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At-Large Submission for the NETmundial+10 Consultation

This ALAC statement comments on the NETmundial+10 consultation which aims to gather contributions from all stakeholder groups regarding the various policy issues in the scope of the event (please see the Joint Statement).

The At-Large Operations, Finance and Budget Working Group (OFB-WG) discussed the NETmundial+10 Statement during calls on 28 March 2024 and 4 April 2024. The OFB-WG agreed to develop a comment statement. Amrita Choudhury volunteered to draft the statement. The At-Large statement was ratified by the ALAC on XX April 2024.

INTRODUCTION

The NETmundial+10 event builds upon the 2014 NETmundial meeting and its outcome statement to advance discussions pertaining to the further implementation of multistakeholder practices in the digital world. It is not the goal of the NETmundial+10 event to duplicate efforts in the discussion of specific Internet governance and digital cooperation issues. Nevertheless, the event will serve as an arena that enables the multistakeholder community to build together concrete political commitments and strong messages about the multistakeholder approach. Therefore, the NETmundial+10 consultation aims to be complementary to other consultation processes and to benefit from the unique political characteristics and goals of the event.

SCOPE AND GOALS OF THE NETMUNDIAL+10 EVENT
The main goal of NETmundial+10 is to discuss how to further the multistakeholder approach as the basis for consensus-building and decision-making in the governance of digital policy issues, including in existing multilateral and other relevant decisional fora, at all levels. To achieve this goal, the event scope intends to:
1. Reconfirm all stakeholders' commitment to the NETmundial Internet Governance Process Principles from 2014 and discuss their implementation in light of the changing landscape over the past decade;
2. Further the evolution and implementation of the multistakeholder approach as the basis for the inclusive governance of the digital world, improving governance

processes to cope with issues arising from the accelerating pace of digitalization and disruptive technologies, as well as structural asymmetries, power imbalances, and gaps;
3. Strengthen discussions on mechanisms and structures, in order to further and improve multistakeholder approaches and protocols to shape better decisions in the field, reaching consensus among diverse communities, in multiple distinct national and international decision-making arenas, and setting the ways forward with effective tangible outputs.

Expected outputs

The event will generate a final document with concrete recommendations for the future of the digital governance ecosystem, including:
1. Improved process principles for the governance of the digital world;
2. A framework of shared guidelines for multistakeholder consensus-building and decision-making that could be applied in any relevant decisional fora, at all levels;
3. A commonly agreed set of areas for improvement in the multistakeholder governance of the digital world for the future attention of the international community.

The present call for inputs will serve as the basis for the discussions to be held at the NETmundial+10 event on April 29-30, 2024. This consultation is structured around three major groups of issues:

I. Principles for digital governance processes
II. Guidelines for the implementation of multistakeholder mechanisms
III. Input to ongoing processes

I - PRINCIPLES FOR INTERNET GOVERNANCE PROCESSES I – A) THE 2014 NETMUNDIAL PROCESS PRINCIPLES

1.The 2014 NETmundial meeting adopted a set of 10 Principles for Internet Governance Processes. In light of the rapid technical, social, and economic evolutions that have taken place since then, please indicate below your degree of support for the following statements:

The 10 "NETmundial Internet Governance Process Principles" adopted in 2014 remain relevant to address today's digital governance challenges

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

Our persistent difficulties in dealing with digital issues largely stem from insufficient inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in policy discussions

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

Our persistent difficulties in dealing with digital issues reflect different interests, priorities and value systems of distinct stakeholders

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

2. After reviewing the set of Principles for Internet Governance Processes from NETmundial 2014, do you think they need to be supplemented, in order to guide the development of the governance of the digital world? Please detail.

While Netmundial 2014 Principles remain a solid foundation for guiding the governance of the digital world, there are several reasons for which the NETmundial 2014 Principles need to be supplemented such as emerging issues, striking a balance between global interoperability and localized governance approaches, mechanisms for accountability transparency and oversight in decision making, rapid technological advancements

I - B) STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

3.The 2014 NETmundial statement includes the following "multistakeholder" Internet Governance Process Principle: "The respective roles and responsibilities of stakeholders should be interpreted in a flexible manner with reference to the issue under discussion". The distribution of roles and responsibilities between stakeholders is an ongoing (and contentious) subject of debate. In this regard, please indicate below your degree of support for the following statements:

Each stakeholder group has different roles and responsibilities, depending on the topic and phases of specific governance processes

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree
[ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

Most digital governance processes are applying the above mentioned "multistakeholder" principle

[ ] Strongly agree [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [X] **Disagree** [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

4.Do you see room for improvements in the implementation of the above mentioned "multistakeholder" principle? If yes, what would you suggest?"

While observing the Principles' call for flexibility, defining roles and providing a framework that outlines possible contributions and boundaries, ensuring a smoother collaborative process. Enhanced Representation and Diversity, improved Accountability Mechanisms. Facilitation of Equal Footing, a formalized process for regularly evaluating the effectiveness of stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and Strengthening Dialogue and Consensus-building. By addressing these areas, the implementation of the multistakeholder principle can be significantly improved, ensuring that it not only remains flexible but also becomes more effective, inclusive, and responsive to the evolving landscape of global governance.

I - C) COORDINATION

5.Numerous initiatives and processes have emerged to address the broad diversity of issues raised by the digital revolution. Sometimes, multiple processes address the same issues in parallel. Please indicate below your degree of support for the following statements:

Separate siloed discussions on a specific issue risk creating incompatible and even conflicting outcomes

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

Distributed initiatives on a particular issue can help cover the diversity of approaches and perspectives

[ ] Strongly agree [X] **Agree** [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

Better coordination is needed between processes dealing with overlapping issues

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

6.If you believe better coordination is needed, please suggest ways to do so and specific text or language that could be included as recommendations in a NETmundial+10 outcome statement.

There needs to be better coordination among the different processes and initiatives to reduce duplication, better use of resources, avoid conflict, and enhance engagement and coordination in order to get better outcomes. The annual global and regional Internet Governance Forums (IGFs) could be the platform where the different processes come together to discuss and debate issues.

If you do not believe better coordination is needed, please explain why, including possible ways to prevent potential conflicts, and suggest specific text or language that could be included as recommendations in a NETmundial+10 outcome statement.

II - GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTISTAKEHOLDER MECHANISMS

There is broad consensus to support the multistakeholder approach, but little common or broadly shared understanding about how to put it into practice. NETmundial+10 aims to help operationalize, through guidelines, principles and mechanisms, improvements for multi stakeholder collaboration.

II – A) PARTICIPATION IN MULTILATERAL PROCESSES

7. Some multilateral processes offer the possibility for non-governmental stakeholders to contribute through consultations. However, these examples remain limited and there is often no transparency on how these inputs are taken into account in subsequent stages of discussions among States. Please indicate below your degree of support for the following statements:

Since NETmundial 2014, opportunities for non-governmental stakeholders to participate in multilateral processes have been improved

[ ] Strongly agree [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [X] **I don't know** / I'd rather not respond

More transparent mechanisms should be put in place regarding how input from non-governmental stakeholders is taken into account

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

Relevant non-governmental stakeholders should be able to attend/observe multilateral negotiations on digital issues

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

Relevant non-governmental stakeholders should be able to contribute in a meaningful way to multilateral negotiations on digital issues

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

8.Please suggest ways to improve meaningful participation of non-governmental stakeholders in multilateral processes and add specific text or language in that regard that could be included as recommendations in a NETmundial+10 outcome statement. If possible, please indicate examples you know of meaningful participation of stakeholders in multilateral-driven processes.

Implement structured engagement mechanisms to improve stakeholder participation in multilateral processes. This can be achieved by establishing advisory panels that represent multiple stakeholders.

For transparent communication, create clear channels for input and feedback to facilitate dialogue. Finally, providing training and resources will help ensure that multi-stakeholder participation is more meaningful and impactful.

An example of stakeholder participation is the IGF, which, while not exclusively focused on multilateral-driven processes, serves as a platform where stakeholders from various sectors, including governments, collaborate on an equal footing.

II – B) GUIDELINES FOR MULTISTAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS-BUILDING AND DECISION-MAKING

Principles of open and inclusive multistakeholder collaboration in digital governance are scattered in various foundational documents and declarations. The characteristics enunciated below are distilled from some of those documents that deal with multistakeholder collaboration processes as well as from current good practices and experiences.

The aim here is to obtain feedback from the community as to the relevance of each of these characteristics, with a view to elaborating a sort of "gold standard" or "protocol of protocols" that may serve national, regional, and global communities to establish and develop multistakeholder collaboration processes and mechanisms, as well as to assess processes and mechanisms that are presented as being multistakeholder.

9. Please rank the relevance of the following guidelines in the order of importance in your view. Assign a number from 1 to 12 to each item, where 1 indicates the most important and 12 indicates the least important:

[2] Multistakeholder processes should be accessible to all stakeholders, regardless of their background, status, or level of expertise.

[3] Multistakeholder processes should empower stakeholders by providing them with the necessary information, resources, and skills to participate effectively.

[9] Stakeholders should treat each other with mutual respect, recognizing the value of diverse viewpoints and contributions.

 [6] Multistakeholder processes should involve informed and deliberative discussion among stakeholders.

[7] Stakeholders should share responsibility for the outcomes of the multistakeholder process.

[10] Multistakeholder processes should be governed by the rule of law, with respect for constitutional principles, human rights, and legal frameworks.

[8] Mechanisms for resolving conflicts among stakeholders should be in place to enable decision-making.

[1] Digital governance processes should be flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances, evolving technologies, emerging issues, and changing geopolitical dynamics.

[11] Decisions should consider the long-term implications and sustainability of outcomes.

[12] Capacity-building efforts enhance understanding and skills of stakeholders, particularly those from developing countries and underrepresented communities.

[4] Multistakeholder processes should strive to treat all stakeholders fairly and equitably, considering their respective needs, capacities, and vulnerabilities.

[5] A global multistakeholder approach to digital governance should recognize the need for collaborative action across national borders and stakeholder groups.

10.Please identify up to three relevant items from the above list you consider are not being effectively implemented in current digital governance processes.

[1] Multistakeholder processes should be accessible to all stakeholders, regardless of their background, status, or level of expertise.

[ ] Multistakeholder processes should empower stakeholders by providing them with the necessary information, resources, and skills to participate effectively.

 [ ] Stakeholders should treat each other with mutual respect, recognizing the value of diverse viewpoints and contributions.

[ ] Multistakeholder processes should involve informed and deliberative discussion among stakeholders.

[ ] Stakeholders should share responsibility for the outcomes of the multistakeholder process.

[ ] Multistakeholder processes should be governed by the rule of law, with respect for constitutional principles, human rights, and legal frameworks.

[ ] Mechanisms for resolving conflicts among stakeholders should be in place to enable decision-making.

[ ] Digital governance processes should be flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances, evolving technologies, emerging issues, and changing geopolitical dynamics.

[ ] Decisions should consider the long-term implications and sustainability of outcomes.

[3] Capacity-building efforts enhance understanding and skills of stakeholders, particularly those from developing countries and underrepresented communities.

[ ] Multistakeholder processes should strive to treat all stakeholders fairly and equitably, considering their respective needs, capacities, and vulnerabilities.

[2] A global multistakeholder approach to digital governance should recognize the need for collaborative action across national borders and stakeholder groups.

11.Please suggest additional elements that could take part in a set of guidelines for multistakeholder collaboration that could be included as recommendations in a NETmundial+10 outcome statement. If possible, please indicate examples you know of multistakeholder processes that stand out in your view as positive models of such collaboration.

III - INPUT TO ONGOING PROCESSES

III-A) THE INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM – IGF

12.The IGF environment, including the global annual event, the National and Regional Initiatives and the intersessional work, brings together all stakeholder groups on an equal footing. Please indicate below your degree of support for the following statements regarding the IGF:

The IGF has been an effective space for Internet governance debates and cooperation

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

The IGF lacks the required financial resources to properly perform its mission

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

With appropriate conditions, the IGF has the capacity to innovate multistakeholder approaches

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

A strengthened IGF would be the preferred space to improve coordination among digital governance processes

[X] **Strongly agree** [ ] Agree [ ] Neutral [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ] I don't know / I'd rather not respond

13. Do you believe that a strengthened IGF environment, including the NRIs and the intersessional work, could be the right place to coordinate debates on the governance of the Internet and digital issues, and thus help tackle the problem of governance fragmentation? If so, in which ways should the IGF environment be strengthened in order to fulfill this role?

Yes, the IGF needs to be strengthened. There is a need to address the institutional gaps faced by the IGF in terms of capacity due to a lack of financial resources.

The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) made several good recommendations to address the gaps and make the IGF ready to 'adapt, innovate, and reform' for the future. However, to implement all the recommendations at the practical level, there has to be more financial support to build the capacity of the IGF and IGF secretariat to do more.

Further, the LP-MAG letter to the Co-Facilitators of the GDC on 16 October 2023 made some recommendations to strengthen the IGF. Those could be reference points for improving and strengthening the IGF.

III-B) OTHER PROCESSES (GDC, WSIS+20 Review)

Several processes are underway in the UN context regarding the governance of digital issues, in particular, the negotiations around the Global Digital Compact (included in the Pact for the Future) and the WSIS+20 review process. These processes may set fundamental guidelines and recommendations for the further development of the Internet and the digital ecosystem as a good for society and for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a unique gathering with all participant stakeholders on an equal footing, do you believe that NETmundial+10 should send messages to these processes?

14. If you think NETmundial+10 should send messages to the Global Digital Compact, please indicate below what these key messages would be.

Ref Para 7(i)) of Zero Draft: The role of multistakeholders should not be limited based on "their roles and responsibilities" nor involved "according to their respective mandates, functions and competencies;".(Para Rather, multistakeholders should be involved in each step of decision-making, implementation and review.

Secondly, the draft document suggests creating many new structures, such as the creation of a new panel on AI (49 (a)) convening an intergovernmental multistakeholder process to develop and agree on the above definitions and standards (38(b)); setting up the "High-Level Review of the Global Digital Compact" for reviewing the GDC process (65); " establish a dedicated office for coordinating digital and emerging technology: (Para 61).

Rather than creating new structures, the existing UN mechanisms should be utilized to support in monitoring the implementation and review progress of the GDC. One option for consideration could be for the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), the UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF), and with other UN agencies to be tasked follow-up and implementation with post-WSIS+20 follow-up implementation and the 2030 agenda.

The implementation roadmap could include CSTD providing periodic reporting by all stakeholders to the IGF to organize an annual discussion track for the periodic multistakeholder policy discussions, review, follow-up and engagement with the GDC. The United Nations Group on the Information Society promotes coordination within the UN system and brings in the involvement of specialist agencies like the ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, and the Office of the High Commission of HR.

15.If you think NETmundial+10 should send messages to the WSIS+20 review process, please indicate below what these key messages would be.

The WSIS+20 review process should consider the challenges posed by the Internet and digital technologies and engage the multistakeholder community from across the globe, especially developing countries, to deliberate and then respond to these challenges.

Additionally, the WSIS should renew the mandate of the IGF, a crucial instrument in fostering engagement between the different stakeholder groups towards realizing the SDGs and WSIS vision. Some examples include the work done by the national, regional IGS and youth initiatives and their integration into the IGF's work, the output-focused intersessional activities, etc.

16.Do you think there are other processes that could benefit from the outcomes of the NETmundial+10 meeting? Please detail and indicate which key messages could be sent to those processes.
1. NETmundial taught us the importance of urgency and proactivity in addressing Internet governance issues. Waiting for challenges to become crises is not an option; stakeholders must anticipate and act on emerging issues to safeguard the Internet's future.

2. NETmundial recognized the importance of capacity building and education in enabling effective participation in Internet governance, especially for stakeholders from developing countries and underrepresented communities.
3. The discussions at NETmundial reinforced the Internet's role in supporting sustainable development. Aligning Internet governance with the Sustainable Development Goals ensures the digital revolution benefits all segments of society.

On behalf of the ALAC, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

Jonathan Zuck
ALAC Chair