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| Contribution by the United Kingdom |
| TOPIC FOR OPEN CONSULTATION |
| **Purpose**To propose a topic for the next open consultation: “Policies to promote the participation of young people in international internet-related public policy and the development of the next generation of leaders.”**Action required**The Council Working Group on international Internet-related public policy issues is invited to **consider** the proposal. |

**Topic for open consultation**

At the twentieth meeting of the Council Working Group, there was a proposal from Paraguay, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Central African Republic, Mexico, the Republic of Nepal and Zambia to hold an open consultation on the topic of connectivity for land-locked developing countries. The UK welcomed this proposal and we continue to support it.

We also invite the Council Working Group to consider holding a future open consultation on the topic of **“Policies to promote the participation of young people in international Internet-related public policy and the development of the next generation of leaders”**.

Opportunities and challenges in international Internet-related public policy are changing and developing very rapidly as a result of technical innovation and social and economic development. It is becoming increasingly important to ensure that policy-makers have the right skills, information and experience to keep pace. To maintain this in the future, we need to ensure young people are attracted to consider careers in this area, that there are effective opportunities for development and “pipelines” for new talent, for new ideas to emerge and for new leaders to gain experience and develop.

Policies in areas such as education, skills, recruitment and training are important in this regard. But it is also important that specific opportunities are in place in the area of international Internet-related public policy and that we reach out to young people and provide the opportunities they need. Internet governance forums and processes can be complex and difficult to navigate for newcomers and there is often an expectation that participants will be familiar with the history and precedent around any particular issue. Young people in developing countries face particular barriers and there is a danger future leaders will come disproportionately from developed countries, which would both undermine inclusivity and prevent the global community from benefitting from global talent.

There are a number of programmes and initiatives working in different areas of this issue. A small number of examples could include:

* The Youth Internet Governance Forum, which runs a Youth Ambassador Programme and contributed, for example, to discussions on the Global Digital Compact.
* Schools on Internet Governance (SIGs) started in 2007 and have now spread around the world.
* The ITU runs the Young Professionals Program, which is a recruitment initiative to support development of the next generation of policy makers in the digital tech sector.
* The Diplo Foundation provides courses, policy research and community support in internet governance and wider digital policy.

There are many more examples of valuable initiatives taking place in different parts of the world and in different parts of the Internet governance landscape.

A consultation by the Council Working Group on this topic would help to

* gather, identify and share best practice
* raise awareness of the importance of this issue and identify opportunities for more joined-up and more strategic approaches
* promote the need for inclusion, outreach and support programmes, particularly for young people from developing countries, to ensure they can take part.

Finally, it could help Member States to discover new opportunities for their citizens.

**Topic and questions**

We propose a topic and four questions for consultation, as follows:

**“Policies to promote the participation of young people in international internet-related public policy and the development of the next generation of leaders.**

* Q1 – What examples of successful policies to support the development of the next generation of leaders in Internet governance? What can we learn from them?
* Q2 - What policies can governments use to support the development of the next generation of leaders in Internet governance?
* Q3 – What role can international organisations and other stakeholders play in this regard?”
* Q4 – How can we ensure that all young people – particularly young people from developing and least developed countries – have access to development opportunities?”

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