



## ORAL STATEMENT

UN Global Digital Compact

Informal Consultations with Member States and Stakeholders

March 1, 2024

Delivered virtually by Jason Pielemeier, GNI Executive Director

- The Global Network Initiative, GNI, appreciates the opportunity to engage in this consultation and would like to thank the co-facilitators and relevant UN bodies for their efforts to ensure an inclusive process.
  - GNI's perspective is informed by over fifteen years of experience in fostering multistakeholder collaboration and promoting accountability to advance the GNI Principles on Freedom of Expression and Privacy, which guide tech company decision-making around freedom of expression and privacy.
  - The GNI's framework is focused on freedom of expression and privacy, but provides relevant guidance for addressing the full range of human rights risks and opportunities, including through the establishment of corporate commitments to human rights, developing comprehensive HRDD processes, engaging relevant stakeholders, practicing meaningful transparency, and providing appropriate senior/board-level oversight of these commitments and activities.
  - GNI provides a unique accountability mechanism through which company efforts to implement these steps, including non-public information about internal systems and sensitive case studies, are reviewed and informed by non-company members.
  - The GNI Principles are rooted in International Human Rights Law and the United Nation Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), which should remain core to any new principles and frameworks developed for an open, free, and secure digital future for all, as well as a deep commitment to multistakeholder collaboration.
  - In addition to ensuring that the GDC process and outcome reflect and embed commitments to human rights principles and multistakeholder process, we would like to make one additional, high-level recommendation:
- GDC process should reinforce and not-displace or duplicate existing collaboration: The GDC's ultimate output should explore avenues to reinforce and build upon existing efforts to empower multistakeholder processes and support work toward a free,



open, interoperable, and secure Internet. As interventions throughout these consultations have made clear, collaboration has always been crucial for the Internet's development and growth as a shared, open, and global resource, and a number of successful mechanisms for collaboration already exist and have worked to bring together a wide-range of relevant stakeholders.

- The Global Digital Compact should recognize this and actively promote collaborative efforts involving the technical community, academia, and civil society organizations. Specific examples of collaboration include the IGF and associated National and Regional Internet Governance Forums, inclusive civil society-led events such as RightsCon, and related multistakeholder events such as the upcoming NetMundial+10 conference.
- While the GDC can and should encourage them to continue efforts to expand inclusivity and accessibility, especially for those from under-represented and under-privileged groups, it should avoid creating new, disparate processes which will draw attention and resources away from these existing efforts.
- Thank you very much for this opportunity to contribute to this process. We look forward to also providing written inputs on the "Possible elements" set out in the co-facilitators' recent letter.