Session Title:
CyberBRICS: Building the Next Generation Internet, STEP by Step (WS261)

Date:
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Time:
11:50-13:20

Session Organizer:
Center for Technology & Society at Fundação Getulio Vargas

Chair/Moderator:
Luca Belli, Head of Internet Governance at Fundação Getulio Vargas

Rapporteur/Notetaker:
 Ilona Stadnik, Saint-Petersburg State University, School of International relations

List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:
- Ms Alison Gillwald, civil society, Research ICT Africa, South Africa
- Mr Benedicto Fonseca Filho, government, Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil
- Ms Elonnai Hickok, civil society, Center for Internet and Society India, India
- Mr Fang Xingdong, civil society, CEO of ChinaLabs
- Ms Tatiana Indina, private sector, Silicon Valley Innovation Center, Russia
- Mr Rashid Ismailov, government, Ministry of Telecommunications of Russia

Key Issues raised
BRICS science and technology cooperation
Internet access and infrastructure development
Internet policy and regulation
Business and society affected by Internet governance
E-government, development of services
Internet balkanization

The workshop agenda was described by the moderator **Mr Luca Belli**, Centre for Technology and Society at Fundação Getulio Vargas. Belli introduced digital policies evolutions in Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) countries, highlighting the relevance of BRICS Internet regulation and digital policies for the global ICT development. Belli focused on what are the key priorities of governments and what should be expected in next 5-6 years. Belli passed the floor to the speakers that provided their inputs in BRICS order.

Mr Benedicto Fonseca Filho, Ambassador, Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reassured participants of the willingness of Brazil to actively engage in joint initiatives for international cooperation and multistakeholder governance in capacity building, research and development, and also Business to Business (B2B) cooperation. Fonseca stressed the importance of regional strategies for international cooperation, especially in the MERCOSUR region.

Mr Rashid Ismailov, Ministry of Telecommunications of Russia, continued to develop the importance of the international cooperation argument, emphasising the need to organise comprehensive projects instead of splitting resources among random pinpoint initiatives. Further, he focused on four major components of Russian digital policy:

1. Regulation– legislation has become very comprehensive – too many issues should get attention from regulatory authorities
2. Building the technological and research and development (R&D) capacity - Russia has enough resources when it comes to R&D as it is one of the leading countries in fundamental sciences. However there is still a big challenge to transfer outcomes of R&D into applications and projects for the market.
3. Infrastructure - Russia's huge territory is the biggest obstacle for improving access and usage density rate. Mr Ismailov mentioned the project on deploying fibre cable to Far East regions that will replace the satellite connection which is very expensive.

4. Information security – education initiatives to foster secure behaviour on the Internet, as well as the coordination role of government between the business and the banking sectors, and society in providing security policies and solutions.

Ms Tatiana Indina, Silicon Valley Innovation Centre, spoke on the impact of Internet governance in Russia on business and civil society. While remarking on some positive influence on spurring information and communication technology (ICT), and innovation diffusion into business and daily life, she noted the negative effects of the growing regulatory basket, especially laws on critical information infrastructure, data localisation, and virtual private network (VPN) use restrictions. Enforcement of these laws paralysed the work of several companies; particularly LinkedIn is now blocked for noncompliance. Compliance is very costly. As for civil society, she introduced the results of an independent survey that depicts a negative discourse in Russian mass media and television (TV) regarding the Internet. The Internet was portrayed as a potentially harmful technology for society as it can be used in a destructive manner. Indina concluded with a proposal to adhere to two basic principles: to try to adopt the least restrictive laws, and to make such restrictive laws applicable to a smaller number of people.

Ms Elonnai Hickok, Centre for Internet and Society, India, provided a comprehensive overview of Indian digital policy and subsequently focused on the field of digital identification based on biometrics for authentication purposes. Hickok also stressed that India has been creating different types of infrastructure – a set of open application programming interfaces (APIs, a national cloud MeghRaj, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technology at governmental level. In addition, India is a country of growing startup environment, which benefit from leveraging tax duties. Finally, Ms Hickok told about the opportunity for revision of the surveillance regime in India, as well as of its blocking system.

Mr Fang Xingdong, CEO of ChinaLabs, gave a prospect on bottom-up and top-down approaches to digital regulation in China. The former is market dominated while the latter is government-led. He noted that innovation only happens in the market place, although government is responsible for security issues. Successful development can occur only due to the combination of these two approaches. Mr Xingdong remarked on the challenges that China is facing now in promoting its innovations at global level. He also mentioned an ambitious project to document the 50 years history of the Internet in order to learn lessons from the past to make a better future. In conclusion Fang said that 'BRICS nations' cooperation is essential in the next decade: 40% of the users come from BRICS countries. In the next decade we may have 60% of Internet users coming from BRICS nations'.

Finally, South African representative **Ms Alison Gillwald**, Research ICT Africa, stressed the acute problem in South Africa: 'the system of innovation and the national communications strategies and frameworks have been sadly separated. There has not been adequate integration of the innovation framework consistent with the communication policies and strategies'. She expressed hope that government will consider inputs from society to execute evidence-based ICT policymaking. Referring to the BRICS cooperation, Gillwald noted that in face of Internet balkanisation countries should work more on greater representation, rather than stepping back to create their own national networks.

Gender Reporting

- Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session: 97

- Estimate the overall number of women present at the session: 45

- To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment? N/A

- If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion: N/A