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WHEN AN ENERGY CRISIS BECOMES A CONNECTIVITY CRISIS
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>> (AUTOMATED VOICE) Recording in progress.

>> Hello. So we have Ulrich, you are speaking from online. I am testing that it's working. Great.

>> ULRICH SPEIDEL: I got camera as well. I just turned it off for the moment.

>> I think I saw you. And yep, we can see you as well. Great.

So same question I asked on the onsite speakers do you have any slides you want to share? Are you happy without any slides?

>> Hi, Ulrich

>> ULRICH SPEIDEL: Hello.

>> We'll get started in a couple minutes.

>> Hi, Mikey, this is Neeti, can you hear me?

>> MICHAEL GINGULD: I do have audio.

>> Perfect, thanks.

>> MICHAEL GINGULD: There's a bit of an echo for some reason. Do you have feedback there?

>> You are probably getting a reverb from the speakers in the conference room.

>> MICHAEL GINGULD: Gotcha.

>> But I think we can get started. So to everyone who is here in the room physically as well as friends online, and good morning, good afternoon, god evening, depending on where you are. My name is Neeti Biyani. I work with the APNIC foundation.

>> NEETI BIYANI: The Foundation is an internet development organization. We work on building capabilities, supporting digital innovation and driving digital transformation. I am very proud to be hosting this session today. I am your moderator as well. It's called when an energy crisis becomes a connectivity crisis. I'm guessing no one's alien to all of the events that have actually led to us asking the question about the energy crunch. And all of the factors contributing to that and what that means for connectivity.

Before I move forward with actually opening the panel, I would very quickly like to introduce my speakers for today. I am joined by Anisha Hassan on my right. Anisha is senior fundraising and project manager all SolShare a Bangladesh based renewable energy company working across electricability and solar and power plants and she leads the foundation partnership. And Anisha is a scholar with a post-graduate background if policy. And she combines that background in hands on work in projects to help scale clean energy access in Bangladesh.

I'm joined online by one of my speakers, Ulrich Speidel. He is a senior lecture of the University of Auckland in New Zealand and works at all lay others of the internet protocol stack on connectivity tourism on the Pacific Islands from the ground and in space. And his students are the first Ph.D.s for Tonga and his background as a physicist in electrical power never waned. And however, in Auckland, he powers his house and the houses in the neighborhood on a nice day with one of the largest residential solar installations in the country.

On my immediate right is Matthew James, the founder and managing director of Distance Curve, a Australian carrier that designs and builds and operates highly networks in some of the most remote and challenging environments in the Asia-Pacific. For more than 25 years he specialized in bringing connectivity to places others consider uneconomic or too difficult to reach. Across remote western Australia and northern territory and the highlands of PNG and remote marine environments in the Philippines

Last but not least, I'm joined online by one of my other speakers, Michael, who is director strategy and operations at Airjaldi. He has more than 30 years of experience working in ICD community and rural development projects in India, Indonesia, and Cambodia and Nepal and Israel. And Michael is a founder a rooter limbed a company founded in India. And LBB operating under the brand name Airjaldi is dedicated to creating sustainable broadband networks for rural areas and they have operations in nine India states. And Michael is in India.

Very warm welcome to my speakers who are in person in Kathmandu today and as well as my speakers online, Mikey and Ulrich. And I think with this background we can get started. I would like to introduce how we are going to be shaping the conversation today. We are going to get started by asking our speakers about what sort of challenges they face in their respective environments. And how they have employed policies or strategies or principles to be able to respond and recover.

We will then go into the role of renewable energy solutions. And their successful deployment to be able to support connectivity. And interrogate what that looks like, especially in challenging environments because as we all know the Asia-Pacific is one of the most diverse differentiated, challenge geographic regions in the world. We will then have an interaction with the audience. For about 10 minutes. And then come back to my speakers to listen to them about what sort of strategic investment, policy changes they see are most critical to the region. And then ending the session with their recommendations to both government and service providers.

So I hope that that is a good enough framing for us to comprehensively understand this issue. So if I may start with Matt. Matt, how does unreliable or limited power supply affect network performance and service continuity? And also what sort of mitigation strategies have been looked at that improves network performance in situations where power is limited or

unreliable.

>> MATTHEW JAMES: Testing. And thank you very much, Neeti. When I started Distant Curve, I recognized quickly that the primary issue was not an issue of technology, but rather power reliability. And if you look around the world, power reliability and access to power is not just important for telecommunications. It's important for GDP and human welfare too.

Our primary mitigation for power reliability issues is we were 100% solar and battery powered I'm sure we are the only carrier in Australia that is. I away from my mouth. Okay. We design for five days of no sunlight. And fully operational. We use two battery banks and power controllers for redundancy. And our secondary mitigation is when we are setting up for a client we will look for two separate sorts for our internet feed. And we try and make sure geographically diverse.

We will let customers co-elect their feed or 4G or Starlink or some satellite at our solar power towers and that's an interesting policy mitigation as a carrier we are not really allowed to resell those services but we are allowed to carry our customer services. So we allow them to co-locate. We, within our network haves a low bandwidth back up. In essence if we have power issues like a very prolonged period of no solar, we can file over to the lower bandwidth width that might only use 10 watts compared to 150 watts for primary. And our commercial model reflects that. So our CIR or community information rate will be the rate of that lower bandwidth back up and our PIR will be the higher bandwidth, higher power consumption primary links.

Also, it's power quality not just a availability that's important. And dirty power does does more damage than no power at all. And brown outs and unstable supply quietly kill hardwares as I'm sure you all now in the Asia-Pacific. A clean shutdown doesn't. So we focus a lot on monitoring and preemptive maintenance. And basically trying to stay away from the grid as much as possible so we don't have those brownouts.

That go ahead state of charge monitoring lets us share loads gracefully and a slow degrade rather than a hard crash. That's our approach.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thanks. And Mikey, if I can turn to you and ask about your experience in similar situations. Would you

like to jump in?

>> MICHAEL GINGULD: Sure, can you hear me?

>> NEETI BIYANI: I can.

>> MICHAEL GINGULD: Okay, and I am assuming we are talking about general approaches rather than specific cases, right?

>> NEETI BIYANI: We are, yeah.

>> MICHAEL GINGULD: Okay. So again, when we are looking -- I will add to some of the stuff that Matt said that's not an unusual situation whenever we are in a forum together. Be that as its may, when we talk about reliability and down times, we need to think of two lane cases of redundant. The first one is failure of connectivity equipment itself. We use fiber and wireless. Fiber can be cut as a result of anything from monkeys to very, very severe natural disasters. Such as the one that we have unfortunately witnessed in Nepal. And it's something that's not alien to us in some of the regions we work.

There's also damage that could be caused to wireless equipment. And that is, again, anything from a severe wind or the any other mechanical thing that affects the relays. Going forward with thunderstorms and lightning and that damage congresswomen. And again, various human and subhuman nemesis.

The second case is energy and power. And again, for us in most areas where we work, the situation is not one with zero power but rather a multiple cases of locations where power is intermittent. And of course, again, severe weather instances that will impact or can impact the supply of power.

When it comes to solutions and this is a theme I think I'm going to push throughout the session. The question is not what are the available solutions? There are always solutions. The question is what's the most logical solution? When we say logical, we need to think of two things. One, of course, is cost benefit. What does it cost me to ensure a particular time? Is the customer, whoever it is, willing to pay it? And the second is to pay for it. And the second, which is closely related to it is what's the tolerance for a down time?

Between the idea of 100% connectivity and what I just outlined as visibility there's a whole family of solutions. For us, just to round up this first round, the solution for the

first, which is again, the connectivity dun times is really starts with proper planning and management. Proper planning is min minimizing the points of failure and proper management is carrying out maintenance when you can, not when you have to. And building some redundancies.

This is particularly true when you have fiber and then you could build either fiber rings, which are a way to address failures. Wireless and fiber back ups. For energy, what we do is most of our locations is as I said a good 90% of them or so have an AC power that is they are connected to the grid. But as I said, with some degree of intermittent connectivity. So they all have power back up. Because we are an extremely cost conscious organization, like our customers, we unfortunately use what Matt might call dirty energy. Simple car batteries and simple power back ups.

So and again, for most of our customers the tolerance is not a millisecond but rather a few hours. We ensure all of our relays have at least 4 hours of back up. And when that goes down, we have battery back ups that we keep in storage and we replace the existing battery back ups. If there's a down time of course it's a question of how severe it is. And how long it tables to fix it. And I will probably speak to that later.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thanks a lot, Mikey. And let me turn to Ulrich who is also online. Ulrich, can you share an example of knee-jerk connectivity disruptions that your organization experienced. What were the key lessons that you learned from that response and recovery process?

I ask that especially because of the sort of uncertainty a lot of communities are facing, increasingly so in today's environment.

>> ULRICH SPEIDEL: I'm not from New Zealand today but from the beautiful island in Fiji Island, where I'm at the Pacific Island telecommunication strategy week this week. And so in the Pacific, we are having something we don't actually see that much in Nepal. We get cyclones so there are occasionally one of the cyclones makes it in New Zealand maybe a bad one every 20 to 30 hours. And last year, we got a particularly bad cyclone. And it was the first one that hit in the internet age. And at a time where basically people even when relatively rural areas got used to idea that telecommunications is something they could rely on 24/7. We ended up in a situation where the cyclone went through and the strong rainfall caused a lot of weather to be

turned into raging torrents and the cyclones so they took a number of bridges out, including a bridge with five fiberoptic cables into the town that the bridge was serving. So those got severed so the back up went with the original a couple of alternatives.

In doing so, it knocked out a lot of roads. And also knocked out power. And lots of slips so back to all the sites especially south sites got taken out. And then, of course, a lot of the south sites especially in the rural areas were fit with back up batteries and if they had some radio link or microwave link they were still operational. We had an interesting situation once the cyclone moved through and caused enough troubles and cell phone outages at that point when the backhaul failed, the next thing that happened over the next 24 hours when the cyclone long disappeared there were cell sites fail failing because they run out of battery. And basically what happens is the nation went like, how could this possibly happen? And basically my phone started ringing and the question is can you explain this to us.

I then looked at it a little bit. And one of the things that went into this is a number of funny design flaws that had crept in over the years. One thing for example discussed literally this here at the strategy week was that in telecommunications we had a standard called the 5-9s, which mean a system should have a system of 99.99%. And that standard in some respects seems top replaced and the head of one of the telecom put it nicely by the standard of "good enough." And one area where we felt this acutely in New Zealand is, for example, around 20 years ago when cell phone and cell phone networks in urban areas and close to urban areas became common and the police and fire brigade and ambulance services quietly started doing away with their own dedicated 5-9 networks because they were expensive to run and maintain. And they started to replace with cell phones.

So that that was the rural area was well covered so the government went to the three mobile carriers and basically said, look, the situation on the south side on the rural area and the subsidiary will run and operate and you will be on the south sites and it was particularly those cell sites that frequently failed because of power outage.

One of the things that then needed doing was to just get to even get situational awareness of everything they basically had to go and power them again. And that meant getting obviously

generators and refueling those generators.

Because the roads had by and large phone in a lot of cases that meant helicoptering in the generators and helicoptering for refueling the generators and the number of generators got stolen because the local communities felt it was the quickest way to restore their own power needs. A lot of helicopters would have been needed for search and rescue work in the hours and days afterwards there were a lot of farms and farm animals, for example, affected.

So supplies needed to be flown in and people needed to be flown out and that stuff. What basically happened is the communication to support that simply wasn't there. And so that led to a lot of naval gazing if a long time and the question was how could this happen? After that, the government then sort of put a project away from the back burner onto the front burner so to speak, again, for example for the police to have its own communications network and that's going to be a design to a higher standard and the consumer great mobile phone network. And police were basically largely incommunicado and that creates a lack of situational awareness.

So the power questions really come up a lot of the telecoms were like one thing that's stopping us from putting bigger batteries into the site is planning laws that restrict the size of battery we can put. And people started looking a little bit at this and we search recently a law changed that hopefully solved that battery question a little bit. And of course people are also looking at increasing powering remote sites with solar and some cases with windmills and and/or hydro to get out of the dependence on the grid being there it's been a lot of development.

Again we are still probably a long way away from where we need to be. And the moment we got into the Pacific, people are in many cases starting to look seriously at resilience now in the last few years achieved connectivity. But it's a joy to see how many people are actually thinking about this. And are thinking forward. So they are looking at what they can do.

>> NEETI BIYANI: In the interest of time, I will probably put on my moderators hat more formally and mix up some things so we can cover everything we need to talk about in the 35 minutes that we have. And maybe I'll move onto Anisha. Anisha, given that SolShare works on renewable energy, can you talk of what the role of renewable energy systems look like. And what can improve network reliability and operating costs especially in

remote areas?

>> ANISHA HASSAN: Is this working? SolShare, we work with quite a few types of decentralized. So our main form of energy is decentralized energy. So we work with peer-to-peer solar microgrids. And we have the installations in the refugee camps and we also have them outside and we are in process of edges expanding them to Tanzania and Rwanda. And we are working with electric three wheelers sometimes called tuk-tuk, easy bike depending on where you are from. And they run on lead acid batteries. What we are trying to do is swap those batteries with lithium ion and connecting them to national grid so when they return to the garages at the end of the day and the residual energy they have left in their batteries they are able to feed that back to the grid.

We also work with commercial and industrial solar rooftop installations but focusing on the decentralized or the remote areas of this problem is I think the main problem that we have seen so far is that, and this is what we've been speaking about so far the technology exist and we've been able to validate the technologies and the impact it can create. And you are providing decentralized energy to refugee camps where they did not have these before

You are providing internet connection and supplying the energy back to grid through metering. And supporting the grid at a time when it needs the support the most. The one place where I think we are lacking support the proper government policies, which we see for the industrial side.

There's sufficient policies to, say, support the installation of rooftop solar and there's support from government and the tax rates but we don't see that with the remote areas and the remote regions. But we are at a time where you cannot rely on grid solutions by itself. It has to be a hybrid of on grid and off grid. And only then it can be 100% reliable energy. So things a support we are seeking from the government the focus that you put on the industrial side of the commercial side we need that focus. We need those incentives and those policies to be placed for remote regions as well because they are too suffering from the same problems.

When you put the two together that's when you can get 100% reliable energy. When there's no off grid, you reach to solar with excess solar you feedback to grid. And it's circular system. That's the support we are looking at right now. If the

next 5 to 10 years if that can happen there's immense potential there that's not tapped into. And that's what we are trying to tap into solely one-by-one through the technology that we are deploying.

>> NEETI BIYANI: If I may ask a follow-up question. And you are advocate for governments, and correct me if I'm wrong, and I'm guessing your advocacy move out of Bangladesh into other economies and geographies that you are looking to expand in. Can you maybe in a nutshell tell us what has worked and what hasn't in these advocacy efforts? Because you are saying that you need governments to support these efforts and especially to remote areas. So maybe what worked and what hasn't in a nutshell?

>> ANISHA HASSAN: In terms of what worked, the most recent example the electric three wheelers I'm talking about. We've been able to successfully deploy a pilot we call it virtual power plant. Where we have solar on of the garages and the vehicles they come in at the end of the day. And they feed in the excess energy back to the grid. We've been able to demonstrate this to Desco. And the chairman came in and we demonstrated this and we are in the process of validating this. This is one garage. There's 25,000 of these across the country. We have take telephone first step and we are working with them to make sure that we can scale this up but this is only the first step and we hope to scale this further.

>> NEETI BIYANI: That sounds very exciting. And Matt, if I may go to you and ask to remark what is holding back the energy?

>> MATTHEW JAMES: It's primarily a knowledge gap. When people come up with a comm system they are treating back up as a afterthought. And com mechanics should come first so the radio or what dishes you use and the type of fiber is only 10% of the design challenge. And reliability is a supply problem is the standard practice is backwards. And it's the cart before the horse. Our approach is we start by understanding our loads. And radiation and solar and radiation and likely cloud cover throughout the year then we design our battery and solar to meet our customer requirements. And Mikey went into that. Different customers have different requirements.

That usually end up with having us having a giant big spreadsheet that allows us to put in all of the various inputs and spit it out. At least cost design. If solar and battery

gets cost prohibitive, then as I just mentioned earlier, we can overlay costs back up and explain to customer they'll have to accept the tradeoffs. So we might go from 5-9 is our typical design to 3-9 for cost conscious customers. Common knowledge gaps, I guess how to size solar arrays and batteries. Different different types of battery chemistries. Doing a full failure mode engineering analysis is really important to know where your single points of failure are. And you can often times if you identify them, you can come up with very inexpensive work around, for those single points of failure.

How to size for a tighter design up time and battery and solar and knowing what your system efficiency is. And we often go to all DC. We don't use inverters it kills our efficiency.

Also there's bit after financing structure problem. If we are talking about more general rather than just Distant Curve. Solar is capex heavy and it's a lot of up front cost. And diesel is the rears are and many procurement and funding models are build on low capex and high optics so they buy us against the better long-term choice.

From my choice there's no power off where I am. So it was the only choice but it's often a hell of a lot cheaper than doing generators anyway when you do it properly. I will to back what is holding back renewables, primarily a knowledge gap and also the people specifies systems and procure and management often aren't the people who understand power. So bad decisions get locked in at specifications time. Before an engineer or somebody that understands these systems actually ever gets to see it.

So what unblocks that in my opinion my very strong opinion, mentoring. And broad mentoring a local level and also at a country and regional level. About these sorts of issues. And ameliorations

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thanks. Ulrich, you pointed to the extremely unpredictable challenging environment and many of the Pacific Island economies. So if I am to pick up from where you left off, would you like to describe for the room what sort of infrastructure design choices have you made or stakeholders that you work with made that have delivered the greatest resilience in your context?

>> ULRICH SPEIDEL: That's a good question in part because quite a few of them had solar projects that have gone haywire. And a lot of them have learned their lessons and a second time

around they are saying, for example, again, we need some integrated solution. From somebody with an actual name and a reputation to lose to come in and do it properly. There's a lot of fly by night that have been the ones that have the cheapest quote. And that's to put this Matt put this nicely it's not necessarily the depth of knowledge out of the (off microphone) yet so we are trying to mentor make sure that information is gets around and you ask those things.

There's one thing I want to add a little bit to what Matt said. In a lot of Pacific Island situations, you have relatively small grids. And you get all the power brownouts and the dirty power situations from the grid. One of the things where I see a lot of potential for solar is in terms of the grid support. Because when you have solar and you are design it properly so it can take it through the dark times. It can certainly support you going through the brighter time as well. And at that point you possibly finding yourself with so much extra electricity you can help stabilize the local grid with the excess power you have. And cases where we were able to sell this back to local grid you can actually then also make your investment pay off a bit faster. But at that point, it's engineering wise a little bit more complicated and it can quite understand why people are preferring to stay on the DC side of things. With a battery you got a stuff coming from the roof and you have a grid and then you have multiple power sources and multiple power sinks and controlling where which power flow goes at which point in time at a particular situation that's a somewhat challenging thing that technology is wrapping its head around to get right. And it's getting better.

But this is all knowledge that's sort of newly getting into the markets and onto the call. And I think that's where the mentoring does help a lot.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thanks, Ulrich. If I go to Mikey, you work in nine states and many are mountainous and rugged and quite different from the environment described by Ulrich earlier. Would you like to come in with how you enable your infrastructure to have greater resilience, especially in mountainous regions?

>> MICHAEL GINGULD: Right. So the geography really doesn't necessarily make for a radically different use case. The energy solutions are known to all to exist all across. If we look at the areas where we work, it really boils down to solar.

And the thing about solar, again as as opposed to all the other alternatives, all the other off grid alternatives is it's priced is dropped so significantly. Those who have been through long enough remember days when it was a factor 20 more expensive than it is today. It is now an affordable option. For us, when we design a network as I said, staters by spacing out the system. And how many hours do we need? If it's a 24 hour back up for a wireless link, it really doesn't require that much bandwidth. Solar panels and batteries. If it's fiber, it's even less a situation.

Again, if you look at some of the more challenging installations I'm thinking, for example, about sinking. So we have a back up system that is very efficient and in terms of keeping the network alive. But what happens when that's flash flood and everything gets washed away. That's a aspects of maintaining the networks and that's on top of keeping on the energy sufficiently equipped to address down times you should also have a back up (off microphone) and think to yourself, okay where are my nature prone bottlenecks? What happens if they go down?

This came to the floor I think about 3 years ago and, again, thinking a severe flash flood. You might remember that, hundreds of people died. And all the networks went down in a flash. Pun intended. We were lucky we had back up equipment, wireless equipment that allowed to take the network up to 24 hours, which was an unintended achievement. But an achievement nevertheless the less and a great learning experience. To sum it all up, again, solutions are there. And so similar the cheapest that's available. Back up networks or an ability to bring the network back up is as important as the back up systems. The last thing is to again just to note we need to remember many of our customers don't have back up systems themselves. At times when the network goes down even if you bring the network up, 95% of your customers are still down so you need to focus on those that really need it factories. Security services.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thanks. We are going to break the conversation now to go to the audience. Both in the room and online. I think we have time for three questions comfortably, but we can maybe accommodate a fourth as well. If you have question for our speakers, either in person or online, feel free. And to my friends and colleagues who are online, please drop your questions in the chat. I am monitoring and will

direct them to the correct speaker.

>> Hello, thank you. And nice presentation and very present emerging discussion. Because solar and power is a big crisis in the world. And my question is directly. How South Asia over the financial technical and maintenance area of the solar and battery and how to remote community for risk and easy access for those technologies?

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thank you. And also please request for the benefit of the rest of us, and please introduce yourself and your organizational affiliation so that everyone knows you.

>> Thank you. My name is Mustava [sounds like] from Bangladesh. And working in some solar and remote area systems for service and others.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thank you. Any other questions? We will take the gentleman.

>> Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Krishna from disability society Nepal. First of all, thank you for the discussion. We increasingly depend on digital systems not only for communication now but also for public services and education. Employment and operations and services. So in an energy crisis and the infrastructure the consequences are not experienced equally across communities. My question is, how can we ensure that the resilient strategies do not leave persons with disability and rural communities and other vulnerable groups behind when power and (off microphone) fail together? Thank you so much.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thank you. I think we will take a last question from the room. So I see a question online. So that's all the time we have.

>> You want to take online first?

>> NEETI BIYANI: No, you go, please.

>> He was just mentioning our gentleman. For example, we are in Nepal. For the last three, four days, we are in Nepal. And we are also seen power outages happening on and off kind of thing. So the question is, like when a country like Nepal where are the countries are moving to a digital economy and digital society. Can which means there's more reliance and the need for digital systems and machines and usage and all the expanding and

increasing day-by-day and at the same time, the question comes from the connectivity. The power supply. So what should be the two, three factors that should determine the policy, infrastructure policies and decisions at the government level?

That goes hand in hand. Otherwise it will always be a continuous kind of gap and crisis. Of course, we understand the capital city of the economy how much take, for example, Nepal. So that parallel of digital upticks and also the need for the supply of power and connectivity and also we know that solar is a costly game for many economies and thing likes that. What the two, three factors that should decide and the economy and government in place to decide on this necessity. Because this is increasingly becoming a problem and a challenge.

>>: Thank you, can I record your name and organization?

>> Syed and I'm from India based out of northeast.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thank you so much and I think the last question we will take is from a friend in Nigeria. Thank you for joining the Asia-Pacific IGF, firstly. So they are asking what is one concrete step this a country with limited resources could take first? How would we measure whether it works? I think that's a very important question and holds true for all of the Global South.

Maybe I'll start with requesting Anisha. Anisha, if you could take the first question from our colleague in Bangladesh. On the South Asian context and how we can holistically address the financial, technical barriers, especially with respect to remote communities.

>> ANISHA HASSAN: To the financial barrier it's very evident it's one of the things we also suffer with quite a lot. But the way we found a way around the financial barrier. So I'll use the example for electric three wheelers again here. The rickshaw, which is a community that's completely out of the financial system. They do not have the proper banking system and don't have the collateral to take loans so they are an informal system. What we have done is basically when we swap their batteries, before they feed energy back to the grid we installed a small chip so we call this a sole gongle into the batteries and this chip acts as the financial mechanism that we are trying to put in, which is the drivers they take out loans to pay for these batteries and they pay on a weekly basis.

And that is what enables them to switch. Because switching to lithium-ion batteries is very expensive. It's not something they can afford. So when you put these chips in, they can take out loans from the banks. So they are formally getting introduced to the banking system for the first time. And that's only because these chips are collecting bath data on their payments and we are collecting the data and providing it to the banks and the finance years so we are trying to create a model where we can bring this informal sector towards the formal financial sector so more banks and NGOs can come into the sector to finance them and facilitate this transition to the decentralized energy systems. That's just one of the ways that we are trying to do this.

We have over 300 of these batteries on the ground right now. And partnered up multiple banks in Taka [sounds like]. So I think if you are able to connect the decentralized informal sector to the financial sector either through collecting data or connect them through partnerships and NGOs I think that's one way to bring them into the system and increase loans and the financing for these technologies.

I hope that answers your question, if you have any follow up towards that.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thanks, Anisha. Ulrich, can I move to you online to take the question that Krishna from Nepal asked on ensuring the resilience for underprivileged communities, especially in the context of when power and infrastructure are both hit, impacted.

>> ULRICH SPEIDEL: To an extent that's something we are grappling with a little bit. Because one thing if you want to bring that sort of solar, and I guess to an extent, wind infrastructure into places that have just been cut off, you want to have it there beforehand. And so I think one of the things that I would say is having that infrastructure even if it's just a small enough to power internet connection for a few people in the village, even that is good enough for (off microphone) but communicate needs and communicate we need oil, we need support. This is one that needs sorting that's the situation here. One of the things especially in a world where there's an increasing number of natural disasters from weather and I guess Nepal just had an overdose of that itself.

You are in a situation then where you could give the people from the outside trying to help you some sort of a situational

awareness to what is going on and what the local situation is. And that saves a lot of resources when the relief efforts sort of gets going. So that's one thing, for example. In Tongo, there was a corruption where it was incommunicado and people were trying to help but how to you help if you don't know if the people were alive? And for 24 hours that's what the situation was.

And sending trips there with relief efforts what is it they need in have the house been flattened? What's the drinking water doing and then you take the entire kitchen sink and it's expensive way of doing relief effort when a little bit of back up communication installed in advance would have saved the day there.

That's a lesson that was learned there. And I would also comment perhaps on this that with solar it's a very, very scalable technology. And you can actually start small. And you can start with one part of a school or a school or start with one municipal building with a library and work you way out in the community from that as the knowledge arrives on the ground to how to do this and how to drive it. And how to connect it. And how to make it sort of support places that you previously might have powered from diesel. And it's the savings from having to no longer having to buy diesel for the generators or petrol or whatever you are using that to help you finance that sort of thing.

That's probably the approach I would say taking and the other thing, again, as was said earlier, mentoring and spreading the word and spreading the information. And we can all get gung ho but solar but spreading the word how to do it properly from a technical point of view, we are risking people taking out huge loan for projects that don't work. And there's a real risk for that. I have seen that happen in the Pacific.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thanks, Ulrich. I think for the third question that we had from our colleague, Syed from India. Can I turn to you, Matt, what the two or three factors that determine policy action on these issues?

>> MATTHEW JAMES: Thank you for the question. Some of you have may have heard I answered the question in town hall saying I believe that the evolution of AI is going to be a critical issue for equality of people. And basically access to different models so that sort of tie into your question a little bit. We are entering a period of massive acceleration in technological

evolution, I'm experiencing it myself. Like it or not, being connected is going to become necessary just to function to a certain extent. And the problem is the reason it's urgent now is the gap compounds the cost of being unconnected growing non-linearly. And the connected pull away faster every year. So it's really urgent now.

For vulnerable communities that the difference between catching the wave and being permanently locked out. Why that is load bearing in disaster primary regions, which the very events that destroy infrastructure, cyclones and inside are getting more frequent and severe. Particularly in developing nations. So resilient comm stops being convenient and it becomes the back Ben of early warning and emergency responses. And recovery. When everything is down, the network is what coordinates survival.

To answer your questions, I don't have three in particular but I think the actual investments needed are local capacity and skills. And this is coming back again and again in this conversation today. And build regional expertise so the communities aren't dependent on outsiders flying in. And that ties back to mentoring. This has been very important for me actually even in a developed country. Governments as anchor tenants in remote areas you will not do these kinds of remote deployments unless you have an anchor tenant.

Public demand really underwrites otherwise marginal or remote sites and make them commercially viable. And that's not going to be a applicable for a small village but I think you understand the general point. And shared infrastructure and redisposition shares at regional level. I think there's certainly a need for some or the sort of standardization of your infrastructure and telecommunication infrastructure. And I think it's very important that we treat connectivity as an essential utility like water, electricity, medicine. And it should be planned and funded like that water power and roads. Because the market alone won't serve the people who need it the most.

>>: In that cases, and Mikey, if I could turn to you quickly on the question we had online, what are the sort of immediate steps that an under resourced country can take to better connectivity access but also make sure these are resilient and don't suffer from shocks and how do you monitor impact?

>> MICHAEL GINGULD: Basically I have two points on it. Number 1, at a state level, prioritize. We are always at a world of unlimited resources. And it's never going to change. Doesn't matter if you are in Nigeria or Mumbai. So if you live in Nigeria, you know what is essential in Nigeria. What's important in the only from top-down government but from a citizen level you need to prioritize what is essential for you. Again if we talk about connectivity and keeping connectivity as an essential service, what is done on the local level to do what? And a big part of the session here was I think dedicated to that.

Because as good as the state level infrastructure is if there is no response it's not going to help. And that is becoming extremely available and affordable. And just one last word about knowledge and AI is you can't escape the mention of AI and the ability to access the knowledge has become so much easier that really the barriers have been lowered to a point where almost each one of us can implement solutions.

>> NEETI BIYANI: In that case, thanks a lot. And thanks to all of your audience members who volunteered with your thoughts and comments. And also thanks to my speakers. I think I am going to come back to all four of you for your absolute last final thoughts. And I will give you 40 seconds each because that's all the time we have. So last words. If you could recommend one priority action whether it's for service providers or governments it doesn't matter. But if you could with a burning passion recommend one priority action for any stakeholder to take, to strengthen digital resilience, especially in remote and island communities, what would that be? And why? Maybe I'll start with Ulrich first.

>> ULRICH SPEIDEL: For me, that would be two forms of backhaul and resilient power and based wherever possible on solar, if absolutely need be with some fuel driven generator back up. And generally, two completely independent separate parts of everything. And mandate that for telecom license and support those getting it implemented by a clearing the regulatory path rather than going and back stabbing them which is also happening from the regulatory side. And that's it from me.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thanks, Ulrich. Anisha. Same question.

>> ANISHA HASSAN: Sorry for repeating what I said before as well and not focusing on the commercial and industrial side

in the situation. But with remote communities, even though we are in the working actively with the peer-to-peer grids across Bangladesh, we constantly get requests to install in The villages because the box because we see there's a huge demand for off grid and on grid. So you have the national grid but you still want to use the peer-to-peer microgrid when there's low shedding and there's huge demand and huge untapped and potential. And I understand from the government's perspective sometimes you don't have enough data on these communities.

But work to collect the data. There's organizations that is collecting the data. And work with the organizations to come up with boils that you can put in place as you do for the industrial side. The same for the rural communities and the off grid communities. Huge untapped potential. Especially in Bangladesh.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thanks. Mikey.

>> MICHAEL GINGULD: Simple, it's about the money. Do not go into anything that you cannot support yourself. The last couple years have seen a serious downturn in support for any development project. And when the suction sound is heard you might be left with nothing. So don't go for anything you cannot support yourself.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thanks. That was pragmatic. And last but not least, Matt.

>> MATTHEW JAMES: Like it or not, lower orbit satellites will be a major future path for all economies. For those economies that are still negotiating access, I would strongly suggest that they use that negotiation power to lobby the lower orbit satellites like Starlink to allow and make it clear in small village environments it's okay to have one terminal and share it within your village. That should be a condition of access to an economy.

On that basis too, strengthen legislation, letting carriers access public land free of charge. With sensible guardrails and also I think there needs to be hands on help and specific communities to going to what Ulrich said, redundant telecom and power design and like the IXP model, for instance, a similar bringing mentoring. I'm sorry, I broke the rules that was three points.

>> NEETI BIYANI: Thank you so much to my wonderful panel

and my audience today. You've been absolutely fantastic. I hope that in this multifaceted debate we would at least meet a starting point where we can collectively as a community start thinking of the debate from both angles. How to approach this issue? And who is it serving? Not everything can be left up to the market as we have seen in with the foundation communities and central communications are key. That's the only way of which we can ensure any level of equity. So thank you so much. That was our panel today. I will hand it back to the organizers. Have a good rest of your day.

(applause)

>> NEETI BIYANI: .If you want to continue chatting about this, he'll be on floor 1, so you can pick his brain if you want to.

>> Thank you so much. Would you like to take photos with the folks online with the online speakers? Is Michael and Ulrich still there? I think they both dropped and thank you very much participants for attending this session. And the next session in the hall is assistive technology for meaningful participation and successful integration in education and the workplace. And parallel to that in the next room is surveillance by design, digital ID and data protection and the trust crisis in South Asia. So please do join the rooms that you are akin to. Thank you.

Assistive Technology for Meaningful Participation and Successful Integration in Education and the Workplace

>> Hello.

>> For those still outside, please come in, our session is going to begin shortly. We have Georgina online, can you hear us Georgina?

>> GEORGINA NAIGULEVU: Yes, I can hear you.

>> And we don't have Manique in the room. Kiran, are you able to hear us online?

>> KIRAN HARISINGHANI: Yes.

>> Okay. Great. So we have all our online speakers ready and our onsite speakers are ready as well. So I guess we can begin when I will start the clock at one hour and you may begin.

>> Thank you, Rani. Good afternoon, everyone, it is a pleasure to welcome you to this session at APrIGF 2026. Thank you to our speakers, our online moderator the organizers and everyone joining here in person and online. I'm Suvasini Shrestha from Nepal and founder of Suni Impact and ID and inclusive assistive technology practice resource and special educator and advocate.

I'm also a alum of 2025 APrIGF 2025. And have been involved in yGF Nepal as well. Can currently I serve as regional lead for the Internet Society Accessibility Standing Group 2026 to 2028. Recently I had an the opportunity to present my research paper at the use of assistive technology at the GAAD conference 2026. With an honour, I have been awarded with 15 influential women 2025 in Nepal for my kind contribution to our digital accessibility and digital inclusion.

With over 14 years of experience in the technological field, my passion is to empower persons with disabilities through technology and social inclusion. For me, accessibility is is not simply about access to technology, it's about creating the conditions for meaningful participation, independence and equal opportunity.

Today, our session is entitled assistive technology for meaningful participation and successful integration in education and the workplace.

When we talk about assistive technology, we often focus on devices, software, AI, and accessibility features. But the bigger question is are persons with disabilities involved in designing the technologies and systems intended to support them? So here's the key statistics of Nepal as the 2021 national publication and housing census identified around 65,000 persons with disabilities representing 2.2% of the total population.

Physical disability accounts for the largest shared follow I be low vision and hearing related disabilities. Globally, more than 2.5 billion people need one or more assistive products yet nearly 1 billion people lack access with accessing some low and middle income countries like Nepal.

Today, we will explore this through five perspectives covering education, employment, policy, technology, and innovation and community experience. Today, we have five speakers, three of them are here. And two of them are online

speakers. So each speaker will have 4 minutes followed by audience discussion, including questions from our online participants as well.

I would like to welcome all our speakers here in this session. Our first speaker is Mr. Udit Pandey. He's an accessibility advocate and researcher working at the intersection of technology, education, disability, inclusion, and internet governance. He's been involved with the APNIC and THNIC and he presented his research robotic anchor at HRI 2026, exploring assistive robotics for navigation and autonomy and independence for people with visual impairments. And he's a global advisor with 1 billion strong and continuing to contribute to technology, research, and policy and advocacy.

Udit, like to start with the question, what are the most challenges and opportunities for persons with disabilities in the school and higher education and how can assistive technology support meaningful participation and inclusion? Udit, you have 4 minutes. Over to you.

>> UDIT PANDEY: Hello, everyone. Thank you so much to our moderator for that introduction. A very good afternoon to you all. And I want to ask everyone joining us in here and everyone joining us online to pause and reflect on a quick question. We all are gathered here at the APrIGF because we deeply care about internet governance and regional equity and digital equity. But we spend a lot of time arguing in sessions like this whether technology is reaching every remote locality in our region. But I want you to pause and reflect that what was the last time we asked the same question for our local classrooms?

When was the last time we thought that not every student who enters through the school gates is truly participating in in their journey?

Because we are living in an era where AI is there, where we have screenreaders and braille displays and lot of assistive tech. But technology doesn't always equal inclusion. It's how our policies that implement those assistive tech can decide whether a child participates in their journey on not. Often, the fight for an education for a child who has special needs or who has a disability starts right at home. Often, parents are they are met with anxieties that if they enroll their child into an inclusive school, would the environment be supportive? Would the child just face problems? Our first and foremost responsibility is to collaborate with these families and

demystify assistive tech.

We have a key role displayed by our special schools but we can't always rely on the special schools. For meaningful inclusion we need students enrolled in the mainstream schools. If the second point I gathered at APrIGF is ensuring that our digital online platforms are truly accessible. Because today and in yesterday's era, we are increasingly adopting digital methods of education. And we have to ensure that accessibility is not something that we fix at the very end. But that is the top priority that is put at the center when we are designing our platforms.

Because learning is not about getting through the school gates. But it's about being truly involved in those discussions and assignments. In conclusion, education is a fundamental right for every child. But no child should be left behind just because of their disability. Thank you.

(applause)

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Thank you. Udit, you highlighted the importance of meaningful participation in education. And you said that technology does not always lead to inclusion. We need to think from the perspective of persons with disabilities. So but education is a pathway to skills and employment and economic participation. So what happens when students transition from education into vocational training and the workplace?

With that, we bring to you our second speaker, Manique Gunaratne. She's here with us online. Our second speaker is a manage other of the specialized -- specialized training and Disability Resource Center at the Sri Lanka, her work focuses on expanding leadership opportunities for persons with disabilities while also contributing to the internet governance, digital rights and accessibility. And he's involved are with the Internet Society and the dynamic coalition on accessibility and disability and the accessibility advisory group.

She's been presented as the top 25 women in the world for the women disability lab and advancing women in leadership and disability. And today, Manique will help us explore from the transition from skills and training to meaningful employment. What are the key barriers and opportunities for people in vocational training and employment? And how can workplace accessibility and assistive technology support not only employment but progression and leadership? Manique, you have 4

minutes, please go ahead.

>> MANIQUE GUNARATNE: Welcome, everyone. Greetings from Sri Lanka I'm a person with a disability advocating for the rights for people with disabilities in employment.

It's very important that people with employment is not only to have financial support but also empower them and have dignity so their voices can be heard. There are training gaps. Training gaps can be rectified by arranging suitable training programmes.

Digital accessibility is very important for people with disabilities to equally participate in employment and training activities. Hiring barriers are mainly a attitudinal barrier, and educating the employer can be rectifiable. And inclusion a workplace is not just including a ramp. And accessibility for the environment and communication and digital accessibility, everything should be taken together.

And workplace accessibility is also important for people with disabilities to make an inclusive workplace. And this gives people opportunity because most of the people with disabilities start work sometimes (off microphone).
Training (muffled)

Women with disabilities are marginalized due to their disability. One being a woman. Two, being a woman with a disability. Three, is we are not in power. We are marginalized. So opportunity to communicate as well.

Partnerships are important with multistakeholder. So that everybody can get a chance to contribute to society and employment for people with disabilities. I would like to request everyone to make the concept accessible for all and nothing about us without us. And make this opportunity of APrIGF for a start of a new beginning so that people with disabilities would be included to have dignity and justice for all. Thank you.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: She reminded us about training gaps and successful inclusion depends not only on individual skills or technology but also on the systems and policies that surround people. So with that, written bring us to you are third perspective from our third speaker. Miss Gunela Astbrink. Gunela is a digital inclusion policy and accessibility specialist with extensive experience in internet governance and

disability inclusion.

She's a member of the APrIGF Multistakeholder Steering Group and complete her second term on the Multistakeholder Advisory Group. She was also the Founding Chair of the Internet Society Accessibility Standing Group and contributed significantly to disability leadership training in internet governance and digital rights across the region.

Gunela, welcome to you. Gunela, we heard about challenges in education and employment from a policy perspective, where do you see the key gaps between accessibility commitments and implementation, particularly around assistive technology and digital inclusion? What good practices from the Asia-Pacific can help turn policy commitments into meaningful participation? Gunela, you have 4 minutes.

>> GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you very much, Suvasini, and very pleased to be here. I just wanted to reiterate some statistics. We as people with disabilities form at least 16% of any country's population. It depends very much on how the statistics are collected. UNS cap estimates there's over 750 million people with disability in the Asia-Pacific region alone.

And we know how much technologists can make a difference for persons with disabilities. Some common online tools such as speech recognition and scanning started off as assistive technology for persons with mobility restrictions. And for blind people respectively. And now we have speech recognition in our phones and don't think anything of it. We all use it. Designing digital technologies to cater for a wider range of a population is vital for persons with disability and helpful for everyone. For example, captioning of videos and also realtime text transcription, which we have on the screen here. And online calls, for example, it's essential for persons with hearing loss but it's also very helpful for people with English as a second language.

So established standards assist to make this happen. Let's consider levers to widen accessibility. We have policies, legislation, and regulation that can potentially have a powerful impact on improving digital inclusion generally. And the availability of assistive technologies, specifically. Policy instruments are increasingly addressing assistive technologies. And we need to consider the blurring between accessible technologies and assistive technologies. I think Udit mentioned

that. And we can talk about that later in the session.

Importantly here for internet governance is the World Summit on Information Society, WSIS+20 outcomes document. Here we are particularly interested in paragraph 23, when and as we know the WSIS+20 outcomes document was passed by the UN General Assembly one year ago. I wanted to just specifically state what in part paragraph 23 states and partly it says we call for converted action by all stakeholders to promote accessibility and equal access to the internet and digital resources as our priority, including through the availability of accessible and assistive technologies and the integration of accessibility by design principles in digital development.

And I think those words are really important. And we need to as all stakeholders work together to make this happen. So we can actually see implementation across various different countries. In this region and globally. And there is work now just started on a way to get that process going. But I also wanted to mention just a month ago, the UN general assembly adopted a landmark resolution on access to assistive technologies, specifically. This historic milestone was led by Pakistan through a blind government member. And it was co-sponsored by over 40 member states. Establishing a assistive technology as a global priority for sustainable development and universal health coverage. So we can look like at this from different aspects and it's very good to know that the UN have different processes that hopefully can achieve a little bit more.

So I also wanted to mention a lateral organization the APAC. And that's done research into structural reform in assistive technology in the past year. And some of the key issues in assistive technology generally are, one, financing. Two, data affordability. Three, education and workplace provision, which is exactly what we are talking about here. And fourth is potential regulation of digital platforms and AI, which is something we have always been discussing. So I wanted to finish -- [audio dropped].

(connection with room lost).

>> For all of us here and around the world.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: And we need to focus on the design principle. And we as a stakeholder should work together to bring this into action. And policy implementation is very important to play the role in this. So far we have looked at

the learner the worker and the policy environment. But we also need to ask is innovation reaching the people who need it? And are we building accessibility into innovation from the beginning in so with that, we bring Georgina here. Our speaker number 4. Georgina is a practice lead for inclusion and locally led development at Tetra Tech international development with more than 20 years of experience across technology, digital resilience, governance, and social inclusion in the Pacific, she brings strong internet governance and accessibility perspectives. She's also a disability advocate and (muffled) of the people's federation. So Georgina as AI and emerging technologies create new possibilities for accessibility, how can we ensure these innovations bring participation gaps rather than create new barriers and that accessibility is built into innovation from the beginning?

>> Are you there?

>> GEORGINA NAIGULEVU: Thank you so much. And warm greetings to you all. And for those that I haven't met as introduced, my name is Georgina Naigulevu. I am the Practice Lead for inclusion and locally led development at Tetra Tech International Development. I am speaking to you online from the Fiji Islands located in the Pacific region, often known as the Pacific Ocean. So it's a tiny island on the Pacific side of the world.

As you shared, I served at the internet governance society ASG Vice Chair and humbly serve as the Treasurer for the Pacific Island chapter for the Internet Society, bringing to you 20 years of experience in technology. And as a person or women with disability in the tech field, both have taught me that technology can open doors but only when people with disabilities have a real role are in shaping it. In my work shaping the Fiji digital development, I saw how digital systems can improve access to informations and services. But putting a service online does not automatically make it accessible.

People need to be able to use it. And understand it. Trust it. And get help when they need it. A useful starting point as I normally would allude to perhaps is the W3C web content accessibility guideline. They offer a shared baseline for things like text alternatives, and keyboard access, captions and clear navigations. But standards alone cannot tell us what a service works for the people who need it. We also need to test it with persons with disability. And the assistive technologies they use. I saw the real value of community

knowledge through the mobile mapathon, which I co-founded. Persons with disabilities and students and volunteers used simple tools that they had on hand, which was a smartphone, to map pavements and identify barriers in getting around. The technology help gather information. And also used our lived experience to show what it meant and what needed to change.

This is a humble practical example of designing with communities and using local knowledge to guide action. Artificial Intelligence accelerates new possibilities. It can now describe images, generate captions and support communications. But these tools need to work for people across different disabilities, language and accents. We must be able to protect privacy and make sure people retain control over decisions made with AI.

However, technology can also create new participation gaps, whereby we may be excluded because we lack reliable internet, affordable devices and digital skills or accessible interfaces. AI systems now can reproduce bias, if the data used to develop them does not adequately represent people with disabilities, minority language communities and women and all the people or people living in developing and remote communities. In places such as the Pacific, solutions that assume fast, inexpensive and continuous internet connectivity may actually increase inequality.

For organizations and governments looking for practical guidance, I would suggest the ITU toolkit billing towards building inclusion digital communities and offer advice on putting ICT accessibility into practice, including in public services and procurement. If you are working in the Pacific, I would encourage you to also look at the resources in the Pacific disability forum that help provide guidance, shape for and with Pacific disability communities. If you have -- if you are from other region, you may have similar regional forums. From my perspective, three actions matter. Involve persons with disability from the start. To the end. Include accessibility requirements when technology is funded and procured. And invest in affordable access.

Scales and local support in the Pacific, that also means considering connectivity cost, language, and the realities of island communication this may also be different in different contexts across the World. Technology is most useful when people -- when it gives people more choice and control. If we combine good standards with community leadership and knowledge

as well as innovation can help people participate more in education, work, health services and public life.

Thank you so much for that.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: A beautiful insight. So the digital transformation does not make technology accessible automatically. We need to test it with people with disabilities so it's accessible to everyone. And now we explored education, employment, and accessibility and technology. At the center of all of this conversation is one important question. What does inclusion actually look like in peoples every day's lives? So that brings us to our final speaker, Mr. Krishna Maharjan. He's part of the Digital Right Society Nepal and a computer engineer working at the intersection of digital right inclusion and accessibility and governance. His work focuses on using technology to improve access to services and opportunities for people with disabilities and with a Facebook on strong ICT and inclusive digital system.

Krishna, I would like to bring the system of technology back to communities. My question is, what can lived experience and community based approaches tell us about making assistive technology and disability inclusion work effectively in practice? You have 4 minutes. Over to you.

>> KRISHNA MAHARJAN: Thank you, Suvasini. And first, welcome to my home country and home city, Kathmandu. All of the participants, I hope you are having a good time in Nepal. From our experience, working directly with person with disabilities and the local communities in Nepal, I think lived experiences teaches one very important lesson. Having access to assistive technology cause does not automatically mean a person is included. For example, a student may have a screenreader. But if the learning platform digital materials and examination system or school website is not accessible that student still faces barriers.

Similarly, a person may have the might assistive technology for work but if the portal is inaccessible and the workplace is incompatible. Another the employer does not understand reasonable accommodation. That technology alone cannot ensure meaningful employment. To at the community level, we learn that we cannot look at assistive technology in isolation. We have to look at the whole accessibility ecosystem around the person. So that includes accessible digital platforms and affordability and connectivity and digital scales and local language school.

Capacity. And family and community support. And most importantly the attitude of the institutions and people around them

This is particularly important in countries like Nepal and South Asia where there can be significant difference between what works technically and what works practically. And technology may be highly advocative but if it's too expensive and high speed connectivity or internet or doesn't support local language it's difficult to access outside of major cities, that many persons with disabilities are will still be left behind.

In our experience, we are implementing a digitalized disability recording and report system in the local governments of Nepal. And obviously, it's support by the foundation Australia. And the system itself is not an assistive technology but it's implemented as a reinforce of a very learned lesson for us. Digitalization is not automatically inclusion. Whenever we introduce a digital system we need to ask, can people with disabilities actually use it?

Is it accessible from the beginning? Are local institution repaired to support users? Does it work under different connectivity conditions? And where persons with disabilities were persons with disabilities involved in designing and evaluating it? This is where lived experience becomes extremely important.

We often use the principle nothing about us without us. But meaningful participation should be in good consultations. And persons with disabilities should not only be invited at the end to test the product that's already been designed. They should be involved in identifying the problem. And designing the solution. And testing it and implementing it. And evaluating whether it improves the participation. From the community perspective, I emphasize three things. First, design with persons with disabilities No. simply for them.

Second, look beyond the assistive devices and build a whole accessibility ecosystem around the person. And third, major access to participation and out comes. Instead of only asking how many assistive devices we are distributing, how many platforms were made accessible, we should ask, can the person participating in education independently? Can they develop skills and compete for employment? Can they progress in their career? Can they access public services?

Can they participate in decisions that affect their lives? So for me that is where the lived experience and community based approaches are most valuable. They help us understand the difference between technology that is technically available and technologies that enable actually the participation. So for my last statement, I would like to say assistive technology can provide the tool to accessibility can remove the barriers. But inclusion is active. Only when persons with disabilities can participate, contribute, make choices and lead on an equal basis, thank you.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Thank you, Krishna.
(applause)

Thank you for bringing the community perspective. We have all the five different perspective. They all are connected. Education, employment, policy, technology, and community participation are not separate conversation but they are a part of the same inclusion journey. So with this, I would like to bring out audience into our conversation, if you have any questions, you can raise. Yes?

>> Thank you so much for the wonderful presentation, everyone. My question is the work that I'm going doing for the global index with responsible AI. We define responsible. We have some dimensions. One is minority rights, which includes disabled people. And in reality, I'm confused how do you define a good AI governance regulation that has elements of disability? Somehow they put the wordings into the regulations. But then in details the truth is, is it really what is needed? You know what I mean? I just want to know from your perspective how to better improve the AI governance, especially in the context of minority, especially like disability rights. Thank you.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Thank you for the question. Gunela, would you like to answer this question?

>> GUNELA ASTBRINK: Yes. Off the top of my head, I can't give you exactly a guidance but -- is this on? Yep. So I think it's looking at particular policy instruments. And for example, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities that talks about accessibility of information and so forth. When it comes to AI specifically, one of the things that often comes up is unconscious bias. And certainly, persons with disability are subjected to that all the time. And it means, for example, employment. If a person with a disability applies for work, often it is gone through an AI process.

And it reflects the employer that may be they don't understand the capability of a person with a disability and what can be done. So without any discussion, that application by person with disabilities is disregarded. So that's an example of unconscious bias. And there are many other examples like that. So it's hard to put into short number of words but that is one of the keys aspects and there would be a number of others in regard to disability rights.

That would need to be considered. And we can certainly talk about it directly in a lot more detail. So anyone else on the panel would like to answer that one as well?

>> Would you like to answer this question, Krishna?

>> KRISHNA MAHARJAN: I'll put it shortly about AI. For persons with disabilities, I think we've been advocating for the not only the technology but the inclusive AI that person with disability won't be left behind like the AI can play a significant role in every day life of persons with disabilities such as the person with disability -- for example a person with visual impairment and using a screenreader can use AI and can get the result in a more time in less time as much as fast as possible. And for the Deaf people, he or she can use AI without the sign language interpret interpreter and and understand the language and communicate with the other people.

So I think with better governance, persons with disabilities should be included from the beginning of a policy planning and all the decision making. So I think I already told you in my presentations it's all about the participation from the beginning and from the very beginning. Thank you.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Thank you, Gunela, and Krishna. Is there anymore questions?

>> Georgina wants to speak, maybe we can pass the floor quickly to her.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Over to you, Georgina.

>> GEORGINA NAIGULEVU: Just looking at and listening to the question. AI governance is about the rules and the designing the systems of things in terms of the rules, policies, processes and responsibilities. That that guide how AI is developed and used, right? That's the definition that we

understand when we talk about AI governance. So imagine a (feedback) sorry there's an echo. Imagine a government rolled out an AI powered online public service. The question we would have to ask is that that public service, is it accessible to persons with disability? And which different types of disabilities is it accessible the a person who is blind and uses a screenreader? Is it accessible for people with hearing impairment. It's not just about giving access. So while we are all really happy about AI and it accelerates things but we have to come back to the basics on who decides how the tool is being used and what rules would it follow? Just following what the two speakers said, Gunela had said when it comes to employment, it's starting to use AI tools to filter through CVs but there is a bias to it.

And I think it's also understanding what those biases are being whether it's helping improve things or is it shifting the power or holding power to a certain group? So that's the little part that I just wanted to contribute on my end.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Thank you.

>> UDIT PANDEY: Concluding everything that was said by all the speakers and I think AI is majorly fed on data. So we have to somehow see what type of data we are feeding the LLMs or the AI. And to wrap it up in a single sentence, I would say we should start including more and more persons with disabilities from the default. So we don't somehow exclude them.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Yes, definitely, we should include persons with disabilities from the beginning. Not in the process in the middle. So we have a few more questions here. Can we ask question all together and we can answer its later?

>> Yep. I'll be reading on behalf the online participants so we actually have a question for Udit. Udit, this is for you bestie. It says here, looking at things from the student in classroom perspective, when course materials, university portals or classroom software aren't fully accessible, what practical tools work arounds or immediate steps can students and educators use to keep learning, moving forward while waiting for systemic changes? Over to you, Udit.

>> UDIT PANDEY: So I will take up the question real quick to summarize its. Like we have various methods. We have OCR tools you can scan them and read and know there's a lot of tools out there publicly available. You can read using audios and you

can just scan the picture. And the output comes into an audio format. And you could use screenreader technologies and many of the technologies too. To continue with your educations. Some tools are like I like to recommend would be like be my eyes and seeing AI and many others. And with these applications, you can scan your handwritten notes and make them into a bit accessible formats and try to read them.

These are some few recommendation I would like to give.

>> Thank you, Udit, it was really quick. Next question,

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Three hands are raised. Four. So many questions. (Laughter). We have very limited time.

>> I'll be quick. So I actually starting to have more -- well, empower employment with people with disability my challenge is always find it very difficult when it comes to a local context in my community. And I appreciate some of the methods that you helped to introduce but I want to move to how do we actually -- how do we actually persuade people who don't have lived experience of disability or people around them don't have that kind of pinpoints to really get them as an ally of people with disabilities to really enhance to get their attitude and action online with the group.

That's my question, thank you.

>> We can take more questions and we will summarize it.

>> Hi, everyone, I am Lakvi [sounds like] and I am educator and also work in tech. So my question is now recently with the vibe coding we can generate a lot of codes via that. And I have seen that while doing it accessibility is like least of the things that come into account. So my question is on while we are talking about making sure that people with disabilities also come into the table while creating these kind of tools but now no one gets in the seat because of vibe coding is rapidly taking over the thing a no person can do it.

My question is how can we keep this design alive and technology lets us build so rapidly no one is even involve? Thank you.

>> Thank you, one more request question. And please make it short? Sweet.

>> Sure, hello, everyone, I'm from India. First of all, thank you so much for your session. And so my question is, we often talk about accessibility as a technical requirement. But how can policy maker ensure that persons can disabilities are actually being involved in design and evolution of the AI?

In the assistive technologies rather than only being considered after the technologies is developed? Thank you.

>> More questions.

>> Hello, from Nepal. So my question is like a follow up to this question. So I think the EU recently passed a accessibility act in 2025. And I think the EU sets a precedent on this policy level and other countries on the subject matter. Could there be a general consensus in the APAC region to pass something of similar to implementing a accessibility standard and how would that work?

>> Thank you. We have to end this question here because we are running out of time. And there are online participants as well. We can do our networking while we are having a tea outside. Thank you.

We can answer those questions.
Starting with Gunela.

>> GUNELA ASTBRINK: Thank you. So thank you for the great questions. And I'll respond to the last one. Is to start with the EU accessibility act. And that is really important piece of legislation. It took a long time, nearly a decade or so to put into practice. So it means that each European state that's part of a EU needs to abide by this education. And it means, for example, if there's any technologies that are developed, they need to abide by certain accessibility guidelines. And it means also, for example, if there's countries in this region that want to are contracted to develop something for a European country, that needs to be accessible as well.

So it's actually has an important impact on this region. Say, India, for example, in exports various technologies. And this -- I also wanted to mention public procurement. And government purchasing of technologies. Platforms, software, whatever. That governments are often the largest purchasers of technologies and can have a huge impact on the market. And so, for example, in some countries, Australia is one of them, there are public procurement id guidelines for governments and that

makes a difference.

Anyway, I'll stop there. But I wanted to also mention I think there was a question about the fast paced of development and how can accessibility being included? And is it something that needs to be doing a catch up all the time? Well, I mean, I think we also need to consider that when it comes to development of technologies security, for example, has to be built in if it's done properly. So accessibility really should be built in. if we are making something available for the whole community.

Yeah, I could go on about the culture of accessibility but we have limited time.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: We have only 10 minutes left.

>> UDIT PANDEY: Taking up the second question regarding the vibe coding. I do agree with what was said in that question. That increase your edger is of ChatGPT and Google and Gemini and you could just name the tools and accessibility is something that's least of their concerns. I think because again it comes down to the data these LLMs are being continuously trained upon, which lacks the about -- the information about the persons with disability. If there's any information there that's highly scattered and I would say sometimes (off microphone) information. So what I think can be done to implement accessibility is we should I think we shall have some separate modules regarding accessibility and coding in our curriculums in our universities. And in our institutions.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Thank you, Udit. Krishna, would you like to add something? Let's make it very quick.

>> KRISHNA MAHARJAN: Thank you for the question. I wanted to answer to the question how could we persuade the people in the local context level? So in my experience, like I've been working in the local level for the rights of person with disabilities for more than 8 years. Now that we have been using an approach that first of all, we have to organize a lot of sensitized programmes on disability rights and inclusivity and local level or community level. And then we have to create a lot of digital content and accessible contents that can rate more and more people possible.

And we have to do the advocacy programmes in the government level and non-government level. So we have to approach in such a way that we can like empower or educate the people in local

government or nongovernment or government level. So that's -- that's how we can persuade the people working in the government level and non-government level. So yeah, it's again, the same question, we have to involve the persons with the disabilities from the very beginning in the software development phase or after in the testing or later phases.

>> UDIT PANDEY: Just adding to what Krishna said. We can also ask those people to attend some sort of simulation workshops where the -- there's some of the disabilities are being simulated and they could firsthand experience what are the challenges? And how people with those specific disabilities navigate the daily lives. So these type of workshops can also bridge the gap.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Yes, definitely. We have our online moderator. Welcome. It's writer and disability advocate from India. Kiran, is there any questions online? Are there any questions from online we can take?

>> KIRAN HARISINGHANI: So how can we make sure that accessibility reaches to village people than to just only the city people? For the whole panel.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Thank you, Kiran, Georgina, would you like to answer this question?

>> GEORGINA NAIGULEVU: Yes, I sort of answered the question in terms of we need to understand that digital as a principle need not only be online only. You can design for offline use and use existing community networks and provide existing registration and take services to community. And having that multichannel approach. I just don't want us to digitize the barrier. If someone cannot access the internet which is often the case in the Pacific we don't have much bandwidth it's also using apps that can sync when they come back into internet connectivity that's something that we use here.

It shouldn't prevent people from being recognized or accessing services is what I am asking. And also there's a lot of low digital literacy as well. But helping by assisting them as well in understanding what is being captured.

>> SUVASINI SHRESTHA: Thank you, Georgina. We have come to the end of this session. The topic with assistive technology for meaningful participation and successful integration in education and the workplace. So we can take more questions

after the session in the lobby. So the goal of this session is not simply to provide technology but to ensure it enables meaningful participation and equal opportunity.

Accessibility should not be something added at the end. It needs to be considered from the beginning. So we have discussed this so far. And more importantly, we need to move from designing for person with disabilities to designing with persons with disabilities. So I sincerely thank our five speakers, Udit Pandey, Manique Gunaratne, Gunela, and Georgina and Krishna for sharing your experiences. And thank you to Kiran for supporting our online apartments and thank you to everyone who joined us here and online.

And I hope this panel leaves you with ideas to action let us move beyond technology and what technology should ultimately enable. Meaningful participation and equal opportunity and inclusion in education, employment, and society. Thank you very much, everyone. Its has been a pleasure moderating this session. Thank you all.

(applause)

>> Thank, you speakers and moderator, online speakers and for joining us online. Thank you for the sign language interpreters. And we have connected but not safe. And in the next room, AI in the kill chain. And note, the session in the next room may be presented in a pre-recorded format.

Please be back in the next 5 to 10 minutes. We will begin at 4:00 p.m. sharp.

Connected, but not safe?

>> Participants outside, if you are joining this session in the Langtang Hall. Connected, but not safe. Please join us, we will begin shortly.

>> WANG CHIU YIN: Hello, everyone, I'm Wang Chiu Yin, a fourth year university student majoring in political science at Cheng Kung University. [audio dropped] here because this is my first time attending a international forum on internet governance. As you can see on the screen, my topic today is connected, but not safe. And I want to begin with a very simple question. Take a guess. If someone is online every day, does that necessarily mean that she is digitally included? I don't know what you guys answers are but my answer is not always.

When we talk about digital inclusion we often focus on access. Like does someone have a smartphone? Does she have internet access or basic digital skills? Of course these are all important but I think access is only the first step.

A person may use social media every day like Instagram, Facebook or other platforms. But she will still feel she has to limit what she says, who can she her post, what personal information she shares and how visibility she can be online. So the main idea of my study is simple. Access is not the same as equal participation. And if people cannot participate under equally safe conditions, then digital inclusion is still incomplete.

This is the framework that guided my research. I look at digital risk, safety concern, response, participation, and finally, inclusion. The important points is that digital risk does not -- doesn't always make someone leave the internet. For example, after experiencing harassment a woman may not stop using Instagram. Instead, she may turn her Instagram to private account or use a second account, share less information, block certain users or avoid certain topics.

So if we only ask whether she is still online or not, we may think nothing has changed. But in fact, the the way she participate may have changed a lot. I use mix method design on my study. I conducted a survey of 200 young woman age 18 to 30 in Taiwan together with 5 semiconstructed interviews. I used both methods because I wanted to answer two different questions. The survey helps me see the broader pattern. Whether higher sift concerns are linked to lower participation.

The interviews helped me understand what the lower participation actually looks like in daily life. In the survey, I major safety concerns related to harassment, privacy, and AI related risks. I also reduced the participation while controlling for age, education, and daily internet use.

The main result was clear. Higher safety concern was associated with greater reduction in digital participation. The coefficient was 0.407 with a p-value below 0.001. In simple term, woman with higher sift concerns were also more likely the to report reducing the way they participate online. Because this is a cross sectional study I'm talking about association, not causation. So I cannot say that safety concern definitely causes lower participation but the relationship is still important because it's just the access alone opportunity tell us

whether people are participating under equal conditions.

I also looked separately at harassment, privacy and AI related concerns. When testing one at a time, all three were significantly related to reduced participation. But when I included all three in the same model, only harassment remained independently significant. This doesn't mean that privacy and AI related risks aren't important. It means that least concerned overlap while harassment showed the strongest unique relationship with reduced participation in this sample.

One possible reason is like harassment often feels more direct and personal. And privacy risk might sometimes feel distance. And AI risks may feel new or hard to predict. But harassment usually involve another person actively targeting you. And sometimes continuing even after you try to leave the interaction.

So let's begin even clear to interviews I will show the next page. Of course, the five interviews I observed three common ways woman respond with digital risk. The first was protective adaptation. Some participants made their accounts private. Use a second account. Limited who could see their post. Block users. Or move conversations into smaller and separate spaces. They didn't leave the internet but they participated more carefully.

The second response was disengagement. Some participants simply stopped replying the hostile users. And they ignore comments and ended a conversation or kept screenshot only when the situation became more serious.

In this cases, they weren't living digital life. They were living the harmful interaction. And the third response was active resistance. Some participants reemployed publicly, stayed visible or even turned hostile comments into content. But yeah, I don't want to treat this kind of resistance as easy because standing up to harassment still need to take confidence, time, and emotional energy and sometimes support from other people.

So participation is not simply online or offline. It can be reduced, changed, protected, or sometimes made even more visible.

And this led to idea I care about most in this research is safety work. A person may still look very active online but

behind that visible activity, she may be constantly making small decisions like who can see my post? Should I share my location? Or should I block this weird person? Or should I save screenshot? Or should I reply? Or will replying make things worse? This decision takes time, attention, and emotional energy.

But most of this work is invisible. Imagine that I post five times a week. And other person also post five times a week. On paper our level of participation is looks the same. But if I spend much more time changing my private -- privacy settings and limiting my audience, worrying about unwanted contact, and deciding whether posting is worth the risk then we are not participating under the same conditions. So continued participation shouldn't automatically be treated as proof that safety risks had no effect.

Sometimes people can keep participating only because they are doing a lot of safety work in the background. At the same time, I don't think every unpleasant online interaction should be treated as a safety threat. The women I interviewed made a clear difference between disagreement, criticism, one time offensive comment and more serious situations such as repeated unwanted contact, doxing, stalking or online behavior that affects offline life.

And this distinction is important. And protecting users shouldn't remove disagreements from the internet. The key question is whether the behavior’s been repeated crosses personal boundaries and invades privacy or creates a real world risk.

This brings me to three governments implications. Governance implications. First, look at patterns not only individual posts. One message may not look seriously itself, but 10 message from different accounts after a user has repeatedly blocked the same person are very different. So moderation systems need to consider repeated behavior and attempt to get around a user's boundaries.

Second, we need safety by design. Today, users are often told to make shire accounts private and block people and report content and be careful about what shared and these tools are useful obviously but it also plays a will the of responsibilities on the individual. And good platform design should reduce how many defensive work people have to do to participate normally. Third, response should match the level of

risk. And a harsh comment is not harassment and and (off microphone) and offline danger and finally I want to be clear about the limit of my study. The survey is cross sectional so it cannot prove causation. And the collection was convenience and noble sampling so it cannot represent all young women in Taiwan. The five interviews is exploratory to help explain experiences but cannot tell us the experience of the whole population. So I see this study as starting point for the final answer.

I also want to share a personal experience that of this issue that felt very real to me. I personally experienced and kind of harassment as well. And since then, I have never turned my Instagram account public again. So whenever I want -- I think about I want to switch it back to public, or even when I want to pause something on my feed or share my story, I immediately feel a sense of (?) and I think about who is seeing my post and where it might be shared and whether it can attract unwanted attention again. Sometimes it feels like this account is no longer completely to be mine, even though I am still using Instagram, the way I participate has already changed.

For me, this is exactly what I mean by safety work. And I'm still online but I am constantly managing my visibility in order to feel safe. Also one of my best friend work as a model. I once found out her photo has reposted in a private Facebook group, where many men were commenting on and discussing her appearance and her body. And this was not an isolate case. In that group there were many similar posts about other women as well. What is especially frustrating to me is even when this group were reported and taken down, similar groups would often appear again under different names. For me, this shows that digital safety is not only about one harmful post or one individual user, sometimes the problem is reported patterned. And supported by an online community and reproduced again and again.

And for a woman whose photos are being shared and discussed, simply being online can mean constantly thinking about where their photos may appear. Who might be looking at them. And what they can do to protect themselves.

And I think most of you guys have already heard about the Cornell case recently. And a survey at the Cornell University shows the online and offline measures and a former student alleges she was sexual assaulted by multiple fraternity members in 2024. And the case is under investigation so this remains an

allegation. What is especially relevant to my topic is the all righted digital part of the case. According to recent reporting and investigative records a snapshot group chat was used during the incident with a message about the woman being shared among the fraternities me. For me this raises a larger question, when does online communication stop being only online and become part of a offline safety risk?

So to conclude, I want to return to a question I ask at the beginning. If a young woman has a smartphone and internet access and digital reach and digital skills and uses social media every day, and is she digitally included I would say access is necessary but not enough. Safety concerns can reduce participation, they can change participation, and even when people stay online, they can make participation more costly.

So the question shouldn't only be can people get online? It should also be, under what conditions can they stay online in express themselves. Remain visible. And participate safely? And the final question I want to leave you guys is this. How much safety work should individual users be expected to carry on by themselves? Because if some people must constantly monitor their visibility, limit what they say, protect their personal information, manage harassment, and watch for offline risks just to stay online.

Then equal access as has not yet created equal participation. Before I finish, I also prepared a form. I would love to hear more stories and perspectives on women's data safety, especially from people with different backgrounds and experiences. Your feedback can help me improve my research and make it more complete and have a broader process prospect in the future.

If you want to share your thought with me, scan the code and share your thought with me, regardless of gender. I am grateful to be part of this community and I hope we can work towards a digital space where everyone can participant for freely safely and equally. And thank you for listening and thank you for being part of this conversation.

(applause)

>> There's a comment online, not a question. He or she said thank you for the presentation. Being online is not the same as being equally able to participate. Is a powerful point from a child right and gender perspective, safety should be

built into platform design not left to individual users from Nigeria.

Thank you very much for the presentation and thank you for joining the session. And next up we have town hall in this room at 4:30 p.m. Please be back at 4:25 so that we can begin our town hall on time.

(applause)

For all Fellows who will please gather around outside by the wall of APrIGF 2026, we'll take a photo right there, right now.

Town hall-2.

>> Hello, everyone, wanted to test. Elizabeth can you hear us? Yes? Can you speak again?

>> ELIZABETH POLLARD: Hello.

>> Can you speak again?

>> ELIZABETH POLLARD: Yes, test.

>> Want to do a mic test and make sure you can speak and contribute to this.

>> ELIZABETH POLLARD: Makes sense.

>> Syed.

Everybody, participants, so just like yesterday, we are using this hall, the main hall if you are not able to find seats here there's an overflow room just beside here between Kangchenjunga Hall and you can join this session as well from there.

>> SYED KAZI: Yes, welcome. Welcome to the second town hall session. 6th of October, 2026. So every day, we finish it's a history. Yes, was a history from today and today will be history for tomorrow and we are creating history and contribute contributing to the synthesis document.

And there's the last session and please don't take it as a punishment. Somebody was asking me just finish it early so that

hello because I said I understand. But even if in your spare time you cannot to out so you have to finish it. One hour discussion, we need to do it. And but of course, let's start. And with this, I'm starting to energize all of us, which means that -- (applause)

So see the energy level. So every time I think we need to keep this in mind. Let's start. And yesterday, hello, Elizabeth, and on those online participants who are there. And I think welcome to this second town hall session. We want to do the introductory part we did yesterday because we all know what's the synthesis document by now and where the comments are available to comment. And also yesterday we explained the processes and we will not go back into that. And today's main purpose is straight away to the sessions you have attended. And just like yesterday, an exercise to recount to remember going back since morning to now what are the important aspects you have observed and you have noticed and you have participated in and you wanted to speak in certain sessions but you could not.

And you still had something to contribute. And eventually as we discussed yesterday we will go to the synthesis document as your inputs because every word and every sentences which are critically thought and contributed by us in the session will certainly to into this synthesis document. So with that, Elizabeth, do you want to say introductory words?

>> ELIZABETH POLLARD: I don't think there's much we need to go over it's the same rules and structure as yesterday. Just empathizing with you all being weary at the end of the day it's almost 10:00 p.m. in Australia so we are all in the same boat.

>> SYED KAZI: Thank you so much. And let's go to the first session. And today we had 14 sessions. And I was counting and 14 is not a small number. So we consumed so much of content and knowledge and information. So the entire day.

The first session was on attended this session. And I love the topic and all. From barrier to enabler and thinking policy for community-driven internet access. I think most of the people sitting here we all know community driven community based and internet center and connectivity. And this is the terminology being used and this session discussed a lot of perspectives and the question is that especially participants from Indonesia and Philippines and Thailand and Myanmar and Nepal is also a great example of community specific internet. The question is what is stopping community networks from growing? There's many issues we discussed and this is one question we discussed and the

second is how can a government better support community networks?

These are simple questions and relevant questions. So any comments or any comments you have? More to a policy perspective. What can be done to promote based on the Nepal example we had where alternative networks and solutions are so critical in difficult times.

Any comments? Any hands? Good.

>> From the discussion we had there was like for an example using Starlink. There were countries that is not legalized yet. But people are using it. Still they are using it illegally and it can also cause a lot of problems. Also there are instance where certain platforms are banned and people are using VPNs and that's also not safe with the VPNs and the governments I think that is something that stops communities from growing because the government has strict regulations. Especially in our region so I think the government should look at all of these new point of view and relax and allow the communities to connect to the internet more? Between what is legal and illegal and also towards the more inclusive community networks. Community networks if you don't believe in community and connectivity is a different thing. Anything? Your hand is up. In the back.

>> Just to what happened in the discussion what she already mentioned so they also talk about the cases of Philippines and Indonesia as well and how community network access changed the whole connectivity regime there. But I think the question you posed on the slide is the difficulties so I believe one difficulty from the regulatory side it needs licensing and provisions or provisions to do that but the major thing is the ecosystem that is sustainability. We see the community networks are mostly project based. So once the project is done, the connectivity established and the problem is that how to fund it continuously in order to operate it for like throughout the year.

Without any interruption. So that is one of the greatest challenge and it needs continued funding which is a very difficult thing to do. And that's what I think my thoughts are. Thank you. Thank you. I think that's an important point. And we discussed and still being discussed what's the sustainability model of this network. If no other hands I think we can go to the next session.

>> I think I would build on what is stopping community network from agreeing apart from sustainability of the community network. There was also a session by the APNIC foundation that spoke of community networks and others that are not balancing out. And there's many issues and you may get the initial funding to grow it but the other aspects are often forgotten so those may be things that should be looked at a project at a comprehensive level.

>> SYED KAZI: In fact, my quick opinion there's a services obligation fund, which I think many countries we have provisions why not that can be leveraged and even the electricity point. Us can be part of the process because we like the citizen to take the part. And next, next session. Next session was on building the next generation of Pacific cybersecurity professionals and partnerships, skills and regional resilience. What is the biggest challenge in building cybersecurity skills in the Pacific? How can Pacific and other countries work together to build this workforce? And how can we keep skilled people in the region so they don't go out? Quick hands. Pacific, any comments? Because we understand that different ecosystem challenges and constraints and resources in Pacific Islands and Pacific economies. There's a hand.

>> Thank you. And hi. Thank you. This was a great session. And wanted to share something we discussed was there is a lot of atom happening and a lot of knowledge and a lot of passion but it's often happening in silos and one point I took away from this session is the importance for cybersecurity professionals in work in tandem with other industries and specifically legal, policy, human rights, even like medical, et cetera. Like it's so important for this work to be intersectional. And not just focused on technology.

But also industry specific. So I think that was one point I took away. Thank you.

>> SYED KAZI: Wonderful, intersection is one point that's very important. And any other points and anything that anyone experienced also? May not be Pacific but I think the context of the similar challenges and continues and they need to keep skilled professionals within.

Okay. Because we are all skilled? Wonderful. No hands? Anything. Anything online or anything comments?

We can go to the next session.

>> Hello. From Cambodia. And I also a officer on background of cybersecurity. And for the throw question. I want to say that first, we have someone from cybersecurity background, we want to keep them in touch of each other with another country in the Pacific region. They can get a chance to join a programme or get their turn and they can say their region or influence someone who influence from the cybersecurity. And we can have make any competition for them to join so it's okay not just only competition but there's also what's the cybersecurity that can be be spread to everyone around them to know how to protect yourself or how someone can detect them, especially for the information. And this is from what I've been or understand.

I also not just joined in here or also in my country, I mostly turn about any programme I hear in my country in the metal cybersecurity field. And it's important to provide any fund that we can get from the APIC foundation we got a fund we have a purpose and we are not only working but we have a fund to buy any global certificate that came.

>> Our skills. So after we get improve our skill and plus a professional we can share into everyone too. So thank you so much.

>> SYED KAZI: Thank you.

>> We have a comment from Arjin online. He said glad to be part of this and to reach the curriculum and syllabus along the trainings from different countries. And we have from Nigeria, access to affordable training and hands on practice is a big barrier especially for young people outside major cities and skills need to be taught early in ways that don't depend on costly equipment or fast internet.

>> SYED KAZI: From Nigeria. Right. I think he sat in the session was commenting on that. So thank you. If no other hands we can go to the next session.

How many people have attended this session? Okay. So only one. I can see only one or two hands. Brilliant. Only two hands. Great. Drawing the line online harm, queer expression, and platform governance in Asia-Pacific. Who should decide what counts as harmful content? And how can we make the internet safer without limiting free expression? If the questions are clear, can you comment? Can you comment? Who attended? Okay.

>> In this session, introduced the drawing line civil society initiative designed to help local systems and platforms distinguish between (off microphone) versus kind of a fictional consensual expressions. And this is what they highlighted within this session.

>> SYED KAZI: Wonderful. You want to comment? Yes.

>> Hi, so one really clear point in this session was that there is a tendency to sometimes relate queer content with immoral content, which is definitely not the case. And but that is a lot of the attitudes in South Asian countries. What's necessary for this is strong legislation. Of course, in Pakistan we don't have holistic queer legislation but we have a great piece of legislation called the transgender person protection act which came out in 2022. And an example where this was really instrumental in supporting the cause because we had a movie called Joy Land, a fictional movie where the transgender person falls in love with a cis het male. And this was initially banned but because there was a existing law. And CSO and community and there was a lot of protest online and offline. And the commission released the commission. And it was unbanned within a week. And it was the first movie that went to the Cannes festival. So thank you.

>> SYED KAZI: A case study. Yeah.

>> One of the things that I think we should keep in consideration when deciding what counts as harmful content is context. So sometimes context is what decide what is harmful content of free expression. So we were also talking about this in one of the few sessions previous sessions I think a few days ago.

It was that regional content sometimes when translated like in regional languages when translated loses its meaning and it could be perceived as harmful and maybe it was not the same. Maybe it was not harmful when it was originally posted but the translation changed the mean organize twist the words. And context is one of the things and another thing is decide I think politics come into practice because when private sector is a free stakeholder in deciding content moderation, politics and profit are those type of -- those type of things also tend to moderate or regulate content and deciding on who gains it and that's why harmful content loses its meaning or consideration and content regulation loses its meaning when (off microphone)

profit is also taken into account.

>> SYED KAZI: This is also subjective in many cases. If no hands, I think we will shift to the next session.

Next session.

So Elizabeth, when you need to express anything, please do. Just jump in whenever you want.

So this is a session on closing the last mile gap. Civil society approach to internet quality measurement in rural Indonesia. I think the issue is important internet quality and the measurement it's a case of the Indonesia. And the question are we measuring internet access in right way. And how can we ensure access and connectivity data reflects the real world experience of the rural communities? How do we measure the impact and strength and out comes and all those things and eventually the quality of the measuring the internet? Any comments? This is very important.

>> An important conversation about the looking at access as political. Because it's control and regulated and also the measurement tools, whichever apps are platform. And whether the user being protected by these particular organization or efforts. There was real prosecution about using a Starlink in Indonesia and safe net being advocating to release it. Although assessment or reports or things being out there. And whether this data is being used for advocating a particular government to give free or open internet for the community. So that was the conversation like access and politics and governance.

>> SYED KAZI: I also got a chance to be part of that. And any other comments and quality of internet measurement in quality -- measuring the quality of internet. Anything you want to add? Especially with the context? Any comments? If something comes to your mind. Okay. So it will come later on. Go and comment on the link.

>> From Sherry. So I would like to share my thought on the second question. A lot of measurement use quantitative methods so we see in today's session how they find out the unit of analysis doesn't really reflect the inequality within a country. I would like to point out that we often time underestimate the strength of qualitative method in doing this research. And we talk about assess of connectivity it's not just about being able to be connected through wired cables through wifi it's also

about how you can meaningful use the internet. And we have also been hearing discussions on how we are concerned about the digital literacy. And how we can assess how people can truly be meaningfully empowered by the internet. And we should explore like qualitative methods and like interviews and how people use and it the barriers they face while using the internet. And that will achieve whether we understand whether the connectivity is meaningful.

>> SYED KAZI: Thank you. Thank you so much.

>> Omor, feel free to unmute yourself.

>> Thank you. And I would like to answer the second question like Miss Sherry. My perspective is to capture the real world experience. I think we must support community led participatory measurement protocols using open source tools deployed in local homes because the initiatives should also create local residents and into independently measured latency and reliability and regulatory bodies must also formally integrate this community generated microdata into national broadband planning and universal service fund allocations to ensure that policies are driven by lived user experience rather than top-down operator force because we can see that operators of ISD fake their reports and they just claim they have the 99.9% of up time or 100% of up time. And in reality we can see it's often different. In this case, I think that microdata are should be feeded into the national policy so the policies or the lived experiences are reflected and we can ensure better connectivity.

>> Thank you, I would like to read a comment excellent from online participant. They mentioned many session was so cool and the idea of utilizing the community knowledge and a simple instrument introduced in the session and can't wait to test it out in my community and reflective rural measurement must be community led and prioritizing priority and digital literacy and actual reliability over simple speed test.

>> SYED KAZI: Thank you. For no other qualities and Omor you give quality input and it's a quality measures. And it's an important input that you have given this floor. Okay, so we can go to the next session.

So how many attended this exercise also? This it's a physical exercise raising your hand. How many attended this? It got -- when I said exercise. It exercised itself. From

compliance to confidence, how Asia start ups are shaping the future of AI governance? How many people attended? I think most of you attended but maybe your hand is not getting to that height.

Okay. So the question is what kinds of AI related regulations may inadvertently stifle start ups and AI regulation can stifle. Is the tradeoff worth it? How can APAC countries make their AI results more consistent in terms of flourishing the AI start ups and contributing to their growth? So any comments? Elizabeth, please, go ahead.

>> ELIZABETH POLLARD: I think the two questions together raise a really important point for me, which is that while we want to encourage innovation and start ups to be able to operate using AI and other tools, we also don't want to have to accept higher levels of harm by accepting start ups from certain base level safety rules. So I think countries collaborating to create guidelines that are consistent makes it easier for start ups to be able to implement those safety guidelines and operate across different countries without undue hardship to their business as well.

>> SYED KAZI: Elaborating on the guidelines and formation and I think that would be a great input. Any comments on this session?

No comments. Where is it?

>> I'm a student from Korea. And regulations are unclear one-size-fits-all or can change really still start up like a (off microphone) but I felt the side of regulation was overlooked when there's too much technology can lose its direction and can lose the well design loses that gives that direction. When we look for a new way to work within this rule, where where the information comes from and the problem isn't regulation at this times it's designed of the regulations. The isn't the regulation and the design and formation of the regulation. Great.

Next session.

>> I think in multiple Asian countries the bigger problem is not having AI regulation. If we have AI regulation in frameworks, we can talk about that and we can depend on code. But if we do not have regulations and frameworks built in we can't do that if we try to start something that's starting from

the resilience we can't do that. And I think that's the problem in most of the countries.

In Nepal, there's no regulation about AI and AI privacy and ways that we can use to maintain morals and data miners so I think that's a bigger problem.

>> SYED KAZI: Nepal has to work a lot on this issue, right? Next session.

Eco internet index. APAC leads the way. I think it's on environment connectivity. I did not attend this session. How would we balance the need for resilient connectivity and environmental impacts? Are there APAC specific issues to consider when advocating for a greener internet? Things a burning issue and I was talking to someone in the morning this is a big issue but it's silent. And no one is talking much about it. On the other hand, we want the AI it does and this is equally very important. And hand to hand. I think going hand in hand. Any comments? Environment, AI.

Internet impacts.

>> Hello from Indonesia. And this is very interesting to me because it's a paradox. I used to build a start up and almost a year we have 300,000 users and it's problem because it's like it's too much. It's out of our expectations. And one of the things I also consider is the energy not like the big data center and blah, blah, blah. But the thing is even if we run it inside my house and through my home servers, it's going to be a problem. And like I have to abuse that and I have to abuse the servers and one of the key points when I build it it's we don't just have to check the technology requirements, but we have to prioritize the energy of ability first. If we abuse the energy we can do that and we don't have a problem by paying because like loss lots of organization who wants to fund the internet and who wants to fund the AI. But the thing is if we abuse and every single home abuse it then it's going it be a problem. We need a policy and I think it has to be a stronger policy that touch the grassroots because now every single phones can use it and every single phones can abuse it. If you three at least know the basic. And that's my thought. Thank you.

>> I would like the address the second question since I was a speaker here. I want to address there are three Es in the EII report which is energy, efficiency, and economy. So I would say we should consider the fact that when we talk about

sustainability and climate issues, we must make sure it's by design and not for design. So when we think about infrastructure being taken into consideration, we must take sure that we must make sure that it is, again, for the people and not by the people. Or by the people and not for the people.

>> SYED KAZI: Everything boils down to the people.

>> Online, they mentioned to reflect rural experiences measurement must be community led. Prioritizes affordability, data literacy and actual reliability over simple speed test. And Elizabeth, you have your hand raised. Over to you.

>> ELIZABETH POLLARD: Thank you. I have a comment on this. I think in a unique position in Asia-Pacific being a region that is had some of the most disaster prone countries who are the most in deed of resilient connectivity. And I just think we as a region need to be careful in turn to consider whether the measures we are taken to build resilient infrastructure and scale the infrastructure with inadvertently contributing to the climate conditions contributing to the disasters in our vulnerable region.

>> SYED KAZI: Thank you, Elizabeth, well noted. If no other comments? We will -- there's another comment.

>> My name is Michelle. And I'm an Ambassador with the Internet Society. And my comment is more on a macro level. I do work in policy governance and work in advocacy and diplomacy. And I work on policies like this. And the problem sustainability is becoming a trend. And practically in the late 2010s, it was very trendy to be sustainable. It was very trendy to be climate forward and it was very trendy to think about sustainability and Asia-Pacific and Africa and how AI effect us.

You found a lot of governments and countries were throwing in a lot of money into sustainability and to climate change. And policy work. But then that sort of shifted. And so we see that when the trend does not support it, the support that was given to us in this policy work is also taken away. And so now in my work on a macrolevel I'm finding a lot of governments don't even want to talk about sustainability anymore. Whereas two of three years ago it was part of the their key talking points and but now they don't care about it anymore it's not entrepreneurity. It's not a trendy thing. And also for us as the Global South we need to stop depending on western countries to look at them and what policy they are pushing in order for us

to follow.

When they stop accepting sustainability as trendy then where will we go? You know? When our lives become a trend for them and sustainability becomes a trend for them when it stops we are the ones who suffer.

>> SYED KAZI: Well-thought point, which mean there's a big question mark and 2030 and beyond also I think that's what we can foresee in things like that. And any online comment?

>> We have a question from the local hub. They said we should use renewable energy while keeping the internet accessible and this should keep without impacting connectivity. And they said (reading) we should consider these difference and promote affordable and sustainable and environment friendly internet solutions.

>> SYED KAZI: Brilliant input. Thank you for online comments and sharing your views. No comments, we can go to next because we have a few left.

I think you must be counting your time and that's okay we need to go. I think yes, we need to finish this. From local evidence to regional dialogue and local evidence and regional dialogue and trust inclusion and open internet in the age of AI.

The question is what local experiences from your country could other countries in the region learn from related to this. What other countries could learn and how can we encourage better cross regional collaboration and knowledge sharing related to trust, inclusion, and open internet in the age of AI? What are the processes and initiatives or steps perhaps certain economies have take and in how we can share and learn from each other. Any comments? Great. I think many of you are tired by now.

>> A quick comment. So this the major focal point here is linguist diversity and internet inclusivity. There's 120 plus languages spoken languages within Nepal only. And they search about our Pacific region it's 3,000 plus. So it's a huge task.

What I realize here, so as for these questions we need some kind of a urgent regional requirement to develop and support localizing AI models to provide the widespread language.

>> SYED KAZI: (off microphone) it's also about the money resource required for the models and the investments we need to

make and all this stuff. Any other comments? No comments and any online comment? No comments. Okay, next.

How many left right now? How many sessions? What?

>> There's one online. It says 120 plus registered languages are spoken in reality this would be much more.

>> SYED KAZI: The dialects have dialects and so many things, and those are not counted. Next session is about community wifi and cyclone (reading). This is Bangladesh so I'll come to the Bangladesh colleagues. And what steps are taken before or during and after disaster to preserve resilient connectivity for at-risk communities? And because fishing communities are always at risk. And second question, who should be responsible for funding resilient internet infrastructure. The questions are clear and the topic I think is clear. Any comments?

Steps, all about the steps. I think since yesterday I think we've been talking steps. And measurements we to take and funding for resilient infrastructure. And anything specific to Bangladesh? Any thoughts relevant from other economies?

>> I'm from Bangladesh. From this session, we saw a documentary how with the help of APAC foundations and some pilot work was done in Bangladesh. There were some Starlink devices installed in a fishermen community and also in their boats. And we saw that how in after 70 kilometers or more than that, when the mobile network was not good not at the level then they could call to their home and they could understand the current situation and the environment how is it.

So that was just a pilot project. But the issue is that it is tough for them to install. So that's why the company who were taken these initiative put some kind of workshops and learn them that how they can operate it. So that can be taken as an example. And can be implemented elsewhere. Thank you. Thank you.

>> Just about the second question with the funding. I think primarily, it should be -- it's still a pilot model but maybe the government can take it as an example. And like for a longer time like different development agencies can come and fund it but it's not sustainable approach so it should be integrated and maybe the whole pilot project. The model can be integrated into the policy and the government can take not only

to the (off microphone) implemented throughout the coastal build so they can protect the people in the communities in the coastal areas.

It's not only -- primarily the government should be funding about it. But if the government has sometimes the resource constraint or the funding constraints maybe the other society organizations or the private sector should come. It must be a collaborative effort to fund that.

>> SYED KAZI: A quick point. Do you think this kind of model is the burden on the government to spend money on connectivity? Because the mainstream connectivity is a lost cause of infrastructure so this model would be cost effective even for the government also, do you think that?

>> I believe this is cost effective because government it is their responsibility and need to come up with some interventions to protect the people, fishermen in the coastal area. So like funding for internet issues and connecting them through internet like installing here for an example, it will save the government like money from the other initiatives as well. So it would be cost effective I believe.

>> SYED KAZI: Many economies are resource constraint, and if it was cost effective it would be brilliant.
No comments. Next session.

This is this one was a session, right? I attended this session it was a wonderful discussion. When an energy crisis -- it's about energy crisis you can see how energy is connected to the connectivity. And the question is how can we make digital infrastructure more resilient? Should connectivity be prioritized during an energy crisis? What factors could determine energy supply for low (reading)

>> One thing I really liked from this session by Matthew James specifically is how he connected energy to connectivity. Usually we think there's a back uplink, we are fine. But it's how much power that back up needs. He mentioned you can switch to a lower bandwidth back up to that uses power to keep basic connectivity going. And I really liked his line that dirty power does more damage than no power at all because you have obviously unstable power or burnouts can slowly damage the infrastructure where a clean shutdown doesn't. So I think the main takeaway for me was resilience isn't necessarily about keeping everything running at 100%.

Sometimes it's about being able to scale down and stay partially connected rather than completely crashing out.

>> I would like to add onto these views. That's a green transition must be inclusive and that last mile is most fragile so we must make sure that the understood served areas lacking back up power must be efficient with their equipments and having diverse if Id energy sources that's about it.

>> I'm a student here in Nepal. And the session was really interesting especially in the context of Nepal because we get often hit by disasters and crisis. So to make my point very short. The thing is in Nepal, we only talk about internet resilience only after disaster hits us. So there's a need of a pre-planning beforehand so that we can cope with the disaster and reduce the lasting effects of disaster.

So the stops discussed in the session, back up power resilient infrastructure. Renewable energy. And better crisis planning by the government are the things that are most required in Nepal right now. Thank you.

>> SYED KAZI: I think this point was also discussed in the plenary. And this was raised by the special secretary and someone asked him this question. And moving on to the next session. For energy crisis and more AI and more energy crisis could come up because data centers and all that. And how are the economies preparing for that. That's another question.

Governing and AI and everything. So governs generated AI. Things a interesting topic and billing data digital spaces in South and Southeast Asia and how to protect elections from AI generated misinformation? Who should be responsible for dealing with AI generated political content, which not acceptable. Do we need more regional cooperation on this issue. Things a burning issue from the country I come from that's a big issue and any comments and elections and AI and manipulation and misinformation. And the danger that we are sitting on the (?) that we are sitting on.

>> The conversation was very interesting, but I ask a question but it seems the thing remain unsettled. The thing is like we discussed about the panelists discussed about how the AI generated misinformation and disinformation can be discounted and especially with media and fact checkers which is good I agree. And nowadays different political parties, they are

employ their own fact checkers to manipulate the narratives.

We believe or have want to believe or have the tendency to believe on the fact checkers they will debunk the disinformation. So this narrative is contributed in different ways the political party and the fact checker or media might have a bias about it and it's difficult who to believe.

Also I asked a question there was an answer like the citizen journalism. And again, the sitting journalism I can go in a camera and be a citizen journalism and be biased. And it's difficult to do that and count the misinformation disruption during election time.

>> SYED KAZI: It's bias in one thing or the other.

>> We have two comments online. Omor said economically investing in satellite connectivity like Starlink is far more cost effective. If life is lost at sea due to lack of realtime weather alerts, the financial cost exceeds the cost of equipment. And human lives are invaluable and cannot be measured in monetary terms. And this session brought about new things I hasn't thought about, specifically the cross border actors and how information can be manipulated and undermining our democracy's thoughtful session and left me thinking.

>> SYED KAZI: Yes. So any other comments on this? No comments, I think we can move, next.

You can see assistive technology for meaningful participation and successful integration in education and the workplace. How can you raise the bar for accessibility across all kinds of technology? And what does meaningful digital inclusion look like for people with disabilities? Any comments? Any comments?

We have three, four hands.

>> Hi. My name is Azhay [sounds like] from Myanmar. And I learned one thing from the this event is which is the blurring line between the assistive technology and accessibility. And many speakers also purport the solution which are like using the technology advances. So for example like the solutions being more personalized and also the AI powered.

What I believe is everything has a flipside. And they are some kind of rate we can put intentionally so as I mentioned

like the technology needs a lot of the AI power and personal life and sometimes they might be asked to give a lot of the sensitive personal information, for example, like over their privacy. When we talk about these kind of issue we have to ensure that the people can disabilities are not being forced to give too much control over their personal information. And privacy. For the (off microphone) of the accessibility. So that's something we need to think about. That's my personal opinion.

>> This session highlighted that the accessibility should be integrated into the system. We should do it beforehand. Like you can't -- you can't do a technology or platform and then -- you have to think about accessibility before you do it. Not after.

>> Okay. So I'll be quick. When I'm doing research on responsible AI governance we define minority rights as one of the dimensions to define reasonable AI governance. And when I listen to disability aspect somehow when I look at the AI governance in general international standard even they just mention disability rights. It's like a little thing as part of the bigger regulation. So it's interesting to know from the perspective of the speakers and also like moderator that somehow little things can define like the disability cell and also putting like considerations of like just even access to get the regulation also can be considered part of it. And thank you.

>> Thank you. Syed, you are going from one end of the room to the other. And we have multiple comments. Accessibility should be built into design from the start not add later. Governments can make accessibility standards or requirement for public digital services and persons with disabilities should help design and test the tools. The second question is meaningful inclusion means that technology is affordable and work on low bandwidth and supports local languages and comes with training so people can use it every day and not only major cities from the local hub said that build every app, website, and device so everyone can use it and ask people with disabilities to test it and make helpful tools cheap and easy to get and that means that people with disabilities can use technology on their own to study work and talk with others just like everyone else.

One more from the local hub. And digital inclusion means that people with disabilities can use technology independently and feel they are genuinely part of the digital world and not

just given access to it. And technology should be affordable and accessible and designed around the real needs especially around education in the work place. If anyone from the overflow room would also like to share your thought, please let us know and we can hear from you.

>> SYED KAZI: Thank you for the brilliant comments. And next session. We have two things what's the other one? Surveillance and by design. Surveillance by design and digital ID and the trust crisis in South Asia. How do you prevent a digital ID from becoming a tool for surveillance? What safeguards should the governments and communities put in place? Any comments? Digital IT, safeguards? Not being misused and surveillance. How do we protect ourselves? You want to say?

>> Thank you. I think one case I was thinking of was when we have irregular migrants in countries and they are issued the temporary ID cards for example in Pakistan we have irregular migrants and they have temporary cards issued by the government and that results in a database.

So eventually what happened when policy shifted if country they used the same database to expel those persons. So I think they have to be safeguards in place they aren't used negatively. And then also we in Pakistan, I feel like the issue with a lot of ID data is that there's a lot of gatekeeping of data within different departments.

So we do have like a national data service and also we have provincial IDs. And it's all linked to one card, so I think it was be helpful if it's one stream of the data.

>> SYED KAZI: Good point. If not comments we will move onto the next session.

Connected but not safe. Not safe. I'll finish it. (Laughter). Thank you. Rethinking digital inclusion through the experiences of young women in Taiwan.

>> So I think what I like most about about this session was the idea that being online doesn't necessarily mean that everyone is getting any full chance to participate. And the concept that we heard about the safety registered to me because people especially women have to constantly manage their privacy and visibility just to feel safe online. And I also like the emphasis on the safety by design because it shifts some responsibility from individual users towards the platform and technology designers. And it really made me think about whether

we are designing technology that truly empowers users or giving them for responsibility protect themselves. Thank you.

>> Thank you. I assume there's no comments more. So we move onto the next session.

Last session. Great. See, kill, bill, kill, bill so we will kill now so we have to get ready. And AI in the kill chain. Sorry. (Laughter).

Sorry for that. AI in the kill chain -- the title -- (Laughter). I'm sorry, please see the title. (Laughter). I'm not reading the title. Sorry for what I think the main issue here is that -- (Laughter). It's good that we are laughing here we are relaxes ourself and the AI the kill chain accountability human control ask the case for binding regime in Asia-Pacific. I think the word kill is very, very I think startling being used for what context we can understand. I think the severity of the problems so how do we keep humans accountable for AI assisted military decisions. That was the purpose. And the laugh was a different thing. And there's an example how AI was used to kill and dehumanize human lives and should military have it own international rules?

How the can the Asia-Pacific region have a stronger voice on military AI? This is very important.

>> This is one of the most prominent issues in modern times impacted by the AI. And the speaker also mentioned the Israeli defense force have a AI system that targets humans without manual intervention. And in war zone it kills people. If anybody has a if you know the movie Terminator, there's they are killing humans and (off microphone) in U.S. is -- sorry -- the U.S. has a similar problem. And not just the AI killing factor. Another factor I see is recently the Anthropic, the company behind Claude AI does not adhere to U.S. laws to be used in a war case. And the contract was canceled and I think OpenAI was filled in.

And this created a sense that Claude was a serious AI company and some kind of analogy. Both companies came into our house and they stole everything.

(off microphone).

So what I want to add then is I think just permission is not enough but we need a enforcement for the policy level. Every day we are discussing policy but there's to real body to enforce it. And the enforcement is a major factor that we should be thinking this about right now. Very quickly.

>> Very quickly. So basically in my opinion like now. As we speak. And here, AI is already being to kill humans. So just one take I want us to remember it's really okay to enhance AI for human capabilities. But we have to limit that not AI to replace human authority.

Because we do that, then maybe it's not AI killing humans but killing all humans. So that's a problem.
(applause)

>> SYED KAZI: Because we are ending this -- online comment?

>> Omor, you can unmute yourself, over to you.

>> Thank you so much. Everyone is trying to answer this the second question, so I would like to go to third question and answer it. So the Asia-Pacific should not let super global powers set the rules. And we need regional bodies and multistakeholder platforms like APrIGF to build a unified content to push for bending regional (off microphone) that prioritize human oversight and peace and stability over the algorithmic warfare so we can protect our lives. Thank you.

I think you are muted.

>> SYED KAZI: Any last comments and any goodbye comments? Thank you. Thank you, everyone. And there is announcement. Elizabeth, are you there with us? Any last comment? Please give your last comment.

>> ELIZABETH POLLARD: I don't want to keep anyone longer than we have to so I would encourage anyone who had comments they didn't have time for today to put them on the comments page. Looking forward to seeing you tomorrow for the final town hall.

>> SYED KAZI: Great. So we are done. And thank you so much. See you tomorrow. Good night. And not good night and good evening and see you.

>> Thank you, everyone, thanks for joining the town hall. And please come tomorrow morning. We have an open house with MSG, 8:30 here in Kangchenjunga room 2. If you have questions or want to about the APrIGF MSG and how to become a member who what do we do? Join the open house tomorrow at 8:30. And all members, please do come so you can share your experience with

all the participants and MSG Chairs will be there as well.

(applause)

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