**NEW: IGF 2015 INTERSESSIONAL PROGRAM**

**Call for Public input: Policy Options for Connecting the Next Billion**

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**Introduction**

The [report](http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/a67d65_en.pdf) produced by the UN CSTD working group on IGF improvements called for the development of more tangible IGF outputs to “enhance the impact of the IGF on global Internet governance and policy”. Given this the IGF MAG is developing a new intersessional program. This program is intended to complement and extend other IGF activities, such as Regional and National IGF’s, the Dynamic Coalition and the Best Practice Forums. The outputs from this program are intended to be a dynamic resource and evolve and grow over time.

The topic “*Policy Options for Connecting the Next Billion*” was chosen for the 2015 intersessional work after an earlier public consultation. The theme for the intersessional work for the 2016 IGF program of activities is expected to be determined during/immediately following the next IGF by the global IGF community. The theme is intended to reflect topical issues and to increase support to the Regional and National IGF’s, Best Practice Forums, and Dynamic Coalitions.

**Theme: Policy Options for Connecting the Next Billion**

Technological advancement in connectivity expanded broadband access and mobile penetration in recent years. Three billion people were connected to the Internet by the end of 2014. In spite of the progress achieved, more effort is necessary in order to connect the next billion and to address the digital divide.

The identification of strategies to improve connectivity is timely due to the ongoing process of reviewing the outcomes of the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS+10) and the discussion of the post-2015 sustainable development goals.  Collaboration between governmental and non-governmental actors is key to meet this challenge and the mutistakeholder nature of the IGF makes it a privileged space for discussion.

**Modality**

In order to identify policy options for “C*onnecting the Next Billion*”, rounds of online public consultations will be conducted. Following the example of the [IGF Best Practices Forums](http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/best-practice-forums), an open and bottom-up process is envisioned to collect input.

Draft outputs will be produced and further discussed, both online and during the IGF 2015 (10-13 November, João Pessoa, Brazil). The output will also be shared with relevant fora (e.g. WSIS+10), and may serve as input to the community in order to decide on a theme for the 2016 intersessional work.

**Timeframe**

* 27 May – open-ended: Launch public call for background contributions on the theme of “*Policy Options for Connecting the Next Billion*”. Contributions will be gathered and ultimately incorporated in the output through an iterative process.
* 15 July: Invitation to the IGF community to join open editorial group.
* 15 July - 11 August: First draft “*Policy Options*” open for public comment through web platform
* 3 Sept. (date tbc): Draft reviewed by open editorial group
* 14 Sept. - 6 Oct.: Second draft open for public comment through web platform
* 2 Nov.: Final draft output published on IGF website
* 10 - 13 Nov: Presentation and discussion of the "*Policy Options*" during IGF meeting
* Post-IGF: "*Policy Options for Connecting the Next Billion*" incorporates input from IGF Brazil, published and shared with relevant fora (WSIS+10 etc.). Documents/work space continue to evolve (based on support and value).

**Guidelines for background contributions**

All stakeholders are invited to submit contributions on the theme “*Policy Options for Connecting the Next Billion*”. Contributions from national and regional IGFs, Best Practice Forums, Dynamic Coalitions, and IGF workshops are particularly welcome, prior or after their event.

**Format**: Contributions must be supported by links to studies, reports, references, statistics, etc. and are expected to be of reasonable length in order to maximize readability.

It is encouraged to send **bullet points addressing the following questions:**

1.     Definition of the issue

2.     Regional specificities observed (e.g. Internet industry development)

3.     Existing policy measures, and private sector or civil society initiatives

4.     What worked well, identifying common effective practices, as well as any unexpected impediments

5.     Unintended consequences (of policy interventions), good and bad

6.     Unresolved issues where further multistakeholder cooperation is needed

7.     Insights gained as a result of the experience

8.     Proposed steps for further multistakeholder dialogue/actions

All formats are welcome, and additional templates may be developed to aid contributions if this is deemed helpful.

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