

RIPE NCC's contribution to the EU consultation on the Zero Draft of the Global Digital Compact (GDC)

The RIPE NCC supports the vision presented in the [GDC Zero Draft](#), which focuses on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030, and promotes collaboration and partnership among all stakeholders. We are pleased to note that the Zero Draft has incorporated important structural elements and recommendations made by the RIPE NCC, and that the technical community has been recognised as a distinct stakeholder group.

We welcome the GDC guiding principles and its recognition of the Internet as a critical global resource for inclusive and equitable digital transformation. We also welcome the emphasis on open standards and interoperability which are both crucial elements for building and maintaining the open and global Internet.

As one of the five authoritative Regional Internet Registries, the RIPE NCC ensures the Internet remains one and global, and is firmly committed to promoting open standards, inclusive and transparent policy development, and bottom-up community engagement. We welcome the GDC's commitment to uphold the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), and we encourage all stakeholders to work together towards reaffirming and strengthening its role, scope, and mission.

Ahead of the next rounds of negotiations and as part of the Internet technical community, the RIPE NCC calls for attention on the following elements:

On the Commitments and Actions:

- We welcome the emphasis placed on connectivity throughout the document and especially under Objective 1, which aims to close the digital divide and enhance inclusion, notably through digital literacy and skills development. However, we believe the commitments outlined under objectives 1 and 2 should be strengthened, especially clusters on *Connectivity* and *Access to digital technologies*. This could entail further increasing the level of commitment and the sharing of best practices, given that digital technologies are recognised as cross-cutting elements supporting most of the SDGs (70%).¹
- The technical community participates in the closing of the digital divide alongside stakeholders other than the private sector. The RIPE NCC underlines that governments, especially from developing countries, benefit from technical expertise and engage in capacity-building with the Internet technical community. This plays an important role in expanding connectivity and closing this divide.
- The RIPE NCC welcomes Paragraph 26 (d) under *Internet governance* (Objective 3), but calls for particular vigilance on how decisions and actions pursued by governments can unintentionally jeopardise the technical operations of the Internet. We believe that means of communication should not be affected by political disputes and conflicts, we are thus calling for attention to ensure public policies and foreign policy instruments do not inadvertently undermine the integrity and security of the Internet's technical operations.
- Finally, the GDC process is an opportunity to reaffirm a commitment to preserving a single, open, stable, trustworthy, secure and interoperable Internet and other objectives with specific calls on closing the digital divide.

¹<https://www.undp.org/press-releases/digital-technologies-directly-benefit-70-percent-sdg-targets-say-itu-undp-and-partners>

On the Follow-up and Review mechanisms:

- Paragraph 53 effectively encourages active participation from diverse stakeholders and aims to enhance our current cooperative endeavours. However, to amplify its impact, the paragraph should explicitly advocate for the strengthening of existing multi-stakeholder governance frameworks. This would better facilitate inclusion and cooperation, thereby enhancing stakeholder engagement in a more structured and impactful manner.
- Paragraph 61 calls for the creation of an office to ‘coordinate digital and emerging technology’. The RIPE NCC sees a need to clarify the rationale for additional coordination at this level, particularly in relation to the roles already played by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and relevant UN agencies in this area.
- We underline that the multiplication of processes and platforms discussing Internet governance matters would lead to a duplication of efforts and dilute the voices of non-government actors as a result. We align ourselves with governments and other stakeholders who ask to avoid such duplication within the UN and rather recommend the strengthening of existing fora including UN agencies and mechanisms to align already developed WSIS Action Lines.

On the GDC negotiations process:

- We call for the GDC process and its outcomes to remain principle-based and oriented on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, while the development and implementation of concrete actions should be defined and assessed through established fora and existing platforms, including the IGF at national, regional and global levels.
- While it is crucial for GDC negotiations to remain open and transparent, it is further important to recognise the distinct and specialised role of the Internet technical community. Unlike other stakeholders, the organisations that are responsible for technical coordination - including naming, numbering, and the development of Internet standards - possess an unparalleled depth of expertise that is fundamental to the entire Internet ecosystem.
- Integrating the technical community in multilateral processes should not be solely about equal representation but about valuing this community’s neutrality and specialised knowledge that transcends individual or group interests, benefiting all stakeholders. This involves advocating for an establishment of a unique advisory capacity that leverages technical neutrality and specific competencies to foster greater unity and efficacy in Internet governance.
- The RIPE NCC calls on the future Pact of the Future to implement the WSIS - SDG Matrix, which directly links WSIS Action Lines with Sustainable Development Goals.²
- Finally, the RIPE NCC encourages the European Union in its endeavour to work together with its partners and all stakeholders to ensure the vision and principles laid out on the Zero Draft are strengthened and not undermined during the negotiations.

The RIPE NCC is committed to act as a trusted steward of the open, inclusive, collaborative Internet model, engaging and connecting people and communities. Our contributions to the GDC process and discussions can be found on our website at [RIPE NCC Contributions to External Consultations](#).³

² https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/sdg/Content/Documents/wsis-sdg_matrix_document.pdf

³ <https://www.ripe.net/membership/internet-governance/multi-stakeholder-engagement/ripe-ncc-contributions-to-external-consultations/>