



February 14, 2013

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

United Nations
Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)
Dependance La Pelouse
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

re: Google's Thoughts on IGF Reform in 2013

Dear Sir:

In many ways, the Internet has reached a constitutional moment. As we saw last year, there are many pressures afoot to bring more control and regulation over the Internet, even before the Internet reaches its next 2 billion users. For this reason, the stakeholders in the Internet need to be more focused on defining their future. The Internet Governance Forum is at the center of the opportunity for stakeholders to define the Internet's constitution---and its future. Indeed, the IGF is the only truly general multistakeholder forum that convenes stakeholders from around the globe to discuss the future of the Internet.

We propose three key initiatives to help secure the IGF's leadership in the future. We look forward to addressing topics on theme and format at the next MAG in Paris, and to continued participation with our colleagues to improve the IGF. Although themes, format and structure of the next IGF are important, there are many more fundamental issues that need to be addressed. In this spirit, we write to offer our observations on the top three areas of focus:

1. Address the IGF's Funding Issues

In 2012, the IGF raised a little over \$900,000 from the private sector, NGOs and governments. Although we don't have access to the IGF's overall budgetary needs, we know that the funding requirements are far greater than the donations received. Lack of funding led to the surprise cancellation of the search for an Executive Secretary in 2012 and prevents the IGF from engaging in other activities, such as improving its website and providing better participation programs for the developing world, among other things. Because of the IGF's place within the United Nations infrastructure, its budget and financing should be transparent and clear so that the stakeholders can help to contribute. We believe there is willingness in the private sector to provide support and explore other solutions, but success will require the active and willing participation of the United Nations in many respects.

Our recommendations for the benefit of all stakeholders:

- We respectfully request that the United Nations openly and transparently publish the prior IGF expenditures, the future budget, together with financial contributions from stakeholders.
- In order to facilitate contributions by governments, we respectfully request that the United Nations publish clear guidelines on a website to provide information to potential government funders on how they can financially support the IGF.
- For the benefit of private sector and other organizations, we respectfully request that the United Nations assign appropriate resources to work out contracts for private-sector funding and to collaborate with ICC BASIS and other interested parties on mechanisms to facilitate funding from the private sector;

- For everyone, we request that the United Nations set up a mechanism for contribution, without requiring a contract with the United Nations.

2. Include Recommendations for Next Steps with Key Workshops

Many stakeholders don't want the IGF to become a decision-making body, and a wholesale change of mission of the IGF would not be within the mandate set forth at WSIS. However, the IGF need not remain static. One way to help improve it would be to leverage the IGF to identify which forums can be used to resolve various issues raised at the IGF. We would propose that certain workshops be designated for making non-binding suggestions where certain issues might be resolved and decided. In a sense, this would be a form of "intellectual tech transfer" for Internet governance issues.

For example:

- Security issues of a technical nature might be recommended for action at the IETF or even organizations like FIRST or the IEEE. In preparing for workshops, the wisdom of the panelists and participants could be leveraged to record recommendations of the participants for the forum.

3. Invest in Information Infrastructure

The main vehicle for communication with IGF participants is through its website, and it's amazing how much the website has accomplished from the in-house IGF team. However, the IGF's website is not well suited today as a repository for information for the proceedings from previous IGFs, nor is the website well suited as a multimedia platform. While the redesign of a website is often viewed as a tactic in most organizations, at the IGF, this is much more mission critical and worthy of attention in 2013 as a priority. We urge consideration of the following:

- Appoint a multistakeholder group that will lead reform efforts to launch a new website no later than June 2013.
- Drive funding for the new website as part of the financial matters discussed in §1, above. However the budget should be clearly identified so that interested parties may either donate money or in-kind services for this specific project.
- The emergence of many "regional" IGFs is also a very positive thing where many policy issues are discussed before the IGF itself. The information infrastructure project should take these regional IGFs into account, and if possible, provide a centralized opportunity for the exchange of information and a repository of any reports, videos, or other documented outcomes. This doesn't mean that the regional IGFs need to follow the same themes as the IGF, but we should be able to use the Internet and the IGF's website to create better opportunities for sharing information with the IGF's global audience.
- The information infrastructure project should also carefully evaluate how to use technology to be more inclusive (through remote participation) of stakeholders in other parts of the developing world.

We look forward to discussing these issues further in Paris and throughout the course of 2013.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Patrick

Patrick S. Ryan
Public Policy & Gov't Relations Counsel,
Free Expression & Int'l Relations

/s/ Vint

Vinton G. Cerf
Vice President and
Chief Internet Evangelist