

Policy Network on Meaningful Access
IGF 2023 - Intersessional Activity Proposal

Summary:

- Why it was decided it was important to create a PNMA in 2021
- Why it is still important
- Where we are with the work done
- What is planned as intersessional work for year 2023

1. Why it was decided it was important to create a PNMA in 2021

The PNMA was created in 2021 as a successor of the Policy Options for Connecting and Enabling the Next Billions (CENB) and BPF on local content and a response to an increasing demand from the community to address the issue of access in an in-depth way. The rationale behind the PNMA proposal was that CENB and BPF Local Content could evolve into a more dynamic concept, to also address the situations where the access without appropriate services and contents in local languages is not the solution.

The concept of meaningful access (developed by and with inputs from multistakeholder partnerships, such as A4AI, GDIP, ISOC, APC, and adopted by some international organisations such as ITU and UNESCO) in fact has proven to be the best solution to develop digital cooperation among the part of the human population still today excluded from the access to the Internet. Bring access to developing countries in order to provide only social media in English, it doesn't make too much sense, while on the contrary, bringing Internet to provide services in the local languages, useful for the population of the regions, makes more sustainable and immediately useful the access to the Internet. For all these reasons, the efforts made by BPF on local contents (that was identifying best practices to promote new services or the digitization of old services) were married with the efforts recensed by the CENB, about the best practices to incentive the creation of broadband connection in the developing countries.

2. Why it is still important

As the [first report of the PNMA produced in 2022](#) explains very well, and how it can be tracked by the various meetings held by the network all over the [2022 process](#), this network's activities had the active engagement of around 30 organizations and individuals from all stakeholders' groups: governments representatives (e.g., Brazil), NGOs (e.g., APC, NUPEF and many others), industries (ranging from Internet giant platforms such as Google, represented by Vint Cerf, to small companies such as Narval or Habeshaview), and International Organizations working both in the field of access as well as of contents, such as ITU and its Broadband Commission, WIPO, WAN-IFRA, and ICANN. All these actors were able to bring their contributions to the community debates and to actively share them during the PNMA final session at IGF 2022 in Addis Ababa, dedicated to [“Meaningful Access From Policy to Implementation: Lessons and Good Practices”](#).

3. Where we are with the work done

During the 2022 process, the PNMA community has actively contributed to identify a certain number of best practices and policy solutions that have been retained as possible models to be exported or applied to other regions or countries of the world. Through this work we have identified good practices to:

- Build capacity in the public administrations of LDCs, in order to equip them to create appropriate conditions for broadband networks (like PRIDA in Africa);
- Digitize local contents via successful business experiences and opportunities (as Habeshaview, an Ethiopian woman-led enterprise); and
- Successfully analyse how to remove barriers to circulation of contents across borders (WIPO project) or bring them to remote areas.

These are a few of the examples collected in the output report, from which we would like to expand our analysis and activities for 2023.

4. What is planned as follow up of 2022 action plan and as intersessional work for year 2023: focus on sharing good practices and connecting dots to influence policy impact

In the final PNMA output report, truly a collaborative work across the group, there are plenty of recommendations on actions to be implemented in the course of the year 2023. One section of the report is dedicated to comments, raised by the community throughout the year and during the main session, on considerations for the IGF to address, so to evolve the meaningful access discussions to implementation support and/or evaluation – generating visible and bigger impact. It was also agreed amongst the community that a natural following step, after compiling good practices, would be to verify their continuity and scaling capacity. Hence, the PNMA would like to use the 2023 process to encourage such activities within our groups and partners, as well as establishing connections to support and influence decisionmakers with evidence-based policy advice on access and connectivity. As initial examples, the Leadership Panel (of which the chairperson was one of the protagonists of the PNMA session held in Addis) is recommended to submit the successful examples identified by the network to regional institutions such as the African Union and the League of Arab States, for implementation in their areas. On the Digital Compact Initiative, we have identified experiences that could be featured on it and spread around the world. Not least important, the PNMA would like to extend the bridges for cooperation beyond the internet governance community – the policy network can, for instance, develop relations with multilateral institutions willing to provide their expertise and resources across the world to those in need.

In summary, the PNMA would like to deepen the 2022 action plan by moving from collection of practices to active evaluation and impact influencing. For more details see the [PNMA 2022 report](#).

CONCLUSIONS:

For all the reasons mentioned above, the outgoing team of the PNMA (Sonia Jorge, Giacomo Mazzone and Daphnee Iglesias) proposes to continue this experience for 2023, with a start as soon as possible at the beginning of the year, in order to implement the suggestions approved in the action plan 2022.