

Dynamic Coalitions comments on the MAG-WG Strategy paper

June 2021

1. Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) were invited to provide feedback on the [proposals on strategic improvements to the IGF and operational measures in 2021](#) developed by the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) on IGF strengthening and strategy (WG-Strategy). The paper was discussed during the 54th DC coordination meeting on 9 June 2021. This document reflects points raised during the meeting; these, however, do not necessarily represent the collective views of DCs.

2. Overall, DCs welcomed the invitation to comment on the strategy paper, which was broadly seen as a useful and welcome document that could help improve the IGF.

A year-round IGF and the role of DCs

3. Some points were made that the paper does not go far enough into suggesting a **re-orientation of the IGF from an annual event with intersessional activities to a year-round forum**. Some of the thinking behind the High-level panel on digital cooperation and the Roadmap on digital cooperation is to transform the IGF into a series of more consistent activities throughout the year. DCs, for instance, could play an important role in this regard, as multistakeholder and community-driven processes that could contribute to various activities and development of outcomes. Moreover, if year-round activities are held that result in some forms of outputs, this could contribute to shaping the programme of the annual IGF, without needing to go through the traditional call for workshop proposals, which takes considerable time and effort.

IGF intersessional work

4. The proposal in the strategy paper that **'intersessional work should have clear objectives'** was welcomed, but questions were raised as to what is understood by 'clear objectives' and who decides on this. It was also suggested that another recommendation for intersessional activities could be to work in an outcome-oriented manner.

DCs in the framework of a multi-year strategy

5. A question was raised on whether the WG-Strategy envisions an approach in which proposals for new DCs are to be considered within the context of a multi-year strategy for an IGF that has a narrower focus. Will new DC proposals be evaluated in relation to the IGF strategy and how/whether they fit within the strategy? Similarly, would DCs be considered as potential mechanisms to fill in a gap in coverage of a certain issue or of specific aspects of an issue? For instance, if a review of the multi-year strategy identifies a specific issue that requires further attention within the IGF, could the Secretariat/MAG/etc. encourage the establishment of a DC to coalesce stakeholders around that issue?

DCs and the issue-driven approach

6. DCs generally welcome the proposal in the strategy paper for coalitions to be invited to address the issue-driven policy questions identified for the IGF, and to join potential

'issue-teams'. They would also be open to consider cooperation with other IGF intersessional activities in addressing IGF issue areas, for instance in the framework of the IGF 2021 preparatory phase. At the same time, it is worthwhile noting that DCs would decide on an individual basis whether, to what extent, and how they would want to contribute to such activities, considering their focus and goals.

Outreach and stakeholder engagement

7. A point was made on the need for the IGF to bring more stakeholders on board. If the IGF is striving to become more impactful and to make a difference on certain issues, then it becomes a necessity to convince certain stakeholders to contribute to its activities. On the one hand, this can be addressed through a strengthened communications and outreach strategy. On the other hand, it could also be worthwhile to engage with the specific entities we want to bring into the IGF and understand what would make the IGF more relevant to them, what specific issues they would want to address as part of IGF activities, and in what form. This is particularly relevant with regard to industry stakeholders, especially those from business areas not directly related to the Internet. The strategy paper is already making steps in this direction by suggesting an issue-driven approach to IGF meetings, with more focus and less issues being addressed, and this could contribute to making the IGF more relevant to certain stakeholders. Looking more closely into how to engage missing stakeholders could be another issue worth exploring.

Strategy implementation

8. One challenge is to determine who will implement the recommendations outlined in the strategy paper, how, and with what resources. It was noted, for instance, that much of the work within DCs is done on a voluntary basis, which sometimes poses challenges to the sustainability of activities. More discussions would be welcome on how to ensure that resources (financial, human) are in place to drive the outlined recommendations.

Strategy approval

9. Several concerns were raised regarding the point in the strategy paper which notes that 'the IGF MAG and the IGF Secretariat develop a draft multi-year plan that will be submitted to the UNSG for approval and finalisation'. Such an approach, it was said, could impact the bottom-up nature of the IGF and be a departure from the current status-quo in which the IGF operates at an arm's length away from the Secretary-General. Understanding why the WG-strategy suggested this approach would be welcome.

List of participants

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Eileen	Cejas	Youth Coalition on Internet Governance
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