

IGF Daily Highlights - 22 October 2013

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Role of Governments in Internet Multistakeholder Cooperation debated at opening of Internet Governance Forum

Bali, Indonesia - The issue of what role is appropriate for Governments in the multistakeholder environment of cyberspace regulation took centre stage as the Internet Governance Forum opened in Bali, Indonesia. Discussions were driven by recent calls for increased involvement from governments on internet issues in the context of news about Internet surveillance, and to a proposal made by Brazil at the World Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF) in May 2013, known as the “Draft Opinion on the Role of Governments in Multistakeholder Cooperation.”

In the main session of the day, with its theme of “Building Bridges - Enhancing Multistakeholder Cooperation for Growth and Sustainable Development”, the Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries of the United Kingdom, Ed Vaizey thanked Brazil for provoking an important discussion on the appropriate role of Governments. “Government intervention is not the same as Government control,” Mr. Vaizey said, emphasizing the UK’s view that Governments should support building IT infrastructure, ensure a fair legal framework, defend freedom of expression and support the multistakeholder process that makes the Internet “a massive force for good.”

Explaining Brazil’s proposal, Mr. Benedicto Fonseca Filho, Director of the Department of Scientific and Technological Themes Ministry of External Relations said that the intention is not to expand Government roles at the expense of other stakeholders, but rather to recognize that different stakeholders have different responsibilities. Brazil’s view is that the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and other international organizations have legitimacy in the process, and that they can and should support meaningful Government participation in Internet governance. At the same time, he said, while proposal was initiated at the ITU it was made clear that “the discussion belongs everywhere”. The question that needs to be answered, he said, is

“how can governments be integrated in self-regulatory Internet bodies so that their concerns are heard and possibly mitigated, without impeding on the economic development and freedom of information flows?”

“We start with the premise the multistakeholder system has proven itself more successful than any pre-existing model for the deployment and governance of a new technology,” said Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Daniel A. Sepulveda, U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy, acknowledging that Governments have an understandable interest in having a conversation about access to “what has become one of the most revolutionary and greatest communications tools of all time.” Considering the growth and impact and that the Internet has had over more than three decades, the United States fully acknowledges the need to “find ways to better integrate Governments and other stakeholders from the developing nations into the multistakeholder institutions that govern the Internet today,” Mr. Sepulveda said.

President of South Asia AT&T Virat Bhatia said that for the private sector, the concept of multistakeholderism includes vital role business plays in the bottom-up, transparent and inclusive Internet governance decision-making processes. In the Internet world, he said, unlike the old traditional Telecom world, governments are neither big player themselves in most cases, nor do they have years of accumulated technical and economic capacity to manage the cyberspace on their own. In this respect, he cautioned that governments must move very carefully, with a well-informed understanding and with an openness to consult, engage and include the inputs from industry, technical communities, and civil society organisations - including youth.

There are areas where there is a need to discuss between the Governments and technical community, such as international emergency call standards on mobile phones, remarked Jari Arkko, Chairman, Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), emphasizing that there is an increasing need to think about the future of the Internet, given that the speed of innovation is increasing. Governments and the Internet technical community need to learn more about how each other works, he said.

U.S.- based Independent Research Consultant Avri Doria emphasized that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has made Governments responsible for protecting rights on the Internet as much as anywhere else. “Governments do have an important role, but that role really

needs to be gauged by the degree to which they are indeed serving the people of the world,” she said. Ms. Doria articulated the concern that as governments and inter-governmental organizations get more involved in Internet governance there is a risk that civil society may be “pushed out of the tent.”

In the debate that followed the interventions, points made included:

- The Representative of Brazil said his country fully embraces the multistakeholder model, and does not see a contradiction between increased government involvement and the multistakeholder model.
- Brazil sees the multistakeholder model and IGF which is maybe the best expression of the multistakeholder model at the international arena is a very important place that serves as a meeting point for ideas, for contacts among different stakeholders and for cross-fertilization of ideas and efforts.
- The Representative of the United States referred to comments made by the U.S. President that intelligence gathering operations are to be consistent with the country’s values and they will be reporting to the world as that process moves forward.
- The Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) agreed to having the whole morning session of the IGF on 25 October devoted to the issue of Internet surveillance in response to the strong interest in the subject.
- If what is illegal offline is also illegal online, then what happens when countries have different customs and different laws? The Representative of the UK said in response that the debate on internet governance is a book that is being continuously written, but that the authors should include everyone, and that governments “should not seek to put in place a framework to control the Internet.”
- The Representative of the United Kingdom said that the IGF needs to raise its presence, and that promoting the IGF’s activities around the world “is something the U.K. Government wants to participate in”, adding that this year’s IGF is the best ever.

Following the morning debate on the forum’s main topic of “Building Bridges - Enhancing Multistakeholder Cooperation for Growth and Sustainable Development” high-level representatives of participating governments, international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector were given an opportunity to address the participants. In their remarks, a consistent message of support for the multistakeholder model was espoused. Representative of the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) also urged the participants to support accessible internet

initiatives to make sure that truly everyone can be involved in the discussion on the future of the internet.

Workshops overview:

Day 1 of the forum saw 20 different workshops run concurrently throughout the day. These included:

Emerging Cybersecurity Threats - focused on emerging cybersecurity threats, including mobile and cloud security, and the implications on Internet governance. The discussion encompassed a discussion of the threats, while also discussed proactive strategies and solutions for addressing emerging cybersecurity threats.

Protection of Children Online - discussed effective ways to protect children from online threats, including sexual harassment and sites of violent nature with the focus on needs and specificities of developing countries.

Power of Internet for Disaster management and Environmental monitoring - provided an overview on the use of Internet based services and ICTs for climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and disaster management; policy, legal and regulatory frameworks; international cooperation for disaster management in countries. In addition, the workshop addressed how the use of “Big Data” will add new and potential capability for disaster management.

Internet Governance and Open Government Data Initiatives - as consumers and citizens are increasingly conducting more of their personal and business lives from mobile internet enabled devices, personal data about these activities is often shared in real-time between different parties across the globe. The workshop looked at how mobile data can be used to provide social and economic good while balancing privacy and strengthening consumer confidence and trust. It also looked at the role of regulatory frameworks in creating social and economic opportunities while helping mobile users understand and control how their personal information is managed.

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