

PROPOSAL FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITY: **Policy Network on Meaningful Access**

Version 16/2/2025

1. Why it was decided it was important to create a PNMA in 2021

The PNMA was created in 2021 as a successor of the Policy Options for Connecting and Enabling the Next Billions (CENB) and BPF on local content and a response to an increasing demand from the community to address the issue of access in an in-depth way. The rationale behind the PNMA proposal – as described in the IGF dedicate page <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/policy-network-on-meaningful-access-pnma> - was that CENB and BPF Local Content could evolve into a more dynamic concept, to also address the situations where the access without appropriate services and contents in local languages is not the solution.

The concept of meaningful access (developed by and with inputs from multistakeholder partnerships, such as A4AI, GDIP, ISOC, APC, and adopted by some international organisations such as ITU and UNESCO) in fact has proven to be the best solution to develop digital cooperation among the part of the human population still today excluded from the access to the Internet. Bring access to developing countries in order to provide only social media in English, it doesn't make too much sense, while on the contrary, bringing Internet to provide services in the local languages, useful for the population of the regions, makes more sustainable and immediately useful the access to the Internet. For all these reasons, the efforts made by BPF on local contents (that was identifying best practices to promote new services or the digitization of old services) were married with the efforts identified by the CENB, about the best practices to incentive the creation of broadband connection in the developing countries.

2. Why it is still important

Around 30 organizations and individuals from all stakeholders' group have actively participated to the activity of this network in 2023. This can be seen through the second report of the PNMA produced in 2023: https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/277/26685 and can be tracked by the various meetings held by the network all over the year 2023 (see the page with all the records: <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2023-policy-network-on-meaningful-access>).

Governments representatives (like Brazil), NGO (like APC, NUPEF, Global Digital Inclusion Partnership and many others); industries (such as Google, represented by Vint Cerf, to small companies such as Narval or Savannah Moon of Habeshaview), and International Organizations active in the field of access as well as in the field of contents, such as ITU and its Broadband Commission, WIPO, WAN-IFRA, ICANN and others bring their own contributions to the debate and, also, to the final session hosted at IGF 2023 in Kyoto¹.

Where we are with the work done

All along the year 2023 the group –thanks also to the indefectible work of Ms. *Daphnee Iglesias, Independent Consultant for Digital Policies and Governance*- has actively contributed to identify a certain number of best practices and policy solutions that have been retained as possible models to be exported or applied to other regions or countries of the world. Through this work in 2023, for instance, have been identified good practices to produce capacity building in the public administrations of the LDC, in order to equip them to create appropriate conditions for broadband networks (like Papua New Guinea plans); successful collaboration experiences across African region in the field of domain names and IDN (ICANN Africa project), successful experiences to create business opportunities from the digitalization of local contents (Savannah Moon); interesting analysis of how to remove barriers to circulation of contents across borders (WIPO projects)

¹ details: <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2023-policy-network-on-meaningful-access-meaningful-access-to-include-and-connect> ; report: https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/256/26722

and so on.

During the year 2023 was also reorganized and revitalized a repository of the PNMA and of the previous Policy Options for Connecting and Enabling the Next Billions (CENB) and of the BPF on Local contents. In this new tool, available to the large public all best practices identified in the course of these years of existence are now gathered and made accessible: <https://intgovforum.org/en/content/pnma-repository>.

3. What is planned as follow up of 2023 action plan and as intersessional work for year 2024

In the final report produced by the group, there are plenty of recommendations of actions to be implemented in the course of the year 2024. PNMA chairpersons have formally asked to the Leadership Panel to submit the successful examples identified by the network to Regional institutions such as African Union, League of Arab States and so on for implementation in their respective areas. For the future Digital Compact Initiative, where some experiences could be submitted to be spread around the world. For the Multilateral institutions that could provide their expertise and resources across the world to countries in need. For more details about the various proposals identified, see again the PNMA 2023 report². The method adopted to produce the report was based on collaborative work with the dedicated PNMA multistakeholder working group of experts (MWG³). The community engagement was facilitated through several NRI focal points and a dedicated mailing list.

CONCLUSIONS:

For all the reasons mentioned above, the outgoing chairmanship of the PNMA (Neema Lugangira et Giacomo Mazzone) and the new proposed chairmanship (MAG member Alhagie Mbow and former MAG member Giacomo Mazzone) suggest to MAG to continue this experience for 2024, with a start as soon as possible, in order to implement the suggestions approved in the action plan 2023.

2. https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/277/26685

³ The full list of MWG members in 2023 could be found here : <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/pnma-multistakeholder-working-group-0>