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Digital policy developments in the third quarter of 2024

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the third quarterly newsletter of 2024 from the ICC Global Digital Economy Commission (DEC). This summer, global digital policy didn't take a break. At the UN, negotiations for an international approach to combatting cybercrime remained a geopolitical minefield until the very end, with the adoption of the said [treaty](#) triggering an [explosion of scrutiny](#) from stakeholders, including business. Meanwhile, rocky intergovernmental negotiations on [common principles](#) for the future of global digital cooperation have signalled the UN's increased involvement in digital policy.

Over at the EU, we saw the [new leadership](#) of the European Commission unveiled, with Henna Virkkunen (Finland), taking over the digital portfolio as Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy. AI developments also demanded constant attention, with the Council of Europe's (CoE) [AI Convention](#) presenting its [first roster of signatories](#), and the [EU AI Act entering into force](#), adding one more piece in the complex AI regulatory puzzle. And just like that, the EU is now set to look towards the implementation of the Act, while celebrating the first -over- one hundred signatories of the [EU AI Pact](#), a voluntary initiative allowing front-runners from the industry to test, prepare and share best practices early, as the legislation ushers in. To seal things off, after adopting two landmark resolutions this year on the [promotion of "safe, secure and trustworthy" AI systems](#) and [capacity building](#), the UN also amplified its involvement in global AI governance, with the release of a report on [Governing AI for humanity](#), further reinforced by the UN-adopted [Global Digital Compact](#) (GDC).

In the midst of this whirlwind of developments, the ICC Global Digital Economy Commission delivered two timely policy pieces: a [working paper](#) unpacking the complexities and best practices in protecting critical infrastructure and essential services, and [a universal framework](#) on business considerations for global governance of AI.

Continue reading for the full scoop on our latest endeavors, including opportunities for further engagement.

Our Third Quarter in Numbers

1

ICC-hosted event

9

speaking engagements

6

key events attended

3

policy products, input documents and responses to consultations

Save the date: ICC Global Digital Economy Commission Meeting

- We are pleased to announce the next meeting of the ICC Global Digital Economy Commission is scheduled to take place on **Wednesday, 18 December from 14:00-18:00 UTC+3 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and online**. The meeting will be taking place on the margins of the [19th annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum](#) (IGF) and will feature a session on recent digital policy developments and the future of global digital cooperation.

About the IGF

- First convened in 2006 by the UN Secretary General in response to a hard-earned [ministerial-level request](#) for an inclusive, bottom-up policymaking process on Internet-related issues, the IGF has since become a key platform for shaping Internet and digital policy discussions. While it does not produce negotiated outcomes, it provides valuable insights that inform decision-makers in both the public and private sectors.
- The current geopolitical landscape amplifies the voices of those that claim that challenges posed by rapid digitalization and the spread of emerging technologies should be addressed in an intergovernmental setting, thus risking the overhaul of the current open, multistakeholder approach to digital policy. This framework, along with the IGF, will be under close scrutiny next year at the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20).
- At this watershed moment, active business presence is key to showcase that the multistakeholder model works. ICC, through [Business Action to Support the Information Society](#) (BASIS) has been coordinating business input into those discussions for the past 20 years and remains a key partner in ensuring that every business has a stake on the digital policy discussions.
- Learn more about our plans at this year's IGF further below.

Internet Governance and Digital Policy at the United Nations

Digital policy discussions reached a turning point at the [Summit of the Future](#) (SOTF), driven by the UN's efforts to establish shared international principles for governing the digital world. As part of the Summit's outcomes, the GDC, annexed in the [Pact for the Future](#) (PFTF), was adopted, carrying long-term implications for the governance of the Internet, AI, and data. This milestone foreshadows critical discussions to be held at the WSIS+20 next year, which will shape the UN's digital policy framework for the foreseeable future.

Recent Activities

- We continued to stay in close dialogue with key government and stakeholder partners during the text-based negotiations on the PFTF and GDC before their adoption at the Summit, achieving important changes in the GDC's approach to data, AI and multistakeholder Internet governance.

Upcoming Engagements Next Quarter

- We will continue our advocacy efforts as the GDC moves into its [implementation phase](#) and share opportunities for business input.
- ICC BASIS will be present at the 19th IGF, where we will hold 4 public-facing sessions, and a compendium of bilateral meetings with governments and stakeholder partners. Our goal will be to advance business priorities in digital policymaking supporting the multistakeholder approach to Internet

governance and digital policy, as well as to raise awareness of the work of the ICC DEC on cybersecurity, AI, and data.

Cybersecurity

The [UN Ad Hoc Committee on Cybercrime](#) (AHC) wrapped up its mandate by adopting the [first-ever UN instrument on cybercrime](#). While this is celebrated by many as a historic milestone, non-governmental stakeholders across civil society and business warn against the potential adverse effects of the Convention on data privacy, human rights, and cybersecurity.

The 8th substantive session of the [Open Ended Working Group on the Security of and in the Use of ICTs](#) (OEWG) adopted its third [Annual Progress Report](#) (APR) by consensus. The APR includes a proposal for “regular institutional dialogue”, i.e. the shape that cybersecurity discussions in the UN will take, once the OEWG’s mandate comes to a close in 2025. The modalities, role and input of stakeholders to this future process remains currently unclear, and will be a key issue of discussion at the remaining meetings of the OEWG.

Recent Activities

- In an effort to further amplify ICC’s positions on the UN’s cybercrime Convention and voice the private sector’s outstanding concerns, ICC participated at the [reconvened concluding session of the AHC](#), and coordinated numerous bilateral meetings with likeminded governments and stakeholder partners to provide substantive input to the negotiations.
- In July, we released the [ICC Cybersecurity Working Paper on Protecting the cybersecurity of critical infrastructures and their supply chains](#). The paper spotlights the challenges and best practices in safeguarding critical infrastructures and the essential services they help deliver, emphasizing that industry regulation alone cannot address these challenges. The paper was [shared as a contribution](#) to the OEWG 8th Substantive session where the issue is being extensively discussed.

Upcoming Engagements Next Quarter

- The ICC Working Group on Cybersecurity will determine the next steps of concrete engagements around the UN’s Cybercrime Convention, continuing to highlight global business concerns of what is ultimately a flawed instrument, that fails to deliver global rules capable to tackling cross-border cybercrime collectively.
- We will continue to monitor the OEWG as it enters the [final stretch of meetings](#) of its current mandate. ICC will keep highlighting the growing imperative to ensure that future mechanisms discussing cybersecurity norms, rules and actions at the UN meaningfully include business and other stakeholders.
- As we enter October, which marks Cyber Awareness month, the ICC Global Digital Economy Commission will continue its advocacy on the critical task of protecting critical infrastructures. Members are encouraged to share messages from the [latest ICC paper](#).

Connectivity and Access

Conversations at the UN and the adopted GDC reiterate commitments to connecting everyone to the Internet, lacking however to consider the importance of adopting a holistic approach to address the barriers to digital inclusion and promote investment

across the entire digital ecosystem. Connectivity was front and center at the [SOTF's Digital Action Day](#), co-convened by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology (OSET), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with important pledges announced to address the digital divide. At the same time, the standardization sector of the ITU (ITU-T) is gearing up to its quadrennial [World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly](#) (WTSA) taking place in New Delhi, India on 15-24 October. Meanwhile the development sector (ITU-D) is focusing on the preparatory process for the next [World Telecommunication Development Conference](#) (WTDC), set to take place in Baku, Azerbaijan on 17-28 November 2025.

Recent Activities

- ICC provided feedback the ITU Council Working Group on International Internet-Related Public Policy Issues (CWG-Internet) consultation regarding [developmental aspects to strengthen the Internet](#). The [submission](#) highlights the importance of promoting international multistakeholder cooperation on Internet-related public policy issues, as a prerequisite to unlocking its full potential.
- **Upcoming Engagements Next Quarter**
 - On 3 October, we will present our contribution to the CWG-Internet consultation, underlining that ongoing processes discussing Internet related public policies should provide guidance on how to build enabling environments and ensure meaningful multistakeholder input.
 - As we prepare for next year's WTDC, we will follow the [ITU-D Study Group Meetings](#) between 4-15 November, focusing on enabling connectivity and digital transformation.

Artificial Intelligence

- September came full speed on AI policy, as several [countries](#) signed the CoE Framework Convention on AI which was formally adopted in May. The CoE is now focusing on developing a non-binding methodology for the risk and impact assessment of AI systems (HUDERIA), with the process expected to conclude by the end of the year.
- Meanwhile across the Atlantic, the UN placed AI governance high in their agenda, with an entire section of the adopted GDC dedicated to the topic. Preceding this, the [UN Secretary-General's AI Advisory Board](#) launched their long-awaited report on [Governing AI for Humanity](#), opening up future conversations on global AI policy and governance.

Recent Activities

- We released ICC's [Overarching Narrative on AI](#), a four-pillar framework outlining business considerations for the global governance of AI, drawing on [business case studies](#) that respond to existing guidelines, and address current challenges. Members can [submit their case studies](#) that respond to the implementation of existing AI principles, and address AI policy challenges.
- We followed the 11th Plenary meeting of the CoE Committee on AI (CAI), which focused on the development of the HUDERIA methodology.

Upcoming Engagements Next Quarter

- We will participate at the 12th Plenary of the CoE CAI on 26-28 November, sharing business perspectives and guidance for the development of the HUDERIA methodology.

If you would like to inquire further about a particular topic or express interest in joining any of our working groups, please do not hesitate to contact us.