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Mr. Chengetai Masango
the head of the UN Secretariat of IGF

Copy to:
Mr. Vint Cerf, Chair of IGF Leadership Panel,
and Ms. Maria Ressa, Vice-Chair
Ms. Carol Roach, IGF MAG Chair

UIA Ref. № 47
Since June 12, 2024
Re: venue of IGF 2025

Dear Mr. Masango,

IGF-UA-2023 Steering Committee is addressing to you to express our gratitude for your hard work in ensuring the Internet Governance Forum as an open platform for free discussion of the most pressing development issues of Internet Governance. All progressive mankind is interested in “facilitating a common understanding of how to maximise digital opportunities and address digital risks and challenges” (<https://www.intgovforum.org/en/about>).

IGF-UA was initiated in 2010 (with huge help and support from IGF Secretariat). We survived extremely difficult times (with efforts to adopt russian-style legislation, with efforts to fake multistakeholder process of consensus building, with bombing attacks on our IGF-UA venue, with blackouts and losses of connectivity). After our victory we will be happy to invite IGF to peaceful and prosperous Ukraine.

In March 2022 IGF-UA has issued the statement that “we consider it immoral to hold the IGF-2025 in the Russian Federation, as well as all other events of the IGF. We also call on the organizers of all IGF events to deny representatives of the Russian Federation participation in IGF events, at least for those who have not condemned the armed aggression against Ukraine” (our letter of March 2022 to IGF Secretariat is attached).

As far as we understand, russian proposition for IGF 2025 is still on the table. Moreover, russian representatives claim that “UN representatives sent an official confirmation of russia’s host status to the Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media”.

We assert with the utmost assurance that holding jubilee IGF in the country-aggressor will ruin (or fake) the whole 20-years long process of multistakeholder dialogue, aimed on consensus “to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”. (https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ares70d125_en.pdf)

It is difficult to imagine how individuals would engage in meaningful discourse regarding the issue of free expression when a nation is under the control of a totalitarian regime. It is impossible to envision how individuals would engage in a candid discussion regarding the necessity of a free, secure, and accessible Internet in a country that is actively attempting to dismantle GPS systems and fragment the Internet. Rather, it is going to be more of a spectacle, obscuring the existence of issues.

We are sure that it is unacceptable to risk the physical safety of potential Forum participants (they can be arrested right at the airport as representatives of "foreign, terrorist or extremist organizations"), digital security (they will be subject to digital surveillance), financial risks (they will have to use the services of a very limited number of air carriers, and then potential participants will have to pay exclusively with local bank cards, after which they can forget about the security of personal data), and a lot of other risks.

We also would like to draw your attention to the fact, that some participants will simply not be able to participate in the IGF in Russia, even online. Given that the Russian Federation is waging an aggressive war, such participation can be qualified as collaboration on the part of the countries in which these participants live or of which they are citizens. It means the using of IGF platform for political fragmentation instead combating the fragmentation of the Internet.

Taking into account all of the above, we are writing to you for information on the following issues:

1. In 2023 the Norwegian government announced its bid for the 2025 forum (<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/norway-bids-to-host-internet-governance-forum-2025/id2973634/>). Is this bid officially confirmed by IGF Secretariat? If yes, what are the official criteria for scoring different bids?

2. We urge to fix the official position of IGF-UA Steering Committee on inadmissibility of holding the IGF – 2025 in the country-aggressor (and in a country with huge risks for Internet Governance at all and for a lot of participants of the process).

3. IGF-UA Steering Committee is going to send our official statement to all interested parties. We will highly appreciate any your official feedback, which we can cite.

We are more than confident that our joint work for the benefit of the entire Internet will be no less fruitful in the future than it has been, and our platforms will be just as successful in uniting all stakeholders, successfully overcoming the processes of Internet fragmentation and the influence of personal ambitions of individual players

We will be happy to meet you in Norway on jubilee IGF!

Kind regards,

**On behalf of the IGF-UA-2023 Organizing Committee
Secretary of IGF-UA-2023 Organizing Committee**



Volodymyr Kukovsky

About Ukrainian Internet Governance Forum (IGF-UA).

First Ukrainian Internet Governance Forum (IGF-UA) was held in September 2010 in Kyiv city. IGF-UA Forums became the continuation of world series of Forums on discussing the most important issues of information society development, consolidation of efforts of governmental bodies, business, internet-society, professional and academic elite to speed-up the implementation of IT achievements, creation of conditions of comprehensive development of World Wide Web in public interest. IGF-UA Forums collect participants from different world countries, representing international structures, governmental institutions, ICT and mass media non-governmental and commercial organizations. For detailed information visit igf-ua.org.