CAIGF
CENTRAL ASIAN
INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

REPORT

on the work done by NLC LLC on holding the Central Asian Internet Governance Forum in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan

BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN
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Contents

Introduction 3

Session 1. Digital Transformation in Central Asia: Challenges and Opportunities for the State, Business, and Citizens 4

Session 2. Digital Infrastructure: Realizing the Potential of Central Asia in the Age of Technology 5

Session 3. A Secure Digital Future for Central Asia: Strategies, Initiatives, and Cooperation in an Era of Growing Cyber Threats 6

Session 4: Contributing to Digital Transformation: The Key Role of Parliamentarians in shaping the Digital Space 7

Session 5. Digital Initiatives to Address Social Challenges in the Region: Inclusivity, Sustainability, Efficiency 8

Financial report 9

Conclusion 10

Photos from the event 11

Links 13

Introduction

On 21-22 June 2024, the eighth Central Asia Internet Governance Forum (CAIGF) was held in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, which aimed to strengthen the existing open platform for discussing critical issues related to Internet governance and accessibility in the region in order to create an inclusive, secure and sustainable digital environment. The event was organized by the National Legal Corporation Limited Liability Company (hereinafter referred to as NLC). NLC has been operating since 1998 and specializes in various areas of law, including corporate law, tax law, digital law, labor law, intellectual property law and other key areas.

This year, the CAIGF has defined as its mission an active discussion of the digital agenda, which covers modern technological, social and humanitarian challenges. In the context of the emphasis on the transition of many processes to the online space, the tasks of bridging the digital divide, improving the availability of the Internet and expanding the field of digital literacy among the population are becoming priorities.

The event was attended by more than 280 participants - representatives of government agencies of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, expert community from all over the world (USA, Canada, China, Switzerland, France, Estonia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan), as well as the forum was attended by representatives of global technology companies such as Google and IMB.

CAIGF 2024 emphasized the need for a balanced approach to bridging the digital divide, improving Internet access, digital infrastructure and implementing digital initiatives to solve social problems, the development of digital competencies – as it turned out, are common priorities for the countries of Central Asia. Also within the framework of the forum, international experts in the field of digital technologies shared their knowledge and experience that can be used to develop solutions necessary to promote technological innovation in the region.

Session 1. Digital Transformation in Central Asia: Challenges and Opportunities for the State, Business, and Citizens

The first day of the forum was opened by Shermatov Sh.Kh., Minister of Digital Technologies of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in his welcoming speech he noted that we all have a unique opportunity today - not only to "compare notes" and understand where each of us is in digital development, to share our unique experience and successes in digitalization. But also to try to find a balance between the security and accessibility of the Internet, digital opportunities, and the potential to shape the digital agenda for the Central Asian region.

The first plenary session "Digital Transformation in Central Asia: Challenges and Opportunities for States, Businesses and Citizens" discussed priorities and lessons that can be learned from the experience of other countries that have successfully undergone digital transformation. Questions were raised about the creation of effective legislation governing its digital sphere and how digital transformation can contribute to economic growth and create new jobs. Particular attention was paid to the issues of attracting and retaining specialists in the field of digital technologies, competing with global digital companies and ensuring the inclusiveness of digital transformation.

Session participants discussed how digital technologies can be used to solve social problems, improve access to education, health care and other services. Opportunities and barriers for regional cooperation in the field of digital transformation and the possibility of creating a single digital market in Central Asia were also considered.

During this session, O. Skorokhodova, Director for Government Relations for Central Asia at Google Corporation, made a presentation, she spoke about the potential of artificial intelligence for Central Asian countries. She also noted that according to a study by Ipsos and Google conducted in 17 countries, many people are optimistic about the use of AI both today and in the future, expecting that over time AI will have a huge positive impact, from speeding up work to improving transportation, education and improving the quality of life. People believe that AI can solve many problems: poverty, bias, climate change, discrimination.

The session was also attended by Tomas Tiirs, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Estonia to the countries of Central Asia, who shared Estonia's experience in digital transformation and the approach to artificial intelligence. Oleg Byakhov, Head of Business Development in the Global Public Sector at IBM Corporation, spoke about the technological solutions offered by the heads of the largest companies to support digital transformation in the region.

At the end of the session, it was noted that in order to support digital innovations, it is necessary to create a flexible regulatory environment that will ensure the introduction of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, big data and cloud technologies.

Session 2. Digital Infrastructure: Realizing the Potential of Central Asia in the Age of Technology

During the plenary session on the topic "Digital Infrastructure: Enabling Central Asia in the Age of Technology", much attention was paid to the importance of digital engagement to ensure the development of the Central Asian region. The role of the Internet and digital technologies in improving access to information and services, as well as supporting the economic growth of the countries of the region was discussed. During the session, special attention was paid to stimulating innovation to create new solutions and approaches to sustainable development, as well as the need to strengthen digitalization and use innovative approaches to ensure the sustainability of infrastructure projects and systems.

The focus was also on the creation of a reliable and affordable network infrastructure necessary to support a wide range of digital technologies and services. Ways to incorporate innovations in telecommunications, the Internet, cloud and big data into existing systems to improve their efficiency and reliability were discussed. The discussion also raised the issues of accessibility and inclusiveness of digital infrastructure so that the benefits of digitalization are available to all segments of the population, including residents of remote and mountainous areas.

The session was moderated by Mochu N., ITU Regional Director for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Region. Among the speakers were Rogi M., World Bank Development Practice Manager for Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa; M. Anisimov, Lead Manager for Global Stakeholder Engagement in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, ICANN, who spoke about ICANN's role in ensuring the stability of Internet infrastructure; Radjabov B. from the UNESCO Office in the Republic of Uzbekistan and Muksinova M., Deputy Head of the IT Products Export Department of the IT Park of Uzbekistan. The discussion was attended by A. Toktorbaev, Chairman of the Service for Regulation and Supervision in the Communications Industry under the Ministry of Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic; M. Anisimov, Lead Manager, Global Stakeholder Engagement, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, ICANN; Michel Rogi, Head of the Digital Development Practice at the World Bank in the Europe, Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa region and Ibodova P., representative of civil society, expert of the GIPI Foundation, Tajikistan.

This session provided a platform for the exchange of ideas and strategies that help Central Asia realize its digital ambitions and strengthen its position in the global digital economy. Also during the discussion, the key issues of connecting to the network, which are crucial for the communities of Central Asia, improving access to the Internet and infrastructure, including in remote mountainous areas, were actualized.

Session 3. A Secure Digital Future for Central Asia: Strategies, Initiatives, and Cooperation in an Era of Growing Cyber Threats

The session "Secure Digital Future of Central Asia: Strategies, Initiatives and Cooperation in an Era of Growing Cyber Threats" focused on various aspects of cybersecurity and digital resilience in the region.

The session was moderated by Artem Goryainov, an expert in the field of cybersecurity and digital resilience at the National Legal Corporation. During the session, participants expressed their views and research on relevant topics.

Olzhas Satiyev, co-founder of the Digital Resilience Association and head of the Center for Analysis and Investigation of Cyber Attacks, spoke on the topic "Towards a Digital Forum: A Special Path of Turkic Cybersecurity". In his report, he announced the creation of the Digital Resilience Association, which brings together industry, business and the state to jointly create a secure digital future in Central Asia. The association will serve as a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of cybersecurity, as well as for official efforts to protect the region's digital ecosystem.

Erkin Khalikov, Head of the Cybersecurity Incident Investigation Department of UZCERT, made a presentation on "The development of cyber threats and their impact on society and the state". In his presentation, he showed how cyber threats are developing and what measures need to be taken to minimize their impact. He stressed the need to develop and implement cybersecurity policies tailored to the specific needs and capacities of the Central Asian regions.

During the session, participants also discussed cases and best practices on national and regional initiatives in the field of digital resilience. As part of the discussion, Shukhrat Sattarov, a representative of the Center for the Study of Regional Threats of the Republic of Uzbekistan, noted the importance of strengthening cooperation with trade organizations and other stakeholders to share knowledge, resources and experience in the field of cybersecurity and digital resilience.

During the discussion, the following results were summed up: that it is necessary to develop and implement national and regional cybersecurity strategies that take into account the specific needs of Central Asian countries, as well as to actively promote digital hygiene programs and cybersecurity training among the population. Participants stressed that it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between Central Asian countries to share knowledge and resources, as well as support initiatives to create a platform for the exchange of experience in the field of cybersecurity at the local level. It is also necessary to jointly promote the introduction of innovative technologies and solutions to increase the sustainability of the region's digital ecosystem.

Session 4: Contributing to Digital Transformation: The Key Role of Parliamentarians in shaping the Digital Space

In recent years, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has sought to strengthen the participation of parliamentarians in discussions on issues related to the use, evolution and governance of the Internet and related digital technologies. Besides dedicated sessions that are being held at the global IGF, the Forum's Parliamentary Track has expanded to regional IGF initiatives. With the session held at the 8th Central Asian Internet Governance Forum (CAIGF) on 21 June, "Contributing to Digital Transformation: The Key Role of Parliamentarians in shaping the Digital Space", particular focus was put on regional Members of Parliaments to further involve key decision-makers in debates around the governance of the Internet.

Invited speakers included Alexei Sandikov, Member of Parliament from Armenia, and longtime contributor to the IGF Parliamentary Track, Tattu Mambetalieva, Director General of National Legal Corporation and Olivier Crépin-Leblond, active member of the Internet technical community and coordinator of the IGF Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values. Parliamentarians from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and government representatives from Uzbekistan participated in the interactive session.

The Digital Code and its conception were introduced by Tattu Mambetalieva, a legal framework that intends to advance Kyrgyzstan's digital transformation by unifying and combining all digital norms in one document. The Code's shaping is a successful example of international collaboration, involving forty countries and thirty experts, and learning from experiences of already existing rules and regulations, including from the private sector. The framework will soon be submitted to the Kyrgyz Parliament for further consideration.

Member of Parliament Alexei Sandikov touched upon the importance of parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue. As an essential part of international cooperation, parliamentary diplomacy creates ties between countries and seeks to contribute a perspective of parliamentarians to the global discourse around Internet governance. The IGF has provided a platform to Members of Parliaments to enhance inter-parliamentary dialogue, in addition to the facilitation of multistakeholder discussions.

The Internet is a global medium, open to all. As the "network of networks", it is interoperable and decentralized. The Internet has proven to be resilient, robust, and reliable. It is an end-to-end medium, so traffic from one end of the network to the other end of the network goes unhindered. And, as the Internet expands with newer applications, there are emerging needs on important aspects of the Internet, for instance, freedom from harm. Olivier Crépin-Leblond introduced these core Internet values, showcased the contributions of the Internet to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and highlighted the benefits that this global network brings to societies. Reiterating the need to treat the Internet as a critical infrastructure, he called for parliamentarians and government representatives that are working to produce legislation and regulation to safeguard the core Internet values to leverage the benefits of the network.

Session 5. Digital Initiatives to Address Social Challenges in the Region: Inclusivity, Sustainability, Efficiency

The second day of the forum was opened by O.A. Pekos, First Deputy Minister of Digital Technologies of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In his speech, he stressed the importance of using digital technologies to overcome social challenges in the region, noting the importance of ensuring the availability of digital opportunities for all, including women and girls, who play a key role in digital transformation. He stressed that investing in education and technical training for girls is an investment in the future, allowing them to become a driving force for digital progress.

The final session was devoted to discussing the challenges that can be solved with digital technologies, such as telemedicine, online education, and digital financial services. Bridging the digital divide in digital access and the importance of cooperation between governments, civil society and the private sector were also discussed. Participants highlighted opportunities for regional cooperation in the development and implementation of digital initiatives, which will create an inclusive, sustainable and inclusive digital society.

The session was moderated by Tattu Mambetalieva, General Director of the National Law Corporation (Kyrgyzstan). Among the speakers were A. Shuzheeva, co-founder and chairman of the board of the NGO "TechnoWomen", who spoke on the topic "Involving girls and women in the development of the digital future" and Sokolov S., TikTok Director for Government Relations and Corporate Affairs in Eastern Europe, he made a presentation "Supporting the global and local community through partnership". Sardor Kadyrov, Regional Director of Yandex, and Bakhrom Rajabov from the UNESCO Office in the Republic of Uzbekistan were also represented.

The discussion resulted in an understanding of the need for further development and support of digital initiatives to solve social problems, including improving access to education, healthcare and financial services. It was noted that only by combining the efforts of the state, civil society and business can we create a digital society where technologies serve for the benefit of everyone, contributing to sustainable development and solving social problems.

Financial report

№	Item	Cost $ (USD)
1.	Simultaneous translation	2 000
2.	Aviatickets international speakers	8 000
3.	Aviatickets KG-UZ,KZ-UZ,TJ-UZ	13 500
4.	Transfer	300
5.	Accomodation for participants	13 500
6.	Rent of hall	2 500
7.	Coffee breaks and lunches	10 800
8.	Gala dinner	5 250
9.	Badges	200
10.	Photo video support	1 500
11.	LED screen	2 000
12.	Microphones and garniture	1 500
13.	Promotion in social media and information agencies	1 500
14.	Distributing materials	1 500
15.	Rent of equipment for translators	2 000
16.	Banners and décor	3 000
	Total	**69 050**

Conclusion

The Eighth Central Asia Internet Governance Forum (CAIGF 2024), held on 21–22 June in Tashkent, became an important platform for discussing key issues of digital development and security in the region. The forum brought together representatives of governments, business, international and non-governmental organizations, as well as leading experts from Europe, China, the USA, Canada and other countries.

Over the course of two days, the forum participants discussed a wide range of issues, including the development of digital infrastructure, security and digital resilience, as well as regulation in the context of digital transformation. Successful cases and best practices on national and regional initiatives aimed at ensuring cybersecurity, improving access to digital technologies and maintaining the sustainability of digital systems were considered.

Particular attention was paid to the use of digital technologies to solve social problems, including telemedicine, online education and digital financial services. Participants stressed the importance of an inclusive approach that ensures that digital opportunities are accessible to all, including women and girls, and the need for collaboration between governments, civil society and the private sector.

The results of the forum confirmed that digital transformation is crucial for the development of Central Asia. Today, everyone is witnessing the fundamental changes that are taking place due to the use of artificial intelligence and other disruptive digital technologies. The new digital reality is rapidly changing countries and entire regions, transforming management and service delivery models across all sectors. The participants noted that CAIGF 2024 provided an opportunity for all Central Asian countries to gain national identity in the era of globalization and become open to creating new collaborations, implementing project contacts to achieve new digital forums here in Central Asia.

CAIGF 2024 was not only dedicated to the exchange of knowledge and experience, but also an important step towards creating a reliable and sustainable digital ecosystem in Central Asia. Participants agreed on the need to further strengthen regional cooperation and continue to work on joint initiatives aimed at achieving common goals of digital development and security.

Photos from the event

Яндекс
kaspersky
TikTok
INFOWATCH
ОРГАНИЗАТОРЫ

дущая мировая платформа
я создания и обмена
роткими видео
ша миссия:
охнов ть на творчество и
иносі радость

Яндекс
kaspersky

Links

Event website: https://caigf.org/ru/

Director NLC LLC
Mambetalieva T.E.