

Olaf Kolkman  
Acknowledgements: Mona Gaballa, Israel Rosas, Tatiana Tropina, and Carl Gahnberg

# The Global Digital Compact

What is it, why does it matter



Olaf Kolkman, Principal  
Kolkman@isoc.org  
@olaf@social.secret-wg.org

# The Document

A/79/L.2

## Global Digital Compact

1. Digital technologies are dramatically transforming our world. They offer immense potential benefits for the well-being and advancement of people and societies and for our planet. They hold out the promise of accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. We can only achieve this through strengthened international cooperation that closes all digital divides between and within countries. We recognize the challenges that these divides pose for many countries, in particular developing countries, which have pressing development needs and limited resources.
3. We recognize that the pace and power of emerging technologies are creating new possibilities but also new risks for humanity, some of which are not yet fully known. We recognize the need to identify and mitigate risks and to ensure human oversight of technology in ways that advance sustainable development and the full enjoyment of human rights.
4. Our goal is an inclusive, open, sustainable, fair, safe and secure digital future for all. This Global Digital Compact sets out the objectives, principles, commitments and actions we undertake to achieve it in the non-military domain.
5. We have strong foundations on which to build. Our digital cooperation rests on international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>17</sup> We remain committed to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society reflected in the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action<sup>18</sup> and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.<sup>19</sup> The United Nations provides a critical platform for the global digital cooperation we need, and we will harness existing processes to do so.
6. Our cooperation must be agile and adaptable to the rapidly changing digital landscape. As Governments, we will work in collaboration and partnership with the private sector, civil society, international organizations, the technical and academic communities and all other stakeholders, within their respective roles and responsibilities, to realize the digital future we seek.

## Objectives

7. To achieve our goal, we will pursue the following objectives:
  1. Close all digital divides and accelerate progress across the Sustainable Development Goals;
  2. Expand inclusion in and benefits from the digital economy for all;
  3. Foster an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space that respects, protects and promotes human rights;
  4. Advance responsible, equitable and interoperable data governance approaches;
  5. Enhance international governance of artificial intelligence for the benefit of humanity.

<sup>17</sup> Resolution 70/1.  
<sup>18</sup> See A/C.2/59/3, annex.  
<sup>19</sup> See A/60/687.

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[https://www.un.org/global-digital-compact/sites/default/files/2024-09/Global%20Digital%20Compact%20-%20English\\_0.pdf](https://www.un.org/global-digital-compact/sites/default/files/2024-09/Global%20Digital%20Compact%20-%20English_0.pdf)

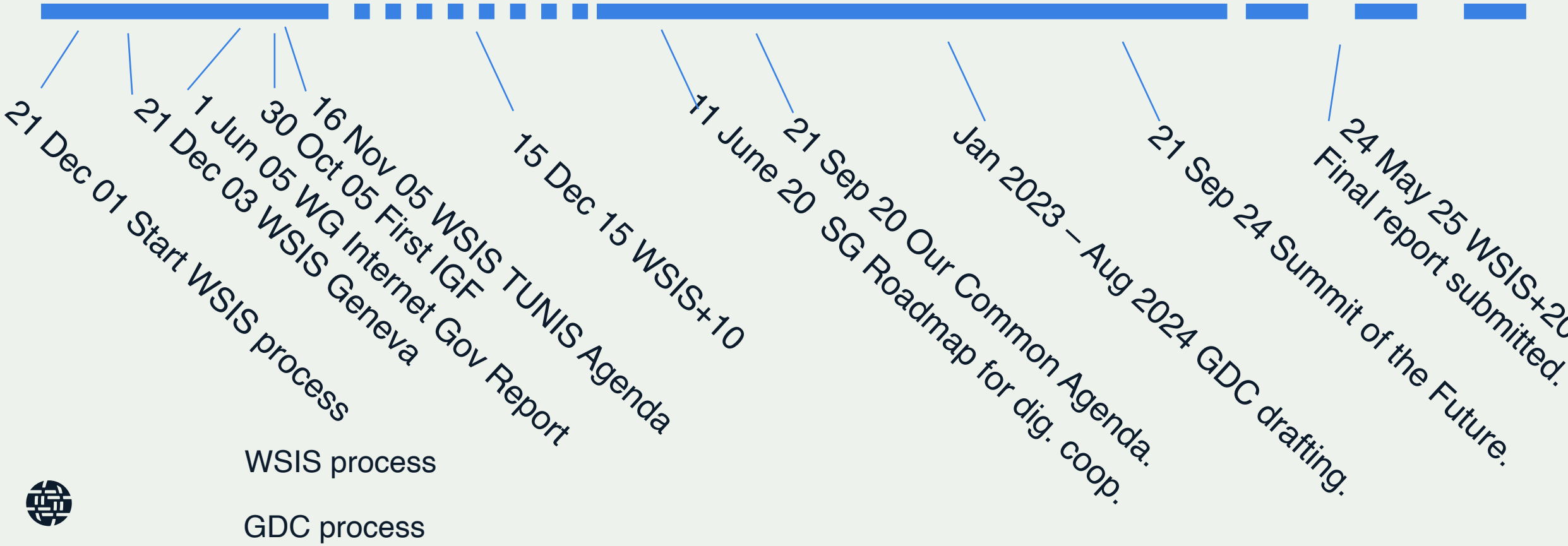
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# A timeline

2001 – 2005

2020-2025



## WSIS Tunis agenda (2005)

- Confirmed a working definition of Internet Governance and thereby recognized the role of the Technical Community
- Defined the IGF as a place for coordination
- Set out an agenda mainly focused on capacity building and bridging divides
  - With a review process



<https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html>

**Welcome the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF)** established in Geneva as an innovative financial mechanism of funding the digital divide into digital opportunities for the developing world by focusing mainly on specific and urgent needs. The DSF will complement existing mechanisms for funding the Information Society, which should continue to be fully utilized.

### INTERNET GOVERNANCE

- 30. **We acknowledge** that the Internet, a central element of the infrastructure of the Information Society, has evolved from a research and academic facility into a global facility available to the public.
- 31. **We recognize** that Internet governance, carried out according to the Geneva principles, is an essential element for a people-centred, inclusive, development-oriented and non-discriminatory Information Society. Furthermore, we commit ourselves to the stability and security of the Internet as a global facility and to ensuring the requisite legitimacy of its governance, based on the full participation of all stakeholders, from both developed and developing countries, within their respective roles and responsibilities.
- 32. **We thank** the UN Secretary-General for establishing the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG). **We commend** the chairman, members and secretariat for their work and for their report.
- 33. **We take note** of the WGIG's report that has endeavoured to develop a working definition of Internet governance. It has helped identify a number of public policy issues that are relevant to Internet governance. The report has also enhanced our understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of governments, intergovernmental and international organizations and other forums as well as the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries.
- 34. **A working definition of Internet governance is the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet.**
- 35. **We reaffirm** that the management of the Internet encompasses both technical and public policy issues and should involve all stakeholders and relevant intergovernmental and international organizations. In this respect it is recognized that:

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# The Global Digital Compact

Process to implement the ambitions of item 7 from the UN SG's 'Our Common Agenda'.

Global Digital Compact to:

- Connect all people to the Internet, including all schools
- Avoid Internet fragmentation
- Protect data
- Apply human rights online
- Introduce accountability criteria for discrimination and misleading content
- Promote regulation of artificial intelligence
- Digital commons as a global public good



[https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common\\_Agenda\\_Report\\_English.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf)



# Concerns about the GDC Process

UN process lead by co-facilitators Sweden and Rwanda, later replaced by Zambia.

A multilateral process lauded with informal consultations and (online) stakeholder sessions. “Negotiated by 193 Member States and informed by global consultations“



The first draft and first revision were publicly available.

- Rev.2 and Rev. 3 were developed in multilateral discussions. Some intermediate versions gave concern about more multilateral directions. See also <https://open-internet-governance.org/letter>
- ISOC analyzed the various revisions on its [“Global Digital Compact: Zero Draft Matrix”](#) page

Final version published 21 September '24 and adopted during Summit of the Future.

- Adopted by consensus following diplomatic compromise





# Steps ahead

**September 2024:** Compact Open for endorsement

Endorsement site: <https://www.un.org/global-digital-compact/en>



**December 2024:** List of endorsers will be listed on the GDC website

**Q1 2025:** Compact implementation map

**Mid 2025:** Implementation & WSIS+20 Review

**Q3 2027:** High-level Review





# What does Endorsement mean – ISOC's interpretation

- Endorse the vision and principles of the Compact and/or to take an active part in the next steps.
- Paragraphs 1 to 6 talk about vision and para. 8 about principles.
- Paragraphs 7 and paras. 10 to 63 talk about objectives

ISOC is considering whether to endorse the visions and principles of the compact.

We also consider whether to provide input on actions we take to bridge the digital divide.

- E.g. our work on interconnection (IXPs and alternative last mile solutions) and relevant measurements from our [pulse.internetsociety.org](https://pulse.internetsociety.org) platform.
- We will only consider those actions on which we actively do work.



# General conclusion

## Positive:

- General support for multi-stakeholder governance remains. The existing process (WSIS) has been recognized.
- The principles, on face-value

## Concern:

- The process was ultimately multilateral
- No clarity on the roles and responsibilities of each of the stakeholders (who are “we” in the text?)
- Still some confusion about the follow up process (e.g. implementation c.f. art 66)

## To pay attention to:

- GDC is a New York process. WSIS a Geneva process – different focus/competencies
- WSIS+20 and the evolution of the IGF

## Of note:

- Some organizations will not endorse the principles because of followed process, but do plan to support implementation



Thank you

