

22 October 2020

Letter of intent for engagement with the UN SG's Digital Cooperation efforts

Dear Secretary-General António Guterres,

On behalf of the undersigned organisations, we congratulate you on the successful outcome of the High Level Panel of Digital Cooperation and its report “the Age of Digital Interdependence” as well as the launching of the “Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation”.

The coalition of Civil Society groups undersigned are committed to supporting the implementation of the Roadmap’s vision in which “*all stakeholders play a role in advancing a safer, more equitable digital world, one which will lead to a brighter and more prosperous future for all*”.

We have actively engaged in the Digital Cooperation process from its inception: from inputting into the High Level Panel’s consultation on its report to engaging in the follow up process, including in the virtual Roundtables set up to discuss if and how the recommendations included in the Roadmap can be advanced. We were encouraged that the experience and expertise of stakeholders from civil society, the technical community, private sector and other stakeholder groups were also brought to bear in the discussions. We are also committed to working with the future Tech Envoy, in order “*to ensure greater coordination between UN agencies, advise the senior leadership of the United Nations on key trends in technology and serve as an advocate and focal point for digital cooperation – so that Member States, the technology industry, civil society and other stakeholders have a first port of call for the broader United Nations system.*”

In November, we will be providing you with a Position Paper detailing stakeholders’ aspirations and expectations for the Tech Envoy. The Position Paper will be co-created and will consult as widely as possible among non-State stakeholders. We are hopeful that it will enrich your work, personally, as well as the Digital Cooperation process.

We are concerned that despite the active engagement and genuine interest of civil society and other stakeholders in the consultations of the High Level Panel Report and in the discussions in the subsequent Follow-up Roundtables, there remains limited overall engagement and consultation with stakeholders in the process for the selection of the Tech Envoy. The Roadmap recognizes the importance of stakeholders in the implementation of the recommendations of the High Level Panel. In that spirit, we urge a more inclusive consultative approach with stakeholders in the process for the selection and appointment of the future Tech Envoy.

As noted in the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation “*digital cooperation is a multi-stakeholder effort and, while Governments remain at the centre, the involvement of the private sector,*

technology companies, civil society and other stake-holders is essential. It is vital to engage with the private sector, the technical community and civil society from the beginning if realistic and effective decisions and policies are to be made”.

We therefore write to express our commitment to this engagement, and to supporting an inclusive, multi-stakeholder and transparent process as we jointly implement the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Access Now

Association for Progressive Communications - APC

Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa - CIPESA

Data2x

Future of Life Institute

Global Partners Digital

Internet Governance Caucus

Internet Society - ISOC

Paradigm initiative

World Wide Web Foundation