

Her Excellency, Antje Leendertse
Co-Facilitator
Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

His Excellency, Neville Melvin Gertze
Co-Facilitator
Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations

Re: Civil Society Participation in the Ministerial Meeting of the Summit of the Future

Your Excellencies,

We the undersigned civil society organizations actively engage and follow the process of developing the United Nations (UN) Global Digital Compact (GDC), as a key component of the Summit of the Future. We thank the Government of Germany and the Government of Namibia for your efforts as Co-Facilitators of the UN Summit of the Future process. We are particularly encouraged by your efforts to enable a multistakeholder process.

As the preparatory process of the Summit of the Future develops, we write to express our specific concerns regarding the **lack of information about the mechanisms for participation of non-governmental stakeholders**. It is unclear how non-governmental *stakeholders* can contribute to and define the scope and modalities of the Summit of the Future in September 2024 and participate in the upcoming Ministerial Meeting of the Summit of the Future on September 21, 2023 in New York.

We are pleased to see that observers might be invited to provide statements during the [plenary segments of the Ministerial Meeting](#). However, we also see with concern that inscriptions will be received for speakers at the ministerial level only. We would appreciate receiving information about the selection of observers, who are chosen, and under what criteria, whether to achieve diversity in terms of regional, thematic, gender, geographic, or other representation. With more clarity on who will be allowed to speak, and the time allotted to specific stakeholder to make interventions, as well as with information about how to get accreditation to participate in the Ministerial Meeting, we as civil society can be more efficient as we could group our statements, sign onto joint statements, and be more strategic in our engagement with the process.

As referenced in your [Co-Facilitator letter dated May 12, 2023](#), you are committed to ensuring transparency and inclusivity for all Member States and stakeholders. A meaningfully inclusive multistakeholder approach is essential throughout the development of the Summit of the Future process, including definition of the scope and modalities of the Summit and, by extension, the GDC track. We therefore take this opportunity to reiterate our [Principles and Recommendations on ensuring civil society inclusion in UN discussions](#), for your consideration. This statement calls on UN agencies, mechanisms, and bodies to ensure that virtual modalities, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, do not limit the

meaningful inclusion of civil society voices in UN discussions. Such principles apply to the now hybrid modalities we are witnessing at the UN as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our organizations have been collaborating on the digital cooperation agenda for four years, and we remain dedicated to bringing our thematic and technical expertise to the process.

Based on the above, we therefore urge you as Co-Facilitators of the Summit of the Future to consider the following actions moving forward:

1. When determining non-governmental speakers for the Ministerial Meeting, ensure the criteria is clearly communicated to civil society groups and disseminated widely to ensure diverse participation, and that there is balance across stakeholder groups.
2. Ensure there is a dedicated portion of the plenary session for civil society interventions.
3. Establish *a mechanism* to submit written interventions to the co-facilitators and ensure that such interventions are posted in a central place on the Summit of the Future webpage for future reference and for all to access.
4. Share information on the upcoming Ministerial meeting in September - including any logistical information and mode of participation - particularly with regards to modalities for civil society participation in a timely manner.
5. Make needed provisions so that civil society organizations are actively and meaningfully provided with opportunities to contribute to the Summit of the Future process, including the GDC track in the period ahead of the Summit itself. We particularly view the upcoming Ministerial Meeting as a fruitful opportunity for the mandate to conduct such meaningful civil society engagement and would welcome any additional opportunities to contribute.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Signatories

1. **Access Now**
2. **Global Partners Digital**
3. **Association for Progressive Communications**
4. **Derechos Digitales - América Latina**
5. **Internet Governance Caucus**
6. **Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD)**
7. **Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation (AODIRF)**
8. **CCAOI**
9. **Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)**
10. **Bangladesh Internet Governance Forum**
11. **Population and Development Initiative**
12. **Alliance for Universal Digital Rights (AUDRi)**

- 13. Equality Now**
- 14. Organization of the Justice Campaign**
- 15. Life campaign to abolish the death sentence in Kurdistan**
- 16. Fundación Karisma**
- 17. European Center for Not-For-Profit Law Stichting**
- 18. Global Network Initiative (GNI)**
- 19. Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)**
- 20. Data Privacy Brasil Research Association**
- 21. Pollicy**