



CIRA, the Canadian Internet Registration Authority

cira.ca

Sabrina Wilkinson, Policy Program Manager, [sabrina.wilkinson@cira.ca](mailto:sabrina.wilkinson@cira.ca)

CIRA is a not-for-profit organization with a core mandate to ensure the safe, stable and secure operation of the .CA domain and its underlying technologies. We also connect, protect and engage the internet community in Canada and abroad by providing high-quality registry, domain name system (DNS) and cybersecurity services.

As part of its mission to build a trusted internet, CIRA gives back to Canadian and global internet communities. We invest revenue generated by our services into programs and policies that make the internet a better place for Canadians. We act as the Secretariat and primary sponsor for the Canadian Internet Governance Forum (CIGF), the national initiative of the UN-led Internet Governance Forum (IGF). We are long-time participants in global internet governance, including in engagement in Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers' (ICANN) and Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) processes.

CIRA welcomes the opportunity to submit recommendations for the Chapeau and Chapters I-V of the zero draft of the Pact for the Future (Pact). In February 2024, we look forward to participating in the stakeholder consultations on the annexed Global Digital Compact.

### Applicable to the Chapeau, Chapters I-V

**Recommendation 1: The technical community should be recognized as separate and distinct from other stakeholder groups in consultations for the Pact for the Future and its outputs.**

The contributions of and challenges posed by the global internet underpin and crosscut the issues and challenges addressed by the Chapeau and Chapters I-V of the Pact. Yet, the technical community – the organizations, groups, and actors that play a critical role in the day-to-day technical functioning of the internet – are not consistently identified as a distinct stakeholder group in consultations related to the development of the Pact.

The technical community plays an integral role in the stability, security, and reliability of the internet, and the pursuit of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. It also holds a depth of unique technical expertise and experience that can and should inform decisions that are made about or have implications for the internet. The technical community should readily and consistently be recognized as separate and distinct

from other stakeholders, including civil society, in consultations related to the Pact. We appreciate this distinction being made within the Global Digital Compact Co-Facilitators' September 2023 Issues Paper and December 2023 letter, but the practice has not been universal. Outputs of the Pact, including Chapter III (Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation), should also explicitly demarcate the technical community as a separate and distinct stakeholder group.

**Recommendation 2: The Pact for the Future should express support for the multistakeholder model of internet governance.**

The technological success of the internet is the result of the multistakeholder model of internet governance. This model of governance involves the participation of distinct stakeholders – governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community, academia, and users – in decisions about the management of the global internet. Like any system of governance, the multistakeholder model can and should be improved. Nonetheless, the model is the best-suited approach to the governance of critical internet resources and has underpinned the internet's role as a driver of global innovation and economic growth.

As and where the Pact addresses the governance of the internet, such as within Chapter III (Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation) and Chapter V (Transforming global governance) it should acknowledge and express explicit support for the multistakeholder model of internet governance.

**Recommendation 3: The Pact for the Future should express support for the renewal of the mandate of the IGF in the upcoming World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) +20 Review.**

The Pact, and its annexed Global Digital Compact, will be consequential for the upcoming World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) +20 Review. The WSIS+20 Review has the potential to renew the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), a key output of the original WSIS. In bringing together a broad range of distinct stakeholders to platform discussion about the internet and related issues, the IGF is a key and enduring example of the success of the multistakeholder model of internet governance.

The IGF has its challenges; work should be done to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and relevant to evolving technological and geopolitical environments. Even so, it is a well-established, multistakeholder forum and an opportune venue to continue crucial discussions about the future of the internet. As and where the Pact addresses the governance of the internet, such as within Chapters III and V, it should acknowledge and express explicit support for the renewal of the mandate of the IGF in the upcoming WSIS+20 Review.