

IGF 2016

6 – 9 December 2016, Jalisco, Mexico

NRIs Coordination Session Report

National and Regional IGFs

9 December 2016, 10:15 – 11:45 a.m. UTC, Workshop Room 9

Moderator: Ms. Marilyn Cade, MAG Member

Rapporteurs:

- Ms. Sorina Teleanu, SEEDIG
- Ms. Lianna Galstyan, Armenia IGF and SEEDIG

Remote Moderator:

- Abdeldjalil Bachar Bong, Chad IGF

I. Session objectives and structure

This 90-minutes long session was focused on the administrative and organizational issues of the National, Regional and Youth IGF Initiatives [NRIs], including looking at achievements in 2016 and ahead to 2017 work priorities for the NRIs.

The session priority was to have the NRIs Coordinators, or their designee as active participants to address the continued strengthening of the NRIs at national and regional levels, and reflection of the NRIs into the IGF itself and its intersessional activities.

The session was structured in a way that an overview of the NRIs landscape was presented by the IGF Secretariat's Focal Point for the NRIs, followed by welcoming remarks from the IGF MAG, IGF Secretariat and UNDESA, and finally with opening the substantive segment of the session with the NRIs addressing the main NRIs work challenges and solutions for years ahead.

The NRIs Focal Point briefed the attendees that that 79 national, regional and Youth IGFs currently exist. A timeline of the NRIs annual meetings during this year was presented, as well as the geographical location of all NRIs on the world map, and records of the NRIs across three IGF mandates, emphasizing that from 37 NRIs at the beginning of the second IGF mandate, we are entering the third one with 79.

Welcoming remarks were presented on behalf of the MAG, IGF Secretariat and the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs. The main key points are summarized below by the session rapporteurs:

- **Key points raised by the Director of the Division for Sustainable Development / UNDESA**
 - NRIs stands as a good development of the IGF process, as they are closer to the ground, and represent the voices of citizens on the field. Connecting the local and global levels is very important, and the NRIs are successfully filling up that gap. The NRIs contributions are making the global IGF much stronger..
 - UNDESA acknowledges the independence and diversity of NRIs, while the IGF is offering a global platform to raise their voices.
 - The connections between the global IGF and NRIs take the form of a symbiotic relation.
 - UNDESA is at disposal to discuss the support modalities between the IGF and the NRIs, in order to help each other

- **IGF MAG Chair**
 - It is important to have the work of the NRIs reflecting back in the work of the global IGF.
 - It is important to think about the ways on how to get the NRIs voices earlier into the IGF process.

- **Program and Technology Manager, IGF Secretariat**
 - The IGF Secretariat works together with the NRIs, that have contributed to the IGF community intersessional work activities significantly.
 - The Secretariat is open to discussion on how it can best help to nurture and support the NRIs.
 - Moving forward, we should continue to work well together.

The substantive part of the session was dedicated to the NRIs to speak about their major challenges and potential solutions they face while working, and that were raised during the NRIs main session. Below are the key summary points raised by the NRIs representatives, and summarized by the session rapporteurs.

- NRIs are aware that they are not mandated by the WSIS Tunis Agenda. However, they appreciate the support offered so far by the IGF Secretariat, the MAG, and UNDESA. It was asked for this support to continue, in various forms, as it follows:
 - IGF Secretariat and the UNDESA responsible entities could be present at some of the NRIs IGF meetings. This would help in bringing more credibility and visibility to the initiatives.
 - Some raised the point that the MAG members should be present at the NRIs meetings.
 - To continue neutral support from the IGF Secretariat, and maintain a dedicated staff position, as stability in this regard is needed.
 - Liaison within the MAG is needed, as it will help feeding inputs from the NRIs into the programming activities of the MAG.
 - The online participation is a challenge for some initiatives, and support in this regards would be helpful.
 - Some guidance from the Secretariat in terms how can we attract all stakeholders as participants, but also supporters of the annual IGFs on national and regional levels is needed. Multistakeholderism is a big challenge for some of the NRIs.
 - It was noted that funding is one of the biggest challenges within some of the initiatives, as there is no stability due to the lack of supporters.
 - Some initiatives are experiencing issues with having diversity of the stakeholder participation on NRIs annual IGF meetings, as well as the participation of young people.
 - Other suggestion should also be explored such as to create a dedicated position within the MAG for a MAG member representing the NRIs.
 - It would be helpful if the Secretariat and/or the UNDESA help with getting Government's involvement in the NRIs processes.
 - NRIs and the global IGF should continue work on improving the processes and getting messages from the bottom to the top.

From the UNDESA, it was said that all received inputs by the NRIs will be considered. In regards to the asked UN presence at the NRIs annual meetings, it was noted that this suggestion will be further discussed with the IGF Secretariat, and with other UN bodies.

The moderator concluded the session by encouraging everyone to comment of the IGF Retreat output document and asked if the present colleagues are in agreement for an extension of the comment period. Participants did not object to this idea.

It was reminded that a Taking Stock on-site session will be later during this day, where all participants will have opportunity to express their feedback on the program of this year's IGF.