



# Microsoft's Input to the Global Digital Compact

# Introduction

---

---

---

---

# Table of Contents

# Reaffirm the commitment to connect all people to the internet, including all schools

## Core principles

**The Global Digital Compact should acknowledge that affordable access to meaningful connectivity is now a necessity and should be considered a fundamental human right.**

Broadband is the electricity of the 21st century, fueling economic and social opportunities, whether improving outcomes in education and healthcare, starting or growing a small business, providing access to clean drinking water, or adopting ecologically sustainable and

Union (ITU) “[a]chieving universal and meaningful digital connectivity - the possibility for is key for enabling digital transformation.”

However, for billions of people around the world, these opportunities remain out of reach [ITU data show that 2.7 billion people—or one third of the world's population—remained unconnected to the internet in 2022](#)

## Key commitments to bring about these core principles

To achieve this vision, governments, international organizations, companies, civil society organizations, and others must all be involved. We support the [UN's set of aspirational targets for 2030](#) to help prioritize interventions, monitor progress, evaluate policy

by the end of the decade, including to reach 100 percent of households and schools with internet access by 2030.

Another important target is digital gender parity, with ITU data continuing to show a gender gap in internet use. Gender equality, besides being a fundamental human right, is essential to achieving peaceful societies, with full human potential and sustainable development, as well as to spur productivity and economic growth.

As our primary contribution to these goals, Microsoft has expanded our Airband initiative through new partnerships with local and global partners to [extend internet coverage to 250 million people globally by the end of 2025, including 100 million people in Africa](#). Accomplishing these aggressive goals will need to leverage public-private partnerships, such as [Microsoft's agreement with Liquid Intelligent Technologies in Africa](#), which will involve middle-mile broadband providers, local ISPs for last-mile connectivity, energy partners, international organizations, and local governments. It is also vital to use all available

Microsoft's approach is to use technologies based on what is best for a particular

Broadband Radio Service (CBRS). To enable Microsoft and others to make these great strides, we call on governments, regulators, and international organizations to promote and enact policies that allow for and encourage the building of networks that leverage a hybrid mix of technologies.

Microsoft has also made a number of commitments in relation to skilling, [notably a commitment via the ITU's P2C initiative to train and certify 10 million people with in-demand digital skills by 2025](#), and [an initiative across 26 countries to increase cybersecurity skills for women and job seekers](#). As a part of that, Microsoft is partnering with the OECD in support of a [detailed study](#) that analyzes the cybersecurity skills gap and presents strategies to grow cybersecurity workforces through secondary education and training.



## Key commitments to bring about these core principles

Microsoft advocates for laws, regulations, and international agreements that keep data safe and respect sovereignty. This includes support for the development of strong, interoperable national privacy laws that engender customer trust. We also support the development of practical, risk-proportional, and harmonized approaches to content regulation.

In 2022, Microsoft and other cloud service providers committed to [Trusted Cloud Principles](#) to protect the rights of our customers. In setting out these principles, we seek to partner

and privacy, and to establish and ensure basic protections for organizations that store and process data in the cloud. There are three fundamental tenets that could be enshrined in the Global Digital Compact:

- We recognize the interest of governments around the world in protecting the safety, security, privacy, and economic vitality of individuals and organizations
  - We recognize that international human rights law enshrines a right to privacy
  - We recognize the importance of customer trust and customers' control and security of their data
-

# Protect data

## Core principles

**The Global Digital Compact should underline the important principles of transparency, consumer empowerment, corporate responsibility, and strong enforcement.**

Privacy is a fundamental human right, and strong data privacy laws are vital for safeguarding it. This right is more important than ever with the growth in the volume of data in our world and its importance in our lives. This growth in the collection and use of personal data has heightened concerns about its protection. To build trust in technology, we need strong data privacy laws that place accountability where it belongs—on the organizations that collect, store, and process data.







In relation to exercising human rights due diligence, it is important to note the roles of both governments and companies. Under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, companies have a responsibility to respect human rights and should conduct human rights due diligence to assess the impact of their technologies on human rights.

# Accountability criteria for discrimination and misleading content

Core principles

The Global Digital Compact should call for stronger international norms to protect against malicious information operations and create a standard of behavior for nation-state

---





[the Rome Call on AI Ethics](#) and [UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI](#), both important initiatives that can help realize the important principles outlined above.

Microsoft continues to build out our [responsible AI program](#), investing in research, policy, and engineering so that our systems are designed to perform fairly, accurately, and safely. Advancing transparency and ensuring humans remain accountable for the performance of AI systems is core to this work. So too is ensuring that our AI work continues to build on our strong foundation in privacy, security, accessibility, and digital safety.

Microsoft's [AI for Good program](#) provides technology and resources to empower organizations working to solve global challenges to the environment, humanitarian issues, accessibility, health, and cultural heritage. This includes work related to preparedness for disaster response and the use of satellite data imagery to enable sharing of information with governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

We will continue to [share what we learn](#) and seek feedback from our stakeholders. A recent example of this is our publication of Microsoft's [Responsible AI Standard](#) (that guides how teams at Microsoft build and use AI), [Impact Assessment template](#), and [guide](#).





## Key commitments to bring about these core principles

1. **Open data:** The amount of data in the world is growing exponentially, but access to the potential value from this data is not. Focus on improving access to data is needed to help address the looming data divide where a small number of companies and countries have access to the majority of the data that fuels today's technological advancements. As such, we will continue our [Open Data Campaign](#), enable access to data sets that can help address societal challenges, and deepen our collaboration around data with others. This includes collaboration around open data and digital public goods—we all have a role in advocating for, and contributing to, curated libraries of open data and open source GovStack digital public goods.
2. **Tools to make data usable:** Easy access is required for data resources to serve as





## Key commitments to bring about these core principles

Convened by the UN, the Internet Governance Forum is a truly global and bottom-up forum for multistakeholder discussion about the challenges and opportunities stemming from digital technologies. At the most basic level, there is value in how it brings people together

and viewpoints to be formed. It then plays an important role in identifying and forming consensus views as inputs on how to manage the governance of digital technologies and the internet itself.

We welcome the improvements being driven by the Secretary-General, including the recent appointment of an IGF Leadership Panel that can add value by transmitting the IGF's outputs to relevant decision-making bodies and intergovernmental processes, and by bringing in more funding to ensure the IGF has the resources to deliver on its mandate.

Microsoft itself commits to continuing to contribute to multistakeholder initiatives that transformation. Examples include:

- Ongoing contributions to the IGF, including donations to the IGF Trust Fund, and our partnership with the IGF Secretariat to provide capacity-building. It also means generally playing a part in the work of the IGF, including through leadership roles Microsoft has held in intersessional workstreams on cybersecurity, AI, and the environment and by contributing to the IGF's workstreams on digital rights, digital skills, and digital infrastructure. Microsoft also supports the IGF's work on digital rights, digital skills, and digital infrastructure through its participation in the IGF's workstreams on digital rights, digital skills, and digital infrastructure.



