MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy

Online Meeting 70
8 February 2024 at 05:00 UTC

Summary Report

The 70th virtual meeting of the IGF MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy (WG-Strategy) was held on 8 February 2024 at 05:00 UTC. The meeting was moderated by Amrita Choudhury, and a recording of the meeting is available upon request.

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

Agenda

1. Update from the IGF Secretariat
2. Open Consultations and MAG meeting
3. CSTD/WSIS +20 questionnaire response
4. WSIS +20 update
5. GDC + GDC timelines
6. NETmundial +10
7. AOB

Discussion

1. Update from the IGF Secretariat
Amrita Choudhury noted that there remained an open call for volunteers to lead work on looking at intersessional work.

2. Open Consultations and MAG meeting
Chris Buckridge updated on the recent MAG call. Noted the input received on the themes - significant feedback (three times previous); AI and cybersecurity & trust were the two prominent themes supported across stakeholder groups; and there was discussion of establishing a new WG related to youth engagement.

Anja noted the preparations for the Open Consultation and MAG meeting in Riyadh. She also noted that the vacancy for the PNAI consultant has now closed, and the position should be filled in the coming month. She finally noted that the "Internet We Want" paper is still open and encouraged all to socialise the call for input on that paper.

Wolfgang Kleinwächter asked about the remaining MAG meetings for the year and their location. Anja confirmed that the second meeting will be in Geneva in June (dates TBC). Participants also noted the importance of not clashing with events such as EuroDIG.

3. CSTD/WSIS +20 questionnaire response
4. WSIS +20 update
Chris gave an update on the drafting of an IGF community response to the CSTD questionnaire on WSIS+20. Based on the work of a WG-Strategy sub-group, the first draft is now ready and has been shared with the Chairs of the MAG and the Leadership Panel, as well as the WG-Strategy list. Feedback is requested by 15 February, which will be integrated in time for the Secretariat to submit the final version (assuming sign-on from the MAG and LP) around 23 February. The CSTD's official deadline is 29 February.

5. GDC + GDC timelines
Amrita noted the timeline shared by the Co-Facilitators for feedback on the GDC. Chris noted the GDC guiding questions.

Anriette Esterhuysen noted that the current Zero Draft of the Pact for the Future does not currently have any reference to the WSIS outcome documents, and this could serve to marginalise the work done under the WSIS umbrella. Amrita noted that there is an opportunity to provide feedback. Anriette agreed, and also noted that the "Major Groups" players do good work, but are different individuals to those engaged in the WSIS-related discussions, and that silo-ing makes things difficult.

Jorge Cancio noted that the Swiss are also promoting recognition of the WSIS outcomes in the Pact of the Future negotiations (he noted there is currently one reference to one outcome document). He also noted that there seems to be a strict separation of content between the Pact and the GDC annex - which is positive (no duplication) - so they are looking to see how the GDC consultation goes, and encouraging all to engage with the New York representations. He noted that many of the negotiators of the Pact (and the GDC) are not necessarily well aware of the existing (WSIS) work on digital cooperation and digital governance. We need to hammer in that WSIS already covers all of the issues being considered in the GDC, and question 5 (re. follow-up) is an opportunity to make that case.

Wolfgang agreed that the current New York processes are ignoring what was achieved 20 years ago. Both the Secretary-General and the Tech Envoy have described these events as the first meetings looking to the future, whereas this is a reinvention of the work already set in motion with WSIS. He noted that the STI community has regular work in New York, and we need to develop a concept to bring together the discussions about the Sustainable Development Goals and WSIS work, particularly as governments will view development as a higher priority. He noted that the SDGs, created 10 years ago, do not include a strong digital component, and this is now a challenge. Meanwhile, he noted that in the current situation, we are unlikely to reach better language or formulations than we have in the WSIS outputs, so there is a need to reinforce this strongly and repeatedly - especially the principles of openness, inclusivity and a bottom-up approach. Avoiding efforts to re-negotiate the Internet governance definitions and approaches is a fundamental issue.

Mark Carvell asked whether the ITU, which has mapped linkages between the WSIS action lines and the SDGs, has a role in the New York-based discussions and negotiations. He added that there would be an opportunity to emphasise these linkages at the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event in May.

Bruna Santos suggested that linking the IGF and SDGs could be a focus of the 2024 IGF, perhaps in a main plenary. Anriette noted that the themes referenced in the current thematic input are very consistent with the themes outlined by GDC proposal, and that this is an opportunity to go back and look to the WSIS process, rather than just the GDC process. Bruna agreed that the challenge is to balance out what has come through in the call for input and the specific challenges that we see coming through, and this includes defining some long-term vision for the IGF. She also suggested a "Governance Track" within the IGF 2024 programme, and that this is a good point in the process to explore this possibility.

Desiree Miloshevic agreed it might be useful to look ahead to 2030 and align the IGF discussions and outputs with that work. She also noted that topics like AI were first put on the global governance agenda by the IGF (via the "emerging technologies" topic). She noted that we should not be outflanked by "digital governance", as the WGIG report from 2005 was already looking beyond the Internet to other technologies.

Jordan Carter noted that there's an open question of how to address the "digital governance" approach in the IGF, and suggested it would be really useful to look at how the IGF can

integrate with the 2025-2030 SDG processes. Jorge agreed with the need to continue developing the IGF approach, including the capacity to act as GDC follow-up, as well as a broader consideration of the WSIS architecture, the role of specific agencies, and the wider linkages. If we can link the work of the WSIS to issues of development and sustainability, we will be in a better position to push back on new structures that are unlikely to be meaningfully multistakeholder. This needs to be a positive narrative about WSIS's relevance to the modern world.

6. NETmundial +10
There will be an update on NETmundial+10 in the next WG-Strategy call.

7. AOB
Wolfgang provided an update on work to look at different perspectives on Internet governance, which has now solidified into a website: https://www.dgdg.blog/. They have gathered an editorial team of six people and are calling it the Digital Governance Discussion Group (DGDG). The site will gather articles, statements from around the world, looking ahead to key points including the Summit of the Future and the WSIS review in 2025 (with budget to maintain through 2025). The goal is to ensure that the inputs made in the coming discussions are collected and made available to all involved in the discussions and negotiations. The website will be live from 11 February.

The next call will be on 22 February at 13:00 UTC, and will include an update on the NETmundial+10 preparations.

List of participants

1. Amrita Choudhury, Group's Co-Chair, CCAOI
2. Anja Gengo, IGF Secretariat
3. Anriette Esterhuysen, former IGF MAG Chair
4. Avri Doria, Independent Expert
5. Bruna Santos, Group's Co-Chair, IGF MAG member
6. Carol Roach, IGF MAG chair
7. Chris Buckridge, Group's Co-Chair, IGF MAG member
8. Concettina Cassa, Group's Co-Chair, Government of Italy
9. Desiree Miloshevic, Independent Expert
10. Jorge Cancio, Government of Switzerland
11. Jordan Carter, IGF MAG Member
12. Junko Kawauchi, IGF MAG Member
13. Mark Carvell, EuroDIG
14. Neil Dundas, IGF MAG Member
15. Olga Kyryliuk , IGF MAG Member
16. Stacy Gildenston, Independent Expert
17. Tereza Hoerejsova, former MAG Member
18. Wolfgang Kleinwächter, University of Aarhus
19. Xiao Zhang, IGF MAG Member