



**IGF Leadership Panel**  
**17<sup>th</sup> IGF Meetings**  
**28 November-2 December 2022**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia & Online**

The [Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\) Leadership Panel](#) held a series of meetings during the week of the IGF, from 28 November to 2 December 2022 at the headquarters of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Those Panel members in attendance at the annual Forum met face-to-face in Addis Ababa, with a virtual connection available for members offsite.

The onsite [Panel members](#) were as follows: Mr. Vinton Cerf, Chair of the Panel; Ms. Karoline Edtstadler; Ms. Lise Fuhr; Mr. 'Gbenga Sesan; Mr. Lan Xue; as well as ex-officio members Ms. Huria Ali Mahdi; Mr. Paul Mitchell; Mr. Amandeep Singh Gill; and Mr. Hiroshi Yoshida. Participating offsite Panel members were as follows: Ms. Maria Ressa, Vice- Chair of the Panel; Mr. Hatem Dowidar; Ms. Maria Fernanda Garza; Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves; Mr. Alkesh Kumar Sharma; as well as ex-officio member Mr. Krzysztof Szubert.

**Session I – Panel Meet & Greet | Monday 28 November | 10:00-11:00 EAT**

The Panel sat for their first session during the IGF Week, an informal ‘meet and greet’, as an opportunity for many of the members to engage with one another face-to-face for the first time.

At the outset, the Chair reminded the Panel of the mandate handed down to them by the UN Secretary-General: to spur high-level and wider stakeholder engagement in the IGF, increase financial support for the IGF Secretariat, and engage with outside activities to promote the IGF and its outcomes. The Chair also referenced broader responsibilities of the Panel, to be open and constructive, and toward Internet stakeholders generally, to find a “way forward” that minimizes the Internet’s harms and maximizes its benefits.

An exchange of ideas among the membership ensued, including for next steps, future plans and commitments.

**Decisions, Action Items & Next Steps**

- The Panel should consider alignment with the process for the G7, taking place in Japan, the next IGF host country, in 2023. Japan would welcome IGF input into the G7 agenda, which is still in formation.
- The Panel should consider similar engagement with the G20 process in India, also in 2023, where digital issues like data for development are priority themes.
- Events such as the above should be mapped and tied to members who are

interested or likely to attend

- IGF discussions should be made more concrete and outcome-based so its decisions can easily and effectively be brought into other fora. A project on “SDGs for the Internet” could be considered through the IGF.
- A face-to-face meeting of the Panel could be held in Vienna, Austria, in late February or early March 2023, per invitation of Ms. Edtstadler.

### **Session II – Meeting with the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) | Monday 28 November | 17:20-18:20 EAT**

The Panel and MAG met for the first time for a discussion that centred around the following initial questions:

- *How can we drive consensus between the MAG and Panel and create common/aligned messaging?*
- *What is the best process for sharing data and aligning work items between MAG and the Panel (and other UN processes as appropriate)?*
- *How can this effort assist in sourcing/implementing tangible on tangible human-centered projects aligned with the Global Digital Compact (GDC)/Common future?*
- *What is the best way to address gaps in policy coverage and drive commitments from implementors?*
- *How should this effort address other emerging processes such as the Declaration for the Future of the Internet?*

The conversation between Leadership Panel (LP) and MAG members brought various issues to the fore. Among these was that the LP has a special responsibility for IGF fundraising and, as a body, should seek to be cost-neutral to the IGF Trust Fund. Others were that the fundamental value of the IGF – as a unique multistakeholder voice in the digital space – should guide the LP’s work, and that together, the LP and MAG should recognize that “the digital world is bigger than the Internet” and that the scope of their consideration and decision-making implicates a very wide range of issues.

With the LP committing to a concrete approach to its work, and both the LP and MAG committing to closely working together, several points for future consideration and action were made.

### **Decisions, Action Items & Next Steps**

- The Panel and MAG should identify specific steps for approaching the GDC together.
- Joint alignment with processes like the G7 and G20 must similarly be sought, while remembering that the stakeholder community extends beyond G7 and G20 member countries.
- Both bodies should dedicate themselves to being as procedurally transparent as

possible and accountable to stakeholders.

- Both bodies should also be mindful of and spare no effort toward the need to extend their outreach beyond stakeholders who have long been in the IGF's orbit.
- The Panel and MAG should pool their expertise to identify priority digital issues, with the MAG, in particular, spotlighting these based on their communication with constituencies.
- The Panel and MAG must establish a regular calendar of meetings between each other, whether monthly, bimonthly or quarterly.

### **Session III – Meeting with Mr. Junhua Li, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs | Tuesday 29 November | 10:00-10:30 EAT**

The Panel held a brief informal meeting with the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Junhua Li. Following the introductions of members onsite and online, the discussion focused on the Panel's remit and the special nature of the IGF.

#### **Decisions, Action Items & Next Steps**

- The remit of the Panel, and therefore its emphasis moving forward, is to lift up the IGF, make it more relevant, and its outputs more sharply focused.
- While the IGF is not a decision-making body, it should be strengthened and act as a solid basis for policymakers.
- Panel members should also strive to make processes as inclusive as possible, so those for whom the "future of the Internet" is being planned are represented, as well as highlight regional priorities (in parts of the global South, for instance, connectivity is less of a challenge than content and literacy).

### **Session IV – Meeting with UN Secretary-General António Guterres | Tuesday 29 November | 18:00-19:00 EAT**

The Secretary-General opened the meeting by expressing appreciation to the Leadership Panel for taking on their role and tackling the complexities of the work ahead: there are serious problems related to the Internet that need to be addressed, and technologies will continue to advance rapidly. He noted that the establishment of the Panel was in response to the Roadmap on Digital Cooperation, with the intention of strengthening the IGF and increasing its influence. Alongside this, the UN is pursuing constructive collaboration on issues related to Internet/digital governance and regulation through the Summit of the Future, to be held in 2024, and the proposed GDC. In connection, he appealed to the Panel members to approach these two core issues with bold energy and focus: (i) strengthening the IGF, and (ii) how to ensure a meaningful GDC.

The Panel Chair noted that there is an extensive set of related issues to be addressed, which should be prioritised and considered with respect to how they should be pursued – as technical issues, socio-economic issues, or both, as needed – and that the Panel’s work will need to take a practical approach, with various modalities, and a strong “architecture behind it” to appropriately capture and corral its workstreams. In connection, the Panel agreed to determine a set of metrics by which to monitor its progress.

The Panel Vice Chair addressed the urgency of the situation, noting that a defined “democratic Internet” does not yet exist. Individuals come under attack because data can be “weaponised”. As such, data privacy is crucial and technology must be used for good – but it is difficult in the absence of laws to contain this kind of activity.

The Panel members each then expressed views on the work ahead. Key substantive inputs related to improving connectivity and closing digital divides, maximising the use of digital tools to support the Sustainable Development Goals, and leveraging existing resources (e.g. past IGF outcomes, monitoring the work of other relevant bodies and products). In relation to connectivity, it was noted that connecting people is important, but that addressing basic needs of people including literacy is even more important. By enhancing literacy including digital skills, it will follow naturally that people become meaningfully connected. The Secretary-General said he was “moved” by the discussion and that these kinds of policy interventions would contribute to reversing trends of increasing inequality.

Other inputs related to practical measures were articulated, such as the need to cooperate with the MAG, aligning with the Panel’s TOR, consideration of future IGF meetings, amplifying and leveraging existing resources (e.g. the IGF Messages), the need to engage in outreach/funding, and logistical issues for the organising and recording of the Panel’s work. The importance of aligning the Panel’s work to the Summit of the Future and the GDC was highlighted.

### **Decisions, Action Items & Next Steps**

- The IGF Secretariat will provide the Leadership Panel with:
  - A list of upcoming conferences that are relevant to the Panel’s Terms of Reference
  - A suggested platform for collaborative work

### **Session V – IGF 2022 Session: ‘Open Dialogue with the IGF Leadership Panel’ | Wednesday 30 November | 17:20-18:20 EAT**

The session, a public event in the IGF 2022 schedule moderated by the Secretariat in a question-and-answer format, was an opportunity for IGF participants to both give input to and enquire about the Panel’s forthcoming activities. All members onsite were present as panellist-respondents in the session.

After a round of introductions from the Panel members, in which they reiterated their commitment to bolstering the Forum – not least with fundraising – and to the related project of advancing an open, free and human-centred Internet, 90-second interventions were heard from participants.

### **Decisions, Action Items & Next Steps**

- Panel members agreed that processes such as these to collect views from stakeholders would be vital to their work.

Contributions and questions from the public over the course of the session were raised as follow:

- Could the Panel establish project for connecting the unconnected, particularly women, girls and youth?
  - How would the Panel place emphasis on important intersessional outputs, such as those produced by IGF Dynamic Coalitions?
  - How could the profile of the IGF be raised to the level of the COP climate change conferences?
  - How can the multistakeholder discussions and coalitions forged at the global and regional/national IGFs (NRIs) be taken forward and put in front of the international community?
  - Would the Panel form groups dedicated to the needs of women and vulnerable stakeholders, such as persons with disabilities?
  - Could the Panel minimize potential overlap between the IGF's work and ICANN's?
  - How would the Panel address the current tension between multistakeholderism and multilateralism?
  - How would the Panel ensure transparency in its work, and how would stakeholders be able to interact with it?
- The Panel should engage in targeted outreach and communications campaigns to match to audiences and fora the most relevant of the IGF's rich outputs. This would be one way to elevate the IGF on the international stage.
  - The Panel plans to attend key international conferences where it can bring visibility to the IGF's work. It will also identify ways to act as a connector between the IGF's bottom-up, multistakeholder discussions and Governments.
  - Intersessional work, and particularly views from NRIs, are indispensable for bringing to light on the IGF platform geographically and context-specific "use cases" – examples of digital challenges and what has or has not worked in terms of solutions. The Panel will ensure that those continue to be facilitated. It will further commit itself to promoting intersessional work as part of its broader effort to disseminate IGF outputs.
  - Drawing an analogy between COP and the IGF, the Panel should use the framing

and language of the climate crisis to lend urgency to the threats faced in the digital space.

- To confront the persistent challenge of infrastructural connectivity for all, the Panel should consider two potential obstacles, in the form of: development banks, which have not traditionally supported connectivity schemes, and the market's failure to incentivize connectivity in critical places like schools.
- To the extent possible, the Panel will devote itself to advocacy for persons with disabilities, particularly in the context of training for engineers in accessibility-enhancing measures.
- The Panel should favor open and “complex conversations” between multistakeholder and multilateral communities to bridge the divide between them.
- The transparency of the Panel will be assured through clear disclosure of its plans, consultations with stakeholders as a matter of course, and openness as to the reasoning of the decisions it takes.

### **Session VI – Reflecting on IGF 2022 and Looking at IGF 2023 | Friday 2 December | 10:45-11:45 EAT**

The Panel convened a final meeting on the last day of the IGF week to think strategically about the future orientation of its activities as well as what it had heard during IGF 2022 discussions. On the latter, reflections were shared by the Chair and a few Panel members, specifically regarding: recourse mechanisms for online harms that go beyond the judicial system; technical adjustments that could be made to the Internet's infrastructure for inhibiting bad behavior online; and the importance of an open Internet, even and especially during times of conflict, as well as, in general, for SMEs around the world.

Several suggestions were made for the Panel's working modalities and future activities as outlined below.

#### **Decisions, Action Items & Next Steps**

- The Panel's membership could be split into working groups, based on the different parts of its mandate and members' interests or expertise in various digital policy areas. Some proposed working groups were on:
  - IGF fundraising
  - Host country learning experiences / IGF hosting
  - Policy areas such as Cybersecurity, Government services, Human rights, and Technical matters

- The Panel will need to connect with particular Internet governance-related institutions, processes and conferences, including but not limited to: ICANN, WSIS, the GDC, and a UNESCO meeting on hate speech that will take place in 2023. The Panel should also examine potential IGF linkages with existing declarations, like the U.S.-led Declaration on the Future of the Internet and the Paris Declaration on Cybersecurity.
- In reference to conferences or processes relevant to the IGF, the Secretariat could prepare a common calendar of these populated with members' suggestions and use it to track potential attendance of one or more members. These may include conferences or processes that discuss broader issues of which Internet governance and allied issues are a part.
- The Panel should review the work of the MAG Working Group on Strategy and the outcome document of the IGF Expert Group Meeting (EGM) held in March 2022 as bases for their efforts on IGF strengthening.
- Prior surveys done of IGF impacts, such as those produced ahead of IGF renewals, should also be provided by the Secretariat and reviewed.
- The Panel should ensure its activities and records thereof are open to the MAG and public at large, with all posted to the IGF website. Periodic webinars with stakeholders could also be considered, and the MAG should be regularly consulted.
- Bearing in mind that IGF stakeholders already deliberate on and produce recommendations on digital policy issues, the Panel should focus on how to give these a strategic orientation.
- Promoting the "greater impact and dissemination of IGF discussions" should be the Panel's top priority with explicit measures agreed around this.
- Fundraising for the IGF is imperative and should be an equal priority.

**Annex – Leadership Panel Schedule of Meetings at 17<sup>th</sup> IGF**

Date & Time	Room	Meeting
<b>Monday 28 November</b>		
10:00-11:00	E-128	Panel Meet & Greet   <i>Closed</i>
17:20-18:20	CR6	<p>Meeting with the MAG   <i>Closed</i></p> <p><b>Discussion Questions</b></p> <p>How can we drive consensus between MAG and HLP and create common/aligned messaging?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the best process for sharing data and aligning work items between MAG and HLP (and other UN processes as appropriate)?</li> <li>• How can this effort assist in sourcing/implementing tangible on tangible human-centered projects aligned with DGC/ Common future?</li> <li>• What is the best way to address gaps in policy coverage and drive commitments from implementors?</li> <li>• How should this effort address / other emerging processes such as the Declaration for the Future of the Internet?</li> </ul>
<b>Tuesday 29 November</b>		
10:00-10:30	E-128	IGF Leadership Panel Meeting with Under-Secretary-General of UNDESA Mr. Li (Informal Meet & Greet and Photo Op)   <i>Closed</i>
18:00-19:00	E-128	<p>Meeting with the UN Secretary-General   <i>Closed</i></p> <p><b>Draft Agenda</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Secretary-General opens</li> <li>2. Chair Mr. Vint Cerf</li> <li>3. Vice-Chair Ms. Maria Ressa [Virtual]</li> <li>4. Secretary-General gives his views and feedback on the Chair and Vice Chairs statements</li> <li>5. Farewell remarks (Chair and Vice Chair)</li> </ol>
<b>Wednesday 30 November</b>		
17:20-18:20	CR1	<p>Open Dialogue with IGF Leadership Panel   <i>Open</i></p> <p><i>The session is intended as an open discussion of the Panel with IGF stakeholders, particularly to address questions about the Panel's forthcoming activities.</i></p> <p><b>Draft Agenda</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introductory remarks by the Panel Chair (5 mins)</li> <li>2. Introductory remarks by the MAG Chair (5 mins)</li> <li>3. Panel members introduce themselves to participants (10 mins)</li> <li>4. IGF Secretariat moderates Q&amp;A with participants “round robin” style, in order to give all panellists an</li> </ol>



		<p>opportunity to address questions (35 mins)</p> <p>5. Closing remarks by the Panel Chair (5 mins)</p>
<b>Friday 2 December</b>		
10:45-11:45	E-128	Leadership Panel Meeting reflecting on IGF 2022 & Looking at IGF 2023   <i>Closed</i>