



# IGF Internet Governance Forum

**The Global Multistakeholder Forum for Dialogue on Internet Governance Issues**







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# What is the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)?

Internet governance was one of the most controversial issues at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in two phases, in Geneva, 2003, and in Tunis, 2005. Cognizant of the fact that any Internet governance approach should be inclusive and responsive, the WSIS requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convene a new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue.

As a platform for discussions, the Forum brings various stakeholder groups to the table as equals to exchange information and share good practices. While the IGF may not have decision-making mandates, it informs and inspires those who do. It facilitates a common understanding of how to maximize Internet opportunities and address risks and challenges.

The IGF also gives stakeholders from developing countries the opportunity to engage in the debate on Internet governance and it contributes to capacity building, allowing these stakeholders to build knowledge and skills that will facilitate their participation in existing Internet governance institutions and arrangements. Ultimately the involvement of all stakeholders, from developed as well as developing countries, is necessary for advancing dynamic public policies in Internet governance.





**T**he Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Secretariat supports the United Nations Secretary-General in carrying out the mandate issued at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS): to convene a new forum for multistakeholder policy dialogue – called the Internet Governance Forum. The IGF is a platform where all Internet stakeholders are equally invited to discuss the operational, technical, commercial, social and administrative aspects of managing Internet growth.

The IGF Secretariat is funded through voluntary contributions from various stakeholders to the United Nations IGF Trust Fund. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) provides administrative support to the IGF Secretariat, including the management of the IGF Trust Fund.

The IGF serves as a laboratory, a neutral space where all actors can take up an issue without concern that a decision may be taken against their interests. As an open forum, rather than a membership forum, the IGF is for all people with a stake in Internet governance. It was established in 2006 and has since gained prominence among Internet stakeholders as an open, inclusive and transparent forum for dialogue on Internet governance issues.



# Why is the IGF Important?

**T**he IGF has over the years identified a wide-range of issues to be addressed by the international community and has shaped decisions taken throughout the world.

The IGF does not adopt resolutions or create any binding treaties. Its importance lies in its ability to facilitate discourse between governments, intergovernmental organisations, private companies, the technical community and civil society organisations that deal with or are interested in Internet governance related public policy issues. IGF gatherings discuss proposed regulatory frameworks, potential risks, global trends, as well as best and worst practices that have been adopted or are currently under discussion. Participants also examine the impact of treaties, recommendations and other documents adopted in various international venues within the Internet governance ecosystem.



## Impacts:

- Enhanced cooperation and collaboration among key organizations and stakeholders dealing with different Internet governance issues
- Increased opportunity to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet
- Strengthened capacities of developing countries and their stakeholders to participate effectively in Internet governance arrangements
- Increased multilingualism and multiculturalism on the Internet



# The IGF Mandate

The mandate of the IGF are set out in paragraphs 72 to 80 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (the Tunis Agenda):

“We ask the UN Secretary-General, in an open and inclusive process, to convene, by the second quarter of 2006, a meeting of the new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue—called the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). The mandate of the Forum is to:

- Discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet;
- Facilitate discourse between bodies dealing with different cross-cutting international public policies regarding the Internet and discuss issues that do not fall within the scope of any existing body;
- Interface with appropriate inter-governmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview;
- Facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, and in this regard make full use of the expertise of the academic, scientific and technical communities;
- Advise all stakeholders in proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world;
- Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries;
- Identify emerging issues, bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the general public, and, where appropriate, make recommendations;
- Contribute to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise;
- Promote and assess, on an on-going basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet governance processes;
- Discuss, inter alia, issues relating to critical Internet resources;
- Help to find solutions to the issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet, of particular concern to everyday users;
- Publish its proceedings”

The United Nations General Assembly endorsed the Tunis Agenda in its resolution 60/252. The initial mandate of IGF was for five years, from 2006 to 2010. Recognizing the importance of the Forum in fostering the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet, as well as its role in building partnerships among different stakeholders, the United Nations General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to examine the desirability of the continuation of the Forum.

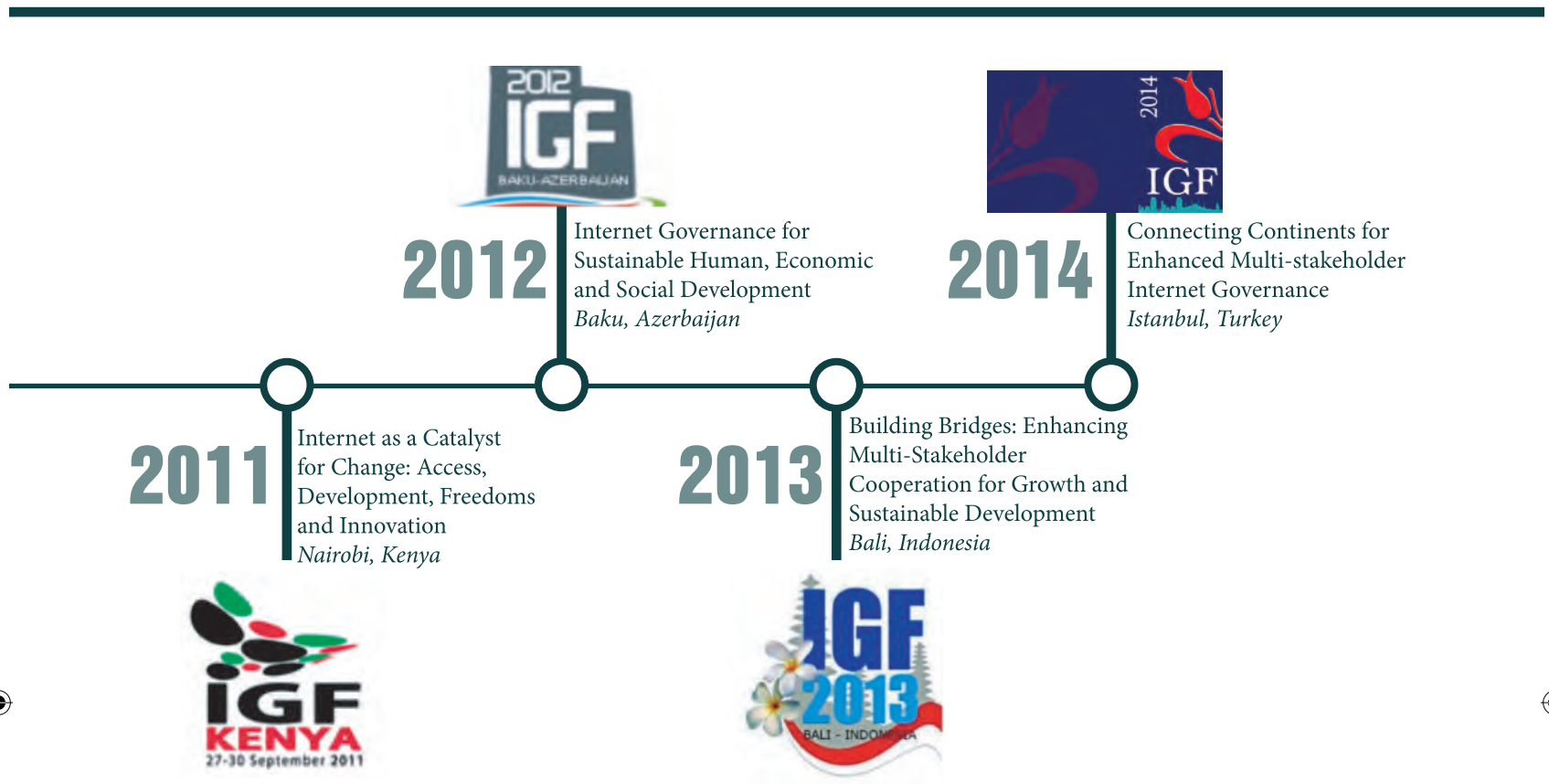
As a result of the five-year review, IGF’s mandate was renewed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/141 in 2010 for a further five years, under the patronage of the Secretary-General from 2011 to 2015.



# IGF Through the Years







# How is the IGF Funded?

**T**he IGF is funded through voluntary contributions from various stakeholders, including governments. Information about donors and their contributions is published on the <http://www.intgovforum.org> website.

The IGF Secretariat's activities are funded through voluntary contributions transferred to a multi-donor Trust Fund project administered by UNDESA. All contributions are managed in accordance with the United Nations Rules and Regulations and are, as such, subject to UN auditing policies. The expenditure is contained in the audited financial statements of the UN.

Host Countries are the primary funders of the costs of hosting the annual IGF meeting in their country.



# Ways to Participate in the IGF?

**A**s long as the Internet expands and evolves, it will continue to be the subject of political debate. Everyone must take an active role in managing the Internet and addressing governance challenges.

Your crucial contributions can make a difference and sustain the IGF's foundational work.

## Here's What You Can Do To Participate At Various Levels:

- **VISIT** the IGF Calendar to find a meeting in your area. Go to **[www.intgovforum.org](http://www.intgovforum.org)**
- **TAKE AN INTEREST** in domestic Internet governance discussions. What challenges does your local community face, and what policies are being introduced to address them?
- **START** or **CONTRIBUTE** to an ongoing dialogue on Internet issues with your relevant government agencies. Your expertise could help inform better decision making at a local or national level.
- **PARTICIPATE** in National, Regional, or Global IGF meetings. Share your knowledge and experience!







**IGF:** The Global IGF meeting is held annually in a different part of the world. For more, visit the IGF website at [www.intgovforum.org](http://www.intgovforum.org)

**REMOTE PARTICIPATION:** The IGF has been working to become fully accessible online. All of its sessions are live streamed, including workshops, opening and closing ceremonies, and thematic main sessions. In addition to watching the webcast of the sessions and follow real time captioning, remote participants are able to interact with the meeting by sending text questions and/or video/audio interventions using the remote participation platform

**REMOTE HUBS:** Remote hubs can be set up in different parts of the world with the aim of facilitating remote participation in the IGF meeting, as well as local debates on themes introduced at the IGF

**REGIONAL IGF INITIATIVES:** Regional IGF meetings are held throughout the year and throughout the world – in Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe and the Middle East

**NATIONAL IGF INITIATIVES:** National IGF meetings are held throughout the year and in several countries, among which Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malta, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russia, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States — For more, visit <http://www.intgovforum.org>

**OTHERS:** Youth IGF Project, Youth IGF, German Youth IGF, Youth Asia Pacific IGF  
<http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/igf-initiatives>

# How Can I Contribute to the IGF?

For contributions to the IGF and further information, please visit [www.intgovforum.org](http://www.intgovforum.org) or contact the IGF Secretariat:

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