



Project Liberty's Institute

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## **Chapeau**

Project Liberty is an international impact organization mobilizing diverse stakeholders across technology, academia, policy, and civil society to collaboratively build more responsible and ethical approaches to technology development and governance. Our independent non-partisan Institute, founded in 2021 with academic partners Stanford, Sciences Po and Georgetown, supports research and convenes experts to create practical frameworks for how we design, invest in, deploy and regulate new digital technologies in service of the common good.

As civil society representatives in this ecosystem, we are committed to driving responsible technology innovation that upholds human rights as enshrined in the UN Charter and Universal Declaration. We thus call on Member States to utilize the historic opportunity of the Summit of the Future. This necessitates advancing ambitious incentives and governance approaches embedding ethical considerations across technology lifecycles, from design through deployment to regulation. Achieving this requires transparent and inclusive multistakeholder collaboration towards evidence-based frameworks that foster a new civil digital architecture centered on human dignity and agency.

## **Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation**

New technologies spanning data, AI, blockchain, or extended reality hold tremendous potential for advancing our societies and the Sustainable Development Goals, but also risks to human rights, equity, and peace if not developed responsibly. We need a new paradigm that proactively reconciles cutting-edge innovation with ethical aspirations for technologies that measurably enhance inclusion, sustainability, human flourishing and prosperity for all.

The Secretary-General's vision laid in Our Common Agenda report stresses that alongside climate change, digital transformation represents one of two seismic shifts shaping the 21st

century. Hence proposals on science, technology, and innovation represent integral components for the ambitious Pact for the Future that the Summit of the Future must deliver.

Progress requires transparently and inclusively articulating a bold shared vision for the science, technology, and innovation ecosystems we want, underpinned by evidence-based metrics developed through multistakeholder input as outlined in the co-facilitators letter of 30 August 2023. Moreover, while established human rights frameworks and laws provide foundations, better systems, and operational tools are imperative for practical implementation, oversight, and enforcement across technology lifecycles. Earlier intervention in the innovation cycle when new technologies are designed, when they receive investment, or when they are first commercially deployed could preempt unintended consequences otherwise addressed only post-deployment through regulation.

Financial and geopolitical incentive structures overwhelmingly shape technology innovation trajectories, often overriding ethical considerations. Investment criteria and shareholder accountability typically eclipse voluntary principles. Responsible innovation thus hinges on transforming incentives, funding models, and innovation ecosystems to align positive societal outcomes with competitive returns.

We need a new paradigm for sustainable and responsible innovation that reconciles ethical aspirations for technologies that enhance human dignity, inclusion, and sustainability with cutting-edge digital breakthroughs.

A new civil digital architecture in the public interest should align the trajectory of technology development with democratic values, economic fairness, and the common good and embed ethical standards by design in technical architectures, including at the infrastructure level through public interest technology. It necessitates clear metrics and evidence, multistakeholder collaboration on systems and incentives, and rules that embed ethical considerations into the very heart of the underlying infrastructure of the digital economy — setting standards upon which commercial applications are then built. Rather than narrow liability frameworks, responsible innovation requires holistic, systemic changes across technology lifecycles to uphold human rights.

**Accordingly, three key recommendations for the Science, Technology, and Innovation chapter of the ambitious Pact for the Future emerge:**

- First, Member States should support the creation of measurable indicators and benchmarks for responsible technology innovation through a proposed multistakeholder Global Panel for Responsible Technology. This evidence-based body composed of leading academics from around the world would rigorously and transparently assess scientific literature and insights to create indicators that can measure progress on positive societal visions as outlined in the Secretary-General's reports, moving beyond narrow economic measures that often misalign innovation incentives. Its findings would be reviewed by stakeholder groups including governments, industry, and civil society, in

their respective roles, as defined in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society's Article 34. The Panel's indicators and reports would inform policies and technology design worldwide.

- Second, the Pact should recognize the importance of public interest technologies that proactively embed ethical standards by design into underlying digital infrastructure, upon which commercial applications are then built. Our organization currently stewards the open-source Decentralized Social Networking Protocol (DSNP) establishing a rights-based foundation for an equitable personal data economy by allowing users to control their personal data. Similar global public goods are required across emerging digital domains like AI and quantum computing to balance both private and public interests in line with the ambitions of the Pact for the Future.
- Finally, the Pact must urge transformed incentives towards responsible innovation through frameworks and mechanisms that render ethical technologies financially competitive alternatives for companies and shareholders. Member States should formally convene industry, investors, and civil society to jointly develop voluntary Responsible Technology Investment Guidelines reflecting ambitious societal priorities. Incentives could be further strengthened by public policy levers and public-private partnerships for research and development into responsible innovation for the common good.

Through such systemic, transparent, and inclusive multistakeholder measures – from shared scientific evidence-based indicators and public interest technologies to realigned investment incentives, and increased multistakeholder collaboration between governments, industry, civil society, and academia, the Summit of the Future can reorient digital technology trajectories towards improving human life, peace, and planetary prosperity.

We stand ready to support Member States and all stakeholders with our expertise and curated scientific insights in this complex but essential transformation.