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Project to support the Internet Governance Forum

Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2020
Annual Progress Report

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Introduction

This annual report provides a consolidated summary of key activities undertaken over the course of the 2020 cycle of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). It is structured around four expected accomplishments listed in the [IGF Project Document](#)¹ which guided the work of the IGF Secretariat:

- 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.*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a need to comply with the global safety and epidemiological measures, the 15th annual IGF meeting was hosted online by the United Nations in two phases: 2-6 and 9-17 November 2020. Under the overarching theme ‘Internet for human resilience and solidarity’, this meeting marked the fifth 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 2020 planning process started immediately after the 14th IGF concluded in Berlin, Germany. The IGF 2020 Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), whose renewal was announced on the last day of the IGF 2019, immediately commenced planning the 15th IGF building on the procedural and substantive feedback from the community received through the traditional taking stock process. The planning cycle included a face-to-face Open Consultations and MAG meeting – in January 2020 at United Nations Office at Geneva, Switzerland (UNOG); one online Open Consultations and MAG meeting from 15-19 June 2020; and twenty-two online MAG³ meetings.

With emphasis on improving working modalities, the IGF’s preparatory and 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 countries*⁴, 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

¹ IGF Project Document (2017-2025):

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

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

³ Online MAG meeting summaries from the 2019 preparatory process can be accessed at:

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

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

⁵ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/4586/1454

(UN DESA)⁶. The Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation⁷ also featured prominently the overall planning process.

Under the overarching theme, ‘Internet for human resilience and solidarity’’, the 15th annual IGF meeting provided a platform for advancing critical Internet policy discussions through several annual workstreams and more than 250 different sessions, focused on four key themes: Data, Environment, Inclusion and Trust.

2020 IGF stood out in terms of a more focused international cooperation with high-level experts and leaders, non-traditionally present in the IGF discourse, UN agencies, parliamentarians, youth and stakeholder from developing countries, as well as a record number of participants. The Forum gain more political visibility. Addresses of the UN Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Economic and Social Council, 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 refreshed by featuring dedicated tracks to high-level leaders, parliamentarians and youth; and introducing a concept of voluntary commitments from expert speakers. The IGF 2020 was also output-oriented, with tangible output documents emerging from the meeting, including in a form of thematic key messages. All outputs, consolidated under the “[IGF 2020 Outputs](#)”⁸, drew from the individual reports of the program’s more than 250 sessions.

Advancements made by the IGF have been recognized by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in its [Resolution E/RES/2019/24](#)⁹, 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 2019](#)¹⁰ 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, the 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

⁶ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-retreat-documents>

⁷ The UN DESA Under-Secretary-General’s response to the Roadmap: https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/10358/2173

⁸ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/berlin-igf-messages>

⁹ https://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/ecosoc_res_2019d24_en.pdf

¹⁰ <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/197>

participation of governments and all other stakeholders from developing countries in the Forum itself, as well as in the preparatory meeting.

Activities undertaken in 2020

The consolidated summary of activities undertaken in preparation for the 15th annual IGF meeting are consolidated below. The structure is developed around the four expected accomplishments listed in the IGF Project Document¹¹:

- 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.*

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 2020 Preparatory Process

The 2020 IGF planning cycle started immediately after the 2019 annual meeting concluded, building on its outcomes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic being confirmed early in the year, the IGF Secretariat and UN DESA developed a contingency plan in case of being unfeasible to host the annual meeting in person. With careful, continuous monitoring of the global health and epidemiological situation, in June 2020 it was officially decided that the 15th annual IGF meeting will be hosted online for the sake of protecting participant's health and safety. The Government of Poland's offer to host the IGF 2021 was accepted.

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 2020 MAG was announced¹² on 29 November 2019 as the last day of the 14th annual IGF meeting. A total of 50 members¹³, 9 among them new, were appointed. Members come from all stakeholder groups and regions, representing governments, civil society, private sector and

¹¹ http://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/4099/516

¹² <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/mag-2020-chair>

¹³ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/mag-2020-members>

technical community. All members of the MAG serve in accordance with the [MAG Terms of Reference](#)¹⁴ and in personal capacity, but are expected to have close linkage with their respective stakeholder groups. Representatives of previous host countries and relevant international and intergovernmental organizations were also invited to attend the MAG meetings.

The United Nations Secretary-General [appointed](#)¹⁵ Ms. Anriette Esterhuysen of South Africa as the Chair of the MAG for 2020.

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 2020:

- The MAG ‘Call for nominations’ was 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 note](#)¹⁶ 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 unrepresented regions. Careful consideration was given to inclusion of youth and more senior candidates. The gender parity was achieved.

Planning Meetings and Overall Process Improvements

During the previous IGF cycle, several objectives for improving the overall process for the 2020 year were met. This relates to advancing the working modalities, particularly in regard to the work of the intersessional activities and the IGF annual meeting, as well as related to strengthening the stakeholder engagement and raising inclusiveness and visibility of the IGF.

The programme planning was carried out through twenty-four meetings of the MAG, of which one hosted as face-to-face and the rest online¹⁷. In addition, more than a hundred open online meetings were held to support the MAG working groups, IGF’s intersessional work and National, Regional and Youth IGF Initiatives (NRIs).

Given that the meeting was hosted completely online, several adjustments and improvements were introduced for achieving greater inclusivity and streamlining the overall process. These related primarily to the:

¹⁴ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/mag-terms-of-reference>

¹⁵ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/personnel-appointments/2019-11-25/ms-anriette-esterhuysen-of-the-republic-of-south-africa-chair-of-the-internet-governance-forum%E2%80%99s-multistakeholder-advisory-group>

¹⁶ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/mag-renewal-2020-general-guidance>

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

- The process was made more concise and streamlined through by structuring it into four main thematic tracks;
- Strategies for innovative work mechanisms for the intersessional work were developed;
- Youth engagement strategy was implemented throughout the year;
- Improvements were made to the call for workshops systems, to ensure more streamlined submission and evaluation processes;
- Produced tangible outcomes and outputs with dedicated repositories;
- Full integration of IGF intersessional work in the annual programme;
- Format design was adjusted to a fully online hosting of the annual meeting;
- Extended timeframe of the meeting, for the sake of accommodating participants from as many time zones as possible;
- Pre-recorded thematic introductory sessions for the sake of informing participants beforehand;
- Introduced a dedicated high-level leaders track; a track for engagement of parliamentarians; and a track for youth.
- Strengthening the IGF's collaborative work with the NRIs;
- Introducing new technological methods for supporting the facilitation of work with session organizers;
- Advanced communication and outreach strategy.

These improvements are explained further below.

Open Consultations and MAG Meetings

The IGF 2020 cycle featured two Open Consultations and MAG meetings. The first IGF 2020 Open Consultations and face-to-face MAG meeting took place on 14-16 January 2020 at the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the second Open Consultations and MAG meeting were hosted online from 15-19 June 2020. Both meetings featured online participation, 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 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Mr. Wai Min Kwok participated. As the meeting was initially planned to be hosted by the Polish Government, Ms. Wanda Buk, Polish Deputy Minister for Digital Affairs joined the first meeting as the Host Country Co-Chair.

The core objective of these meetings was to plan the annual IGF, in particular its programme, and discuss the IGF's community-led intersessional work. Of particular focus was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and means of adjusting the process to a fully online environment of convenience for all.

The first Open Consultations segment reflected on the results of the IGF 2019 Taking Stock process, where the stakeholders advised on improvement for 2020. Among the key points raised were:

- Overall, the 2019 IGF was praised. Special recognition was given to the high-level track, youth and parliamentary engagement.
- Of particular note was a successful engagement of participants from the Global South countries.

- A broad positive feedback was given to a well-structured programme and output-oriented meeting.
- It was called for continued effort in rising the high-level participation, engagement of underrepresented groups and strengthening linkages with the Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) and National, Regional and Youth IGFs (NRIs).

The consultations also featured updates from a number of organizations, among which were: 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)

The MAG's deliberations were expressed in line with agreed objectives for streamlining and improving the annual meeting programme. The following key decisions were taken:

- Through a bottom-up, open calls for issues and validation of thematic tracks, 225 received inputs navigated MAG's work that decided to focus and streamline the overall programme around the four themes: (1) Data; (2) Environment; (3) Inclusion, and (4) Trust. Each of the four thematic tracks was supported by a group of MAG members that developed corresponding thematic narratives.
- It was agreed that the 2020 Best Practice Forums (BPFs), would build on the 2019 work and focus on 'Cybersecurity', 'Data and New Technologies in an Internet Context', 'Local Content', and 'Gender & Access'.
- Through a public Call for Workshops and the MAG evaluation timeline, out of 237 workshop proposals received, 86 were approved.
- Seven main sessions were approved. Four focused on the main thematic tracks; one on Internet governance and-related aspects of the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation; one on the role of the Internet in emergency situations hosted by the NRIs and one of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the DCs, prepared by the DC network.
- [MAG working groups](#) continued a documented work on workshop process improvements; communication and outreach; IGF strategy and strengthening; and multilingualism¹⁸.
- The annual meeting format was adjusted to the fully online hosting, by splitting its duration in two phases, with more days and shorter, fluctuating hours to accommodate as many time zones possible.

The Secretariat facilitated inclusion of 27 Open Forums in the IGF 2020 programme as traditional sessions organized by government or international and intergovernmental organizations. Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) were also approved to organize 18 sessions, bringing multistakeholder expert views on diverse topics. The programme was also enriched with the work of more than 35 NRIs that organized 7 collaborative thematic sessions.

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

Four IGF Best Practice Forums (BPFs) worked in the leadup to the IGF 2020 annual meeting on:

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

- **BPF on Cybersecurity**, that explored best practices in relation to international cybersecurity agreements;
- **BPF on Data and New Technologies in an Internet Context**, that focused on means of data collection and utilization;
- **BPF on Local Content and**, that looked into protection, preservation and sustainability of creative work and traditional knowledge in digital space;
- **BPF Gender and access**, focused on gender-related topics representation in IGF processes.

At the IGF 2020 annual meeting, all four BPF exchanged views on policy challenges and best practices with relevant experts and stakeholder representatives. Insights and community feedback also fed into the final reports published as output of the IGF 2020 BPF work¹⁹.

IGF 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 thirty (130) [national, regional and youth IGF initiatives \(NRIs\)](#) 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 15th 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 2020 annual meeting.

A.2 The 15th annual IGF meeting

The 15th annual IGF meeting was hosted online in two phases: from 2-6 and 9-17 November 2020, under the overarching theme: ‘Internet for human resilience and solidarity’. This year, the fifteenth IGF 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. The Forum 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 fulfil the nexus of respecting human rights and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The discussions took place under four thematic tracks:

- **Data** focused on fundamental challenge of ensuring the benefits of the data revolution to contribute to inclusive economic development while protecting the rights of people.
- **Environment** that discussed the interdependences between the use of Internet and digital technologies to preserve the environment, but also to threaten its sustainability.

¹⁹ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/best-practice-forums-bpfs>

- **Inclusion** that exchanged inputs on ways for achieving an equitable and inclusive Internet.
- **Trust** that fostered dialogues on relationships between security and people’s fundamental freedoms and rights online.

To provide a high-level overview for decision-makers of the most current thinking on key Internet governance issues, discussions from the over 250 sessions held during IGF 2020 have been distilled into [IGF 2020 Outputs](#)²⁰.

In addition to 80 thematic pre-events, opening and closing Sessions, the IGF 2020 programme of 275 sessions in total, also featured 7 main thematic sessions; 84 workshops; 27 open forums; 4 individual best practice forum (BPF) sessions; 18 individual dynamic coalition (DC) sessions; 7 individual national, regional, and youth (NRIs) collaborative sessions; introduction and orientation session; as well as dedicated tracks for high-level leaders; youth and for parliamentarians.

Improving visibility and tangible outcomes of the 15th IGF

The IGF aims at continuously improving its processes. This relates to advancing the working modalities, particularly in regard to the work of the intersessional activities and the IGF annual meeting, as well as related to strengthening the stakeholder engagement and raising inclusiveness and visibility of the IGF.

As noted, the IGF 2020 planning process started immediately after the 14th IGF concluded in Berlin, Germany. At the first MAG and Open Consultations in-person meeting in January 2020 in Geneva, Switzerland, the intersessional work modalities were agreed and four (4) [Best Practice Forums \(BPFs\)](#)²¹ approved to specifically analytically map best practices within dedicated output documents: 1) *Cybersecurity*; 2) *Local Content*; 3) *Gender and Access*; and 4) *Big Data and New Technologies in an Internet Context*. These workstreams allowed for the IGF process to engage stakeholders from all sectors that hold interest or expertise in the subject matters to exchange views on existing good practices. With the aim to improve the future BPF-related work, the working focus group on assessing so far implemented BPFs and recommending future criteria and monitoring mechanisms was approved (‘BPF on BPFs’). Also, cooperative mechanism for the [BPF-NRIs](#) mutual support were agreed among these two groups’ facilitators, to enter implementation in 2021. The MAG had also chartered four [MAG-led working groups](#), namely the *Working Group on Outreach and Engagement (WG-OE)*; *Working Group on Workshop Process (WG-WSP)*; *Working Group on Language (WG-Language)*; and *Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy (WG-Strategy)*. These groups worked throughout the year on their respective subject focus areas.

The January MAG meeting also resulted in the MAG’s review of the community’s feedback on the Forum’s possible thematic orientation, deciding to streamline and focus the annual programme on four main themes through four defined thematic tracks: 1) Data; 2) Environment; 3) Inclusion; and 4) Trust; each one being associated with a corresponding [thematic narrative](#)²².

²⁰ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/10794/2357

²¹ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/best-practice-forums-bpfs>

²² <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2020-themes>

Introducing the environment as a dedicated thematic track was especially welcomed, particularly in the wider context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Following an open validation process of these thematic tracks, a public, open call for session proposals was launched on these themes, resulting in receiving over four hundred (400) proposals, with over three hundred (300) workshops evaluated by the MAG and rest of thematic sessions cleared by the IGF Secretariat.

In parallel with MAG's advice on the programme planning, the IGF Secretariat confirmed the annual work plan with the national, regional and youth IGF initiatives (NRIs) as well as the Dynamic Coalitions (DC) to conduct continuous coordination among these initiatives through bimonthly online meetings, reviewing of adherence to the IGF core criteria and substantively contributing on individual basis to improve the implementation of their processes. A bottom-up process among these networks was facilitated to determine thematic orientation of their main session and workshop-like sessions organized for the IGF 2020 annual meeting.

The fact that it was decided that the annual meeting will be hosted completely online, the overall planning was impacted. The impact was mostly felt on aspects of the meeting structure, logistics, as well as the discussion thematic narratives. Specifically, a number of efforts had been undertaken to improve the overall structure of the IGF's programme to adjust it to a completely online format. The duration was extended over a longer period of time, while the fluctuating hours were shortened, to better facilitate the inclusion of as many time zones as possible. The number of parallel session tracks was reduced to up to three. The already approved sessions' proposers were asked to revisit their sessions and adjust the format to online hosting. Several guides were produced to facilitate the community's familiarity with the online platform.

A number of technical improvements were introduced to support the facilitation of a fully online meeting. 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 [webpage](#)²³ for the annual meeting was created to reflect all relevant information in one place. The IGF 2020 sessions were live-streamed via multiple platforms, namely the IGF YouTube²⁴ and Facebook as well as the UN WebTV²⁵, and real-time captioned. All main sessions and high-level sessions were interpreted to six UN languages.

In order to implement targeted stakeholder engagement with the UN system, parliaments, youth and developing countries, the meeting included new, innovative structural components namely the high-level leaders track, parliamentary roundtable and a youth-dedicated track, as well as support the participation from developing countries.

The **high-level leaders' track** brought together leaders and experts from all stakeholder groups to discuss the role of the Internet in the age of uncertainty. The sessions included in this track

²³ <https://www.intgovforum.org/vIGF/>

²⁴ All sessions

²⁵ Main session and high-level sessions

discussed how the Internet and digital policy can support people's recovery from emergencies in the areas of health, security, economy, social development and environment. The High-Level Leaders' Track was, in particular, used to increase engagement with other United Nations processes. Continuing a practice that was introduced at IGF 2019, a **parliamentary roundtable** was hosted this year in cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. 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** that included several youth flash sessions and dedicated Youth Summit, young people from different parts of the world, discussed ways for connecting the next generation of the Internet users and called for advancing traditional education systems through digital innovation.

Much effort was invested in advancing participant's outputs. In a leadup to IGF 2020, several guides for the meeting orientation were produced, including the [Guide to IGF 2020 Issues and Themes](#)²⁶, containing overviews of each of the thematic tracks, as well as overarching policy questions to help guide the discussion on the themes throughout the many and varied, more specific topics under discussion in individual sessions. To strengthen the communication of session outcomes directly from session organizers, participants and rapporteurs, [key takeaways](#)²⁷ documented in session reports were directly distributed to Internet governance stakeholders via social media and consolidated 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 2020 annual meeting resulted in a number of tangible [outputs](#)²⁸, with written output reports emerged from all the intersessional activities, as well as the messages produced for the high-level leaders track, the parliamentary roundtable and all sessions hosted within dedicated thematic tracks, all main sessions as well as the global youth summit. The messages were developed by the Host based on session reports from the session organizers received within a few hours of their session conclusion. Additionally, the entire procedurals and substantive highlights of the annual meeting were consolidated in the [IGF 2020 Summary Report](#)²⁹ issued on the last day of the 15th IGF. Particularly, the meeting's concrete action-oriented outputs were prompted by the Host introducing the concept of '[voluntary commitments](#)'³⁰ that encouraged participants to express voluntary commitment(s) they will undertake during the next year (IGF 2021 cycle), either at the individual capacity or on behalf of their organization, to foster the aims and goals of the IGF as expressed in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda. Through this call, the President of the Swiss Confederation announced cooperation with the IGF Secretariat through IGF 2020/21 project on matters related to environment and digitalisation. Several other stakeholders noted their commitment to continue working on advancing the public digital policy through their projects.

²⁶ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/10794/2324

²⁷ Compilation: 'key takeaways' from IGF 2020 session reports

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

²⁸ IGF 2020 outputs <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2020-outputs>

²⁹ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/10794/2357

³⁰ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2020%E2%80%8E-call-for-voluntary-commitments>

The historic record participation at the IGF 2020 annual meeting confirmed the Forum's relevance to people. The Forum saw 20,929 participants overall across sessions. There were 6,149 registered participants from 173 different countries. Regionally, the participation was balanced among the African region (15%), Asia Pacific (17%), Eastern Europe (12%), GRULAC (13%), WEOG (35%) with 8% being participants from intergovernmental organisations. Stakeholder-wise, the participation came from governments (17%), intergovernmental organisations (8%), civil society (39%), technical community (15%) and private sector (18%). The Forum made a progress also in terms of gender-balanced participation with 47% female, 52% male and 1% of those identified as other. The biggest number of participants came from the US, followed by Germany, Switzerland, UK, France, Poland, Nigeria, Brazil, Russia and India. 15,558 participants followed the meeting through the UN WebTV live stream, while 23,431 participants followed the meeting through YouTube process.

In order to bring the 15th 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 are number of national and regional IGF initiatives where the IGF Secretariat and/or the MAG Chair participate remotely (European IGF (EuroDIG), China IGF, Asia Pacific IGF, West African IGF, Latin American and Caribbean IGF, South Eastern European IGF (SEEDIG), Caribbean IGF, African IGF). The IGF Secretariat and/or the MAG Chair also participated in person in some of the largest global event 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.

Cooperation with other Internet governance related entities

Throughout the year, the 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 four Best Practice Forums hosted over thirty (30) online meetings engaging stakeholders from all parts of the world that contributed with bringing good practices and discussing them. The Dynamic Coalitions had new stakeholder joining through five new DCs³¹ being established, namely the *DC on Internet Universality Indicators (DC-IUI)*; *DC on Internet Standards, Security and Safety (DC-ISSS)*; *DC on Internet and Jobs (DC-Jobs)*; *DC on Data Driven Health Technologies (DC-DDHT)*; and *on Data and Trust (DC-DT)*. The NRIs, as expanded throughout the year with the new national IGFs emerging in *Botswana, Côte D'Ivoire, Madagascar, Moldova, Honduras, Quebec, Russian Youth IGF, Chad Youth IGF, Ghana Youth IGF*.

The 2020 IGF process also focused on contributing to the implementation of the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, by forging linkages with the NRIs through facilitating their active participation in the IGF 2020, fostering engagement with parliamentarians and elevating the concept of digital cooperation through a [dedicated main session](#)³² at the IGF 2020. The MAG WG-Strengthening discussed the improvements throughout

³¹ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/dynamic-coalitions>

³² <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2020-main-session-digital-cooperation>

the year, and the UN DESA and IGF Secretariat have institutionally liaised with the related processes at the UN level.

The IGF continued to actively participate in the European Commission's High-Level Group on Internet Governance (HLIG) and contributes to the work of the Commission on digital matters. The IGF 2020 established cooperation partnerships for IGF 2021 and beyond. Development of the work plan on the project related to a Policy Network on Environment and Digitalisation supported by the Government of Switzerland commenced in late 2020 and continues through 2021. In implementing the youth engagement strategy³³, an extensive cooperation was established with the Polish Government, namely the Ministry of Digital Affairs, the Internet Society, Polish Research Institute -NASK, over 25 youth IGF initiatives and capacity-development initiatives for youth and dynamic coalitions for youth (YCIG). This work also continues through 2021. This resulted in several hundred young people being engaged in discussions on how to bridge digital divides, ensure digital transformation of traditional education and invest in youth's capacity development and in established global youth network over a dedicated IGF mailing list³⁴, committed to work on youth-engagement for the coming IGF's cycles.

A partnership with the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) was established on co-organizing the parliamentary roundtable along with UN DESA³⁵. The parliamentary track will continue to be improved in consultations with participating members of parliaments that expressed willingness to contribute.

The UK Government provided a [grant](#)³⁶ to the IGF Trust Fund for the redevelopment of the IGF website into a fully-fledged interactive collaborative platform in order to better fulfil the IGF mandate. The grant aims at strengthening community collaboration and inclusiveness, particularly for developing countries, as well as the accessibility and usability of the website.

The Forum managed to strengthen its engagement with the UN agencies through the implementation of the IGF 2020 High-level leaders track. Among those actively participated in the track³⁷, are the high-level representatives from the United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, International Monetary Fund, International Telecommunication Union, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Health Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, UN Women, World Trade Organization, UN Disarmament, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The meeting also included the UN Secretary-General's participation, as well as of the President of the General-Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

³³ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/10545/2227

³⁴ igfyouth@intgovfroum.org

³⁵ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2020-parliamentary-roundtable>

³⁶ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/uk-government-funds-major-redevelopment-of-igf-website>

³⁷ <https://www.intgovforum.org/vIGF/high-level-speakers/>

Finally, an opportunity was given to the community to contribute to the IGF 2020 high-level leaders track by suggesting expert speakers on appropriate levels from all stakeholder groups, which resulted in over 300 suggestions received³⁸.

Ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the CSTD Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)³⁹

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

A particular attention in this IGF cycle was given to the substantive and technical aspects of participation, given a completely online hosting 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 [webpage](#)⁴⁰ for the annual meeting was created to reflect all relevant information in one place. The IGF 2020 sessions were live-streamed via multiple platforms, namely the IGF YouTube⁴¹ and Facebook as well as the UN WebTV⁴², and real-time captioned. All main sessions and high-level sessions were interpreted to six UN languages. As a result, the IGF 2020 saw a record participation of over 6,000 registered stakeholders and over 20,000 stakeholders accessing the Zoom and live-streaming the meeting, as explained in more details further below.

The annual meeting also saw twenty-seven remote hubs registered in Africa (14), Asia-Pacific

³⁸ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/seeking-high-level-speaker-and-participant-names-for-igf-2020>

³⁹ https://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/a67d65_en.pdf

⁴⁰ <https://www.intgovforum.org/vIGF/>

⁴¹ All sessions

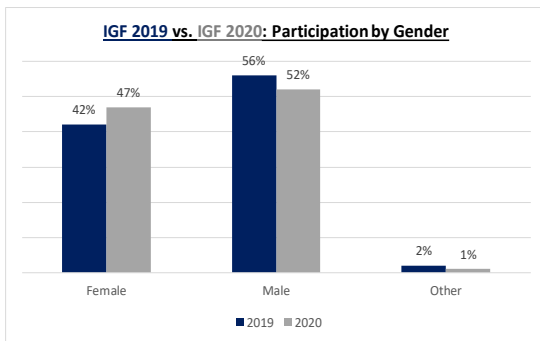
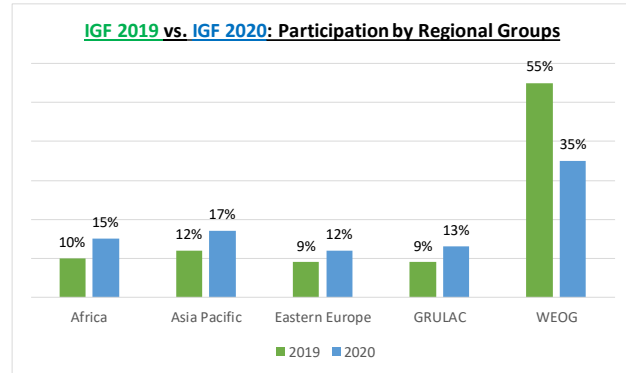
⁴² Main session and high-level sessions

(4), Europe (3), and Latin America and the Caribbean (5), with an active online presence, video-sharing and live-comments.

B. Expected Accomplishment 2
Enhanced collaboration among key organizations dealing with different Internet governance issues in support of development goals

Participation in the IGF 2020 Meeting

The [official statistics](#)⁴³ regarding the IGF 2020 participation were published on the IGF website after the annual meeting ended. A total of 6,150 stakeholders registered for the 15th IGF from 178 different countries. Comparative views of onsite participation statistics for the last two IGF meetings are presented on the graphs showing an increase in participation by regional, gender and



stakeholder groups.

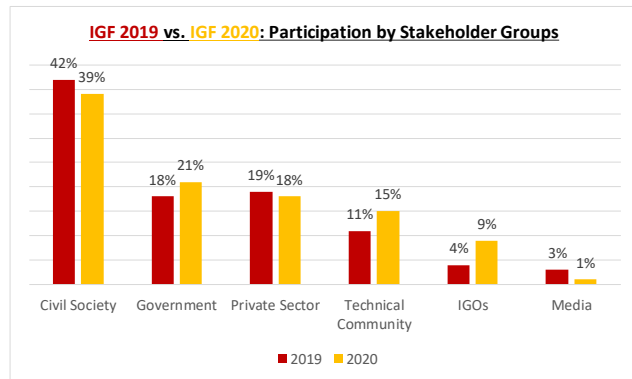
All regions, except WEOG, saw an increase in participation. The biggest number of participants came from the United States of America, Germany, Switzerland, United Kingdom, France, Poland, Nigeria, Brazil, Russia and India.

The IGF 2020 also marked an increase in gender balance compared to 2019, with having 57%

male, 47% female and 1% of participants identified as other. 59% of all participants did not attend any of the past IGF meetings, which is more than recorded in 2019 (53%).

Looking at the stakeholder groups, most of the participants came from the civil society. As a result of a dedicated stakeholder engagement strategy, Governments, technical communities and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) saw a particular increase compared to 2019. The Forum saw participation of heads from 45 different UN agencies.

⁴³ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2020-participation-and-programme-statistics>



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 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 viewers 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 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 15th 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 (European IGF (EuroDIG), China IGF, Asia Pacific IGF, West African IGF, Latin American and Caribbean IGF, South Eastern European IGF (SEEDIG), Caribbean IGF, African IGF). The IGF Secretariat and/or the MAG Chair also participated in person in some of the largest global event 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 2020 intersessional work also engaged with many stakeholders through its open, bottom-up consultations and contributions to developing the final outputs.

The IGF Secretariat also received a recognition at the 5th Geneva Engage Awards for *its pioneering efforts in making online meetings an effective tool in global diplomacy*, from the Geneva Internet Platform and Diplo Foundation supported by the Canton of Geneva in Switzerland⁴⁴.

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 work nature. 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. In 2020, its importance was vital for all processes, given the fully online hosting of the entire IGF process, including the annual meeting. During 2020, the number of visits to the IGF website were historically the highest ever. Over 80,000 connections were made and over 400,000 pages were opened. Only the last quarter of the year saw over 138,000 visits to the website⁴⁵.

The IGF website saw growth of close to 40% registered users, by having 7,853 new accounts register marking the 2020 year with a total of 21,031 registered individual users. Among the newly registered users, 46% were female, 53% male and 1% identified as other. Stakeholder-wise, newly registered website users came from civil society 38%, private sector 22%, government 19%, technical community 14% and intergovernmental organizations (IGO) 10%. Regionally, the composition is balanced among all regions: Africa: 18%, WEOG 29%, Asia Pacific 20%, GRULAC 12%, Eastern Europe 12%, IGO 9%. Countries with more than 100 new

⁴⁴ <https://www.geneve-int.ch/5th-geneva-engage-awards-towards-effective-and-engaging-online-meetings>

⁴⁵ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/8318/2406

accounts during 2020 are United States, India, Poland, Brazil, Nigeria, United Kingdom, Germany, China, Russian Federation, France, Canada, Italy, Kenya, Netherlands and Switzerland. The website visitors increased especially from Eastern Europe, as the region where the next IGF will be hosted. Most of the visits to the IGF website were made by users from United States, China, India, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Poland, Brazil, Nigeria, Russia. Mobile usage increased to 31%. Further, access to the IGF website through mobile devices also showed an increase from 28% to 34% of all visitors⁴⁶.

The social media accounts also saw a significant increase in traffic. For example, the IGF Twitter account's number of followers grew from 8,862 followers in 2019 to 10,089 at the end of IGF 2020. The number of Facebook followers increased from 11,026 in 2019 to 11,495. It is estimated that tweets about the 2020 IGF (#IGF2020) 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 3 retweets per contributor, with about 1,000 impressions and 10 interactions per tweet.

The [schedule](#) for 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 Secretariat built an [online, interactive scheduling system](#). 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 2020. For example, the newly built schedule was designed to be user-friendly toward stakeholders with visual impairment. Also, the IGF Secretariat used Zoom platform for facilitation of online meetings, given its user-friendly setup.

To help straightforward the communication, the IGF 2020 information were consolidated at a dedicated [landing page](#). A regular monthly newsletter was introduced.

Given an increased effort to produce tangible outputs and outcomes of the meeting, especially the thematic discussion outputs, a dedicated section on the IGF website served as a gathering point for all produced [IGF 2020 meeting outputs](#)⁴⁷.

C.2 MAG Chair's Blog and Document Repository

The practice of the MAG Chair's communicating with the wider community continued over several [activities](#), such as the facilitation of webinars and publishing blogs. The Chair facilitated eight webinars on subjects related to strengthening of the IGF processes. Areas covered by these webinars included: capacity development, IGF outputs, frameworks for addressing emerging

⁴⁶ "Visit" refers to connections to the IGF website made from different devices, or from the same device, with a separation of at least 30 minutes.

⁴⁷ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2020-outputs>

Internet issues, participation in the IGF, reviews of the Roadmap for digital cooperation, and engagement with the NRIs and intersessional streams.

The latest [MAG Chair's blog](#) related to the IGF 2020 transitioning to a fully online hosting.

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 2020 meeting. All these were accessible and mobile friendly.

An online [repository](#) for media/press relevant documents on the IGF 2020 was consolidated, to support the marketing and outreach of the meeting. Other existing sections of an online document [repository](#) on the IGF website were continued to be populated with relevant information about the meeting, searchable by key term.

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

C.3 IGF 2020 Outputs

As outlined in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda, the publication of the [IGF's proceedings](#)⁴⁸ is part of the Forum's mandate. In fulfilling this part of the mandate, the IGF Secretariat produced and published the [IGF 2020 outputs](#), which included the overall summary of the annual process including the annual meeting, as well as all transcripts and reports of sessions held during the 15th IGF annual meeting.

The [IGF 2020 Summary Report](#)⁴⁹ was prepared during the annual meeting by the Host in lieu of a traditional Host Country's Chair's Summary. 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 250 sessions held during IGF 2020 were distilled into the [IGF 2020 Messages](#)⁵⁰ on the four main themes of data, environment, inclusion and trust. The substantive discussions of the high-level leaders' track were also consolidated into a set of messages. The parliamentary roundtable concluded with [output document](#)⁵¹ that focused

⁴⁸ IGF Proceedings available at: <http://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-annual-meetings-proceedings>

⁴⁹ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/10794/2357

⁵⁰ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2020-messages>

⁵¹ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/9615/2349

on the importance of building trust in a time of the COVID-19 response and post-pandemic recovery⁵². The Youth Summit also produced a set of [messages from youth](#)⁵³ shortly after the session ended. These were made available at the IGF website on each meeting day, reflecting daily discussions and 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 250 sessions, was done on the basis of input session [reports](#) 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 [transcripts](#) and [videos](#).

A year-long preparatory process of the four best practice forums resulted in tangible output documents. The [BPF on Gender and Access](#)⁵⁴ focused on identifying gender gaps in the digital sphere by conduct an assessment of Internet-related policy processes and spaces through a feminist approach, to determine whether and how they protect and foster participation of women and gender-diverse people, particularly young ones.

The [BPF on Local Content](#)⁵⁵ gathered good practices on how to protect, preserve and remunerate creative work and collective wisdom in order to create a sustainable model for the production, distribution and local fruition of local content in the digital age, including, among other matters, intellectual ownership rights, communities' intellectual property rights, ownership of national or community identifiers of natural resources and protection of creative works.

The community of the [BPF on Data and New Technologies](#)⁵⁶ in an Internet Context collected good practices on how the Internet users' data is collected, analysed and used to ensure that this data is used to bring benefit and not to harm users.

The [BPF on Cybersecurity](#)⁵⁷ built on its last year's report by focusing on identifying additional international agreements and initiatives on cybersecurity, and performing a deeper analysis of a narrower set of agreements. Specifically, this BPF looked at whether the agreement includes any of the UN-GGE consensus norms; and whether any additional norms are specifically called out.

All the IGF 2020 outputs, including the ones produced by the Host, IGF 2020 participants but also community such as DiploFoundation and Geneva Internet Platform, were made available during the meeting. A few hours after each session ends, pertaining videos and transcripts were uploaded to the IGF YouTube account and IGF website.

C.4 Dynamic Coalitions and National, Regional, Sub-regional and Youth IGFs

Extending and developing on a process which began in 2015 with their first-ever main session at the IGF, IGF Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) coordinated their efforts throughout 2020 leading up to the annual meeting. Through their regular monthly virtual meetings and adoption of common work standards, their activities have become more synchronized, all while coalitions continue to

⁵² https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/9615/2349

⁵³ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/10545/2363

⁵⁴ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/bpf-gender-and-access>

⁵⁵ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/bpf-on-local-content>

⁵⁶ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/best-practice-forum-on-data-and-new-technologies-in-an-internet-context>

⁵⁷ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/bpf-cybersecurity>

work independently as multistakeholder expert discussion groups on a variety of topics. A majority of DCs produced [papers](#) on their DCs contributing to the post-pandemic socio-economic recovery, discussed during the 15th IGF. Also, seventeen (17) individual DCs hosted their sessions contribution with their multistakeholder efforts to matters related to accessibility online, net neutrality, platform responsibility, to name the few.

As with other parts of the IGF Community, DCs are growing steadily, with for now twenty-three (23) being recognized and active in their thematic work. Five new DCs joined the 2020 network, namely the DC on Internet Universality Indicators (DC-IUI); DC on Internet Standards, Security and Safety (DC-ISSS); DC on Internet and Jobs (DC-Jobs); DC on Data Driven Health Technologies (DC-DDHT); and on Data and Trust (DC-DT).

At the same time, more than a hundred and thirty (130) [national, regional and youth IGF initiatives \(NRIs\)](#)⁵⁸ collaborated in a bottom-up manner throughout the year, and hosted the main session on the role of the Internet in emergency situations, as well as seven (7) collaborative sessions discussion a range of issues, from access, to cybersecurity, data online and digital economies. Furthermore, throughout the year more than seventy (70) NRIs have hosted their annual meetings, pre-dominantly in an online form. The Secretariat's analysis shows that the priority discussions topics were cybersecurity, data, digital transformation, access and new emerging technologies. The 2020 year marked the arise of discussions on environmental sustainability and the role of the Internet and public digital policy.

In addition to the NRIs collaboration on IGF 2020 dedicated sessions, the exchanges among NRIs and broader community were facilitated though the NRIs hosting a joint booth at the IGF Village and presenting their work; as well as through exchanges at the NRIs Coordination Session hosted shortly after the annual IGF 2020 concluded, focused on strengthening the NRIs individually and collectively.

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 2020

The IGF sees the participation of developing countries critical for Forum's success. Its mandate calls for strengthening and enhancing of the 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. Also, during the 13th IGF, the United Nations Secretary-General has called for action to increase inclusiveness in the IGF processes. The Secretary-General underlined that the IGF must increase its efforts to draw upon the "weak and missing voices" into the IGFs work. It was also called for a broader multidisciplinary approach,

⁵⁸ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2020-nris%C2%A0preparatory-process>

to involve experts not traditionally involved in the IGF processes. The community also echoed for more inclusion and diversity in the IGF's participation spectrum.

With a clear willingness to address the above, the IGF 2020 continued to invest in engagement with stakeholders from developing countries. Over 100 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 2020. Applicants received support for the costs of their Internet connection. 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 2020 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 15th annual meeting. In 2020, more than 30 MAG members in total were supported to either travel to the 1st MAG meeting in Geneva or participate in the second online MAG meeting and the 15th annual IGF meeting, in line with eligibility criteria.⁵⁹

D.2 Capacity Development in Internet Governance

In order to fulfil its mandate and *contribute to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise*⁶⁰, 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)*⁶¹, 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 work*⁶², a capacity development plan was developed. This year, due to the pandemic, the capacity development effort focused on providing substantive support to the national, regional and youth IGFs, resulting in an annual increase of the [recognised NRIs](#)⁶³ for 8 more national and regional IGFs; as well as to the [Dynamic Coalitions](#)⁶⁴ resulting in five (5) new DCs being recognised. Also, throughout the year, several online consultations and capacity development webinars were hosted for young people to support their engagement in Internet governance. This resulted in building a network of over 500 young people, subscribed to a dedicated mailing list, that will continue collaborating in 2021 for strengthening youth engagement.

⁵⁹ <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/documents/igf-meeting/416-eligibility-criteria-for-funding-a-meeting-participant/file>

⁶⁰ Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, para. 72

⁶¹ Report of the Working Group on Improvements to the IGF, section IV.
https://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/a67d65_en.pdf

⁶² UN Secretary-General address to the 13th IGF: <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2018-address-to-the-internet-governance-forum-by-un-sg-ant%C3%B3nio-guterres>

⁶³ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-regional-and-national-initiatives>

⁶⁴ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/dynamic-coalitions>

Several online trainings, in addition to written guide⁶⁵, were hosted for the session organisers and session moderators on how to use the IGF 2020 participation and maximize opportunities for themselves and other participants.

Also, as mentioned above, over hundred (100) individuals from least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) received support for meaningful participation in the IGF 2020 annual meeting by financially supporting their costs of access.

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 the 2020, one female fellow from Afghanistan joined the IGF Secretariat. The fellow had the opportunity to work directly on Internet governance issues and benefit from unparalleled, up-close expertise engaging with the IGF community. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented from engaging internets due to travel restrictions.

Conclusion

The 15th annual IGF meeting was hosted by the United Nations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was hosted over two phases from 2-6 and 9-17 November 2020. Under the overarching theme, “Internet for human resilience and solidarity”, the IGF 2020 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 fulfil the nexus of respecting human rights and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over 250 discussions took place under the four thematic tracks: Data, Environment, Inclusion and Trust.

The 2020 forum had a particular significance, as the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the world's reliance on the Internet and shone a brighter light on the reality that issues of Internet governance are not just about the Internet, but are now intimately linked to people's everyday lives and to the full breadth of other governance issues not traditionally viewed as having an Internet-dimension.

The overall preparatory process for the 15th annual IGF meeting was dynamic, implemented through one face-to-face Open Consultations and MAG Meeting in January, one hosted online in June and twenty-three online working meetings of the MAG. The process also included over a hundred online meetings of the MAG working groups, as well as the community-led work through the intersessional activities, including the BPFs and DCs and the collaboration with the NRIs.

⁶⁵ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/information-for-session-organisers>

Four IGF Best Practice Forums (BPFs) worked in the leadup to the IGF 2020: [BPF on Gender and Access](#); [BPF on Local Content](#); [BPF on Data and New Technologies](#) and the [BPF on Cybersecurity](#). BPF sessions on these topics exchanged views on policy challenges and best practices with relevant experts and stakeholder representatives and consolidated overall preparatory work in final output documents, each.

A new documentation processes on the IGF 2020 were developed, to aid participant and stakeholder understanding the forum. A call for voluntary commitments was introduced to create an opportunity for all stakeholders to share action-oriented commitments to forward the goals of the Internet Governance Forum.

IGF 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 network organized a main session focused on the role of the Internet in the COVID-19 times, in addition to 18 individual DC sessions.

More than 131 National, Regional and Youth IGF Initiatives (NRIs) used a bottom-up consultative process to agree on topic, “The role of the Internet in emergency situations”, as a main priority issue for NRI discussion. In addition, NRIs organized seven collaborative sessions on topics of mutual interest.

During the 15th annual IGF meeting, more than 6,000 participants from 173 countries registered to actively participated in over 250 sessions. With the increased quality of outcome documents from community-led intersessional work, as well as continuously strong interest in holding sessions in the meeting, the IGF has once again received positive indications that it continues to fulfil its core objectives and expected accomplishments, as set out in the IGF Project Document. As per the IGF Project Document, the IGF will continue to communicate, interact and collaborate with other Internet governance-related entities to further global policy dialogue. The Forum also stays committed to working on fulfilling the recommendations of the CSTD Working Group on Improvements to the IGF, as well as on facilitating the WSIS action lines.

Capacity building remains one of the highest priorities and the IGF will continue investing efforts in increasing capacity across all communities through its work, with special attention to engaging the communities from least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states. For 2020, in order to foster meaningful inclusion, especially of stakeholders from developing countries, over a hundred individuals received support to participate in the 15th annual meeting.

The [16th annual meeting of the IGF](#) will be hosted by the Government of Poland from 6-10 December 2021 in Katowice under the overarching theme: Internet United. As in the past, the IGF will aim to innovate its processes while maintaining its commitment to providing an open, inclusive, transparent and non-commercial space for global Internet governance discussions. The Forum also ensured its sustainability through confirming the next host countries, which are the governments of Ethiopia (2022); Japan (2023) and Russia (2025). A number of expressions of interests are received for hosting in 2024.