

**Report on the Implementation of the Outcomes of the
World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)**

2018 Input from the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

I. Executive Summary

The 13th IGF was held from 12 to 14 November 2018 at the headquarters of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, France. The meeting marked the third gathering of the global multistakeholder IGF community since the renewal of the IGF's mandate for 10 years by the UN General Assembly¹. Under the overarching theme, *'The Internet of Trust'*, the IGF provided a platform for advancing critical Internet policy discussions, in particular in response to a number of challenges that emerged in 2018 pertaining to data privacy, rapidly developing technologies, and a perceived erosion of trust in the digital space.

During the three-day meeting, more than 3000 delegates from 143 countries² participated in over 150 sessions at the IGF, both onsite and online. The overall programme was developed in a bottom-up and inclusive manner in consultation with the growing IGF community and with a view to enhancing wide-ranging and diverse multistakeholder participation. The lively and productive meeting featured interactive dialogues, and addressed a broad range of timely themes and issues, among them: trust and accountability measures in the cybersecurity context; Internet ethics; challenges related to future of work and global labour; personal data protection; net neutrality; Artificial Intelligence; blockchain technologies, including the emergence of cryptocurrencies; applications of big data; Internet and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); gender and youth participation online; the broadening of stakeholder engagement in Internet governance; digital capacity building; and issues related to Internet and human rights. Of note this year was the 'Cybersecurity, Trust & Privacy' theme, with the most programme sessions subscribed and inclusive of topics as diverse as cybercrime, cyberdiplomacy and algorithms. The discussions under the theme nevertheless focused heavily on data privacy, as well as legal and regulatory questions in this domain.

The IGF is unique in the sense that it is [convened by the United Nations Secretary General](#) to be an open, multistakeholder forum bringing together all stakeholders as equals. Its UN mandate gives it convening power and the authority to serve as a neutral space for all stakeholders. Exchanges throughout the week recognized the important role Internet plays for economic and social development within the right policy frameworks, as well as recognized the need to protect

¹ http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/125

² <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2018-attendance-programme-statistics>

rights online as fundamental human rights. The use of transparent and inclusive multistakeholder approaches continued to be critical for identifying, discussing and proposing solutions around complex digital policy issues.

With emphasis on improving working modalities, the IGF's preparatory and intersessional activities this past year have been guided by its 10-year mandate, calling for the IGF to 'continue to show *progress on working modalities* and the participation of relevant stakeholders from developing countries' and by the recommendations of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) Working Group on Improvements to the IGF³.

II. Analytical Overview

The IGF has strived to build on the significant progress it has made since 2012 on fulfilling 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 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.

Improving Tangible Outcomes and Visibility of the IGF

2018 was an exceptional year for the Forum in terms of its high-level engagement and visibility on the world stage. For the first time, the IGF was personally presided over by the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, and the head of state of the host country, President Emmanuel Macron. Secretary-General Guterres and President Macron each spoke in the IGF's traditional opening ceremony and directly addressed the work and future of the Forum⁴.

Also for the first time, the IGF was convened not as a standalone event but as part of a series of strategically scheduled events for "Paris Digital Week", organized by the Government of France, which also included the inaugural segment of the Paris Peace Forum and the Govtech Summit.

This confluence of factors resulted in a bigger platform for the IGF and its participants, and stronger mainstream media coverage for the meeting. More than eighty journalists, from outlets with wide national or international scope and reach, were present at the IGF.

³ http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/a67d65_en.pdf

⁴ <https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2018-speeches>

As part of the collective effort to enhance the outcome-orientation of the IGF, the IGF Secretariat built on the prior 2017 ‘Geneva Messages’ to deliver a set of key messages emerging from the meeting’s expansive programme. The ‘[IGF Messages](#)’ were drafted on the basis of community inputs and published online during the meeting itself, providing succinct and readable takeaways on the IGF’s major themes.

Cooperation with Other Internet Governance Related Entities

The 2018 meeting represented an opportunity for participants to give input to the [Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation](#) and interact with the panel’s members through an open forum session in the programme. Announced on 12 July this year, the purpose of the Panel is to advance dialogue on international cooperation, identify good examples and propose modalities for working across sectors, disciplines and borders to address current and future challenges in the digital age.

The IGF provided a further venue for new Internet governance-related initiatives, with the launch by the President of France on the first day of the ‘[Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace](#)’. The Call proposes a framework for regulating the Internet and fighting back against cyber attacks, hate speech and other cyber threats.

Capacity Building

To maximize capacity building and to promote extensive stakeholder inclusion, [transcripts](#) and [webcasts](#) from all of the sessions were made instantly available throughout the meeting. Workshop [reports](#) and summaries of the more than 150 sessions held throughout the three-day meeting were also published on the IGF’s website.

Providing even further opportunity to participate and enhance institutional memory of the dialogue that took place, all sessions were [live streamed, and session videos](#) were instantly uploaded for online viewing. Both the IGF’s and wider UN Secretariat’s social media channels, such as Twitter #IGF2018 and Facebook, were also particularly active during the busy week, and facilitated additional platforms for dialogue. Several official [UN press releases](#) were produced over the course of the meeting and were made instantly available to the media. These helped to extend the IGF’s impact beyond the annual meeting to those hoping to learn more about digital policy issues, particularly in developing countries.

In order to help orient first-time participants to the IGF and to help them understand the organizational processes, as well as to foster their integration into the IGF community, a set of continuous activities throughout the 2018 programme was developed under the [Youth and Newcomers Track](#) by the MAG and IGF Secretariat.

Trends and Experiences on Main Theme(s) of WSIS Outcomes

IGF 2018 clearly recognized the rapid evolution of the Internet and the huge potential of new technologies in bringing growth and benefits to all. There were concerns that impacts of new

developments on security and human rights might limit or jeopardize these positive effects, however. In response to the growing complexity of Internet policy issues, calls were issued for a strengthened multistakeholder and multidisciplinary Internet governance approach.

Artificial Intelligence, 5G, blockchain, algorithms, and the Internet of Things, were among the innovations cited as having tremendous promise. Stakeholders recommended an alignment of these technologies with mounting ethical concerns, for instance by creating Artificial Intelligence systems that benefit individuals without discrimination, and ensuring transparency in the development of algorithms⁵.

‘Fake news’ and its various offshoots, such as hate speech and propaganda, continued to be significantly discussed at IGF. The discussions this year notably applied to the use of false or misleading information for the purpose of affecting elections and political processes, as well as the impacts of different forms of distribution through social media and messaging platforms⁶.

Connectivity for refugees figured as part of the IGF’s ongoing examination of human rights and the Internet. While access plays a pivotal role in helping refugees stay connected, participants determined serious challenges remain to ensuring full and meaningful online participation, particularly where infrastructure is concerned⁷. The impact of net neutrality on freedom of expression and a user’s freedom of choice online, was further discussed in the context of human rights⁸.

Digital inclusion has been a recurring topic at the IGF since 2006. The principle of “leaving no one behind” in the 2030 Agenda was once again underscored, focusing on the inclusion online of women, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous people and youth, among others⁹. The significance of youth to the digital economic prospects of societies was also raised, drawing the connection between high youth mobility and prosperity, while emphasizing the need to have the perspectives of young people at the centre of debates on future of work¹⁰.

There was consensus on the importance and relevance of cybersecurity to generate and preserve the trust essential to maximize the potential benefits of cyberspace and of the digital economy. At the same time, a series of challenges, including threats to data privacy, have emerged over the past year that many felt required new solutions. Digital threats affect the entire Internet ecosystem, and cybersecurity and privacy solutions may have cross-border, cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral implications¹¹. In light of what has been seen as a fragmentation of national regulatory policies, suggestions were made for stronger legal interoperability and closer

⁵ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/6037/1412

⁶ http://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/6037/1415

⁷ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/6037/1414

⁸ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/6037/1416

⁹ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/6037/1411

¹⁰ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/6037/1409

¹¹ https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/6037/1408

cooperation between countries, between the developed and developing world and among different stakeholder groups¹².

III. Brief Description of Innovative Policies, Programmes and Projects, plus Future Actions with regard to Issues Raised in Part 2

One tangible way for the IGF to enhance and increase the participation of developing countries is through the National, Regional and Youth IGFs (NRIs) which have been emerging spontaneously ever since the IGF was convened in 2006. They are independent in their work, and organized in accordance with the core IGF principles of being multistakeholder, bottom-up, inclusive, open, transparent and non-commercial. Since the 10th IGF, the number of NRIs has grown tremendously and the total number of officially recognized initiatives has more than doubled from 43 NRIs at the end of 2015 to a current record of more than 100 [recognized NRIs](#). The NRIs are active and immensely useful contributors to the IGF community's intersessional activities. The linkages between the NRIs and the IGF have increased significantly, due to many joint work activities such as the organization of sessions held during the 13th IGF; work on organizing collaborative sessions; developing publications containing guidelines and best practices on how to establish and run a successful NRI; as well as a publication that reflects the value of existing Youth engagement at the IGF supported by the NRIs. Records from the [NRIs regular fortnightly meetings](#) also serve as valuable and tangible inputs to the global IGF; providing more local and issue -perspectives to policy challenges.

In the resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 7 August 2018 [on the recommendation of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (E/20168/31)]¹³, member states welcomed the continuous progress made with regard to the intersessional work of the Internet Governance Forum in the different modalities of connecting and enabling the next billion online, dynamic coalitions and best practice forums, as well as the contributions being made by both national and regional Internet governance forums.

In 2018, the IGF furthered its work on [Policy Options for Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion\(s\)](#). This year, the intersessional initiative aimed at supplementing the recommendations made in Phases I, II and III with concrete case studies to highlight how projects on the ground help to make progress in key sustainable development goals. CENB Phase IV focused on four SDGs: Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth; Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; and Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

[The IGF's Best Practice Forums \(BPFs\)](#) continue to offer unique platforms to investigate topical Internet policy challenges by collecting community input and experiences in a flexible and bottom-up manner. The BPFs gather knowledge that exist with different groups, organizations,

¹² https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/6037/1413

¹³ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2018/28

experts and individuals, made available as a useful resource for the broader community in the form of tangible Best Practice outcome documents. The BPF processes create temporary platforms for people to discuss, interact and collaborate on one specific Internet governance issue. They foster interaction between existing stakeholders and stakeholder groups and community members from all geographic regions.

Through their substantive outreach efforts and continued calls for input and contributions, the BPFs enabled more diverse and varied participation in IGF processes, including from a richer variety of regions and stakeholder groups. By continuously involving new people in their work, the various BPFs also contributed to enlarging the global footprint of the IGF. As a part of the 2018 community intersessional activities, the fifth cycle of BPFs focused on [Internet of Things](#), [Big Data and Artificial Intelligence](#); [Cybersecurity](#); [Gender and Access](#); and [Local Content](#). BPFs worked throughout the year in an open and inclusive way via open mailing lists, regular virtual meetings and BPF workshops during the 13th IGF meeting.

Extending and developing on a process which began in 2015 with their first-ever main session at the IGF, IGF Dynamic Coalitions coordinated their efforts throughout 2018 leading up to the annual meeting. Through their regular monthly virtual meetings and [adoption of common work standards](#) (open archives, open membership, open mailing lists), their activities have become more synchronized, all while coalitions continue to work independently as multistakeholder expert discussion groups on a variety of topics. A majority of DCs produced [papers on the SDGs](#) for IGF Community review before and during the 13th IGF. This substantive work also culminated in a multi-themed and engaging main session, following up coalitions' joint main sessions held since 2015. As with other parts of the IGF Community, DCs are growing steadily, with three new coalitions in 2018 and a further DC proposed for early 2019.

Some specific efforts undertaken to improve working modalities included:

In 2018, prior to the workshop proposal process, the MAG launched a public Call for Issues collecting community inputs to serve as a basis for the annual programme, including for workshop selections. A new approach to shaping the programme used the collected issues for a more thematic, focused and non-duplicative design of the schedule.

As an ongoing initiative of the MAG Working Group on New Session Formats ([WG-NSF](#)), and with support from the Secretariat, [23 lightning sessions](#) were selected for open-air talks after being successfully introduced as new session formats in 2016. Taking place in a 'boundary-less' space in the IGF venue, the 20-minute talks allowed presenters to have up-close and informal engagement with the participants. They were held every day of the meeting during lunch breaks and covered a wide variety of topics, among which children's rights online, the advent of 'digital assistants', community networks and Internet shutdowns.

Important for the IGF's longer-term efforts to improve its processes are two MAG Working Groups which have been active intersessionally: the MAG Working Group on a Multi-year Strategic Work Programme ([WG-MWP](#)) and the MAG Working Group on IGF Improvements ([WG-IMP](#)). Critically, the former aims to deliver a multi-year 'living programme' for the IGF,

covering expected major areas of work as well as the IGF's community intersessional activities, and has closed a process to collect the IGF's community's views on necessary areas for impact.