

**Statement by Derechos Digitales at UN Global Digital Compact: Deep Dive on Internet Governance**

13 April, 2023 – Jamila Venturini

Thank you co-facilitators.

Dear excellencies and colleagues,

I am speaking from a country marked by an increase in polarization and different forms of violence. Beyond gender based and political violence that increasingly manifest with the use or assistance of technology, Brazil has seen an increase in armed attacks in schools in the past years, with a tragic episode last week that resulted in several children killed or injured. Initial investigations point out that some of those are articulated online through social media – in uses of platforms that, in some cases, could not have been predicted by the engineers behind them.

The question on how do we prevent the spread of violence and extremism online is not only legitimate but necessary. However, rushed measures can lead to more harm instead of benefit. We cannot trust that technologies or tech companies alone can solve such complex social problems or that a change in a code or protocol will prevent new tragic episodes from occurring. Any response require serious and coordinated multistakeholder efforts involving not only representatives from different sectors, but also from different expertise fields, as well as proactive measures to assure that people and communities affected can also have a voice.

At the same time, we cannot close our eyes anymore to the real and concrete impacts of digital technologies to the exercise of human rights, including social and economic rights, particularly for historically marginalized communities. In Latin America, cases of discrimination through automated decision making systems multiply, with innocent people being mistakenly identified as criminals and arrested, and others prevented from accessing social assistance in moments they most need.

Tech companies do have the responsibility to respect and protect human rights and to implement strict transparency and accountability mechanisms. Governments should assure that they comply with such obligations and create mechanisms for multistakeholder participation in decision-

making related to technology at all levels: from research and development, to implementation and impact evaluation.

The Global Digital Compact should provide for proactive actions towards building effective multistakeholder processes and increasing broader participation on all digital cooperation and internet governance discussions so that they do not replicate power imbalances and continue to exclude those who have been historically absent from these discussions – such as women, LBGTG+ groups, indigenous and rural communities, and representatives from the Global Majority in general.

Concrete mechanisms should also be implemented within the Compact to assure that decision-making at intergovernmental and standard-setting organizations, development agencies and banks, among others, related to the digital and data ecosystems are strongly anchored in existing human rights standards and that multistakeholder input is taken into consideration – starting by the drafting of the Global Digital Compact itself.

The Internet Governance Forum has been a central piece of the internet governance ecosystem for almost two decades and should be strengthened so that discussions developed within this multistakeholder space can actually guide policy-making at the global level.

Complex socio-technical problems such as the ones we are facing, require strong commitments to human rights and also complex and coordinated responses. The Global Digital Compact is a key opportunity to advance in that direction.

Thank you.