**Declaration on Community Connectivity**

**Preamble**

Three billion people do not have access to communication infrastructure, and people in rural areas are unlikely to realise the benefits of access in the near term. There is no business case for extending coverage based on the current operational models of traditional network operators, and alternative strategies may face nearly-insurmountable regulatory hurdles.

While the Internet access playing field has opened in several counties, concerns about vertical integration and net neutrality violations have become increasingly concreate. In order to reverse these trends and reclaim the pivotal role of the commons in networks, it is necessary to create the technology, policy and regulatory frameworks that empower communities and local entrepreneurs to solve their own connectivity challenges and create new opportunities in a sustainable fashion. Bottom-up strategies that embrace net neutrality and diversity in the last mile can truly empower individuals, allowing everyone to play an active role in making connectivity affordable and easily accessible.

1. **Connectivity**

Connectivity is the ability to reach all endpoints connected to the Internet without any form of restriction on the data-packet exchanged, enabling end-users to run any application and use any type of service via any device.

1. **Community Network**

Community networks are a subset of crowdsourced networks, structured to be open, free, and neutral. Such networks rely on the active participation of local communities in the establishment and management of the shared infrastructure as a common resource, owned by the community. Community networks can be operationalised, wholly or partly, through local private sector entities or public administrations and are characterised by:

1. collective ownership: the network infrastructure is owned by the community where it's deployed;
2. social management: the network is governed and operated by the community;
3. open design: the network implementation details are public and accessible to everyone;
4. open participation: anyone is allowed to extend the network, as long as they abide the network principles and design.

1. **Community Network Participants**

Community network members have to be considered active participants and, as all Internet users, have to be considered both producers and consumers of content, applications and services. Notably community network participants:

1. have the freedom to use the network for any purpose as long as they do harm the operation of the network itself, the rights of other participants, or the principles of neutrality that allow contents and services to flow without deliberate interference;
2. have the right to understand the network and its components, and to share knowledge of its mechanisms and principles;
3. have the right to offer services and content to the network, while establishing their own terms;
4. have the right to join the network, and the obligation to extend this set of rights to anyone according to these same terms.
5. **Policy Affecting Connectivity and Community Networks**

National as well as international policy should facilitate the development of connectivity and the deployment of community networks. Notably, national as well as international policy should

1. be designed considering the impact on connectivity, with particular regard to individuals’ human rights to freedom of expression and privacy;
2. lower barriers that may hinder individuals’ capability to create connectivity;
3. allow the exploitation of unlicensed spectrum bands for public-interest purposes.