Global digital compact -Rev 1

Concepts and ideas for strengthening developing country standpoints

South Centre-TNI meeting
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IT for Change

Presentation focus on four broad objectives - excerpted from Rev 1

- Close all digital divides and accelerate progress towards the SDGs
- Expand inclusion in and benefits from the digital economy for all
- Foster an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space that respects, protects and promotes human rights
- Advance responsible and equitable international data governance

Issue 1. Close all digital divides, in particular between developed and developing countries

1.1. Financing mechanism for universal and meaningful connectivity:

a. Consider the digital development tax proposed by the UN SG in Our Common Agenda as a mechanism to finance universal access strategies, including public access points:

   "companies that have benefited for decades from a free and open Internet [should] contribute to the connectivity of the [...] people who are still offline" [pp 28, Our Common Agenda]

b. The proposal for the Global Fund for AI and Emerging Technologies for Sustainable Development (para 60) should ideally be financed through ODA. (Contributions from the Digital Development Tax can also be considered as another source).

   Any voluntary financing - relying on contributions from select states, private sector, philanthropies to raise the 100 million USD for launch of this Fund in 2025 - should be accompanied with guardrails to prevent infrastructural monopolies and dependencies.

Issue 1 (contd.)

1.2. WSIS action line holders to support developing countries in undertaking digital inclusion surveys for national action plans and linked to the SDG score card

National digital inclusion surveys with systematic disaggregation of data and gender statistics, to identify gaps in access and use of the Internet, data and AI technologies, by individual citizens, enterprises, and public agencies can aid identification of gaps and challenges in leveraging digital technologies for SDGs (through appropriate infrastructural and human capabilities)

* Building on the idea of para 13(d) in rev 1

Issue 1 (contd.)

1.3. Digital public goods and digital public infrastructure as enablers of SDGs

Sovereign control, democratic governance, public accountability – as essential to DPG standards (in addition to openness and interoperability). Only this will ensure that no single country or stakeholder monopolises the foundational building blocks of digital innovation.

Concrete ODA commitments to enable developing countries evolve compute power - including public cloud infrastructure and data exchanges.

Human rights impact assessments (ex ante and ex post) and redress for human rights violations to be instituted in the roll out of DPIs – and such processes to cover deployment by public agencies and PPP instantiations.

Human rights safeguards are pivotal particularly for digital identity systems and digital payment solutions (incl to prevent predatory practices in the market and in DPI systems).

Issue 2. Expand inclusion in high value segments of digital economy for developing countries

2.1. A fair and just international economic framework in the digital economy

- Extra-territorial obligations of state parties where digital TNCs are headquartered to prevent human rights violations in cross-border data value chains (eg. data privacy and labour rights violations in global South markets)
- Reform of trade and IP frameworks that impede developing countries from pursuing autonomous domestic digital industrialisation pathways for moving into high value segments of data value chains
- Support developing countries to evolve robust digital taxation regimes

Issue 3. Foster a digital space that respects and promotes an integrated, indivisible human rights approach

1. Shift from lifecycle approach to value chain approach to protect the rights of all people and not just users of technology - this will ensure ESCR violations in digital value chains are not overlooked.

   Eg. livelihood rights of farmers impacted in an agtech value chain, labour rights of gig workers in platform services value chains, knowledge sovereignty of indigenous people whose languages and cultural resources are mined by generative AI, and so on.

2. Underscore the duty of State Parties to enact corporate due diligence legislation to hold digital TNCs accountable for human rights vigilance in their value chains.

Issue 4. Responsible and equitable intergovernmental cooperation on data and AI governance

International digital cooperation modalities should comply with the Tunis Agenda.

International cooperation on data and AI governance should enable all stakeholders to effectively participate in their respective roles and responsibilities, with special attention to inclusion of the global south :

- GA process to determine a framework for international digital cooperation on data governance, including cross-border data flows and equitable distribution of data value (para 44 of Rev 1)
- Terms of the UN International Scientific Panel on AI and emerging technologies for horizon scanning and risk identification to be determined through a intergovernmental process. Panel itself can have a multistakeholder composition with adequate representation from the global South (governments, tech community, civil society, private sector other than Big Tech) (para 53(a) of Rev 1)
- International harmonisation of network infrastructure, DPG and AI standards setting through a multilateral process

Thank you!

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