

The Internet Governance Forum: Open Call for Input on Inter-sessional Work Response from the Association for Progressive Communications 2 February 2015

1. Which themes should be addressed in the inter-sessional work of IGF 2015?

- **Human rights-related issues** should be taken up through inter-sessional work. As we suggested in our assessment of IGF2014¹, privacy/data protection and intermediary liability, the importance of anonymity are among pressing issues that deserve the attention of inter-sessional work. Inter-sessional work on the right to privacy could help inform other UN processes addressing the issue, for example at the UN Human Rights Council. It could also inform national processes.
- **Security:** Many governments and nongovernmental actors are currently concerned with addressing the challenge of both respecting rights to privacy, as well as respond to the perceived need to make the internet more 'secure'. Opinions on how to 'secure' the internet vary enormously. These issues are complex and comprise both policy and technical challenges which require the in-depth attention that only intersessional work can provide.
- **Internet Governance and Development:** Articulating a *development agenda* in internet governance has always been challenging. Creating the opportunity for intersessional work with developing country actors will be a far more effective means of doing this than just allocating time at a global IGF. Dedicating intersessional time to the specific concerns of developing countries/and of economic and social development in general, would help the IGF address issues such as capacity building, developing country participation in internet governance, creating a more equal distribution of power and influence in the development of the internet and internet decision-making. It would create the opportunity for discussion of substantive policy issues of concern to developing country stakeholders. This issue is particularly timely in 2015, as the UN is finalising its Sustainable Development Goals. Inter-sessional work on internet governance and development could contribute to UN-wide discussions on development. It would also assist in involving governments in the IGF process.
- **The overall WSIS+10 review** (this theme is linked to the above 'development agenda' point). IGF intersessional work could feed into this process by facilitating the opportunity for multiple stakeholders to share views in ways that can compliment that intergovernmental process that will take place at the UN in New York.
- particular, the need for public access – one of APC's key policy concerns. Specifically infrastructure sharing, rethinking universal service funds, and the need to open radio spectrum, such as TV white space (TVWS), to more unlicensed and innovative use could be topics for intersessional work.
- **Internet governance principles:** Intersessional IGF work should focus on dissemination and discussion of the IG principles agreed on at the NETmundial with a view to identifying main concerns with the principles, if and how these can be addressed, and ultimately with a few to and having the NETmundial principles adopted by regional IGFs, national IGFs, intergovernmental organisations, multi-stakeholder forums/bodies, industry bodies, civil society networks, etc..
- While it is not a theme, we think it would be useful for stakeholder groups to work on their own intersessionally to build their understanding and develop their views on particular issues so as to enable more mature debate during the IGF.

2. In the past, Dynamic Coalitions have constituted the major inter-sessional activity. However, the MAG felt that Dynamic Coalitions would benefit from a better integration into the main IGF workstream. What should be done to achieve this objective?

- Invite each Dynamic Coalition to identify someone to participate actively in the IGF MAG if they are not already represented in the MAG.

¹ https://www.apc.org/en/system/files/APC_IGF2014_Assessment.pdf

- Request each Dynamic Coalition to present their proposal for Intersessional Work to the first MAG meeting of each new IGF cycle.
- Encourage delegates from the Dynamic Coalitions to engage with regional IGFs.

3. Last year saw the revival of Best Practice Forums. They provided reports of their activities, available on the IGF website: <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/best-practice-forums>. Which themes should be continued? Should there be new themes developed through Best Practice Forums (e.g. ICT and Gender, Infrastructure Developments/IXPs)?

- Yes, Best Practice Forums should be continued.
- Themes could be identified through 1) analysis of the outcomes/chair's report of the previous IGF, 2) call to the community.
- BPF themes should be discussed at regional IGFs.
- Suggestions for themes: ICT and Gender; Human Rights Best Practices (in various contexts); Public access to the internet; Using the internet to enable participation in political and public life by people that are generally excluded; Access to learning and learning materials; Viable open access business models that do not rely on traditional rigid intellectual property control for access to online content and information; Breaking the gender divide in the ICT sector in developing countries.

4. What is the most effective way to liaise with the regional and national IGF initiatives and to involve them in the IGF's inter-sessional work?

- Making Internet Governance more relevant for developing country participants
- Creating and sustaining communication channels between the regional IGF initiatives
- Involve regional IGFs in agenda building
- Encourage regional and national IGFs participation and where possible provide financial resources to make this a possibility
- Encourage regional and national IGFs to respond to calls for submissions re the preparatory phase of the IGF
- Appoint some MAG members to liaise directly with regional and national IGFs?
- Ask each regional IGF to nominate a representative to participate in the work of the MAG if they are not already represented on the MAG. If they are represented on the MAG formalise that relationship.
- Introduce regular reporting into the MAG from regional IGF organisers, and into regional IGF processes on what is happening at the global level.
- Invite regional IGFs to identify intersessional topics, to work on them, and to report on this work at the global IGF.
- We recommend that the linkages be made through specific thematic areas from the beginning of a cycle - with regional IGFs discussing a topic and feeding conclusions into the global IGF. (2014)
- We feel these spaces have an important role to play in linking national, regional and global dimensions of internet governance within the IGF as a complex policy system. The IGF should find ways to reflect regional inputs in the global IGF agenda in a more systematic way. In addition the regional and national processes have to be strengthened in their own right and the nature and character of those processes should be defined by the regional, national and local actors.

5. What types of formats are best suited for the IGF's inter-sessional activities to provide outputs: Dynamic Coalitions, Best Practice Forums, policy messages, a combination of all, other?

- In addition to BPFs and Dynamic Coalitions we propose working groups tasked with something specific such as compiling examples of public internet access provision in different parts of the world. Ideally these working groups should work as part of the BPF process.

6. What is the best way to organize the inter-sessional work towards the IGF event: virtual webinars, physical working groups on the side of MAG meetings with remote participation, year-long collaboration through wiki-type tools, other suggestions?

- Physical meetings w/remote participation
- Online meetings
- Identifying groups already working on relevant issues and inviting them to be part of the process, for example, groups working on transparent and inclusive governance who do cover internet related issues, but who are not necessarily closely involved in the IGF.
- Another example could be groups working on privacy and surveillance issues, such as the 'Necessary and Proportionate' coalition, or in the case of Africa, the coalition working on the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Principles.

7. What is the best way to present the outputs of IGF inter-sessional activities at the IGF event: main sessions, forums, workshops, other?

- Work done intersessionally to be tracked and reported on using the IGF website in a way that allows the community to comment and participate.
- Summary of intersessional work done to be presented at the opening plenary.
- Round tables/open forum type events or workshops where the work done intersessionally on different themes is presented at the IGF.
- A template for this presentation would be helpful and should include input from regional IGFs, as well as a section that makes recommendations on what should be discussed/explored at the global IGF.
- Intersessional work could build a common understanding/point of reference for main sessions;
- Intersessional work could be built on in workshops, which could serve as working sessions.

8. What should be the modalities for stakeholder engagement (e.g. online platform, etc.)? And what is the best way to raise the profile of IGF outputs with relevant communities and organizations?

- Building on the positive aspects of NETmundial, use online platforms, with written contributions, and allow for the opportunity for people to comment on working drafts of outcome documents. The NETmundial experience indicated that sufficient time for submissions and commenting, as well as transparency in processes, are key.
- To raise the profile of IGF outputs, stakeholders should be encouraged to take the outcomes forward at other venues. For example, following IGF2104, APC took forward a message crafted at the IGF to the Human Rights Council the following week. This kind of example is something that needs to be planned and built upon. For a long time, it has

been a goal to increase IGF communication with other fora and councils, this is one way to do it.

- Poster sessions and posters built into the IGF exhibition area.
- Use of social media