Switzerland Contribution to the Global Digital Compact 30. April 2023

I. Introduction

Switzerland is convinced that the United Nations provides the appropriate framework to develop a Global Digital Compact in an open and inclusive process that brings together governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and all other interested stakeholders in a multi-stakeholder approach.

A Global Digital Compact has the potential to strengthen a principles-based order in the area of digital cooperation. We believe that this potential can only be harnessed if the process is open, inclusive and based on existing work streams and fora. Geneva, with its ecosystem and know-how, is an ideal location for involving all relevant actors in the development of a Global Digital Compact and generating added value.

(IGF) 2022 held in Addis Ababa,

which focused on the Global Digital Compact themes, should be especially taken into consideration, as they provide key inputs from the global multistakeholder community. Switzerland stands ready to support the Co-Facilitators of the Global Digital Compact, and to work towards the establishment of a Geneva-based presence of the Office of the Secretary-

The themes foreseen so far are all relevant, and should build on already existing agreements, especially those of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and its outcomes, as well as the outcomes of the WSIS+10 review. Probably attention should also be given to the intersection between digitalization and climate change, which has been discussed inter alia during the UN IGF 2021 (where a report on the matter was produced by a dedicated UN IGF Policy Network). An appropriate follow-up to the Global Digital Compact is essential. Considering its multistakeholder nature and multilateral basis, the UN IGF is best placed for offering a platform for periodic discussions and actions related to the follow-up and implementation of the GDC, ensuring ownership of the process by all stakeholders. The follow-up actions to the Global Digital Compact

critical digital literacy and awareness, as well as cultural and solutions. This also implies profound changes in the way curricula should be designed in schools and in teaching and education as a public good. It also implies to ensure the favorable framework conditions including the right regulatory framework conditions.

True connectivity requires meaningful participation of all stakeholder groups worldwide to the corresponding governance processes and institutions.

Moreover, it is important to foster competition for an inclusive digital transformation and promote investment and easing infrastructure deployment.

Policy principles that support bridging the digital divide, as listed in this OECD report Bridging digital divides in G20 countries | en | OECD, need to be taken into account. Broadband Commission Expert Group on how to close the broadband gap.

Switzerland will continue to support the work of the Diplo Foundation and its <u>Geneva Internet Platform</u>, which amongst other things offers state of the art quality information and capacity development resources, including on policies to foster access to networks and services.

Switzerland will continue to support UNESCO International Bureau of Education in Geneva which, among other things, is working to steer the transformation of education (hybrid education learning assessment). The organization is also supporting the Education in Emergency thematic in Geneva, among other actors such as the GeneW*nB1

support in providing a venue and facilitation efforts interoperable, safe, and secure nternet for all worldwide. between all interested parties. Free cross-border data flows need to be anchored in Switzerland is actively working towards anchoring international law, while taking into account data the free flow of data and prohibitions to forced data protection needs and avoiding forced data localization in its Free Trade Agreement practice and multilaterally at the WTO. localization policies. Fragmentation at the user-layer of the Internet, imposition of unnecessary barriers for usage of the internet across borders and imposition of tariffs on electronic transmissions need to be avoided by working towards common policy standards. This requires strengthening open, inclusive and accountable governance structures, especially through further developing an effective, proactive and politically visible UN IGF. 3. Protect privacy and data In order to better tap into the social and economic Switzerland commits to further international power of data while also preventing users from losing discussions on data governance and to address data-related challenges in a horizontal and crosscontrol over their own data, we should develop a data governance approach that overcomes the sectoral manner in accordance with its privacy and supposed tension between data privacy and data data protection legal framework and international use, bearing however in mind that the protection of obligations, including furthering discussion on data personal data and privacy is a fundamental right and divides. acknowledging the importance of ensuring high standards in this regard. Switzerland commits to promote the development of interoperable trustworthy data spaces and to explore Digital self-determination aims to be a new approach further processes and policies to make digital selfin governing responsible data access, use, re-use, determination a reality. management and empowering data subjects in the digital age. At its foundation is the idea that individuals, companies and society as a whole should be able to determine what actions they take in our digital ecosystem. This includes giving these actors the ability to determine the relevance and value of data that is important to them, to have access to and control over this data, and to determine how said data is used and reused.

By improving the level of control that individuals and organisations have over their own data, we can increase their trust in our data-driven society and raise their willingness to share and make use of data. Increased data sharing between different actors will increase access and growth opportunities for various players and sectors and open up new ways of using and combining data. This will lay the foundation for developing innovative applications with individual and collective benefits. Society as a whole should benefit from the efficiency gains and innovative potential brought about by data without losing democratic control over basic societal functions in important sectors. We therefore conceive of digital self-determination as a long-term goal. Trustworthy data spaces show great potential as a way of making digital self-determination a reality. There is a need to promote the development of standards for trustworthy data spaces in cooperation with existing organisations for norms and standardization, and to develop international guidelines for trustworthy data spaces in order enable their interoperability and to create legal certainty on an international level. Users and owners of data should have the freedom to transfer data across borders and have the choice of storage, Forced data localization, which creates data insecurity and infringes on the rights of data subjects and owners should be avoided. The development and use of digital technologies 4. Apply human rights online -tech project should be guided by the UN Guiding Principles on from its onset in 2019 and is committed to continue Business and Human Rights. States should develop its cooperation. effective regulatory and policy responses to the risks associated with digital technologies. Switzerland is a member of the Freedom Online Coalition since 2019 and Friend of the Chair since 2020.

The Global Digital Compact should build on recommendations 3a/b of the SG Roadmap on R-

Tech Project, that provides authoritative guidance and resources for implementing the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human rightsd Na

enforcement of community standards. Also, they should put in place mechanisms for reporting and access to redress.

States have the duty to guarantee freedom of expression as well as other fundamental rights such as protection from discrimination. As such, it is crucial that a clear framework for communication on digital platforms is developed and applied. Any measures they take to combat hate speech and disinformation must be consistent with international law as well as the protection of fundamental and human rights.

6. Regulation of artificial intelligence

Any international regulatory efforts should build on existing international law, expanding and concretizing it only where necessary.

Wherever possible, any efforts should focus on regulating the potentially negative and undesirable effects of AI, and not the "technology" AI per se.

Other areas

In general terms, the GDC should build on the agreements of the World Summit on the Information Society and its outcomes, as well as the outcomes of the WSIS+10 review.

An appropriate follow-up to the GDC through existing structures