

RESPONSE OF THE DYNAMIC COALITIONS COORDINATION GROUP (DCCG) TO THE IGF STOCKTAKING, NOVEMBER 2023

Note: this contribution represents the views of the Dynamic Coalitions Coordination Group as a whole. It complements the submissions made by individual DCs on their own account, and does not replace them.

i. Potential of DCs to contribute IGF outcomes

The DCCG invites the IGF leadership to facilitate a discussion on how the DCs can actively contribute to the IGF transition to a more outcome-orientated and impactful forum. The concept of multistakeholder cooperation/multistakeholderism came out of the IGF where it is firmly anchored, with the DCs a key manifestation of this. In turn, the Internet is a space that is uniquely innovative, thanks to the possibility for individuals to share, create, and scale up ideas.

Consistent with the vision of the founders of the Internet, the DCs provide an open stakeholder-led space for promoting creativity and innovation, and for building common values and shared visions. With the addition of two new IGF dynamic coalitions (DCs) in 2023, there are now 28 DCs. They are all examples of the DC as a successful multistakeholder model for deep dive intersessional activity relating to important digital themes and specific opportunities and challenges.

The number of DCs will likely continue to increase with the rapid pace of evolution in digital technologies and applications, and the emergence of new social and economic opportunities, many of which will likely create technical and public policy challenges. The DCs provide the IGF with agile expert-led platforms for productive inter-stakeholder networking and information sharing, and for generating the global cooperation and collaboration necessary for devising and implementing solutions.

The DCs fall into two general categories: i) those that are action-orientated with set objectives for delivering concrete outcomes such as policy recommendations and practical toolkits, within clearly-defined timeframes; and ii) other DCs which function primarily as important global collaborative networks of experts and like-minded entities which for example share knowledge and best practice.

DCs therefore have different experiences when it comes to whether, how often and what kind of outputs they produce and these can take various forms, such as:

- analytical papers, studies and research reports on specific topics;

- policy recommendations and practical guidelines for decision-takers in governments and the private sector;
- toolkits for capacity building;
- pools of resources such as comparative analysis of existing regional and national Internet and digital policies and assessments and compilations of good ICT practice.

The contribution of DCs to IGF deliberations, debates, outputs and messaging will become more significant as the IGF transitions to a more outcome-orientated and impactful forum, given their focus on real-world experience and expert insights. In this way DCs will assist in generating the necessary stakeholder cooperation consistent with the objectives of the Global Digital Compact and recommendations of the High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation.

DCCG members urge the leaders of the IGF's own governance - notably the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) and the Leadership Panel - to recognise this contribution of the DCs and take account of the outcomes of their intersessional activities in their strategic planning, meeting programme planning and IGF outputs advocacy.

ii. A framework for IGF recognition of DCs' tangible outputs

Many DC stakeholders work in the IGF's intersessional period on reports, analyses, etc that ultimately are often overlooked by the wider IGF community and remain outside the IGF's formal reporting of concrete outcomes and messages. In past discussions about recognition of DCs' outputs, it was pointed out that the DCs are self-organised entities and therefore outside the remit of the IGF's formal processes of oversight and management. Formal recognition of the outcomes of their work would not be possible therefore.

In view of the evolution of the IGF into a more outcome-orientated stakeholder process, several DCCG members believe the IGF leadership should reconsider its position on non-recognition. They now request the LP, MAG and Secretariat to initiate a discussion about the conditions that would allow DC outputs to receive more formal IGF recognition. It is suggested that this could be taken forward under an agreed framework that would set the conditions for approval of specific DC proposals for activities such as policy research and analysis of best practice that are deemed to be consistent with specific IGF objectives. Such approval would pave the way for formal recognition of DCs outputs under the aegis of the IGF, as well as a higher profile for intersessional work.

The DCCG members look forward to discussing these proposals for enhancing DC integration and recognition of DCs outputs, with the LP, the MAG and the IGF Secretariat at an early opportunity during the planning phase and stakeholder consultations for the IGF.

iii. DCs' participation in the annual IGF

Members of the Dynamic Coalitions Coordination Group (DCCG) are concerned that as the number of DCs increases, the competing pressures for slots in the IGF programme acts as a constraint on the opportunity for DCs to present the outcomes of their intersessional work. A serious detrimental consequence of this constraint is that the ability to integrate the contributions and outputs of the DCs within the wider IGF framework is severely undermined.

Following their review of the IGF programme in Kyoto, DCCG members have concluded therefore that a new approach to integration of the DCs activities in IGF deliverables should be considered if the outcomes of their work are to be recognised and acted upon.

One possible option for the LP, MAG, DCCG and IGF Secretariat to consider, when devising such a new approach to integration of the DCs, is to consolidate the IGF programme time for DCs in the schedule into for example a three hour slot that would provide the necessary time for delivering the key outcomes of the DCs. These could be agreed at a collaborative DCs preparatory intersessional event to be held in mid-2024, the aim of which would be to collate thematically the recent and projected tangible DC outputs such as individual research project reports, policy assessments and capacity building toolkits of all the contributing DCs, in preparation for presentation at the subsequent IGF.

DCCG members believe that this approach would ensure a) the kind of prominence within the broader IGF community that the DCs' concrete results deserve and require; b) that these outputs are taken fully into account in the relevant thematic IGF workshops and main sessions; and c) that they are integrated in the LP's stakeholder consultations on IGF messages and outcomes for wider dissemination and advocacy by the LP, for informing the Tech Envoy's Office on GDC relevance (as well as any subsequent high-level entities engaged around Internet governance); and that d) the IGF Secretariat reporting of IGF proceedings covers the DC outcomes on an equivalent basis to the forum outcomes.

iv. Creating positive synergies in the IGF stakeholder community

DCCG members see the integration of their activities and outputs in the IGF community as creating the kind of valuable channels for synergies and connections between workshop proposals and DC activities which do not currently exist. In cases where there is sufficient commonality and mutual benefit, this would generate opportunities for workshop organisers to involve DC representatives in the planning and delivery of their IGF workshops.

The annual IGF event provides a key global platform for DCs to receive further inputs and feedback on their work, and to secure additional support and funding. By creating synergies within the IGF's programme, in addition to the work of the DCs benefitting from wider recognition and impact, the outputs of the IGF as a whole will be augmented with the results of highly relevant activities by dedicated teams of stakeholders. A further benefit for DCs is that this will also likely generate more interest amongst stakeholders worldwide in actively participating in the ongoing intersessional activities of the DCs and enabling them to add their contributions to the outcomes.

Furthermore, the benefit for the overall logistics of the IGF programming of this approach for delivering DC outcomes is that it would obviate the need for many DCs to hold individual sessions and it would thus ease some of the competitive pressure on IGF slots.

An additional recommendation for supporting alignment and collective action around priority themes at the IGF is to include DC consultation (where appropriate) in the application requirements for IGF session organisers. Proposals for IGF sessions which are focussed on a specific theme or issue currently being addressed by a DC, should explain how their session leaders will engage with the DC. Conversely, as far as is feasible, DCs should conduct outreach to session organisers whose goals and thematic priorities align closely with those of their DC.

We also welcomed the intersessional event held in 2023, and the opportunity this provided to highlight the work of DCs. This was a strong opportunity to make DCs' ongoing work between IGFs more visible, for the MAG itself and beyond. We also welcome discussions about other ways in which the IGF can ensure that it is seen not just as an annual event, but as an ongoing multistakeholder platform.

vi. DCs contribution to the Global Digital Compact

It is expected that the thematic framework for IGF 2024 will continue to be closely aligned with the thematic areas to be covered by the UN Secretary-General's Global Digital Compact (GDC) proposal. Members of the DCCG fully support the proposal contained in the joint letter submitted by the Chairs of the Leadership Panel and the MAG dated 16 October 2023 that the IGF is ready and best-suited to serve as the venue for periodic multistakeholder review and follow-up to the GDC following its presentation at the Summit of the Future.

Several DCs responded to the recent stakeholder consultations on the GDC and there was general agreement at the DCs Main Session at the IGF in 2022 in Addis Ababa that DCs would potentially have a substantive role to play in the assessment, implementation and monitoring of progress of the GDC commitments, in line with the their specific areas of policy focus. This was welcomed by the Tech Envoy when he spoke at that session.

DCCG members reaffirm their continued support for the GDC process and their willingness to draw on their pools of expertise and experience relevant to the thematic areas covered by the GDC. DCs look forward to the opportunity to contribute further in the final stages of the Compact's development and finalisation and in the implementation phase following the Summit.

vii. Accessibility at the IGF meeting

The IGF meeting planners need to increase their focus on accessibility for all in order to maintain its claim to be the true home of multistakeholderism in Internet governance. This includes ensuring that meetings are accessible for people with disabilities, that there are meaningful possibilities for online participation, and that we do all we can to facilitate multilingualism.