

Comparing the Rev. 1 and Rev. 2 of the Global Digital Compact

ABOUT: *The Global Digital Compact (GDC) negotiation process is being co-facilitated by the Permanent Representatives of Sweden and Rwanda to the United Nations (originally, Sweden and Zambia were the co-facilitators, but Rwanda replaced Zambia in October 2023). The co-facilitators released the Zero Draft of the GDC on April 1, 2024, followed by the first revision on May 15, 2024, and the second revision on June 26, 2024. There were many changes between each version of the document.*

This bulletin will focus on comparing the Rev. 1 to the Rev. 2, identifying wording, deletions, and additions to the first revision text.

NOTE ¹: The parts of the bulletin that was written or summarized by the Lead Author has been *italicized*. The non-italicized parts are excerpts from the Rev. 1, Rev. 2 and other documents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This bulletin compares the Global Digital Compact Rev-1 and Rev-2. Both documents follow the same structures: a short chapeau, followed by two paragraphs on objectives (para 7) and principles (para 8), and a subsequent definition of commitments and actions to reach the objectives by 2030. This organization of the document contents was established in the Zero Draft and has not changed in their revisions.

Rev-2 includes changes in wording, deletions, or additions in almost every paragraph. It is stronger than Rev-1 and mainly focuses on promoting international cooperation in digital technologies.

Its main goal is to build "an inclusive, open, sustainable, fair, safe, and secure digital future for all" (paragraph 4) setting out objectives, principles, commitments, and actions to achieve this vision. Nevertheless, its contribution to developing AI governance is limited and, notably, the principle of "leave no one behind" is nearly absent from Rev-2.

The document relies on international law, the UN Charter, international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and the 2030 Agenda as key references for establishing international cooperation in the digital field. Member States reaffirm their commitment to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. The work of the ITU and the Internet Forum are also considered as references in some areas.

Importantly, the commitment to develop targets, indicators, and metrics for universal meaningful, and affordable connectivity, building on existing work, present in Rev-1 has been retained in Rev-2.

Rev-2 gives increased attention to data-related issues, particularly in the fields of data security and data financing. For instance, in objective 2 (Expanding inclusion in and benefits from the digital economy for all), governments commit to conducting national and regional assessments to address gaps and needs in digital transformation and to strengthen the collection and use of data for informed decision-making, while a new paragraph 42 emphasizes that safe and secure data systems are critical for evidence-based policymaking and public service delivery, warning that underinvestment in public data systems and statistical activities can hinder sustainable development.

The expression "Non-Military Domain" is frequently used in Rev-2, particularly concerning cybersecurity and AI systems development.

The mention of "gender equity" among guidelines for standards development organizations to create AI standards was deleted, despite the document's overall strong emphasis on gender-related issues.

¹ **DISCLAIMER:** This bulletin is intended to provide an overview of the latest developments and is not a comprehensive summary or record of the SOTF processes. It was prepared independently, and the content does not reflect the specific views of any of the partner organizations. Contact Fergus Watt (ferguswatt6@gmail.com) for more information. Material is not copyrighted and can be distributed freely.

A new reference to middle-income countries' specific needs is included in Rev-2, which pays more attention to data and digital security in the non-military domain. When referring to stakeholder engagement, Rev-2 tends to use the word "relevant" before "stakeholders." It could be a way to limit stakeholders' participation and its implementations would be closely followed to ensure that it will not lead to exclusions.

In Rev-2, paragraph 61 (formerly 60 in Rev-1) requests the Secretary-General to establish a Global Fund for AI for Sustainable Development to "catalyze the AI capacity-building required to bridge AI divides and promote AI-based solutions for the SDGs." The Rev-1 mentioned the need for collaboration with technology companies and academic communities has been removed, as has the objective of supporting the development of computing capacity and quality standard data sets.

Furthermore, Rev-1 proposed an initial fund of 100 million US dollars to be operational by 2025, financed by voluntary contributions from various sources, with progress reported annually. Rev-2's wording is less ambitious, simply requesting the Secretary-General to initiate consultations with potential contributors and report on progress within 12 months.

HEADLINES:

- Rev-2 includes changes (in wording, deletions or additions) in almost every paragraph.
- Rev-2 main goal is to build "an inclusive, open, sustainable, fair, safe, and secure digital future for all" (paragraph 4), establishing objectives, principles, commitments, and actions to undertake to achieve it.
- International law, the UN Charter, international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and the 2030 Agenda are considered the main references in establishing international cooperation in the digital field.
- Member States reaffirm their commitment to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.
- The "leave no one behind" principle is almost absent from Rev-2.
- Rev 2 provides increased attention to data-related issues, particularly in the field of data security, and calls for increasing data-related investments.
- The Expression "Non-Military Domain" is repeatedly used in Rev-2, linked to the development of cybersecurity and AI systems development.
- The mention of "gender equity" among the guidelines for standards development organizations to develop AI standards was deleted. Even though the document has a sound reception of gender-related issues.
- The word "relevant" before "stakeholder" appears repeatedly in Rev 1. Rev 2 extended the use of this expression, which could be used to exclude actors and sectors from participating in digital technology-related processes.
- Rev-2 includes a mention of "satellite technologies" and erases the reference to a minimum technical standard for internet speed connection present in Rev-1. Instead, it refers to "sufficient speed" to enable internet use and reliability.
- Rev-2 includes the decision to connect all schools and hospitals, and not only schools, as in Rev-1.
- In paragraph 34, Rev-2 includes an express mention of the need to support journalists and media workers to promote diverse and resilient information ecosystems. Rev-2 also includes a new mention on fighting hate speech
- In Rev 2, paragraph 61 (60 in Rev 1), states request the Secretary-General to establish a Global Fund for AI for Sustainable Development to "catalyze the AI capacity-building that is required to bridge AI divides and promote AI-based solutions for the SDGs." In Rev 1, this paragraph mentions fund collaboration with technology companies and technical and academic communities and the objective of supporting the development of computing capacity and quality standard data sets. Both mentions were erased.
- In Rev-1, paragraph 61 stated that the Global Fund for AI for Sustainable Development: "should be put into operation with an initial amount of 100 million US dollars at launch in 2025, financed by voluntary contributions from public, private, and philanthropic sources," requesting the Secretary-General to initiate consultations among potential donors and report on the progress of the Fund in the context of

annual reporting on the Global Digital Compact. The Rev 2 writing is less ambitious: “We request the Secretary-General to initiate consultations with potential public, private and philanthropic contributors and to report on progress on the Fund within 12 months.”

- On the same issue, Trev-1 stated that the Global Fund for AI for Sustainable Development would be established under the Secretary-General authority, but Rev-2 changes the paragraph 60 wording opening the opportunity of establishing it under a different authority.

METHODOLOGY:

This bulletin will focus on the GDC Rev-2, comparing it with the Rev-1. It will identify key modifications in language and contents. To do so, a table highlighting the changes was created. Its first column shows the original Rev-1 content, the second column for Rev-2 content, and the third column for the author’s observations (in *Italic*) on content changes between the two revisions.

The content and language changes in Rev-2 are highlighted in colors corresponding to those used in Rev-1 to make it easier for readers to track content and review language. For instance, content from Rev-1 is highlighted in yellow, and its corresponding content or revised language in Rev-2 is also highlighted in yellow. Additionally, the third column, ‘Author’s observations,’ includes notes on the changes.

RESOURCES:

1. [Zero Draft of the Global Digital Compact](#)
2. [Global Digital Compact Rev-1](#)
3. [Global Digital Compact Rev-2](#)