



Press invitation: Stockholm Internet Forum 2021, SIF21:

Mobilising for digital resilience - a free, open and secure Internet in the shifting landscapes of the pandemic.

Should the Internet be a resource for strengthening democracy – or should it be allowed to be a tool for limiting and shrinking the democratic space?

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an inevitable surge in the use of digital technologies. Thanks to advanced digital tools billions of people have been able to continue working, communicate and manage errands, even though societies have been completely or partially locked-down.

However, our growing reliance on digital tools has also exposed threats and vulnerabilities. There is an increase in existing disparities between those with and without access to the Internet. Perhaps even more severe is State authorities increased control over the media, human rights activists, online activists, and others, through surveillance techniques and internet shutdowns.

On May 10-12, we bring you the seventh edition of the Stockholm Internet Forum (SIF). This year's event is an entirely digital experience. During three days it will gather 500-1000 online activists, democracy advocates, and journalists from all across the globe. SIF offers a platform for participants to freely discuss security and safety concerns, such as hate speech, targeted attacks and surveillance, but also to exchange knowledge and ideas on how to strengthen online democracy.

The Director General of Sida, **Carin Jämtin**, will inaugurate this year's SIF. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, **Ann Linde**, and the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation, **Per Olsson Fridh** will also take part of SIF21. Other renown speakers are **Irene Khan**, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of freedom of opinion and expression, **Clément Nyaletsossi Voule**, UN Special Rapporteur on Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association and **Mary Lawlor**, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders.

When: 10-12 May, 2021

Where: All open sessions and keynotes will be live streamed on www.stockholminternetforum.se and Sida's youtube channel: [Link](#)
Media can attend all open sessions. Participants and media representatives are welcome to ask questions to the panels on Twitter with the hashtag #SIF21.

Link to the programme and additional information can be found here:
<https://stockholminternetforum.se/>.

For further questions, inquiries or interview requests: contact Press Officer Inga-Lill Hagberg on Sida's Press Office. Phone: +46 706-27 60 98, email: inga-lill.hagberg@sida.se or twitter: [@Ingalillhagberg](https://twitter.com/Ingalillhagberg)

Open sessions during SIF21, open for media:

Monday 10 May 13:45-14:45 CEST (UTC +2):

Opening panel : Building Resilience – why we need to talk about tech

A multifaceted panel opens SIF21 by discussing the role of the internet and technology in building resilience as the world faces a pandemic.

Tuesday 11 May 10:15-11:15 CEST (UTC +2):

Towards Universal Connectivity

This session will highlight the importance of providing open and secure internet connectivity that is accessible to all students.

3.7 billion people were offline during the pandemic, meaning that families and individuals with good connectivity were able to continue to work and learn, and those without were left further behind. This session will highlight the challenges that have been brought to the forefront as a result of the pandemic and the need for good connectivity. It will also highlight some of the solutions and work underway to address this.

Organised by International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and UNICEF in collaboration with Sida

Speakers: Doreen Bogdan Martin, Director BDT, ITU, Mats Granryd, the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSMA), Doreen Bogdan Martin, Director BDT, ITU, Mr. Pavel Koktyshev, Vice Chairman, Zerde holding, Kazakhstan

Tuesday 11 May, 14:15-15:00 CEST (UTC +2)

26 years after Beijing: Women human rights defenders online

Policy recognition of online gender-based violence against WHRDs – and increased attacks in the pandemic and a shrinking democratic space.

During the last years, concerns about WHRDs exposure to gender-based violence in the online space have gained wide policy recognition. This session builds on demands to protect WHRDs, towards the Generation Equality Forum in Paris following up on the Beijing Platform for Action. Given the increase in online attacks against WHRDs, exacerbated by the shift to virtual platforms during the pandemic and in an era of shrinking democratic space, state and non-state actors must take further action.

Organised by The Association for Progressive Communications (APC) in collaboration with Sida

Speakers: Jan Moolman, Women's Rights Programme co-manager, Association for Progressive Communication Women's Rights Programme, Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Clement Voule, UN Special Rapporteur on Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, Annika Ben David, Ambassador-at-large for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden

Tuesday 11 May, 16:15-17:15 CEST (UTC +2):

The role of digitalization in building resilient societies

This session will highlight successful examples and lessons learned from digital innovations and responses to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Every country is grappling with how best to respond to, and recover from, the Covid-19 pandemic. Some countries were better prepared than others. This session will explore how digital transformation has been pivotal during the pandemic and how some of those successful strategies are helping to plan to build back better, more resilient societies in the longer term.

Organised by Digital Impact Alliance in collaboration with Sida

Speakers: Kate Wilson (CEO DIAL)

Tuesday 12 May, 14:00-14:15 CEST (UTC +2):

Ann Linde will hold a keynote session

Read more about the open sessions [here](#).

Interesting speakers at SIF21 – open sessions



Irene Khan ([@Irenekhan](#)). UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. She is the first woman to hold this position since the establishment of the mandate in 1993.

Irene Khan is an internationally recognized advocate for human rights, gender equality and social justice. She teaches at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, and is co-author of *The Unheard Truth: Poverty and Human Rights*, which has been published in seven languages.



Clément Nyaletsossi VOULE ([@cvoule](#)). UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association. Prior to his appointment, he led the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) that support human rights defenders. Mr. Voule also worked as Secretary-General of the Togolese Coalition of Human Rights Defenders, as a campaigner for

the Togolese Coalition for the International Criminal Court and as Secretary-General of the Amnesty International section in Togo.



Mary Lawlor ([@MaryLawlorhrds](#)), UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders. Ms. Lawlor is currently an Adjunct Professor of Business and Human Rights in the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI), School of Business, Trinity College Dublin. In 2001 she founded *Front Line Defenders - the International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders* to concentrate on human rights defenders at risk.



Mats Granryd ([@MatsGranryd](#)). Director General of the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSMA) and a Member of its Board. Mats is a strong proponent of sustainability and led the mobile industry in becoming the first sector to broadly commit to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016. He is now spearheading initiatives to amplify and accelerate the mobile industry's impact on all 17 of the SDGs, across both developed and developing markets.



Kate Wilson ([@DIAL_Kate](#)). CEO of Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL). Kate Wilson believes that digital technology products, new technology policies and updated business model practices are required to make transformative change in the lives of the underserved and decrease the growing digital divide. Prior to DIAL, Kate co-founded and led the Digital Health Solutions Group at PATH where she designed and led several global projects, in both Africa and Asia, most notably those using digital technology to improve the delivery of immunization services and health information systems for universal health coverage.



Helani Galpaya ([@Helanigalpaya](#)) is the CEO of LIRNEasia, an information and communication technology policy and regulation think tank active in the Asia Pacific region. She researches and engages in public discourse on issues related to net neutrality, policy and regulatory barriers in Internet access, e-Government and broadband quality of service. She is also currently researching how experiences and perceptions of harassment, surveillance and privacy impact the way men and women differentially experience the Internet, and how online identity helps or hinders their digital and political participation.

Interesting people at SIF21 - closed sessions:



Sonia Jorge ([@SoniaA4AI](#)). Executive Director for Alliance for Affordable Internet. Sonia Jorge is an expert in the confluence of development and communications policy and has over 25 years of diverse international experience in a career spanning both the private and not-for-profit sectors. As a policy advisor, Sonia has led numerous digital policy and development projects in several countries and with international organizations, such as the World Bank, UNDP, UN Women, and for private sector companies, from mobile operators to industry associations.



Phumzile Van Damme ([@zilevandamme](#)) is a South African politician and Member of the Parliament of South Africa representing South Africa's official opposition, the Democratic Alliance. She was first elected at the 2014 South African general election and re-elected in 2019. She currently serves as a Whip in National Assembly and is a member of the Communications and Digital Technologies Committee. Van Damme has been described as a Social Liberal and is considered a global expert on misinformation.