Readout for GNI Summit for Democracy Roundtable on Countering the Misuse of Technology

March 16, 2023

Jason Pielemeier, Executive Director of the Global Network Initiative, opened the roundtable and welcomed three new members of GNI: AfroLeadership, an NGO working in Francophone Africa; the University of California Berkeley Human Rights Center; and the global freedom of expression organization Article 19. He then outlined the agenda for the roundtable and introduced the speakers.

Tim Maurer, Director for Tech and Democracy at the National Security Council, set the roundtable in the context of the Summit for Democracy and the U.S. government's focus on advancing technology for democracy. Maurer also introduced a set of recommendations for counter-censorship technical measures, which were also circulated to the roundtable participants.

Scott Busby, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State at the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor discussed the different types of commitments that the private sector can take to advance technology for democracy and counter misuse. These included policy statements on human rights; supporting democracy and free flow of information in times of conflict or repressive environments; and investing in democracy-affirming anti-censorship technology.

David Kaye, GNI Board Chair, led a discussion on human rights due diligence. **Jason Pielemeier** highlighted GNI's participation in the Action Coalition on Responsible Technology (ART), including the development of the Across the Stack tool, which helps companies and other stakeholders identify key questions and connections that can inform human rights due diligence throughout the tech ecosystem. Several GNI company members highlighted their human rights due diligence activities, such as creating due diligence toolkits for conflict-sensitive settings; considering risks across the 5G value chain; publishing human rights impact assessments; and developing a framework for evaluating surveillance concerns in the context of emerging technology.

Agustina Del Campo, GNI Board Deputy Chair, moderated a conversation on stakeholder engagement. **USAID** underlined the opportunities for public-private partnerships in promoting

tech and democracy. **Anne Marie Engtoft Larsen, Tech Ambassador for the Danish Government,** showcased the Danish Tech for Democracy Initiative and its multi-stakeholder action coalitions (such as ACT and ART). Companies flagged their participation in GNI as an important way to engage with stakeholders, and also explained their efforts to give civil society access to technology that improves their privacy and security.

Elonnai Hickok, GNI Managing Director, moderated a discussion on transparency, explaining the ways that the GNI Principles and Implementation Guidelines require both public transparency reporting and confidential sharing of more sensitive information. **Tom Barraclough from the Brainbox Institute** highlighted the work that GNI and others have been doing to catalog and improve the visibility of digital transparency work and elevate perspectives from the Majority World in related discussions through the [Action Coalition on Meaningful Transparency](#) (ACT). Companies in this discussion shared details on their transparency policies, such as reporting on government requests for content removal and data disclosure, sharing data about internet tampering with researchers, and ensuring explainability and interpretability of AI systems.

Jason Pielemeier closed with an invitation to view the Summit for Democracy as a chance to deepen engagement between government, the private sector, and civil society.