**Internet Society's Contribution to the Global Digital Compact**
April 2023

**Introduction:**

The Internet Society supports and promotes the development of the Internet as a global technical infrastructure, a resource to enrich people's lives, and a force for good in society. Our work aligns with our goals for the Internet to be open, globally connected, secure, and trustworthy and we seek collaboration with all who share these goals. Together, we focus on: building and supporting the communities that make the Internet work; advancing the development and application of Internet infrastructure, technologies, and open standards; and advocating for policy that is consistent with our view of the Internet.

**Description of the process we follow to collect, consult, and prepare your input:**

ations Global Digital Compact (GDC). This initiative is important to outline shared principles for "an open, free, and secure digital future for all." The Internet is central to this.

The development of this submission involved extensive internal discussions and participation in different consultation processes, including the Global Digital Compact Thematic Deep Dive discussions in New York, including the sessions on: Digital Inclusion and Connectivity (27 March 2023), Internet Governance (13 April 2023), and Data Protection (24 April 2023).

We urge the GDC to reaffirm the consensus from the Tunis Agenda on Internet governance. The approach involves all stakeholders in their respective roles—popularly known as the multi-stakeholder approach—and is the most certain way to secure the sustainable development of the Internet and, therefore of all humanity that connects through it, including the fulfillment of the UN 2030 Agenda.

The information and knowledge sharing, collaboration and innovati

on, and civil engagement and empowerment.

2. **Support local content and traffic exchange initiatives:** The Internet should provide local content and services that are culturally relevant and supports the needs of the local communities and economies. It requires infrastructure to host and deliver content locally, an Internet Exchange Point (IXP) to keep local content local, and to support and encourage entrepreneurs and developers generate content and services that meet local needs.

3. **Ensure stakeholders have access to trusted data about the state of the Internet:** All stakeholders should have access to trusted data about the health and evolution of the Internet. The [Internet Society Pulse](#) initiative consolidates trusted third-party Internet measurement data from various sources into a single platform. This is critical for making informed decisions and policies.

4. **Identify innovative financing mechanisms to support community-led initiatives:** Innovative financing mechanisms are needed to support local, community-led initiatives. Universal Service and Access Funds and innovative private sector investments, can help communities build sustainable solutions for Internet access.

5.

- Governments need to invest in/foster two types of skills: skills for the technical community so that access can expand and skills for the application layer (developers, entrepreneurs, etc.) so that the Internet can be used effectively to improve societies.

- The **private sector** plays a crucial role in investment. Investment is needed for the infrastructure to provide Internet access and create and host content and services. Partnerships among private and community operators have proven successful in providing access to backhaul and supporting community management of local access solutions. For example, in 2020, Murambinda Works partnered with TelOne, a leading telecom operator in Zimbabwe, to gain access to their fiber backbone, ensuring sufficient bandwidth. In early 2021, they developed software applications (apps) to add value to the network. One app was a school management system that linked schools to the district education offices, giving educational inspectors access to vital information without traveling. This type of partnership between private and community operators can effectively expand access to the Internet and create new opportunities for local communities.

- **The technical community** needs the opportunity to deploy and operate resilient access and content infrastructure. It is also necessary to develop human capacity so entrepreneurs, developers, and others can create content and services and innovative new business and delivery models built on them.

## 2) Avoid Fragmentation

### a) Core Principles:

The Internet Society is committed to upholding and defending the open, globally-connected, secure, and trustworthy Internet, which creates immense opportunity for everyone. We stand to lose the interoperable, seamless Internet to threats of fragmentation. The Internet Society has identified a set of critical properties the Internet needs to **exist**:

1. The Internet's **accessible infrastructure with a common protocol** has enabled its accessibility and phenomenal growth, allowing global connectivity and organic growth. The network is open to anyone willing to participate and continues to grow because participants find value in connecting.
2. The Internet's **open architecture of interoperable and reusable building blocks** provides choices allowing easy deployment and innovation without re-engineering the entire

network. The open and interoperable building blocks encourage developers to build on top

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At the Internet Society, we launched the Global Encryption Coalition (GEC) in 2021, with over [300 members](#) distributed across every region of the world, the GEC promotes and defends encryption in key countries and multilateral fora where it is under th

- **Civil Society** plays a key role in identifying threats to encryption, raising awareness, and conducting advocacy to ensure that public support for strong encryption is clear to policymakers and businesses.

  Civil Society organizations are invited to join the [Global Encryption Coalition](#) in promoting and defending encryption in key countries and multilateral fora where it is under threat.

- The **technical community** holds immense knowledge of the use of encryption. It has the skills to analyze legislative proposals and business decisions to understand their impact on encryption and the larger Internet. The technical community should work with policymakers and businesses to identify policy solutions that are technically feasible and would preserve the security promised by end-to-end encryption.

## 4) Internet Governance

### a) Core Principles:

The Internet Society firmly believes that multistakeholder mechanisms support a stronger Internet governance ecosystem and are critical for the evolution of the Internet. We reaffirm the Tunis Agenda call for enhanced cooperation with the involvement of all stakeholders in their respective roles.

We recognize four significant attributes to a successful multi-stakeholder process: inclusiveness and transparency; collective responsibility; effective decision-making and implementation; and collaboration through distributed and interoperable governance.

stakeholders can cooperate and collaborate to enhance digital cooperation as set out in the Secretary General's Roadmap to Digital Cooperation and the Our Common Agenda report.