



## **Open Consultations and Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) Meeting**

**28-30 January 2019**

### ***Synthesis Paper***

## ***Contributions Taking Stock of IGF 2018 and Looking Forward to IGF 2019***

### **I. Introduction**

1. This paper summarizes inputs received from the IGF community in response to an invitation<sup>1</sup> from the IGF Secretariat for stakeholders to submit written contributions taking stock of the IGF 2018 meeting (13th IGF<sup>2</sup>) and looking forward to the IGF 2019 meeting (13th IGF). In addition, the taking stock process this year also asked stakeholders to reflect on ways the IGF can strengthen its collaboration with other organizations and/or across disciplines, as well as how it can contribute to the work of the UN Secretary-General's newly formed High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation<sup>3</sup>.

2. This synthesis paper is intended to form an input for the first Open Consultations and Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) Meeting (28-30 January 2019) in the preparatory process for IGF 2019. This paper is a summary of the various contributions received by the IGF Secretariat. Some specific suggestions are included verbatim. A complete list of contributions received can be found here: <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/2018-2019-stocktaking-contributions> and in the Annex of this document.

### **II. Taking Stock of 2018 programming, outputs, preparatory process, community intersessional activities and the 13th annual IGF: What worked well? What worked not so well?**

3. Many stakeholders expressed deep appreciation to the Government of France for its hosting of the 13<sup>th</sup> IGF, particularly as it enthusiastically volunteered to take up this role late in the planning phase and in the absence of other hosting options. Considering the challenge of a much shorter timeframe, the IGF Secretariat, the staff at the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the French Government team, which was seen to have a

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-community-public-consultation-taking-stock-of-the-2018-work-programme-and-13th-igf-and>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2018-0>

<sup>3</sup> <https://digitalcooperation.org/about/>

refreshingly hands-on approach, were praised for their overall excellent running of the meeting. In terms of logistics, the 13<sup>th</sup> IGF was cited by some as one of the best ever.

4. The MAG, under the leadership of its Chair, Ms. Lynn St. Amour, was also thanked for its hand in planning a dynamic, successful programme.

5. Several submissions remarked on the suitability of UNESCO as a meeting venue that was both institutional and functional. Registration procedures were highlighted as especially smooth and efficient in 2018. Despite some rooms being small in size and non-configurable due to their historical status, they provided open and comfortable settings for discussions, including for bilateral meetings. The provision of overflow rooms at the time of the high-level opening was appreciated by many; it was further noted that the premises featured multiple, useful spaces for networking, smaller group meetings and independent work. The friendliness and availability of UNESCO's staff in helping participants navigate the venue was emphasized.

6. Stakeholders remarked on UNESCO's central and easy-to-reach location within Paris. Although food offerings during the lunch breaks were limited, it was recognized that these provided a much-needed, cost and time effective alternative to external restaurants. Paris in general was said to be a desirable meeting location; however, as an expensive European capital, many urged a rotation to different regions for future IGFs, particularly to facilitate the participation of stakeholders from the Global South.

7. The scheduling of the IGF within 'Paris Digital Week' was widely viewed as advantageous. Many said this raised the IGF's profile and placed it within a wider context of international events attended by world leaders, including the inaugural Paris Peace Forum and the Govtech Summit.

8. There was broad agreement on the far-reaching, positive impact of the presence in the meeting of UN Secretary-General António Guterres and French President Emmanuel Macron. This saw the IGF presided over for the first time, at the highest UN and host country levels. The participation of Mr. Guterres and Mr. Macron was felt to have increased not only the visibility of the IGF, but also its political relevance and the future impact of its outcomes.

9. The absence of the traditional Day 0 or 'pre-events' day was raised by some. Inputs noted that in the past, this informal day had provided a good opportunity to organize meetings and events with less rigid formats, and its reinstatement was called for. Reactions were mixed to the shorter meeting schedule at three days versus four, with some appreciating that this made the programme easier to follow, and others expressing that the time was insufficient to cover the many issues under discussion.

10. Remote participation, once again, was highlighted as a critical component of the IGF ethos and the IGF's meeting's success. This was felt to have worked largely well for a number of sessions once connectivity issues had been overcome at the venue, although some difficulties remained with remote moderation.

11. IGF Village booth holders who submitted inputs welcomed the opportunity to showcase their work and meet stakeholders from other Internet governance-related organizations. While the Village exhibition area was spacious and well-appointed, some had also hoped for better-equipped individual booths.

13. The launch in 2018 of a first-ever public 'Call for Issues' ahead of the usual workshops process was seen by many as a success, with some remarking that it had achieved a meeting programme that, as desired, was more focused and appropriately reflective of the topical interests of the IGF community.

14. The workshop proposal and selection process was said to be well-organized and well-managed, despite the shorter preparatory phase. The 'Call for Issues' in relation to the workshops process was highly appreciated and noted as effective for reducing the number of workshops on the same topics. At the same time, some felt that, partly due to the high number of workshops that had been accepted for a reduced meeting duration, the schedule was too dense. In addition, a few stakeholders mentioned the process for submitting proposals could be difficult to navigate, both because of the complex requirements involved and because related information was in English only.

15. The work of Best Practice Forums (BPFs), the initiative on 'Policy Options for Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion(s)' (CENB), and Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) – as well as of National, Regional & Youth IGF Initiatives (NRIs), continues to be strongly appreciated. In general, the inclusion of their individual sessions in the programme also continues to be supported, with the joint approach of some of these groups – DCs and NRIs, respectively, with members of the MAG – to the organization of main sessions seen as having worked well.

18. The overall content of the 2018 meeting was praised, in particular the timely emphasis on an 'Internet of Trust', with a programme reflecting the many ethical and cybersecurity issues related to this topic. Stakeholders took note of and embraced the stronger outlining of thematic tracks in the programme, and together with this, the thematic focus of main sessions. On the whole, the shorter duration of these sessions was viewed as an improvement.

17. The continuation in 2018 of synthesis or 'key' messages on the meeting's major themes was much supported. The 'IGF Messages', building on last year's experimental 'Geneva Messages', were highlighted as a positive development that should be maintained, as they represent both a valuable resource from the meeting and contribute to the progressive drive to have the IGF produce more tangible outputs from its discussions. It was also remarked that there had been two sets of messages with different approaches – one produced by the Secretariat, and the 'Paris Messages' by volunteers from the French Government – and that this underscored the need to find the right balance between a participatory, bottom-up and multistakeholder process and a desire for more curated outcomes.

19. Many said the Paris IGF accurately projected the vibrancy and trend in growth of the IGF community, with diverse stakeholders present in the meeting, including many newcomers. Nevertheless, it was said that the presence of governments and the private sector was still regrettably low or lower than hoped.

20. Across nearly all submissions, the political spotlight placed on the IGF in 2018 was seen as a positive opportunity. Without regard to the content of the 'Paris Call for Trust and Security', launched by President Macron during the meeting, it was felt, in general, that the IGF's use as a platform for such a proposal bolstered its profile.

### **III. Suggestions and Recommendations Looking Forward to the 14th IGF**

20. While Paris was noted as a well-connected destination for travel, stakeholders asked that future IGFs seriously take into account the affordability of meeting locations and diversify hosting regions from year to year. These comments were made in light of the 2017 IGF as well as 2019 IGF taking place in Western Europe.

21. To the extent possible, some submissions recommended maintaining a strategic scheduling of the meeting in sequence with other highly visible international events, as was done during 'Paris Digital Week'. However, it was also underlined that the timing of the IGF should not clash with other large fora where similar issues are discussed, as was the case in 2018 with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)'s Plenipotentiary meeting.

22. A few suggestions were made regarding rooms in future venues – namely that they be large enough to avoid overcrowding and accommodate popular sessions. Some wished to see larger and more bilateral meeting rooms made available. A specific idea was also put forward for an ample 'study hall'-like space, with plugs for devices, and in which participants could work quietly.

23. To avoid future connectivity issues, it was strongly recommended testing be done in the venue prior to the meeting, as was traditionally the case during Day 0. It was said that the IGF should be especially mindful of the functionality of its remote participation tools when the meeting is hosted in a location that can be difficult to travel to for stakeholders from the Global South. More importantly, these tools should be accessible for persons with disabilities. It was suggested continuing to liaise with the IGF's Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility (DCAD), which has been an committed advocate on this front for many years.

24. Related to the above, recommendations were made to ensure the appropriate presence of in-room remote moderators for effectively bringing in perspectives from online participants. It was noted with appreciation that participant comments made through social media channels, such as Twitter, were already being taken into consideration in discussions. At the same time, some noted a drop in the active engagement of online participants and called for the IGF to do

more to promote this opportunity. Resources allowing, a request was made for interpretation of meeting proceedings to be provided via the IGF's social media platforms.

25. Stakeholders continued to see improvements in the scheduling of IGF sessions, attributed in part to the more thematic approach to the programme in 2018, as well as a shorter schedule overall. Nonetheless, a few wished to see even further reduction of concurrent sessions on same or similar themes, which could be greatly eased by the wholesale reduction of sessions in the programme. In terms of programme structure, a couple of suggestions were made to introduce a schedule in which workshops would be held on separate days from more outcome-oriented 'working sessions' or main sessions.

26. Some general recommendations were made across session types, primarily centred on panelists and panel configurations. Despite positive steps toward increasing the stakeholder diversity of panels, it was said this could be taken further. More pressingly, according to many, the number of panelists should be further reduced, and attention paid to the risk that roundtable formats – considered by the MAG to be more conducive to discussion and engagement – are used as ways to have what could effectively be expanded panels. It was said interactive and dynamic formats should continue to be promoted, with special mention made of the opening high-level sessions in 2017 and 2018 which applied these to good effect. Future opening sessions should strive to be similarly engaging and dialogue-based.

27. A couple of inputs touched on session organizing. It was suggested, for instance, that the resource persons list on the IGF website be better categorized, to assist those looking for experts in their sessions. It was also recommended ensuring all main sessions have their session details published online in a timely way, as well as more structured planning for some collaborative sessions by NRIs. Regarding particularly active DCs, it was said 60-minute session durations were inadequate and that they should be allotted more time in future schedules.

28. The public 'Call for Issues' ahead of the 'Call for Workshops' was lauded as a major innovation in the building of the programme. It was advised by a good many stakeholders retaining this, and beyond retention, paying closer attention to the results of the process. In addition to the issues identified in the Call, it was said the IGF should draw stronger and more explicit links to topics related to sustainable development and the UN 2030 Agenda, as well as to perpetually emerging digital issues, in order to secure its relevance in wider policy discussions.

29. The more outcome-oriented reporting process introduced in 2018, and contributing to a set of key 'IGF Messages', was said to be a step in the right direction. Some inputs called for simplifying and improving on this process by considering a reduction to the number of reporting phases, as well as making electronic submission more user-friendly.

30. Related to this, the continuation of the 'IGF Messages' themselves was strongly supported and was said, should be a focus of the meeting activity in 2019. A suggestion was also made to include in these documents 'next steps' and areas for action.

31. Inputs concerning the IGF's intersessional activities – namely DCs, BPFs and CENB – as well as NRIs, emphasized their importance and the critical need to continue to support them. From a qualitative standpoint, the management and results of their work throughout the year was, on the whole, felt to be excellent and said to represent an IGF success in terms of its ability to produce tangible policy recommendations. Regarding BPFs specifically, some advised caution in selecting too many from one cycle to the next, as this could risk spreading the Secretariat's resources thin. Similarly, it was suggested avoiding 'bundling' too many topics under one BPF. Taking all intersessional activities and NRIs as a whole, it was felt the communication among and between them should be greatly enhanced.

32. Many said the dissemination of intersessional groups' policy outputs should be given more priority. It was noted that still too few are aware that the IGF is producing these outputs and that greater emphasis needed to be placed on systematically sharing and building communications campaigns around them.

33. Regarding NRIs specifically, stakeholders advocated for more strategically capitalizing on them for promotional purposes – as vehicles of positive visibility for the IGF and of the IGF's values. Some also suggested using NRIs for local and regional 'policy mapping' exercises that could feed into the annual meeting and intersessional work.

34. In general, it was felt the IGF needed to do more on its outreach front, with a focus on regularly sharing its successes, effectively communicating the 'added value' of the IGF, proactively engaging the media, and utilizing its existing partnerships. The comment was also made that the responsibility for outreach and communications should rest primarily with the Secretariat.

35. While remarks on improving outreach were applied broadly, a high number of inputs urged the strengthening of communications with governments. It was said the Secretariat should take advantage of its location in Geneva to forge ties with permanent missions, as well as explore more connections to intergovernmental bodies. This was in addition to a perceived need to include not only under-represented governments and business community leaders in the IGF's policy discussions, but also, specifically, representatives of the media, industries undergoing digitization and citizen laypeople.

36. Citing their concern that the IGF continue to be relevant, and in order to build on the positive visibility and momentum of the 2018 meeting, many stakeholders put forward recommendations on the IGF's strategic trajectory. Among them, it was said the IGF needed to interpret its mandate with a current-day lens and understand how Internet governance has evolved; and while adhering to the mandate, as a priority, move toward developing tangible and practical recommendations that address digital policy challenges. It was also advised that the IGF

continue to apply a broader approach to Internet governance that includes digital topics that affect citizens in their day-to-day lives, while some mentioned preferring a narrower approach. In general, many wished to see the IGF fulfill its potential as a globally recognized destination for addressing existing and emerging Internet public policy issues.

37. Finally, some contributions continued to call for the re-appointment of the position of 'Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Internet Governance', which has long been vacant, in part as a way of strengthening the IGF's political role and relevance.

#### **IV. How could the IGF respond to the recommendations made by the UN Secretary-General during his speech at the IGF 2018 Opening Ceremony?<sup>4</sup>**

38. Regarding the Secretary-General's recommendation that there be a more inter-disciplinary approach to Internet governance, it was said more should be done to connect the IGF in a cross-sectoral way within the UN system itself. The IGF could also consider conducting Internet governance capacity building within certain academic disciplines. Further, the IGF should continue to include in its discussions issues that relate to other fields, such as jobs and the economy.

39. On the matter of shared references and language on digital policy, it was suggested the IGF could be repository of such knowledge in the UN system. In order to continue effectively building a shared language, the IGF should also maintain its commitment to making its activities more multilingual.

40. There was agreement on the need to continue including under-represented voices in Internet governance debates, and on continuing to discuss the digital divide where it intersects with Internet governance. The comment was made that as connectivity expands, in reality, more research should be done into more specifically identifying who is under-represented. The need to put youth voices at the centre of digital policy discussions was also noted.

41. To address the matter of IGF reform, suggestions focused on similar issues. Broadly, it was said the IGF should be more sustainably funded; feature a more focused annual meeting programme; highlight the success of its existing activities and outputs; invest greater effort in a move toward tangible outcomes; and strengthen its relationship with governments.

#### **V. How could the IGF respond to President Macron's "call for action" made during his speech at the IGF 2018 Opening Ceremony?<sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2018-address-to-the-internet-governance-forum-by-un-sg-ant%C3%B3nio-guterres>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2018-speech-by-french-president-emmanuel-macron>

42. Many noted the critical importance of collaboration for overcoming the challenges outlined by President Macron. Mr. Macron stated that new and innovative approaches were needed, and in line with this, inputs largely expressed that this would be best achieved by including multistakeholder voices and bridging the multilateral-multistakeholder gap in the drive for solutions, with the IGF as a logical venue.

43. Related to the above, several submissions focused on the need to enhance the IGF itself as a response. These remarked that the IGF should have more prominence within the UN, and to this end, the suggestion was repeated to put in place a Special Advisor to the Secretary-General tied to the IGF. In addition, it was said the IGF needs to extend its reach to different stakeholders, including governments, to strengthen the legitimacy of its discussions. While there is a wish to see its role elevated, at the same time, it was underlined that the bottom-up, non-binding nature of the IGF must be maintained.

44. Some inputs cautioned that there was a need for technically informed policy proposals in response to President Macron's call, and linked with this, an understanding of the importance of a single, open, interoperable Internet.

## **VI. What other organizations/disciplines should the IGF be collaborating with and how/to what purpose?**

45. Many emphasized that the IGF is already an open, multistakeholder, collaborative space which fosters dialogue and partnerships across disciplines and organizations. It was noted that this aspect of the IGF should be continuously developed and in particular, to extend to never-before engaged stakeholders and actors.

46. Nonetheless, some specific suggestions were made – namely for the IGF to establish closer and more collaborative ties to organizations within the UN system, such as UNESCO and the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum. Enhanced collaboration with the NETmundial conference, the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), and civil society organizations such as the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) and Mozilla Foundation, were also suggested.

## **VII. The Secretary-General set up a High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation (HLPDC) to “identify good examples and propose modalities for working cooperatively across sectors, disciplines and borders to address challenges in the digital age”. How can the IGF contribute to the work of the HLPDC to help foster these aims? Are there specific inputs for the HLPDC in relation to the IGF?**

47. Responding to how the IGF can contribute to the HLPDC's work, a majority of submissions referenced the IGF's extensive multistakeholder, regional, national, as well as intersessional networks, and that these could be utilized for providing inputs to the Panel.

48. Many felt that in light of the IGF being a very well-placed organization to fill the gaps in cooperation identified by the HLPDC, or at minimum, as an organization that can actively improve cooperation on digital policy issues, that there were ways in which the HLPDC could contribute to the IGF's work. It was noted by many that they hoped the Panel would make recommendations on how and where the IGF could be strengthened, in areas of financing, outreach, high-level political visibility and the issuing of action-oriented outcomes.

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## **Annex**

### **List of Contributions (listed in order as received by IGF Secretariat)**

- Leonardo Reis - Solintel
- Wout de Natris - De Natris Consult
- Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones, Mexico / Federal Telecommunications Institute of Mexico (IFT)
- Michael J. Oghia - Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)
- Amrita Choudhury - Cyber Cafe Association of India (CCAOI)
- Arsène Tungali - Civil Society Internet Governance Caucus (IGC)
- Manohar Velpuri - Absolutum Consultancy
- Timea Suto - International Chamber of Commerce-Business Action to Support the Information Society (ICC-BASIS)
- Oksana Prykhodko - European Media Platform
- Livia Walpen - Swiss Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM)
- Concettina Cassa - Agenzia per l'Italia Digitale / Agency for Digital Italy (Agid)
- Silvia Way Naupay - Women in Politics and Power, Peru
- Anriette Esterhuysen - Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
- Sivasubramanian Muthusamy - Internet Society (ISOC) India, Chennai
- Nigel Hickson - International Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

**-Roman Chukov**

**-Timothy Kwadwu Asiedu**

**-Ali Hussain**

**-Mark W. Datysgeld - Governance Primer**

**-Constance Bommelaer - ISOC**

**-Valentina Scialpi - European Commission**