

IGF 2016

6 – 9 December 2016, Jalisco, Mexico

- Summary Report -

IGF 2016 Newcomers Track: Knowledge Cafés Sessions

6 - 9 December 2016, 13:30 – 14:15 p.m., Workshop Room 4

Objectives of the Knowledge Cafés Sessions

During the regular meeting days, there were a 45 minutes informal sessions open to all participants, but structured primarily for the first time coming participants. These sessions illustrated that each stakeholder group has its own role within the multistakeholder configuration, where the quality of the entire process depends on joint collaboration of everyone.

The aim is for the Participants to have close interaction with some of the experienced stakeholders from the IGF community and to discuss the IGF processes, substantive issues and ways of engagement for them.

It intended to create a more intimate and relaxing atmosphere, where networking and sharing experiences will be easier.

Below sections outlines the major key points raised during each of the sessions:

A. 6. December: Private sector and Technical community at the IGF: What is the role of these stakeholder groups within the IGF and ways for engagement?

Speakers coming from: International Chamber of Commerce, Google, Yahoo, Facebook, Microsoft and ISOC shared their experiences with the participants on why and how their respectful organizations are taking active participation at the IGF. Below are the key summary talking points:

- The IGF was described as a critical component of the multistakeholder model of Internet governance, which is the reason why these stakeholders support the IGF and send numerous delegations. It is a unique space that fosters cross-sector collaboration, which gives it a higher value;
- These stakeholders take active participation, as the IGF provides them a chance to have ‘university level courses’, discussions, conversations on lots of issues that are important to their companies and Internet end-users.
- IGF is an excellent ground for networking;
- IGF stands as a central point where stakeholders can meet, exchange information and ensure that their role contributes to protecting the overall Internet;

- It is important for these stakeholder groups to be actively involved, and contribute to the global IGF agenda be more comprehensive and meets the need of global community;
- Specific topics were named, that these stakeholders are particularly covering at the IGF, as organizers or active contributors.

After these remarks, participants engaged in informal conversation with the speakers.

B. 7. December: The role of Governments and IGOs at the IGF and ways for engagement.

Speakers from the Council of Europe and European Commission explained why the Internet Governance topic is important for their respective organizations. The value of having all stakeholders gathering in one place and speak about Internet was noted. Capacity building was named as an action that is needed within the Internet governance arena, and in terms of experts on all fields.

As a support to the need of the community for having a unique space for everyone to discuss Internet, a growing number of national and regional IGFs was mentioned as an illustration.

Some participants asked for an advise on how to engage with the stakeholders on particular topics. It was advised to map the relevant sessions in the IGF interactive schedule and engage with the stakeholders that are indicated as organizers in that schedule.

Questions regarding the ways on how the community ensures that the discussion is effective was raised. Speakers explained that this is a complex process that requires balance among stakeholders work scopes.

Participants engaged in informal conversation with the speakers.

C. 8. December: The role of the civil society at the IGF, working modalities and ways for engagement.

Speakers representing: ISOC chapter and national IGF, academia and NGOs (HIVOS), spoke about the importance of civil society engagement.

With emphasizing that the civil society has the largest representation at the IGF, it was advised that this discussion be developed around modalities for more effective engagement and impact of civil society in all its forms of representation. Dialogue is the key tool for conducting effective work.

Importance of the discussion being conducted on national levels was stressed, in line with explaining concrete actions the stakeholders are doing in some countries under the umbrellas of national IGFs, such as preventing libraries in rural areas from disappearing, e.g.

Speakers pointed that in some regions civil society drives the process of gathering all stakeholder around one table and around one project, for achieving changes and making the society benefits.

Participants were reminded on ways of engagement, through the existing working groups and community intersessional work of the IGF.

Participants engaged in informal conversation with the speakers.

D. 9. December: IGF Newcomers Track feedback.

This session was dedicated to the participants providing feedback on the overall Newcomers Track, its logistic and ways forward.

Below are the key points raised during the session by participants:

- The Knowledge Cafe sessions allowed the participants to meet with people from civil society, private sector and doing so in a smaller setting allowed for interesting discussions to go on alert when they would meet at the venue;
- As the Internet Governance arena is large and complex, having the Newcomers Track has been a very valuable tool toward helping to find footing and gain confidence in order to interact in the larger sessions during the week;
- The Track helped the participants feeling as a community member;
- It provided an opportunity for learning and effectively engaging with many stakeholders and networking.

Recommendations for improvements:

- As an idea for next year, there should be a Newcomers Cafe where the participants could talk to each other. Knowing their peers and other participants would give them more confidence to step up to the mic a little bit later;
- To explore ways for participants to stay engaged during the event itself;
- Language barrier was pointed, as the Track was organised using English language only;
- More organizations should support this Track and be involved;
- The Track needs to be promoted better and be given more visibility within the IGF agenda;
- Many participants expressed their enthusiasm about staying involved and improving the Track for the IGF 2017;
- Speakers should avoid using acronyms as it created difficulties for the first time coming participants to follow the discussion.

➤ Post-Meeting Feedback:

After the meeting, the feedback survey was sent. Within three weeks after the meeting, 57 response were submitted, where the results are the following:

- Did you find the Newcomers Track useful?

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 corresponds to not very and 5 to very much, 50 responses indicated 5, while 2 indicated 4, and 5 indicated number 3.

- What did you find as the most useful? Check all items you found useful.

41 participants indicated Webinar, 90-minutes Mentors Session, Knowledge Cafes Sessions, Interaction with speakers and other participants. 9 participants indicated 90-

minutes Mentors Session, Knowledge Cafes Sessions, Interaction with speakers and other participants and 5 speakers indicated 90-minutes Mentors Session, Knowledge Cafes Sessions.

- Did you wear the Newcomers pin?

12 participants indicated Yes, while 45 indicated No.

- Did you approach a mentor who speaks your language?

6 participants out of 57 responded that they did.

- Do you think the Newcomers Track should be continued next year?

All 57 participants responded Yes.

- If there will be a working group of volunteers for the Track improvements, would you be interested to help?

6 participants responded that they would.