

# Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum 2022 Synthesis Document

## Preamble

1. The Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF) 2022 was held from 12-14 September in a hybrid format, virtually, and physically hosted in Singapore<sup>1</sup>. APrIGF was co-located with Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC54) and Asia Pacific School of Internet Governance (APSIG) for the first time, with APNIC as the co-host of the hybrid event. The overarching theme for APrIGF 2022 was *“People at the Center: Envisioning a Community-led Internet that is Inclusive, Sustainable and Trusted”*. The main theme incorporated three high-level thematic tracks, namely "Inclusion", "Sustainability", and "Trust".
2. The use of high-level thematic tracks was to enable discussions on cross-cutting issues related to Internet Governance in the Asia Pacific region. This allowed the APrIGF community to recognise and appreciate the complex and interrelated nature of diverse Internet Governance issues and understand their significance at a policy level in all economies across the region. Thus, the APrIGF Multistakeholder Steering Group (MSG) adopted a more flexible and all-encompassing approach to the design of the program since APrIGF 2021. This year, APrIGF continued to use these high-level themes designed to encompass various sub-topics under each track. Session organizers and participants were encouraged to approach policy discussions creatively in an interdisciplinary and holistic manner.

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<sup>1</sup> Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum - <https://ap.rigf.asia/>

# Inclusion

3. Inclusion is deliberate actions taken to facilitate ubiquitous access and equity for all communities. In addition to Internet connectivity and accessibility, inclusion also covers aspects such as availability of multilingual digital training programs, and bridging digital literacy gaps.
4. Inclusion engages diverse stakeholders to ensure all rights and voices are treated equally in the multistakeholder decision-making processes. Balanced participation from different stakeholder groups such as governments and law enforcement agencies, private sector, civil society, technical community, and others, is essential towards achieving inclusion.
5. The inherent diversity and sheer geography of the Asia-Pacific region presents a daunting challenge to ensure full inclusion, and continued conversations are required to address such challenges.

## *Meaningful Access*

6. The importance of digital connectivity has increased significantly in recent years, especially with the United Nations declaring access to the Internet as a basic human right in 2016. Currently, 37% of the world's total population<sup>2</sup> (2.9 billion people) remain unconnected. Despite major shifts toward operating remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, research-based evidence shows a large disparity in Internet usage across developed versus under-developed economies. For example, Singapore had 92%<sup>3</sup>, whilst Afghanistan only reached 22.9%<sup>4</sup> Internet usage among their respective populations.
7. In addition to access challenges, issues such as local culture, behaviours and language barriers increase the difficulty for digital adoption and entrepreneurship among underserved and indigenous communities. Biases are embedded in current technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) developments, and adoption constraints can be minimized if digital solutions are developed by the local community and entrepreneurs, taking local context into consideration<sup>5</sup>. Further, digital tools (e.g. apps directly connecting women entrepreneurs in underserved communities to new markets, avoiding the “middleman” market power issue) can promote inclusion. However, these will only be sustainable with long-term commitment to expand access, spur competition, and taking into account of local voices<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/#statisticContainer>

<sup>3</sup> [https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-singapore#:~:text=Internet%20use%20in%20Singapore%20in%202022&text=Singapore's%20internet%20penetration%20rate%20stood,percent\)%20between%202021%20and%202022](https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-singapore#:~:text=Internet%20use%20in%20Singapore%20in%202022&text=Singapore's%20internet%20penetration%20rate%20stood,percent)%20between%202021%20and%202022)

<sup>4</sup> <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-afghanistan#:~:text=Internet%20use%20in%20Afghanistan%20in%202022&text=Afghanistan's%20internet%20penetration%20rate%20stood,at%20the%20start%20of%202022>

<sup>5</sup> S01 Connecting the Unconnected - Efforts from Private Sector and Policy Lessons from the APAC- <https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=NjJlNzRiODFiNWwNiOS8vNS8vNTU0Ly8w> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

8. The integration of marginalized communities does not end with providing Internet connectivity and access to digital tools. Inclusion means benefiting from digitalization in all its dimensions<sup>7</sup>. With appropriate policies, market incentives, and a local-based approach focusing on the needs of marginalized communities, innovation can flourish and digitalization can spur local entrepreneurs/start-ups, multiplying positive economic impacts.
9. A public-private sector aligned strategy is required to address existing barriers to connectivity such as geography (developing economies or rural population), age, skills etc. For instance, mutual agreements between governments and private telecommunication companies are essential towards connecting the unconnected areas.

### *Capacity building and new voices*

10. Inclusion is multi-faceted. The Internet governance sphere presents opportunities and avenues for emerging voices, although it can often be challenging for novices. In the diverse field of Internet governance, we need to consider key questions such as “What is the entry point and right approach to effectively engage in Internet governance discussions?”; “How can the roles of various stakeholders be understood well?”; “How to empower and encourage emerging voices?” The creation of spaces starting at the local level empowers newcomers to discuss Internet governance issues, which can later be scaled and replicated at the regional and/or global level. Ensuring inclusion of diverse and newer voices allows for more robust, cross-disciplinary interactions across the region.
11. An intersectionality lens applied to the APriGF activities can further ensure diverse participation of newcomers. Ethnicity, age, gender, (dis)ability, educational background and religious belief are some dimensions that need to be considered. New voices from marginalized and underserved communities must be included, especially members of rural and remote communities, persons with disabilities, and LGBT+ communities<sup>8</sup>.
12. It is also important to meaningfully include youth voices and opinions from different backgrounds, and have an open participation structure as well as ample opportunities to recognise their contributions. Youth participation is essential for the sustainability of the Internet governance community. Some steps encouraging youth participation include building awareness on topical issues, and opportunities to allow meaningful youth participation (e.g. speak/ moderate/organize sessions) in Internet governance spaces. sessions<sup>9</sup>. The Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum (yIGF) this year had participants put together a youth statement on different Internet governance issues<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> S06 Empowering New Voices in Internet Governance spaces - <https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=Njl4MjY4NTc2YTM4OC8vNS8vMzM5Ly8w>

<sup>9</sup> Asia Pacific Youth Internet Governance Forum - <https://yigf.asia/>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

13. However, sustainability of youth participation and retention of newcomers have always been a challenge. Some factors that hinder continued participation include a lack of funding support, a lack of appropriate capacity building materials, and language/communication barriers<sup>11</sup>.
14. Fellowship programs which encourage participation from diverse economies could potentially address part of the challenge. Fellowship alumni can share their Internet governance know-how, skills, ideas, and technologies with newcomers in their locales. Over time, these success stories and good practices can in turn encourage more efforts within and across different economies.
15. To further the usefulness of fellowship programs, clear support and pathway on how fellows can evolve in the Internet governance space are required. For instance, fellows could join the APriGF multistakeholder steering group (MSG) to stay involved. The nature of working group/community discussions, as well as methods of communication/collaboration need to be inclusive.
16. Finally, it is particularly important in the Asia Pacific region with its great linguistic diversity that Internet governance capacity building programs and educational modules should be translated into local languages for the target communities. Volunteers or translation equipment/technology play an important role in translating content and discussions for non-native English speaking communities<sup>12</sup>. Capacity building materials should also be created with the target audience in mind and for appropriate levels, from complete newcomers to returning fellows to more advanced concepts<sup>13</sup>.

### *Digital literacy*

17. Digital literacy entails more than just technical knowledge. It covers a variety of ethical, social, and reflective behaviours that are critical for online resilience and ethical digital citizenship development.
18. The digital literacy movement must encourage multi-stakeholder collaboration to create an ecosystem that aids local champions<sup>14</sup>. Having inter-organizational dialogue with relevant entities (such as UNICEF, which champions digital literacy and education initiatives) can help advance solutions for ensuring effective developments of digital-education and digital-literacy.
19. Increased awareness programs on the negative impacts of irresponsible use of the Internet are also needed. It is also essential to raise awareness on digital citizenship alongside digital literacy, where safeguarding interests of all in the Internet space is important.

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<sup>11</sup> S06 Empowering New Voices in Internet Governance spaces -

<https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=Njl4MjY4NTc2YTM4OC8vNS8vMzM5Ly8w>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> S12 Multi-stakeholder Collaborative Approach for Developing Local Digital Literacy Champions -

<https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=Njl3OGJjYTM4OC8vNS8vMjM5Ly8w>

### *Resilience and inclusivity in digital education*

20. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the education system dramatically, affecting over 94% of the world's student population<sup>15</sup>. Currently, over 1.2 billion students are out of the traditional classroom<sup>16</sup>. There has been a shift in the educational paradigm to match the 2030 target of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>17</sup>. As economies are changing, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) require interventions in the educational curriculum to match learners with skills necessary for Industry 4.0<sup>18</sup>.
21. As such, there is a need to create a resilient and inclusive digital education system that entails improving digital infrastructure and digital literacy<sup>19</sup>, especially for the marginalized communities. This includes developing systems with localized content, and accessible formats across all communities. There should also be adequate funding and training for educators and librarians, who support other learners on digital literacy<sup>20</sup>.
22. How can we improve the accessibility of infrastructure (meaningful connectivity, affordability, tools, devices) required for providing digital education at school and at home? With unprecedented economic changes ushered in by technological innovations, digital education is uniquely positioned to build the future workforce's skill sets. But is digital education sufficiently equipped for the task?

### *Accessibility for persons with disabilities (PWDs)*

23. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) face numerous challenges both in the physical and virtual worlds. They face a number of disparities in the digital spaces which greatly inhibit their ability to practice their digital rights. Ensuring accessibility for PWDs is one of the many aspects of inclusion. In Asia Pacific, it is estimated that 650 million people have disabilities<sup>21</sup>. In order to ensure that no one is left behind, voices of the underprivileged, especially PWDs, must be integrated within Internet governance discussions for a truly inclusive Internet<sup>22</sup>.
24. Inclusion of PWDs in the digital sphere includes equipping them with the right and specific skill sets that enable their effective participation. Accessibility improvements for online and onsite capacity building sessions can be achieved by following guidelines created by the accessibility

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<sup>15</sup> [https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg\\_policy\\_brief\\_covid-19\\_and\\_education\\_august\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/coronavirus-education-global-covid19-online-digital-learning/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

<sup>18</sup> S05 Resilience and inclusivity in digital education - <https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=NjJINDBINGFkODBiNC8vNS8vNTUzLy8w>

<sup>19</sup> S05 Resilience and inclusivity in digital education - <https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=NjJINDBINGFkODBiNC8vNS8vNTUzLy8w>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> <https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/publications/are-persons-disabilities-included-effort-leave-no-one-behind>

<sup>22</sup> S03 Strengthening the disability voice in Internet Governance - <https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=NjJ2YTMzYmZjNS8vNS8vMjAwLy8w>

community<sup>23</sup>. Different stakeholder groups play different roles in supporting and mentoring PWDs to participate meaningfully. In turn, these capacity-building skills can be transferred to a wider group to stimulate larger advocacy and achieve a more accessible online community<sup>24</sup>.

25. The pandemic-induced remote learning has affected education institutions and created challenges for students, faculties, administrators, and policymakers. There is a need to enhance digital accessibility and connectivity for Students with Disabilities (SWDs) in higher education especially in the post-COVID-19 scenario. Public and private initiatives addressing Internet connectivity issues, as well as providing necessary support, learning management tools, and assistive technology, is important to allow SWDs to continue their higher education without additional challenges.

## Trust

26. Trust calls for striking a good balance between security and people's fundamental freedoms and rights to privacy. The security, stability, and resiliency of the Internet are critical to ensuring users can benefit from a healthy digital environment. Collectively, the stakeholders must work towards a safe, reliable and trustworthy cyberspace that enables the fair use of the Internet without compromising on user safety, personal data and mutual respect.
27. This will involve looking at the roles and responsibilities of governments, industry, civil society, and other stakeholders to maintain trust in Internet governance. Key issues that were discussed related to trust were regarding the rise of mis/disinformation, online harassment, protection of digital rights and freedom of expression, malicious attacks targeting critical sectors such as the healthcare sector, amongst others.

### *Impact of mis/disinformation*

28. Disinformation and misinformation have become some of the biggest threats to trust on the Internet globally, and particularly in Asia<sup>25</sup>. There have been frequent instances of misinformation and disinformation on social media, across communities and boundaries. In particular, critical sectors such as public health and election integrity face major threats<sup>26</sup>. Collaboration between governments and civil society is needed to tackle disinformation and misinformation.

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<sup>23</sup> IGF Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability (DCAD) Accessibility Guidelines 2015  
Accessibility and Disability in IGF meetings -  
[https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot\\_download/4281/517](https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/4281/517)

<sup>24</sup> S03 Strengthening the disability voice in Internet Governance -  
<https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=Njl2YTMjZTBjYmZjNS8vNS8vMjAwLy8w>

<sup>25</sup> S013 Combating Disinformation from COVID-19 to the General Election: Multistakeholder Digital Literacy vs Legislation & Censorship? -  
<https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=NjJkZWJINDcxODVINS8vNS8vNTUwLy8w>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

Governments need to ensure competency in digital literacies such as fact-checks and critical thinking through formal education in schools, as well as develop legal frameworks that target online perpetrators such as phishing. Civil society as well as general end users can raise awareness in digital literacies and digital rights through informal ways such as campaigns and research.

29. In addition, the broader goal and solution to tackling disinformation and misinformation is to build digital literacy. This kind of literacy must be effective and comprehensive, allowing different users to enhance their individual experience of the Internet. To supplement this, industry self-regulation and the use of technology are necessary.
30. An unfortunate trend explored in Asia seems to be a shift towards increased government regulation and criminal punishments for misinformation. This can be problematic, especially for political and election related content. In recent years, a number of electoral events around the world have given rise to concerns among election regulators and civil society groups about the role of social media in spreading mis/disinformation during elections, with the potential to manipulate the conduct and outcome of elections<sup>27</sup>.
31. Generally, targeted advertising with political content should be clearly identifiable and categorized as info-advertisements. Election commissions/bodies should be responsible for deployment of “digital election observers” that can monitor such content<sup>28</sup>. Additionally, there is a need for community based solutions to ensure transparency in disinformation mitigation practices<sup>29</sup>.

#### *Prevention of online harassment*

32. Online harassment could happen to everyone regardless of their gender, age, and ethnicity etc. The latest report by UN Women and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2021<sup>30</sup> indicates that online misogyny has risen since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes trolling, sexual harassment, and victim blaming.
33. Multi-stakeholder groups must work together with relevant institutions and networks to ensure comprehensive support for victims. Extensive capacity building and sustained digital security training must be provided to front liners to mitigate the risk of trauma and ensure their safety and security. In addition, lawmakers, policy makers, and officials who are involved in law enforcement activities must be trained to have sufficient knowledge about Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV), and improve their response in processing OGBV cases<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> S09 Social Media Regulation during Elections: Expanding or Limiting Digital Democracy?

<https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=Njl3OTU1ZmE1ZGY0YS8vNS8vMjM1Ly8w>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> <https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/publications/covid-19-and-violence-against-women-evidence-behind-talk>

<sup>31</sup> S07 Online harassment as tools of exclusion: A discussion on Addressing Online Gender Based Violence Through Community Organised Helplines -

<https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=NjJlMjM1ZmE1ZGY0YS8vNS8vNTUyLy8w>

34. Digital platforms should improve their internal policies and systems that focus on protecting victims. Additionally, platforms should play their roles in educating users on digital literacy and safety to women, girls and at-risk people/community<sup>32</sup>. Legal frameworks alone cannot tackle this issue. Raising awareness and educating the Internet users to respect one another need to be implemented.

*Protection of digital rights and freedom of expression*

35. The COVID-19 crisis has called for immediate policy intervention at an unprecedented scale. Governments across the Asia Pacific region have turned to digital solutions for managing the COVID-19 pandemic, including deploying digital contact tracing technologies and accelerating digital transformation in the public sector. The long-term effects on personal data governance through temporary measures enacted during the pandemic need to be assessed<sup>33</sup>. Sector-relevant purposes should be identified for secure data free flow regarding economic activities. Strong regional data protection regulations become especially important in light of this.

36. The COVID-19 pandemic also caused major and rapid migration to online spaces for both existing and new activities. Technology intersected in different ways with the right to health, education, privacy, information and expression. As governments and technology companies created new policies and actions, they caused more public participation while allowing themselves access and control to digital space (including through surveillance). There is a need here for a human rights due diligence framework by technology companies<sup>34</sup>.

37. While civil societies have used tech platforms and the Internet to better conduct their activities, the adoption of both have increased significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic, albeit slower in the South Asian region. However, recent trends have shown how these platforms may be weaponized by governments and big tech to monitor and disrupt civil society activities. There have also been disruptions in civil society activities, involving the silencing of journalists and whistle-blowers, manipulation of public opinion and the oppression of citizens<sup>35</sup>. These contribute to the shrinking of the influence and role that civil society holds. Still, these spaces are being leveraged to discuss, mobilize and coordinate the efforts of digital right advocates. It is necessary to recognise the rise of authoritarianism and surveillance across Asia, increase the resilience of these users and civil society, and implement stronger data protection frameworks. It is important that digital security mechanisms are adopted to develop digital resiliency, to protect themselves and maintain and increase civic space<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> S17 Advancing data justice in (post-)pandemic data governance: perspectives from Southeast Asia - <https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=Njl4MmRhZWJlZDA4NC8vNS8vMzUwLy8w>

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> S14 Digital Resiliency of Civil Society in the context of shrinking Civic Space - <https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=Njl3OTViNTI3MzlkNy8vNS8vMjM3Ly8w>

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

38. Users are increasingly vulnerable to the use of deceptive designs<sup>37</sup>, particularly amongst minors and novice Internet users. For example, users may be forced to agree to Terms & Conditions in order to use a service, while their personal data is extracted and registered on third party platforms without their explicit consent. This is an important point to address as the security and safety of the users are at stake. Although there are technical solutions to identifying deceptive design such as through implementation of AI and Machine Learning in browsers; more emphasis should be placed on empowerment of good practices and defining trusted design and relevant guidelines including open data policies<sup>38</sup>. This includes national and international legal structures and systems for providing safety, privacy and integrity while protecting Internet users<sup>39</sup>. By empowering users to choose alternatives to companies employing deceptive design, investors would be encouraged to refocus funding to competitors that meet consumer expectations on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and ethical technology. This might be realized through digital badges for sites that show transparency in handling data and publishing information. In addition, websites with mechanisms to verify facts prior to publishing should be recognised.

#### *Mitigation of cyber attacks on critical sectors*

39. Cyber attacks on critical sectors such as healthcare can have potentially devastating humanitarian consequences as they prevent access to and the delivery of essential services. Unfortunately, this situation has worsened since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Medical staff and healthcare facilities, already under immense pressure due to the strains of the pandemic, had to also deal with increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks. In a number of cases this has resulted in a direct impact on patients, whose treatments were delayed or postponed.

40. To prevent cyberattacks and alleviate its impacts, increasing information sharing and building capacities of healthcare workers to close the cybersecurity gap must be a focus<sup>40</sup>. Since attackers do not respect borders, stakeholder groups need to increase information exchange across sectors and countries on best practices and defensive actions, and collaborate to find solutions to address cybersecurity. Cybersecurity responsibilities are distributed among many regional, national, and industry actors. These entities should collaborate more across sectors or countries through developing legal frameworks, best practices, improving critical infrastructures, and raising awareness on health data and personal data. Healthcare workers should be aware of the right to privacy, patient's personal information and their medical records. Hospitals and medical institutions should train their employees on their roles in preventing cyberattacks through good cyber hygiene.

41. Moreover, hospitals and medical institutions must invest in continuous cybersecurity protection to thwart ever-evolving threats. This includes implementing horizontal IT security team structures

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<sup>37</sup> S15 Toward Trusted Design: User Protections for a Better Web for All - <https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=Njl4MmU0MGU4NWlwZC8vNS8vMzU0Ly8w>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> S16 Protecting the Healthcare Sector from Cyber Harm - <https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=Njl3MzgwZTY0ZTUxMC8vNS8vMjlyLy8w>

within organizations to break down organizational silos, and to ensure a swift escalation of an issue and a timely response. In the long term, establishing a culture of cyber resilience to respond to ever-evolving threats is a must. For example, deployment and utilization of two-factor authentication must be normalized.

42. Apart from legislation, governments should advance protections to establish the Disaster Recovery Centres (DRC), as well as national and industry or sector-specific Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs)<sup>41</sup>. Regarding diplomatic measures, strengthening confidence-building measures between APAC countries or different territories is crucial. Healthcare system operators must be held accountable to the security holes in the products.
43. Furthermore, routing security remains relevant to protecting the open and interoperable Internet infrastructure. There is an urgent need for multiple players (including but not limited to network operators, governments, private sector, and users) at the national, regional, and global levels to secure one of the foundational building blocks critical to the Internet's functioning<sup>42</sup>.

## Sustainability

44. The evolution of the Internet and its applications have facilitated digital economy developments as well as substantial advancements in science, agriculture, health and education. Sustainability draws attention towards careful consideration of the global effects and outcomes of technology and its innovations.
45. It is important to ensure that the Internet stays interoperable, and continues to provide the functionality for effective and efficient communication. Policymakers should consider potential unintended consequences on the workings of the Internet when developing new regulations/legislation. For instance, network usage fee proposals and the "Sending Party Network Pays" policy introduced in South Korea, as well as data delivery costs considered in the European Commission, bear additional costs to network and data accessibility and could potentially fragment the Internet.
46. Also, building a resilient Internet is essential. It encompasses many facets, including retaining Internet accessibility during natural disasters like typhoons or earthquakes. Current initiatives such as the Locally Accessible Cloud System (LACS) and Low Earth Orbit Satellites (LEOS) could be useful in addressing sustainability during such disasters, and could be extended to address general issues of unstable Internet access. In addition, Internet of Things (IoT) provides the platform and tools that enable assessment of resilience in cities vulnerable to extreme

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> S18 Routing Security – We can do better!<https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=NjI3YjNiODI5MzA5MS8vNS8vMzA3Ly8w>

weather conditions in terms of ability to provide electricity under stressed conditions, as well as continuity of telecom and digital services.

*An energy efficient, eco-Internet*

47. As Internet usage continues to increase, it is also necessary to ensure that the sustainability of the Internet network and infrastructure are considered in any climate agenda and action plan<sup>43</sup>. Government and industry are the two key sectors which can create major influence on any fundamental and infrastructural changes to improve the Internet's energy efficiency. It is also important to raise general awareness on the Internet's environmental impacts, particularly among youths to drive innovation.
48. Digitalization is a major driver and engine for sustainable growth that is amply demonstrated by huge strides made in the renewable and alternative energy sectors deploying connectivity and mobility to aid and support in measurement of sustainability parameters like net zero, reuse, carbon capture and redesign<sup>44</sup>. Renewable energy, energy saving devices, cloud based platforms could be considered as potential solutions.
49. To develop feasible solutions for a "green Internet", further discussions should be initiated at a local participation level. Discussions should also be conducted involving the solution providers, and could extend to cover a full impact assessment from digitalization (e.g. who will be impacted from building large data centres), to proper e-waste management etc.<sup>45</sup>.
50. Although Asia is lagging behind when it comes to sustainability and carbon initiatives, some efforts have been initiated. For instance, the Taiwan Stock Exchange (TWSE) <sup>46</sup>requires enterprises to publish their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reports or whitepapers. Other initiatives such as a "Green Computing Certification Scheme" (similar to the concept of Energy Star), or applying tools from the Green Internet Foundation<sup>47</sup> could be explored.
51. The EcoInternet Pilot Study Report 2021<sup>48</sup> shares some insights into the carbon footprint of the Internet and its environmental impacts. In addition to this pilot study, more dialogue can be held to further discuss extensive measurements for carbon emission and consumption.

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<sup>43</sup> S08 Towards an EcoInternet – A Multistakeholder Dialogue on Policy Making and Strategising for a Sustainable and Energy Efficient Internet -

<https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=Njl3YTIINzc1NTFmYS8vNS8vMjk0Ly8w>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.twse.com.tw/CSR/en/sustainability-6.html>

<sup>47</sup> Green Internet Foundation - <https://www.thegreenwebfoundation.org/>

<sup>48</sup> EcoInternet Pilot Study Report 2021 <https://www.ajitora.asia/eco-internet/>

## *Sustainability and the future of work*

52. With technological developments, another aspect for consideration would be the shifts towards non-traditional modes of work. Technology creates opportunities for businesses and individuals to benefit from new work models, but at the same time poses risks with a shift of control away from individuals.
53. Well-crafted policies are required to mitigate risks raised by digital labour platforms. Policies focusing on promotion of competition, data protection, transparency of algorithmic management, labour rights protection, and unionization, should be examined when considering potential issues linked to digitalization. In addition, to achieve a sustainable gig economy<sup>49</sup>, discussions on bridging the digital divide should also be considered to address different user adoption levels for these technological platforms.
54. As we look ahead on the future of work models, policymakers, lawmakers, businesses, platforms, and the workforce, will need to work together to identify a balanced structure for an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable economy. In addition, businesses should strive to employ human-rights centric sustainable business practices to operate their platform.
55. The vistas towards achieving sustainability provides yet another opportunity to make corrections in economic and social development that was lopsided in terms of inclusion and equity. Since resources available for development are finite and hence require judicious exploitation and deployment, there is tremendous scope for developing new skills in key economic sectors like agriculture, energy, manufacturing, trade, health and education. Sustainability programs have indeed upscaled the two vital sectors of health and education on par with erstwhile economic leadership sectors like energy, banking and manufacturing. Business models that conform to evaluating sectors on the merits of efficient resource deployment and social utility are emerging to replace the traditional finance oriented return on investment (ROI) paradigm. The real challenge for policy makers is to plan and orient the transition phase in order that the life cycle of investments already made are phased out in an orderly manner and in tandem with development of alternatives without causing major disruptions and gaps in making available the products and services.

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<sup>49</sup> S10 Future of Work: Achieving a sustainable gig economy - <https://forms.for.asia/proposal/?proposalform=Njl2OGJmNGM5Mjg3ZS8vNS8vMTgyLy8w>

## **Appendix I**

The 2022 Synthesis Document is drafted, synthesized and published by the 2022 Drafting Committee <https://ap.rigf.asia/committees/#committeeDrafting> with the assistance of the APriGF Secretariat.

Public input was sought during Public Input period I (12-22 September), APriGF conference Townhall sessions (29-30 September) and Public Input period II (19-26 September)

Comments were collected on the platform: <https://comment.aprigf.asia>.

## Appendix II

### List of 2022 APriGF Sessions

- S01 [Connecting the Unconnected – Efforts from Private Sector and Policy Lessons from the APAC](#)
- S02 [Digital accessibility and connectivity for disabled students in higher education during COVID-19](#)
- S03 [Strengthening the disability voice in Internet Governance](#)
- S04 [Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the ICT Job Sector](#)
- S05 [Resilience and inclusivity in digital education](#)
- S06 [Empowering New Voices in Internet Governance Spaces](#)
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