

INTER REGIONAL DIALOGUE SESSION
- Report of the session held at the 2015 IGF -

Submitted by Marilyn Cade

11 November 2015, Workshop Room 8, 09:00-12:30

Estimated number of participants: 65-70

Name of the Moderator/Coordinator of the Substantive Session: Marilyn Cade

Rapporteur: Sorina Teleanu, South Eastern European Dialogue (SEEDIG)

Co Moderators: Mark Buell, *Canadian Internet Registration Authority Senior Communications Advisor Ottawa, Ontario* and Ellen Strickland, *Collaboration and Community Lead at InternetNZ*

- Report Summary -

The Moderator welcomed all to the *Substantive Session of the National and Regional IGF Initiatives*. She provided a brief overview of the global IGF process, starting from the Tunis Agenda, explaining the reasons and purpose of forming the IGF Secretariat, all based on the relevant paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda. She outlined the importance of the engagement at the national and regional level, which led to the emergence of the national and regional IGF initiatives building from the very first IGF held in Greece.

In the introductory remarks it was also noted that there is a need for maximizing the coordination between the global IGF and the national and regional IGF initiatives, both at the coordinator level as well as on the thematic level. The Moderator proposed a commitment to a reflection from the national IGFs into the IGF, and from the IGF into the national and regional IGF Initiatives. She also highlighted the need to build more visibility and better understanding of the organization, structure and management challenges of the national and regional IGF initiatives. She also noted that the work done by the National IGF Initiatives in contributing into the Intercessional work on Connecting the Next Billion, and on undertaking sessions on WSIS+10 were clear indications of the already present linkage and engagement and synergistic relationship. She also applauded the continued growth of the number of initiatives, while noting that this session would also seek to identify further modalities and activities that can support the engagement and reflection of views from the National and Regional Initiatives into the IGF, and from the IGF into the Initiatives. She also called on the group of Coordinators in attendance to contribute, with their colleagues from other Initiatives to create a set of recommendations for the IGF Secretariat and the MAG that will support the strengthened functioning of the national and regional IGFs, while at the same time creating the conditions for the overall number of Initiatives to grow. She also highlighted the work of the survey group, noting that these are the main reasons why a group of volunteers, supported by the IGF Secretariat and led by Marilyn Cade, has gathered and did a survey for national and regional initiatives which will be presented later in the session, and is available on the website in more detail.

The Moderator presented the agenda for the session. The written copies of the agenda were distributed to all participants.

The proposed agenda was adopted as following:

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- Introduction to the session topics by Moderator: Reflecting views into the IGF processes and reflecting from the IGF into the National and Regional Initiatives processes
- Introducing the panel speakers
- Introducing the coordinators and members of the national and regional initiatives
- Opening remarks by Am. Janis Karklins, the MAG Chair
- Opening remarks by Chengetai Masango, the Programme and Technology Manager at United Nation's Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum
- Reflecting views into the IGF processes and reflecting from the IGF into the National and Regional Initiatives
- Regional Initiatives processes. Growing the number of initiatives.

II Review of the WSIS+10 process

III Review of the 'Connecting the Next Billion' theme

IV Presentation of the Survey Results: Led by Team Leaders for presentation of Survey Results and Secretariat

V Final Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Remarks from Key Speakers:

Am. Janis Karklins, MAG Chair

In his opening remarks, Mr. Karklins emphasized the importance of national and regional IGF initiatives. He invited all representatives of existing and potential future initiatives to use the opportunity of being all in one place and to present their experiences regarding their internal work, but also regarding the external work they have with all the relevant stakeholders, including the global IGF relevant parties. He stressed out the importance of feedback from IGF initiatives, since it directly influences the creation of the annual agenda of the MAG. On the points raised from the participants' side that there should be more engagement between regional and national initiatives, the Chair agreed and gave a full support to that idea.

Chengetai Masango, UN's Secretariat of the IGF

Mr. Masango opened his remarks by saying that a good governance begins at home, illustrating on that way how the national and regional (N/R) initiatives are one of the most important outcomes of the entire IGF process. He explained the opportunities that the IGF Secretariat has available for N/R, by assisting in providing advice and trainings on demand, offering access to a remote participation platform for the annual meetings of the IGF initiatives, providing a fellowship programme and ensuring a continuous communication between the IGF Secretariat and the initiatives. The need for re-activating the regular, frequent meetings for all initiatives, in 2016, was mentioned and it was suggested that this could be a subject for this session's

discussion. In answering to participants' questions, Mr. Masango stated that it is necessary to continue capacity building efforts for the purpose of enabling people to be more proactively engaged in the Internet governance discourse.

Review of the WSIS+10 Contributions of National and Regional Initiatives

The second section of the meeting was dedicated to the WSIS+10 consultations. Marilyn Cade made a brief overview of the WSIS+10 process and stressed the importance of introducing such a global and important topic into the local communities. The representatives of the Initiatives were asked to indicate if they had introduced this into their Initiatives. Several participants noted their consultations on this topic, and raised the issue of the necessity to have more mutual dialogue on this. The majority expressed their opinion that this is a very important topic and that they did include it in their official agendas. However, some of them identified concerns about the lack of communication with higher decision making bodies on the IG field.

Connecting the Next Billion

The third section was dedicated to the IGF 2015 track of inter-sessional work, called *Policy options for Connecting the Next Billion (CNB)*. While the survey undertaken had asked for key priorities this topic in a variety of statements emerged as a priority, and in fact, many of the national and regional initiatives made substantive contributions into the inter-sessional work. The Moderator opened the floor for a discussion, after explaining the background of this project, why it was initiated and by whom. Participants who submitted their contributions were called to comment on their findings. The initiatives that were present, but did not submit a contribution for the CNB, used this opportunity to highlight some issues related to connectivity in their communities. Issues like meaningful access, local content, awareness raising and costs were among the main topics of discussion.

Challenges to Initiatives: drawn from the Survey and Discussion among Coordinators:

The sub-section related to the biggest challenges that the initiatives are facing was chaired by Ellen Strickland.

The participants shared some examples of good practices and identified the biggest obstacles. The question of definitions was raised and it was concluded that defining access versus defining meaningful access is always a hot topic since the idea of meaningful access has a very different connotation. Challenges include broadening participation, diversity from all stakeholder groups, reliable funding. Some suggestions about sharing of best practices to meet requirements, such as sharing of registration formats, templates, etc. were identified for further discussion.

Survey of the 2015 National and Regional IGF Initiatives

Chaired by a team leader, Mark Buell, with shared presentation by co team leaders Sorina Teleanu and Anja Gengo. The mentioned team worked on collecting and developing substantive analysis of the collected data from August, 2015 until early November, 2015.

This *fourth* section was dedicated to presenting the results of the survey. The main purpose of the survey questions was to identify the key challenges that the N/R initiatives are facing and to develop a set of recommendations and policy plan actions in order to increase the quantity and quality of the officially recognized IGF initiatives. The initiatives were once again acquainted to the criteria and requirements they need to satisfy in order to be recognized and listed at the IGF

webpage. The results from the survey are available [here](#) and by the end of this year, the full written analysis will be finalized and distributed to all initiatives.

During the presentation itself, it was emphasized that 24 initiatives of the existing number of initiatives responded, while 30% of the all regional initiatives responded and 70% of the all national initiatives responded. It was noted that 2 prospective initiatives participated, and while not included in the formal survey, were included in the discussion for informational purposes

The format used was challenging to some of the Initiatives and the Secretariat was very supportive of improving the mechanism to simplify the ability to participate in future surveys.

Some gaps were identified through the survey, e.g. that not all ask for gender or stakeholder breakdown in the registration process, thus creating a challenge in their final report. One small recommendation from the group was to standardize registration categories, to follow the IGF itself, which will result in standard reporting on stakeholder and on gender

Outcomes, recommendations and possible next steps

During the meeting itself, a set of several recommendations was made for the initiatives and for the IGF Secretariat:

- to enhance the coordination between national and regional initiatives
- to enhance the coordination between global IGF, MAG members and national and regional initiatives
- to stimulate interests of the N/R coordinators for introducing topics from the global IGF into their initiatives
- to develop sets of action lines that initiatives could implement with the aim of promoting Internet governance in their communities
- to increase the cooperation between all initiatives and various stakeholders for the purpose of building or strengthening the multistakeholder process
- to re-activate the regular meetings of N/R initiatives coordinators (on the margins of MAG meetings and IGF Open Consultations, and at the IGF meetings themselves) and to resume the conference call engagement of the Initiatives
- Another proposal briefly mentioned by the participants but not fully discussed, was to seek funding for at least one person per initiative from developing countries, to attend the IGF to ensure the linkage