IGF BEST PRACTICE FORUM

GENDER 2016:

A PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

20.07.2016
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Note: this is a provisional document and is subject to change at any time without notice.

ALPHABET SOUP

The world of Internet governance loves its acronyms and jargon, but that doesn't mean we do. Here's a quick guide to some of the most frequently used acronyms in this and other IGF documents:

BPF – best practice forum

DC – dynamic coalition

IGF – Internet Governance Forum

IGO – intergovernmental organization, e.g. the United Nations

Intersessional activities – community-led activities that occur throughout the year, i.e. not only at annual IGF meetings, but also between the meetings. Such activities offer the IGF community the opportunity to work on substantive and concrete longer-term projects in the field of Internet governance.

MAG – Multistakeholder Advisory Group, a group of individuals that represent each stakeholder group (civil society, intergovernmental organizations, governments, the technical community, and the business sector). See the current list here.

multistakeholder – also sometimes used as multi-stakeholder, refers to a process where multiple stakeholders (usually from all different fields – technical community, governments, civil society, IGOs and businesses) are involved

remote hub – an area set up away from the meeting with the aim of enabling people in different countries to listen and watch proceedings at IGF 2015 and to participate remotely.

UNDESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Still confused? You can also find Diplo's useful acronym glossary online.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM?

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) serves to bring people together from various stakeholder groups as equals, in discussions on public policy issues relating to the Internet. While the IGF has no negotiated outcomes, it informs and inspires those with policymaking power in both public and private sectors. The IGF facilitates a common understanding of how to maximize Internet opportunities and address risks and challenges that arise.

To learn more about the IGF and its work, [visit its website](#).

HOW DOES THE IGF WORK?

Every year, the multistakeholder IGF community works on not only organizing and hosting a major annual meeting (normally attended by 2000+ delegates), but also works on producing tangible outcomes through its programme of intersessional activities.

The IGF's **annual meeting** is organized by the multistakeholder advisory group (MAG), which is selected to represent the interests of every stakeholder group (civil society, intergovernmental organizations, governments, the technical community, and the business sector). (See the current list of MAG members [here](#).) At the IGF's meeting every

year, delegates discuss, exchange information and share good practices with each other. In 2016, this meeting will take place in Guadalajara, Mexico, from 6 to 9 December (tbc). *To learn more about this meeting and how to participate, visit the host country's [website](#).*

The IGF developed an **intersessional programme** consisting of best practice forums (BPFs) and other initiatives intended to complement other IGF community activities. This intersessional programme was designed in accordance with the recommendations of a 2012 [report](#) that called for the development of more tangible outputs to 'enhance the impact of the IGF on global Internet governance and policy'.

The IGF MAG is supported by the [United](#) [Nations](#) [Secretariat](#) [of](#) [the](#) [Internet](#) [Governance](#) [Forum](#), which is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

WHAT IS A BEST PRACTICE FORUM?

In 2014, the IGF developed an intersessional programme consisting of best practice forums (BPFs) and other initiatives intended to complement other IGF community activities. This intersessional programme was designed in accordance with the recommendations of a 2012 [report](#) that called for the development of more tangible outputs to 'enhance the impact of the IGF on global Internet governance and policy'.

BPFs have the freedom to define their own methodologies; tailored to each theme's specific needs and requirements. While BPF outcomes have already been useful in informing policy debates, they are also viewed as iterative materials that are not only flexible but also 'living' in the sense that they can be updated at any time to accommodate the pace of technological change faced by Internet policymakers.

HOW ARE THEMES FOR BPFs CHOSEN?

Every year, the multi-stakeholder advisory group (MAG) of the IGF chooses topics for BPFs. Generally, the topics are nominated by MAG members and then discussed at (a) meeting(s). Topics can be of any nature - technical or non-technical – and are generally chosen if they are perceived to be topical and important to the future of the Internet and related public policy challenges.

WHAT IS THE BPF GENDER?

The BPF Gender was launched in 2015. The focus of this first intersessional activity dedicated to gender was online abuse and gender-based violence. Over a period of nine months, the BPF gathered

In May 2016, at the first open consultations and MAG meeting of the IGF in Geneva, Switzerland (read more about this meeting here), input was gathered and feedback was given on the progress and outputs of the 2015 BPFs, including the 2015 BPF Gender, which focused on online abuse and gender-based violence against women. At this meeting the need was stressed for continuing to dedicate intersessional efforts to the study of gender-related challenges where the Internet is concerned.

To learn more about the work of the BPF Gender's work in 2015, see *What did the BPF Gender achieve in 2015?*

WHAT DID THE BPF GENDER DO IN 2015?

In December 2015, the BPF Gender 2015 published an extensive report on its findings and work on online abuse and gender-based violence. This report was produced as a reflection of this open, iterative and bottom-up process in which people from diverse regions and stakeholder groups participated by completing a survey, attending fortnightly virtual meetings, commenting on Draft I (which was published on an open and editable Google doc), commenting on Draft II (which was published on the IGF's review platform), commenting on Draft JP (at IGF 2015 and via email), responding to mailing list questions, participating in a social media campaign, and submitting both formal and informal case studies. The BPF also published a ten-page summary of its findings in the BPF Handbook 2015 (see pg 33-46 for the BPF Gender's summary).

At IGF 2015 in João Pessoa, Brazil, the BPF furthermore organized and hosted a 90-minute session led by BPF coordinator Jac Kee to discuss not only the BPF's draft findings and recommendations for further exploration, but also the ways in which the problem of online abuse and gender-based violence can continue to be addressed at both the IGF as a critical platform for multistakeholder engagement on key internet policy, governance and human rights issues, and in other policy discussion spaces.

Panelists included:

Agustina Callegari, Personal Data Protection Center, Ombudsman's Office of Buenos Aires City, Argentina

David Kaye, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression

Frane Mareovic, Director Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Gary Fowlie, Head ITU Liaison Office to the UN in New York, USA

Hibah Hussein, Public Policy Analyst, Google, USA

Mariana Valente, Director: InternetLab, Brazil

Narelle Clark, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network; Immediate Past President of ISOC (Australian Chapter), Australia

Nighat Dad, Digital Rights Foundation, Pakistan

Patrick Penninckx, Council of Europe Head of the Information Society Department

Rebecca McKinnon, Global Voices Online, USA

Watch the BPF's session at IGF 2015 in Brazil here.

WHAT IS THE BPF GENDER DOING IN 2016?

In 2016, the BPF Gender aims to:

1. build on and improve the outcomes of the 2015 BPF Gender, which focused on online abuse and gender-based violence against women, *and*
2. investigate women's access to the Internet (or the gender digital divide).

HOW CAN I HELP?

1. Join the BPF Gender 2016's **mailing list**, where all information related to the BPF, including meeting notifications and other calls for action, is shared.
2. Join our next virtual **meeting** (which is open to all, takes place wholly online, and can be joined by anyone with an VOIP-enabled device) (details for registration to be shared on the BPF Gender's mailing list). For technical information about joining these meetings, read this guide.
3. Attend one of our **webinars**, which not only provides a platform for diverse stakeholders to share stories and lessons learnt in the field, but also shares important information in participating in the BPF's activities. Details of these webinars will also be shared on the BPF Gender's mailing list.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW WHEN PARTICIPATING?

Anyone and everyone is welcome to participate in the BPF Gender's work. All participants have to adhere to the IGF's Code of Conduct, which not only emphasises the need for transparency and inclusivity where meetings are concerned, but also for **fair and reasonable behaviour** during meetings.

Please note that as per IGF protocol, all meetings are recorded, and all emails sent on the BPF mailing list are stored and searchable on the IGF's website.

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE DETAILS?

Jac SM Kee (MAG coordinator) - jac@apcwomen.org

Renata Aquino Ribeiro (MAG coordinator) - raquino@gmail.com

Anri van der Spuy (UN Secretariat of the IGF - rapporteur) - avanderspuy@unog.ch