MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy

Online Meeting 52
6 April 2023 at 14:00 UTC

Summary Report

The 54th virtual meeting of the IGF MAG Working Group (WG) on IGF Strengthening and Strategy (WG-Strategy) was held on 6 April at 14:00 UTC. The meeting was moderated by Amrita. The recording of the meeting is available upon request.

The co-chair opened the meeting by introducing the agenda:

Agenda

1) Global Digital Compact:
   a) contribution from the MAG
   b) contribution from the LP
   c) letter to GDC Co-facilitators

2) Update from the IGF Secretariat
3) AoB

Discussion

1. **Global Digital Compact:**
   a. **contribution from the MAG**
   b. **contribution from the LP**
   c. **letter to GDC Co-facilitators**

Bruna Santos noted that the Leadership Panel (LP) contribution to the Office of the Tech Envoy's GDC survey has been submitted (it will likely be posted publicly shortly). Chris noted that various groups are moving, in spite of some bottlenecks and roadblocks. Amrita noted that the LP members have been invited by the WG-Strategy Co-Chairs to join the working group discussions.

Wout de Natris noted that the DC-IS3C General Meeting, also being held this afternoon, is a very active workspace, and demonstrates the strength of the IGF. Mark Carvell explained EuroDIG's use of a commenting platform to develop the regional IGF's response to the GDC survey, drawing on the EuroDIG messages from recent years. This includes a proposal for green digitalisation and environmental sustainability as an additional thematic area of the GDC. He also stated that he is leading a submission from the Dynamic Coalitions collectively. He suggested that it is regrettable if the Leadership Panel has submitted its contribution without wider consultation across the IGF communities that would for example take into account the DCs' response. Bruna noted that there had been some efforts at consultation ahead of the submission, but that what is now important is

to ensure that subsequent contributions reinforce the messages in the LP submission (including the importance of the IGF itself, which has not been highlighted enough in consultation discussions so far).

Jorge Cancio noted that the LP submission is clearly based on the IGF Messages, and that any possible MAG contribution should be focused on complementing the LP submission, including the role of the NRIs and intersessional work. It is important to work towards better exchange and process for LP/MAG cooperation going forward. He noted the need to focus on the role of the IGF, both in drafting the GDC and, looking to the future, the IGF as a follow-up mechanism. Jorge noted that the IGF could serve as an ideal venue for these follow-up processes, but there is now concern that an alternative (duplicative) structure is being considered for this follow-up role. The creation of such an alternative structure could see a draining of enthusiasm and resources from the IGF.

Ben Wallis suggested that one of the roles of the LP is to convey and translate IGF outputs to high-level audiences, and this submission could be considered an appropriate expression of that role. He also noted that the Issues Paper to be prepared by the Co-Facilitators is expected to draw on responses to the survey as well as the deep dive sessions - this highlights the importance of taking part in the deep dive sessions, especially the upcoming deep dive on "Internet governance" (13 April). It is vital stakeholders and the MAG take part and stress the importance of the IGF.

Wolgang Kleinwächter was pleased to see the LP accept its role as ambassadors, and stressed the need for the MAG and LP to work together, not in competition. He cautioned that some in the UN in New York see the GDC as a means of establishing new structures, and this would be problematic - there is a strong need to argue that the IGF should be the space for GDC follow-up. He concluded that it was concerning not to see more members of the LP attending the Vienna meetings in person.

Timea Suto agreed that there was not a clear process for the LP regarding their submission, and for the most part the LP took the existing messages as the basis for their submission. Any additional input from the IGF communities should complement both the IGF Messages and the LP contribution. She noted that there is a general lack of coordination and communication (even between the MAG and this WG-Strategy) - we need to work on improving that.

Dino Dell'Accio noted that we need to better define the MAG's value proposition in the GDC process, and understand the "rules of engagement" - considering the criticisms of the GDC, lacking specificity, ambition and accountability. Accordingly, we need to define what this group, or the MAG more generally, can bring to the GDC? Amrita noted that the current expectation is that the IGF and its bodies can bring important, substantive input from a diverse range of stakeholders.

Mark said that he was encouraged when Amandeep noted in Addis Ababa that he saw a role for the Dynamic Coalitions in the follow up to the GDC. He stressed the need to seize every

opportunity including direct communication with the co-facilitators, to argue that all phases of the GDC (not just the preparation phase) should allow for contributions from all stakeholders, as some UN member states such as the UK have already stated it should. Regarding the upcoming deep dive consultation on Internet governance, he noted that as at the time of the WG meeting no guiding questions had yet been published and no briefers had been identified though it was clear from the last consultation session that the briefers have an important role in these sessions (this key information was circulated by the co-facilitators later on 6 April). Mark added that it was also a concern that the process for nominating and appointing the briefers for the deep dives had not been made public.

With reference to the CSTD Session, Mark wnoted with concern that despite its overall responsibility for WSIS, there is no budget allocation for CSTD to cover the costs of preparation for the WSIS+20 review which would include for example paying for consultants (to write the necessary briefing papers. The Chair of the CSTD 26th Session just held (Peter Major) had made an urgent call for contributions from Member States to cover these additional costs.

Bruna noted that she has asked the Office of the Tech Envoy about the deep dive process (including on briefers, questions, planning processes, and actions to be taken out of the sessions) - the response did not address those questions. She also noted that in past consultations, some were not able to speak because they didn't have their cameras on, so it is important for people to be aware of this requirement.

Christina Arida noted that while we are focused on bringing up the importance of IGF in the GDC process, we also need to be making this argument strongly in relation to the WSIS+20 process. It seems the GDC and WSIS+20 processes are moving quite independently.

Abdulrahman Almutairi noted that there is a strategic issue between the MAG and the LP, which includes a low level of communication. An agreed roadmap would help to make collaboration more effective. He also noted a lot of ambiguity, which benefits the first-mover, so we should consider that in our planning.

Chris noted the strong agreement that there should be better communication between the MAG and LP, and the feeling that a virtual meeting between the groups before July would be useful. He also noted that this WG would be best placed to initiate a draft MAG contribution to the survey. He noted that at this point, while it may be useful to invite the Co-Facilitators to a WG-Strategy call, more substantive proposals are likely to be re-directed by the Co-Facilitators to their deep dive sessions (or the Tech Envoy's survey).

2. Update from the IGF Secretariat

Anya noted that the call for IGF session proposals is now open (with a deadline of 19 May); that the Secretariat is working to assemble consultants to support the intersessional work streams; and that the July meeting for the MAG has been finalised for 10-12 July, with the LP meeting on 13-14 July - the MAG and LP will plan to meet on the morning of 13 July.

3. AoB

The next meeting will be on 4 May at 14:00 UTC.

ACTIONS
1. WG Co-Chairs to communicate to the MAG and LP the need for more effective communication and urge a virtual meeting be held in the coming weeks.
2. MAG members in the WG to develop an initial draft of MAG response to the Tech Envoy's GDC survey.

Attendees:

List of participants

1. Abdulrahman Almutairi, Digital Government Authority, Saudi Arabia
2. Abu Azzan
3. Adam Peake, IGF MAG Member
4. Amrita Choudhury, Group's Co-Chair, IGF MAG member
5. Anja Gengo, IGF Secretariat
6. Ayden Ferdeline, Independent Expert
7. Ben Wallis, Microsoft
8. Bruna Martina Los Santos, IGF MAG member
9. Chris Buckridge, Group's Co-Chair, IGF MAG member
10. Concettina Cassa, Group's Co-Chair, Government of Italy
11. Cristina Arida, NTRA Egypt
12. Dino Cataldo Dell'Accio, UNJSPF
13. Flavio Wagner, CGI.br and University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
14. Jim Prendergast, Independent Expert
15. Jorge Cancio, Government of Switzerland
16. Mark Cavell, Independent Expert
17. Prince Andrew L. Zutah, Independent Expert
18. Rosalind Kenny Birch, UK Government
19. Tereza Horejsova, IGF MAG member
20. Timea Suto, ICC BASIS
21. Wolfgang Kleinwächter
22. Wout De Natris, Independent Expert