IGF 2023
Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation
(PNIF)

PNIF Multistakeholder Working Group of experts (MWG)
Meeting I, 21 March 2023

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation

1. The IGF MAG confirmed the continuation of the Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation (PNIF) and its proposed work plan for 2023 . The PNIF Framework for Discussing Internet Fragmentation serves as a solid starting point.

2. The IGF 2022 Messages and the IGF Leadership Panel's Contribution to the Consultation on the Global Digital Compact emphasize the importance of multistakeholder governance mechanisms for avoiding internet fragmentation and acknowledge the work of the PNIF. The Leadership Panel encourages the continuation of the work 'to support governments, private sector, civil society and the technical community to be aware of possible threats to the open internet'.

3. It was felt that the PNIF should seize the opportunity to complement the Leadership Panel's GDC contribution with a PNIF contribution that explains what the PNIF achieved in 2022 and elaborates on the plans for 2023. Such a contribution should highlight the bottom-up character of the PNIF and the opportunity for stakeholders to get involved in the 2023 work, and express the hope that this work will be recognised in the GDC.

Work Plan PNIF 2023

4. A sufficient number of members reconfirmed their availability for the PNIF MWG, as such, no major changes to the composition of the group seem necessary.

5. It was noted that two of the eight sub-themes for the IGF 2023 directly relate to the work of the PNIF: '*Avoiding Internet Fragmentation'* and '*Global Digital Governance and Cooperation'.* The Forum's overarching theme is '*The Internet We Want - Empowering All People'.*

6. The work plan for 2023 is to further unpack the PNIF framework via three parallel work streams on *fragmentation of the user experience, fragmentation of the Internet's technical layer,* and *fragmentation of Internet governance and coordination.*

   The work streams - led by at least two co-leads - will work in an open and bottom-up manner to take a deep dive into the identification and prevention of fragmentation:
   - <u>identification</u> : Identify which types of fragmentation and related actions pose the highest risks and should be avoided;
   - <u>prevention</u> : Define practices, guidelines, and principles to prevent or address fragmentation.

The combined work of the three work streams will culminate in the PNIF 2023 outputs, which are envisaged to include:
- A refined and robust framework for discussing fragmentation, to provide increased clarity and common understanding about the diverse causes of fragmentation, their interrelation , impacts, and when fragmentation is most harmful and should be avoided.
- Recommended high-level overarching principles to avoid Internet fragmentation (building on the 2022 framework), to feed into discussions between policymakers and stakeholders, in particular but not exclusively in the framework of Global Digital Compact (GDC) process.
- Concrete guidance and solutions for stakeholders to address fragmentation, including alternative solutions for problematic policies and behaviour that might lead to harmful fragmentation

7. The aim of the PNIF remains to maximise the participation of the whole community in the discussion, the work stream approach is a practical solution to structure the work around specific parts of the problem space.

8. The MWG discussed next steps and practicalities to implement the work plan and envisages the following steps:
- Kick-off the PNIF 2023 and inform the community (PNIF-list and beyond) of the envisaged work plan. (online and/or virtual meeting)
- Identify co-leads, kick off the work streams (e.g. virtual meeting per stream)
- Identify and reach out to additional stakeholders to be involved in one or more of the work streams
The different steps will be further operationalised via the MWG mailing list and/or a next call.

9. It was noted that the IGF meeting is planned early (8-12 October). As a consequence substantive work in the work streams will need to be done before the quieter July/August period kicks in.

10. It was stressed that an open communication about the work stream activities (including having all calls open to all interested and invitations shared on the PNIF list and beyond) will help to keep links between the different work streams and facilitate working towards the PNIF session at IGF 2023 and the PNIF output.

11. It was noted that ongoing work by the Internet Society on a matrix of various types of fragmentation threads and possible advocacy measures could be relevant input for the PNIF work. Also GPD is planning to organise virtual regional round tables to discuss internet fragmentation which could be aligned with or fed in the PNIF work.

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Recording:
https://intgovforum.zoom.us/rec/play/Mzr4KUXlmZl8NkitUzG9iFdg-ydDQH0xmTfqS03YfUuPWBDmU8DdXR-hT1ZXxytMAJ5gkHFI_Et6816l.2SPg_93bS_TltoTt
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