



IGF Internet
Governance
Forum



INTERNET
GOVERNANCE
FORUM
POLAND
INTERNET UNITED

Annual Progress Report

Internet Governance
Forum (IGF) 2021



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Introduction

This annual report provides a consolidated summary of key activities undertaken over the course of the 2021 cycle of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). It is structured around four expected accomplishments listed in the IGF Project Document¹ which guided the work of the IGF Secretariat:

- Creation of an enabling environment for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue related to the key elements of Internet governance;
- Enhanced collaboration among key organizations dealing with different Internet governance issues in support of the Information Society and development goals;
- Exchange of information to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet;
- Strengthened capacity of developing country stakeholders to participate effectively in Internet governance arrangements.

The 16th annual IGF was held in Katowice, Poland, from 6-10 December 2021. In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and changing protocols with regards to travel, vaccination and testing requirements, the meeting was hosted in a first-ever hybrid format, allowing for the equal and full engagement of both online and onsite participants.

Under the overarching theme 'Internet United', the meeting marked the sixth gathering of the global multistakeholder IGF community since the renewal of the IGF's mandate for 10 years by the UN General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/70/125)². The IGF 2021 planning process started immediately after the 15th IGF concluded. The IGF 2021 Host Country, as well as the IGF 2021 Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), whose renewal was announced on the last day of the 2020 IGF, immediately

1 https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/4099/516

2 <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/70/125>

commenced planning the 16th IGF, building on the organizational and substantive feedback from the community received through a traditional taking-stock process. The planning cycle included two online Open Consultations and MAG Meetings – in February and June 2021; and one hybrid Open Consultations and MAG Meeting in September 2021, at the United Nations Office at Geneva, Switzerland; and twenty-two online MAG³ meetings.

With emphasis on improving working modalities, the IGF's preparatory process, including its intersessional activities this past year, have been guided by its extended ten-year mandate, calling for the IGF to continue to show progress on working modalities and the participation of relevant stakeholders from developing countries⁴, by the recommendations of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) Working Group on Improvements to the IGF⁵ and the IGF Retreat Proceedings convened by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)⁶. The Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation⁷ also featured prominently the overall planning process.

Under the overarching theme, 'Internet United', the 16th annual IGF meeting provided a platform for advancing critical Internet policy discussions through several annual workstreams and more than 300 different sessions, focused on six issue areas.

The 2021 IGF stood out for its hybrid format; record number of participants; and more focused cooperation with high-level experts and leaders non-traditionally present in the IGF discourse, such as UN agencies, parliamentarians, youth, and stakeholders from developing countries. The

3 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/mag-meeting-summaries>

4 <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/70/125>

5 https://unctad.org/system/files/non-official-document/ecn162012_p09_EN.pdf

6 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/3367/711

7 <https://undocs.org/A/74/821>

Forum gained more political visibility. Addresses from the UN Secretary-General, President and Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, among many, underlined the importance of digital technologies and digital transformation for people's wellbeing and emphasized the role the IGF plays for better policies and cooperative mechanisms among stakeholders.

The Forum's structure was strategically redesigned to include dedicated tracks for high-level leaders, parliamentarians and youth. The 2021 IGF was also output-oriented, with tangible outcomes emerging from the meeting, including as thematic key messages ('Katowice IGF Messages'⁸). All outputs, consolidated under "IGF 2021 Outputs"⁹, drew from individual reports of the programme's more than 300 sessions.

Advancements made by the IGF have been recognized by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in its Resolution E/RES/2019/24¹⁰, adopted on 23 July 2019, in which the member states recognized the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and its mandate as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on various matters and welcomed the continuous progress made with regard to the intersessional work of the Internet Governance Forum in different modalities such as dynamic coalitions and best practice forums, as well as the contributions being made by national, regional and youth Internet governance forums; and the General Assembly (GA) in its draft resolution proposal A/RES/74/197 of 19 December 2019¹¹ that recognized the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and its mandate as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on various matters, as reflected in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, including discussion of public policy issues related

to key elements of Internet governance. In recognizing the need for further improvement, GA resolution A/RES/74/197 also acknowledged the need for the extension of the IGF's mandate beyond 2025 and stressed the need for the enhanced participation of Governments and stakeholders from all developing countries, in particular, least developed countries, in all meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, and in this regard invites member states, as well as other relevant stakeholders, to support the participation of Governments and all other stakeholders from developing countries in the Forum itself, as well as in preparatory meetings.

Activities undertaken in 2021

The consolidated summary of activities undertaken in preparation for the 16th annual IGF meeting is available below. The structure is developed around the four expected accomplishments listed in the IGF Project Document¹²:

- A. Creation of an enabling environment for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue related to the key elements of Internet governance;
- B. Enhanced collaboration among key organizations dealing with different Internet governance issues in support of the Information Society and development goals;
- C. Exchange of information to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet;
- D. Strengthened capacity of developing country stakeholders to participate effectively in Internet governance arrangements.

8 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/223/20511

9 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-outputs>

10 https://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/ecosoc_res_2019d24_en.pdf

11 <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/197%E2%80%8E>

12 <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/197%E2%80%8E>

A. Expected Accomplishment 1

Creating of an enabling environment for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue related to the key elements of Internet governance

A.1 IGF 2021 Preparatory Process

The 2021 IGF planning cycle started immediately after the 2020 annual meeting concluded, building on its outcomes. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to pose challenges to global gatherings, the IGF 2021 Host Country - the Government of Poland - and the United Nations, along with the IGF MAG, planned the entire process by prioritizing the health and wellbeing of participants, and designing ways to ensure participation was as equal and meaningful as possible for online as well as onsite participants. The preparatory cycle started with the renewal of the MAG and was carried out over several open consultations and meetings, public surveys, calls for contributions and engagement strategies, as explained further below.

Renewal of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG)

The 2021 MAG was announced¹³ on 17 November 2020, on the last day of the 15th annual IGF meeting. Within a total of 40 members¹⁴, 15 were newly appointed. Members come from all stakeholder groups and regions, representing governments, civil society, the private sector and technical community. All members of the MAG serve in accordance with the MAG Terms of Reference¹⁵ and in their personal capacity, but are expected to have close linkages with their respective stakeholder groups. Representatives of previous host countries and relevant international and intergovernmental organizations were also invited to attend the MAG meetings.

13 <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2020/11/inclusive-and-meaningful-access-to-internet-key-for-strong-covid-19-recovery-igf-concludes-with-calls-for-global-unity-to-bridge-digital-divides/>

14 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/mag-2021-members>

15 <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/mag-terms-of-reference%E2%80%8E>

The United Nations Secretary-General re-appointed Ms. Anriette Esterhuysen of South Africa as the Chair of the MAG for 2021.

As with every year, the process for renewing the MAG was carried out through bottom-up, open community consultations. In order to achieve a timely and effective renewal, and based on feedback from various stakeholders (including from the IGF Retreat in 2016), steps were taken to continue improving the process in 2021:

- The MAG 'Call for nominations' continued to be announced earlier than in previous years, allowing for a more extensive nominations timeline.
- On the public list of current members, the terms served, stakeholder and regional affiliations for each member were published.
- A guidance note¹⁶ was published with the Call. This included information on vacant seats; the desirable composition of the MAG (in relation to gender parity, stakeholder and regional balance); a historical overview of countries represented (noting those that were un- or under-represented); and a summary of the number of terms served by each member, along with their stakeholder and regional affiliations.
- Priority was given to the eligible candidates coming from historically underrepresented regions. Careful consideration was given to inclusion of youth and more senior candidates. Gender parity was achieved.

Planning Meetings and Overall Process Improvements

During the previous IGF cycle, several objectives for improving the overall process for the 2021 year were met. These relate to: designing an effective hybrid format, along with associated preparatory and engagement phase; improving working modalities, particularly of intersessional activities;

16 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-mag-renewal-2022-general-guidance>

strengthening stakeholder engagement; and increasing the inclusiveness and visibility of the IGF.

The programme planning was carried out through twenty-three meetings of the MAG, one of which was hosted as hybrid and the rest online¹⁷. In addition, more than one hundred open online meetings were held to support MAG working groups, IGF intersessional work streams, and national, regional and youth IGF initiatives (NRIs).

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 16th annual IGF was held as a fully hybrid meeting, with participants joining onsite, in Katowice, and online. With the objective of making participation in the meeting meaningful and inclusive for all attendees, several innovations and specific features were introduced:

- Interactive preparatory and engagement phase hosted in the leadup to the 16th IGF;
- More focused issue-oriented programme;
- Capacity development activities;
- Stronger strategic stakeholder engagement.

The MAG had also chartered four MAG-led working groups¹⁸, namely the 'WG-OEC' Working Group on Outreach, Engagement and Communications Strategy; 'WG-Hybrid' Working Group on Hybrid Meetings; and 'WG-Strategy' Working Group on IGF Strategy. These groups worked throughout the year on their respective focus areas.

Open Consultations and MAG Meetings

The IGF 2021 cycle featured three Open Consultations and MAG Meetings: the first hosted online on 22-24 February, the second online on 22-23 and 30 June, and the third on 29

¹⁷ <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/mag-meeting-summaries>

¹⁸ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/mag-working-groups>

September-1 October 2021 in a hybrid format at the UN Office at Geneva. All three meetings featured live streaming and transcription. The meetings were moderated by the MAG Chair, Ms. Anriette Esterhuysen, while the IGF Secretariat was represented by Mr. Chengetai Masango. On behalf of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Mr. Wai Min Kwok participated. Also in attendance were Mr. Michal Pukaluk and Przemislaw Typiak, from the Office of the Prime Minister of Poland, participating on behalf of the Host Country Co-Chair, Mr. Krzysztof Szubert.

The core objective of these meetings was to plan the IGF process, including its preparatory and engagement phase, intersessional work and the 16th annual meeting.

The key points discussed across the open consultations and MAG meetings related to:

- A more concise and coherent IGF programme, with fewer and more interactive sessions. For instance, based on the call for issues, three-four themes would be selected with three specific policy questions per theme. Workshops would be invited to explore those questions, while also reserving a space for 'other' workshops.
- A more output-oriented meeting. This meant ensuring more clarity on outputs/ messages: fewer but clearer outcomes, and better integration of the different types of outcomes into a single outcome document.
- A hybrid meeting with equal opportunities for online and onsite participants. This included a decision to hold side events and preparatory events online.
- Increased participation of youth, governments, parliaments, the private sector, and other 'under-engaged' communities.
- Improve connections among intersessional tracks, and with other global processes.
- Development of a comprehensive communications plan.

- Simplified access to the online meeting platform and dedicated meeting pages. The focus here was on enabling more interactivity within the online platform. There was agreement that reconfiguration discussions should not begin with tech, but on what users need and want. Objectives would need to drive the platform(s), the session design, and how everything is communicated.

The consultations also featured updates from a number of organizations, among which: the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the Internet Society (ISOC), and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

In response to the above key points, inputs from the IGF community, and proposals relating to the UN Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation calling for a more focused IGF, the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) opted for an issue-driven approach to the IGF 2021 programme, toward a dual goal:

- The evolution and strengthening of the IGF, by encouraging targeted, deeper discussion on specific issue areas and, therefore, more focused outcomes.
- The preservation of the IGF’s open and bottom-up character, as a space for dialogue and debate on a wide range of issues considered relevant by people and institutions from all stakeholder groups around the world.

The two main issue areas were:

- Economic & Social Inclusion and Human Rights
- Universal Access and Meaningful Connectivity

The four cross-cutting issue areas were:

- Emerging Regulation: Market Structure, Content, Data and Consumer Rights Protection
- Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change

- Inclusive Internet Governance Ecosystems and Digital Rights
- Trust, Security, Stability

Each issue area had corresponding narratives, policy questions and concrete sub-issues¹⁹ to help guide submitters of session proposals. In addition, several new types of sessions were introduced to better respond to the community’s demand for diversity.

Overall, session proposers could choose between the following session types:

- Open Forums²⁰, sessions organized by governments, treaty-based international organizations, and global organizations with international scope and presence, with operations across regions, dealing with Internet governance issues;
- Town Halls²¹, sessions organized by entities dealing with Internet governance issues of international scope;
- Launches and Awards²², sessions to present and discuss Internet governance-related academic and/or research initiatives or outputs such as research or think tank work, books and similar;
- Lightning Talks²³, brief, to-the-point, prepared presentations specific Internet governance issues;
- Networking Sessions²⁴, gatherings of stakeholders interested in same or

19 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-open-forums>

20 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-open-forums>

21 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-town-halls>

22 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-launches-and-awards>

23 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-lightning-talks>

24 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-networking-sessions>

similar issues; icebreaker sessions; social gatherings; gatherings of people and organizations from a particular region, stakeholder group, or area of activity;

- Pre-events²⁵, sessions hosted on the day before the IGF official programme begins (6 December).

IGF 2021 Preparatory and Engagement Phase

The Preparatory and Engagement Phase²⁶ was more than an introduction to this year's IGF. It aimed to engage people in IGF discussions and identify synergies between different activities to facilitate cooperation. The pre-programme was organized jointly by the MAG²⁷, working in 'issue teams' dedicated to the programme's different areas; intersessional activities, including NRIs²⁸ who chose to participate; the Secretariat; and community members.

The shared goals of the phase were:

- Facilitate in-depth engagement with IGF 2021 issue areas towards achieving the goal of a more focused and impactful IGF,
- Provide the IGF community with opportunities for developing capacity in IGF-linked areas,
- Facilitate engagement with IGF intersessional activities, and,
- Broaden participation and inclusion in all aspects of the IGF process.

During this phase, 22 multistakeholder events²⁹ were hosted.

25 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-pre-events>

26 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-preparatory-and-engagement-phase>

27 <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/lexicon/8#MAG>

28 <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/lexicon/8#NRIs>

29 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-preparatory-and-engagement-phase>

Intersessional work and collaboration with National, Regional and Youth IGF Initiatives

In between the two annual IGF meetings, the community works on several substantive activities and discusses them at the annual IGF meeting. These activities are collectively called the IGF intersessional work and take the following forms:

- **Best Practice Forums (BPFs)** which provide a platform for stakeholders to exchange experiences in addressing Internet policy issues, discuss and identify emerging and existing good practices.
- **Dynamic Coalitions (DCs)** as open, multistakeholder groups dedicated to an Internet governance issue or set of issues.
- **Policy Networks (PNs)**, facilitated by multistakeholder working groups of experts, based on broad bottom-up community consultations, are dedicated to identifying status quo and current issues including the policy gaps, existing capacity and conditions, local specificities, good and bad practices, and possible ways forward through actionable activities led by identified implementation parties.

In 2021, two BPFs and two PNs were implemented:

- BPF on Cybersecurity, on best practices in relation to international cybersecurity agreements;
- BPF Gender and Digital Rights, on gendered disinformation;
- PN on Meaningful Access, on persistent challenges to meaningful and universal Internet access;
- PN on Environment, on the intersection between environmental sustainability and digitalisation.

[2021-preparatory-and-engagement-phase](https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-preparatory-and-engagement-phase)

22 Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) continued their work as independent, multistakeholder expert discussion groups on a variety of topics, respecting common standards of transparency and inclusiveness (open archives, open membership, open mailing lists). The DC network specifically collaborated throughout the year to map their joint efforts to achieve the SDGs and have it discussed during their dedicated main session.

More than a hundred and forty (140) national, regional and youth IGF initiatives (NRIs)³⁰ identified through a bottom-up process their collective thematic focus on the role of the Internet in emergency situations and prepared a dedicated session for the 16th IGF.

Both DCs and NRIs networks developed their bottom-up agendas related to their work plan and future process improvements on which they focused agendas for their traditional coordination sessions hosted shortly after the IGF 2021 annual meeting.

A.2 The 16th Annual IGF Meeting

In 2021, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) held its 16th annual meeting in a hybrid format, in Katowice, Poland, and online. Under the overarching theme Internet United, the meeting featured discussion on some of the most pressing Internet and digital policy issues, from meaningful access, digital rights, and cybersecurity, to the challenges and opportunities offered by advanced technologies such as AI and quantum computing.

The Forum brought together representatives from governments, the technical and academic communities, business, civil society and intergovernmental organizations to discuss advancing a range of Internet-related policy issues. It provided a substantive multistakeholder platform for engaged and informed discussions about policy issues pertaining to the Internet,

amplifying digital cooperation and how the Internet can support and fulfill the nexus of respect for human rights and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

About the hybrid format

The 16th IGF hybrid format aimed at making participation in the IGF 2021 meaningful and inclusive for all participants. It included several specifically designed features:

- **Unique participating platform** through which the meeting discussions were implemented in an equal manner for all participants, regardless if they connected from the venue in Katowice or any other part of the world.
- **3D Venue** created as an equivalent to the onsite venue, for all participants to have an opportunity to experience the physical premises. As with onsite participants, online participants could enter meeting rooms and connect to the participating platform.
- **IGF Village**, composed of over 23 physical booths, with 3D booth equivalents.
- **Flexible sessions** that allowed for participation of speakers/moderators/rapporteurs entirely online or in a mixed setting. Regardless of whether they were online, onsite, or mixed, each session was allocated a physical room in Katowice with a screen projecting the Zoom room, and a support team of staff for technical and logistical implementation.
- **Remote hubs**, as an effective participation alternative for those unable to travel. These were substantively and in several cases, financially, supported.
- **Extended working hours** to accommodate as many participant time zones as possible.
- **Hybrid feedback** that facilitated engagement in sessions live onsite or online, and even asynchronously (to redress time zone difficulties), with participants able to

30 <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-regional-and-national-initiatives>

watch session recordings and register their input using session-specific hashtags. All comments could be made on social media - with Twitter the preferred platform for ease of use - and tagged according to the guidelines³¹. Session organizers were advised to scan Twitter for comments and take them into account for their reports.

- **Bilateral meeting rooms** with online participation facilities.
- **Networking opportunities** accessible to online participants.
- **New website and mobile app** that supported easier navigation of the IGF 2021 content.

To provide a high-level overview for decision-makers of the most current thinking on key Internet governance issues, discussions from the over 300 sessions held during IGF 2021 have been distilled into IGF 2021 Outputs³², and specifically the key takeaways from all sessions fed into the Katowice IGF Messages³³ structured per issue area³⁴.

IGF 2021 High-Level Leaders Track

Co-organised by the Host Country and UN DESA/IGF Secretariat, the IGF 2021 high-level leaders track focused on the overarching theme 'Internet United'. Experts and leaders from all stakeholder groups discussed a series of key questions such as: In which areas of people's lives do we see the biggest impact of digital transformation for sustainable development? How can we ensure that revitalized digital economies are inclusive? How can technologies work for people?

31 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/social-media-hybrid-feedback-at-16th-igf>

32 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-outputs>

33 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/223/20511

34 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-outputs>

The sessions of the high-level track were:

- Global economic recovery – where are we at?
- Cities United: connected, green and inclusive
- Creating sustainable value and inclusive society – the role of digital platforms
- How to promote inclusive and diverse innovation, investment opportunities and corporate social responsibility in digital technologies?
- Building equitable employment conditions and competences for the future of work. Governance models to promote inclusive and diverse business development – what stands in the way?

Strengthened parliamentary track

In 2019 and 2020, the IGF parliamentary track consisted of a roundtable in which over 70 members of parliaments (MPs) from around the world engaged in discussions on Internet and digital policy issues. In 2021, the track was strengthened to include (a) a series of online preparatory sessions held between September and November, and (b) three topical sessions held in the context of IGF 2021, in addition to the now traditional roundtable.

Building on the 2019³⁵ and 2020³⁶ parliamentary roundtables, the IGF 2021 parliamentary track³⁷ was organized jointly by UN DESA, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the lower chamber of the Polish parliament, the Sejm. Support was also provided by the Department of Digital Policy in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, acting as co-facilitator and overall coordinator of the IGF 2021 from the Host Country's side.

35 https://www.intgovforum.org/filedepot_download/7505/1807

36 https://www.intgovforum.org/filedepot_download/9615/2349

37 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-parliamentary-track>

Under the theme Legislative approaches for a user-centric digital space, parliamentarians exchanged views and shared good practices on tackling three key digital policy challenges: privacy rights and legitimate uses of personal data; balancing freedom of speech and the fight against harmful online content; and the governance of artificial intelligence. The main points emerging from these discussions – as well as from a series of preparator sessions held between September and November – formed the basis for the output document from the parliamentary track at IGF 2021³⁸.

Involvement of UN agencies

The Forum saw over 40 entities from the UN system involved in the 16th IGF as panelists, session organizers and active participants. A high-level UN coordination session (“UN Open Forum”), specifically dedicated to how the United Nations system can support digital transformation and achieve sustainable development goals, engaged senior officials of ten UN agencies, all calling for more cooperation across the system.

Focus on youth

Throughout the year, thanks to a collaborative effort by the Polish Youth IGF, Government of Poland along with the Polish national research institute (NASK), and United Nations to put in place a capacity development track for youth, over five webinars were hosted aiming to engage youth from around the world to prepare the Global Youth Summit. Collectively, through the hosted webinars, close to 10,000 young people and those with interest in youth-focused activities, went through. The Host Country also organized a competition called “My Internet of the Future”³⁹ which attracted over 500 art pieces created by young people from around the world reflecting their vision for the digital world.

The Global Youth Summit⁴⁰, a traditional IGF session which facilitates dialogue between young people and senior stakeholders, took place on 6 December. The summit gathered hundreds of young people from around the world to discuss the critical digital issues of the day, resulting in several concrete action points.

The summit was co-organized by the Polish Youth IGF, IGF 2021 Host Country, NASK and IGF Secretariat. It featured addresses from several high-level senior stakeholders, including the UN Secretary-General and Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland. More details about the summit and its outputs are available here⁴¹.

All youth-related activities were regularly communicated through a dedicated youth mailing list, as well as the monthly newsletter.

Improving visibility and tangible outcomes of the 16th IGF

The IGF aims to continuously improve its processes. This applies to working modalities, as well as strengthening stakeholder engagement and raising the inclusiveness and visibility of the IGF.

Through its preparatory and engagement phase and intersessional work, the IGF 2021 engaged stakeholders from all sectors with interest or expertise in Internet governance. The working groups the MAG charted for 2021 were open to everyone, allowing for broad stakeholder engagement.

Further, in light of high interest from the community and their global political relevance, the IGF strategically emphasized environmental issues. This enabled the IGF to expand its community to non-traditional actors from the fields of sustainability, environment and climate change. The inclusion of these issues

38 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/241/20492

39 <https://www.gov.pl/web/indonesia-en/my-internet-of-the-future--write-record-draw-and-win>

40 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/247/20484

41 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-global-youth-summit>

as a year-long intersessional activity and within the annual meeting programme was also welcomed in the wider context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The IGF continued to emphasize the openness and inclusiveness of its processes, including through the call for inputs, session proposals, and contributions to intersessional work, bringing together a large number of stakeholders from around the world to directly shape IGF 2021 programming.

The 2021 MAG renewal also brought new stakeholders into the heart of IGF programme building. Members from historically unrepresented and underrepresented countries were appointed to the MAG (e.g., the United Arab Emirates, Madagascar, Bahamas, Kazakhstan) as well as from underrepresented disciplines. A member of the national parliament was appointed for the first time.

In parallel with the MAG's advice on programme planning, the IGF Secretariat confirmed the annual work plan with national, regional and youth IGF initiatives (NRIs) as well as Dynamic Coalitions (DC). Continuous coordination among these initiatives was conducted by the Secretariat through bimonthly online meetings, review of adherence to IGF core criteria, and substantive contributions to their individual processes. Joint work through the Secretariat also helped determine the thematic orientation of NRI and DC main sessions at the annual meeting. Strong support to these networks also resulted in their qualitative renewal. This year saw a dynamically revived Arab IGF and re-instituted Mozambique IGF.

The IGF 2021 capacity development framework, explained in more detail in this report, also increased participation in intersessional work.

The high-level leaders track brought together leaders and experts from all stakeholder groups. The track was used, in particular, to increase engagement with other United Nations processes. Building on a practice introduced

at IGF 2019, a parliamentary roundtable was hosted this year in cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Members of parliaments from around the world came together to discuss ways of building trust during and beyond the COVID-19 crisis. Through the youth track, including several youth flash sessions and a dedicated Youth Summit, young people from different parts of the world discussed ways for connecting the next generation of Internet users and called for digital innovations to reform traditional education systems.

Technical improvements

A number of technical improvements were introduced to support the facilitation of a fully hybrid meeting, starting with a new IGF website, made possible thanks to a generous donation from the United Kingdom Government. The revamped website allowed for easier visual orientation of the IGF process, and included several built-in features to support smooth participation. It contained a more advanced automated system for receiving session proposals, facilitating their visualization and generating related statistics. Further, it enabled the development of an in-house interactive annual meeting schedule linked to post-session reports and transcripts, which made available shortly after each session and searchable across themes, meeting days and rooms. The website also made direct communication among registered IGF participants available for the first time.

A dedicated landing webpage⁴² for the annual meeting was created to reflect all relevant information in one place. IGF 2021 sessions were captioned in real time, and live-streamed via multiple platforms, namely the IGF YouTube⁴³ channel and on Facebook. All high-level leaders' track and main sessions were interpreted in six UN languages.

42 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/dashboard/igf-2021>

43 <https://www.youtube.com/user/igf/featured>

Advancing outputs

Much effort was invested in advancing participant's outputs. In a leadup to IGF 2021, several guides for the meeting orientation were produced, including the Guide to IGF 2020 Issues and Themes⁴⁴, containing narrative overviews of each of the issue-area tracks, as well as overarching policy questions to help guide the discussion. To strengthen the communication of session outcomes directly from session organizers, participants and rapporteurs, key takeaways⁴⁵ documented in session reports were directly distributed to Internet governance stakeholders through the IGF website and by consolidating them into a unique report. Communication through a regular monthly newsletter and periodic updates, as well as the IGF's social media accounts, was continuously facilitated throughout the year. UN press releases on opening and closing of the Forum were published.

The IGF 2021 annual meeting resulted in a number of tangible outputs⁴⁶, with written output reports emerged from all the intersessional activities, as well as the messages produced for the issue-areas, the parliamentary roundtable and youth track. The Katowice IGF Messages⁴⁷ were developed by the Host-based on session reports from the session organizers received within a few hours of their session conclusion.

In close cooperation with the MAG Working Group and IGF Secretariat, a communication strategy was developed to support IGF 2021 and its community outreach activities. In addition, a concept of daily briefings with prominent experts was carried out during the 16th IGF in a dedicated studio/press corner. Also, to support

44 https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/10794/2324

45 https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/10794/2351

46 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-outputs>

47 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/223/20511

stakeholder engagement between local and global processes, the IGF Secretariat and/or the MAG Chair participated in several NRIs meetings, such as Trinidad and Tobago IGF, Ecuador IGF, Côte d'Ivoire IGF, African IGF, Bolivia IGF, Greece IGF, APriGF, Central Asian IGF, South-eastern IGF, Caribbean IGF, SEEDIG, Georgia IGF, West African IGF, St. Vincent and the Grenadines IGF and others. The IGF Secretariat and/or the MAG Chair also participated in some of the largest global events on the Internet and social development, such as the annual session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and UN High-Level Political Forum.

Cooperation with other Internet governance-related entities

Throughout the year, stakeholder engagement and cooperation were facilitated through the intersessional work streams and the NRIs, as well as participation of the IGF Secretariat, UN DESA or the MAG in major Internet governance meetings.

The two Best Practice Forums, two Policy Networks, 22 Dynamic Coalitions and 140 NRIs, hosted over a hundred (100) online meetings engaging stakeholders from all parts of the world to contribute and exchange good practices. The NRIs expanded throughout the year with nine new IGFs emerging.

The 2021 IGF process continued to focus on contributing to the implementation of the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, by facilitating consultations on establishing the proposed multistakeholder high-level body, forging linkages with NRIs, fostering engagement with parliamentarians and elevating the concept of digital cooperation through a dedicated main session⁴⁸ at the IGF 2021.

The IGF continued to actively participate in the European Commission's High-Level Group on Internet Governance (HLIG) and contributed

48 <http://intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-main-session-digital-cooperation-quo-vadis>

to the work of the Commission on digital matters. The IGF 2021 established cooperation partnerships for IGF 2022 and beyond.

A capacity development project was carried out in collaboration with Microsoft's UN Affairs office called "Our Digital Future" (ODF). This capacity development workshop series aimed to bring together diverse stakeholders to share best practices and build capacity in developing countries on the digital transformation and cybersecurity fronts. The participants had the opportunity to learn about the prerequisites needed to ensure the sustainability of best practices and the roles different actors can play in advancing national capacity on digital transformation and cybersecurity. This project was driven by the call in the UN Decade of Action to partner for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and has especially focused on intersections digitalisation has with themes covered in Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation and Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

The commitment of the President of Switzerland to support the IGF in addressing the environment was followed up in 2021 through concrete donations received from the Government of Switzerland which allowed to implement a new intersessional workstream called the Policy Network on Environment. In addition to enabling the IGF community to gain in depth understanding of intersections digitalisation has with sustainability and environment, it also triggered successful cooperation with stakeholders and processes who were not traditionally or most actively present in the IGF domain before, represented in the PNE's dedicated multi stakeholder working group⁴⁹.

In implementing the youth engagement strategy⁵⁰, the Secretariat continued to engage with different stakeholders to expand its

network of young people gathered around the dedicated mailing list and involved in planning of the youth track at IGF 2021. In addition to firm cooperation with the Host Country and other Polish stakeholders, such as the national research institute (NASK) and Polish Youth IGF, it connected with the Internet Society's Ambassadors Programme and participated in a training upon invitation.

IGF Secretariat and UN DESA established a partnership with the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) and national Parliament of Poland (Sejm) was established to co-organize the parliamentary track along with UN DESA⁵¹. The parliamentary track gained much prominence this year and over 100 registered parliamentarians went through several capacity development activities, such as thematic workshops, and the roundtable hosted at the 16th IGF.

The Forum successfully strengthened its engagement with the UN System - moving beyond the inclusion of UN entities as individual organizers of "open forum"-type sessions, and inviting them to coordinate and dialogue with one another within the IGF 2021 High-level Leaders track. This included an inaugural UN-dedicated session, the "UN Open Forum: Connecting the digital dots – how the UN System is supporting the digital transformation and the way forward". Among those who participated in the High-level track⁵², alongside ministerial representatives and leaders in the private sector and civil society, were officials from UNESCO, ITU, the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the World Bank, the UN Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Regional Commissions for Asia Pacific (UNESCAP) and Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), as well as non-traditional participating entities

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

50 http://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/10545/2227/4

51 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/high-level-speakers>

52 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/high-level-speakers>

such as the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Violence against Children.

The UN Secretary-General, Polish President and Prime Minister also addressed the meeting, rounding out participation at the highest political levels.

Ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the CSTD Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)⁵³

The IGF continued to work on implementing the recommendations of the CSTD Working Group on Improvements to the IGF. These are namely: increasing and improving both the tangible outcomes and the overall visibility of the IGF; the working modalities of the IGF, including open consultations, the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) and the IGF Secretariat; the funding of the IGF; broadening participation and capacity-building, and linking the IGF to other Internet governance-related entities.

Created as one of the major outcomes of the WSIS process, all of the work of the IGF Secretariat aims to ensure that the IGF facilitates implementation of all the agreed action lines, including, but not limited to: (C1) The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development; (C4) Capacity building and (C11) International and regional cooperation.

A.3 Facilitation of Participation

Particular attention in this IGF cycle was given to the substantive and technical aspects of participation, given the hybrid modality. The Zoom platform was predominately used for enabling participation of stakeholders in all the intersessional activities, as well as the annual meeting. Online training sessions were held

for the session organizers and rapporteurs to familiarize them with the Zoom platform.

The IGF improved its website's automated system for receiving session proposals to allow for a more visible overview of received proposals and related statistics. It also made it technically set to develop its interactive annual meeting's schedule, as well as for all post-session reports and transcripts to be available shortly after each session concludes in a structured manner with the possibility of filtering sessions across themes, meeting days and room. The website also facilitated the possibility for direct communication among registered IGF participants.

A dedicated webpage⁵⁴ for the annual meeting was created to reflect all relevant information in one place. The IGF 2021 sessions were live-streamed via multiple platforms, namely the IGF YouTube and Facebook, and real-time captioned. All main sessions and high-level sessions were interpreted to six UN languages. As a result, the IGF 2021 saw a record participation of over 10,000 stakeholders and over 13,000 stakeholders live-streaming the meeting, as explained in more details further below in the section related to the statistics.

53 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/high-level-speakers>

54 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/dashboard/igf-2021>

B. Expected Accomplishment 2

Enhanced collaboration among key organizations dealing with different Internet governance issues in support of the Information Society and development goals

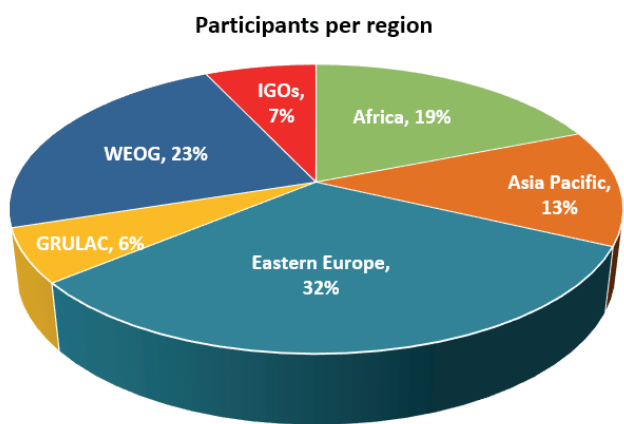
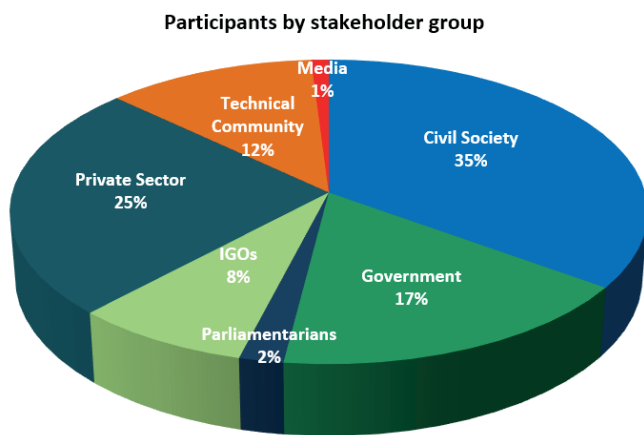
Participation in the 16th IGF

The official statistics regarding the IGF 2021 participation were published on the IGF website after the annual meeting ended⁵⁵. A total of 10,371 stakeholders from 175 countries participated in the 16th IGF. At the IGF venue in Katowice, 2,734 participants collected their badges. The meeting recorded over 15,000 connections to sessions hosted over 750,000 minutes.

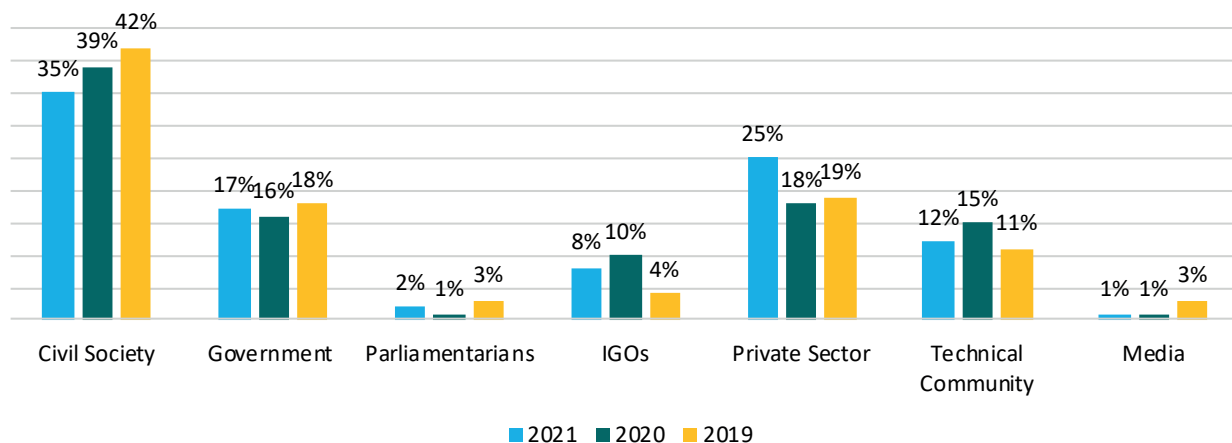
The historic record participation at the IGF 2021 annual meeting confirmed the Forum’s relevance to people. The Forum saw 10,371 participants overall across sessions, with 2,734 participating in person.

Looking at the stakeholder groups, most of the participants came from the civil society. As a result of a dedicated stakeholder engagement strategy, the private sector saw a particular increase compared to the previous years. The Forum saw participation of representatives from more than 40 different UN agencies, in addition to a number of other intergovernmental organizations. Below is the visual comparison of the stakeholder groups participation across the last three IGF cycles.

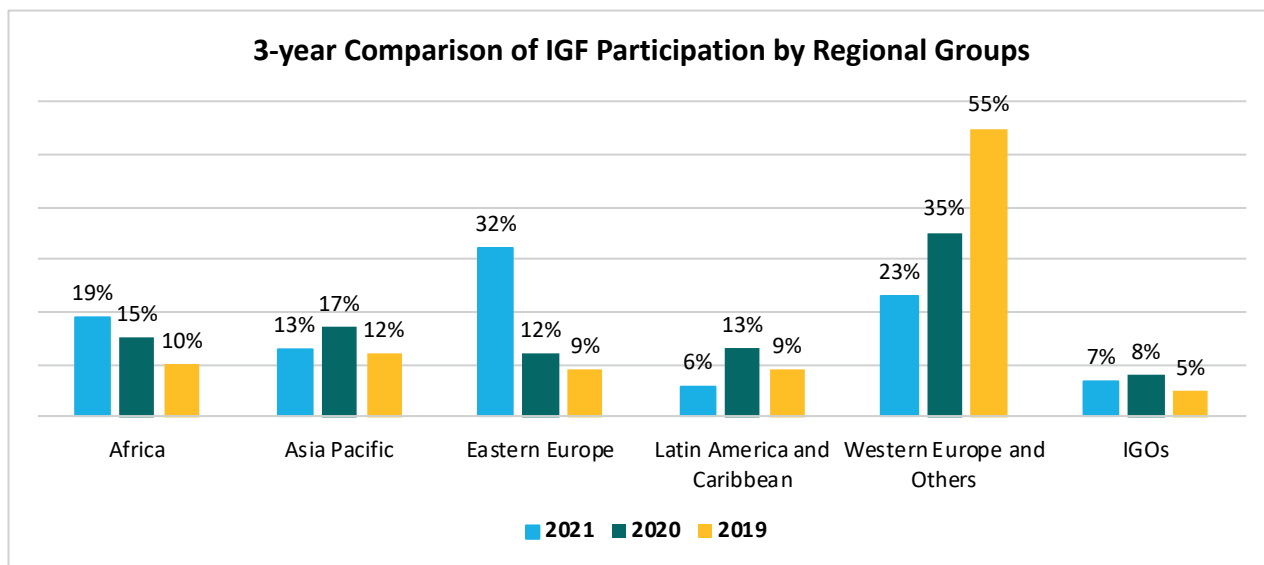
Regionally, in comparison to the average participation from past years, Eastern Europe marked a significant increase, followed by a solid increase from the Africa region. The WEOG region saw a significant reduction, compared to the past two years. Below is the visual comparison of the regional groups participation across the last three IGF cycles.



3-year Comparison of IGF Participation by Stakeholder Groups

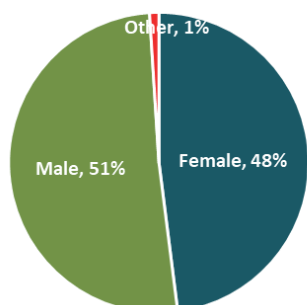


55 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-participation-and-programme-statistics>



The gender balance follows the average balance for the last three years, with 51% male, 48% female, and 1% of participants identified as other. 67% of all participants indicated that the 16th IGF was their first annual meeting to participate.

Participants per gender



Comparing the participation gender breakdowns with the past two IGF cycles, 2019 and 2020, it is evident that 2021 follows 2020 in terms of increased gender balance, compared to 2019.

Regarding participation by level of development of the country, based on the latest available HDI Index⁵⁶, there were about 64% from developed countries classified as “very high⁵⁷”, and 36% from developing countries, not classified as “very high”, with the stakeholder distribution as illustrated below.

56 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>

57 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2020-readers-guide>

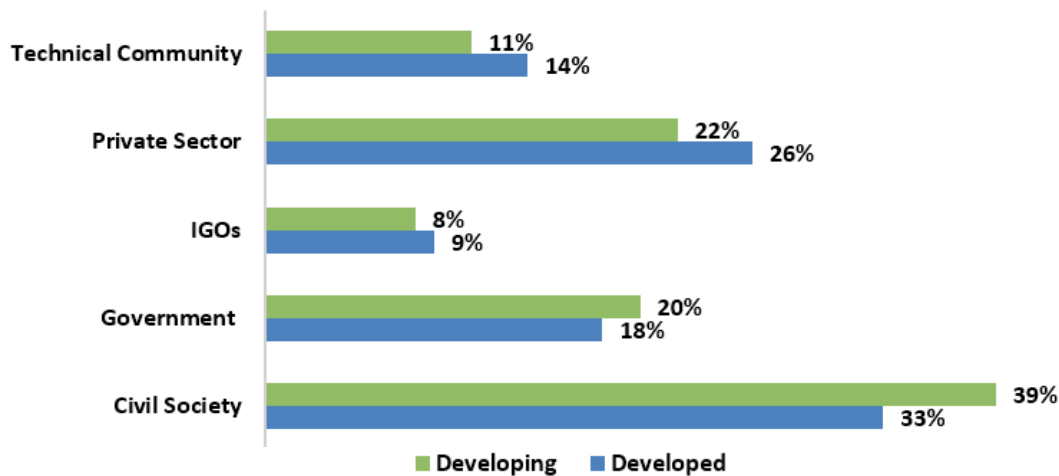
The meeting recorded 20,929 connections to sessions hosted over 1,000,000+ minutes, making an average time per connection be 50 minutes. The IGF website received more than 80,000 connections and almost 400,000 pages opened. Some of the countries with a high number of connections were the US, UK, China, Poland, France, Germany, Netherlands, India, Brazil, Russia, Nigeria and Switzerland.

During the IGF, there were about 250 networking email connections using IGF 2020 Schedule (spontaneous one-to-one contact between attendees).

UN Web TV featured more than 15,000 live viewers, meaning more than 1,000 viewers on each high-level session on average. Some of the top viewing countries included the United States, Switzerland, Comoros, Israel, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Australia or China. Sessions were also offered at the IGF’s YouTube and Facebook sites. All IGF 2020 sessions are archived at the IGF YouTube Channel, with the highest number of viewers during the IGF 2020 timespan coming from India, Brazil, USA, France, Poland, Germany, Russia, UK and Bangladesh. IGF Facebook Channel also presented some youth sessions, where other countries such as Italy, Pakistan or Egypt were prominent in views.

Social media activity is estimated to have reached more than 20,000,000 people, with about 400 contributors counting only mention of #IGF2020 hashtag, an average of 1.25 original tweets and

Participation of countries by Human Development Index (HDI)



3 retweets per contributor, with about 1,000 impressions and 10 interactions per tweet.

The Host had oriented specific efforts toward engaging high-level multistakeholder participants and those coming from the global south, with over a hundred participants receiving financial support for the costs of their Internet connection.

B.1 Participation in various Internet governance-related events and processes

The IGF Secretariat continued to engage and collaborate with other Internet governance-related entities.

Throughout the year, the IGF strove to build capacity across various communities and develop a more inclusive and relevant programme. It focused on strengthening existing networks of engagement as well as interacting with new stakeholders. In addition, the IGF actively participated in various international, regional and national events to promote its core values, namely the multistakeholder engagement; a people-focused approach to Internet policy; and an open, inclusive and transparent dialogue in the service of advancing a robust, safe and accessible Internet for all.

In order to bring the 16th IGF process closer to global community, a specific communication and outreach strategy was developed that resulted

in raising visibility of the IGF through major gatherings of stakeholders, such as number of national and regional IGF initiatives where the IGF Secretariat and/or the MAG Chair participate remotely (Trinidad and Tobago IGF, Ecuador IGF, Côte d’Ivoire IGF, African IGF, Bolivia IGF, Greece IGF, APriIGF, Central Asian IGF, South-eastern IGF, Caribbean IGF, SEEDIG, Georgia IGF, West African IGF, St. Vincent and the Grenadines IGF and others). The IGF Secretariat and/or the MAG Chair also participated in some of the largest global events on the Internet and social development, such as the annual session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), UN High-Level Political Forum.

The IGF 2021 intersessional work also engaged with many stakeholders through its open, bottom-up consultations and contributions to developing the final outputs.

Specific efforts were invested by the Host Country, Government of Poland, especially in regard to in-country consultations and ensuring all sectors of the society are engaged in the IGF, including numerous bilateral meetings with the member states, engagement with universities, cultural institutions such as museums, or wider international outreach through open webinars, or other initiatives or events such for example is Expo 2020, European Economic Congress, Economic Forum, European Financial Congress and others.

C. Expected Accomplishment 3

Exchange of information to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet

C.1 Accessible and Inclusive Communication and Collaboration

Exchange of information among the stakeholders engaged in the IGF process is essential for the work of the IGF, given its bottom-up working modalities. The MAG works primarily through up to three in-situ meetings and regular bimonthly online meetings, while the IGF's intersessional work depends on online community input.

The IGF website is among the most valuable tools for stakeholders to find and share information. With the hybrid hosting of IGF preparatory work and the annual meeting this year, the website was particularly vital to the IGF community. During 2021, it received more than 350,000 connections. Among countries with the highest number of connections were: Poland, United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany, France, The Netherlands, India China, Switzerland and Brazil.

The IGF website saw a growth of 43% registered users, represented by 15,573 new accounts; 2021 ended with a total of 36,598 registered individual users. Among the newly registered users, 48% were female, 51% male and 1% identified as other. Stakeholder-wise, newly registered website users came from civil society (32%), private sector (27%), government (18%), technical community (14%) and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) (9%). The composition was balanced among all regions: Africa (9%), WEOG (23%), Asia Pacific (10%), GRULAC (5%), Eastern Europe (44%), IGO (9%). Countries with more than 100 new accounts during 2021 were Poland, the United States, Nigeria, China, India, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Website visitors from Eastern Europe notably increased, as the region where the IGF would be hosted. Most of the visits to the IGF website were made by users from the United States, China, Poland, the United Kingdom, India, Germany, France, Netherlands, Switzerland and Nigeria. Mobile usage increased to 31%. Further, access to the IGF website through

mobile devices was leveraged by the inclusion of a new IGF App released in October 2021.

The IGF's social media accounts also saw a significant increase in traffic. For example, the IGF Twitter account grew from roughly 10,000 to 12,200 followers at the end of IGF 2021, while Facebook followers grew from about 11,500 to 13,000 over the same period. More connections were made between IGF social media properties and other UN accounts to strengthen intra-institutional ties. In the months leading up to the annual meeting, IGF "social media ambassadors" were also recruited among MAG members and members of the IGF community in an effort to amplify the IGF's messaging. Continuing on past years' practice, the community was actively encouraged to follow a social media hashtag guide to promote the annual meeting as well as its specific sessions.

Impressively, during the week of #IGF2021, related content generated over 27,000 engagements and reached close to 744 million social media accounts. This represented a stunning 370% growth in potential reach compared to 2020. The trend was mirrored in traditional media: there were over 2,500 news and media articles by over 1,000 media outlets in 185 countries on IGF 2021, representing a 169% increase over the fully digital IGF 2020.

Communications activities were ramped up during the 2021 meeting, with daily press briefings featuring special guests as well as daily media alerts disseminated in English and Polish, in addition to standard UN press releases. Press were given ample and clear resources to assist them with coverage, thanks to practical notifications sent via the press mailing list and the IGF website's Press page, which included a link to multimedia materials on Trello. More than in previous years, the communications team was a proactive and readily available interface between media present at the meeting and meeting organizers, assisting with queries and coordinating interviews. In order to bridge the media coverage gap that has tended to exist around annual meetings, intensified on-the-ground activities along these lines may be replicated in future.

To streamline communication over the course of the annual cycle, all details on IGF 2021 preparatory and intersessional work were consolidated in a dedicated landing page⁵⁸, while the most important developments and community calls continued to be posted in the website’s News section. A regular monthly newsletter also continued to be sent.

The schedule⁵⁹ of the annual meeting is central to the IGF, as it presents a high volume of information across several days. In order to help IGF participants navigate the programme and personalize their participation, the new website included a built-in an online, interactive scheduling system⁶⁰. This allowed for sessions to be viewable according to time, day, meeting room, session type and theme, and for users to select sessions of interest and save them in their personal schedules. Users also had the ability to create profiles displaying their Internet governance related interests and expertise.

The IGF Secretariat continued its work on improving accessibility of the website and its features. A number of improvements were made in 2021 with the introduction of the new website, including the fulfilment of W3C-WAI standards, expanded multilingual content, availability of the mobile, and implementation of an accessibility layer in the hybrid 3D Virtual tool, for easy navigation. International sign interpretation was also a successful featured of main and high-level sessions during the IGF. With its user-friendly setup, the IGF Secretariat relied on the Zoom platform for facilitation of online meetings.

Given the increased effort to produce tangible outputs and outcomes of the meeting, especially those related to major digital policy issues (as contained in the “IGF Katowice Messages” and 2021 Parliamentary Output), these were given visibility in a dedicated section⁶¹ on the IGF website. Outputs once published were also shared in real time to IGF 2021 meeting participants and the IGF community.

58 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/dashboard/igf-2021>

59 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-schedule>

60 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/schedule/20211206>

61 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-outputs>

C.2 MAG Chair’s Activities

MAG Chair communication with the wider community was maintained over several activities.⁶² The Chair oversaw the IGF 2021 preparatory and engagement phase, a series of multistakeholder webinars and discussions aimed at both increasing engagement in the IGF 2021 process, and deepening the understanding of the annual meeting’s main policy issues. Areas covered by these included capacity development, frameworks for addressing emerging Internet issues, participation in the IGF meeting, and engagement with the NRIs and intersessional streams – with the Chair personally facilitating a session on “16 Years of IGF Evolution and Strengthening – Taking Stock and Looking Forward”. The Chair also relayed developments in the preparatory process, and on Internet governance issues broadly, through the “MAG Chair’s Blog”, posted to the IGF website and in the IGF’s monthly newsletter.

C.3 Resources, Documents and Media Repositories

The IGF Secretariat continued to add materials to the IGF website, including, but not limited to: various contributions received from stakeholders and syntheses of such contributions, summary reports of open consultations and MAG meetings (including the virtual meetings), background papers submitted by workshop organizers, transcripts of the open consultations and MAG meetings, intersessional documentation as well as transcripts and reports of the various sessions held during the annual IGF 2021 meeting. All these were accessible and mobile friendly.

Media coverage of the IGF annual meeting was exhaustively documented for public perusal on the website’s dedicated Press page - in addition to the resources made available for journalists, from immediately-posted press releases to multimedia resources, such as photos, videos and social-media friendly promotional materials.

In order to foster and prompt the engagement

62 <http://intgovforum.org/en/content/mag-chair-activities>

among stakeholders, a List of Resources Persons⁶³ continued to be populated, to put at the community's disposal to create profiles with interests and biographies. In addition to the list⁶⁴ being searchable by regional and stakeholder groups, technical improvements were made this year to make the list search by youth criteria, all with an aim to foster youth inclusion in the IGF processes, and to support session organizers in their search for experts on a particular topic from a particular region or sector.

All documents posted throughout the year, regardless of area of work, continued to be transparently available through the IGF's documents section.

C.4 IGF 2021 Outputs

As outlined in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda, the publication of the IGF's proceedings⁶⁵ is part of the Forum's mandate. In fulfilling this part of the mandate, the IGF Secretariat produced and published the IGF 2021 outputs⁶⁶, which included the overall process and substance related summary of the IGF process including the annual meeting, as well as all transcripts and reports of sessions held during the 16th IGF annual meeting.

The IGF 2021 Summary Report⁶⁷ was prepared during the 16th annual meeting. The structure of the summary was overhauled, to give priority to key substantive features of the meeting and major outcomes, with links to its procedural aspects. The Summary is widely distributed across various networks in the IGF ecosystem.

To provide a high-level overview for decision-makers of the most current thinking on key Internet governance issues, discussions from the over 300 sessions held during IGF 2021

63 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/resource-persons>

64 <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/resource-persons>

65 <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-annual-meetings-proceedings>

66 <https://www.intgovforum.org/content/igf-2021-outputs>

67 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/223/20706

were distilled into the IGF 2021 Messages⁶⁸ on the meeting's six issue-areas. The substantive discussions of the high-level leaders track were also consolidated into a set of messages. The parliamentary roundtable, focused on legislative approaches for a user-centric digital space, concluded with output document⁶⁹ translated into English, French and Spanish. The Youth Summit also produced a set of messages from youth⁷⁰ shortly after the session ended. These were made available at the IGF website on each meeting day, reflecting daily discussions and the final consolidated version was announced on the last day. Post-meeting, participants were given time to digest the messages and advise on substantial improvements, before the final version of messages is formatted. This reporting-out process of developing concrete thematic output of more than 300 sessions, was done on the basis of input session reports⁷¹ received the session organizers within 12 hours of their session end. Reports were made available at the IGF website, as soon as submitted, curated together with session transcripts⁷² and videos.⁷³

A year-long preparatory process of the two best practice forums resulted in tangible output documents. The BPF on Gender and Digital Rights⁷⁴ focused on understanding how gender based disinformation has been deployed as a strategy against women and gender-diverse groups.

The BPF on Cybersecurity⁷⁵ built on its last year's report by focusing on the drivers of cyber norms and testing these norms concepts

68 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/223/20511

69 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/241/20492

70 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/247/20484

71 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/igf-2021-reports>

72 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/igf-2021-transcripts>

73 <https://www.youtube.com/user/igf/videos>

74 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/bpf-gender-and-digital-rights>

75 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/bpf-cybersecurity>

against historical Internet events, to better understand how specific norms can be effective at mitigating adverse cybersecurity events.

The Policy Network on Environment (PNE)⁷⁶ and its multistakeholder working group focused on looking into the policy intersections between environment and digitalisation and specifically how digitalisation can support environmental sustainability in relation to environmental data, food and water systems, supply chain transparency and circularity, and a number of overarching Issues.

The multistakeholder working group of the Policy Network on Meaningful Access (PNMA)⁷⁷ worked throughout the year to bring clarity on why achieving meaningful and universal Internet access remains so challenging, in spite of years of efforts by policy makers and other actors from all stakeholder groups.

All the IGF 2021 outputs, including the ones produced by the Host, IGF 2021 participants but also the community, were made available during the meeting. A few hours after each session, resulting videos and transcripts were uploaded to the IGF YouTube account and IGF website.

C.5 Dynamic Coalitions and National, Regional, Sub-regional and Youth IGFs

Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) are open, multistakeholder and community-driven groups dedicated to an internet governance issue or set of issues. They emerged at the first IGF meeting in 2006.

At IGF 2021, 17 DCs held individual sessions to discuss Internet policy issues within their focus and present their work. A DC main session on the theme Digital cooperation in practice: IGF Dynamic Coalitions (a) showcased how coalitions contribute

to advancing the debates on the IGF 2021 issue areas and (b) featured a strategic discussion on how coalitions could contribute to broader digital cooperation efforts and a strengthened IGF.

Throughout 2021, Dynamic Coalitions, supported by the IGF Secretariat, worked on a report documenting their history, providing insight into their work and processes, and analysing their further potential. The report – titled IGF Dynamic Coalitions: Digital cooperation in practice⁷⁸ – is intended to facilitate a better understanding of the worth of coalitions and their contribution to current IGF processes, as well as to shaping the future of the IGF. It includes a series of suggestions and recommendations that could contribute to strengthening DCs and enhancing their contribution to the IGF and to broader digital cooperation efforts. Full report⁷⁹ | Abridged version⁸⁰.

National and Regional IGF Initiatives (NRIs) are organic and independent multistakeholder networks that are discussing issues pertaining to Internet Governance from the perspective of their respective communities, while acting in accordance with the main principles of the global IGF. To date, 141 NRIs are recognized by the IGF Secretariat.

At the 16th IGF in Poland, over 100 NRIs co-organized seven sessions, including five thematic collaborative sessions, main session and coordination session. Specifically, the main session focused on discussing local specificities of the role of the Internet in times of crisis, while the coordination session emphasised the need for sustainable funding for NRIs in order to build a more stable IG(F) ecosystem. More information about the NRIs collaborative sessions is available at the IGF website⁸¹.

78 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/186/18941

79 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/186/18941

80 https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/186/18940

81 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2021-nris-collaborative-sessions>

76 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/policy-network-on-environment-and-digitalisation-pne>

77 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/policy-network-on-meaningful-access-pnma>

D. Expected Accomplishment 4

Strengthen capacity of developing country stakeholders to participate effectively in Internet governance arrangements

D.1 Participation of Developing Countries in IGF 2021

The IGF sees the participation of developing countries critical for Forum's success. Its mandate calls for strengthening and enhancing stakeholder engagement from developing countries and to contribute to building capacity for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise.

The IGF 2021 continued to invest in engagement with stakeholders from developing countries. Over 110 individuals from least developed or landlocked developing countries (LDC/LLDC), small island developing states (SIDS) or transitional economies, received financial support for meaningful participation in the IGF 2021. Applicants received support for the costs of their travel to Katowice. Supported candidates proved to have an interest in Internet governance-related activities and a demonstrated commitment to contribute to its community after participating at the IGF 2021 meeting.

Preference was given to candidates from underrepresented countries and groups (such as women, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, older persons, youth).

As in previous years, financial support was provided to MAG members from least developed countries, developing countries and transitional economies to enable them to participate in MAG meetings and the 16th annual meeting. In 2021, more than 12 MAG members in total were supported and either received the support for the costs of their Internet connection to participate in the first two online open consultations, or their travel was supported for the 3rd MAG meeting in Geneva. They have also received travel support to participate in person at the 16th annual IGF meeting in Katowice, in line with eligibility criteria.

D.2 Capacity Development in Internet Governance

In order to fulfill its mandate and contribute to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise⁸², as well as in a response to the recommendations of the CSTD's Working Group on Improvements to the IGF to support the participation of stakeholders from developing countries, in particular, the least developed countries (LDCs)⁸³, and the UN Secretary-General's call for action expressed at the 13th IGF stressing that the Forum must increase its efforts to draw upon the "weak and missing voices" into the IGFs work⁸⁴, a capacity development plan continued to be developed and implemented⁸⁵. In 2021, the capacity development effort focused on several activities: capacity development thematic workshops; support to NRIs, DCs and schools on Internet governance; fostering integration of unrepresented communities in IGF.

In addition to providing substantive support to the national, regional and youth IGFs, resulting in an annual increase of the recognised NRIs⁸⁶ for 8 more national and regional IGFs, financial support was provided. Twenty (20) NRIs received the financial grants to engage communities in their IGF processes. The value of the grants were up to 5,000 USD for national IGFs, up to 6,000 for sub-regional IGFs and up to 12,000 USD for the regional IGFs. A total of 96,518 USD was allocated.

The Secretariat also continued to support the network of DCs, substantively on individual and

82 <https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html>

83 [Report of the Working Group on Improvements to the IGF, section IV. https://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/a67d65_en.pdf](https://www.unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/a67d65_en.pdf)

84 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-2018-address-to-the-internet-governance-forum-by-un-sg-ant%C3%B3nio-guterres>

85 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-capacity-development-0>

86 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-regional-and-national-initiatives>

collective levels resulting in development of the above-mentioned paper. Also, throughout the year, several online consultations and capacity development webinars were hosted to support stakeholder engagement in Internet governance and specifically trigger interest in the IGF 2021. Several of these were especially tailored for youth and members of parliaments. Youth had opportunities to learn more about tips to successfully benefit from the IGF, and specifically learnt more about environment, access and safety, as these shown to be among topics of the highest importance. Parliamentary track included several thematic workshops on privacy and data protection, AI, Internet governance ecosystem, freedom of speech and content online.

Specific online trainings were hosted for the session organizers and session moderators on how to use the IGF 2021 participation platform and maximize opportunities for themselves and other participants. This includes a hybrid orientation session for the first time IGF participants delivered at the 16th IGF in Katowice.

In order to build a long-term engagement between various communities and Internet Governance Forum (IGF), as well as to build and strengthen the overall capacity on Internet governance processes at the local and with that the global levels, the capacity development workshops were organized in close collaboration with the community. For 2021, given the COVID-19 pandemic constraints, the workshops were delivered online. Eight thematic workshops⁸⁷ were hosted in conjunction with the NRIs meetings on topics related to environment and digitalisation, meaningful access and connectivity, stakeholder engagement in Internet governance and IGF 2021, strengthening regional and national cooperation in Internet governance. The meetings were hosted back to back with the APriGF, SEEDIG, West African IGF, African IGF, St. Vincent and the Grenadines IGF, EuroDIG and Arab IGF. Overall, these workshops attracted more interest in the IGF intersessional work and the 16th IGF.

Also, as mentioned above, over one hundred (110) individuals from least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) received support for meaningful participation in the IGF 2021 annual meeting by financially supporting their costs of participation.

D.3 Internships and Fellowships at the IGF Secretariat

The IGF continues to build capacity through in-office training on Internet governance matters. It has especially supported youth from developing countries in this regard.

During 2021, three female interns from Germany and UK, joined the IGF Secretariat. They had the opportunity to work directly on Internet governance issues and benefit from unparalleled, up- close expertise engaging with the IGF community.

87 <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/igf-capacity-development-workshops>

Conclusion

The 2021 IGF cycle was notable for its innovations and for having built on the successes of recent years, extending a trajectory of growth and improvement for which the IGF has been known during its current mandate. The launch of the hybrid format; expansion of stakeholder engagement, including of under-represented groups and into vital political and institutional decision-making spheres; the fostering of new policy discourses; and the strengthening of technical and communication measures to make the IGF ever-more accessible and visible; constitute main areas of progress over the past year.

In 2021, the decision early on by the United Nations and the Host Country, the Government of Poland, to adopt a hybrid approach to the IGF's gatherings was critical for organizing amid the unpredictable circumstances of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. "Hybrid" in this sense entailed the development of measures that would ensure the equal and meaningful engagement of all stakeholders, whether they were onsite or online for the IGF's discussions - an effort that could logically draw from the organizational experience and best practices of the fully virtual IGF in 2020. To differentiate the hybrid 16th IGF from a standard meeting with remote participation, among many other uniquely "hybrid" features, a single, egalitarian process was used to give the floor to onsite and online participants; working hours were extended to accommodate different time zones; a hybrid feedback mechanism was implemented; the IGF Village, social and cultural events were all virtually accessible; and additional support was given to remote hubs.

The 16th IGF as well as the first two Open Consultations and MAG meetings were hybrid, allowing for maximal inclusivity and, importantly, flexibility, as circumstances surrounding travel changed rapidly.

The aim to increase engagement in IGF processes was furthered on multiple fronts, with new milestones reached. This year's annual meeting saw an impressive increase in the typically

underrepresented private sector: it was the largest stakeholder group to participate in the IGF onsite and made up a quarter of all registered participants. The meeting's dedicated tracks for high-level leaders, parliamentarians, and youth - also traditionally under-represented and critical to digital policy formation - all but guaranteed these perspectives were given ample space, visibility, and opportunity to shape IGF outcomes. A secondary effect of the great care placed in developing the meeting's high-level component was strong UN System representation, including of entities participating for the first time, such as the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and UN Population Fund (UNFPA). Throughout the year, structured and consistent capacity development activities by the Secretariat reached stakeholders uninitiated to the IGF, particularly from developing and least developed countries, while a renewed MAG welcomed the membership of countries underrepresented or never-before present in the body, such as Kazakhstan and Madagascar.

The 2021 IGF also broke ground in terms of opening new policy fronts. Thanks to initiative taken by the Government of Switzerland, digital impacts and implications for the environment were squarely on the agenda this year, with the launch of the intersessional Policy Network on the Environment (PNE). The PNE successfully harnessed the strong political and popular momentum behind climate issues to bring visibility to its work. It also expanded the type of expertise that exists under the IGF umbrella and confirmed the IGF as a space for effective multidisciplinary. At the same time, the intersessional Best Practice Forum (BPF) on Gender and Digital Rights in 2021 shifted its focus to the under-studied topic of 'gendered disinformation', demonstrating that even longstanding IGF activities can innovate and propose novel areas for policy cooperation. Cutting-edge issues, such as AI and quantum computing, continued to be explored in the context of the annual meeting, with new issues sure to emerge over the course of community consultations in the next cycle.

Finally, a new IGF website this year improved the functionality, ease of navigation, and organization of important substantive and practical information, for regular IGF community and first-time users alike. The modernized display as well as technically advanced platform meant developments in the 2021 preparatory process and key annual meeting resources, such as the schedule and associated session details, were more accessible than ever. In addition to effective experimentation with new 'portals' for experiencing the annual meeting, namely the 3D-rendered meeting venue and platform Wonder.me, a sleek and fully operative mobile app was made available during the annual meeting. In parallel, communications activities were ramped up in the months immediately preceding and during the 16th IGF; this resulted in close to a respective tripling and quadrupling of media coverage and social media reach over 2020. Given the IGF's wealth of activities and outputs, whose relevance will only continue to grow in the global discourse, there is still much potential to expand IGF communications.

The 17th IGF will be hosted by the Government of Ethiopia in the third quarter of 2022. As it begins a new cycle, together with the MAG and cooperating closely with UN DESA, the Secretariat will commit to further improving IGF processes, reach, and impacts, and to draw on the organizational and substantive lessons learned over the past year while working toward an 'Internet United'. It will also pay particular attention to aligning and connecting its work to the UN Secretary-General's vision for a Global Digital Impact. Subsequent IGF host countries on the horizon are Japan (2023) and Russia (2025). A number of expressions of interest have been received for hosting in 2024.