

IGF Outcome

The Initiative of the Government of Portugal and the TaC-Together against Cybercrime International

**Under the High Patronage of Mr Henri MALOSSE¹,
President of the European Economic and Social Committee**

European Observatory on Vulnerable People² in the Information Society

**Empowering vulnerable people through ICT for better human development,
economic sustainability and greater participation in decision-making processes.**

To be launched in November 2014



SOURCE PHOTO
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ICT products and services should be accessible to all.

¹ <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=president.en.home>

² As defined by the Tunis Agenda and Geneva Declaration of Principles. Information at:
<http://www.itu.int/wsis/index.html>

Global overview

Aspects of the Information Society are present in all spheres of our life and have become an integral part of our daily activities at work, home or when socializing with other people.

The Internet and ICTs are a catalyst for change; they are also a perfect tool that can permit vulnerable people to fully discover the opportunities offered by the Information Society and fully enjoy their human rights as EU citizens.

ICTs can provide an essential, enabling environment for the empowerment of all, especially people living in vulnerable circumstances.

Today, more than one-fifth of the world's population may be vulnerable to the digital divide³. The United Nations post-2015 agenda⁴ incorporated ICTs as a critical success factor for the inclusion of vulnerable people.

Greater participation in the Information Society can help vulnerable people to cope with a number of existing difficulties (literacy; the digital divide; access to the Internet, to information, to better education, multilingualism, active entrepreneurship, etc.) and dangers/risks (different types of exploitation, online risks and Internet safety), information on their rights and responsibilities, access to the information on legal and administrative aspects, in order to be an integrated part of public life.

The question of providing inclusive Internet access and of the participation of vulnerable or disadvantaged people in the global Information Society is becoming more and more important in the light of recent events worldwide and different political changes.

The need for the European Observatory on Vulnerable People in the Information Society.

Everyday progress in the field of ICTs is creating positive opportunities to bring public and private sector services closer to citizens and enable them to have more of a say in the way they interact with governments, businesses and decision makers. As a result, citizens are increasingly relying on the ICT sector to help them cope in the interconnected world.

Just as a clean environment alone cannot address sustainability, the availability of computers or the Internet does not in itself determine who can access and use ICTs and e-government services effectively. Digital skills and an awareness, willingness and capacity to engage with ICTs and e-services⁵ are of key importance.

³ As reported by the Global Initiative for inclusive ICTs, more information at: <http://g3ict.com>

⁴ More information at: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/mdg.shtml>

⁵ <http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb>

In 2014 significant numbers of citizens are still short of both access to technology and the skills needed to gain access to the information delivered by the mechanisms of the Information Society.

« ... the mark of a just society is one which includes and takes care of its most vulnerable citizens. The same has to be true with the Internet; we all will be judged by how inclusive access to, and use of, the Internet is. I recognize there is much work to be done by all of us. (...) » - underlined Mr Fadi Chehadé, President and CEO of ICANN, during the IGF⁶ 2013 in Bali.

To allow the inclusive development of our societies, it is crucial to allow the participation of all in the building process of the Information Society, and first of all by making the Internet accessible to all.

In its final resolution, the 52nd session (2014) of the UN Economic and Social Council reaffirmed that “Empowerment and participation are important for social development and that sustainable development requires the meaningful involvement and active participation of all, including children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged and vulnerable persons and groups”⁷.

Promoting inclusion – with due regard to the needs of vulnerable populations – can be instrumental in mitigating the effects of exclusion and improving people’s livelihoods. The opportunities offered by the Information Society, in this sense, are instrumental in promoting a sustainable development that is for the people.

The participation of vulnerable people in the Information Society is one of the growing Internet policy issues⁸ that requires dialogue and the common vision at the EU level.

To effectively increase the participation of vulnerable people in the building process of the Information Society and to make their voice heard by stakeholders and policy-makers at different levels, there is a need for a facilitation hub, which will facilitate the process, observe best practices and analyse the current trends.

The above-mentioned hub – the **European Observatory on Vulnerable People in the Information Society** - will facilitate the integration of the most fragile groups of European citizens into the decision-making processes in the Information Society and policies related to the Internet and ICT’s that will stimulate their participation in the sustainable human and economic development of the EU countries⁹.

⁶ <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/>

⁷ For more details, visit:

<http://undesadspd.org/CommissionforSocialDevelopment/Sessions/2014.aspx>

⁸ According to a number of European stakeholders and the global initiatives of the main private and public sector actors, such as Google with *Google Ideas*, Facebook with *Connect the Unconnected* or a number of EESC (European Economic and Social Committee) activities.

⁹ This will participate in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The present European Initiative will reaffirm the European Union as a leader in the field of Information Society innovative initiatives and social inclusion, and put citizens at the heart of EU policies.

Annexe 1.

Multistakeholder Working Group Vulnerable people & ICTs **TaC International IGF 2013 Open Forum**

Report

Notice: TaC International¹⁰, together with IFLA¹¹, would like to thank Mr Fadi Chehadé, President and CEO of ICANN, Mr Henri Malosse, President of EESC, Mr Nigel Hickson, VP of ICANN, Stakeholder Engagement for Europe, The Government of Portugal, Ministry of Education and Science, represented by Ms Ana Neves and all members¹² of the *Multistakeholder Working Group Vulnerable people & ICTs* for their support of Initiative to better include vulnerable people in the Information Society.

A successful discussion took place during the Open Forum of the *Multistakeholder Working Group Vulnerable people & ICTs* organized by TaC International and supported by IFLA during the IGF 2013 in Bali.

The Forum focused on the presentation of different areas to be included in future guidelines on better inclusion of vulnerable people in the Information Society that have been identified by the group during its first year of engagement.

The discussion was opened with an introductory message from Mr Fadi Chehadé, President and CEO of ICANN and Mr Henri Malosse, President of the European Economic and Social Committee.

After a brief presentation of the objectives and purpose of the Working Group - which is the direct outcome of IGF dialogue - an interactive dialogue with the audience and exchange of

¹⁰ www.vulnerables.eu

¹¹ www.ifla.org

¹² Mr Pavan DUGGAL, Mr Khaled FATTAL, Mr Adrian HALL, Ms Danielle de GROOT MSC, Mr Stuart HAMILTON, Mr Zahid U. JAMIL, Mr Danil KERIMI, Mr Wolf LUDWIG, Ms Yuliya MORENETS, Ms Ana Cristina Amoroso das NEVES, Mr Andrew RUGEGE, Ms Madi SHARMA, Ms Barbara-Chiara UBALDI, Mr Moctar O.A. YEDALY.

best practices and discussing needs at national and regional levels took place. In addition to the identified areas¹³, it was recommended to pay attention to the following points:

- Role of mass media and namely radio and television, especially at the local level
- Perception of the digital world that target group might have
- Development of local content
- Availability of open source software
- Domain names in different languages affordable for the communities.

The presented action plan¹⁴ proposed by the Working Group won general approval.

It was underlined that there is a need to urge IGF communities to pay particular attention to the subject of ICT and social aspects of society, which are missing from IGF discussions.

The importance of the role of ISPs and industry in the process of better inclusion of vulnerable people in the Information Society was also underlined.

At the end of the Forum participants agreed to call on **governments to consider guidelines on better inclusion of vulnerable groups in the Information Society.**

¹³ Access, including public access to ICTs, access to information, access to ICT services; Role of Mobile devices; Multilingualism, including the development of local content; Safe and responsible use, including privacy; e-government solutions and open data; Social and economic integration/ Participation in the public life; Public - private cooperation.

¹⁴ For more details see the transcripts of the Open Forum at: <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/igf-2013-transcripts>

Annexe 2.

December 16, 2013.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Multistakeholder Group on Vulnerable people & ICTs*¹⁵

TaC/IFLA Open Forum calls on governments to consider guidelines on better inclusion of vulnerable groups in the Information Society

At a time of major changes in the Internet landscape when governments, civil society and the private sector are coming together to connect the most vulnerable people¹⁶, worldwide communities have an important role to play.

TaC - Together Against Cybercrime International and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) organised an Open Forum¹⁷ of the *Multistakeholder Group on Vulnerable people & ICTs* at the 2013 IGF in Bali. The Forum, which is the direct outcome of previous IGF dialogue, discussed a set of areas that could be included in guidelines for a global strategy on the better inclusion of vulnerable groups in the Information society.

Mr Fadi Chehadé, President and CEO of ICANN in his opening message to the Forum underlined that « (...) the mark of a just society is one which includes and takes care of its most vulnerable citizens. The same has to be true with the Internet; we all will be judged by how inclusive access to, and use of, the Internet is. I recognize there is much work to do by all of us. (...) ».

A message from Mr Henri Malosse, President of EESC¹⁸, the voice of the civil society in Europe supported the Open Forum discussion. Mr Malosse reminded participants that access to education could be better achieved with the help of ICTs - « (...), and through ICT we can arrive in every place of the world... we could bring education, and education is the future. (...) - said Mr Malosse». The President of the EESC also underlined the fragility of vulnerable people with regard to online abuse.

¹⁵ More information at: www.vulnerables.eu

¹⁶ As defined by the Tunis Agenda and Geneva Declaration of Principles.

¹⁷ More information at: <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/open-forums/list-of-open-fora>

¹⁸ European Economic and Social Committee, www.eesc.europa.eu

Mr Nigel Hickson, Vice-President, Stakeholder Engagement for Europe at ICANN noted that « (...) We are not going to attract marginalised groups to the Internet unless it is a single, open and secure Internet. That is something at the heart of the ICANN mission. »

Mr Stuart Hamilton, Director of Policy and Advocacy at the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) said: « (...) we must not forget about the importance of public access to ICTs in the community – vulnerable and marginalised people need safe spaces like libraries where they can access computers and training. »

The *Multistakeholder Working Group on Vulnerable people & ICTs* will therefore continue its work on a set of guidelines for a global strategy on the better inclusion of vulnerable groups in the Information Society and engage with governments to provide input and support for its work.