Contribution to Global Digital Compact

28 April 2023

BROADBAND COMMISSION
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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28 April 2023

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Introduction:

Key points/key messages:

- *The Commission* ***welcomes the appointment*** *by the President of the UN General Assembly of the* ***Permanent Representatives of Rwanda and of Sweden*** *as* ***Co-facilitators to lead the intergovernmental process on the Global Digital Compact***[1] *and conduct the consultations with Member States and Stakeholders on the proposal and the development of the GDC.*

- *The Commission* ***welcomes the initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General to propose a Global Digital Compact and recognizes therefore the need for coherent and coordinated UN effort and process leading into the 'Summit of the Future' outcomes in 2024.***

- *The Commission appreciates the multistakeholder character of the consultations thus far and* ***calls for continued opportunities for multistakeholder engagement throughout the process of development of the Global Digital Compact.***

- *The Commission calls for the Global Digital Compact to be* ***anchored in the vision of a connected, inclusive and sustainable world.***

- *The Commission reiterates* ***the importance of respecting existing UN agencies and bodies' mandates given by Member States in digital and ICTs and the commitments already made by Member States and all relevant stakeholders, also through the conferences, processes and UN led fora like WSIS.***

- *The Commission expresses the need to* ***ensure consistency between existing multilateral and multistakeholder fora and mechanisms, avoiding duplication and ensuring that efforts complement, build on and reinforce existing frameworks and successful activities, which have proven to be impactful****.*

- ***Any new efforts proposed in the GDC should complement the broader UN digital cooperation landscape already established and should include all relevant players from the digital ecosystem.***

- *The Commission, as a multi-stakeholder leadership platform, has* ***established a solid foundation and strong case to continue its role as a pre-eminent thought-leader on digital and can play an important advisory role for the GDC,***

[1] https://www.un.org/pga/77/2022/10/27/letter-from-the-president-of-the-general-assembly-oca-global-digital-compact-co-facs/

especially in the consultation period before its adoption by UN Member States at The Summit of the Future.

a. <u>Detailed Overview:</u>

The accelerating pace of technological development is changing the way we live, work, and learn. Responding in a human centered way, attentive to the benefits and concerns, requires innovative ways of thinking, acting, organizing and collaborating in our work, based on a clear understanding of the technologies, their opportunities and risks and their governance, and a deep reflection involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders. As of today, 2.7 billion people are still unconnected to broadband access, and thus excluded from the benefits of digitalization. Many more lack meaningful access that would enable them to fully leverage its benefits.

Faced with the challenges of today, the UN system has a key role to play in facilitating inclusive, international cooperation in addressing global challenges, as well as in leveraging the opportunities that digital technologies can bring.

As a high-level partnership led by UN, government, and ICT industry to galvanize actions and advocate for closing the digital divide, the Broadband Commission is committed to *accelerate progress toward achieving the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and continue to play an important role as the unique multistakeholder leadership platform advocating for universal meaningful connectivity*.

The Commission's Members' participation in the <u>UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation</u> Roundtable Group on Global Connectivity **demonstrated our commitment and support in contributing to the UNSG 's recommendations for concrete actions** by diverse stakeholders that would enhance global digital cooperation. Moreover, the work and accomplishments of the Broadband Commission over the past decade have established an important precedent for these actions and serve as a solid foundation for bringing the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation to life. As a result, the Commission is well placed as an advocacy engine for implementation of the Roadmap.

The Commission **welcomes the initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General to propose a Global Digital Compact and the decision of the President of the General Assembly to appoint co-facilitators for the process - the Permanent Representatives of Rwanda and of Sweden, and recognizes the need for coherent and coordinated UN efforts.** The Commission calls for the Global Digital Compact to be **anchored in the vision of a connected, inclusive and sustainable world,** where no one is left behind from benefitting from digital transformation, where the potential of ICTs is harnessed to realize the 2030 Agenda and to secure a sustainable and inclusive digital future for all.

With its legacy of more than a decade of focused work for universal meaningful connectivity accelerating the SDGs (and their predecessor the MDGs), the Commission reiterates t**he importance of respecting existing UN agencies and bodies' mandates given by Member States in digital and ICTs and the commitments already made by Member States and all relevant stakeholders, also through the conferences, processes and UN led fora like WSIS.**

The Commission expresses the need to **ensure consistency between existing multilateral and multistakeholder fora and mechanisms, avoiding duplication and ensuring that efforts complement, build on and reinforce existing frameworks and successful activities, which have proven to be impactful,** leveraging innovative solutions and collective knowledge with public-private partnerships models.
As an example, the Broadband Commission was instrumental in launching several major global initiatives including Giga and EQUALS and strongly believes in supporting public-private financing of universal broadband, pioneering innovative hybrid and/or complementary, replicable and sustainable financing and investment models for all types of networks, and catalyzing impactful partnerships.

Any new efforts proposed in the GDC should complement the broader UN digital cooperation landscape already established and should include all relevant players from the digital ecosystem, like industry members, entrepreneurs, financing institutions, civil societies, non-profits, etc. representing players across the ICTs value chain, who are key in delivering different technology solutions and innovation. We appreciate the multistakeholder character of the consultations thus far and **call for continued opportunities for multistakeholder engagement throughout the process of development of the Global Digital Compact.**

With more than **170 Members of the Commission since 2010, including 50 current Members, representing all players from the digital ecosystem** and a community of more than **500 top External Experts** in the field of ICT for development, this multistakeholder leadership platform, has **established a solid foundation and strong case to continue its role as a pre-eminent thought-leader* on digital and can play an important advisory role for the GDC, especially in the consultation period before its adoption by UN Member States at The Summit of the Future.**

*For more than a decade, the Commission has advocated for universal, meaningful and affordable connectivity acting as an advocacy engine for implementation of the UNSG's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation with a commitment to:

- **Contributing thought leadership, advocacy efforts, knowledge and learning resources related to the SDGs, including on education/skills, health, gender equality etc**; (The Commission contributes annually to many UN & non-UN led processes and key industry meetings like:

G20, UNGA, HLPF, WSIS, TES, COP, LDC5, CSW, GSMA Mobile World congress, WEF, IGF, UNCTAD e-commerce week among others).

- **Leveraging its collective expertise and collaborative solutions to generate policy, regulation and technology recommendations for harnessing the power of digital connectivity to leave no-one behind**; (The Broadband Commission has convened over 35 Working Groups on the socio-economic impact of ICTs and issues the annual flagship State of Broadband Report, that analyzes global connectivity challenges and successes, and tracks progress toward achieving its 7 Advocacy Targets)
- **Fostering and catalyzing public-private partnerships.** (For example, the Commission has been an incubator for many high-impact initiatives such as UNICEF/ITU Giga, Equals and the Child Safety Online Declaration.)

1. About the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development

Led by **H.E. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Mr. Carlos Slim Helù of Mexico, the Commission is co-chaired by ITU's Secretary-General and UNESCO Director-General** and comprises over 50 Commissioners who represent a cross-cutting group of top CEO and industry leaders, senior policymakers, and Heads of international agencies, with academia and non-profit organizations concerned with development. With its leadership representing government, private sector and UN at the helm, the Commission constitutes a **unique multistakeholder high level platform of the most influential ICT advocates**.

With its collective, multistakeholder approach, the Commission addresses the key digital challenges to accelerate sustainable and inclusive global development. Through its non-binding recommendations, best practices and thought leadership, the Commission informs global policy discussions; mobilizes efforts to achieve universal connectivity and advocates for the importance of connectivity on the international policy agenda and that expanding broadband access and use in every country is a key to accelerate progress towards UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.** The Commission's "2025 Advocacy Targets" focus on providing policy and programmatic guidance for national and international action in broadband development.

The Commission is convinced that achieving affordable universal connectivity is essential for achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The pandemic and its socio-economic impacts have underscored the urgency of concrete, coordinated actions across all sectors and geographies. The COVID-19 crisis has dramatically illustrated the vital importance of broadband networks and services in driving robust, resilient and well functioning societies and economies. Lack of affordability, constrained access to infrastructure and devices, poor digital skills and/or the absence of relevant content mean the billions of marginalized people struggling with poor connectivity are unable to fully leverage

the power of digital transformation in a way that could catalyze seismic shifts in development outcomes.

The Commission believes that **holistic actions** and **collective, collaborative efforts by all stakeholders** must be taken to connect all people to the internet, to realize the goal of universal connectivity.

Since 2010, the Commission meets regularly, two times per year, and convenes also during its special sessions at the global, regional and local multi-stakeholder conferences and fora, including WSIS, STI, HLPF, WEF at Davos, GSR, WTDC, UNCTAD e-commerce week, GSMA MWC, AI4Good etc. The Commission contributes to various UN processes and its work and thought leadership is referenced in ITU and UN resolutions.

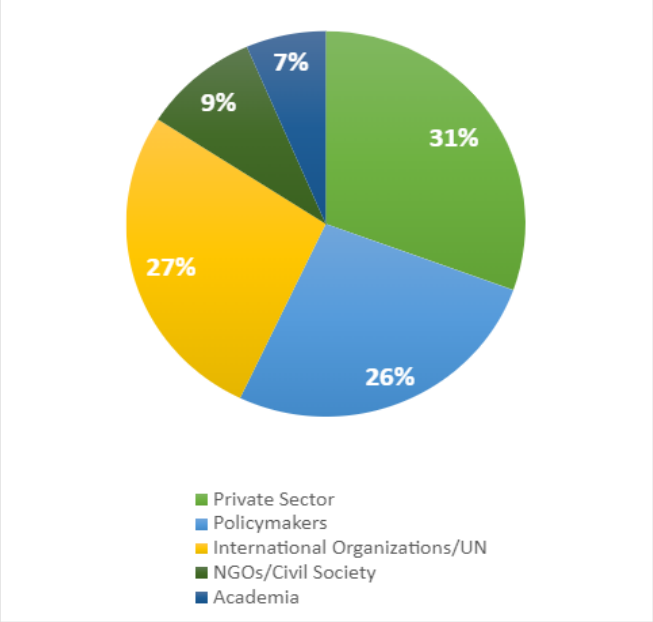
In 2020, within the context of the UN75th Anniversary, and as the Commission celebrated ten years of achievement, its Members committed to mobilizing efforts to achieve the 'Global Goal of Universal Connectivity' in support of the Roadmap and other connectivity initiatives. The Commission reaffirmed its commitment to help **achieve universal connectivity as a fundamental element of an inclusive and sustainable world**.

The Commission's work and mandate is unique by bringing together a high-powered community, including top CEO and industry leaders, senior policymakers and government representatives, international agencies, academia and organizations concerned with development. As leaders in their fields, the Commissioners embrace a range of perspectives in a multi-stakeholder approach to promoting the roll out of broadband, as well as providing a fresh approach to UN - business engagement.

The Commission is pioneering and leading knowledge products on ICTs and SDGs and has a proven model for collaborative and consensus driven outcomes done by multi-stakeholder membership including:

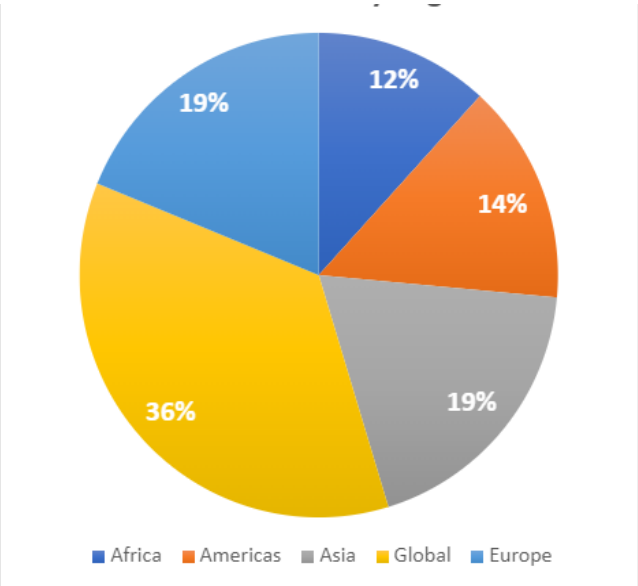
- ✓ 35 Working Group outcomes on digital development with some 300+ collaboratively developed recommendations issued.
- ✓ 12 Annual State of Broadband Reports with almost 70 unique recommendations and conclusions developed by consensus by public and private sector members

With more than **170 Members of the Commission** (past and present) and a community of more than **500 External Experts in the field of ICT for development**, this multi-stakeholder leadership [leaders] platform has advocated for digital technology as an accelerator for the SDGs (and their predecessor the MDGs).



Membership since 2011- breakdown by sectors

**This information has been provided by the Broadband Commission Secretariat*



Membership since 2011- breakdown by regions

**This information has been provided by the Broadband Commission Secretariat*

Thematic Areas on which contributions is submitted include following 7 digital issues that the Common Agenda report suggests for the Global Digital Compact to cover:

1. **Connect all people to the internet, including all schools**

The Commission calls in its 'Manifesto' on the global community to recognize **digital connectivity as the foundational element of the United Nations 2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development. In this respect, **all stakeholders should consider the role of digital connectivity in all SDG-driven actions.**

The Manifesto seeks to 'Build Back Better with Broadband' to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and re-energize the commitment of world leaders in this crucial Decade of Action towards 2030.
This Broadband Commission's Manifesto is a rallying cry, calling for collaboration in:

- Establishing a baseline for universal digital connectivity
- Identifying and supporting public-private financing of universal broadband, pioneering innovative hybrid and/or complementary, replicable and sustainable financing and investment models for all types of networks, and catalyzing impactful partnerships
- Advocating for enabling ICT regulatory environments, ICT capacity building and online safety and security, especially for children, as integral to efforts to achieve the Global Broadband Targets 2025 and the SDGs.

Actions to enable broadband adoption and accelerate digital inclusion, as outlined in several Commission publications, include:

1. **Set a conducive regulatory environment for broadband services that will attract the vast investment needed to support a more digital world.**
    - Adopting an enabling ICT regulatory environment (such as appropriate digital policy, plan, strategy or regulations) that incentivizes and accelerates investment in digital infrastructure access, and ICT skills and use, enabling broadband adoption and accelerate digital inclusion and incentivizes the provision of more affordable services.
    - Governments wishing to reduce the cost of broadband access can resort to a variety of measures, from adopting policies that incentivize the provision of more affordable services, to promoting public-private partnerships as appropriate and creating an enabling investment environment. Governments may also consider reducing sector specific taxes or subsidizing access to free or low-priced devices, as well as free connection in public administration

facilities and other anchor institutions such as libraries, hospitals or schools, or at other public hot spots. Measures to ensure affordable access to universal meaningful connectivity will ideally form part of more comprehensive broadband strategies.

- Protecting personal data is critical. Many data protection frameworks are inadequate, lacking clear implementation processes such as a data protection authority; they often do not require user consent for personal information to be used nor do they specify controls for transferring personal data abroad. Efforts are needed for countries to create adequate data protection laws or update their existing laws to bring them into conformity with best practices.

Key documents:

https://www.broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2023/01/2022-Target-Guide-Update.pdf
https://www.broadbandcommission.org/recommendations/
https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2022/

2. **Incentivize and accelerate investments in broadband:**
    - Promote more diversified sources of financing for digital infrastructure, identify and support public-private financing of universal connectivity, pioneer innovative hybrid and/or complementary, replicable and sustainable financing and investment models for all types profit as well as non-for-profit digital networks.
    - Use of universal service funds to develop broadband with a strong focus on rural, remote, un-served and underserved areas
    - Update ICT regulations to promote more investment and market approaches for sustainability
    - Expand initiatives to map network coverage and infrastructure needs, to develop priority lists for investment
    - Incentivize and accelerate broadband investment
    - Promote advanced market commitments for rural broadband access
    - Incentivize Public & Private Partnerships
    - Incentivize shared infrastructure frameworks, and implement "Dig Once" Policies & Expedite Rights of Way and Construction Permits;

Key documents:
https://www.broadbandcommission.org/recommendations/
https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2022/

3. **Close ICT data gaps:**

- More can be done to collect and publish granular, reliable and gender disaggregated data related to infrastructure deployments as well as Internet adoption and use in accordance with international guidelines and standards. This can include the disaggregation of Internet use by MSMEs or vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities or the elderly. Moreover, more research to better understand the context, circumstances and needs of individuals and MSMEs not yet using the Internet can be conducted or supported. These data and insights are key in setting policy priorities, targets and budgets.
- Measurement of broadband metrics merits more focus as a result of the pandemic and the likely aftermath. Indicators that were not prominently analysed before have now become more relevant. This includes household indicators such as the percentage with computers and Internet access or Internet-enabled handsets. Both merit additional granularity such as the type of computer the household has as well as the type of Internet access and breakdowns by household demographics. Collection of asymmetrical broadband speed information is also important given the new significance of upload speeds.

Key documents:

https://www.broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2023/01/2022-Target-Guide-Update.pdf
https://www.broadbandcommission.org/recommendations/
https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2022/

4. **Develop Digital skills/capacity and promote digital inclusion and entrepreneurship for a digital economy:**

- Integrate gender in national broadband plans & strategies and undertake action plans to advance gender equality in access to broadband
- Include in broadband plans efforts on digital inclusion, measures to protect children online, a focus on limiting environmental impacts and addressing climate, and public access initiatives. The pandemic brought into sharp focus the digital divide with many unable to work from home or take part in remote education due to a lack of adequate skills, Internet access, appropriate devices and the means to pay for it.
- Integrate gender in national broadband plans & strategies and undertake action plans to advance gender equality in access to broadband
- Ensure public confidence in participating online by considering increasing efforts to prevent cybercrime & cybersecurity incidents

- Promote ICT capacity building and online safety and security, especially for children, as integral to efforts to achieve the SDGs.
- Encourage e-business and entrepreneurship
- Foster digital innovation by preserving intellectual property (IP) rights
- Foster locally relevant content creation and local hosting
- Build human digital capacity and skills to help users, SMEs and public sector agencies make the most of digital opportunities
- Ensure a particular focus is given to MSME's: that digital connectivity is accessible and affordable and the training and support structures available for entrepreneurs and small enterprises to engage in digital trade

Key documents:

https://www.broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2023/01/2022-Target-Guide-Update.pdf
https://www.broadbandcommission.org/recommendations/
https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2022/
https://broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/digital-entrepreneurship-2018/
https://www.broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/msmes/

5. **Digital and broadband – an important role to play in combating the effects of climate change:**
    - Address environmental impacts of digital infrastructure and the potential of connectivity in addressing the climate emergency
    - ICT companies need to do everything they can to reduce and eliminate their operational GHG emissions. This includes adopting concrete targets in line with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recommendations for minimizing the rise in temperature to 1.5°C.
    - Building resilience. Digital and broadband can demonstrate leadership in targeting the reduced carbon emission – and can actively help build resilience to climate stress.
    - Digital and mobile technology can address climate change in seven ways (GSMA, 2021) enabling clean energy and energy efficiency; improving mobility and logistics; improving natural resource management and forestry; improving agriculture; managing wate solutions; improved waste management and circular economy solutions; increased disaster preparedness and effective response.

Key documents:
https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2021/

https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2022/
https://www.broadbandcommission.org/recommendations/

6. **Develop capacities of policymakers and civil servants to engage in the digital transformation.**
    - Raise awareness of artificial intelligence and digital transformation competencies. These competencies are foundational for successfully implementing digital transformation in government and creating an enabling environment for digital transformation in society through improved digital governance.
    - Contextualize, localize, and adapt AI and digital transformation competencies. Competencies need be contextualised, localised and adapted for their specific context, based on the analysis of capacity building needs at individual, team, department, and government levels.
    - Develop digital transformation-related capacity-building programs and trainings, as part of national digital transformation initiatives.
    - Facilitate knowledge exchange and mutual learning through multi-lateral cooperation. Create coalitions and platforms for exchanging good practices on AI and digital transformation-related capacity building at the national, regional, and international levels.

Key documents:

https://www.broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Artificial-Intelligence-and-Digital-Transformation-Competencies-for-Civil-Servants.pdf
https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2022/

School Connectivity

The Broadband Commission believes that **specific actions around education and connecting schools should be taken as COVID-19 disrupted educational systems across the world.** Millions of school children were unable to continue their studies due to a lack of household equipment for remote learning. Unlike work from home flexibility that will survive post-pandemic, most educators agree that online learning is not an equivalent substitute for the in-school presence of children. Nevertheless, home connectivity is an important complement for remote learning in the event of future pandemics, school closures for other reasons (e.g., inclement weather) or studies and homework outside of school. Governments and the private sector need to take steps to ensure that all students have the necessary digital environment to support remote learning.

As the incubator for the ITU/UNICEF initiative, Giga, the Broadband Commission views public-private partnerships a critical component to connecting schools to the internet. In alignment with this initiative and the Commission's input to the Transforming Education Summit, the Broadband Commission is calling for public and private cooperation across all sectors and geographies to unlock the power of digital learning by supporting digital transformation that delivers affordable and inclusive connectivity for the most marginalized learners, teachers and families.

The Commission also recognizes that to improve education, its efforts to expand connectivity and strengthen digital skills and capacities must be complemented by support for universally accessible, high-quality and inclusive online learning platforms and content.

As a high- level multistakeholder advocacy platform, the Commission commits to taking action, and encourages the broadband community to also:

- Contribute thought leadership, advocacy efforts, knowledge and learning resources related to SDG-4, including digital learning.
- Leverage the collective expertise and collaborative solutions to generate policy, regulation and technology recommendations for harnessing the power of digital connectivity to leave no-one behind.
- Foster public-private partnerships to connect schools, households and individuals, thereby opening empowering pathways to lifelong learning.

Key documents:

https://www.broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2023/01/2022-Target-Guide-Update.pdf
https://www.broadbandcommission.org/recommendations/
https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2022/
https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/tes-open-statement/
https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/recommendations-sdg4/

2. Avoid internet fragmentation
No inputs.

3. Protect data

a) Key commitments

The State of Broadband Report 2022:

Protecting personal data is critical. Many data protection frameworks are inadequate, lacking clear implementation processes such as a data protection authority; they often do not require user consent for personal information to be used nor do they specify controls for transferring

personal data abroad. Efforts are needed for countries to create adequate data protection laws or update their existing laws to bring them into conformity with best practices.

Key documents:

https://www.broadbandcommission.org/publication/state-of-broadband-2022/

The Working Group on Virtual Health and Care: The Future of Virtual Health and Care Driving access and equity through inclusive policies

The Broadband Commission's 2021 Working Group on Virtual Health and Care encourages inclusive policymaking that puts the individual at the center of care delivery and planning. The Working Group's report examines virtual health and care in context of the COVID-19 pandemic: the trends, forecasts, key role of policy in influencing adoption, challenges, and ways of overcoming them.

It recommends policies as well as key stakeholder actions to ensure virtual health and care solutions increase equitable access and outcomes for those facing the greatest barriers to obtaining services, resulting in improved health and care equity and faster achievement of universal health coverage.

Data and technology Ensure the flow of data by blending hardware with evolving software and delivery standards. Policy elements: infrastructure, data governance, interoperability.

Data governance: Clear data governance structures and standards driven by a core set of equity and rights-based principles for data use, access, and authorization throughout the delivery chain to secure individual privacy and establish trust.

Establish a national health and care information system – if one does not exist already – that acts as a single source of information to reduce uncertainty over data ownership.

- Develop a comprehensive health and care data strategy based on respecting privacy and preventing misuse to build user trust and maximize the public benefits of health data for all.
- Align virtual health and care data security and privacy policies with the national cybersecurity strategy to ensure all-round security considering the changing nature and sources of data generation.
- Encourage interoperable standards in the design and implementation of virtual health and care solutions to simplify the user experience through novel insights generated by health and care sector players and policymakers.
- Create frameworks for data sharing, so that relevant health data is securely accessible for authorized stakeholders while ensuring individual privacy and security.

- Build infrastructure based on open standards that can be reused to facilitate adoption of new technologies and optimize resource utilization (onsite or cloud).

Key documents:

https://www.broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/virtual-health-and-care/

https://www.broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2022/06/The-Future-of-Virtual-Health-and-Care_2022_Broadband-Commission-Working-Group-Executive-Summary.pdf

4. Apply human rights online

Affordable, reliable connectivity is now coming to more countries than ever. It has the potential to transform children's lives, giving them access to previously unimagined educational, cultural, and economic opportunities. But too often, children cannot realize these opportunities, because the Internet is also a place, in which the vulnerable are exposed to the risk of serious harm. Globally, there are more than 2.2 billion people under the age of 18, making children the biggest vulnerable group in our societies. Children around the world are regularly exposed to risks and harms online, including:

• Sexual abuse, exploitation, and trafficking – ranging from grooming to rape, recorded or streamed by abusers.
• Online harassment, victimization, and cyberbullying.
• Radicalization and recruitment by extremist organizations.
• Exposure to misinformation and age-inappropriate content, such as pornography or violence.
• Apps and games that are designed to encourage unhealthy habits and behaviors.
• Falling victim to illegal or unethical data harvesting and theft.
• The normalization of gender-based violence through exposure to online abuse materials.

To combat these harms and risks requires a coordinated and global approach. Unfortunately, the fight against child online abuse and exploitation is neither unified nor pursued in a way that is consistent across all countries. Capabilities, legal frameworks, awareness, lack of allocated and dedicated resources and the will to act all vary widely between agencies and jurisdictions.

Not only are these practices an affront to the most basic rights of children, they also threaten to undermine the potential benefits digital transformation can deliver for all countries, but particularly for rapidly developing societies in the global south. The ITU estimates that for each 10% increase in the penetration of digital services, a country can expect 1.3 per cent

growth in GDP per capita. But such benefits can only materialize if all citizens, including children, are able to derive the maximum possible benefit from the opportunities connectivity offers. And they can only do this if they are safe when they go online. For these reasons, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also set a target under SDG 16.2 to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking, torture, and all forms of violence against children by 2030. To galvanize the action required if we are to meet this ambitious target, the Working Group has drawn up the Child Online Safety Universal Declaration.

a) Key commitments

The core objective of the Broadband Commission Working Group on Child Online Safety is to raise awareness of the online risks and threats to children. It also brings forth a set of recommendations to minimize those risks and threats, while simultaneously being able to capitalize on the benefits the expansion of broadband will bring to children, particularly those in developing countries. The recommendations aim to mobilize political will and collective action by all the key stakeholders. These include governments, regulators, operators, the private sector, social media and gaming platforms, Internet service providers, UN and other child-focused agencies, and the Broadband Commissioners and their peers. Collectively, we must now prioritize child online safety. The digital world is the world in which most children in developed countries live, play, and learn today. Increasingly, the digital world is also becoming the world of children in developing countries. It should respect children's rights to be free from all forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation. It must become a safer world, preparing future generations to thrive in the digital space. The goal of these recommendations is to provide a framework that supports collaboration and action among all stakeholders who play an integral role in prioritizing child online safety

- Include child online safety strategies in all national broadband and/or digital plans by 2021
- Prevent, detect, respond, and take action
- Establish clear and accountable mechanisms to ensure child rights are included in operating model
- Harmonize definitions and terminology and develop common standards
- Use age-appropriate design and meaningful data-consent for social media and gaming platforms, and others online services for children
- Invest in data collection and research and in the development and scaling up of technology-driven solutions
- Develop common metrics for child online safety
- Implement universal digital skills education

This Child Online Safety Universal Declaration strives to align all relevant stakeholders on the common mission of championing the cause of protection of children online. The declaration intended to affirm our collective commitment to protect children as they access

the Internet, and to work together to ensure that we exercise our responsibility of educating children across all tiers and lifestyles for the digital future ahead of them.

- Support child-friendly digital services, and cybersecurity measures to protect systems and platforms used by children.
- Utilize tools and platforms available to ensure that digital innovations support public good.
- Take leadership and proactively promote the cause of child online safety, through innovative approaches for a healthier digital future of society and sanctions to offenders.
- Collaborate with other stakeholders across sectors and industry segments and foster knowledge as well as expertise on addressing the child online safety.
- Support educational campaigns and school courses to train children for online safety.
- Make measurable progress toward the establishment and strengthening of hotlines and helplines to make sure that all children have access to help when they need it (as a victim or with a sexual problem behaviour).

Key documents:
https://broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/ChildOnlineSafety_Report.pdf
https://broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WGChildOnlineSafety_Declaration2019-1.pdf

5. Introduce accountability criteria for discrimination and misleading content

a) Core principles

The need for action against disinformation has also been recognised at the ITU/UNESCO Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development. The Commission created a Working Group on Freedom of Expression and Addressing Disinformation, that in turn commissioned this comprehensive global study in 2019. The research underpinning this study was conducted between September 2019 and July 2020 by an international and interdisciplinary team of researchers. Balancing Act: Responding to Disinformation While Defending Freedom of Expression uses the term 'disinformation' to describe false or misleading content with potentially harmful consequences, irrespective of the underlying intentions or behaviours in producing and circulating such messages. The focus is not on definitions, but on how States, companies, institutions and organisations around the world are responding to this phenomenon, broadly conceived. The work includes a novel typology of 11 responses, making holistic sense of the disinformation crisis on an international scale, including during

COVID-19. It also provides a 23-step tool developed to assess disinformation responses, including their impact on freedom of expression.

b) Key commitments

The study addresses key stakeholder groups, making a set of recommendations for action in each case. Among these, the following recommendations are highlighted here:

Intergovernmental and other international organisations, as appropriate, could:

- Increase technical assistance to Member States at their request in order to help develop regulatory frameworks and policies, in line with international freedom of expression and privacy standards, to address disinformation. This could involve encouraging the uptake of the 23-step disinformation response assessment tool developed for this study (see below).
- Particularly in the case of UNESCO with its mandate on freedom of expression, step up the work being done on disinformation in partnership with other UN organisations and the range of actors engaged in this space.

Individual states could:

- Actively reject the practice of disinformation peddling, including making a commitment not to engage in public opinion manipulation either directly or indirectly - for example via 'influence operations' produced by third party operators such as 'dark propaganda' public relations (PR) firms.
- Review and adapt their responses to disinformation, using the 23-step tool for assessing law and policy developed as an output of this study, with a view to conformity with international human rights standards (notably freedom of expression, including access to information, as well as privacy rights), and at the same time making provision for monitoring and evaluation of their responses.
- Increase transparency and proactive disclosure of official information and data, and monitor this performance in line with the right to information and SDG indicator 16.10.2 that assesses the adoption and implementation of constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information.

Political parties and other political actors could:

- Speak out about the dangers of political actors as sources and amplifiers of disinformation and work to improve the quality of the information ecosystem and increase trust in democratic institutions.

- Refrain from using disinformation tactics in political campaigning, including the use of covert tools of public opinion manipulation and 'dark propaganda' public relations firms.

Electoral regulatory bodies and national authorities could:

- Improve transparency of all election advertising by political parties, candidates, and affiliated organisations through requiring comprehensive and openly available advertising databases and disclosure of spending by political parties and support groups.
- Work with journalists and researchers in fact-checking and investigations around electoral disinformation networks and producers of 'dark propaganda'.

Law enforcement agencies and the judiciary could:

- Ensure that law enforcement officers are aware of freedom of expression and privacy rights, including protections afforded to journalists who publish verifiable information in the public interest, and avoid arbitrary actions in connection with any laws criminalising disinformation.
- For judges and other judicial actors: Pay special attention when reviewing laws and cases related to addressing measures to fight disinformation, such as criminalisation, in order to help guarantee that international standards on freedom of expression and privacy are fully respected within those measures.

Internet communications companies could:

- Work together in a human rights frame, to deal with cross-platform disinformation, in order to improve technological abilities to detect and curtail false and misleading content more effectively and share data about this.
- Develop curatorial responses to ensure that users can easily access journalism as verifiable information shared in the public interest, prioritising news organisations that practice critical, ethical independent journalism.
- Recognise that if health disinformation and misinformation can be quickly dealt with in a pandemic on the basis that it poses a serious risk to public health, action is also needed against political disinformation - especially at the intersection of hate speech – when it, too, can be life-threatening. The same applies to disinformation related to climate change.
- Recognise that press freedom and journalism safety are critical components of the internationally enshrined right of freedom of expression, meaning that online violence

targeting journalists (a frequent feature of disinformation campaigns) cannot be tolerated.

- Apply fact-checking to all political content (including advertising, fact-based opinion, and 'direct speech') published by politicians, political parties, their affiliates, and other political actors. The study also addresses recommendations to other stakeholder groups such as news media, civil society organisations, advertising brokers, and researchers.

Key documents:
https://broadbandcommission.org/publication/balancing-act-countering-digital-disinformation/
https://broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WGFoEdisinfo_executivesummary2020.pdf

6. Promote regulation of artificial intelligence

Working Group on AI and Health: Reimagining Global Health through Artificial Intelligence: The Roadmap to AI Maturity

To combat today's growing health challenges, we need to systematically integrate AI-enabled tools into the way healthcare is delivered and expand access for all. Without AI, UHC may not
be achieved. To bring AI capabilities to the next level for health systems, UHC and patients, countries need to be proactive and foster a robust enabling environment for needs-driven AI. To create an AI-enabling environment, policymakers, donors, private companies, and other stakeholders should proactively invest in the six areas for AI maturity in health. The recommendations detail specific action points and recommendations for each stakeholder group, and can help navigate challenges, pursue best practices, and strengthen AI-enablers.

The report identifies six areas for AI maturity in health that countries should prioritize to advance on their journey to AI maturity.

1. People & workforce
Countries should prioritize AI and data science in their national health education curricula for pre- and in-service training and formal education. They should strengthen level-appropriate offerings for both technical and non-technical roles and prioritize the soft aspects of technology solutions: human-centric
design and behavioral aspects.

2. Data & technology
Countries should prioritize the foundations: robust technology architecture, connectivity, access to quality and representative data, data privacy and security layers, data stewardship,

interoperability, fair and transparent algorithms and AI models, and explainability. Critical to achieving this are consent-driven policy frameworks, a strong data and AI strategy, robust technology implementation roadmaps, and the formulation of relevant best practices.

3. Governance & regulatory
Leadership is critical to establish the robust governance structures and regulations necessary to ensure AI innovation targets national health priorities. Keys to good AI governance are: a national strategy and budget development, clear costing and implementation plans, privacy and security-preserving regulations that put people first while balancing innovation, and the integration of human rights and a social contract. Likewise, regulators should continuously develop appropriate clinical and scientific validation pathways.

4. Design & processes
Existing national health systems and clinical workflows are not always ready to integrate AI solutions. Relevant stakeholders may want to perform gap analyses for technical and user requirement specifications and collaborate broadly to ensure successful integration. Professional societies and academies, government agencies, and the private sector should collaborate to streamline the integration of AI into health systems. The localization of solutions into deployment contexts, performance measurements for outcomes-based validation, and human-centric design should also be prioritized to enable AI impact in healthcare.

5. Partnerships & stakeholders
Countries should support effective, goal-oriented partnerships (e.g., multisectoral public-private partnerships, data collaboratives), coordinated prototyping, stakeholder engagement and participation in international working groups or task forces, and strong relationships with local partners and patient organizations. Perhaps most important of all, progress on the path to AI maturity requires the cultivation of high-level political support across ministries and the head of state.

6. Business models
Innovative and sustainable business models should be a priority for countries and stakeholders across the healthcare, tech, and life sciences industries, and for the public sector. Countries should foster a diverse set of funding mechanisms guided by a long-term outlook for AI in health solutions. They can develop incentive mechanisms, experiment with novel pricing models and monetization strategies for assets, and advance the use of innovative financing mechanisms for social impact.

Key documents:
https://www.broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/digital-and-artificial-intelligence-in-health-2020/

Working Group Report on AI Capacity Building: Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation Competencies for Civil Servants

The development and use of digital technologies is also impacting how governments operate and function. Digital transformation, including artificial intelligence (AI) adoption, has become one of the highest priorities for public organisations. For instance, governments are increasingly trying to digitize their services through technology because of growing public expectations. But today, some governments are asked to do more: to create an enabling environment in which green, inclusive, equitable digital transformation strengthens democratic societies and economies. Several studies have indeed revealed critical digital competencies gaps in the public sector, including in the Global South. It is therefore extremely important to identify and address those digital transformation gaps and to succeed in the public sector, as a catalyst of change for societies and economies in digital age.

While there is a growing literature on the types of digital competencies that public sector officials need, there is an unmet need to develop comprehensive digital competency frameworks that can:

1. clearly identify the internal challenges a government faces in its digital transformation journey;

2. propose specific competencies that can address those challenges, and:

3. take into account some specificities of the Global South.

The AI and Digital Transformation Competency Framework unpacks the major AI and digital transformation competencies needed in the public sector. The framework aims to provide guidance not just for civil servants, but for international organisations and regional and national actors to support capacity development. The Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation Competency Framework includes three major Competency Domains:

1. Digital Planning and Design 2. Data Use and Governance 3. Digital Management and Execution

The competency framework also includes five complementary Attitudes that enable civil servants to pursue digital transformation effectively: 1. Trust 2. Creativity 3. Adaptability 4. Curiosity 5. Experimentation

General Recommendations

- Raise awareness of the competencies needed by civil servants to successfully implement digital transformation in government and to create an enabling environment for digital transformation in society through improved digital governance

- Support governments in contextualization and adaptation of AI and digital transformation competencies for civil servants based on analysis of capacity-building needs at individual, team, department, and government levels
- Enable capacity building by making learning resources and training content accessible openly accessible that can be used, tailored and adapted at the national level to train civil servants to acquire relevant competencies
- Support governments in monitoring the impact of capacity-building initiatives on digital transformation-related outcomes in the public sector
- Foster cooperation between international, regional and national organisations, including in civil society, that support the training of civil servants, to facilitate knowledge exchange and mutual learning

Recommendations for Governments

- Governments should take a holistic approach when using the framework, first developing a digital strategy at country level, then a digital action plan to strengthen the digital competencies included in this framework
- Governments should start to test this framework by including the development of capacity-building programs and trainings in digital projects and initiatives, while assessing vendor lock-in risks by offers from private and other actors

Recommendations for Academia

- Universities can leverage this framework to establish curricula and interdisciplinary programs for developing AI and digital transformation-related competencies Recommendations for the

Private Sector

- Private sector can collaborate with governments to implement capacity-building initiatives, and by contributing expertise and knowledge based on experience with digital transformation.

Key documents:
https://www.broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Artificial-Intelligence-and-Digital-Transformation-Competencies-for-Civil-Servants.pdf
https://www.broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/ai-capacity-building/

7. Digital commons as a global public good

Working Group Report on School Connectivity: The Digital Transformation of Education: Connecting Schools, Empowered Learners

Following the recommendation 1B of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation, the Broadband Commission Working Group on School Connectivity has also provided advice regarding the identification, assessment, support, and deployment of Digital Public Goods to articulate the link to quality and inclusive learning. Digital Public Goods (DPGs), are defined by the Digital Pubic Goods Alliance as open source software, open data, open AI models, open standards and open content that adhere to privacy and other applicable best practices, do no harm and are of high relevance for attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some examples of Digital Public Goods include: open source software and applications for education in local languages; open educational resources aligned to state curriculum standards tailored to meet student and teacher needs; open source applications to support learning of children with disabilities; Open Educational Resources (OERs) to provide access to localized courseware; open access libraries to scientific literature and many others.

Public data gathered with public money creates public goods. Digital cooperation is a key enabler for school connectivity. It is reflected in the priorities of many organizations and recommended by the United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation.

Institutional capacity and the development of local ecosystems for the production of vetted, high – quality content and Digital Public Goods (DPGs) are also key to the sustainability of any school connectivity program. Moreover, the human factor is one of the key ingredients for making connectivity work for learning. Teachers are key in driving successful adoption of high quality content, DPGs, and technology. Teacher training allows them not only to acquire new skills and competences, but also to overcome fears of using technology; this in turn helps in the deployment and adoption of online tools and content, and empowers them to become more vested in the process of vetting and assessing those solutions.

Key documents:

https://www.broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/school-connectivity-2020/