

Comments by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Finnish NRI on the Report of the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation

- We appreciate the panel's devotion to strengthen multistakeholder involvement through different areas in the panel report concerning both current work and future developments in order to reflect current and future needs in the fast moving digital development. This would also mean complementing multilateral processes involved to take into consideration the necessary public policy needs to address different concerns through smart regulations.
- Our comprehensive view is to rely on the existing mechanisms, not to create unnecessary new institutions or mechanism and duplicate the work and institutions working already in this area. Instead, we should both strengthen and update them in the areas that are now lacking concrete and productive results. This would require a comprehensive analysis and description of the ongoing work. As one of the experts of internet governance described this: "Multistakeholderism is the language of the future but it still lacks a grammar".
- We strongly recommend the idea to strengthen the already very productive work of the IGF. While doing so, one should recognize the very important and concrete achievements that the IGF has made this far in the digital cooperation – especially through important bottom up processes involving all the stakeholders and raising the digital awareness among the least developed countries and providing them opportunities to be involved. This is possible through extensive capacity building. For Finland, as a major funder and supporter of the IGF we are very satisfied for the progress achieved especially in the LDC countries progress for digital capacity building and support for their citizens' awareness and building their digital inclusiveness.
- However, there is a growing need to do more in this area and we should make sure that the IGF has more and stable resources to focus on capacity building as well as other important topics. We support the idea to place the IGF Trust Fund directly under the Secretary-General's office. We should come up with an arrangement that could provide stable funding and enable long-term planning of the IGF.
- We understand and support the need to develop IGF's work, as described in the report, to produce even more concrete and well explained recommendations to follow up with actual decision making. All the different stakeholders, including governments and private sector should be able to turn recommendations into actual decisions implemented. That is why we support the appointment of the Technology Envoy as a special adviser to the Secretary-General, who would also hold responsibility on advising the IGF.
- We want to note that the panel report includes very important recommendations on interdependency of peace, sustainable development and human rights. We share the view that digital cooperation and harnessing the potential of new technologies are essential to reach the sustainable development goals. In particular, we agree that digital connectivity, while necessary, is not sufficient to attain the SDGs. It must be combined with a platform

for sharing digital public goods, created through a multi-stakeholder alliance involving the UN. Such platform must be designed in an inclusive and human-centric manner, ensuring that the data created and used is managed in an ethical fashion.

- Finally, on child rights we want to note that in the digital societies they include safety, inclusiveness, privacy, learning, playing, free time and welfare, which must be secured both in developing and implementing digital solutions. We also highlight gender-sensitive approach in digital development.
- As a sign of its support to the report of the Panel, Finland will provide a substantial financial contribution to the “follow-up secretariat”, which will be established to consult with key stakeholders and to advise the Secretary-General on the most effective actions to follow.