



Global Digital Compact Townhall meeting

24 October 2025

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ARTICLE 19

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Excellencies, colleagues, thank you for this opportunity to contribute to this Global Digital Compact (GDC) Townhall Meeting.

My name is Anna Oosterlinck and I speak on behalf of ARTICLE 19, a local to global human rights organisation, focusing on freedom of expression and related rights.

Thank you for organizing this townhall meeting, as open dialogue with stakeholders is key to a successful implementation of the GDC. We hope to see many more and would like to request the ODET team to consider inviting stakeholders to suggest topics for future meetings.

ARTICLE 19 has been engaging extensively on the GDC, since 2023, first as part of its development and now its implementation. On the topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI), we worked with Member States and [other stakeholders](#) in shaping the modalities and terms of reference for the Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance through inter alia contributing to the [first](#) and [second](#) Stakeholder Consultations organized by the co-facilitators. ARTICLE 19 is also engaging in other digital policy processes at the UN, including the [WSIS+20 review process](#).

Responsible, secure, accountable, transparent, equitable, and human rights-based AI by design is our collective priority.

I will focus my remarks on the AI Panel and Dialogue. We propose five foundational principles drive the work of the Panel and Dialogue:

- 1) Ensure a **multistakeholder model of AI governance**. All stakeholders, including human rights actors and communities most impacted by AI applications, must be able to meaningfully participate in these mechanisms as per the NetMundial+10 Principles. Human rights perspectives need to be embedded throughout their work, so that the varied ethical, social, economic and political impacts, harms, inequalities and risks from diverse perspectives, including the Global Majority, are fully identified and understood. Virtual participation in these mechanisms should be offered as a standard way of engagement.
- 2) **All human rights** must be protected **throughout the full lifecycle of all AI technologies**. Freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, rights to privacy and data protection, the right to non-discrimination, the right to equality are all key, with gender equality at its absolute core. ARTICLE 19 also recommends considering various AI technologies individually, given their different use cases and impacts.

ARTICLE 19 recalls the commitment undertaken by States in GA resolution 78/213 to refrain from or cease the use of AI technologies that are impossible to operate in compliance with international human rights law or that pose undue risks to the enjoyment of human rights. The GDC is anchored in international human rights law and gender equality as foundational principles and this should be reflected in the work of both bodies. We welcome the explicit reference to human rights in the mandate of the Dialogue, but this is missing from the Panel's mandate. We therefore call on the Secretary-General to ensure proposed Panel members include human rights experts from diverse constituencies.

- 3) The Panel and Dialogue should duly consider the **role of the private sector**. Any AI governance framework needs to ensure technology private sector actors effectively implement their responsibilities as per the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- 4) Avoid duplication with existing AI governance initiatives within and beyond the UN system. AI governance requires a **holistic and global approach**, turning a patchwork of initiatives into a coherent approach in compliance with international law, international human rights law and the SDGs.
- 5) The Panel and Dialogue should coordinate with **existing UN structures**, such as the WSIS framework, IGF and the Data Governance WG in the CSTD. They should leverage existing UN expertise, in particular from the OHCHR, UN Special Procedures, ITU and other relevant UN actors.

Thank you for your attention.