



Internet Governance Forum 2023 | Parliamentary Track

Shaping Digital Trust for the Internet We Want

Concept note

CONTEXT

The Government of Japan will host the United Nations 18th Internet Governance Forum (IGF 2023) under the overarching theme “*The Internet We Want – Empowering All People*” developed around eight sub-themes from 8 to 12 October 2023. Participants from around the world are expected to take part in this event onsite, in Kyoto, and online.

In recent years, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has sought to strengthen the participation of parliamentarians in discussions on some of the most pressing issues related to the use, evolution and governance of the Internet and related digital technologies. In 2019 and 2020, a parliamentary roundtable was held in the context of the IGF annual meeting. In 2021 and 2022, an extended Parliamentary Track was introduced, which included a series of activities for parliamentarians in the lead-up to and at the annual IGF meeting.

Building on last year’s Parliamentary Track experience, the IGF plans to further strengthen its Parliamentary Track, in particular through expanding the set of intersessional activities dedicated to fostering inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation on key digital policy issues and delivering more action-oriented outputs. The track expands its global activities, with sessions held at the European Dialogue on Internet Governance in June and at the African IGF in September 2023. With the annual IGF meeting scheduled to be held in Japan, global engagement with national parliaments and parliamentarians will also focus on the Asia and Pacific region with its regional IGF in August 2023.

KEY TOPICS

This year’s topic is about the role of parliamentarians in **shaping digital trust**, as we witness an increasing lack of public trusts, or confidence, around privacy, security, consumer and human rights protection. However, trust is a vital element for resilient and sustainable economic growth and recovery.

Lack of trust can serve as the rationale for an increasing number of compelled data localisation measures globally, which may result in increasingly fragmented national approaches to **data governance**. Tackling this lack of trust must be a collective effort to ensure that regional, national or industry initiatives, however well-meaning, do not further fragment the Internet. Trust is strengthened when governments adopt robust and comprehensive commitments to protect the rights and freedoms of individuals, including the fundamental right to privacy.

The fast pace of digital technology development can challenge the level of trust towards new technologies if our governance systems do not keep up. **Artificial intelligence** holds immense potential for our economies, societies, and the planet. Applied well and consciously, AI can be a benefit to all by increasing efficiency, support resource management, and much more. However, the ability to create believable content at such large scale and low cost can rapidly turn into a threat. The fast development of AI is an example of how the gap between innovation and governance can easily increase. Policy and legislation ideally need to anticipate and respond quickly to foster innovation while ensuring digital technologies, such as AI, can be trusted.



From a lack to an abundance of information, digital technologies have also revolutionized communication in online spaces. However, modern online **disinformation** has surged, challenging trustworthiness and reliability of consumed data and even threatening democracy. Emerging technologies, such as AI, are as well intensifying misinformation and disinformation threats, allowing the wide spread of misleading and contradictory pieces of information. While protecting and respecting freedom of opinion and expression, governments may find it difficult to address online disinformation without cooperation among multistakeholders including parliamentarians.

How can countries strengthen data governance, ensuring data protection and privacy, to support a truly global digital economy? How can policy, regulatory and legislative frameworks facilitate collaboration for the development of artificial intelligence in a trusted way, while continuing to enable innovation? How can governments develop robust accountability for digital platforms and address disinformation through relevant practices? These and similar questions will be discussed at the IGF 2023 Parliamentary Track, offering parliamentarians an opportunity to exchange good practices, discuss challenges and solutions, and engage with other stakeholders in a dialogue aimed to help inform efficient and effective policy making and implementation.

OBJECTIVES

Under the overarching theme of the IGF 2023: *The Internet We Want – Empowering All People*, the objectives of the Parliamentary Track activities are to shape a trustworthy future by:

- Discussing the role of members of Parliaments (MPs) and legislation in shaping a trustworthy digital space.
- Updating MPs on latest AI and data governance practices, and their implications for individuals, the society and the economy.
- Exploring challenges – and potential solutions – related to the use of AI, ensuring they are safe, fair, accountable, transparent, interpretable, trustworthy and aligned with human values.
- Fostering dialogue and exchanges of experiences among MPs on national approaches to disinformation.
- Engaging in a dialogue with other actors (business sector, technical community, civil society) on multistakeholder approaches to protection of rights and freedoms of individuals.

OUTPUT

Parliamentarians from around the world are invited to discuss the proposed issues with experts, share their views, explore the questions at hand, and exchange opinions and experience on existing or potential legislative solutions.

The key messages that emerge from the Parliamentary Track exchanges, including guidelines, and recommendations for parliaments, will be captured as the formal, action-oriented output of the IGF 2023 Parliamentary Track.

PLAN OF ACTIVITIES

The programme below is indicative at this stage and will be shaped further in the lead-up to IGF 2023.

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES	
Date and Time	Focus
Online introductory session	
15 September, 13:00 UTC	[Optional] What is the IGF and what to expect from the meeting and the Parliamentary Track? - MPs will be invited to an online discussion to set the scene to the IGF 2023 and the Parliamentary Track. - MPs will be introduced to the main topics ahead of the Parliamentary sessions and roundtable.
Day 0 side event co-organized by ICANN and the IGF Secretariat 8 October (Kyoto & online)	
8 October, 1,5 hrs UTC+9	[Day 0 Event] DNS: Foundation for Safe, Secure and Interoperable Internet Participants in the Parliamentary Track are invited to join this engaging session, co-organized by ICANN and the IGF Secretariat, that offers valuable insights into the Domain Name System (DNS), a critical component of the Internet's foundation. The session will foster discussions on the dynamic interplay between policy and technology, highlighting its implications for Internet governance. By actively participating in this session, MPs will have a unique opportunity to gain comprehensive insights into the DNS and its governance framework, and how these operations shape the Internet and contribute to its overall functionality.
Parliamentary Track at IGF 2023 8 and 9 October (Kyoto & online)	
8 October, 1.5 hrs UTC+9	[Parliamentary Session 1] Governing data: what can Parliamentarians do to support a trustworthy online space? - How can countries strengthen data governance, ensuring data protection and privacy, to support a truly global digital economy? - How to mandate protections for personal data and privacy, based on, for example, OECD's Declaration on Government Access to Personal Data Held by Private Sector Entities? - How can governments and industry collect data with principles and standards for policies and practices that protect data and the right to privacy?
8 October, 1.5 hrs UTC+9	[Parliamentary Session 2] Facilitating trustworthy innovation: how governance frameworks can enable the safe development and use of artificial intelligence How can policy, regulatory and legislative frameworks facilitate collaboration for the development of artificial intelligence in a trusted way, while continuing to foster innovation?



	• How to ensure that the design and use of AI is safe, fair, accountable, transparent, interpretable and trustworthy? • How to strengthen cooperation across Governments, industry, experts and civil society to elaborate and implement norms, guidelines and principles relating to the responsible use of AI? • How to ensure that artificial intelligence aligns with universal human rights and values, while its application is wide spreading in our societies, economies, and politics?
9 October, 1.5 hrs UTC+9	[Parliamentary Session 3] Counteracting disinformation to make the digital space trustworthy again • How to develop robust accountability for digital platforms and users to address disinformation? • How to effectively address online disinformation? • How could parliamentarians promptly address the emerging challenges in the digital space including disinformation?
9 October, 1.5 hrs UTC+9	[Roundtable] The Role of Parliamentarians in Shaping a Trusted Internet Empowering All People • How to align safety standards across regions, countries and industries to help build a global culture of digital trust and security? How to align international principles and frameworks with national measures? • How to strengthen cooperation across Governments, industry, experts and civil society to elaborate and implement norms, guidelines and principles relating to the responsible use of digital technologies? • How to improve regulatory capacity and develop agile governance measures to keep up with the rapid pace of technology? • How to develop legal and regulatory frameworks while maintaining active policy compatibility with the interoperability of the Internet?
As part of the Parliamentary Track at the IGF 2023, MPs are cordially invited to a luncheon taking place on 9 October.	
MPs are also encouraged to actively participate in all other IGF 2023 sessions taking place during the week and contribute their views and experiences to the discussions. The overall programme will be made available on the IGF website in due time.	