#### Input from the Government of the Republic of Poland to the Global Digital Compact

#### Introduction

The Government of the Republic of Poland expresses its deepest appreciation to the United Nations Secretary-General (UN SG), H.E. Mr. António Guterres for preparing the SG's report "Our Common Agenda". This document presents a set of guiding recommendations to develop the joint programme and respond to current and future challenges. The Polish Government is fully committed to continuing our active involvement in the UN Internet Governance Forum and other related initiatives.

The visible aspect of Poland's engagement in this process is the co-organization of the first fully virtual IGF in 2020 and the hosting of the UN IGF 2021 in Katowice under the overarching theme "Internet United", held also for the first time in a fully hybrid mode. This event held between 6 and 10 December 2021 gathered more than 10,000 people from 175 countries worldwide, with almost 200 ministers and other high-level guests. For 5 days, we talked about the most important issues in the digital space: from the regulation of platforms, the role of digitization in a pandemic, and the impact on global economic development, to cyber security and users' rights online. Throughout the entire week, 39 remote local hubs from countries ranging from Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bolivia, Colombia, Haiti, and Venezuela to Malaysia and India participated. We also had a very good outreach, including 50,000 social interactions with the hashtag #IGF2021 and a reach of 5 million people, and more than 20,000 views of online sessions.

Yet the most tangible output is *the Katowice IGF Messages*, a 7-pager document that summarises conclusions from over 300 sessions, presenting a positive vision for the future of the Internet, which combines fundamental values such as human rights, access, and openness, as well as economic considerations.

Based on this outcome paper and on actions already undertaken by the Polish Government, please find below Poland's input to the Global Digital Compact (GDC). On a general ground, we have a unique chance to change the old paradigm of information society as a set of users being sources of data in favour of a new paradigm of knowledge society as interactive actors having the ability to empower their creativity, possibility to commercialise the results of their work. The GDC could play a vital role in defining the scope of actions regarding the upcoming WSIS+20 review process, including the updated IGF multistakeholder model. Poland stands ready to work closely with all stakeholders, in particular the co-facilitators from Rwanda and Sweden, on shaping and implementing the GDC for the benefit of the global digital community. We will be more than happy to share our experience and present our feedback regarding the below-mentioned input.

# 1. E-skills, and connecting all people to the Internet, including all schools

# The current state of play:

By building the digital competences of citizens and thus bridging the digital divide and other digital inequalities, every country is contributing to the development of digital democracy, as well as the digital economy. Therefore, the Polish Government focuses its actions on three main pillars: 1. digital

education of the youngest, 2. re-skilling of the adults, taking into account the needs of the business, 3. support for elderly people, who are often digitally excluded.

In the context of training and the acquisition of new skills, we should also bear in mind the reference to new human-machine relationships, illustrated by the exponentially increasing use of generative artificial intelligence networks used among others in large-scale language models (LLMs). IT training emerges from the area of being able to operate or program a specific device or business process. It should enable interaction with these systems in the process of creating added value.

In addition, the Polish Government invests in the construction of high-speed fiber-optic telecommunication networks to eliminate white gaps in Internet access, so that citizens can work, communicate or use numerous public e-services without problems. Poland is currently a construction site for modern telecommunications networks — broadband investments amount to more than 100,000 km of new internet networks.

# Key commitments and pledges:

Poland's main goal is to provide universal access to ultra-fast internet, develop digital competences for schoolchildren, and support digital education based on modern technologies so that they can navigate safely in virtual reality and understand and better interpret the content they encounter there. We focus on e-inclusion, understood not only to encourage the use of the Internet, the acquisition of digital competences, and the removal of digital barriers but more broadly as a form of mobilization and empowerment aimed at removing various forms of exclusion. All of these activities are part of the recently adopted, by resolution of the Council of Ministers on February 21, 2023, the Digital Competences Development Program until 2030. Presented below are Poland's other important activities in these areas.

- 1. Development of digital education we have taken numerous measures to level the playing field and to implement solutions aimed at democratising access to new technologies used in the education process. We have done that in different areas:
  - infrastructure examples: 1. National Education Network (OSE), which enables schools to access the internet with a symmetrical bandwidth of at least 100 Mbps along with advanced cyber security services − more than 90% (over 20 000 schools) already connected. OSE also received international recognition, being awarded the prestigious WSIS Prize 2018; 2. 100,000 classrooms in schools equipped with LAN connection (by Q3 2025):
  - ▶ equipment examples: future planning that every fourth-grader shall receive their own laptop at least 735,000 additional portable computers with the necessary software are expected to be supplied to schools for use by pupils (by Q3 2025). In addition, at least 465,000 additional portable computers are to be supplied for teachers' usage (by Q3 2023); 2. 100,000 classrooms in vocational schools and general education institutions equipped with IT tools to enable remote teaching (by Q3 2025); 3. Laboratories of the Future they aim to support all primary schools in building future competences among pupils in the so-called STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) as a result, 99% of local government primary schools in Poland have been equipped with modern equipment, including 3D printers, VR goggles, robots,

microcontrollers, modern recording studios and technical equipment of all kinds – from September 2022, these schools are being visited by teams of Mobile Future Laboratories to support the process of using these solutions in each region.

- 2. Connecting all households with high-speed internet since 2015 the population coverage of services of at least 30 Mb/s has grown from 53 to 76%, especially thanks to public interventions which consider up to 2.2 million households.
- 3. Supporting the elderly and persons with disabilities examples: 1. as part of the Farmer's Wives' Associations programme, we have donated computer equipment, workshops, and training to improve the digital competences of more than 100 Farmer's Wives' Associations across Poland; 2. The Digital Senior Clubs aimed at equipping with workstations to improve the digital competences of seniors; 3. we have adopted an amendment to the law on web accessibility of websites and mobile applications to ensure that websites and applications of public institutions could also be used more effectively by people with disabilities.

#### 2. Avoid Internet fragmentation

### The current state of play:

Poland strongly advocates for an open, undivided, free, global, secure, and resilient Internet. As the host country of the UN IGF 2021, we chose "Internet United" for its overarching theme. It reflects the positive vision of the Internet as a meeting point, a modern virtual agora, where people can exchange their views and experience. We also very much support the Internet as a digital space that enables a global online debate, which can be described by the IGF model – as multistakeholder, collaborative, equitable, and inclusive. To sum up, Poland opts for an inclusive and affordable Internet for all, where everyone is welcome and nobody is excluded. Moreover, unrestricted access to the open Internet is key for bridging the digital divide, as well as fostering democracy and human rights. One must also not forget that the Internet is a place where generations meet and exchange their valuable knowledge and expertise. Young people have a special role to play here.

#### Key commitments and pledges:

A dedicated youth track proposed by Poland for the UN IGF 2021 was very successful and delivered interesting outcomes. We strongly believe that voices originating from the community of young users are crucial in every debate on Internet-related issues, especially Internet governance. As present users of this ecosystem, they will soon become leaders taking responsibility for the digital environment and shaping its future frameworks. Therefore, we underline the importance of initiatives involving young people, especially through the Youth IGFs. Moreover, we highlight the necessity to bring young representatives to the table, for instance by establishing a global network of Youth Digital Ombudspersons, as stated in the Katowice UN IGF 2021 Messages.

#### 3. Protect data

#### The current state of play:

The data-based economy is changing the existing development principles. This is a great opportunity for many companies and the economy, as these new solutions and services are being developed and

implemented recently. It is much easier to build up one's position in a new, just emerging industry. This means that society in this new field can stop being just a consumer of what others invent and rather become a set of creators of new solutions. Poland supports the preservation of cultural heritage through i.a. making digital copies and digitally remastering cultural media. Poland also supports the development of the project that would enable sharing of non-personal data in a trusted and interoperable environment. In addition, we are against introducing the right of ownership of non-personal data and instead opt for protecting rights of access to data, trade secrets, intellectual property, as well as privacy and personal data.

### Key commitments and pledges:

The Polish Government has been implementing a project called KRONIK@ - the National Repository of Objects of Science and Culture, to collect and make available in one place the resources of Poland's national heritage in the fields of science, culture, and administration. The repository and the platform (kronika.gov.pl) integrating existing collections and introducing uniform standards for managing digital data, make it possible to protect valuable resources from destruction or loss and to ensure their security. The resource archive space offered is free of charge for all institutions offering cultural and scientific data. The portal has been designed and reasonably modified to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Another project worth mentioning is called National Data Storage. It aims to create a modern architecture for storing and sharing data as well as for efficient processing of large volumes of data in HPC, Big Data, and artificial intelligence models. The project strives to achieve open, modular, extensible, decentralised, and scalable data storage, with a range of access interfaces and integrated services (including mechanisms to facilitate efficient storing and access to data).

# 4. Apply & respect human rights online

#### The current state of play:

We believe that human rights must be protected both offline, as well as online. Poland considers respecting human rights online as a key issue in developing digital democracy. The issue of respect for international law and human rights was one of Poland's priorities during the two-year non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council (2018-2019). We also believe that it relates to the design of national ICT systems and application software in a manner that ensures respect for human rights. They should also be consistent with the terms of use and the method of enforcing these rules on users.

### Key commitments and pledges:

At the end of December 2022, the Polish Council of Ministers adopted the "Position of the Republic of Poland on the application of international law in cyberspace". In this document, Poland fully confirms that international human rights law applies to cyberspace. We particularly state that freedom of expression and the right to privacy require special protection in cyberspace. With this in mind, Poland agrees that protecting international human rights law concerning cyberspace requires action for an open and secure Internet. We believe that respect for sovereignty in cyberspace cannot be an excuse to violate international human rights law. In addition, effective protection of human rights requires that the state refrains itself from unjustified interference with the rights and freedoms exercised on

the Internet, and takes positive action in certain circumstances to ensure effective realisation and protection of human rights on the Internet.

### 5. Accountability for discrimination and misleading content

#### The current state of play:

Poland emphasises issues related to ensuring cybersecurity and combatting cybercrime. Particularly, we focus on increasing general public knowledge and awareness of the scope of cybersecurity. Another important area is protecting children online. Poland is actively involved in negotiations on the CSAM Regulation - Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse. We also set up a variety of public initiatives, aimed at increasing the digital safety of pupils, enhancing responsible pupil activity in the digital environment, and promoting principles of digital hygiene and the safe use of digital technologies. We engage in securing critical infrastructure, as well as increasing digital skills in cybersecurity. Last but not least, we concentrate our efforts on monitoring and combatting disinformation and misinformation in various forms and through different means while ensuring that freedom of speech is duly protected With the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the number of misleading content has drastically increased. The Polish Government acts towards identifying and eliminating this dangerous situation.

#### Key commitments and pledges:

By implementing the Republic of Poland's Cyber Security Strategy for the years 2019-2024, Poland has strived to build a strong position in the area of cybersecurity. The main objective of the Strategy is to increase the level of resilience to cyber threats and the level of information protection in the public, military, and private sectors. We enhance the competences of public administration and national cybersecurity systems, for example by organising a series of training dedicated to operators of essential services under the Cyber Security Cooperation Programme (PWCyber), as well as supporting local governments under the #CyberSafeSamorzad campaign of dedicated staff training. Poland has also created the Cybersecurity Fund, which offers competitive salaries for qualified cybersecurity professionals in government. In addition, we have launched numerous initiatives to enhance a cybersecure society. This includes: 1. education and information, including e-learning (examples: The Cyber Lessons project, Safe in the Network project, "e-Pole can do", the knowledge base on the gov.pl portal), 2. research & development (example: #CyberMadeinPoland, the biggest IT-sec cluster in the CEE region gathering over 40 innovative cybersecurity companies and engaged in the export of innovative Polish technologies, education of the market, regulatory and certification issues), 3. parental support activities (example: the mProtection application addressed to parents, which facilitates the setting of rules, regarding Internet and app use, and gives access to information about child's activity on the device). Moreover, when it comes to countering disinformation, the NASK Research Institute, monitors disinformation activity on the Internet and reduces the impact of disinformation (for example: since the beginning of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the NASK has deemed around 1600 online profiles suspicious, and 88% of these accounts shared messages that were considered disinformation).

Aside from that, the Polish government works on providing society with supporting tools that will help to identify possible disinformation content. The Strategic Programme INFOSTRATEG funds several

competing projects that aim to build AI-based tools to detect and flag such content. The systems should be able to track multiple popular systems of communication and information dissemination.

### 6. Promote regulation of artificial intelligence

#### The current state of play:

Al will have a key impact on the industry, climate, environment, and society. Poland underlines that the human-centric approach should be at the core of developing AI, not the other way around. We believe that human oversight of AI systems and the protection of human autonomy should be the guiding principle for each type of trustworthy AI. This rule should apply not only to the design of AI systems but also to their entire life cycle. We are already successful in building such standards - the EU Ethical Framework for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence ('Trustworthy AI'). We also take an active part in the work of the OECD and the Global Partnership on AI. As part of the ethics by design for smart solutions, in the field of sustainability, there is a need to make revisions to the UN Agenda 2030 SDG to enable a cohesion of values, principles, and policy actions worked out in the Global Code of Ethics on Artificial Intelligence approved by Member States of UNESCO. Any usage of AI in the aims of the UN Agenda 2030 SDG needs to have in the loop the dignity of every human, the well-being of society, and the prevention of harm, including the psycho-physical integrity of people. On the other hand, we must not forget about the benefits of AI for the modern digital economy and society. Therefore, we should bear in mind that the profits brought about by AI technology should reach all citizens alike and not only those clustered in developed and densely populated areas. One of the key issues is the redefinition of education programs and improving digital skills by implementing AI systems. Another very important factor is the cybersecurity of AI, which is critical to its success. It is also connected with the fact that citizens and the business community need to trust in this technology (cybersecurity by design).

### Key commitments and pledges:

In July 2020 Poland adopted its "Artificial Intelligence Development Policy for the year 2020 and beyond". It defines actions and goals for Poland in the short term (until 2023), medium term (till 2027), and long term (after 2027). It aims to use AI research and development to increase innovation and productivity of the economy built on data, as well as to support citizens in the processes of transformation of the work environment and improvement of competences, taking into account the protection of human dignity, the autonomy of individuals, and ensuring conditions for fair competition. We focus our activities towards AI on six key areas: 1. society (i.e. creating new professions, raising competences, adopting friendly legislation on R&D, developing new economic models, removing obstacles, and strengthening legal readiness for market changes), 2. innovative companies (implementation of simple robotic solutions in enterprises generating savings and production efficiency, fostering cooperation between private companies and the public sector in the field of research and pilot projects, supporting the establishment of Polish AI companies), 3. science (popularizing the use of AI as a tool to support research work in all fields of science; providing adequate support to students interested in studying AI; adapting academic teaching methods to the needs of AI development), 4. education (incorporating theoretical and practical knowledge on the functioning of Al into the curriculum at all stages of education (from primary school to universities); ensuring availability of educational tools), 5. public sector (access to public data to allow Polish companies to build new AI solutions; improving the use of AI-based solutions by central and local government), 6. international cooperation (strengthening cooperation on global and European levels; attracting international talent and innovative companies to invest in Poland). This Strategy perfectly complements AI initiatives at the international level – the European Union, the OECD, UNESCO, or the Council of Europe. Moreover, in cooperation with selected universities, we are implementing a project – Academy for Innovative Applications of Digital Technologies (AI Tech). It aims to create a model for the systemic education of high-level specialists in AI, machine learning, and cybersecurity.

### 7. Digital commons as a global public good

## The current state of play:

Poland fully supports and contributes to the creation of digital public commons. We believe that open data is a source of real benefit and time savings for citizens and the administration. Citizens, including entrepreneurs, can use public data resources to pursue their own goals and to develop their businesses or research. Our continuous actions towards the further opening of public data have resulted in making visible progress in the European data opening ranking. In 2017, Poland was ranked 23rd in Europe. Now, we came 3rd. Poland also supports the preservation of cultural heritage through i.e. making digital copies and digitally remastering cultural media.

#### Key commitments and pledges:

The Polish Government is currently implementing the Data opening program for the years 2021-2027. It covers key issues in data sharing and its management. Apart from public institutions, it can also be addressed to other entities, particularly local government units or private entities. The implementation of the Programme will contribute, inter alia, to an increase in the supply and improvement in the quality of data available in the dane.gov.pl portal, which are necessary for the development of innovative services, applications, and other products, including those for new technologies. We are increasingly talking about opening up data in the media, on the Open Data Facebook profile, and at numerous events, including the annual international conference titled: 'The future is data'.

Moreover, the Polish Government is currently working towards adopting a Policy on open access to publicly funded research data. These efforts are accompanied by extensive mapping of the Polish open science ecosystem and consultations with leading experts in this field.

# 8. Other

# Development of e-services for the benefit of society:

### The current state of play:

Poland has been working on several e-government projects to simplify the contact of citizens and companies with public administration. The biggest challenge is to design public services in a way that is as intuitive as possible and that everyone, regardless of their level of digital competences and disability-related barriers will be able to use it. We have been working on allowing all traditional personal documents such as plastic ID cards, driving licenses, and school and student cards to be respected in Poland on an equal level with documents being available in an application. The successful

development of these digital solutions will allow citizens to save time and access public administration services without any limitations. Moreover, digital services have facilitated the process of granting the Polish personal identification number (PESEL) to around 1,5 million Ukrainian citizens who arrived in Poland because of the war, allowing them to accommodate more easily in Poland and to communicate with our public administration.

#### Key commitments and pledges:

Poland has implemented Gov.pl Gateway & Electronic Public Administration Platform (ePUAP) — a uniform and transparent information system containing all e-government services. Thanks to this solution, one can submit a request to obtain a copy of one's marriage certificate, register the birth of a child, apply for an ID card, or report it was stolen or damaged. We also offer a wide range of services for drivers. For example, one can check one's penalty points or see the entire history of a vehicle. To access e-services, one needs to confirm identity either with an e-ID issued by a bank or by setting up a Trusted Profile, a free tool provided by the Polish administration (nearly 12,5 million Polish citizens set up their Trusted Profiles so far, as well as about 600,000 Ukrainian citizens achieved their Trusted Profile, too). Moreover, we have provided a free application for mobile devices called mCitizen, which offers the possibility to store personal identification documents, such as driving licences, on smartphones. The popularity of the mCitizen app is growing. To date, we have 9.5 million of its recorded downloads, and nearly half a million Ukrainian citizens have already installed the mCitizen too.

In terms of higher education, Poland develops from 2011 the System called POL-on - the System of Information on Science and Higher Education — currently its second version POL-on 2.0. It is the broadest repository of data on Polish science and higher education. The data gathered in the System are used predominantly to shape evidence-based science and higher education policies. It is a valuable source of information for analysts, candidates for studies, scientists, and entrepreneurs.

By using data from POL-on Poland has also implemented the Polish Graduate Tracking System – ELA. ELA allows us to verify the time of job search, earnings, and the unemployment rate of graduates in individual fields of study, create rankings, and infographics, and track PhDs' educational history.

### Efforts to enable connectivity to those in need:

### The current state of play:

On the 24th of February 2022, the Russian Federation carried out a military aggression against Ukraine. Poland, alongside other European States and NATO, has condemned the Russian Federation for violating the noble principles, purposes, and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as in the Declaration of Principles adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society. Poland has recognised the significant losses in terms of telecommunication infrastructure Ukraine has encountered due to Russian aggression. This resulted in millions of people being deprived of access to information and communication technologies.

# Key commitments and pledges:

In terms of support of telecommunications/digitalization, Poland provided Ukraine with the donation of Starlink Units and radio stations that has a direct impact on Ukraine's capacities in the context of

access to the Internet. For purposes of re-establishing IT capacities, Poland has provided Ukraine with the donation of Data Centres equipment. We believe such efforts are a strong signal of solidarity with the Ukrainian citizens. They also help the international community to prioritise underserved regions, countries, and populations, including those affected by aggressive and hostile actions.