

## **IGF 2022 Renewal Proposal for the Policy Network on Meaningful Access**

- **Title**

Policy Network on Meaningful Access (PNMA)

- **Name of a MAG Liaison**

Roberto Zambrana  
Karim ATTOUMANI MOHAMED

- **Description of issue**

The concept of **meaningful access** has emerged in response to the growing body of evidence that even when people have connectivity, they might not have been fully benefiting from the Internet. How one gets connected to the Internet is an equally important challenge to the experience that person will have once they are online. While access to infrastructure is critical, without this access being inclusive, useful, sustainable and affordable, and linked to human capacity development and relevant content that can make it so, it will not achieve its positive potential.

In 2021, the PNMA MWG issued a powerful statement:

*"We have come a long way with local, national and global efforts towards universal connectivity and meaningful access, from a wide number of organizations across all stakeholder groups. However, the implementation of policies around meaningful access remains challenging.*

*Therefore, the PNMA MWG has decided not to concentrate its work on mapping or definition tracks since it is already covered in other fora. We will build on this work from a number of current and past efforts. The MWG agreed to explore concrete actions the members of the PNMA could support so that the main outcome of the PNMA is not only a set of recommendations."*

The PNMA has focused on the following key questions:

- How to improve affordability, meaningful connectivity, and the social elements that support meaningful access?
- How to improve the use and quality of connectivity?
- What is connectivity used for?
- What impact does connectivity have?

Therefore, in 2022, we propose to continue the focus on the agreed 3 overarching thematic workstreams: Connectivity (Infrastructure & Business Models), Digital Inclusion (accessibility & multilingualism) and capacity development (technical skills training).

- **Connection and relevance to the IGF**

The Policy Network on Meaningful Access (PNMA) is a new type of intersessional activity under the United Nations Internet Governance Forum to establish an expert-led framework networks on broad Internet governance topics that create spaces for in-depth multistakeholder efforts, grounded on:

- the IGF mandate at paragraph 72 of Tunis Agenda, for the exchange of information and engagement of stakeholders in particular from developing countries as well as capacity development in Internet Governance;
- the paragraph 93(e) from the United Nations Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation in para 93 (e) as it envisages a strengthened IGF with a view to making it more responsive and relevant to digital issues, and streamline the priority areas (global connectivity, digital inclusion, capacity building)
- more recently, Our Common Agenda 1st Commitment: Leave no one behind.

The Policy Network on Meaningful Access (PNMA) officially kicked off in June 2021, aiming to formulate impact-driven, concrete, actionable policy recommendations on how to achieve meaningful and universal Internet access aligned with the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation and the Sustainable Development Goals. Builds on previous IGF discussions - BPFs Local Content, Gender, Proposal about Sustainable and Affordable Internet and the CENB 4 Phases, DCs and NRIs, and more recently Our Common Agenda call to connect the unconnected, just to mention a few.

In addition, the PNMA MWG has actively collected concrete stories, case studies and local experiences under the three overarching workstreams: Connectivity (Infrastructure & Business Models), Digital Inclusion (accessibility & multilingualism) and Capacity development (technical skills training). The group has also reviewed a number of current efforts to better describe the experience and benefits from meaningful access.

As a pilot, the PNMA has been successful in building a "network of experts" - the Multistakeholder Working Group (MWG) and in providing linkages with ongoing relevant discussions in other fora. However, in order to achieve impact, it should ideally continue beyond 2021, in the future framework of the "new" IGF as it will be defined by the ongoing reform process. The IGF 2021 cycle has set the foundations for building a firmer, more impactful process and stronger cooperation networks, long-term. It will collaborate slowly with partner institutions inside and outside the UN system, and participate in related initiatives.

- **Planned outputs**

In 2021, the PNMA had a strong consensus that the value of this policy network is the commitment from a diverse range of stakeholders in trying to find a common solution, and, at the same time, not duplicating efforts by actively streamlining the work within the IGF ecosystem and seeking bridges beyond the IGF community to connect the dots with other fora. Thus, strengthening the policy network in itself is one of the expected outputs.

There is potential to go beyond just delivering another report with policy recommendations. The PNMA could move the needle for policy implementation. The suggested output is to create a common plan of action that outlines how the different stakeholders involved are going to work together achieving concrete steps towards Connectivity (Infrastructure & Business Models), Digital Inclusion (accessibility & multilingualism) and capacity development (technical skills training).

- **Supporting entities**

Same as last year, including the 2021 MWG

<https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/pnma-multistakeholder-working-group>

- **Engagement and outreach plan**

The particular engagement and outreach plan of the PNMA would be decided in a bottom-up manner, through broad community consultations, by the multistakeholder working group of experts with the involvement of the IGF's Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), DCs, NRIs and BPFs. It will collaborate with follow up actions linked to the UN SG's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. The prime objective of the PNMA would be to bring together the different stakeholders already within the IGF community and beyond, as well as those that are part of the follow up on the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, to collaborate.

The MWG would work under the facilitation of the IGF Secretariat, while having a few interested members of the MAG and the MAG Chair, as liaisons with the full MAG and their respective stakeholder groups and networks. The IGF Secretariat, as a neutral process facilitator, would conduct outreach and support the working group to liaise with relevant helpdesks and observatories for providing relevant information, expertise and advice. The overall substantive process would be based on broad community consultants. The communities of the pre-existing BPFs will continue to act on other specific issues and could be gathered, when necessary, to reflect on their original core theme.

The process for gathering inputs would be bottom-up, open and continuous throughout the IGF preparatory process. Inputs would be gathered through the resources of the working group in addition to a community's input. All working group meetings would be open to the community for a broader discussion. The community will be able to communicate inputs through different outreach forms, ranging from surveys, monthly webinars and online

meetings, bilateral meetings etc.

Also, the network of over 135 national, regional and youth IGF initiatives ([NRIs](#))<sup>11</sup> would be invited to provide feedback to each phase of the output document work, as well as to the final version of the output document. The NRIs would be invited to designate one or two liaison resource persons for this process. The liaison would be the key communicator between the local communities of the NRIs and PNMA. This would also help raise awareness on the local/NRIs levels and equip stakeholders with knowledge and experience to independently continue work on meaningful access to the Internet.

Particularly, the PNMA would have close linkages with the IGF's high-level and parliamentary tracks, and with related processes occurring in other international fora, especially those conducted by organizations that are partners of this process.

Finally, as mentioned above, in regard to the para 93 of the Roadmap, and the 1st Commitment from Our Common Agenda, the PNMA results could also be put forward for discussion within the envisioned relevant bodies, in particular the Expert Leadership Group.

#### **Proposed timeline**

March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Reconvene 2021 PNMA MWG</li><li>● Map new stakeholders for outreach and possible representatives for the working group</li></ul>
April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Organise an open briefing session to validate work timeline &amp; methodology, expected outputs.</li></ul>
April - May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Fortnightly / monthly meetings with MWG to advance the discussions based on the agreed scope</li></ul>
May/June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Host 1<sup>st</sup> update webinar</li></ul>
June/July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The first draft presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Open Consultations</li></ul>
September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Host 2<sup>nd</sup> outreach webinar</li></ul>
September - November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Fortnightly / monthly meetings with MWG to draft output document</li></ul>

#### **Reference documents:**

2021 PNMA Proposal:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tkIU8C6m0Bn62GeTTs0FFqDZ04GQFIPU/view?usp=sharing>