# 3RD NATIONAL INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM REPORT

# The use of Emerging Technologies for Disaster Resilience

July 14 - 15, 2021

# Table of Contents

# Acronyms

CTU - Caribbean Telecommunications Union

ECTEL - Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority

FSA – Financial Services Authority

ICANN – Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

IGF – Internet Governance Forum

IGFSA - Internet Governance Forum Support Organisation

ISOC – Internet Society

ISOC SVG - Internet Society Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

NCTI – National Center for Technological Innovation

NIS – National Insurance Services

NTRC – National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

SVGIGF - St. Vincent and the Grenadines Internet Governance Forum

# Introduction

In 2021, St. Vincent and the Grenadines Internet Governance Forum (SVG IGF) members of the board of the Internet Society St. Vincent and the Grenadines Chapter were determined to host the third annual Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines on July 14 and 15, 2021 despite several setbacks. In that, this event was hosted despite the explosive eruption of the La Soufriere Volcano which caused twenty-thousand Vincentians to be displaced, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the threat of increasing dengue cases. As a result of the atmosphere in the country, the theme for the sessions was "The use of Emerging Technologies for Disaster Resilience". The aim of these sessions was to encourage dialogue amongst stakeholders on the problems being encountered in the country due to the crisis and to identify solutions to these problems.

Figure 1 SVG IGF 2021 Invitation Flyer

# Background

St. Vincent and the Grenadines Internet Governance Forum (SVGIGF) was established in 2017 with its Secretariat being the Internet Society St. Vincent and the Grenadines Chapter (ISOC SVG). Its main objective is to create an open, all-inclusive, multi-stakeholder platform to discuss internet governance issues and policies that affect St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Caribbean region and globally.

The forum organises annual IGF events where participants can discuss, exchange information and share good practices on internet governance issues. The SVGIGF aims to facilitate common understandings of how to maximize Internet opportunities, address different types of challenges that arise, in a bottom-up, multi-stakeholder, open and transparent manner.

The SVGIGF initiatives will, therefore, commit to the five (5) baseline principles (access, security, trust, openness and community networks) governing the IGF as set out in the National, Sub-regional, Regional, Youth IGF Initiatives (NRIs) tool kit of the global IGF.

In preparation for the forum, a multi-stakeholder committee was organized to plan for the event. Topics for consideration to be discussed at the forum were solicited online through the Chapter's WhatsApp membership group and the ISOC website www.isoc.vc. The final topics and presenters were decided by the Committee.

# Acknowledgement

We wish to express gratitude to the following organisations and individuals that contributed to the success of our third IGF.

## Financial Support

- Internet Governance Forum Support Organisation (IGFSA) through the Internet Society Foundation

## Secretariat

- ISOC SVG Chapter
- Organisation Partners
- National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC)
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Centre of Technological Innovation Inc. (SVGNCTI INC.)

### Multi-stakeholder Coordinating Team

ISOC SVG Board

- Roxanne John, President
- Andre Gaymes, Vice President
- Oniel Sprott, Treasurer
- Jacqueline Creese, Secretary
- Decima Corea, Board Member
- Jonquil Cadougan, Head, Events Committee
- Angelo Ferdinand, Head, Projects Committee
- Don Providence, Head, Education Committee
- Marcellus Constance, Deputy SVG IGF Coordinator
- Willis Williams, SVG IGF Coordinator

Other support
- Krislin Gouldbourne-Harry – Website support
- Kerry Kerr - Moderator
- Andre Browne - Moderator
- Cyron Cyrus – Social Media Support
- ~~Don Providence~~

# What made this year's IGF Unique

1. The SVG IGF 2021 was the first forum that took on a hybrid approach where the event was held online due to in-person gathering limitations as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. A limited number of persons, mainly facilitators, attended face-face at one of SVG NCTI's Training Room.
2. This year's IGF was held after working hours (6:00-8:00 p.m.) to encourage as much participation from stakeholders who may have been work-engaged to attend if it was held during the work hours.
3. IGF 2021 was held over a 2-day period so that short and concise sessions can be presented that were engaging on each day.
4. Participants were given the option to join the session via 4 platforms – Zoom webinar, SVGIGF website, Facebook or Youtube. The links are presented in annexes 1-5.
5. The second-day session was attended by Anja Gengo who delivered a presentation from Poland where the local time was 3:00 AM.
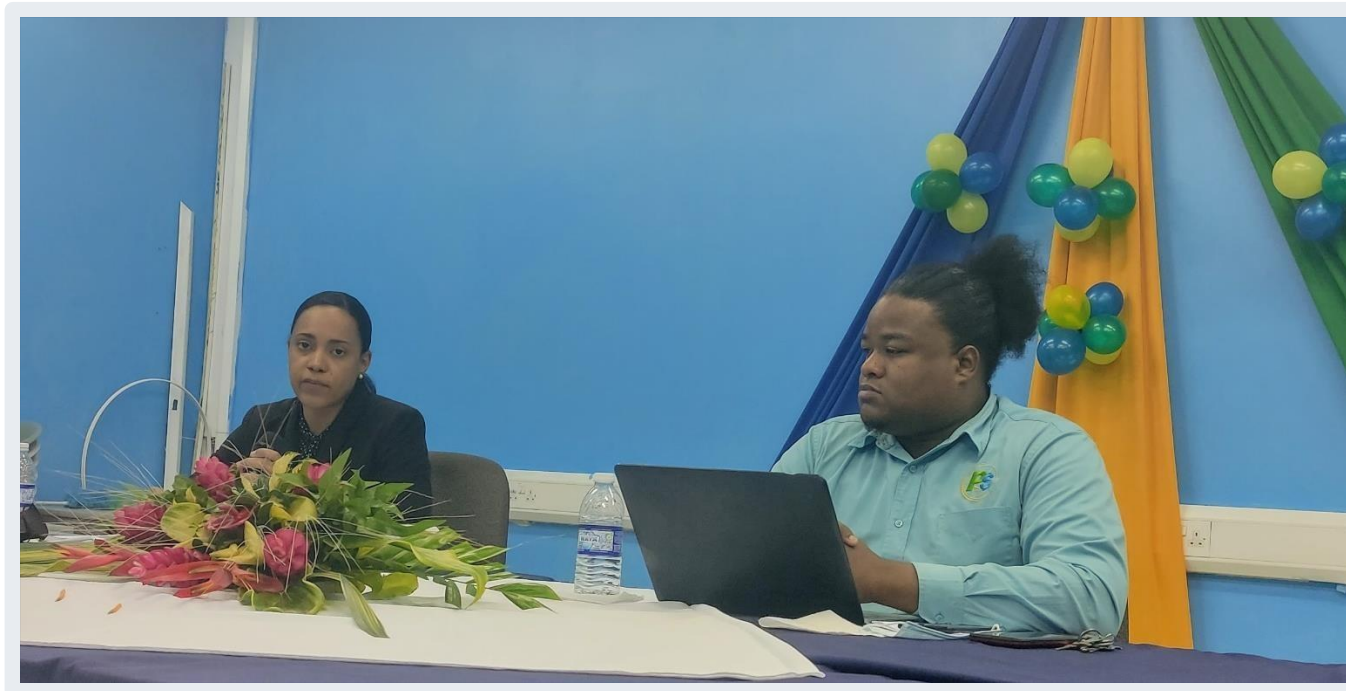
# Highlights - Day 1



Figure 2 Panelists (L-R Ms. Carla James, FSA, Mr. Marlo Browne, Payswif)

The IGF was kicked off on July 14, 2021, with welcoming remarks from Mr. Willis Williams, SVG IGF Coordinator. Mr. Williams highlighted the difficulties faced by the SVG IGF in executing the event. Global and local adversities had to be overcome over the 2020 and early 2021 periods. He praised the members of the Chapter and the IGF Coordinating Committee for their dedication and vibrance in making this IGF event possible.

Secondly, Mr. Chengetai Masango provided featured remarks. In his address, Mr. Masango acknowledged the difficult times facing St Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) and expressed his sympathy and best wishes while commending the people for their strength and resilience. Mr. Masango then spoke in the vein of our theme, The Use of Emerging Technologies for Disaster Resilience. He credited the Covid-19 pandemic for causing situational awareness of the transformative power of digital technologies, especially in providing resilience in times of crisis and disaster; big data analytics, aerial robotics, and good public policy were cited.

Ms. Carla James, Executive Director, Financial Services Authority (FSA) began the evening's presentations. Ms. James's presentation focused on Mobile Payment Services and the role of the FSA in the regulation of those services. She touched on the core principles by which the FSA is guided. These include the reduction of risk of financial loss to the public, the protection and enhancement of the reputation and integrity of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), the need to counter financial crimes in SVG, and elsewhere; and the protection of fair treatment of customers of financial entities. She stressed that the ultimate goal was to "tailor regulation to mitigate the risk of the product without placing undue burden that could stifle innovation".

Ms. James' presentation was then followed by Mr. Marlo Browne, Executive Director of Payswif – a locally developed platform for sending and receiving cash. Mr. Browne, in his presentation, gave a brief background of the development of PaySwif, a locally developed Mobile Payment Service. He proceeded to make the point that while disasters can cripple some businesses, others can flourish based on the type of business and the service it provides. Mr. Browne made a direct connection between PaySwif and the 2021 IGFSVG theme, The Use of Emerging Technologies for Disaster Resilience. He indicated that PaySwif was very active in the service of facilitating relief to citizens through its mobile payment service. He also hinted that they are facing challenges in processing payments through local banking institutions since the number of transactions increased due to the use of the platform following the eruption of the La Soufriere Volcano. They indicated that they anticipate a quick resolution to this issue with the assistance of the FSA.

The question and answer session which followed the presentations was vibrant and provided more information on how the FSA is working to accommodate the operations of firms like PaySwif, within the regulatory framework of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

# Highlights - Day 2



Figure 3 Panelists (L-R) Winston George, Caribbean Digital Transformation Project, Petrus Gumbs - STEM SVG, Eben Wilkins and Maurice John - Technoblurb co-hosts

On the second day of the IGF, there were presentations relating to Digital Transformation, Education and Emerging Technologies.

Presenting on the Caribbean Digital Transformation Project (CARDTP) was the local Project Coordinator, Mr. Winston George. Mr. George, at the beginning of his presentation, established the link between the theme and the Caribbean Digital Transformation Project. He explained that digital technologies are changing the global economy. He added that the Caribbean region and SVG cannot be left behind and that digital transformation is, therefore, critical to realizing economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods. He pointed out that the project would build resilient infrastructure, improve universal access to ICT, and foster innovation.

Director, Science Technology Engineering Mathematics SVG (STEM SVG) Mr. Petrus Gumbs presented on the theme paying particular attention to education. He touched on the effect of emerging technologies on education. He was able to use SVG's peculiar situation with the Covid-19 pandemic coupled with the explosive eruptions of the La Soufriere Volcano, by showing how technology was able to provide resilience in our time of disaster. He also stressed the need to continue to shape the young minds to develop a love and not a phobia for technology. Hence, the STEM SVG program is now available to students of all ages, including adults.

Maurice John and Eben Wilkins, in their usual weekly television program style on Technoblurb, were quite relaxed and jovial but extremely informative. In their discussion, they discussed a wide range of technical topics which were relevant to disaster resilience. Some time was spent identifying some of the various technologies available which are particularly useful in disasters. Video conferencing applications, cloud data storage, cloud computing, telecommuting applications to name a few. The importance of fast and reliable internet was also emphasized.

To conclude the IGF, an IGF Quick Flash was presented by the Associate Programme Expert of The United Nations Internet Governance Forum (IGF), Ms. Anja Gengo. Ms. Gengo began her presentation with greetings and a commendation for the local IGF for doing a great job presenting the two-day event. She was particularly impressed with the choice of topics and exotic appeal to "a good portion of the world". She thought that our experience dealing with natural disasters was remarkable and that the world could learn a lot from us. Ms. Gengo went on to explain what the IGF was all about and took the opportunity to promote the 16th Annual IGF Meeting scheduled to be held in Katowice, 6-10 December 2021. The meeting will be hosted by the Government of Poland. She has recommended that ISOC SVG be represented to share our experience in that forum.

# SVG IGF 2021 Statistics

|  | Day 1 | Day 2 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Moderators | 1 | 1 |
| Technical Support | 1 | 1 |
| Panelists | 2 | 4 |
| Remote Presentations | 1 | 1 |
| In-Person Participants | 6 | 8 |
| Online Participants | 28 | 29 |
| Feedback Survey Responses | N/A | 11 |

# Feedback

Participants were asked to complete a short survey at the end of the second day to provide feedback so that we can improve our sessions in the future. The number of responses received was only 11 despite participants being promised ISOC / SVG IGF branded memorabilia as a reward for their efforts.

**IGF** Internet
Governance
Forum
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines

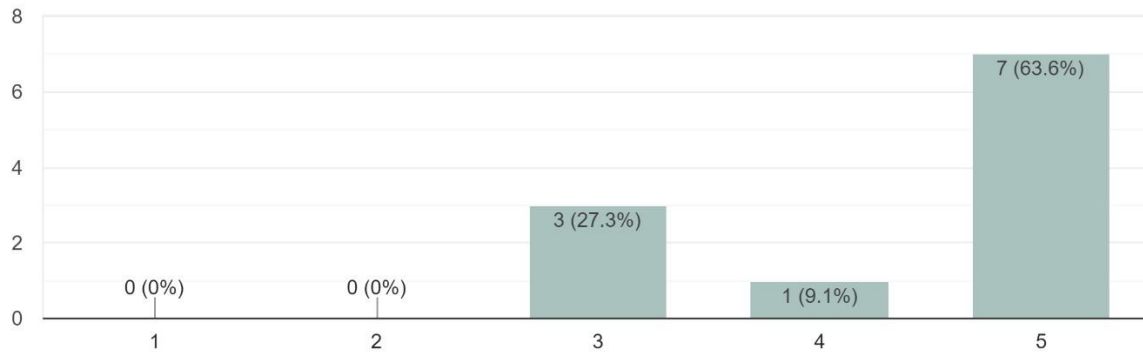Below summaries the responses received.

Overall, how satisfied were you with this webinar?

11 responses
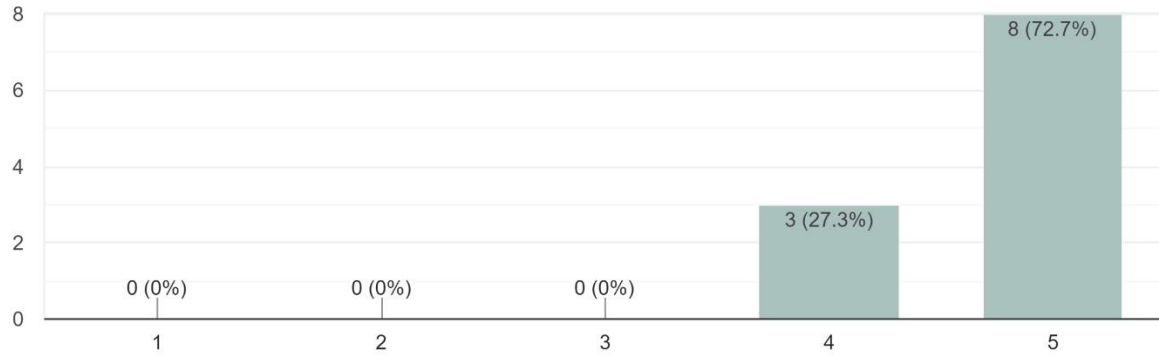


How informative did you find our webinar?

11 responses

How did you hear about this webinar?

11 responses



- Social Media
- Radio
- Television
- Friend

9.1%

27.3%

63.6%
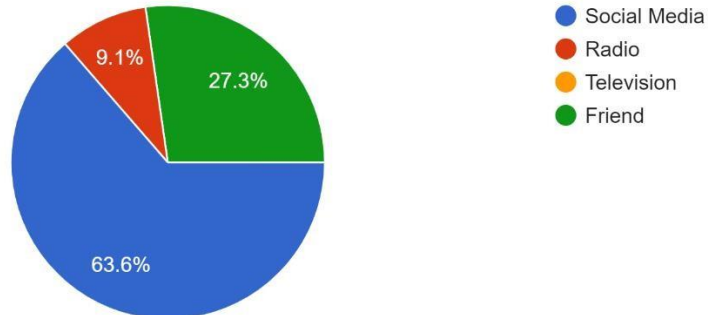
What topics would you like to see discussed in future IGFs?

7 responses

Digital education for the elderly

Cyber Security

Data privacy; digital strategy

Getting better internet service

Getting children involved in ICT early, crypto currency

Something about digital transformation; Occupations Created by the Internet

Making the internet truly accessible to all

Do you have any other comments or feedback?

6 responses

Excellent sessions!

good job. Keep the annual forum going

I think the agenda should contain the names of the panels. I also think that the panels should be gender-balanced. And there could be more sessions.

More publicity for the IGF

The topic were current and informative, I particularly enjoyed the discussion on day 1

The session could have benefitted from greater marketing efforts. So once the time is known and funds are secured for the next IGF, the marketing should begin to increase reach.

# Key Takeaways and Lessons Learned

Based on the discussions at the SVG IGF 2021, the following key points have been noted:

1. There is a greater need for our budget to provide for better/targeted promotion of the IGF across various media.
2. There is a need to engage with Vincentian stakeholders on IGF issues
3. Encourage ISOC SVG members to participate online in the 16th Annual Internet Governance Forum in December 2021
4. The need for Vincentians to adopt modern payment platforms to become proactive in distributing aid in the event of future natural disasters.
5. Vincentians can expect that CARDTP will bring much-needed services to all of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
6. The CARDTP project is expected to modernize the legal and regulatory infrastructure for online payments which are currently impeding local fintech organisations.
7. There is a need for reliable and fast broadband services to support e-learning, payments and other modern systems that rely on internet service to operate effectively.
8. Amidst the various disasters that a country may face, the Internet Governance Forum can continue to be relevant and possible through the full utilisation of online platforms.
9. The need to inspire more female participation to achieve gender equality as it relates to technology.

# Looking forward to IGF 2022

As we look forward to hosting the 4th annual SVG IGF in 2022, the following are possible areas of focus:

1. The status of implementation of the CARDTP
2. Cybersecurity issues concerning digital transformation
3. Public and private sector roles in fostering digital inclusion
4. Capacity building in the adoption of modern technologies
5. The evolved status of the legislation and regulation concerning Mobile Payment Services and Online Transaction Services.

# Annexes

| Annex 1 | IGF Website | https://igf.isoc.vc/ |
| Annex 2 | SVG IGF Day 1 on Youtube | https://youtu.be/p_MFmzXmXqE |
| Annex 3 | SVG IGF Day 2 on Youtube | https://youtu.be/9vtgIXz-eec |
| Annex 4 | SVG IGF Day 1 on Facebook | https://fb.watch/7scB2YG9k7/ |
| Annex 5 | SVG IGF Day 2 on Facebook | https://fb.watch/7scDsGbmA7/ |

| Annex 6 | Feedback Survey | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Annex 7 | Social Media Poster |  |
| Annex 8 | Memorabilia (Face Masks) |  |

Annex 9    Snacks served at the event