

**IGF Leadership Panel Meeting  
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
25-27 February 2024**

The [Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\) Leadership Panel](#) met on 25-27 February in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. [Mr. Vinton Cerf](#) moderated the meeting as Chair of the Panel alongside [Ms. Maria Ressa](#), the Panel Vice-Chair. Virtual participation was available for those unable to attend in person. The purpose of the meeting was to identify strategic priorities for the IGF 2024 cycle, further discussions on the Panel's 'Internet We Want' framework, and explore innovative approaches to the IGF annual meeting programme and funding. A 2024 workplan for the Panel was reviewed and approved in this regard.

Over the course of deliberations, two interdependent focus areas emerged. One was the need to extend IGF support to current digital cooperation processes, namely preparations for the UN's Global Digital Compact (GDC), set to be adopted in September of this year, and the twenty-year review of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20), which will culminate in 2025 and determine the renewal of the IGF's mandate. The second was to amplify IGF successes and vision for the future, including for its potential new mandate, through more deliberate communications and engagement at all levels.

In addition to its internal meeting, the panel held a joint face-to-face session with the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) and IGF stakeholders on 27 February. The MAG shared with the panel the need to prioritize the IGF's positioning with respect to the GDC and WSIS+20 and to engage in proactive outreach leading up to the conclusions of those processes. Their exchanges with one another and stakeholder consultations focused on enhancing IGF visibility and positioning the process and Forum as the unique platform that offers expertise and best practices for open, inclusive, transparent and action-oriented digital policymaking.

At the invitation of the Saudi Government, the panel toured institutions in Riyadh highlighting digital-based solutions for judicial administration and health. Visits to the Judicial Development Center's 'Virtual Court' and King Faisal Hospital demonstrated the use of virtual participation technologies and Artificial Intelligence to improve both the volume and quality of service provision for citizens.

Below is an overview of action items and next steps raised in relation to future activities.

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

#### **I. Optimising Programme and Participation of the IGF 2024 Annual Meeting**

- The Panel recommended a reduction in the number of programme themes to a maximum of five, with a de-emphasis on session type and emphasis on session topic.
- Potential focus issues the Panel could put forward include global cooperation on AI and Cybersecurity and the innovative use of digital identity technologies, as well as "AI at scale", advanced connectivity, sustainable consumption, and digital trust, aligned with digital policy 'mega trends'.
- Based on the Secretariat's summary of stocktaking inputs from IGF 2023, the Panel will endeavour to increase its number of open sessions during the IGF, "bookending" these at the beginning and end of the IGF week.
- The Panel will also encourage initiatives like a judiciary track and recommendations to enhance business engagement, and also increase the engagement of un- or under-represented stakeholder

communities at the IGF; dialogue with judiciaries will be especially important as new technologies become the subject of or are integrated in court proceedings.

- The IGF meeting's taking place in Saudi Arabia should be leveraged to increase the participation of young people and startups.
- Facilitation of visas, especially for attendees from the Global South, will remain a point of attention for the Panel in cooperation with the Host Government.

## **II. IGF in the Context of GDC and WSIS+20**

- The Panel will continue to advocate for the IGF as a follow-up, monitoring venue for the GDC, and as an important mechanism for carrying forward WSIS principles.
- The Panel believe in and will also advocate for the "regularisation of IGF" as an outcome of WSIS – for the IGF's durability in terms of planning purposes and as a recipient of UN regular budget funding.
- The Panel will strategize on how to generate IGF annual meeting outcomes that are useful in relation to the above.
- Members agreed a bilateral meeting with the GDC co-facilitators would be needed following their meeting, in addition to the Panel's participation in consultative processes related to GDC and WSIS+20.
- A communiqué with the Panel's strong endorsement of and vision for a new IGF mandate will be considered for transmission to the President of the UN General Assembly and Member States.

## **III. Communications and Outreach to Support Strategic Objectives**

- The Panel will support the orientation of IGF communications toward narrative storytelling, capturing the successes of the IGF and how the Internet and Internet-related innovations have had tangible impacts on people's lives.
- The Panel will also contribute to a specific initiative to produce video testimonials on IGF and the Internet's value, collaborating with the MAG and broader IGF networks.
- Members will coordinate more closely with the Secretariat on social media communications, providing support for posting across Members' and official IGF accounts.
- The Panel will coordinate with the Host Country on media presence at the IGF and by personally participating in Saudi-organised IGF outreach events, planned in conjunction with the Science, Technology and Innovation – STI Forum (May, New York), WSIS+20 High-level Event (May, Geneva), High-level Political Forum – HLPF (July, New York), and Summit of the Future (September, New York).
- Efforts will be made at proactive outreach to the media, focusing on specialised technical press, but also identifying up to five major IGF-related topics that would be of general media interest, and responding in writing, if clarifications are necessary, to articles on the IGF. Under the guidance of the Vice-Chair, Ms. Ressa, the Panel's Working Group A will lead on media-related efforts.
- Media interactions should not be limited to the Chair and Vice-Chair but engage the full Panel.

- With respect to deeper engagement with UN Member States, the Panel, together with the Secretariat, will take advantage of government representation on the Panel itself, the MAG, within the network of IGF National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs), and begin to make inroads with intergovernmental processes like the G20 (following on the Secretariat’s successful cooperation with the G7 during Japan’s presidency in 2023).

#### **IV. ‘Internet We Want’**

- As an additional section to the current framework or as a separate communications series, the Panel will address the current state of digital affairs, under rubrics like “The Internet We Want and How We’re Getting There”, “The Internet We Have”, and “Reports from the Edge of the Internet”.
- The Secretariat will proceed with gathering all inputs received to the existing IWW paper by 8 March.
- IWW will be developed by the Panel, and in consultation with the MAG, with a set of measurable targets (KPIs) under each of the characteristics of the IWW.

#### **V. IGF Fundraising**

- Through its Working Group C on Funding, the Panel will aim to increase the income of contributions to the IGF Trust Fund from the annual average of \$1.2 million to \$5 million by early 2025. The latter figure takes into account the \$3 million needed to fulfil the IGF Secretariat’s activities, as stated in the IGF project document, as well as an additional \$2 million for “forward funding”.
- The Panel will explore different funding mechanisms, modelling on non-profit structures like the UN Foundation and the IGF Support Association (IGFSA), a current donor to the IGF. Alternative channels to direct contributions to the Trust Fund consider that some donors have not found the current process straightforward and that businesses prefer ways to make tax-deductible donations.

#### **VI. Administrative Matters**

- Concerning the Panel’s two-year term ending in 2024, two options are under consideration: a recommendation for the current Panel to continue until after the 2025 IGF in order to complete the IGF’s mandate; and a partial rotation along the same lines as the MAG following the 2024 IGF in December. Given the preference for the first option, the Panel will be surveyed to understand if there are any Members who wish to opt out before 2025 and whose seats would then be filled on an ad-hoc basis.
- Regarding work in 2024, a draft workplan reviewed during the meeting – merging two working groups to form a new Group A on ‘Awareness-raising, Outreach & Substantive Guidance’ – was adopted to guide Panel activities this year.

## Annex I – Agenda

Date & Time	Location	Meeting
<b>Sunday 25 February</b>		
08:30 – 09:00	<i>Hilton Hotel (Badge desk located outside LP Meeting Room, 'Neom Hall', Ground Floor)</i>	<b>Arrivals &amp; Registration</b>
09:00 – 09:20	<i>Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall</i>	<b>LP WORKING SESSIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>I. Opening &amp; Adoption of Agenda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome Remarks from LP Chair, LP Vice-Chair &amp; Representative of KSA</li> <li>• Message from Under-Secretary-General, UNDESA (4 minutes)</li> <li>• Adoption of Meeting Agenda</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
09:20 – 10:30	<i>Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall</i>	<b>II. Exchange of Views/Open Dialogue</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Taking Stock of IGF 2023</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ <i>Informed by personal views on IGF 2023 meeting and intersessional work &amp; in part by the IGF's annual 'Stocktaking' report</i></li> <li>→ <i>Secretariat presents results of Stocktaking process</i>  <a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KvxOedONBS37YhFWJWEF2f-1-V2MIMtD/edit?usp=sharing&amp;oid=100990275360526525716&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true">[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KvxOedONBS37YhFWJWEF2f-1-V2MIMtD/edit?usp=sharing&amp;oid=100990275360526525716&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true]</a> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Developments since IGF 2023 within Broader Digital Ecosystem &amp; IGF</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ <i>Sharing of experiences &amp; participation in relevant conferences/policy mechanisms</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
10:30 – 10:45	<i>Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall (Coffee provided outside Neom Hall)</i>	<b>COFFEE BREAK</b>

10:45 – 12:00	Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Developments since IGF 2023 within Broader DigitalEcosystem&amp; IGF</b> (cont'd.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Reflections on global developments, digital governance processes like GDC &amp; WSIS+20, IGF developments</li> <li>→ Review of joint LP-MAG response to CSTD questionnaire on WSIS+20 <a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LQjMQRwj6DpAK4CjlxLdYu7L5X5SMfNblNWqqwPgJIs/edit?usp=sharing">[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LQjMQRwj6DpAK4CjlxLdYu7L5X5SMfNblNWqqwPgJIs/edit?usp=sharing]</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Identifying Strategic Priorities for the IGF 2024 Annual Cycle</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Informed by personal views &amp; in part by synthesis of IGF 2024 thematic inputs</li> <li>→ Secretariat presents results of IGF 2024 thematic inputs process <a href="https://intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/309/27171">[https://intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/309/27171]</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
12:30 – 13:30	Hilton Hotel	LUNCH
13:30 – 17:00 (approx. end time)	King Faisal Hospital, Riyadh  Judicial Development Center, Riyadh	<b>SITE VISITS ORGANIZED BY KSA</b> *King Faisal Hospital, highlighting e-health initiatives *Saudi Virtual Court
20:00 – 21:30 (approx. end time)	Location TBC	<b>GALA DINNER ORGANIZED BY KSA</b>
<b>Monday 26 February</b>		
09:00 – 10:30	Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall	<b>LP WORKING SESSIONS</b> <b>III. Discussion on Leadership Panel Work in 2024</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of CSTD Submission</li> <li>• Updates from the Chair</li> <li>• Reporting in of LP Working Groups</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Updates from Working groups A, B, C &amp; D on the past year</li> <li>→ Expectations, concerns &amp; priorities for the year ahead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Structure, Modalities &amp; Leadership of Current Working Groups</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>→ Should current working groups be maintained?</li> <li>→ Is there a need for fewer or new groups? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Who should the focal points be for each group? <a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yU4e_c0nIe0HXp4BT50q9Yre2two7Mc/edit?usp=sharing&amp;oid=100990275360526525716&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true">[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yU4e_c0nIe0HXp4BT50q9Yre2two7Mc/edit?usp=sharing&amp;oid=100990275360526525716&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true]</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Review of Draft 2024 LP Workplan</b></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Informed by draft outline</li> </ul>
10:30 – 10:45	Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall	COFFEE BREAK

10:45 – 12:00	Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall	<p><b>IV. Focus on: Fundraising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Current State of IGF Trust Fund</b></li> <li>• <b>Fundraising as Priority for Entire LP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ LP Tour de table: members share potential fundraising opportunities based on their individual participation in upcoming activities/meetings</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Working Group C on IGF Fundraising</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ What objectives will the Group set for itself and how can it achieve them?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
12:30 – 14:00	Hilton Hotel	<b>LUNCH</b>
14:00 – 15:15	Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall	<p><b>V. Focus on: 'Internet We Want'</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Review of Process to Date</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Ongoing receipt of inputs  <a href="https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/the-internet-we-want">[https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/the-internet-we-want]</a> &amp; timeline  <a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/14sIkZVix8doka0TjwNkhgCU4Dc_02MK6/edit?usp=sharing&amp;oid=100990275360526525716&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true">[https://docs.google.com/document/d/14sIkZVix8doka0TjwNkhgCU4Dc_02MK6/edit?usp=sharing&amp;oid=100990275360526525716&amp;rtpof=true&amp;sd=true]</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>IWW Strategic Outlook &amp; Relation to Other Processes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ How can IWW inform other processes and enhance IGF?</li> <li>➔ What is the vision for IWW beyond its current timeline?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
15:15 – 15:30	Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall	<b>COFFEE BREAK</b>
15:30 – 16:30	Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall	<p><b>VI. Focus on: IGF 2024 Annual Meeting Meeting Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ High-level, initial thinking on structure &amp; themes for recommendation to the MAG</li> <li>• <b>Meeting Outcomes &amp; Impact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ How can the LP work toward stronger outcomes and impact of those outcomes?</li> <li>➔ Are there specific recommendations in terms of the meeting programme or intersessional work that would contribute to the above?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Meeting Setting, Logistics &amp; Cooperation with Saudi Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ High-level thinking on maximising the meeting's Location in KSA</li> <li>➔ Are there highlights of the setting and logistics the LP can begin to promote?</li> <li>➔ How can the LP work with KSA on outreach?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

16:30 – 17:00	<i>Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall</i>	<b>VII. Closing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adopting IGF 2024 Workplan</b> → <i>Review &amp; adoption of initial workplan with any adjustments made over course of the meeting</i></li> <li>• <b>Agreement on Priorities to Relay to MAG</b> → <i>Agreeing on unified message to take to MAG during joint meeting following day</i></li> <li>• <b>Closing Remarks from the LP Chair</b></li> </ul>
<b>Tuesday 27 February</b>		
09:00 – 11:00	<i>Hilton Hotel/ Neom Hall</i>	<b>LP OPEN EXCHANGE WITH MULTISTAKEHOLDERADVISORY GROUP (MAG)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Opening Remarks from LP &amp; MAG Chairs, IGF2024 Host Country</b></li> <li>• <b>IGF 2024 Strategic Objectives: IGF in Context of Ongoing &amp;Upcoming Processes (GDC &amp; WSIS+20)</b></li> <li>• <b>Discussion on Collaborative Approachesfor Strengthening IGF, including throughLP Working Groups</b></li> </ul>

**Annex II – Attendance**

**Panel**

- Mr. Vinton Cerf, Chair
- Ms. Maria Ressa, Vice-Chair (\*online)
- Mr. Ahmed Mohammed Alsuwaiyan
- Ms. Karoline Edtstadler
- Ms. Maria Fernanda Garza
- Mr. ‘Gbenga Sesan
- Mr. Lan Xue (\*online)

*Advisor to the Chair*

- Mr. Krzysztof Szubert

*Panel Support Persons*

- Mr. Asim Abobakr
- Mr. Abdulrahman Al Mutairi
- Ms. Meni Anastasiadou
- Ms. Angela Coriz (\*online)
- Mr. Moritz Fromageot (\*online)
- Ms. Lara Honrado (\*online)
- Ms. Johanna Resch
- Mr. Wiktor Skwarek (\*online)
- Ms. Timea Suto (\*online)
- Ms. Anna Walch

*Regrets*

- Mr. Hatem Dowidar
- Ms. Lise Fuhr





Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves  
Mr. Belete Molla  
Mr. Amandeep Singh Gill  
Mr. Hiroshi Yoshida

**IGF Secretariat**

Ms. Céline Bal  
Ms. Anja Gengo  
Mr. Chengetai Masango  
Ms. Eleonora Mazzucchi