

Submission to IGF MAG from the Center for Technology and Society of Fundação Getulio Vargas Law School (CTS/FGV)

The Center for Technology and Society of Fundação Getulio Vargas Law School in Rio de Janeiro (CTS/FGV) would like to thank the IGF Secretariat for this opportunity to share our views on the 12th IGF, held in Geneva, Switzerland.

CTS/FGV actively participated in the IGF process, over the entire year 2017 and a team of three (Dr Luca Belli, Mr Luã Fergus and Dr Felix Blanc) participated to several IGF sessions. Based on our involvement, we would like to share the following observations and suggestions with the Secretariat and the MAG.

A) Taking stock of 2017 programming, preparatory process, community intersessional activities and the 12th annual IGF:

What worked well?

Geneva Messages

The initiative to compile the results of major IGF2017 sessions should be celebrated, this kind of small and non-binding outcome is a great way to document IGF results. In addition, if there are upcoming “Host City Messages“ this can be an interesting way to follow the evolution of the discussions that took place during the forum.

Different workshop formats

On the IGF 2017 Guidelines for Workshop Proposers, MAG has expressed a preference for workshop formats that are not Panels to increase participation. Notwithstanding many panels have still happened in this edition, we would like to congratulate the MAG for this initiative and want to see much more break-out group discussions and BoFs in the next years.

Youth@IGF projects

First, we want to congratulate the IGF Secretariat for the work done in collaboration with the NRI communities that resulted in a publication that presents the existing practices of the Youth engagement at the IGF. This document is already a great reference for the work that will be carried out by the Youth Initiatives during 2018, providing many insights that would not be possible without this work.

Although it is not a MAG or Secretariat project, we commend the youth fellowships initiatives, like those provided by Internet Society and CGI.br, these programmes are extremely important because they empower the next generation, engage young people in discussions on Internet Governance and place them at the center of the policy debates.

What worked not so well?

Allocation of time for DC sessions (90min to 60min)

Unlike the last IGF editions, this year the Dynamic Coalitions sessions suffered a decrease in their duration (90 minutes to 60 minutes). A highly questionable change, since DCs play an important role for the IGF community, for being an intersessional, multistakeholder, and community-driven activity of the IGF that develop concrete outcomes over the entire year.

It is also important to mention that DCs have in recent years produced substantive papers, recommendations and others outcomes, that need to be presented and discussed with the IGF participants, in order to gather feedback. These latter activities are already very challenging in a 90 minute slot and become very difficult to accomplish with such a short session duration.

Furthermore, it seems quite questionable to grant 60 minutes for the presentation and discussion of DC outcomes while granting 90 minutes to the other intersessional activities. This unequal treatment has no justification and merely penalizes DCs and no motivation for such changement has ever been published on the IGF website, thus making it impossible to know what is the rationale of such discriminatory decision.

Location and Date

Geneva, and many other Swiss cities, are known for their high quality of life, but when it comes to hosting an international event it may not be the best option, especially for participants from the Global South. Geneva is one of the most expensive cities in Europe and crucial items for visitors, such as food and accommodation, were extremely high-priced. Furthermore, despite the high standard of living of Geneva, the organisers did not provide even basic supplies such as water for panelists during the IGF.

The IGF is an event that needs to be inclusive and in need of strengthening, and putting Geneva as host city was not the best option for that.

To complement the choice of the location, the date of the event was not the best possible, particularly because it was so close to the holidays, which made the price of the flight tickets more expensive thus creating an even stronger filter to participation.

B) Suggestions for improvements in 2018? (programming, preparatory processes, community intersessional activities and improvements for 13th annual meeting)

Our main suggestions are related to what was presented in the previous topic:

- Continue with the implementation of outcomes such as the Geneva Messages.
- That more sessions of different formats be encouraged to be submitted, and also approved.
- Strengthening of the partnership between the Secretariat and the NRI Initiatives, and perhaps the creation of an association between the Secretariat and the organizations that are promoting the participation of young people in the IGF
- Restoration of the customary 90 minutes slots, or even longer, for DC sessions.