IGF 2022
Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation
(PNIF)

PNIF Multistakeholder Working Group of experts (MWG)
Meeting I, 23 May 2022

Summary

(1) Welcome and introductions

1. Mr Chengetai Masango, IGF Programme and Technology manager and Head of the IGF secretariat, thanked the members for joining the PNIF MWG. He reiterated that Internet fragmentation is mentioned in the UN Secretary General's Common Agenda and was raised as a topic of high importance at the IGF 2021 taking stock session. He stressed the importance of open and bottom-up discussions and the involvement of all stakeholder groups in the PN, and that the PN should aim to provide an output that can act as input for other processes.

2. Ms Sheetal Kumar explained that the [proposal for a PN on Internet fragmentation](#) was inspired by the efforts and open letter (Sept. 2021) by a group of stakeholders that raised concerns about the human rights risks of internet fragmentation and setting out principles for an open, interconnected and interoperable Internet. Ms Kumar pitched the PNIF proposal at the Open Consultations and Ms Bruna dos Santos, MAG member, presented the proposal to the MAG. The MAG selected Internet fragmentation as topic for one of the two IGF 2022 policy networks (the second being meaningful access, [PNMA](#)).

3. Ms Kumar and Ms dos Santos had volunteered to, together with the IGF secretariat consultant supporting the PNIF, Mr Wim Degezelle, prepare the first meeting of the PNIF MWG and compile a [briefing note](#). It was stressed that the PNIF is separate and independent from the aforementioned stakeholder initiative.

4. The PNIF Multistakeholder Working Group of experts (MWG) was introduced - confirmed members are listed on the [PNIF MWG webpage](#) - and participants to the call introduced themselves; and shared some initial thoughts on the PNIF:
   - Acknowledge and avoid replicating the valuable body of work already done on the issue;
   - Take a constructive approach: formulate alternatives that meet the same objectives for proposals that would fragment the Internet;
   - The more open and inclusive the PNIF is, the more compelling its output will be and the bigger its contribution to avoiding a fragmented Internet.
   - PNIF to aim at providing a substantive input to global discussions, with the UN Global Digital Compact as a first high-level opportunity.
   - Based on existing work, the PNIF to provide a holistic and wide notion of an open, interoperable and inclusive internet, and to come to a shared understanding of Internet fragmentation and its risks.
   - Importance of the policy networks for advancing the IGF and Internet governance in general.

- The UNESCO Rome Principles (2015) say that the Internet should be governed on a human rights base, be open and accessible by all, and multistakeholder lead. The Internet universality indicators measure whether the Internet is fulfilling what is aspired.
- PNIF to identify what are policy elements that contribute to enabling environments for an open and interoperable Internet, what are policy measures that might have unintended consequences and would result in the fragmentation of the Internet, and what are best practices to create enabling environments conducive to the open and interoperable Internet.

(2) Overview of the PNIF proposal

5. The participants received a brief overview of the objectives in the PNIF proposal:
- Offer a systematic and comprehensive *framework to define Internet fragmentation*, its intended and unintended causes, and its potential effects;
- Collect and analyze *case studies* to fine-tune and complement this framework;
- Establish *shared principles, recommendations* or codes of conduct that prevent fragmentation and preserve the open, interconnected and interoperable nature of the Internet.

It was suggested to, in 2022, focus on developing the framework and collecting case studies and propose to the MAG 2023 to continue the PNIF work on principles and recommendations.

6. It was raised that it would be important that the PNIF already this year can present cornerstone principles that can feed into the Global Digital Compact process, before the negotiation process becomes predominantly intergovernmental.

7. It was explained that policy networks (PNs) were created as IGF intersessional activity with the intent of providing in depth understanding of a specific globally relevant internet governance issue, raising awareness on the discussions, and prompting cooperation across stakeholder groups. PNs are expected to work based on bottom-up community consultation, open and accessible to the broader IGF community. The outcomes of a PN can take various shapes, such as output documents, cooperation amongst stakeholders, policy development processes, or observatories. The work of the PNs is facilitated by a Multistakeholder Working Group of experts (MWG). (IGF Policy Networks Concept note)

(3) PNIF MWG organisational

8. It was suggested to keep the MWG leadership structure simple, flexible and agile, with one Lead and one or more Alternate(s) who can fill in for each other. Several participants proposed that Ms Kumar and Ms dos Santos would continue coordinating the PN and both confirmed their availability. Ms dos Santos intends to serve as MAG liaison for the PNIF and will discuss with the other MAG members involved in the PNIF how to organise and maybe share this role. The PNIF leadership roles will be confirmed at the next MWG meeting; additional candidates are invited to put themselves forward on the PNW-MWG mailing list.

(4) Community involvement & timelines

9. It was said that the MWG should aim to present to the community its intended work plan and envisaged deliverables for this year as early as possible and before the IGF Open Consultations in the first week of July, and start thinking upfront about how to communicate and create a community network supporting the PNIF.

10. It was raised that the network of 152 national, regional and youth IGFs (NRIs) is very interested in the work of the PNs and that they are discussing a proposal to have NRIs designated experts from their communities as liaisons to the PNIF and PNMA. It was also suggested that a MAG member involved in the PNIF MWG would serve as a focal point facilitating NRI involvement in the PNIF.

(5) AoB

11. A doodle poll will be sent to schedule the next meeting. Brief notes will be shared with the MWG and a summary prepared for the website. As time ran out, the MWG will come back at its next meeting on the status of the call recordings.

List of participants: Anja Gengo, Bruna dos Santos, Chengetai Masango, Chris Buckridge, Greg Nojeim, Ian Sheldon, Jan Gerlach, John Hughes, Jorge Cancio, Laura O'Brien, Lynn St Amour, Maddie Masinsin (for Allie Funk), Marek Blachut, Marielza Oliveira, Nilmini Rubin (for Flavia Alves), Nnenna Nwakanma, Paula Oteguy, Sheetal Kumar, Timea Suto, Veni Markovski, Wim Degezelle, Yu Ping Chan.

Recording:
https://intgovforum.zoom.us/rec/play/Rj7A9qFxQXSaH4VyFCzEji8fw72VJOhcBbQ0CQKAzR
wZZVV3Yen9ENutHLuwHrytgYj2f6hxBQLDKxZi.3pnC2XjskIbe6zcl
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