Session outline & background

The 2014 National/Regional IGF Initiatives session at IGF Istanbul 2014 was a focused interactive session with the coordinators and participants from the National and Regional IGF Initiatives, as well as others interested or engaged in the Initiatives. There were two segments to the discussion. The first focused on identifying where there are commonalities and differences in the issues being discussed in the National and Regional Initiatives and at the IGF. The second segment examined ideas and perspectives for how Initiatives collaborate and influence the IGF. The aim of the second segment was to try and agree a set of recommendations for how the National and Regional IGF Initiatives can draw from and contribute into the IGF going forward.

National and Regional IGF Initiatives continue to grow in numbers and to diversity in their focus and contribution to Internet governance. Initially launched in just a few countries and primarily focused on preparation to participate in the IGF, the National and Regional IGF Initiatives are now a predictable and stable inter-sessional contributory platform. In 2014, listed on the intgovforum.org list of Initiatives there are: 11 IGF Initiatives self identified as Regional IGF Initiatives; 20 identified as National IGF Initiatives; and four ‘other’ Initiatives, all of whom were focused on youth. These Initiatives have a proven track record of reoccurring sessions annually, and provide linkages to their communities from what is happening in the IGF consultation and planning process.

The Inter- National/Regional IGF session builds on what has now become a key track during the IGF, and this report fed into the Emerging Issues/Taking Stock session.

Panel

- Welcoming Remarks: Janis Karklins, Chair of MAG
- Comments from IGF Secretariat: Chengetai Masango
- Co Organizers: Marilyn Cade and Ricardo Pedraza Barrios
- Moderators: Ellen Strickland, Christine Arida
  - Rapporteurs: Laura Hutchison UK IGF, Sandra Hoferichter EuroDIG
  - Remote Moderator: Yannis Li, APriGF

Feeder workshops

- WS 139 Best practices Forum on developing meaningful multi-stakeholder participation mechanisms.
- WS140: The future of the Global and Regional IGFs post 2015
Report

Segment 1: Scope: Regional / National IGF initiative exchange on Key Issues and Messages: Key messages; Themes or issues that emerged from individual 2014 events. Impact of external events or occurrences, such as WSIS +10, ICANN IANA Transition, NETmundial, etc.

This segment of discussion opened with a strong emphasis on how the political and social culture in a country or region affects the type and nature of discussions at a National/ Regional IGF. It was also noted that National/Regional IGFs have an important role to play in showcasing the multistakeholder model and even being an example of democracy in some cases. They also have a role in education and raising awareness by highlighting key issues such as the economic importance of the internet.

Topics under discussion in Regional and National IGFs

- Government surveillance - civil liberties, privacy, human rights
- Using the Internet to drive social & economic change
- Child protection
- Public access/ capacity building/ digital divide
- Digital literacy
- Net neutrality
- Data access by ISPs/ data protection
- Spam legislation
- Openness – rights, responsibility, local content and multilingualism
- Network filtering
- IPV6
- Youth IGF – several speakers mentioned some form of youth participation, whether stand-alone or integrated into the National/Regional IGF.

External events and changes also featured highly in many National/ Regional IGF discussions:

- New gTLDs
- Internet Governance landscape eg: WSIS +10, Netmundial, ITU plenipot, IANA transition & ICANN accountability as well as ideas for a framework for National/ Regional internet governance.

Segment 2: Scope: What are the key messages to the IGF 2014 Taking Stock Session? Ideas to further strengthen interactive exchanges between National and Regional Initiatives and IGF on messages, issues and key challenges? E.g. how should National and Regional IGF Initiatives contribute to the consultation for IGF 2015?

- One size does not fit all for National/ Regional IGFs. The organic and flexible nature should be maintained with the initiatives focusing on grass roots issues and self determining their structure. However, the guiding principle of any initiative has to be multistakeholder participation & dialogue.
- There is a lack of knowledge and understanding in all countries on Internet governance issues and the need to participate and engage: there was a suggestion that there should be an awareness campaign to tackle this.
- Challenge for civil society to be informed about initiatives and follow up the various processes due to resource, budget and time constraints – more support needed.
- Lack of Funding *mechanisms* for participation, in particular for business from developing countries.
- Lack of available and understandable material in the various languages.
• Need for leaders / partners in the various stakeholder groups to get the community engaged.
• Better participation of National/ Regional initiatives in the IGF is needed.
• Suggestion that there should be a place to collect the outcomes of each National/ Regional IGF. This should include a one-page summary document which highlights the issues discussed and outcomes. This could then be used as a resource by the MAG as well as IGF participants.
• Champion the National/Regional initiatives within the global IGF.
• Encourage MAG members to participate in the National & Regional IGFs: the role of the MAG members should be to liaise between the National/ Regional initiatives and the IGF – two way communication.
• The group also discussed extensively how National/ Regional IGFs could feed into, or be represented in some way in the MAG discussions. It was felt that this was necessary in order to ensure a reliable mechanism for bottom up communication so that grass-roots discussions held at the National/ Regional level were feeding into the IGF.