



International Digital Dialogues Conference

21 & 22 November 2024, Berlin

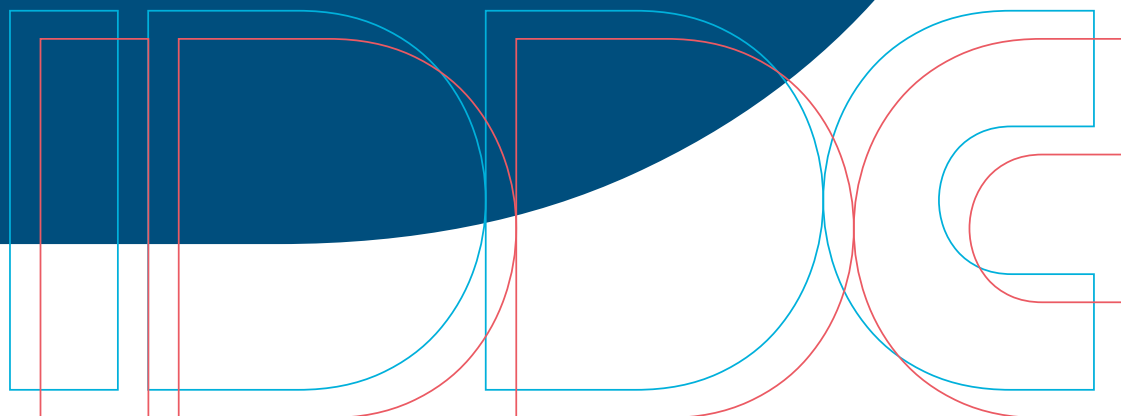


**International
Digital Dialogues**

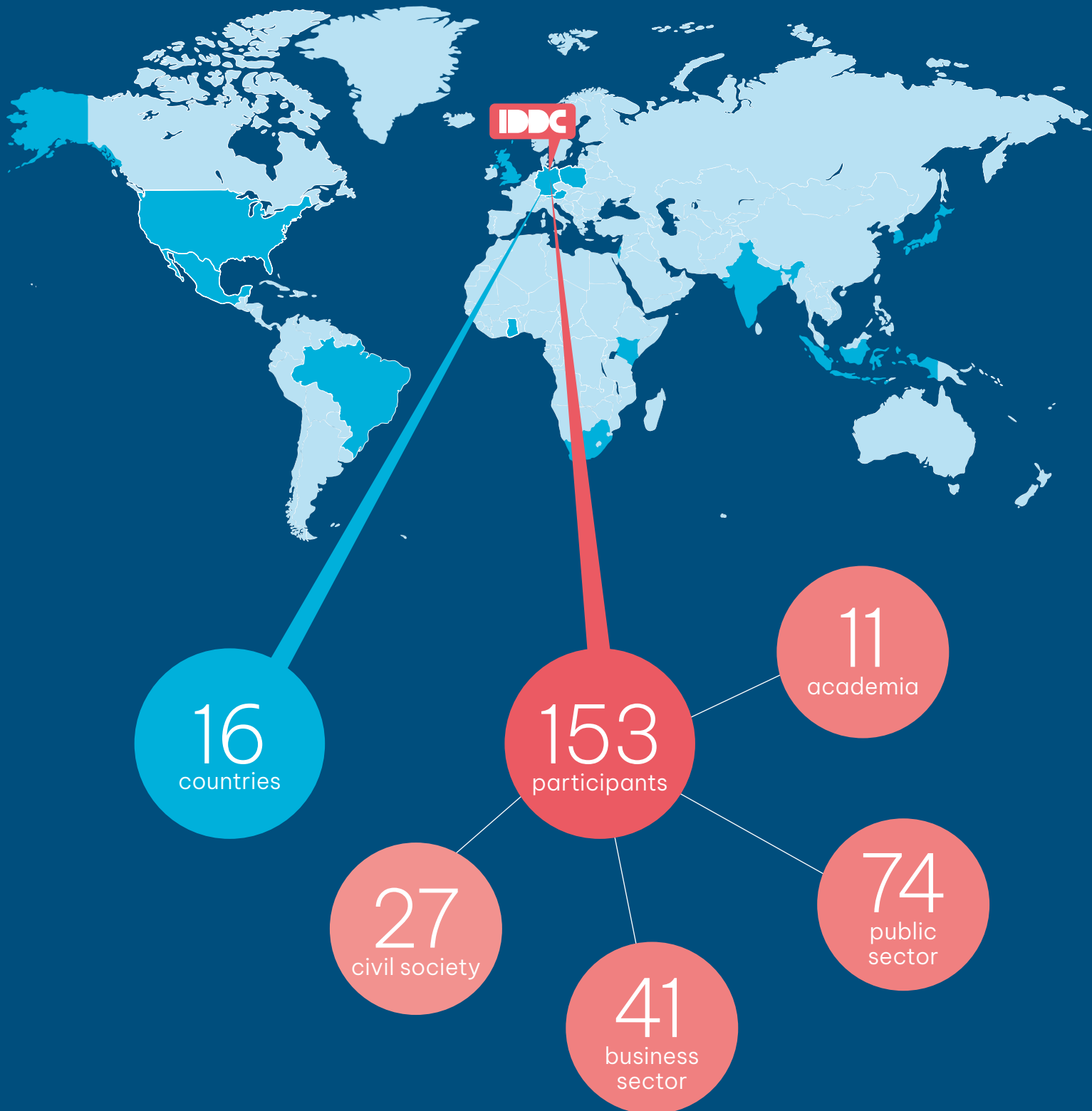
Shaping digital
policy together

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IDDC participants overview



Highlights from political keynotes

“Only with a **common understanding, common values and common rules** do we stand a chance to prevent discrimination, deepfake and disinformation, to implement ethical standards, and to create a level playing field.”



Dr Volker Wissing
Federal Minister
for Digital and Transport

“We have come to realize that **digitalization does not stop at national borders**. And it must not stop at national borders. It can do so much more. Above all, it can help to overcome global challenges.”

“We all learn from each other. We policy-makers learn where the problems are and what citizens, the research community and industry need to solve them. **Involving stakeholders** ensures that the political solutions that we develop really meet the actual needs. And by all **sharing best practice** examples, we learn where things work out.”



H.E. Meutya Viada Hafid
Minister, Ministry of Communication
and Digital Affairs, Indonesia

*“To sustain Indonesia's economic growth, a digital economy ecosystem that empowers the community must also be nurtured. The government has carried out numerous initiatives to enhance some of the cornerstones of Indonesia's digital economy, which includes our vibrant start-ups ecosystem. We have nurtured a **thriving startup ecosystem through supportive regulations**, access to financing, and innovation hubs.”*

*“In an era defined by interconnectedness, the pervasive spread of mis- and disinformation pose **significant challenges to democratic discourse**, economic stability, societal cohesion, and security. [...] The Indonesian government has undertaken this through enhancing people's **media literacy and digital literacy**, leveraging **new technologies such as AI** in detecting and moderating negative content, as well as **collaborating with various stakeholders**.”*

*“To sustain a **free internet**, we must build **resilient infrastructure**, foster **global digital solidarity**, and **empower local voices**, ensuring inclusivity and equity in internet governance.”*



H.E. Dr. Margaret Nyambura Ndung'u

Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy, Kenya

*“In conclusion, the digital age presents both unprecedented opportunities and challenges. By sustaining a free internet, investing in digital public infrastructure, fostering the digital economy, and combating disinformation, we can chart a path toward a more **inclusive, equitable, and resilient digital future**.”*

*“In 2024, with 73 elections worldwide, including Kenya's, disinformation emerged as a critical challenge. AI-driven tools have amplified divisive narratives, eroding trust in institutions. Kenya has countered these threats by **strengthening digital literacy**, deploying **AI for election monitoring**, and **collaborating with fact-checking organizations**.”*

Dr Takuo Imagawa

Vice-Minister for International Affairs,
Ministry of Internal Affairs
and Communications, Japan



*“The world’s internet traffic has increased dramatically and is now called a data explosion. In order to properly cope with such a data explosion, it is essential for today’s digital economy and society to **consider the entire digital infrastructure** and the data that flows through the infrastructure, as an ‘ecosystem’, and to ensure the safety, reliability, resilience, and sustainability of the entire ecosystem.”*

*“I believe that efforts to ensure the **safety, reliability, resilience and sustainability** of the digital infrastructure ecosystem will become increasingly important. I hope that these efforts will make further progress through strengthened cooperation among today’s participating countries.”*

*“At the international level, Brazil has been actively engaged in various forums [...], promoting a balanced position between **combating disinformation** and **hate speech** and upholding **freedom of expression**, as well as defending access to information as a collective right.”*



*“It is [...] imperative that countries collaborate to **establish ethical principles** for the development and use of AI, as well as technical standards and recommendations that facilitate a rational discussion on **science-based solutions** to these issues. This will inevitably involve the conduct of digital social platforms, whether through mandatory regulation or voluntary action.”*

H.E. Roberto Jaguaribe

Ambassador, Embassy of Brazil in Berlin

“Mexico advocates for **international cooperation** in the digital ecosystem, establishing governance frameworks that integrates private sector and academia to create an inclusive and fair digital environment.”

“Mexico is fully aware of the need to establish **regulatory frameworks** that balance innovation with **ethics, privacy, and human rights protection**. These should be flexible regulatory schemes that understand the nature of emerging technologies, enable innovation, creativity, and foster prosperity.”

“In Mexico, we believe that **technological progress** should not only be measured by its innovation, but also by its capacity to **generate welfare**. Therefore, all public policy in the digital sphere should aim to reduce online and offline divides, protect human rights and positively **transform people’s daily lives**.”



Diego Eduardo Flores Jiménez
Head of the Electronics and Digital Industry Sector,
Ministry of Economy, Mexico

KEYNOTE:

Digital public goods for knowledge in the age of AI

Rebecca MacKinnon

The conference was kicked off with a pertinent keynote on digital public goods by Rebecca MacKinnon. Based on her profound expertise as Vice President of the Wikimedia Foundation, she outlined their importance in light of current developments in technology.



In the age of AI, digital public goods are vital for maintaining equitable access to knowledge. Wikipedia stands as one of the biggest providers of content for large language models (LLMs). As such, the protection of a free and open internet is essential for ensuring that everyone can access resources like Wikipedia. However, millions of people around the world still lack this access, limiting their ability to benefit from various sources of information.

Wikipedia, developed and maintained by volunteers on a non-profit basis, exemplifies a digital public good that serves as a multiplier for cultural exchange and economic development. MacKinnon emphasised that to sustain such initiatives, governments must support individuals and organisations behind digital public goods. Digital public goods and open technologies, such as open data, form an interconnected ecosystem, which relies on first-hand reporting, as well as local content available in the relevant languages to ensure platforms like Wikipedia can thrive and remain accurate.

Inclusion and diversity are also fundamental to the development of LLMs. Without diverse voices and perspectives, AI systems risk perpetuating biases and excluding important segments of global society. Promoting equitable access to knowledge, supporting open technologies, and valuing local and diverse contributions are all crucial for fostering digital public goods that benefit society as a whole.

KEYNOTE:

Digital Solidarity

Pablo Chavez



Because emerging technologies are increasingly central to society and geopolitical tensions, balancing the vision of a global, open digital ecosystem with the desire for digital sovereignty is crucial. As a contrary concept to digital sovereignty, digital solidarity involves working together towards shared goals, supporting partners in building capacities, and establishing secure digital infrastructures. It focuses on protecting fundamental rights, fortifying the collective defence against cyber threats, and strengthening nations' digital capabilities.

On Conference Day 2 Pablo Chavez elaborated the concept digital solidarity, which stands at the heart of the current US digital policy strategy. Currently, he serves on the board of the Open Technology Fund, as Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security, and as advisor on tech policy to corporations and non-profits.

Chavez illustrated the critical juncture for countries, making key decisions about their digital futures. Digitalisation not only makes international collaboration necessary, but also offers a unique opportunity to develop collective solutions.

The concept presented by Chavez challenges alternative digital governance models and promotes international cooperation to e.g. combat cyber threats. It emphasises long-term capacity-building, particularly in developing economies, and encourages democratic countries to collaborate on digital security, rights, and infrastructure. Technologies such as artificial intelligence offer significant opportunities for digital solidarity, deepening economic relationships and reducing the risk of fragmentation.

Chavez' conclusive statement was that digital solidarity enables nations to build a future in which technology supports democratic values, enhances international cooperation, and strengthens societies in the digital age. Their joint success, however, depends on their capacity for close collaboration.

BALANCING REGULATION AND INNOVATION:

Crafting effective digital policies for the 21st century



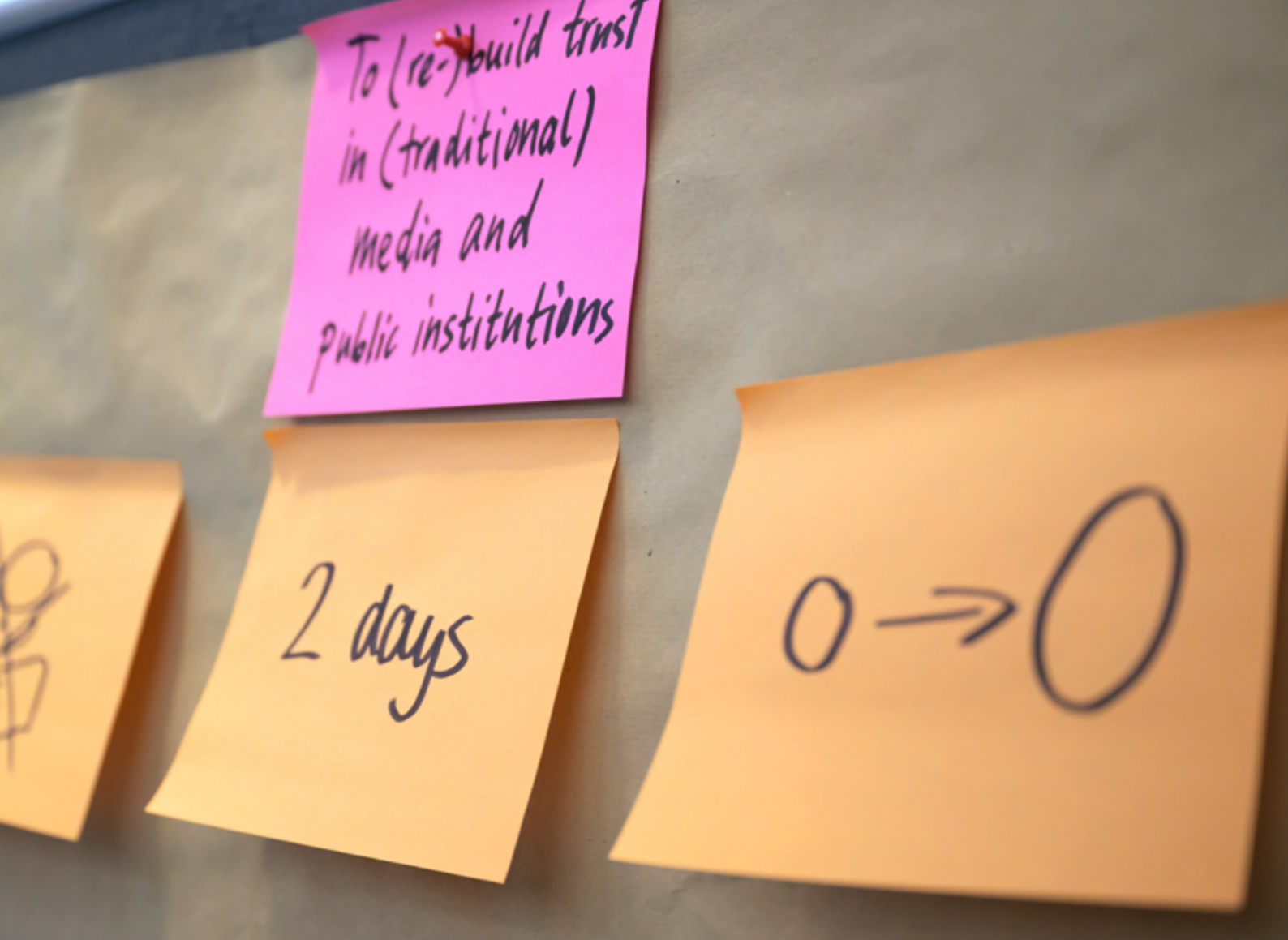
How to regulate digital technology allowing for continuous innovation? How to set appropriate standards while maintaining openness? How to leverage the power of AI while protecting data and individual rights? These questions were explored on Conference Day Two in a high-level panel discussion. The panel featured Renate Nikolay, Deputy Director-General of the European Commission; Vivek Mahajan, CTO of Fujitsu Europe; Caroline King, Global Head of International Government Affairs at SAP; and Lutz Finger, CEO of R2Decide and faculty member at Cornell University. Together, these speakers offered a rich array of perspectives shaped by their diverse experiences in business, academia, and regulatory roles.

Several global regulatory frameworks were discussed as examples of effective policies. One of them – the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – has become the gold standard for data protection, while the proposed EU AI Act has the potential to set a global benchmark for AI regulation. Another example comes from the U.S., where the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) allows companies in the healthcare sector to utilise health data while maintaining patient privacy.

The central theme of the discussion was the sensitive relationship between regulation and innovation in digital policy. Representatives from the industry pinpointed the need for regulation that enables rather than stifles technological advancements. As technology evolves rapidly, governments bear the responsibility to craft regulations that protect citizens and industries while fostering innovation. Suggestions for improving regulation of technological innovation include outcome-focused regulation, where the emphasis is on achieving desired outcomes like security, privacy, and ethical use, rather than on regulating particular technologies.

Specific fields were identified where the tension between innovation and regulation has become apparent and new opportunities may arise. In research, regulation should facilitate technology adoption. For instance, in the U.S., universities are granted access to supercomputing resources to drive innovation. Europe can benefit from similar initiatives. Additionally, technological literacy in society was deemed essential to ensure informed engagement with emerging technologies. In conclusion, the speakers emphasised the importance of cross-border collaboration for effective digital policies.





Stakeholder perspectives on main themes of the conference

On conference day one, business, academia and civil society stakeholders of all Digital Dialogues' partner countries gathered in four different working groups to discuss four main topic areas: (1) a free and open internet, (2) digital public infrastructure, (3) the digital economy and the promotion of start-ups, as well as (4) disinformation and AI. In the working groups, stakeholders addressed specific challenges, shared good practices, and identified concrete solutions. Forging a direct link between expert stakeholders and political decision-makers, the proposals and recommendations formulated in the working groups were presented to government representatives in the scope of a concluding panel.

WORKING GROUP 1

Sustaining and promoting the free internet together

The working group focused on exploring ways to sustain and promote a free internet through collaborative efforts.

To guide their discussions, participants considered several **key questions**, such as how to achieve meaningful multistakeholder involvement, how to ensure inclusivity in internet governance, and how to cope with conflicting goals of different stakeholders. They also examined good practices for addressing these questions effectively.

Several **current challenges** affecting internet governance were identified. These include geopolitical competition, which extends into the digital realm and creates power asymmetries and mistrust among actors, as well as the role of governments, which are under pressure to respond quickly to digital issues, leading to a tension between government-initiated regulations and the need for multistakeholder models. Additionally, the digital divide continues to create unequal access to knowledge, resources, and digital infrastructure.

A variety of **good practices and approaches** were highlighted. For example, Ghana promotes inclusivity by involving children and youth in internet governance discussions through initiatives like a dedicated Children's Day at their national Internet Governance Forum (IGF). Germany demonstrated strong multistakeholder engagement during the Global Digital Compact (GDC) process, where challenges were transformed into opportunities, to strengthen participation. Across all countries, the implementation of regular internet governance schools was found to be an effective way to increase stakeholders' knowledge and capacities in relevant fields.

The group also proposed **concrete initiatives** to address the challenges identified earlier. Building trust between stakeholders was regarded essential, which can be achieved by creating safe spaces for open discussions, fostering balanced debates, and increasing transparency through detailed reporting of meetings. Additionally, participants recommended improving regulatory impact assessments, using regulatory sand-boxing, and adopting anticipatory governance models to proactively shape digital policies. Furthermore, strengthening the existing IGF Dynamic Coalition on Community Connectivity was proposed to promote sustainable internet access. This includes using community hubs such as schools and libraries and investing in local knowledge storage and dissemination channels.

Finally, the group formulated **recommendations to governments**, urging them to leverage existing multistakeholder initiatives and forums, support international cooperation and dialogues, and increase access to resources.



WORKING GROUP 2

Digital public infrastructure for social inclusion

The focus of the working group was the development of **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**.

The **guiding questions** framing the conversation were how to foster technical skills for DPI, how to measure DPI's success in promoting social inclusion, how to design effective frameworks for DPI, and how to ensure that DPI systems are human-centred.

Current challenges that were identified include regulatory hurdles, the need for inclusive design and accessibility, technological and infrastructural barriers, as well as difficulties in measuring success. Participants underlined the necessity of considering diverse perspectives and ensuring that systems are accessible and safe for all users.

The group worked out a wide range of **good practices** and approaches to address these issues. At the technical level, cultivating digital skills through school curriculums, lifelong learning, and partnerships with universities was regarded essential. Moreover, emphasis was placed on providing incentives for online courses and developing reference applications. According to participants, the success of measures depends on focusing on end-user experiences and co-creating solutions with marginalised groups. Among many others, successful examples include community-building initiatives in Brazil, Mexico's so-called software factories where developers donate working hours for social projects, and Kenya's digital hubs. In terms of regulatory frameworks, countries such as the Mexico and Canada offer successful models. The EU's Interoperability Act and Brazil's multistakeholder approach through the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee were cited as examples of effective frameworks. To ensure inclusive design, DPI systems should consider accessibility and safety.



Examples of good practices included Germany's use of simplified language as well as Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention's co-creation approach. In a nutshell, the group emphasised simplicity, language diversity, and the importance of designing systems that are relatable and contextualised for users.

Participating stakeholders proposed several **recommendations for governments**. According to the group's suggestions, governments should not only develop further on the technical level, but also collaborate and provide financial and technical support, integrate DPI skills development into communities and develop legal frameworks to support DPI. Effective DPI frameworks depend on multilateral cooperation, strong privacy laws, and open data initiatives. For inclusive design, governments should promote intergenerational leadership, emphasise user-centred design, and ensure systems are accessible in multiple languages, with an option to interact with a human. Finally, participants stressed the need to establish a legal framework for DPI.

Digital economy and promotion of startups

The discussions were guided by **key questions** on the barriers to digital economy growth, on successful startup initiatives, and on strategies for facilitating collaboration across borders.

To address these challenges, the group highlighted several **good practices and approaches**. Participants emphasised the importance of systematically collecting information and mapping resources and expertise to identify gaps and opportunities within the startup ecosystem. To underscore the simplicity of this idea, they proposed to use a shared, collaborative spreadsheet to gather and organise data. Additionally, the group identified the development of a comprehensive roadmap for startup data frameworks across countries as a promising strategy.

Dialogues and would involve countries such as Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Japan, Germany, and South Africa. Key stakeholders include startups, governments, and ecosystem builders.

WORKING GROUP 4

Disinformation and artificial intelligence (AI) in the super election year 2024

Participants in the working group explored the critical issue of **disinformation and the role of AI**, particularly in the context of the super election year 2024, with elections occurring in more than 70 countries worldwide.

The discussions were guided by **key questions**, including how to maintain information integrity during elections and how diverse stakeholders can collaborate to ensure it, as well as how AI can contribute to effective solutions. Moreover, the working group focused on strategies for enhancing knowledge exchange on good practices related to information integrity and responsible AI development.



Several **current challenges** were identified including the need to develop technical solutions for detecting and debunking manipulated or false information, strengthening the resilience of individuals and societies to withstand disinformation, and rebuilding trust in traditional media and public institutions. Additionally, ensuring that there are trusted sources of information that are widely recognised as reliable by stakeholders was seen as essential.

The group highlighted various **approaches and ideas** to tackle these challenges. International collaboration on sharing existing technical solutions for identifying disinformation was considered crucial. Furthermore, adopting a code of practice inspired by the EU Digital Services Act (DSA) could provide a framework for addressing disinformation. Improving transparency among both public and private-sector stakeholders through proactive disclosure beyond compliance reports, was also emphasised as a key strategy.

To put these ideas into action, the group proposed several **concrete initiatives**. One key recommendation was the development of open-source applications designed to monitor public websites and social media platforms. These applications would automatically detect and flag disinformation, helping to maintain trust and integrity in online spaces. Moreover, the group highlighted the potential of AI-powered chatbots as a means of making reliable information more accessible. These chatbots could engage with the public in real time, offering accurate information and trustworthy resources to counter misinformation. Finally, participants underscored the importance of establishing a joint code of practice to guide the responsible use of AI. Such a framework would promote ethical standards, ensuring that AI technologies are deployed transparently and responsibly.

The group's **recommendations to governments** focused on building trust and fostering collaboration. Participants stressed that transparency is essential to creating trust, called for funding to support credible and independent journalism, and recommended to continue regular forums like the International Digital Dialogue Conference to facilitate multilateral dialogue on disinformation challenges.

ANNEX

Keynote by Dr Volker Wissing

*Federal Minister
for Digital and Transport*



Members of the international delegations,
Guests from industry, academia and civil society,
Esteemed colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

‘Shaping digital policy together’ – this is what this conference is about and precisely what we did yesterday. Together with our existing and planned partners from Brazil, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Singapore, Israel and South Africa we sent a strong signal of our intention to work together internationally in digital policy. And this is not some kind of vague cooperation, where we meet regularly and exchange nice words. On the contrary, have we developed tangible bilateral formats, bringing together politics, industry, civil society and research.

We all learn from each other:

- We policymakers learn where the problems are and what citizens,
- the research community and industry need to solve them.
- Involving stakeholders ensures that the political solutions that we develop really meet the actual needs.
- And by all sharing best practice examples, we learn where things work out.

We take this as inspiration or motivation to be as good or even better.

The objective of our digital dialogues is to jointly create better conditions for the digital transformation and the digital economy. But why do this internationally? Why does not every country just look after its own digitalization? This is because we have come to realize that digitalization does not stop at national borders. And it must not stop at national borders. It can do so much more. Above all, it can help to overcome global challenges – and unfortunately, we have quite a few of these at the moment.

However, mastering such global challenges through digitalization can only be successful if we develop a common international understanding of how to handle digital technologies responsibly. And this is precisely what we are doing with our digital dialogues. Earlier this year, the German Federal Government adopted its first Strategy for International Digital Policy. In it, we determined to use our bilateral digital dialogues to develop and deepen our partnerships. In addition, we want to enhance bilateral cooperation with partners who share our values and who are important political, economic and regulatory players in the digital sphere. Germany is not the only country that is pursuing a strategy in its international digital policy.

The United States also presented a new strategy this year. Against this background, I am delighted that we are going to hear Pablo Chavez’ keynote speech next. His approach of digital solidarity has significantly shaped America’s strategy.

I am confident that Mr Chavez will also give us an assessment of how the future US administration under President Trump will position itself in international digital policy.

The idea of a collaborative partnership can also be found in the Global Digital Compact, which was adopted at the United Nations Summit of the Future in September 2024. It contains a clear commitment to worldwide cooperation for an inclusive, open, free and secure digital future. We have defined four focus topics for our conference in Berlin. The first topic is 'free internet'. It addresses the free flow of information that is made possible by the internet – without censorship, suppression or preferential treatment of data and without digital protectionism. We all agree that we want a global, open, free and secure internet – as an engine for innovation, cooperation, participation, sustainability and economic development. The Internet Governance Forum that will take place next month in Riyadh will be a good opportunity to work together for an open and free internet. For this, we also want to use the WSIS+20 Review Process that will start next year.

Our second focus topic is digital public infrastructure and its contribution to inclusion. We, the digital dialogue partner countries, know how important digital infrastructure is. It provides access to internet – for everybody, everywhere and at any time. However, we are going even further. We want free access to public goods and open source software. Access to public data is a real treasure trove for companies and individuals. With it, they can create completely new business models or applications; they can thrive, evolve and literally grow. That is why it is so important that absolutely everybody gains access; irrespective of where they live, their gender, age or wealth. Only in this way can everybody benefit from the opportunities that digitalization provides.

Our Mobility Data Act adopted in the Cabinet in early October by our three-party coalition, which still existed at the time, is a good example of how this idea of access to public goods works. It is the open data approach turned into legislation.

One of the objectives is for us to soon be able our entire travel chain with one single ticket in an app, using different services such as e-scooters, rail, cargo bikes or car sharing. This does not only give rise to entirely new business models, it can also make everyday lives noticeably easier. Therefore, I really hope that this project is going to be adopted by parliament.

The third focus topic of this conference is the digital economy and the question of how we can promote startups in particular. It is true that all countries represented here today have a very dynamic startup community. This is amazing, because new startups mean innovation, competitiveness, growth and new jobs. In other words, they are the future. And it can be a very promising future. An impressive example of this – made in Germany – is our internationally highly successful technology group SAP, represented here today by Dr King, who is also going to be panellist later. Thank you for agreeing to do so, Dr King.

Looking at SAP today, it is easy to forget that this tech giant also began as a startup – consisting of five young men, who had all met at IBM in Mannheim in the early seventies. This shows that great developments are possible if the conditions are right. In other words,

- if the funding is right;
- if the environment is right, by which I mean the ecosystems that are often mentioned;
- and, of course, if government does not curb their development with too much bureaucracy, regulation, tax or too many requirements.

It is important that we create an environment where companies in the digital economy can grow and can become competitive. The internationalization of startups can play a major role in this. Our digital dialogues are a great format for this topic, too. They allow participants to openly share best practices and their experience in this regard.

And finally, we also have a fourth focus topic: Disinformation and AI, especially in the context of elections. We all know that this is unfortunately

highly topical. Worldwide, we can see an increase in disinformation campaigns and deepfakes as well as manipulative and illegitimate exertion of influence in the media by foreign players.

The European Digital Services Act is one approach to counter illegal content and disinformation in social media and on platforms. In addition, the Agency for Breakthrough Innovations started a challenge on behalf of my Ministry to identify and support the latest innovative approaches to detect and prevent deepfakes. Artificial intelligence also plays a key role when it comes to disinformation. It does not only create opportunities, but sadly also new risks for our democracy. Therefore, we need a regulatory framework that protects us from these risks. However, this is a balancing act. This framework should on one hand make sure that AI applications are secure and trustworthy, without being too strict on the other.

- After all, we want innovation.
- We want to create opportunities.
- We want to allow creative freedom.

That is what made the European AI Act such a tough nut to crack. In my opinion, it went much too far in the beginning and it would have restricted our AI developers way too much. However, I believe that in the end, we found a compromise that leaves enough freedom for European companies to be among the leaders in the AI sector.

I am quite optimistic, for Germany at least. Only recently, the OECD confirmed that Germany has been able to – and I quote – “emerge as a global leader in AI research” We are second in AI patents for the German market, after the United States and before Japan and China. New innovative startups are being founded in Germany nearly every day. As you can see, there is a lot of momentum. However, to remain competitive in the global marketplace and to maintain digital sovereignty, we need to strengthen our position in the AI technology sector even more. And this is what we are supporting with our AI MISSION.

For instance, we are establishing Innovation and Quality Centres that help founders, startups and companies to make sure their AI applications are trustworthy early on, even if they do not initially present a high risk. It is not a binding offer, but I can only appeal to you to set AI quality standards as early as possible as a preventive measure. By doing so, you pave the way to ensuring that AI-based contents do not do any harm. Despite all the euphoria about what AI can make possible, we must not forget that people are still the focus. They have to feel secure. They have to have confidence. Otherwise, even the best AI application cannot have lasting success.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The digitalization is essential for our future as a society and an economy. However, as mentioned earlier: The digitalization and AI applications do not stop at national borders. And this is why I hope that more partner countries will join us. Because only with a common understanding, common values and common rules do we stand a chance

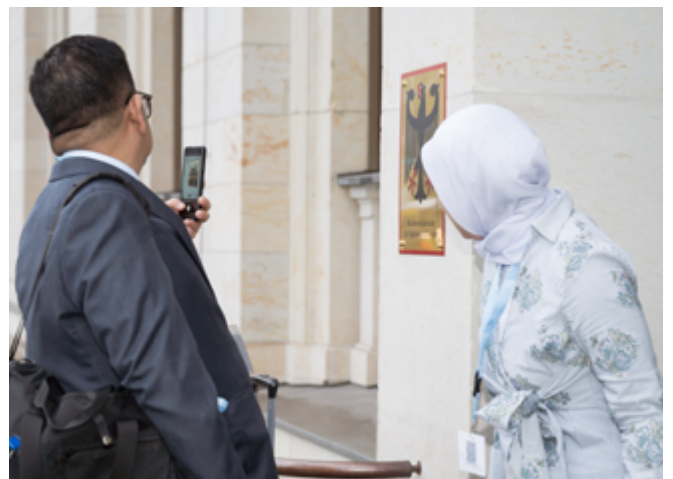
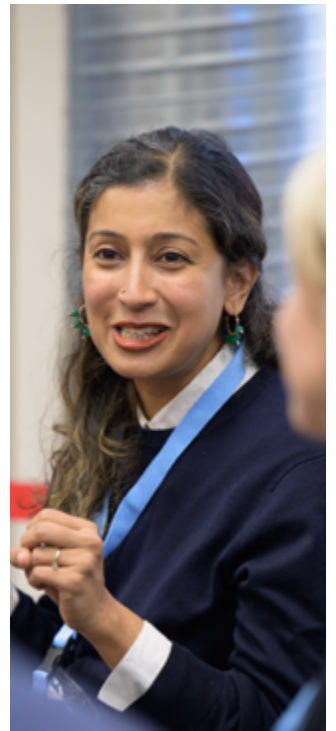
- to prevent discrimination, deepfake and disinformation,
- to implement ethical standards,
- and to create a level playing field.

And only together can we create a digital framework that is GLOBAL. A framework that

- fosters sovereignty and security,
- prosperity and sustainability
- as well as democracy and freedom.

I would like to thank you all for your commitment. And thank you all for making this conference possible. I wish you an interesting second conference day and a pleasant journey home in the afternoon.

Thank you very much.



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Imprint

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