


 Our Common Agenda
Discussion Series
Our Common Agenda Discussion Series**Meeting 3: Humanity, Technology, and the Global Digital Compact, 20 or 21 July****Register here (link soon)**

A key proposal outlined by the Secretary-General in the *Our Common Agenda* report calls for the development of a Global Digital Compact, which seeks to outline "shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all." This innovative idea seeks to transform global governance approaches in all aspects of digital life, ranging from improving access to infrastructure, to promoting human rights online, to regulating artificial intelligence.

Technological innovation has been a source of significant advancement, serving to amplify human intent and capabilities. Yet, like any tool, it can be deployed productively or destructively. Forms of social bias and inequity, for example, are often embedded in the design or application of emerging technologies, subtly influencing their ultimate social impact. Decisions related to use and distribution are often left to a privileged few. Technological products are being developed at a pace exceeding the capacity of even the most qualified legislatures to properly assess. An honest examination of the presumptions and norms underlying the creation and use of digital tools is therefore critical.

This session, the third in a series of monthly dialogues related to *Our Common Agenda*, will provide an opportunity for participants to explore how best to answer the call of the Secretary-General to "put humanity at the centre of technology." It will offer a space to assess various facets of the proposed Global Digital Compact. And it will serve as a channel for perspectives on core principles of digital governance to feed directly into the official preparatory process introduced recently by the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology.

Lead-Off Speakers (to be invited once the co-sponsors list is fleshed out)

- Member State leading the effort
- Yu Ping Chan (/other member), Office of the Secretary Generals' Envoy on Technology
- Tech partner

Guiding questions

- What key principles might governments, the private sector, and civil society agree on as a foundation for global digital cooperation?
- What regulatory changes are needed to shift away from business models that threaten public health and safety?
- How might a global code of conduct, aimed at promoting integrity in public information, address digital risks such as data misuse, misinformation, and cyber-crime?



The *Our Common Agenda* Discussion Series

General Background Note

“Humanity’s welfare – and indeed, humanity’s very future – depend on solidarity and working together as a global family to achieve common goals.” - Our Common Agenda

After the successful and comprehensive series of dialogues hosted by the President of the General Assembly in February and March, it is clear that continued, focused discussion is necessary on the implications and opportunities presented in Secretary-General António Guterres’ report *Our Common Agenda*. Representatives from Member States, the United Nations System, and Civil Society concurrently expressed hope and concern, encouragement and hesitation, and optimism and doubt regarding the next steps in the life of this report. It is with this in mind, and with an aim towards deepening the conversation, that over a dozen organizations have come together to host a monthly series.

Set to begin in May of 2022, the series represents an opportunity for Member States, the United Nations, and Civil Society to consider the most salient points emerging from *Our Common Agenda*, exploring areas requiring further consultation, including implications at local and national levels. At the end of each off-the-record discussion, a two-page unattributed summary will be created as a substantive contribution to the process. We aim to create a final compilation report in advance of the proposed 2023 Summit of the Future.

Background

Our Common Agenda outlines a range of options that highlight the imperative of networked and inclusive multi-stakeholder action. Among the recommendations, the report emphasizes the need for a new social contract anchored in human rights, renewed solidarity between peoples and future generations, a new global deal to deliver public goods and address major risks, as well as proposals for a United Nations more suited to the needs of the 21st century. The five two-day sessions convened by the President of the General Assembly in February and March of 2022 allowed Member States to articulate views on many of these proposals in an open and inclusive forum. These fruitful discussions demonstrated that, on many topics, more discussion is necessary in order to build a strong consensus in advance of the proposed 2023 Summit of the Future. This series is meant as one contribution to the process.

Modalities

This discussion series will be offered in a hybrid format, online and in-person at the Bahá’í International Community’s offices in New York. Each 90 minute session will bring together key lead-off contributors to focus on different thematic areas or specific proposals either from the report directly, or as additional suggestions, followed by open discussion. The first meeting will serve to launch the series and explore options to enhance the contributions of civil society and other citizen representatives to strengthen multilateralism. Subsequent gatherings will focus on issues of specific interest to the various partners including, for example, solidarity between peoples and future generations, governance of the commons and public goods, the changing nature of risk and resilience, and others. The topics will be proposed by series-partners and selected by a small advisory group. The series will take place on a roughly monthly basis until the summer of 2023.