

Input from C. Cassa to the Stocktaking Consultation Conducted by the IGF Secretariat in My Personal Capacity

January 2025

First of all, I would like to thank the IGF for the opportunity to contribute to this stocktaking exercise. Below are my main observations:

A. General Comments

The IGF 2024 in Riyadh was an excellent event. The hospitality and organization were outstanding, and the facilities, including transportation from the hotel to the conference venue and the Wi-Fi, functioned smoothly. Stakeholder participation was strong, although I noticed a lower presence from civil society actors. Additionally, I observed some duplication and overlap between certain sessions. For IGF 2025, I recommend a more integrated and streamlined program to avoid redundancies.

IGF 2025 will be the final event before the conclusion of the current IGF mandate, making it even more crucial to demonstrate the IGF's important role over the past 20 years within the WSIS framework. It is vital to showcase the evolution of the IGF, the new mechanisms and processes introduced, and how these have contributed to enhancing its impact.

Furthermore, it is essential for the IGF community and Secretariat to actively engage in the WSIS+20 review process. This engagement provides an opportunity to share the vision for the IGF beyond 2025 and to discuss proposals outlined in the document "A Vision of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Beyond 2025," drafted by the MAG WG Strategy, which can be found [here](#)..

Additional Suggestions

I believe the IGF Secretariat's role in international relations should be further strengthened. This includes fostering closer ties with other UN bodies, such as the UNSG Tech Envoy's office, as well as other agencies dealing with internet governance and digital issues. Strengthening relationships with governments and other stakeholders is also crucial. The Secretariat should take a more proactive role in promoting and supporting concrete initiatives and ensuring effective follow-up on IGF messages to maximize their impact.

B. Specific Comments on the Questionnaire

1. Taking Stock of IGF 2024: What Worked Well? What Did Not?

a. IGF 2024 Preparatory Process (Timeline, Call for Issues and Session Proposals, Session Selection, MAG Meetings, Capacity Development, etc.)

- Overall, the sessions were well organized.

b. IGF 2024 Overall Programme: Thematic Focus, Structure, and Flow

- IGF 2024 featured a rich program with politically relevant discussions addressing key challenges of digitalization.
- It included reflections on past processes, such as the GDC, and preparations for future events like the WSIS+20 review.
- However, there were some overlaps between High-Level Sessions and Main Sessions.

c. IGF 2024 Hybrid Format Design and Experience

- The audio quality for onsite and online participation was quite poor.

d. IGF 2024 Logistics (Website, Mobile App, Schedule, Registration, Access and Use of Online Platform, Bilateral Meeting System, Security, etc.)

2. Intersessional Activities and NRIs at IGF 2024

a. Best Practice Forums and Policy Networks at IGF 2024

- Please comment on the process, content, and how these intersessional activities were included in the annual IGF programme.

b. Dynamic Coalitions at IGF 2024

- Please comment on the process, content, and how these intersessional activities were included in the annual IGF programme.

c. National, Regional, and Youth IGFs at IGF 2024

- I believe NRIs should have a more prominent presence in the IGF programme and play a larger role in advancing the key messages of the IGF. For instance, I suggest inviting NRIs to identify a few key messages where they can collaborate and contribute collectively.

3. IGF 2024 Programme: Comments on Content, Speakers, and Quality of Discussions

- [Please provide feedback here for specific sessions]

4. Suggestions for Improvements for IGF 2025

a. IGF 2025 Preparatory Process (Timeline, Call for Session Proposals and Selection, MAG and Open Consultations, etc.)

b. IGF 2025 Overall Programme Structure and Flow

- Maintaining IGF 2025 in a hybrid format would be beneficial, as it allows remote participation for those unable to travel.

c. IGF 2025 Programme Content (Thematic Approach, Session Types, Speaker Profiles)

d. Community Intersessional Activities and NRIs: How to Best Connect These with the IGF 2025 Process?

e. IGF 2025 Participants: Who to Invite and How to Interconnect Participants?

- The gathering and active participation of high-level leaders from all stakeholder groups should be maintained and further developed. The innovation of the parliamentary track (since 2019) should also be continued and enhanced.

5. You are welcome to comment on possible improvements of the IGF as it pertains to the IGF mandate. Specifically: How could the IGF 2025 contribute to WSIS+20 Review given the General Assembly resolution A/70/125 calls for a high-level meeting end of 2025 to review the overall implementation of the WSIS outcomes? How do you see IGF supporting implementation of the Global Digital Compact?

- Possible Improvements to the IGF Mandate

- I believe the IGF mandate is sufficiently broad and does not require modification. However, it is important to emphasize that the IGF's mandate is not limited to the technical aspects of Internet functioning but also encompasses the governance policies of applications conveyed through the Internet.
- I suggest renaming the forum from the "Internet Governance Forum" to the "Digital Governance Forum." I believe this name more accurately reflects the work carried out by the IGF over the years.

How Could IGF 2025 Contribute to WSIS+20 Review?

IGF 2025 could contribute to the WSIS+20 review process by stimulating the debate and evaluating the outcomes achieved by the WSIS Action Plan. A working group and a session should be created and included in the IGF 2025 program. The timeline for the WSIS+20 review process should be shared in advance to allow stakeholders to contribute effectively.

Facilitating open consultations and multistakeholder discussions on the WSIS outcomes is another critical aspect to be considered by the WSIS+20 review co-facilitators. Furthermore, the involvement of the IGF Secretariat or the co-chairs of the MAG WG Strategy in WSIS+20 review meetings and working groups would ensure that IGF perspectives are properly considered.

IGF Supporting the Implementation of the Global Digital Compact (GDC)

I believe it is essential for IGF 2025 to identify specific actions and processes to be integrated into its agenda to demonstrate how the IGF supports processes like the GDC. The MAG WG Strategy could play a key role in facilitating this alignment. This connection to the GDC should be emphasized not only in the agenda-setting process but also in the IGF's messages to ensure stronger alignment with the GDC's objectives.

I suggest rewording the IGF 2024 messages to more explicitly highlight their connection to the GDC's goals. Additionally, I propose dedicating a specific section of the IGF website to showcase the IGF's contributions to related processes, such as WSIS, the GDC, and others. Transparency and visibility of these interactions are critical, especially when aiming to operationalize Articles 68, 27, 28, and 29 of the GDC. The IGF must not remain isolated; evidence of these interactions should be publicly accessible on the IGF website.

Lastly, NRIs and intersessional activities should play a more active role in supporting the implementation of the GDC. For NRIs, a possible approach could involve discussing their progress on the GDC objectives and identifying gaps at their national events. The outcomes of these discussions could then be compiled and presented in a dedicated session at IGF 2025, contributing to the advancement of the GDC's objectives.