17th Internet Governance Forum

Connecting All People and Safeguarding Human Rights

FACTSHEET

What does it mean?

Meaningful connectivity means a human rights--centric approach that combines access (affordable connectivity and devices), capability (digital skills and literacy), application (e.g., education, economic development, health, agriculture), and equity (e.g., gender, race, sexuality, language, disability, geographic location, ownership and control). This approach ensures the Internet to be both an accessible and safe space for everyone in the world.

What's the situation right now?

· 2.7 billion people – roughly half of the world population – are still excluded from the "global village", as they lack any access to the Internet.

· The digital divide runs deep along economic lines – only 21% of people in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) enjoy access to the Internet, compared to 87% in developed countries. The Sustainable Development Goal target to achieve universal access in LDCs by 2020 has been missed.

Why does it matter?

· The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated that ensuring meaningful and sustainable access to the Internet for everyone is a global priority.

· The digital divide deprives billions of people of the transformative power of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for education, health care, science and economic growth.

· Evidence increasingly suggests that connectivity is not sufficient, unless people have the skills, the means and the tools to make their experience on the Internet meaningful. This requires considering links between digital equity and social and economic inequalities.

What can be done?

· Develop projects, pilot programs, and financing mechanisms to make smartphones and other devices more affordable for more populations

· Promote competition for small and medium Internet service providers, ensuring a single or a few providers does not monopolize the technology market

· Incorporate digital literacy and skill-building into educational curriculum to train all students and strengthen the international digital learning community

17th Internet Governance Forum

Avoiding Internet Fragmentation

FACTSHEET

What does it mean?

Avoiding Internet Fragmentation means ensuring an open, free and interoperable Internet, where users can access a range of technological products and systems without restrictions. This environment of interconnected networks would need common standards and protocols to be in place across countries and regions. Internet fragmentation can be caused by technological limitations, business practices, and government policy. Examples include Internet shutdowns, content blocking, and private-sector monopoly of Internet traffic.

What's the situation right now?

· In 2021, 182 Internet shutdowns were recorded in 34 countries, showing a rise in the control over information in the digital space by governments around the world. Some countries have also created independent or domestic networks.

· Fewer than 10 companies are currently resolving half of the global Internet traffic, indicating the concentrated power in the hands of a few key corporate actors.

Why does it matter?

· Internet fragmentation undermines international collaboration by preventing mutual sharing of information, practices, and resources, which is key to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

· Content restrictions or blocking isolates certain communities from information about important events of elections or protests, harming democracy and human rights.

· Private-sector monopoly of the Internet traffic creates uneven access to the Internet and information among different populations around the world.

What can be done?

· Establish international regulatory frameworks and shared agreements on minimal global standards for technical infrastructure of the Internet

· Improve cyber diplomacy through both multilateral and multistakeholder cooperation to bridge policy divide

· Adopt common measures to promote human rights online, global free flow of information, and meaningful connectivity across different parts of the world

17th Internet Governance Forum

Governing Data and Protecting Privacy

FACTSHEET

What does it mean?

In the digital age, our daily activities in economic, social, cultural, and political arenas have increasingly taken place virtually, making our digital footprints - the data about our personal information, preferences, and behaviors - a valuable asset. While this data can be used in advanced analytics for innovations in finance, health, and law enforcement, it can also compromise users' privacy online. A systematic approach is needed to regulate data usage to maximize opportunities while ensuring the rights of citizens to control their personal information and make decisions about it.

What's the situation right now?

· So far, 137 out of 194 countries have legislations to provide protection of data and privacy. That means the privacy of roughly 30% of the world's population is still vulnerable.

· Only 48% of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) have adopted such legislations.

Why does it matter?

· Left unregulated, personal data is easily collected, tracked, sold or transferred by technology companies to third parties. These parties, either state or non-state actors, can further threaten our physical, financial, and psychological security.

· The global flow and transactions of data makes it especially risky for migrants, refugees, stateless persons, and ethnic/national minorities to be tracked and surveyed.

· Inconsistent data governance and privacy protection across nations erodes digital trust and hinders global exchange when citizens feel less safe and withdraw from the Internet.

What can be done?

· Keep data access, analysis, or other use to the minimum amount necessary without going beyond its legitimate purpose

· Maintain all data-related activities in an open, transparent, and secure manner

· Enforce due diligence (careful investigation) for any data practices of third-party users to ensure their compliance to international privacy agreements and human right laws

17th Internet Governance Forum

Enabling Safety, Security and Accountability

FACTSHEET

What does it mean?

The safety and security of the Internet is threefold: 1.Strengthening the protection of networks to prevent cyberattacks, mass surveillance, and online violence initiated by individuals or states; 2. Fighting online misinformation and disinformation; 3. Reducing carbon emissions in digital activities and consumption to ensure environmental sustainability.

What's the situation right now?

· Globally, the prevalence of online- and technology-facilitated violence against women and girls range from 16% to 58%. 70% or more targeted by hate speech are minorities.

· As of September 2022, there were about 97 significant cyberattacks against worldwide government agencies, defense, companies, or economic crimes resulting in losses of more than a million dollars.

· Digital technologies contribute between 1.4% to 5.9% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Why does it matter?

· An unsafe and insecure Internet exposes individuals (especially women and minorities) to criminal activities and unauthorized access to data, threatening their personal safety and reinforcing stereotypes, and reduces the technological benefits for developing countries.

· Online misinformation and disinformation weaken responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, distorts electoral processes and deepens polarization.

· Ignoring the environmental aspect of the Internet worsens the climate change crisis.

What can be done?

· Transform social stereotypes and norms through empowerment of women and minorities, addressing unequal (gender, racial) relations, and community engagement

· Establish new international frameworks to prohibit cyberattacks that cause significant, indiscriminate and systemic harm to people, civilian, and government infrastructure

· Monitor the carbon emissions of global ICT companies and support innovative carbon removal technologies

17th Internet Governance Forum

Addressing Advanced Technologies, including AI

FACTSHEET

What does it mean?

Our society and economy are increasingly transformed by advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) systems, which are information-processing technologies that use models and algorithms to mimic humans' capacity of performing prediction and making decisions. Derived from these systems are also the application of robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), augmented/virtual reality (AR/VR) and Metaverse. These systems have been adopted in areas of education, economic development, environment, social networks, health care, law enforcement, and more.

What's the situation right now?

· 37% of organizations have implemented AI in some form. The percentage of enterprises using AI have grown 270% over the past four years.

· Global AI legislation is rising. The number of bills containing the word "artificial intelligence" passed into law grew to 95% from 2016 to 2021.

Why does it matter?

· AI systems are still largely opaque and complex, but they are already making critical decisions about the lives of ordinary people, including those living in the Least Developed Countries.

· AI systems raise concerns about algorithmic bias, discrimination, mis/disinformation, privacy challenges, public safety, access to information, digital divide, personal data, democracy, and human rights.

· Developed by software engineers mostly from the Global North, AI systems need to be understood by more people to defend their digital rights and shape the Internet together.

What can be done?

· Make impact assessments a necessary component for AI development to identity its human rights impact and mitigate any risks in AI application

· Create International frameworks to enhance responsibility and accountability for the use of AI systems and their outcomes

· Ensure AI governance mechanisms are safe, inclusive, and transparent and emphasize AI education