



Summit of the Future - Pact for the Future

Virtual Consultation with Major Groups and other stakeholders and civil society

17 April 2024

Delivered by Anna Oosterlinck

Head of UN

ARTICLE 19

Excellencies, many thanks for the opportunity to contribute to these consultations today and thank you to the co-facilitators for their tireless efforts in bringing everyone together around the Pact for the Future. My name is Anna Oosterlinck and I speak on behalf of ARTICLE 19, a local to global human rights organisation, focusing on free speech and related rights.

We have studied the zero draft of the Pact for the Future carefully. ARTICLE 19 believes that a human rights-based approach to the whole Pact for the Future and its annexes must serve as *the* overarching principle. Human rights are one of the three pillars of the UN, but they offer us so much more than that. We believe that human rights are vital to all global challenges - from advancing international peace and security, addressing inequalities, to effectively addressing climate change. We also firmly believe that human rights and sustainable development are intrinsically interlinked and mutually reinforcing. We therefore believe that all existing international human rights commitments must be integrated and mainstreamed as the primary framework throughout all parts of the Pact, from the chapeau throughout all chapters. This not only includes all international human rights commitments, but also international humanitarian law and international refugee law. When we mention human rights, we refer to the full spectrum of human rights, including civic, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

Second, the Pact and the annexed Global Digital Compact (GDC) need to reaffirm - as absolute core principle - that the same rights that apply offline equally apply online.

Third, on chapter 3 (Science, Technology and Innovation, and Digital Cooperation), we have been focusing our efforts on engaging with the drafting of the GDC. Nevertheless, we strongly recommend including strong protections of key enabling rights for the digital sphere, such as the right to freedom of expression and information, freedom of association and assembly, rights to privacy and data protection, rights to equality and non-discrimination in the Pact.

Fourth, ARTICLE 19 wishes to amplify the call for a multi-stakeholder approach, raised by many in the room today. This requires genuine implementation of the principles of transparency, openness, inclusion, equality, participation, and accountability. It goes beyond mere collaboration, rather it is about participating in the decision-making processes. We call for particular attention to including vulnerable and marginalized groups, whether they be minorities, indigenous people, LGBTQI+ or human rights defenders.

We look forward to seeing you all in Nairobi at the UN Civil Society Conference in May and to working with you to make this Pact a truly once-in-a-generation commitment to a better future for all humankind.

Thank you.