

# APC INTERNET RIGHTS CHARTER

Internet for Social Justice and Sustainable Development

## THEME 1 INTERNET ACCESS FOR ALL

**1.1 The impact of access on development and social justice** Affordable, fast and easy access to the internet can help create more egalitarian societies. It can strengthen educational and health services, local business, public participation, access to information, good governance and poverty eradication. But we should not assume that all technological innovation is automatically beneficial. Civil society organisations (CSOs), governments and regulatory agencies should be aware of the internet's potential to reinforce existing inequality.

**1.2 The right to access to infrastructure irrespective of where you live** The internet serves as a global public infrastructure. This infrastructure must be widely distributed and support sufficient bandwidth, which will enable people everywhere to utilise its potential for raising their voices, improving their lives and expressing their creativity. People have the right to well-distributed national internet backbone that is connected to the international network.

**1.3 The right to the skills** Knowledge and skills enable people to use and shape the internet to meet their needs. Local and national governments, international and community organisations and private sector entities must support and promote free or low-cost training opportunities, methodologies and materials related to using internet for social development.



### ARTICLE 26, UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR):

EDUCATION SHALL BE DIRECTED TO THE FULL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN PERSONALITY AND TO THE STRENGTHENING OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

**1.4 The right to interfaces, content and applications accessible to all ("inclusive design")** Interfaces, content and applications must be designed to ensure accessibility for all, including people with physical, sensory or cognitive disabilities, people who are not literate and people who speak minority languages. The principle of inclusive design and the use of assistive technologies must be promoted and supported to allow persons with disabilities to benefit fully and on equal terms with non-disabled people.

**1.5 The right to equal access for men and women** In many places women and men do not have equal access to learn about, define, access, use and shape the internet. Efforts to increase access must recognise and redress existing gender inequalities. There must be full participation of women in all areas related to internet development to ensure gender equity.

**1.6 The right to affordable access** Policy-makers and regulators must ensure that all citizens have affordable access to the internet. The development of telecommunications infrastructure, and the setting of rules, pricing, taxes and tariffs, should make access possible for all income groups.

**1.7 The right to access in the workplace** For many people, the workplace is the primary or only site of internet access. Workers and employers must enable the use of internet access in the workplace, including for the purposes of worker education programmes and to protect workers' rights.

**1.8 The right to public access** Many people will never enjoy private access to computers or the internet. Public access points such as telecentres, libraries, community centres, clinics and schools must be made available so that all people can have access within easy walking distance of where they live or work. This is particularly important for young people in countries where internet access is not yet readily available or affordable.

**1.9 The right to access and create content that is culturally and linguistically diverse** Websites, online tools and software are dominated by the use of Latin script. This effects the development of local content in non-Latin languages and impedes the possibility of intercultural content exchange. Technical development must encourage linguistic diversity on the internet and simplify the exchange of information across language barriers.

## THEME 2 FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

**2.1 The right to freedom of expression** Freedom of expression should be protected from infringement by government and non-state actors. The internet is a medium for both public and private exchange of views and information across a variety of frontiers. Individuals must be able to express opinions and ideas, and share information freely when using the internet.



### ARTICLE 18, UDHR:

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, CONSCIENCE AND RELIGION



### ARTICLE 19, UDHR:

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION; THIS RIGHT INCLUDES FREEDOM TO HOLD OPINIONS WITHOUT INTERFERENCE AND TO SEEK, RECEIVE AND IMPART INFORMATION AND IDEAS THROUGH ANY MEDIA REGARDLESS OF FRONTIERS

**2.2 The right to freedom from censorship** The internet must be protected from all attempts to silence critical voices and to censor social and political content or debate.

**2.3 The right to engage in online protest** Organisations, communities and individuals should be free to use the internet to organise and engage in protest.



### ARTICLE 20, UDHR:

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

## THEME 3 ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE



### ARTICLE 27, UDHR:

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY, TO ENJOY THE ARTS AND TO SHARE IN SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS

**3.1 The right to access to knowledge** Wide-spread access to knowledge and a healthy knowledge commons form the basis for sustainable human development. Because the internet enables knowledge-sharing and collaborative knowledge-creation to a previously unprecedented degree, it should be a focus for the development community.

**3.2 The right to freedom of information** National and local government, and publicly-funded international organisations, must ensure transparency and accountability by placing publicly relevant information that they produce and manage in the public domain. They should ensure that this information is disseminated online using compatible and open formats and is accessible to people using older computers and slow internet connections.

**3.3 The right to access to publicly-funded information** All information, including scientific and social research, that is produced with the support of public funds should be freely available to all.

## THEME 4 SHARED LEARNING AND CREATION - FREE AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT



### ARTICLE 27, UDHR:

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY, TO ENJOY THE ARTS AND TO SHARE IN SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS

**4.1 The right to share** The internet offers extraordinary opportunity for sharing information and knowledge, and for new forms of creating content, tools and applications. Providers of tools, internet services and content, should not prohibit people from utilising the internet for shared learning and content creation. Protection of the interests of creators must occur in a way consistent with open and free participation in scientific and cultural knowledge flows.

**4.2 The right to free and open source software (FOSS)** We support the use of FOSS. Working with FOSS is empowering, it builds skills, is more sustainable and it encourages local innovation. We encourage governments to make policies that encourage the use of FOSS, particularly in the public sector.

**4.3 The right to open technological standards** Technical standards used on the internet must always be open to allow interoperability and innovation. New technology development must meet the needs of all sections of society, particularly those who face limitations and obstacles when they go online (such as communities who use non-Latin scripts or people with disabilities, older computers or lacking high-speed access).

**4.4 The right to benefit from convergence and multi-media content** The internet is a multi-media platform. Access and regulation must build on its potential to be used to diversify the creation and ownership of online content in multiple formats e.g. community-owned and -driven radio and television.

## THEME 5 PRIVACY, SURVEILLANCE AND ENCRYPTION

**5.1 The right to data protection** Public or private organisations that require personal information from individuals must collect only the minimal data necessary and for the minimal period of time needed. They must only process data for the minimal stated purposes. Collection, use, disclosure and retention of this information must comply with a transparent privacy policy which allows people to find out what is collected about them and to correct inaccurate information. Data collected must be protected from unauthorised disclosure and security errors should be rectified without delay. Data must be deleted when it is no longer necessary for the purposes for which it was collected. The public must be warned about the potential for misuse of data supplied. Organisations have a responsibility to notify people when the information has been abused, lost, or stolen.



### ARTICLE 12, UDHR:

NO ONE SHALL BE SUBJECT TO ARBITRARY INTERFERENCE WITH HIS PRIVACY, FAMILY, HOME OR CORRESPONDENCE, NOR TO ATTACKS UPON HIS HONOUR AND REPUTATION

**5.2 The right to freedom from surveillance** People should be able to communicate free of the threat of surveillance and interception.

**5.3 The right to use encryption** People communicating on the internet must have the right to use tools which encode messages to ensure secure, private and anonymous communication.

## THEME 6 GOVERNANCE OF THE INTERNET

**6.1 The right to multilateral democratic oversight of the internet** Internet governance should be multilateral and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organisations. No single government should have a pre-eminent role in relation to international internet governance.

**6.2 The right to transparency and accessibility** All decision-making processes related to the governance and development of the internet should be open and accessible at global, regional and national levels.

**6.3 The right to a decentralised, collaborative and interoperable internet** The technological development and core resource management of the internet must be decentralised and collaborative, and help to ensure that the network is interoperable, functional, stable, secure, efficient and scalable in the long run.

**6.4 The right to open architecture** The internet as a 'network of networks' is made up of many interconnected networks, based on the key underlying technical idea of open architecture networking, in which any type of network anywhere can be included and made publicly available. Open architecture must be protected.

**6.5 The right to open standards** Most of the protocols at the core of the internet are protocols based on open standards that are efficient, trusted and open to global implementation with little or no licencing restrictions. The protocol specifications must remain available to anyone, at no cost, considerably reducing barriers to entry and enabling interoperability.

**6.6 The right to internet neutrality and the end-to-end principle** The neutrality of the internet, chiefly concerned with the effective transportation of packets, enables its intelligence to reside largely in computers, applications, servers, mobile and other devices at the networks' ends. This has enabled the development of a wide range of new internet activities, industries and services 'at the ends,' and turns the internet into an important tool within the wider context of economic and societal development. The internet derives much of its power and reach from the value of its network effect. The more people that have access to the internet, the greater its value as a means for information exchange and communication. The end-to-end principle and net neutrality must be defended from attempts to create a two-tier internet and centralise control.

**6.7 The right to the internet as an integrated whole** This central interoperability is part of the internet's value as a global public good and should not be fragmented by threats to create national intranets, the use of content filtering, unwarranted surveillance, invasion of privacy and curbs on freedom of expression.

## THEME 7 AWARENESS, PROTECTION AND REALISATION OF RIGHTS

**7.1 The right to rights protection, awareness and education** The rights of people as users of the internet must be protected by international human rights declarations, law and policy practice. National, regional and global governing bodies must make information about rights and procedures related to the internet freely available. This involves public education to inform people of their rights when using the internet and mechanisms to address rights violations.

**7.2 The right to recourse when rights are violated** People need free public access to effective and accountable mechanisms for addressing violations of rights. When human and internet rights are threatened by internet-based content, or by illegitimate surveillance, limitations on freedoms of expressions, and other rights, parties should have access to recourse mechanisms for taking action against such infringements.

The internet can only be a tool to empower the peoples of the world if the rights within this Charter are recognised, protected and respected.



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