U N I T E D N A T I O N S N A T I O N S U N I E S

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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VIDEO MESSAGE TO THE INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

Riyadh, 16 December 2024

Excellencies,

I am pleased to greet the Internet Governance Forum and thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting this gathering.

I also thank my Internet Governance Leadership Panel for their extraordinary work throughout their mandate.

Dear friends,

Digital technology has fundamentally reshaped our world and holds enormous potential to accelerate human progress.

But unlocking this potential for all people requires guardrails, and a collaborative approach to governance.

In September, world leaders reached a critical milestone — the adoption of the Global Digital Compact.

The Compact is the blueprint for humanity's digital future.

It's the first comprehensive framework of its kind, based on a simple but important principle:

Digital technology must serve humanity — not the other way around.

And the Compact breaks new ground in three ways.

First, it expands the vision of the World Summit on Information Society – to not only bridge the digital divide but recognize technology as a global public good.

Second, it aims to address rapidly emerging challenges that have been missing from the global digital debate:

From combatting hate speech and protecting vulnerable populations online, to ensuring that data benefits societies instead of contributing to further concentration of economic power.

And third, the Compact includes the first truly universal agreement on the international governance of Artificial Intelligence;

It commits governments to establishing an independent International Scientific Panel on AI and initiating a global dialogue on its governance within the United Nations.

It brings all countries to the AI table.

And it supports efforts to build AI capacity in developing countries.

Dear friends,

The Global Digital Compact also recognizes the Internet Governance Forum as the primary multi-stakeholder platform for discussing internet governance issues.

As the world implements the Compact, the work and voice of your Forum will be critical.

Together, let's keep building an open, free and safe Internet for all people.

Thank you.