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The 10th Internet Governance Forum enhances the linkages between the Internet and sustainable development

João Pessoa, 13 November – From 10 to 13 November, the Poeta Ronaldo Cunha Lima Conference Center in João Pessoa, in the North-East of Brazil, became the Mecca center for vibrant discussions about internet governance in the context of sustainable development. Annually convened by the United Nations, the 2015 Internet Governance Forum (IGF) succeeded in giving some 4,000 online participants, from 116 developed and developing countries, the opportunity to engage directly with 2,400 on-site attendees in output-oriented debates that addressed the challenges, as well as opportunities for the future of the internet.

Consensus at the 10th IGF underscored the contribution of Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) and the Internet to the achievement of the recently adopted [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). Goal 9 of the agenda sets an ambitious target to “significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020.”

“In keeping with the IGF inclusiveness, this gathering in Joao Pessoa addressed both opportunities and challenges under the following sub-themes: Cybersecurity and Trust; Internet Economy; Inclusiveness and Diversity; Openness; Enhancing Multi-stakeholder Cooperation; Internet and Human Rights; Critical Internet Resources and Emerging Issues,” stated UN Assistant Secretary-General Lenni Montiel.

Over 150 thematic workshops at the 10th IGF focused on a diverse range of topics spanning from zero rating and network neutrality to freedom of expression online, cybersecurity and internet economy. Many workshops stressed the interrelation of human rights and fundamental freedom, both online and offline and how this related to the promotion of development. One pressing issue was the online risks that children face. Privacy issues were also part of the discussions: it was stressed that encryption and anonymity needed to be reinforced and agreements on the need for privacy, transparency and security issues had to complement and not compromise each other. The need for a secure internet to foster development was addressed with many participants calling for public-private partnerships.

The importance of multistakeholder participation was a recurrent theme throughout the week. Partnerships from all stakeholders including the private sector, government, and civil society

were seen as key to the success of an enabling and secure internet that promotes development. Youth participation was particularly strong: there was the development of an “IGF for Newbies” resource to help assimilate young people with the IGF and Internet governance issues.

The IGF once again made effective use of its bottom up and inclusive approach, gathering inputs from all stakeholders to identify obstacles, solutions and strategies to address pressing internet public policy issues. Insights from more than 40 national and regional IGF initiatives served as inputs into deliberations throughout the week.

The IGF in João Pessoa showed, said the Under-Secretary-General for the Environment, Energy, Science and Technology of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Ambassador José Antônio Marcondes de Carvalho, that the Forum could develop and produce “tangible contributions” and, thus, have more substantial impact on the evolution of the Internet, especially in terms of public policy. “This Forum gives an unambiguous message of the importance of the IGF and the legitimacy and relevance of its continuity,” he added.

An interactive plenary main session on the World Summit on Information Society +10 (WSIS) consultations allowed participants to express their views on the future of the Internet within the framework of the ten-year review of the WSIS. This review of the WSIS will provide the opportunity to assess the outcomes of WSIS while reviewing progress made as well as the challenges ahead in the context of the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ambassador Janis Mazeiks, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia and Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, co-facilitators of the upcoming WSIS+10 meeting, confirmed that a report on the consultations held at the IGF would act as an input into the high-level review of the UN General Assembly set to take place on 15-16 December.

It was recommended during the main session on Internet Economy and Sustainable Development that UN agencies such as UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) can feed IGF discussions into work towards synchronizing WSIS Action lines to individual Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This year’s ‘Policy Options for Connecting the Next Billion’ process produced a tangible and community driven, bottom-up IGF output. The compilation output document and the comprehensive collection of inputs and contributions to the process, available on the IGF website, will be forwarded to UN agencies that will be encouraged to disseminate this information as widely as possible to make public officials aware of the work.

Outputs from the 2015 Best Practice Forums (BPFs), available on the IGF website, were presented to the community in dedicated sessions and in a main session. The subjects addressed were: Regulation and Mitigation of Unwanted Communications; Establishing and Supporting Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs); Developing Meaningful Multistakeholder Participation Mechanisms; Practices to Counter Online Abuse and Gender-

Based Violence Against Women and Girls; Creating an Enabling Environment for IPv6 Adoption and Enabling Environments to Establish Successful IXPs.

Participants in the Dynamic Coalitions session provided preliminary feedback on the coalitions' output documents, both verbally from the floor and via idea ratings sheets. It was agreed that discussions on these documents would continue. There was agreement among the DCs that there would be merit in increasing collaboration among the coalitions to develop common procedures.

The Main Session on the NETmundial Statement and the Evolution of the Internet Governance Ecosystem will produce a document describing, with examples, the evolution of the Internet governance, at national, regional and international levels with regard to the principles for Internet governance that have been defined by the NETmundial Statement, the NETmundial roadmap, as well as areas for possible improvements.

The entire IGF 2015 was webcast and interactive online participation enriched sessions throughout the week, allowing many participants from the developing world to participate with those present in João Pessoa. Real-time transcription was also available to augment the overall participatory experience for delegates in the meeting rooms and following around the globe. Thousands of interested individuals followed the proceedings on Twitter, using hashtag #IGF2015.

The United Nations General Assembly agreed in December 2010 to extend the IGF's mandate for another five years. In December this year the General Assembly will assess the progress of the IGF within the overall WSIS review.

About the Internet Governance Forum

Each year, the United Nations convenes the IGF meeting, through the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to bring together various stakeholders to discuss current and emerging Internet governance issues, as well as related opportunities and challenges.

The IGF is an open, inclusive and transparent forum for dialogue on public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance. It is intended to foster a common understanding of how to maximize Internet opportunities and address the challenges that arise.

While the IGF does not have a decision-making mandate, the discussions held during IGF meetings can contribute to shaping international agenda and preparing the ground for negotiations and decision making in other internet governance entities.

The IGF also gives stakeholders from developing countries the opportunity to engage in debates on Internet governance, and contributes to capacity building and to enhancing their knowledge on matters related to the Internet, thus facilitating their participation in other Internet governance institutions and arrangements.

For more information, please visit: www.intgovforum.org

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