



SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE

BULLETIN NO.59:

Global Digital Compact (GDC) Comparison between Rev.2 and Rev.3



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Comparing the Rev. 2 and Rev. 3 of the Global Digital Compact (GDC)

ABOUT:

The [Zero Draft](#) of the Pact for the Future was released on January 26th, 2024, marking the start of formal negotiations in preparation for the Summit of the Future (SOTF) scheduled for September 2024. The Permanent Representatives of Sweden and Rwanda to the United Nations are co-facilitating the Global Digital Compact (GDC) negotiations process (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, consisting of 13 pages, on April 1, 2024, followed by the [Rev.1](#) on May 15, 2024, the [Rev.2](#) on June 26, 2024 (See ICH Bulletin [#43](#) comparing Rev. 1 and Rev. 2), and the [Rev.3](#) on July 11, 2024. Significant content has been modified, removed, and added throughout the consultation process. This bulletin will focus on comparing Rev. 2 to Rev. 3, identifying content changes, as well as removals and additions made to the third revision of GDC document.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Rev.3 of GDC introduces key shifts and updates, reflecting a refined approach to global digital cooperation. The emphasis on closing digital divides is reduced with the removal of specific implementation requirements. Sustainable development is redefined with a more proactive approach as **advance sustainable development**. It narrows digital cooperation to the **non-military domain**, excluding military aspects. Legal frameworks are narrowed, notably with the removal of references to **international humanitarian law**. The role of governments is heightened, as **regional organizations** are removed from the stakeholder list. Objectives in Rev.3 add the terms **responsible** and **approaches** to emphasize ethical considerations and comprehensive strategies in digital cooperation goals. Key principles are adjusted, including a shift from inclusive to **equitable** approaches and enhanced focus on gender equality. Commitments are broadened, with a greater emphasis on the **International Telecommunications Union (ITU)**, **satellite orbits** for developing countries, **telemedicine**, and **digital safety**, especially for women and girls. The inclusion of **mental health and well-being** in content moderation showcases a broader concern for the impacts of digital platforms. The draft expands its focus on **data governance**, adding more comprehensive data disaggregation categories and refining **AI governance**, narrowing it to artificial intelligence specifically. The role of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is clarified, and the global dialogue on AI governance is strengthened by detailing the appointment of **inclusive co-facilitators**. Additionally, the draft emphasizes aligning the Compact's implementation with **national policies** and prioritizes follow-up and review processes. These changes underscore a commitment to global equity, safety, and sustainability in digital cooperation.

DISCLAIMER: This bulletin aims to provide recent updates and is not a complete summary or official record of the SOTF proceedings. It has been prepared independently and does not necessarily represent the viewpoints of any collaborating organizations. For further details, please reach out to Fergus Watt at ferguswatt6@gmail.com. The content is freely distributed as it is not copyrighted.

HEADLINES:

- **Sustainable Development Language Update:** The phrase "put sustainable development at the centre" is changed to "advance sustainable development" in Rev.3, suggesting a more active approach to promoting sustainable development within digital cooperation efforts.
- **Narrowing the Scope of Digital Cooperation:** Rev.3 introduces the qualifier "in the non-military domain" when discussing the application of digital technologies, which narrows the scope by explicitly excluding military considerations from this framework.
- **Removal of International Humanitarian Law:** The removal of the phrase "international humanitarian law" from Rev.3 reduces the range of legal frameworks referenced, potentially impacting the overall approach to digital cooperation by omitting this significant aspect of international law.
- **Shift in Stakeholder Focus:** By adding "As governments" at the beginning of a sentence and removing "regional organizations" from the list of stakeholders, Rev.3 places greater emphasis on the role of governments in digital cooperation, reducing the attention given to regional organizations.
- **Added Responsibility in Objectives:** Rev.3 adds "responsible" and "approaches" to the objectives, indicating a stronger focus on ethical considerations and comprehensive strategies in achieving digital cooperation goals.
- **Emphasis on Gender Equality:** The rephrasing in Rev.3 to emphasize "Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls" strengthens the focus on this principle, while the change from "prevent" to "counter" shifts the action from a preemptive to a more active approach.
- **Simplified Approach to Environmental Sustainability.** Rev.3 simplifies the approach to environmental sustainability by replacing specific actions, such as "measuring, monitoring, and solving challenges," with broader commitments to "advancing" and "promoting" sustainability across digital infrastructure and equipment.
- **Equitable Inclusion Highlighted:** The addition of "Equitable" at the beginning of a principle in Rev.3 emphasizes the need for both equitable and meaningful inclusion in digital environments, strengthening the call for fairness in digital access and participation.
- **Lifecycle of Technologies Specified:** Rev.3 expands on the stages of technology by adding "pre-design, design, development, evaluation, testing, deployment, use, sale, procurement, operation and decommissioning," broadening the focus to cover the entire lifecycle of digital and emerging technologies.
- **Increased Support for Developing Countries:** A new principle (I) in Rev.3 focuses on enhancing partnerships to support developing countries, highlighting a commitment to global equity in digital cooperation efforts.
- **Broadening Access to Connectivity:** Rev.3 acknowledges the significant role of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in advancing connectivity and emphasizes prioritizing access to satellite orbits, particularly considering the needs of developing countries, broadening the scope of digital inclusion efforts.

- **Enhanced Support for Telemedicine:** The addition of a clause in Rev.3 to enhance telemedicine services and capabilities indicates a stronger focus on leveraging digital technologies to improve healthcare access and outcomes.
- **Focus on Safety in Digital Connectivity:** The addition of "safe" to the phrase "meaningful, safe and affordable" connectivity in Rev.3 underscores the importance of ensuring safety in digital access, particularly for women and girls.
- **Broadening Capacity-Building Focus:** Rev.3 expands the focus of capacity-building efforts by including additional groups such as "migrants" and "indigenous peoples," ensuring a more inclusive approach to digital skills development.
- **Comprehensive Data Disaggregation:** The expansion of data disaggregation in Rev.3 to include additional categories such as income, sex, race, ethnicity, migration status, and geographic location reflects a commitment to more nuanced and inclusive data collection and analysis.
- **Broader Digital System Security:** Rev.3 broadens the focus from just cybersecurity to the overall safe, secure, and resilient functioning of digital systems, networks, and data, indicating a more comprehensive approach to digital security.
- **Support for STEM and Gender Inclusion:** The addition of a new point in Rev.3 to support STEM education and promote women and girls' participation highlights a commitment to gender inclusion and educational advancement in the digital domain.
- **Expanded Focus on AI Governance:** Rev.3 narrows the scope from "emerging technologies" to specifically focus on "artificial intelligence," reflecting a more targeted approach to governance and recognizing AI's significant impact.
- **Strengthened Role for International Scientific Panel:** Rev.3 specifies that the President of the General Assembly will appoint co-facilitators from both developed and developing countries to define the terms and functions of the International Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, ensuring a more inclusive and structured approach.
- **Emphasis on Mental Health in Content Moderation:** Rev.3 adds a specific focus on ensuring mental health and well-being, shifting attention from unlawful and harmful content to broader harm caused by digital platforms, reflecting a more comprehensive approach to content moderation.

METHODOLOGY:

This bulletin will focus on the GDC Rev.3, comparing it with Rev.2. It will identify key terminology and language changes that were removed, modified, maintained, or added in Rev.3. To demonstrate this, a table is prepared to highlight the changes in text. The table will have three columns: the first column will display the Rev.2 document, the second will show the Rev.3 document, and the third column will include the author's observations on content changes between Rev.2 and Rev.3. Additionally, the 'Author's Observations' column will explain the content's journey from Rev.2 to Rev.3, detailing whether the content was maintained, modified, removed, or added. New or revised content in Rev.3 is highlighted in **yellow**, in the author's observations column, while removed content is marked in **red** for reference.

RESOURCES:

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