

IT for Change's Input at the Global Digital Compact Consultation

Good day to all who've joined in this important conversation. My name is Viraj, and I represent IT for Change. I'd like to make a few comments on Human Rights online on behalf of my organization:

We echo the comments made by many of the stakeholders today, like Pavitra from APC and Mariana from Digital Labs.

The digital paradigm not only reflects, but also amplifies intersectional exclusion and discrimination based on social locations, such as class, race, gender, and caste. Women and marginalized groups in particular face threats to their human rights in the digital public sphere due to the spread of hate speech through algorithms.

Human rights as ground norms are abiding, but we cannot expect to realize them by applying the same old pre-digital legal-policy instruments of human rights protection to the constantly evolving digital landscape. We urgently need new types of rights that encompass datafied existence, such as:

1. A right to be free from algorithmic hate in the digital public sphere
2. Rights of representation and recognition in data systems, including the right not to be datafied
3. Right to share equally in the benefits of data-based intelligence as an integral part of the right to development

To realize such an updated vision of human rights, we need the following actions at the multilateral level:

1. We need a binding consensus to enforce corporate accountability to prevent hate speech and incitement to discrimination, hostility, and violence in platform environments, especially in algorithmic content moderation and curation systems.
2. We need the articulation of a data rights constitutionalism that defines new rights at the intersection of digitalization and traditional human rights discourse. This includes the right to data access, the right to explanation, the right to be forgotten, the right to be represented (or not) in digital systems, the right to participate in decisions about data innovations, protection against all forms of data discrimination including unfair denial of citizen entitlements, workers' data rights in algorithmic workplaces, and the recognition of the sovereign right of peoples to govern their data resources as a step towards the progressive realization of ESCR, and an extension of state parties' right and duty of development.

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing the thoughts of everyone else here today.