UNIVERSAL STANDARDS AND REGULATION

Everyone has an equal right to benefit from the development and use of digital technology.

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Everyone in the world is equal before the law. We all have an equal right to contribute to and benefit from the development of our shared society, and we are all, without discrimination, entitled to equal protection and equal enjoyment of our human rights.

The digital realm has become so ubiquitous as to be virtually inseparable from the real world. As such, the architecture and development of digital networks, technologies, and services must be based on binding, universal standards that adopt a human-rights based approach.

Currently, the internet and digital technologies are predominantly regulated and governed through industry standards and voluntary codes, which are driven by the private sector and lack transparency, coherence, and formal government oversight. This has encouraged unhealthy competition and resulted in uneven and inadequate protection of users' rights, exacerbated by the inability under current frameworks to hold digital service providers and platforms liable for illegal or harmful user-generated content. This has serious implications for the safety, freedom, and dignity of women, girls, and other discriminated-against groups and marginalized people, who are routinely exploited, abused, and harassed online by perpetrators acting with impunity.

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Similarly, without regulation, the inevitable environmental impact of the construction and maintenance of digital infrastructure, and of the extraction of natural resources for use in digital technologies, are disproportionately felt by women, girls, and Indigenous communities. A new regulatory framework is required to provide clarity and guidance on the expected behavior and liability of digital technology companies. It is imperative that this framework is rooted in a feminist, intersectional analysis and developed alongside women, girls, and other discriminated-against groups and marginalized people to ensure their needs are met instead of codifying inequality into best practice and regulatory conformity.

THE DIGITAL PRINCIPLES

- Digital technologies and architecture shall be based on binding, open standards that ensure inclusion and equal opportunity for all. Content created and shared through the internet or digital networks shall be moderated based on human rights principles.

- States shall mandate technology companies, companies that develop digital technologies, and digital and internet service providers to adopt human rights-based approaches in the development of their content moderation policies and practices.

- The internet's architecture, communication systems, and document and data formats shall be based on open standards that ensure complete interoperability, universality, integrity, openness, inclusion, and equal opportunity for all.

- Notified bodies and national committees should meet diversity targets in relation to representation, supported by governments, and should put into place processes and funds to enable wider stakeholder participation.

- States should take steps to minimize the energy consumption of the internet and digital technologies and minimize harm from the extraction of natural resources to fuel new technologies.