# Contribution to the Global Digital Compact

The Internet Society Brazil Chapter - ISOC Brazil welcomes the opportunity to submit this contribution to the Global Digital Compact process. We are keen to continue participating in the next steps in shaping this important milestone for digital cooperation.

Our focus is particularly on the following topics: Connectivity, Internet Governance, and Internet Fragmentation.

ISOC Brazil is a not-for-profit organization established in 2012 with more than 1050 individual and organizational members across the country. We are the Brazilian chapter of the Internet Society and are aligned to the same ISOC's core principles and mission: the Internet is for Everyone and we defend an open, globally connected, secure and trustworthy Internet.

While our mission-driven background is grounded on the technical community dimension, ISOC Brazil members come from a very diverse range of stakeholder groups: the technical community involved in the technological development of the Internet and its operation; the business community involved in Internet infrastructure and operation (such as access providers) and content development (such as media and applications companies); the civil society groups that promote social and human rights values; and the academic communities from different areas that carry out research on the development and use of the Internet and its social and economic impacts (such as Law, Social Sciences, Media, Political Sciences, Sociology and Computing).

**About the overall process**

ISOC Brazil salutes the Global Digital Compact consultations and all the work that is planned and has been done until this moment, trying to engage diverse stakeholders while providing multiple informative documents to enable meaningful participation.

Nevertheless, we would like to reinforce the need to continue the efforts of engaging with multiple stakeholders in the next phases toward negotiations that will shape the Global Digital Compact.

As recommended, we focused our contribution on two aspects: "core principles that all governments, companies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders should adhere to" and "key commitments to bring about these specific principles", with a brief introduction before each of these.

**About Connectivity**

We would like to reinforce, as a basic principle of connectivity, the importance of community networks to promote access in countries that struggle with resource restrictions and are as large as

Brazil, especially when considering that satellite alternatives that are emerging nowadays are still too expensive and do not empower the communities.

- Since these are initiatives that are not commonly seen as having an immediate return of investment, it is necessary to guarantee international and public funding for projects that aim to implement or reinforce community networks.
- We can list as key commitments:
    - (i) promotion of public-private partnerships, with public guidelines and funding but private implementation;
    - (ii) international funds that may be directed to different countries or regions depending on the current necessity;
    - (iii) elaboration of opportunities focused on meaningful connectivity through community networks.

## About Internet Governance

As a basic principle, UN and country members should recognize and promote meetings that are proposed by nations or entities that do not have a history as decision-makers in critical aspects of Internet Governance. Inequality among countries, also encompassing inequality among actors, is one of the most central issues of Internet Governance.

- The NETmundial meeting, held in 2014, is a good example of a practice that may help create a sense of active belonging for the different countries and actors involved in Internet governance.
- This type of diversity is necessary so different actors may find a protagonist role to collaborate with other traditional initiatives, such as the Internet Governance Forum and its network with national, regional and thematic events. Diversity is important especially to find out, through practice, what organizational and operational models work the best.
- Brazil has the experience of the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee that since 1995 is the multistakeholder body for Internet Governance at the local level. The value of those multistakeholder mechanisms should be a key component at the GDC outputs.
- We can list as key commitments:
    - (i) actively avoiding the perception that UN-related (or other multilateral organizations, such as the WTO) events are the only ones that should be regarded as legitimate and promoted in the Internet Governance Ecosystem;
    - (ii) encourage countries that have little space in traditional Internet governance meetings or in specific thematics to create new discussion platforms, as long as these are built upon a perspective of collaboration and not competition;
    - (iii) incorporate the outputs of these new spaces as valuable inputs to the outcomes of major events or decision-making processes;
    - (iv) open source technologies and open standards should be more heavily promoted as a way to achieve higher levels of equality among the different actors in Internet Governance ecosystems.

## About Internet Fragmentation

ISOC Brazil urges that the discussion about Internet Fragmentation does not focus only on economic interests and concerns of countries where the main Internet Governance institutions are based;

- It is important to emphasize that it may be risky to ignore developing countries' (and other actors with less leverage) claims for digital sovereignty and better economic equality in the digital environment;
- Although meeting these diverse concerns may initially be seen as a step towards Fragmentation, not addressing them can escalate tensions to the point where harsh acts of fragmentation by governments are taken as a tentative solution to the perceived problems;
- It is important to carefully consider regulation focused on protecting fundamental rights as potentially legitimate, considering they have no adverse effects on other valued aspects of the Internet (ex.: GDPR and the free flow of data), provided they do not harm the Internet core and its main principles - to be open, globally connected, secure, and trustworthy;
- However, nationalist and individualistic approaches to regulating the Internet should be avoided, and respect for the different interests involved should be achieved through collaboration and rough consensus between groups of actors with different positions;
- We can list as key commitments:
  - (i) to incorporate substantially, and not only rhetorically, the demands of minorities (in terms of influence) related to Internet Governance;
  - (ii) to decentralize Internet Governance institutions, so that their headquarters are not overly concentrated in the territory of a single country, avoiding challenges about jurisdiction and oversight issues;
  - (iii) to promote substantially multisectoral decision-making processes, taking advantage of the existence of common cross-border interests that exist outside of governmental clashes;
  - (iv) to provide countries with clear and effective tools and guidelines to avoid digital colonization without resorting to acts that may cause fragmentation, such as an international taxing framework for multinational digital platforms
  - Brazil has also a good example for national regulation that does not harm the Internet core, the so-called Marco Civil of the Internet, or the Brazilian Internet Bill of Rights, which is based on principles to protect Internet users, net neutrality and privacy. It also sets the intermediaries liability regime towards allowing charges for those that intentionally publish harmful content online. More about those can be found in our study here: https://isoc.org.br/uploads/download/137