IGF Leadership Panel WSIS+20 Priorities

Explanatory note: *"Internet" should be taken in this document to include the World Wide Web as an integral component of the system. A distinction can usefully be made between the basic technical infrastructure of the Internet and the applications that rely on it. Policy development sometimes confuses these aspects, leading to policy decisions associated with the uses of the Internet that interfere with and may be inimical to the operation of the Internet.*

Stakeholder contribution to the WSIS+20 review

Stakeholder input to the World Summit on the Information Society 20-year review (WSIS+20) review, through the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is crucial. This increases the likelihood that the WSIS+20 outcomes align with the interests of the stakeholders and receive support. It is also an opportunity for the community to situate the IGF's priorities within the WSIS+20 process.

Indefinite renewal of the IGF mandate

The WSIS+20 review should establish the IGF's mandate as a permanent entity to ensure its ongoing impact and relevance in the evolving landscape of the global governance of the Internet and digital policy processes.

The IGF has proven its value in its 20 years of functioning and added value to Internet-related and other digital policy debates. It is time for it to become a permanent structure. Its unique function in enhancing and fostering meaningful dialogue with all stakeholders on digital cooperation should not be lost.

Permanent funding and institutional structure of IGF

The IGF should be part of the UN budget and become a permanent UN body.

A stable funding model will strengthen the capacity of the IGF and its resources, especially the Secretariat, which manages the end-to-end process for the annual Forum, National and Regional Internet Governance Forums (NRIs) and other activities, such as the various intersessional work streams (Policy Networks, Dynamic Coalitions, Best Practice Forums).

Contribute to the implementation of the Global Digital Compact

If the WSIS+20 review decides the implementation of the GDC, the IGF should be part of it, working in tandem with the WSIS Forum, as the premier platform for the evaluation of the progress achieved by the GDC while making the NRIs a channel for discussion and action on the GDC.

The Internet We Want (IWW) summarizes the plethora of topics and issues the IGF community has been discussing over the past 20 years on Internet governance and related digital policy matters, keeping pace with the rapid development of technology. It presents a framework to measure progress on these issues, as part of the implementing structure of the GDC.

The WSIS established[1] an implementation and follow-up mechanism at the national, regional and international levels that must be used for the GDC[2], without the need to create new mechanisms and processes, as the existing ones provide an adequate framework for the follow-up of all issues related to the digital world, including those related to emerging technologies. The IGF should continue to be a fundamental component of this mechanism, not only through its annual global meeting, but also through

---

[1] Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, Paragraphs 99 and 100
[2] Global Digital Compact, Paragraph 68

the NRIs. For this mechanism to work in a harmonious way, all its components must be articulated in a formal way and avoid duplication by emphasizing the unique characteristics of each of the components.

IGF must be prepared to continue to adapt to the needs of all stakeholders

The IGF structure and practices have evolved with time. The MAG organizes the annual meetings. The Secretariat facilitates the MAG. More recently a Leadership Panel was added by the Secretary-General of the UN. The introduction of Dynamic Coalitions (among other concepts) led to intersessional engagement which is of increasing importance. NRI sprang up providentially and the Secretariat also facilitates these bodies. Over time, more reporting has become common but likely all would benefit from more visibility for parties who are not in attendance at the Annual or NRI meetings.

Regarding attendance at the annual IGF, new tracks have brought legislators, regulators and administrators to the meeting but there is more to be done. Governments are initially a part of the multistakeholder concept but their engagement is very dependent on the value they perceive in participation. As the Internet and World Wide Web have become increasingly important to the social and economic well-being of countries and their citizens, governments have increased interest in both the constructive aspects of the Internet and the potential hazards that this global information system affords. Harmful online behaviors lead some countries to seek regulatory control of components of the Internet: the institutions that collectively support its operation (e.g. Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), Internet Society, Regional Internet Registries, Root Zone Operators, Internet Engineering and Research Task Forces, Internet Architecture Board, World Wide Web Consortium, Domain Name Registries and Registrars), the operators of the physical infrastructure of the Internet (e.g. Internet Service Providers, Internet exchange Providers, Internet Application Providers) and the organizations that use the Internet to provide services to government, private sector and general public. These organisations are essential for operating and innovating services on the Internet. As they remain open and inclusive of all stakeholders, they allow for an unforeseen development for the benefit of all Internet users – private, corporate and governments. This should be sustained!

The IGF may need to further adapt its operation to provide more concrete recommendations to all stakeholders, including governments. A combination of NRIs, Internet Society Chapters and participants in IGF may be able to provide useful and localized information about the use, availability, performance and utility of the Internet. Such data may be essential to inform the crafting of policies regarding the operation and use of the Internet. Balancing regulatory actions for the protection of users and maintaining the demonstrated value of an open Internet should be a major focus of IGF attention. Along these lines, the IGF and NRIs might usefully engage with member state representatives to enhance awareness and clarity of the Internet's value and potential actions (e.g. technical and regulatory) to make it a safer and more productive environment.