

Submission of Yahoo Japan Corporation to the
Retreat on Advancing the 10-Year Mandate
of the Internet Governance Forum
[July 1, 2016]

Introduction

Yahoo Japan Corporation (hereinafter “Yahoo! JAPAN”) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the call for written inputs by the Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum (hereinafter “IGF”) for the IGF Retreat 2016 to be held in New York, from July 14 to 16.

As the most popular portal site in Japan with a devoted user base numbering in the tens of millions, Yahoo! JAPAN occupies a long-established position of undisputed leadership in the Japanese Internet market. Taking such leadership position into account, Yahoo! JAPAN has continuously contributed to rulemaking on a wide range of Internet-related issues in Japan and has made tangible achievements in establishing fair and equitable rules to enhance the possibility of the Internet. Yahoo! JAPAN always values the interests of all users and strongly believes that the Internet has unlimited possibility to solve social issues.

As a leader of the Internet industry in Japan, Yahoo! JAPAN recognizes the importance of Internet governance and has actively participated in various discussions worldwide. For instance, Yahoo! JAPAN participated in the UNGA high-level meeting on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) last year¹, and also served as a panelist for a workshop titled “WSIS+10 and Beyond: Where do we Stand in Africa? What are the Main Challenging Issues and Proposals for Implementation?” in WSIS Forum 2016 held in this May². In addition, Yahoo! JAPAN is supposed to hold a workshop titled “Asia-Pacific Region’s Best Practice in a New Internet Era: Safe and Secure Cyberspace for Youth” in Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF) in this July³. Yahoo! JAPAN’s active engagement in the Internet governance can also be proven by its suggestions submitted to the IGF Secretariat in this February

¹ United Nations, General Assembly, *Outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society*, A/70/125, <http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN96078.pdf>.

² International Telecommunication Union, *WSIS Forum 2016 Outcome Document*, p.203, <https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2016/Content/documents/outcomes/WSISForum2016%E2%80%9494ForumTrack-Outcomes.pdf>.

³ Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF), Workshops, No.58 Asia-Pacific Region’s Best Practice in a New Internet Era: Safe and Secure Cyberspace for Youth, <https://apps.2016.rigf.asia/submission/proposaldetail?id=61>.

as one of the "Contributions taking stock of IGF 2015 and looking ahead to IGF 2016"⁴.

While Yahoo! JAPAN welcomes the adoption of the outcome document and the additional 10-year extension of the existing mandates of the IGF, it strongly believes that the IGF should effectively embody its mandates stipulated in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda⁵. In this regard, Yahoo! JAPAN also welcomes UN Secretariat's proposal to hold the working retreat and hopes that it will pave the way for the further improvement of the IGF⁶. In order to assist all participants in achieving the improvement, Yahoo! JAPAN hereby answers to the guiding questions as follows.

1) What are some ways to:

a) Improve the overall preparatory process of the IGF?

First, Yahoo! JAPAN requests the IGF Secretariat to provide more time for the submission of workshop proposals. The deadline for submitting the workshop proposals this year was Monday, June 6, at 23:59 (UTC-11)⁷, which was 6 months before the actual dates of IGF (December 6 to 9). It was extremely difficult for us to list up possible speakers in our workshop proposal since most of our possible speakers had difficulty in fixing their schedules 6 months ahead. In addition, the above deadline was 1 month after the WSIS Forum 2016 (May 2 to 6)⁸. Taking into account the fact that many multistakeholders including Yahoo! JAPAN participated in the Forum, Yahoo! JAPAN presumes that it was not the only one who found it difficult to prepare a workshop proposal for the IGF within 1 month after the WSIS Forum. Moreover, in the fast-evolving Internet industry, multistakeholders could not incorporate the most updated information in their proposals if a deadline were 6 months in advance. For all of these reasons, Yahoo! JAPAN requests that the submission period of workshop proposals should be longer so that you can receive well-prepared workshop proposals from all multistakeholders.

Second, Yahoo! JAPAN requests the IGF Secretariat to endeavor to keep all multistakeholders informed about the rule that any individual or organization can propose workshops for the IGF event, except for members of the Multistakeholder

⁴ Yahoo Japan Corporation, *Yahoo! JAPAN's Suggestions for the 11th Internet Governance Forum* [February 15, 2016],

<http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/documents/igf-meeting/igf-2016/takingstock/679-contribution-from-yahoo-japan>.

⁵ World Summit on the Information Society, Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6 (Rev. 1)-E, <http://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html>.

⁶ Internet Governance Forum, Retreat on Advancing the 10-Year Mandate of the Internet Governance Forum, <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/igf-retreat>.

⁷ Internet Governance Forum, IGF 2016 Call for Workshop Proposals, <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/igf16-workshops>.

⁸ International Telecommunication Union, *supra note 2*.

Advisory Group (MAG), who evaluate these proposals⁹. In addition, Yahoo! JAPAN proposes a new “screening” rule that no member of the MAG shall evaluate a workshop proposal in which such MAG member is listed as a speaker or panelist. Yahoo! JAPAN strongly believes that this new rule will ensure fairness and impartiality of the overall preparatory process of the IGF and will improve the transparency of the workshop selection process.

b) Improve the nomination process and make-up of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) and the appointment process for the IGF-MAG Chair?

Yahoo! JAPAN recalls the nomination process of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) and the appointment process for the IGF-MAG Chair this year. Although Yahoo! JAPAN respects the results of both processes and UN Secretary-General’s consideration on the basis of Selection and Operation Principles¹⁰, Yahoo! JAPAN is concerned about the relevant news article published by the Register¹¹. The article criticizes both processes as a “black box”, by citing acting and former MAG members’ comments. Although Yahoo! JAPAN is fully aware that the article should not be accepted without questioning¹², the transparency of procedures is often required. In order to increase the transparency of the selection processes, Yahoo! JAPAN proposes the following elements:

(1) to adopt a selection process paper in which detailed schedules are provided while setting a deadline to accept public comments about the selection process paper from multistakeholders;

(2) to announce the establishment of a Selection Committee and its procedures;

(3) to set a deadline for the nominations of candidates;

(4) to publicly list up nominated candidates with whom the Selection Committee conducts interviews after the initial screening;

⁹ Internet Governance Forum, IGF Guidelines for Workshop Proposals, <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/igf16-workshops/igf16-wksp-glms>.

¹⁰ Internet Governance Forum, Announcement from Mr. Wu Hongbo, UN Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/magabout/mag-renewal-announcement>.

¹¹ The Register, *Critics hit out at ‘black box’ UN internet body: Who exactly decides who sits on the Internet Governance Forum’s main body?*, http://www.theregister.co.uk/2016/03/31/black_box_un_internet_body/.

¹² According to International Chamber of Commerce’s Business Action to Support the Information Society (ICC/BASIS), the alleged ICC/BASIS views in the article contradict what ICC/BASIS said publicly or privately.

(5) to set an opportunity for multistakeholders to give their comments on the above listed candidates;

(6) to request the Selection Committee to make a final decision on this matter at the Open Consultations and face-to-face Meeting of the IGF/MAG.

c) Strengthen the IGF support structures?

Yahoo! JAPAN suggests the IGF Secretariat to further strengthen partnership with Internet Governance Forum Support Association (IGFSA). As you can see in its website, IGFSA is a channel for additional funding from individuals, companies and foundations to keep the IGF the go-to event for everyone who is interested in the Internet and its governance¹³. IGFSA also mentions in its brochure that it will contribute to the UN IGF Trust Fund and support activities such as Internet governance-related capacity building in developing countries, national and regional IGF initiatives, and fellowships for participation in IGF meetings at national, regional and global levels¹⁴. Although Yahoo! JAPAN is not a member of the IGFSA, such IGFSA's initiative is useful and effective for the improvement of the IGF from an objective point of view.

2) What measures can be taken to engage those stakeholders who are currently unengaged, with a view to expand and diversify physical and virtual participation?

Yahoo! JAPAN requests more opportunities for companies to hold sessions in the IGF. According to paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda, one of the IGF's mandates is to strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms¹⁵. In this regard, there were more than 130 sessions held and about 2,400 people registered in the last 10th IGF¹⁶. However, when it comes to the private sector, the participation rate of companies was relatively low and there was no Japanese company participating in the 10th IGF. Although Yahoo! JAPAN recognizes that it is quite difficult for the private sector to attend an international conference which is not directly and closely related to its own business, holding a session would give the private sector a legitimate reason to participate in such an

¹³ Internet Governance Forum Support Association, <http://www.igfsa.org/>.

¹⁴ Internet Governance Forum Support Association, *Brochure*, http://wp.internet-society.org/igfsa/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2014/08/igfsa-brochure-201411_FINAL-1.pdf.

¹⁵ World Summit on the Information Society, *supra note 5*.

¹⁶ Internet Governance Forum, *The 10th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Chair's Summary (10-13 November 2015, Joao Pessoa, Brazil)*, p.3, http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/10th%20IGF%20Chairs%20Summary_Finalv2.pdf.

international conference as the IGF. And as a result, Yahoo! JAPAN believes that the number and diversity of companies participating in the IGF will be improved and this will widen the representation of the IGF.

3) What are the ways we can better capture the outputs of the IGF and increase their visibility and impact?

Yahoo! JAPAN suggests the IGF Secretariat and the UN as such to share the outputs of the IGF with other international economic organizations such as Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Trade Organization (WTO), and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). According to the 10th IGF Chair's Summary, the output document and other related materials are likely to be forwarded to other related processes such as the UNGA 2nd Committee through the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Council and UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) through council meetings, and these organizations are likely to be encouraged to disseminate this information as widely as possible to make public officials aware of the work of IGF¹⁷. Yahoo! JAPAN welcomes the above circulation of the IGF output document especially because it recognizes the growing trend to cast a spotlight on the concept of digital economy as well as "trade and the Internet". Despite such trend, it is debatable whether trade negotiators have sufficient knowledge on Internet governance to discuss new rules on these fields. Therefore, sharing the outcome of the IGF with the above organizations will be one of the most effective ways to reflect the up-to-date discussion of the Internet governance in the economic field.

4) What modalities should be put in place to ensure sustained funding to support the IGF process and the IGF Secretariat?

Yahoo! JAPAN considers that an increased number of participants in the IGF would expand funding opportunities for the IGF and the IGF Secretariat. As mentioned, the participation rate of companies in the IGF is relatively low in comparison with other stakeholders. This is because the IGF is still low-profile and not attractive for the private sector. Hence, IGF's programs and structure should be improved so that more companies change their attitudes and get willing to participate in it. And in order for the IGF to be attractive, more opportunities to hold sessions should be given to the private sector. Again, it should be born in mind that companies often seek some legitimate reasons to participate in the IGF.

¹⁷ *Id.*, p.5.

5) How can the IGF better support the work of national and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs) and how can synergies between the IGF and NRIs and amongst NRIs be increased?

First and foremost, it is vital that IGF should take the works of national and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs) into full consideration. Internet governance issues differ by countries and regions since they all have different political, economic, and cultural backgrounds. Some countries may give priority to cybersecurity while other countries give emphasis to digital divide. Accordingly, the maturity of each Internet governance issue differs by countries and regions. Therefore, consolidating the work of the NRIs at the place of the global IGF is indispensable for holding the in-depth discussions of the global Internet governance. Vice versa, it is also important for the NRIs to follow the up-to-date trend of the global Internet governance so that they can improve their indigenous Internet governance.

Taking the APrIGF as an example, more than 300 multistakeholders from over 20 countries come together to make developments on Internet governance¹⁸. Yahoo! JAPAN is supposed to hold a workshop at this year's APrIGF in Taipei, and according to its website, the APrIGF is planning to make a synthesis document which aims to document items of common interest relevant to Internet governance in the Asia-Pacific region¹⁹. This APrIGF's initiative is remarkable and the result of the APrIGF should be well considered in the global IGF.

For all of these reasons, Yahoo! JAPAN strongly urges the IGF to receive outcome documents from as many NRIs as possible and have them reflected in its future direction. At the same time, the NRIs should make every effort to produce their detailed outputs by incorporating broad and diverse inputs from the participating multistakeholders.

Conclusion

The IGF is a precious arena to discuss future Internet policy issues among multistakeholders. In particular, such opportunity would be indispensable for developing countries who will become actively involved in the Internet society with developed countries in the near future. Hence, the role of the IGF is important and potentially tremendous, but this will depend on the active engagement by various multistakeholders, fair, impartial, and transparent procedures, and intimate synergies

¹⁸ Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF), About, <https://2016.aprifg.asia/about-aprifg/>.

¹⁹ Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF), Synthesis Document, <https://2016.aprifg.asia/synthesis/>.

between the IGF and NRIs.

As Yahoo! JAPAN has continuously advocated, a global and common environment in which anyone can take part is indeed the fundamental value of the Internet, and the Internet is the only means to vitalize cross-border expression and economic activities in an unprecedented scale and range. Therefore, Yahoo! JAPAN is committed to ensure fair, equitable and unfragmented Internet environment as well as to play an active role in the development of the Internet economy.

In conclusion, Yahoo! JAPAN hopes that its proposals will be taken into full consideration at the IGF Retreat 2016 in New York, from July 14 to 16.