Global Digital Compact Thematic Deep Dive:

Human Rights (8 May 2023)

ABOUT

The Global Digital Compact (GDC), proposed in the UN Secretary General's Our Common Agenda report, aims to establish principles for an 'open, free, and secure digital future'. The third thematic deep dive on the GDC on Human Rights Online was held on 8 May 2023, in a hybrid format (online and in-person at the UN Headquarters in New York). The Co-Facilitators of the intergovernmental process negotiating the GDC - H.E. Ms. Anna Karin Eneström, Permanent Representative (PR) of Sweden and H.E. Mr. Claver Gatete. PR for Rwanda moderated the session. At the beginning of the deep dive, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk and Najat Maalla, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, set the stage for the deep dive. Member State (MS), Intergovernmental agencies, private sector and civil society representatives made their interventions after the briefings

HIGHLIGHTS

KEY AREAS DISCUSSED	VIEWS OF MS
Protection of Human Rights in the Digital Sphere	There is a growing recognition of the need to protect human rights in the context of the digital space. Discussions often revolve around the challenges and opportunities posed by emerging technologies and the internet, with an emphasis on ensuring that human rights, such as freedom of expression, privacy, and non-discrimination, are upheld online.
Balancing Rights and Responsibilities:	Member states and stakeholders are grappling with the task of striking a balance between protecting human rights and addressing the potential risks and harms associated with the use of technology and the digital space. This includes discussions on combating hate speech, disinformation, and online harassment while safeguarding freedom of expression and privacy rights
Data Privacy and Protection	Discussions often center around the importance of strong data protection frameworks, consent mechanisms, and accountability measures to ensure that individuals' personal data is handled responsibly and securely.
Digital Divide and Inclusion	This involves promoting equal access to digital technologies, addressing disparities in internet access, digital literacy, and technological infrastructure to ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to benefit from the digital economy
Online Freedom of Expression and Censorship	Discussions were on how to balance between protecting freedom of expression and addressing issues of online censorship and content regulation. Member states and stakeholders explored ways to

	foster an open and inclusive digital environment that respects diverse perspectives while addressing harmful and illegal content.
Ethical Use of Technology	There is increasing recognition of the ethical implications of technological advancements. Conversations often focus on the responsible and ethical use of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), surveillance systems, and biometrics, ensuring that they do not infringe upon human rights or perpetuate discrimination.
Multi-stakeholder Collaboration	Stakeholders emphasized the involvement of governments, civil society organizations, technology companies, a challenges in the digital space. Collaborative efforts are seen as vital for developing comprehensive policies, regulations, and guidelines.

HEADLINES

Digital technologies can greatly contribute to the protection of human rights. However, digital surveillance, censorship, algorithmic bias, online harassment, and other forms of abuse can suppress or violate human rights. The following are the guiding questions provided by the Co-facilitators to guide the discussions:

- How can women and girls, children, and persons in vulnerable situations such as persons with disabilities or persons belonging to linguistic minorities be supported in exercising their human rights online?
- What are the gaps in terms of existing mechanisms for protection and promotion of human rights in the digital domain?
- How can accountability of digital platforms - public and private - be strengthened?
- How can international organizations, Member States and other stakeholders work together to ensure human rights offline are protected online?

RESOURCES

1. Letter from the Co facilitators - 2 May 2023

2. UNSG's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation Ensuring the Protection of Human Rights

3. Policy Brief : Global Digital Compact: An Open, free and

4. Secure Digital Future for All

MEMBER STATES STATEMENTS

1. Colombia
2. European Union
3. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights