A Narrative Report of

Workshop on

"The Governance of Digital Platforms Emerging Trends and Good Practices"

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Background

Nepal's digital sphere is vibrant and rapidly growing. The increased penetration of the internet, availability of digital devices, and expansion of IT infrastructure across the country have fostered people's activities on digital platforms. These platforms have created tremendous opportunities, spanning from economic growth and advertising to social engagement, assembly, learning, and the exercise of freedom of expression. However, the challenges brought forth and amplified in the digital sphere cannot be ignored. Issues such as hate speech, misinformation, cyber harassment, and cybercrimes are prevalent. It is imperative for Nepal to both augment the advantages and foster human rights on the internet while curbing the negative aspects. Unfortunately, efforts from the government and parliament have been slow, creating an urgency for further discussion and knowledge.

Against this backdrop, Freedom Forum and the UNESCO Nepal Office agreed to hold a two-day event titled "The Governance of Digital Platforms: Emerging Trends and Good Practices." This event aims to foster debate and discussions on Nepal's efforts in digital platform governance, a pressing need of the day, and to seek viable measures that ensure multi-stakeholder engagement, including lawmakers and CSOs. Freedom Forum partnered with UNESCO, providing expertise and workforce to conduct the event at Gokarna, Kathmandu, from September 13-14, 2024.

Activities
Day I

A) Opening remarks

The program was initiated by UNESCO's representative to Nepal, <u>Mr. Michael Croft</u>. He stated, "Hate speech, defamation, and fake news have caused turbulence on digital platforms. While Nepal has made a long struggle for the present state of freedom of expression (FoE), it is impossible to roll back. Hence, UNESCO advocates for the mediation of informed decisions on digital platforms."

In his opening remarks, Croft expressed that the discussion would be fruitful for lawmakers to become well-informed about FoE in the digital sphere and the application of UNESCO's guidelines for digital governance.

Deputy Speaker of the Parliament Hon. Indira Rana Magar presenting her opening remarks

Following Croft's remarks, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Member <u>Hon. Manoj Duwadi</u> emphasized that the NHRC places special priority on freedom of expression (FoE). NHRC has developed a mechanism for FoE practitioners, involving all concerned parties—security, government, ministries, journalists, and advocates. Duwadi underlined that a human rights-based approach to lawmaking is essential, and discussions like these are crucial to support lawmakers. He also reminded attendees that the safety mechanism for journalists at the NHRC has been further operationalized with the engagement of civil society organizations, including Freedom Forum.

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, <u>Hon. Indira Rana Magar</u>, appreciated UNESCO Nepal for promoting good practices and creating such platforms for lawmakers. Citing her own experience of facing online hate speech, she highlighted the need for regulation of digital media, arguing that these platforms sometimes

facilitate human rights violations. "Workshops of this kind provide guidance to key stakeholders, including lawmakers, to strengthen laws and policies for platform governance," she observed.

B) Presentation on 'Global context and overview of UNESCO Global Guidelines on Governance of Digital Platforms':

Similarly, Ms. Marjorie Buchser from UNESCO Headquarters described the evolution of technology through the years and said the balancing tolerance of power between government and digital platforms is the major problem these days. Most governments worldwide are grappling with this issue and are working on developing appropriate frameworks for digital governance, which is both a local and transnational challenge.

Ms. Marjorie Buchser presenting on UNESCO's Guideline on Digital Platform Governance

She shared a presentation on 'UNESCO Global Guidelines on Governance of Digital Platforms' which was launched in 2023. The guideline was prepared after incorporating comments from 134 countries. Objective of the guidelines are:

- To safeguard the right to freedom of expression including access to information and other human rights in digital platforms.
- To outline a human rights-respecting governance system and promote system-based processes for content moderation and curation
- To contribute in a practical way to broader efforts to realize a human-centered model for digital governance
- To contribute to ongoing UN-wide processes such as the implementation of the proposals in UN's Common Agenda.

Buchser discussed that impacts on human rights, independence of regulatory bodies, close coordination among national authorities and multistakeholders' approach are the principles of the guidelines. The guidelines also emphasize the responsibilities of

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governments, platforms, intergovernmental organizations and civil society in establishing independent governance systems and minimizing the fragmentation of regulatory efforts globally.

Buchser also highlighted that transparency of government and technological platforms, linguistic diversity, user appeal and redressal are amongst the major concerns to be addressed by the digital platforms as per the guidelines.

Q and A:

After her presentation, participants raised questions regarding quality access to digital platforms, accountability of the platforms, how the platforms can be participatory and the guidelines' contextualization in Nepal.

To these concerns, she responded that creating better contents, digital literacy, e-governance, data safety provisions would help make the digital platforms more inclusive and accountable. Similarly, the guideline also speaks about diversity and collaboration, and it is applicable universally. However, certain moderation in the national context is required.

C) **Panel discussion on 'Nepali context: Opportunities to develop Nepal's regulatory frameworks for platform governance in line with Human Rights Standards'**

Panel discussion on governance of digital platforms in Nepali context

This session was moderated by the National Resource Person Mr. Taranath Dahal.

Issues raised by Mr. Dahal were human rights protection on digital platforms, approaches on platform regulation, promotion of multistakeholders' approach and use of UNESCO guidelines in Nepal.

Panelists were:

1. <u>Mr. Murari Prasad Kharel, Secretary, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)</u>:
   The contents created and used on the digital platforms should be human rights-friendly and accessible to all the population. Analysis of gaps in the existing provisions should also be studied through human rights perspective to ensure effective governance of the platforms. Moreover, empowerment of rights holders and participation of all the concerned sectors is essential.

2. <u>Mr. Sudarshan Khadka, Secretary, Federal Parliament Secretariat</u>:
   The workshop is very useful for our lawmakers. The parliament is currently discussing to collaborate with UNESCO in pre-law drafting process and conducting Mult-stakeholders discussions. Hence, upcoming laws on digital platform governance will ensure human rights. This guideline will be a useful guide for us.

3. <u>Mr. Anil Kumar Dutta, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MOCIT)</u> :
   The ministry is working on the regulation of digital platforms in Nepal as all these platforms are operated internationally. Nepal also has Social Media Directives in place which facilitates regulation of these platforms. The platforms should be accessible, responsible and accountable as well. The ministry has also demanded registration of the digital platforms in Nepal so that the victims will be provided justice on time. Digital literacy is also important in this context.

D) Comparative Dialogue by Authorities followed by Q & A

The dialogue moderated by Marjorie Buchser had the following speakers. In this session, speakers shared their experiences in dealing with national frameworks on digital platform governance.

1. <u>Mr. Daniel Wilson, Head of Child Online Safety, Department of Science, Innovation and Technology, the United Kingdom</u>:
To protect children and adults on digital platforms, especially from harmful content like pornography, there is a focus on user complaints regarding abuse. There is also a significant interest in a multi-stakeholders approach. This approach is essential to engage not only industry experts but also thousands of children and parents to ensure that the regulatory framework is practical and effective.

Discussions have involved tech developers/ designers, Internet Service Providers and policymakers. Key issues discussed include hateful content, bullying, pornography, violence, and self-harm. To tackle these challenges, the approach needs to be proportionate, with mechanisms like super complaint functions and an independent regulator to oversee enforcement.

2. <u>Mr. George Sarpong, Executive Secretary, Ghana's National Media Commission</u>: The lesson learnt in Ghana covers the nature of law and technology where the life of law is stability, and the life of technology is speed and innovation. If we put law before technology, it fails to keep pace with the rapid developments in technology. I urge Nepali lawmakers to negotiate the challenges of balancing law and technology by keeping in account key public interest issues. Regulatory authorities must be skilled in this regard.

UNESCO's guidelines, however, does not answer all the questions on liability.

3. <u>Hon. Ammar Bahadur Thapa, Chair of Education, Health and Information Technology Committee of Parliament</u>:
Nepal is still lagging in terms of human rights. With digital progress, several positive and negative effects have been witnessed lately. It is necessary to devise new laws to address the emerging challenges on digital platforms.

4. <u>Hon. Bimala Subedi, Chair of Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee of Parliament</u> :
Almost 90% of the population in Nepal with access to internet use social media. With this globalization, women and children have become more vulnerable to digital abuse. Nepal is disproportionately affected because of poor regulatory measures. Thus, we need to focus on regulation rather than control. To solve these issues globally, regional and international collaboration is essential.

E) Group Exercise I:
Based on lessons learnt from the above discussions, the participants were asked to dwell on three questions for their group exercise:

<u>Group A</u>: How can the government and parliament enhance their capacity for regulating digital platforms?
Answer: Parliament should be informed and be provided with necessary capacity-building training and orientations. The state can use IT personnel at local levels to

promote digital literacy. Judiciary bodies should also be capacitated on digital issues. Learning and sharing at national and international levels will also help along with the provision of adequate resources.

Members of Parliament discussing group exercise

<u>Group B</u>: What are the current legal frameworks in Nepal for regulating digital platforms, and are they adequate?

Answer: There is a need for an integrated law to regulate digital platforms as the companies are outside the country. The ministry should actively involve in the process of drafting related bills. Cooperation from the bureaucrats to the lawmakers is essential.

<u>Group C</u>: How can we increase multi-stakeholder participation to ensure better regulation of digital platforms, and what role does parliament play in this process?

Answer: Nepal lacks parental law on digital platform governance. Stakeholders should be involved during the drafting phase, while the inclusive approach is equally significant. Core stakeholders (subject experts, professionals, etc.) should be identified and engaged. Adequate research, survey, public hearings, seminars, workshops of this kind, and use of suggestion boxes will help to formulate user-friendly and human rights-friendly laws and policies.

Conclusion: The participants identified the problems relating to digital governance like legal hurdles, lack of appropriate law, insufficient policy, slow lawmaking process, role of the stakeholders to be engaged law meaning, need of capacity building at multiple levels of lawmakers and concerned ministry officials, area of cooperation and coordination etc.

Day II

The second day of the workshop started with UNICEF's representative to Nepal Michael Croft's review of the first day. He stated that the UNESCO guidelines on Digital Platform Governance was thoroughly discussed on the first day through different perspectives namely, education, security, business, human rights etc. He highlighted that major focus of the first day was about multi-stakeholders dialogue which he referred was the objective of the workshop on the day. He also welcomed participants from diverse sectors; concerned civil society organizations, media, academia and research organizations, etc.

A) Panel discussion 'Governance of digital platforms in Nepal' :

Panelists discussing opportunities for digital platform governance in Nepal

The panel session started with the following panelists:

1. Mr. Anil Kumar Dutta, Joint Secretary at Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MOCIT)
2. Ms. Sidra Jalil, Representative from TikTok online
3. Mr. Prabesh Subedi, Founder, Digital Media Foundation (DMF)
4. Ms. Malavika Rajkumar, Senior Research Associate, IT for Change, India

Moderator: Advocate Baburam Aryal, CEO at Internet Governance Institute.

Objectives: To explore status of formulation of policies related to digital governance and civil society perspectives on the drafted policies.

Key issues discussed:

- Government's preparation on formulation of bills, directives, etc. related to digital governance,
- Nepal's position in law and policy development in terms of content and process

- Is the new lawmaking process participatory and does it address stakeholders' concerns in the previous consultations?
- TikTok's strategy to manage and regulate contents as per the recent agreement with the Nepal government
- South Asian perspectives of digital platform governance and possible adoption of these practices in Nepal.

Mr. Aryal shared that the multi-stakeholder's discussion would be helpful to shape future policy discussions and policy advocacy.

Panelists views:

Joint Secretary Anil Kumar Dutta:
While discussing development in policy making process for Information Technology in Nepal, we had an Electronic Transaction Act (2006) which regulated overall electronic transactions and cybercrime issues. After that, the IT bill was registered at the parliament which was later withdrawn in course of discussion before the general election. Again, we drafted Information Technology and Cybersecurity bill after thorough discussions with the experts and stakeholders. The draft is currently awaiting approval at the Ministry of Law. Similarly, the ministry brought a separate Social Media Directive to regulate the contents in social media. Act related to social media is also in process of approval at the Ministry of Law after approval from the Ministry of Finance.

Moreover, the ministry also revised the Telecommunications Act 2053 and sent it to the Ministry of Law. The ministry will also incorporate feedback received from the public. Additionally, AI has become a cross-cutting issue and is applicable in every sector. Realizing this, the ministry created a concept paper on AI reviewing international provisions. Now, a committee has been formed by the ministry, subcommittee, including experts from both the private sector and the ministry, which is also working on it. Thereafter, a draft of the policy will be prepared soon.

On concerns regarding participatory lawmaking process, our lawmaking process passes through different institutions from the ministries to the parliament. During these phases, we call on the public for their feedback and suggestions on the draft. We also incorporate received feedback while finalizing the bill. Yes, the process may be time-consuming but it is participatory.

Sidra Jalil, TikTok:

We are committed to localizations of TikTok standards and guidelines for content moderation and for TikTok governance. The TikTok indeed, pays heed to the location of content moderation through consultations. Though there is a timeline of 15 days to remove the TikTok contents based on the complaints received from the community guidelines, harmful contents against children and minorities are promptly responded.

Moreover, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are different based on the nature of the case. The platform works in collaboration with the concerned bodies including law agencies and security bodies for the safety of users, as trust and safety are the priorities of this digital platform.

Though current efforts may not be enough to meet the objectives of this digital platform, it is committed to promoting international best practices for digital platforms. I would like to share the platform's commitment to create a direct contact channel to Nepal and I also urge you to promote positivity and inclusion in the digital platform. For this, correct education to the users is important. TikTok can work in partnership with the regulatory bodies in Nepal and other educational platforms on this. Hence, partnership and cooperation on a wider scale is required to address the underlying issues and strengthen this digital platform.

I, however, acknowledge the issue of the language barrier raised during the event and the concerns over need to localize the content moderation tools to promote the platform's right use. I believe this is a humble beginning and we can do more to make this platform better space for the Nepali users.

Malavika Rajkumar, IT for Change:

We now understand that while social media offers many opportunities, particularly in sharing information during crises. The challenges have grown as the platforms have expanded. National governments regulate them. In this case, South Asian countries might adopt a rights-based approach so that platforms address users' rights, especially for marginalized groups. When we talk about users' population in South Asia, issues like education, language, and the type of users become significant. Hence, rights-based approach is crucial.

Platforms and their target population are key aspects to consider. For instance, an AI framework would focus on identifying different stakeholder groups—users, moderators, platform operators. Again, technology is not just online, it exists offline as well, so laws are needed to address this continuum. I want to share here that IT for Change examined how gender-based violence (GBV) is judged by the judiciary, and we found that the

judiciary often view technology as purely an online issue, overlooking cases where photos taken offline are uploaded online.

I appreciate Nepal government's initiative to create a directive for social media. I have not seen a clear definition of cyberbullying before, so that's noteworthy. In terms of digital content platforms, we reviewed 30,000 tweets and noticed that platforms often struggle with timely responses. Community moderation is also an issue.

Focusing on India in 2023, India introduced the IT Rules 2021, which regulates all intermediaries that host online content. Social media intermediaries, like Koo (which is Canada-based), are subject to a risk-based classification.

However, grievance redressal remains a big challenge on these platforms. There is evidence that users often can't get their complaints addressed. There must be a grievance redressal officer, and complaints should be resolved within 24 hours. For instance, India has a response time of 22 hours for issues like child harm, GBV, and fake news. For content such as nudity and sexual deep fakes, there is a 24-hour response cycle. It is important to note that such contents are also highly amplified, and if the officer fails to take timely actions, a grievance appellate system is available.

Content moderation involves managing impersonation, pornographic content, and more. Transparency reports are crucial here—platforms are required to publish compliance and transparency reports on their websites to avoid over-censorship. Lastly, I believe there's a lack of granularity, and this is where local authorities can engage in a more multi-stakeholder approach for discussions.

Prabesh Subedi, DMF:
Every country has its unique modality. Though we hear about the talks of South-to-South collaboration, it's complicated. Nepal also has its own unique situation. As my colleagues mentioned, from a rights-based perspective, we as general users of the platforms, are often impacted when the government and political leadership fail to take required action. In Nepal where more than 90% people engage on internet, citizens have been victimized due to weak negotiation of the government with the giant technological companies such as Meta and TikTok.

We haven't fully benefited from the use of these platforms. Local and indigenous languages of Nepal are not found on the internet—it's either English or Nepali. When will our languages and cultures be reflected online? Neither the government nor the platforms have shown much respect for this.

On the other hand, I must say Nepal is in a favorable context in terms of freedom of expression. We don't have major internal conflicts or confrontations. In this context, Nepal has a good opportunity to build and practice a rights-based, participatory, and people-centric approach. But the digital platforms have largely neglected Nepal. These days we are facing huge censorship on the digital platforms, and there's a lack of appropriate mechanism to address these issues. Platform accountability is a major issue here.

Also, our lawmaking process is problematic which lacks multi-stakeholders' consultation and does not follow basic national and international norms of human rights.

Participant asking question to the panelists in Q and A session

Floor discussions:
Participants raised questions on government's action to the platforms if they do not register in Nepal, to address language barrier on platforms, grievance handling mechanism, contextualization of platform regulation as per national interest and citizen's requirements.

Similarly, few participants also shared their concern over regulation of AI and data leakage when big data companies sell their data. On lawmaking process, participants asked whether the upcoming laws would ensure the essence of civic space, thereby protecting Foe and Freedom of Association (FOA). A participant asked whether the government had been considering development of infrastructure and capacitating human resources for efficient implementation of the policies regarding digital platform governance.

On these concerns, Panelists responded as:

Anil Dutta: When we initially proposed the IT bill, there were a couple of reasons why it couldn't pass, which is why it wasn't implemented at that time. However, in the Social Media Directive, we have included certain points. We have demanded the digital platforms to be listed under nation's law, have at least one office with one representative.

In a meeting with the Ministry, TikTok agreed to open a registered office and contribute towards digital literacy. They mentioned that within three months, all issues would be

resolved. On language, TikTok has agreed to appoint a representative here in Nepal however, skilled personnel and structure is required.

Prabesh Subedi: Major problem lies in the practicality of the laws formulated to regulate digital platforms. The lawmakers are urged to be more focused on lawmaking approaches and their contents to create human rights-friendly policies.

Participants busy discussing group exercise

Group Exercise II:

Mrs. Marjorie Buchser presented a case study of Fredonia which is a democratic country which faced difficult election cycle. In Fredonia, there was election fraud, leading to destabilization, which was amplified. The failure to address this caused a delayed response, escalation, and eventually, online incitement followed by offline violence.

On this, participants were divided into different groups; media, digital platforms, civil society and national authorities to discuss based on the following questions:

1. *What actions should social media platforms have implemented before, during, and after the elections?*
2. *What should national agencies do to control and prevent such incidents?*
3. *What steps could experts, academicians, and CSOs take to prevent these incidents?*

After fifteen minutes of brainstorming, digital platform group said that the platforms should alert its users on possible fake contents, regulate the contents, create election-specific policies which would also monitor regular advertorial contents. Similarly, the platforms can collaborate with the national mechanisms/ agencies and work on public awareness and media literacy.

Media Group: Media monitoring is important, more specifically social media monitoring to avoid mis/disinformation online. Similarly, immediate stakeholders' meeting should be organized by the responsible authority for instance, Election Commission to strengthen information integrity during election period.

Civil Society and Academia Group: CSOs can work in fact-checking, public accountability and building awareness programs. Digital literacy and informal education should be promoted to maintain digital integrity. CSOs as watchdogs, can also conduct media monitoring and advocate for marginalized and targeted groups.

Researchers should have been involved, and observations should have been provided. Universities should have gathered youth to discuss these issues

National authorities Group: The government should collect timely information about possible incidents, and then act. The government should self-regulate the contents, dismiss insignificant contents online and solve this problem in an informative way. The academic community should have tried to bring the platforms within the framework of good governance.

Plenary of Members of Parliament with Multi stakeholders:
The plenary session was moderated by Mr. Taranath Dahal, Executive Chief of Freedom Forum.
Initiating the session, Mr. Dahal said that the guiding framework created by UNESCO could be referred to while drafting laws and policies in Nepal as well, but the lawmakers should be mindful of national context. He also pointed out the challenges in lawmaking process as inability to mitigate confrontations among stakeholders and recognize their roles.

Hon. Sher Bahadur Kunwar: While creating new laws, we need to assess if current laws are sufficient or new ones are required. It will give us a direction to move forward. Also, the digital platforms are required to address the interests of citizens and the country's freedom.

Hon. Devendra Paudel: Good governance, social justice, and the rule of law are the essence of democracy. Nepal, as a signatory to several international treaties, is also responsible for ensuring human rights on digital platforms. The workshop has been very useful to us.

Hon. Sushila Thing: As social media entered Nepal, we all have become its active users, but we are unaware of the laws. More concerning is that regulatory provisions are in disarray, and we seem to be following the opposite track where we allow new platforms to operate in Nepal before preparing a legal framework.

Hon. Deepa Sharma: UNESCO's guideline is a helpful tool to develop a regulatory framework for IT and AI. In Nepal's context where development is still slow, all stakeholders must collaborate so that the country maximizes its benefits.

Floor discussion:
There is a separation of powers in Nepal when it comes to lawmaking, implementation, and interpretation. We need to engage all stakeholders to improve digital governance, both online and offline. While drafting technology-related laws, we need to consider the entire ecosystem. The e-commerce bill, for example, did not consider the broader ecosystem. In regulating digital platforms, Nepal needs clear objectives on its requirements of the representatives of digital platforms.

A participant from Nepal Police Cyber Bureau stated that misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech have become biggest problems in handling social media related complaints. Due to the lack of a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT), we are unable to bring to book the suspects of online violence. He urged the lawmakers to address the problems of Cyber Bureau by bringing result-oriented laws and a mechanism of operation of the digital platforms in Nepal.

Concluding remarks:
Summarizing the two-day discussions, Ms. Marjorie Buchser said that one of the most significant challenges at this time is to create a safe, secure, and free digital space. There are substantial risks too. Tackling these risks is like conquering the Mount Everest, according to Buchser, which is a step-by-step process. Addressing issues surrounding digital platforms, social media, artificial intelligence, and privacy requires different strategies for instance, through regulations and collaboration with digital platforms and various stakeholders.

She also expressed UNESCO's interest in serving as a guiding partner for the platforms' governance in Nepal. It is important to ensure individual freedoms while regulating digital platforms, she said.

She praised the active discussions, insights, and recommendations during the workshop. Lastly, she wished Nepal progresses in its digital journey.

Mr. Michael Croft also appreciated the multi-stakeholder's discussion and gave his final remarks, wishing Nepal capable of digital governance.

Lastly, Secretary at the Federal Parliament Secretariat, Mr. Sudarshan Khadka, applauded for the successful completion of the workshop. UNESCO's guideline is an eye-opening document for lawmakers. "I believe the parliament's collaboration with UNESCO and concerned stakeholders will lead to good legislation," he hoped.

The program witness's participation of total 27 Members of Parliament among which 17 were female. Similarly, 71 participants (18 female) from civil society, media, academia and human rights institutions participated in the event.

Observation and Recommendation: Governance of the Digital Platforms in Nepal

Following a comprehensive assessment of the views and experiences shared by lawmakers, human rights representatives, parliament secretariat officials, and media personnel in Nepal, the following observations and recommendations are presented. These insights are aimed at enhancing the understanding of digital governance issues and promoting the development of human rights-friendly

legislation and policies.

Key Observations

Limited Awareness Among Lawmakers: A significant gap exists in the understanding of digital governance principles among lawmakers. This knowledge deficit hinders their ability to effectively deliberate on and pass legislation related to digital networks.

Need for Enhanced Collaboration: The parliament secretariat and concerned ministries should work together to facilitate informed discussions on digital governance issues and ensure that lawmakers are adequately briefed.

Diverse Perspectives and Human Rights: Addressing differing viewpoints among lawmakers is crucial to ensure that digital rights are protected. Civil society organizations should be empowered to contribute to this process.

Regulation, Not Control: Lawmakers expressed a preference for regulating digital networks rather than controlling them. This indicates a positive approach that prioritizes human rights while acknowledging the need for appropriate oversight.

Positive Outlook and Learning: Participants demonstrated a willingness to learn more about digital governance and expressed a desire for increased cooperation and support.

Recommendations

Capacity Building for Lawmakers: UNESCO should prioritize capacity-building initiatives for lawmakers at both federal and provincial levels. These programs should focus on digital governance principles, international standards, and best practices.
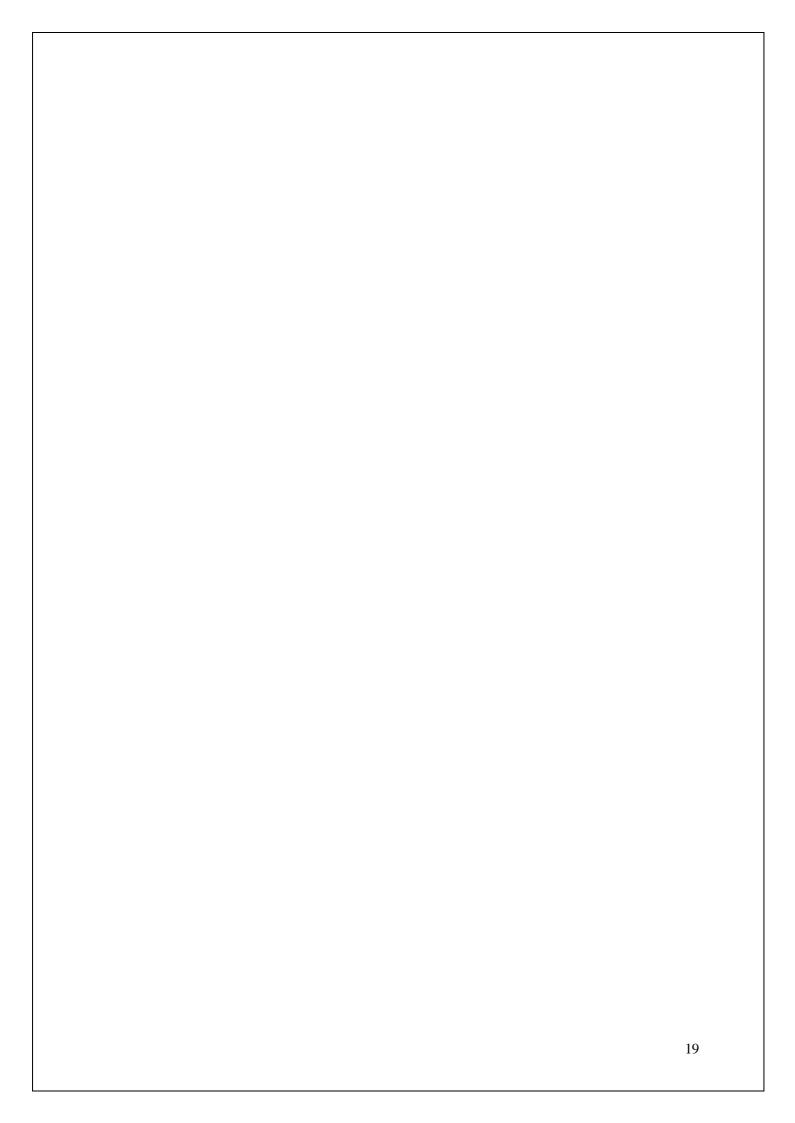
Multi-Stakeholder Mechanism: The establishment of a multi-stakeholder mechanism under the parliament secretariat is recommended to foster open dialogue, research, and policy development on digital governance issues.

Resource Sharing and Civil Society Engagement: Civil society organizations should be provided with necessary resources to participate meaningfully in the development of digital governance policies. Their expertise and insights are invaluable in ensuring that human rights are protected.

Collaborative Approach: Strong collaboration and cooperation among lawmakers, the parliament secretariat, human rights bodies, civil society organizations, and media is essential for effective digital governance.

UNESCO Support and Expertise: UNESCO's support is vital in guiding Nepal's efforts to establish a free, safe, and secure digital environment. The Freedom Forum can play a key role in providing expertise, facilitating dialogue, and mobilizing media support.

Use of UNESCO Guidelines: The UNESCO Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms should be widely disseminated, particularly at the provincial level, to inform lawmakers about relevant principles and norms.

ANNEX

a)   News links :

1. https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/policymakers-experts-join-forces-to-forge-pathways-for-strengthening-digital-platform-governance-in-nepal?fbclid=IwY2xjawFfmU9leHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHbXGsDBp51QRVmaz79w-oPEyF6GiBgTJzpT-KZ2ZQj1y4NxthVJMvq3xRQ_aem_tKSMvnFQm0r1u5YFPWGVPw

2. https://freedomforum.org.np/multi-stakeholders-discuss-digital-platform-governance-in-nepal/

3. https://newbusinessage.com/article/nepal-explores-human-rights-centered-approaches-to-digital-platform-governance