Internet Governance Forum Afghanistan (IGFA)

The Third National IGF of Afghanistan

7th – 9th July 2019

Safi Landmark, Kabul, Afghanistan

Version Control

Version Number	Version Author	Date	Rationale
1	Elaaha Noorzad	4 September 2019	First draft
2	Omar Mansoor Ansari	11 September 2019	Reviewed
3	Tayeba Abidi	11 September 2019	Reviewed
4	Joseph Gattuso	13 September 2019	Reviewed
5	Elaaha Noorzad	13 September 2019	Reviewed

Overview:

The Internet Governance Forum Afghanistan (IGFA) is the national IGF of Afghanistan, which provides the platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue on public policy issues related to the development and use of the Internet in Afghanistan. Launched only two years ago by the Internet Society of Afghanistan, the IGFA has already achieved global recognition as an annual national forum, recognized by the United Nations IGF Secretariat.

- The IGFA's mission is to create a society that is aware of Internet Governance issues and actively participates in related discussions. IGFA has the following objectives:
- Enhance awareness and build the capacity of key stakeholders and decision-makers on Internet Governance in Afghanistan;
- Contribute to strengthening the collaboration and coordination among these stakeholders on issues related to the Internet of priority interest to Afghans;
- Identify policy and regulatory gaps related to the Internet, locally and regionally, and propose solutions in the country;
- Increase the engagement of Afghans in regional and global IGFs, ICANN, and other relevant programs where the issues around the Internet are discussed.

The first IGFA took place in March 2017, in Kabul, Afghanistan where over 350 participants came together and discussed the key issues related to Internet Governance in Afghanistan. Building on the success of first IGFA, the second IGFA was organized in May 2018, which brought together over 300 participants. Both meetings raised the awareness of Afghans on Internet Governance issues, initiated the development of a common understanding around Internet Governance challenges relevant to Afghanistan, and broadened the diversity of voices in these dialogues.

The third edition of the IGFA was held from 7th to 9th July 2019 in Kabul where more than 500 participants, representing various stakeholder groups from government, the private sector, civil society, and the technical community, joined the debate on key elements of Internet Governance in Afghanistan.

This report outlines the core events happened during the three days of lively discussions and debates.

Institutions Behind:

The IGFA 2019 was organized by the Internet Society of Afghanistan (ISOCA), in collaboration with the Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP), the UN IGF Secretariat in Geneva, the Internet Society (ISOC), the Internet Governance Forum Support Association (IGFSA), IO Global, GTR, TechNation, TechTV.Asia (media partner), and the Afghanistan International School (academic partner).

Preparatory Process:

The preparation process of IGFA 2019 was started in December 2018 by the IGFA Organizing Committee and its Secretariat in an open, inclusive and bottom-up approach. The process included fully establishing the IGFA Organizing Committee, which was composed of representatives from all key stakeholder groups – they can be found [here.](#) To prepare the program agenda, the Organizing Committee issued calls for speakers, workshops, and participation through the IGFA mailing list, website, and social media, inviting national and international respondents to propose topics workshops and topics to be included in the program. This approach ensured that everyone had the opportunity to contribute to the program.

The various milestones in the preparatory process are outlined here:

IGFA 2019 Milestones	

IGFA 2019 Program:

The IGFA 2019 illustrated a broad scope of discussions on how best to ensure good Internet Governance practices, considering aspects, such as accessibility and affordability, technical and regulatory matters, consumer protection, equitable development for all and a range of other challenges requiring multi-stakeholder cooperation.

Day 0 of the event included a pre-School of Internet Governance (pre-AFSIG) by ISOCA, a pre-Youth IGF Afghanistan by ISOCA, and pre-TechWomen 2.0 – a summit of women in Technology by TechWomen.Asia. This was followed by two days of the official IGFA that was inaugurated through an opening ceremony and followed by breakout sessions, workshops – all included open discussion and Q&A sessions. The workshops were facilitated and moderated by subject matter experts. All the sessions were provided with simultaneous interpretation in Pashto, Dari, and English.

The IGFA 2019 program included 2 thematic main sessions; 25 workshops; 1 open forum, 1 academy for children – between the ages of 6 and 12 – called "IGF4Kids"; as well as opening and closing sessions. It is worthwhile to mention that IGFA is the only national IGF initiative with a Kids Academy, which is a unique characteristic of the IGFA. The Cybersecurity, Trust and Privacy theme (5) had the highest number of sessions, followed by Human Rights, Gender and Youth (4); Evolution of Internet Governance (4); Digital Government (4); Development, Innovation and Economic Issues (3); Media and Content (3); Digital Inclusion and Accessibility (2); and Emerging Technologies (2). The open forum was held by the organizer and IGFA Organizing Committee where views were heard from a wide range of participants to be considered in future programs.

The complete agenda is outlined below:

Day0: 7 July 2019			
Time	Hall 1: Pre-Afghanistan School on Internet Governance (AfSIG)	Hall 2: Pre-TechWomen 2.0	Hall 3: Pre-Youth IGFA
9:00 – 10:30	Internet Governance 101	Opening Session	How the Internet Works
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee Break		
10:45 – 12:15	Internet Online Trading	Business Digitalization	Child Online Protection
		Cyber Security Training for Women	
12:15 – 14:00	Launch Break		
14:00 – 15:30	Local Content and Technologies	Big Data and Analysis	Cyber Hygiene
		Women in Technology Journalism (Success Stories)	
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee Break		
15:45 – 17:15	I* Organizations and Internet Policy & Regulatory Framework		Youth and Gender in Internet Governance
Day1: 8 July 2019			
Time	Hall 1	Hall 2	Hall 3
9:00 – 10:30	IGFA 2019 Opening Ceremony		
10:30 – 10:40	Coffee Break		
10:40 – 12:10	Cyber Security 101: *Cyber Security & Data Protection*	Digital Innovation	Smart IDs -- eNID and ePassport
12:10 – 14:00	Launch Break		
14:00 – 15:30	eDemocracy	Freedom of Speech and Human Rights Online – *Why is Access to Information Critical?*	Main Session on Emerging Issues

15:30 – 15:45	Coffee Break		
15:45 – 17:15	Digital Equity in Schools: Digital Literacy to Inclusion	The Role of Media and the Future of Access to the Internet	Main Session on Emerging Issues (continued)
Day2: 9 July 2019			
Time	**Hall 1**	**Hall 2**	**Hall 3**
9:00 – 10:00	Main Session on Digital Foundation – Plans and Strategies	Leadership and Business for Women in Technology	Online Safety
10:00 – 10:15	Coffee Break		
10:15 – 11:15	Main Session on Digital Foundation – Plans and Strategies (continued)	Internet Governance Academy for Kids (IG4Kids)	e-Governance and the Academy
11:15 – 12:15	Public Forum		
12:15 – 14:00	Launch Break		
14:00 – 15:00	The Internet Ecosystem	Quality and Cost of Services	Practical Ethical Hacking
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break		
15:30 – 16:30	IGFA 2019 Closing Ceremony		

Highlights on the Opening Session:

The opening ceremony featured H.E. Fahim Hashemi – Acting Minister of Communication and Information Technology – who highlighted the future of technology and Internet Governance in Afghanistan.

*"Initiatives like IGF Afghanistan will help create an enabling environment and encourage private investment. We are seeking ways to reduce the costs of the bandwidth and enhance the quality of services in the coming future. We look for ways we can partner with the private sector to achieve this goal." – **H.E. Fahim Hashemi**

Furthermore, IGFA 2019 Coordinator and Vice-Chair at the Internet Society Afghanistan, Omar Mansoor Ansari elaborated: *"The key issues that are critical to the growth and development of the Internet in*

Afghanistan are: building trust, improving technical security, shaping the future of the Internet, and digital literacy." He added:

> *"Fake news and misinformation causes distrust and mistrust. Also, the cost and quality of services in Afghanistan have been the major barriers to the expansion of the Internet across the country." –* **Omar Mansoor Ansari**

IGFA 2019 Key Messages:

The IGFA 2019 discussed the "*Digital Foundations Strategy*", which is recently developed by the government of Afghanistan, to outline its key points, identify the existing gaps, and provide recommendations for improvement. Every country should have a digital strategy, but this one is too short, lacks important details, and has never gone through a transparent consultation process with the public. It is a good starting point though, which indicates there are more things needed to be done.

> *"A strategy should have a longer timeline and include different phases. Also, the vision for the digital strategy of a country needs to be able to look at the next 20 years. While it cannot devise all of the solutions for 20 years, but it needs to take into account global trends and trends that are external, but affect the country; for example, climate change." –* **Marilyn Cade**

Moreover, the IGFA 2019 recognized the important role of the Internet in driving economic growth through empowering entrepreneurs, small businesses, and even local content creators to expand their services and access larger markets. However, in developing countries like Afghanistan, businesses have not unleashed the potential of internet due to a wide range of challenges form lack of infrastructure and high costs to issues related to awareness and trust. The transition from the traditional economy to a digitized economy needs huge investments. However, with the right strategy and policies, Afghanistan has a unique opportunity for leapfrogging technology, hence, skipping the technological evolution

process by replicating advanced solutions. This will accelerate development, reduce costs, and avoid the harmful stages of development.

Individual reports of each session can be found in *Annex 2.*

Conclusion and Wrap-up:

The successful conclusion of IGFA 2019 was marked during the Closing Ceremony on Day 2 of the program. Delivering the closing remarks, Omar Mansoor Ansari, the IGFA Coordinator, thanked all those who contributed to the IGFA 2019, as well as all the participants. In addition, Joseph Gattuso on behalf of CLDP – one of the biggest contributors to IGFA – expressed his happiness to support IGFA 2019. The closing session was ended with certificate awarding ceremony for participants and group photos.

Feedback from participants:

An open forum was organized by the IGFA Organizing Committee on Day 2 of the event where all participants shared their thoughts and impressions about IGFA 2019. They further shared their suggestions and aspiration for the next year. Below are some key points form the open forum:

What worked well?

- The entire program was very well organized.
- The organizing team and event management team were very approachable.
- The speakers were knowledgeable.
- The topics were attractive.
- IGFA was very active in social media during all days of the event.
- Simultaneous interpretation was available during all days of the event.

*"I congratulate ISOC Afghanistan on conducting another successful IGFA this year." – **Dr Khalil Azizi***

"IGFA has been a tremendous success even though it does not have any major funding source like other countries." – **Marilyn Cade**

What worked less well?

- In most of the sessions, no time was left for open Q&A.
- The invitation emails to some participants were sent late – only one day before the event.
- Focusing too much on social media related issues during the sessions on cybersecurity and data protection.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Enhancing the visibility of IGFA and organizing awareness-raising events about IGFA so that more people get to know about the program.
- Expanding IGFA to other provinces of the country.
- Increasing the number of discussions on problems related to the cost of the internet and the regulations related to the distribution of unregistered SIM cards.
- Engaging more representatives from the government, in particular, high-level authorities.
- Reducing the number of sessions should be reduced as well.

Suggestions for Intersessional activities:

- IGFA team to provide training on different topics related to internet governance in universities and high schools.

Communications and Media Coverage:

The IGFA 2019 have been promoted through the IGFA official website and social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. As mentioned previously, these social media outlets were used extensively during the preparatory process to publish calls for volunteers to support the Organizing Committee, as well as calls for inputs from the public to develop the program contents and agenda. In addition, they were also used to cover the key highlights and important events of the program. IGFA is also active in YouTube where all recordings of the event are available.

Furthermore, outreach was made through the IGFA mailing list and press release. All three days of the event were covered by TechTV.ASIA – a YouTube channel devoted to awareness-raising on technology.

Moreover, a press conference was organized by the Organizing Committee of IGFA on Day 1 of the program which was covered by several national TV broadcasters, namely [Khurshid TV](#) and [Zhwandoon TV](#).

Thanking all those who contributed to IGFA 2019!

Institutional Partners:

TechTV.ASIA | the Afghanistan International School (AIS)

Session moderators, speakers, key participants, and rapporteurs:

Abdul Hakim Farahmand, Adbul Ghafar Rasooli, Agha Malook Sahar, Ahmad Fahim Didar, Ahmad Wais Wardak, Ahmad Zia Yousofi, Aimal Marjan, Akbar Arghandiwal, Akmal Arzhang, Ali Yawar Farid, Amrita Chaudhury (remote), Anja Gengo (remote), Asmat Ullah, Aziz Amin Ahmadzai| Chengetai Masango (remote), Danish Karokhil, Elaaha Noorzad, Esther Mwema (remote), Fakhria Ibrahimi Momtaz, Farhat Akbari, Farid Ahmadi, Farshid Ghyasi, Ghayoor Bawary, H.E. Farhim Hashimi, Hamdullah Arbab, Hanif Gharanai, Haroon Safi, Hayatullah Ibrahimi, Ilyas Essar, Irfanullah Safi, Ismail Khattab, Jane Coffin (remote), Javid Hamdard, Jay Paudyal (remote), Joseph Gattuso (remote), Keramuddin Nisar, Khalil Azizi, Lima Madomi, Lutfullah Rahmati, Manizha Wafiq, Maria Beebe (remote), Marilyn Cade, Masooma Rasooli, Mehreen Najm, Mirwais Arya, Mohammad Mubashir, Mohammad Yonus Omid, Mohmmad Reza Jafari, Mujeeb Muhmand, Mujtaba Zolfaqar Ataie, Mutaleb Rahmani, Nabila Nazari, Naikbeen Naikpay, Najibullah Azizi, Najla Ahmadyar, Nargis Ehsan, Nasir Timori, Noha Ashraf (remote), Omar Mansoor Ansari, Mohammad Rafi Momand, Sahar Yarmal, Sajia Yarmal, Sayed Zaman Hashemi, Shabana Mansoory, Shabnam Mir, Shah Bibi Haba, Sher Shah Rahim, Shruti Moghi (remote), Stoorai Khan, Tayeba Abidi, Uffa Modey (remote), Wais Ahmad Mirwais, Zahid Stanikzai, Zmarialai Wafa, and Zubair Sediqi

Volunteers Team:

Abdul Mateen, Abdul Muqset Rahimi, Ahmad Zia Yousofi, Arezo Yaqubi, Elias Noorzad, Fahim Mansoory, Farhat Akbari, Haroon Safi, Mahdi Rezaie, Masooma Rasooli, Massoud Nasrat, Mehreen Najm, Mortaza Sadat, Mujtaba Zolfaqar Atayie, Mustafa Samadi, Sahar Yarmal, Sorya Rahiq, Sultan Mansoor Raofi, Tahira Latifi, and Zaman Ehsani

Sponsors and Supporting Organizations:

Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP) | the UN IGF Secretariat in Geneva | the Internet Society (ISOC) | the Internet Governance Forum Support Association (IGFSA) | IO Global | Grand Technology Resources (GTR) | TechNation

The Way Forward…

Following recommendations and commitments were made by the stakeholders involved:

- More training and capacity building initiatives to be supported by local actors, at the government, private, technical and civil societies, as well as by International bodies such as ICANN, ISOC, APNIC, ITU, etc;
- Reduction in the cost and enhancement in the quality of the Internet to make it possible for the wider Afghan citizens to connect, the government needs to take concrete actions to achieve this goal;
- Continued dialogue on policy and regulatory reform, the government to work closely with the private sector, civil societies and the private sector on policy and regulatory reform;
- Cybersecurity and online safety awareness through digital literacy programs have to be launched by diverse stakeholders involved to help citizens continue trusting the Internet;
- ISOCA and the IGFA Secretariat to organize the third edition of Afghanistan School on Internet Governance (AFSIG) in the year 2019;
- ISOCA and the IGFA team to hold the first edition of YouthIGFA in 2019; and
- Early preparations to be started for the fourth edition of IGFA in 2020.

Connect with us!

For more details, please connect with us through our channels:

- Website: https://www.igf.af/
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/IGF.AF/
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/IGFAfghanistan?s=17
- YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChfCjT6ID2rnaHgzfO9GtXQ
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/igfafghanistan/
- Email: info@igf.af

Annex 1

IGFA 2019 Organizing Committee:

Omar Mansoor Ansari, IGFA Coordinator

Mr. Ansari is Afghanistan's senior ICT executive and an award-winning technology entrepreneur. Since 1999, he has had an active part in shaping the local IT industry. He founded and worked with a number of associations, networks, and built and supported startups that are taking active role in socioeconomic development on local, regional and international levels. Mr. Ansari is Chairman of National ICT Alliance of Afghanistan, Director of Founder Institute Kabul, and full-time President of TechNation.

Zmarialai Wafa, Title

Mr. Wafa is the General Manager for AfgNIC (Afghanistan Network Information Center) and the Chief Information Security Officer for AfCERT (Afghanistan Cyber Emergency Response Team), both a part of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's Ministry of Communication and IT Department. Zmarialai is an ICT Specialist. As a part of his combined positions, Zmarlialai manages .af, Afghanistan's new IDN ccTLD, NIRA, NIXA, AfCERT, ECA - PKI (Electronic Certification Authority - Public Key Infrastructure), and a Web Filtering project in Afghanistan.

Marilyn Cade, Title

Marilyn Cade is the Principal and CEO of mCADE, ICT Strategies – providing strategy and advice in Internet governance, Internet policy, cybersecurity; global IP networking services and related policy issues. Cade focuses on policy activities that promote economic growth and sustainability in developing countries, bridging the interests of global corporations with businesses from developing and emerging economies and in advancing their concerns in global fora.

Aziz Taqwa, Title

Aziz Taqwa holds a Bachelors and Master's Degree in Information Systems and Management from Brunel University UK. With knowledge of Electronic Governance, soon after completing his masters, he came back to his homeland and started working for electronic national ID project, one of the most important projects in the history of Afghanistan. He now serves the American University of Afghanistan as the Director of Information Technology and Adjunct Instructor of Information Technology and Computer Science.

Abdul Ghayoor Bawary, Technical Coordinator/Operations

Abdul Ghayoor Bawary is the founder of Experts Valley Technologies & an ISP Engineer at MultiNet ISP Afghanistan. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Kardan University and has more than 10 years of professional experience in ISP/IT and has worked with several well-known organizations. Bawary is a board member at Internet Society Afghanistan Chapter.

Shabana Mansoory, Partnerships Coordinator

Shabana Mansoory is a dynamic young woman leader in Tech in Afghanistan. She has a bachelor degree in Computer Science from Kabul University. She has served as Chief Information Officer (CIO) for e-Governance project in the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Afghanistan. Ms. Shabana co-organized the first of its type workshop by name of TechWomen in central and South Asia at IGF 2016 in Mexico and IGF 2017 in Switzerland. She presented Afghanistan in the MEAC SIG 2018 in Egypt and then in ITU Regional Conference on ICT for Women in Lebanon.

Tayeba Abidi, Program Committee Member

Tayeba Abidi has earned a BA in computer science from Kabul University and her master degree in Computer Science from the Technical University of Berlin through DAAD Scholarship. Her last year study focused on "Emerging Trends and Technologies in Open Education and the Impact on Afghanistan". She is a lecturer in IT department of Computer Science faculty at Kabul University and as well she is the Head of Education department in IT Competence and Research Center (ITCC) at MoHE.

Sajia Yarmal, Communication Officer

Sajia Yarmal has more than 9 years of professional experience with national and international organizations. She has founded the *Like Minded Youths Institution* to advocate for the culture and capacitated Afghan youths especially women where still are in disaster and suffering the conflict of these decades of war. She is founder of Tanaab pick & drop laundry services, Board member of internet society Afghanistan Chapter (ISOCA), and one of the key organizing committee member of IGF Afghanistan.

Shahbibi Haba, Program Committee Member

[To be inserted]

Elaaha Noorzad, Program Committee Member

Elaaha Noorzad has completed her Bachelor's in Computer Science from Kabul University. She is currently working as a Programme Development and Reporting Assistant with an international organization. In addition, she serves as a Board member at the Internet Society Afghanistan Chapter (ISOCA), and is coordinating the first Youth IGF in Afghanistan. As part of her activities at ISOCA, she has worked in the design and implementation of the first IoT awareness-raising program in Afghanistan called "*Incredible IoT*", which won the third position in Chapterthon 2018.