.

Bringing a full range of voices to the table will enable more holistic policymaking, which is better equipped to strike the right policy balances. The OECD provided a good example of this with its <u>Going Digital integrated policy framework</u> designed to help policymakers develop a strategy for making digital transformation work for growth and wellbeing.

Finally, <u>as the Secretary-General said in outlining his priorities for 2022</u>, global problems are, at heart, failures of global governance. We should take this opportunity to set out the need for good governance principles, including transparency and inclusiveness, as these are essential for building and retaining trust. Importantly, these are principles that should be embodied not just by governments and the UN system but also by businesses.

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Convened by the UN, the Internet Governance Forum is a truly global and bottom-up forum for multistakeholder discussion about the challenges and opportunities stemming from digital technologies. At the most basic level, there is value in how it brings people together from different backgrounds, perspectives, and parts of the world, allowing new connections and viewpoints to be formed. It then plays an important role in identifying and forming consensus views as inputs on how to manage the governance of digital technologies and the internet itself.

We welcome the improvements being driven by the Secretary-General, including the recent appointment of an IGF Leadership Panel that can add value by transmitting the IGF's outputs to relevant decision-making bodies and intergovernmental processes, and by bringing in more funding to ensure the IGF has the resources to deliver on its mandate.

Microsoft itself commits to continuing to contribute to multistakeholder initiatives that offer the potential to maximize the opportunities from, and tackle the pitfalls of, digital transformation. Examples include:

- Ongoing contributions to the IGF, including donations to the IGF Trust Fund, and our
 partnership with the IGF Secretariat to provide capacity-building. It also means generally
 playing a part in the work of the IGF, including through leadership roles Microsoft has
 held in intersessional workstreams on cybersecurity, AI, and the environment and by
 contributing to the work of the IGF's Multistakeholder Advisory Group.
- Microsoft co-chaired the Private Sector Forum at the 5th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) in 2022-23, collaborating with the UN, governments, civil society, and companies across sectors to harness entrepreneurship and advance the goals and aspirations of people living in LDCs.
- Microsoft is actively engaged in multistakeholder organizations and processes aimed at
 addressing online harms. For example, Microsoft has led an effort through the World
 Economic Forum's Global Coalition for Digital Safety to develop Global Principles on
 Digital Safety: Translating International Human Rights for the Digital Context. Microsoft
 has also been actively involved in the Christchurch Call to Action to eliminate terrorist
 and violent extremist content online, and the WeProtect Global Alliance.

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