

## **IGF Community Public Consultation: Call for Inputs - Taking stock of the 2017 work programme and 12th IGF and suggestions for 2018 and 13th IGF**

### **ICANN Response**

*All IGF stakeholders are invited to submit inputs to the IGF Secretariat related to the following questions:*

*A) Taking stock of 2017 programming, preparatory process, community intersessional activities and the 12th annual IGF: What worked well? What worked not so well?*

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

### **Executive Summary**

ICANN was pleased to have contributed to, and to have been involved in, the IGF 2017 in Geneva. Generally, we thought it an excellent Conference, well attended, well organised and with good participation from the Geneva Internet Community. Along with the Day 0 sessions (organised by the hosts and the community) and the four days of the IGF, there were a myriad of Internet public policy issues discussed and debated. These will, we believe, help inform debate in other fora over the next year and beyond.

The December meeting also raised questions about the IGF itself, and the important role it plays in the Internet Governance Ecosystem. It was made clear that for the IGF to continue in this role further support and resources were required from across the stakeholder community, from governments, business and not least from the UN itself.

### **Detail**

*A) Taking stock of 2017 programming, preparatory process, community intersessional activities and the 12th annual IGF: What worked well? What worked not so well?*

While the IGF 2017 in Geneva was, for many *the* IGF, in fact for many others their own IGF experiences in 2017 were far away from Geneva; taking place instead in the numerous locations where the National and Regional Initiatives (NRIs) take place. This, along with different intersessional activities provided through the Dynamic Coalitions and the Best Practice Forums, is the real strength of the IGF process.

The December 2017 Conference was, as noted above, a success on a number of different levels. It attracted a diverse range of stakeholders, several for the first time, and provided excellent discussion on a wide range of Internet public policy issues. It was particularly gratifying to see enhanced representation from Africa and from other developing countries.

The Day 0 activities were generally thought to be constructive and informative; with different styles of sessions being practised. There is, though, still (understandable) confusion about what “Day 0” is about; and thus, the MAG might well consider whether it should be re-branded to make clear it is effectively a “host’s day”. The decision not to hold a high-level government track on Day 0, which has often tended to duplicate the Opening on Day 1, allowed for more interactive sessions and was generally welcomed.

The new style IGF Opening on Day 1 was an interesting and bold initiative. Having an interactive round table with key VIPs was perhaps preferable to having read-out statements, but in Geneva the session went on for too long and did not fully allow for effective contributions from other key stakeholders from business, the technical community or civil society. More clarity about the scope and a better distribution of the VIPs would address some of these concerns. The Closing Session, including the very valuable “public forum” worked very well indeed.

The Plenary Sessions seemed to have been generally popular, but perhaps slight too long in length.

Aside from the Workshops and Open Forum Sessions it was encouraging to see the use of other innovative forms of sessions; the impromptu “booth” talks and flash sessions worked well although it is difficult for attendees to know about the talks or how to find them.

On the logistics, while the practical limitations of the building, and the understandable but sometimes inflexible security arrangements, caused some problems, especially on Day 1, the overall quality of the rooms and AV facilities was good. The Remote participation provided was also very valuable. There were not, perhaps, enough volunteers, especially on Day 1, but then the weather was an issue. Was really positive to have an IGF Reception (on Day 1) which everyone could attend.

The main issue, for ICANN and for others, was the inadequate space and facilities for the booths. The layout of the building was of course a factor here, but perhaps a better space could have been found (away from Building E) or simply the number of booths restricted.

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

In 2018, we would hope that greater coherence could be achieved between the overall theme and the workshops and Forums that take place. While having such a diversity of Workshops does have real benefits it also detracts from having coherent messages from the conference itself.

We also think that it might be worth the MAG exploring a new approach to Workshops and Forums. While the current approach has afforded a great deal of diversity and allowed a significant number of stakeholders to take part, it also has meant difficulty for those stakeholders to track, though attendance at sessions, a single or small number of issues.

Further thought perhaps could perhaps be given, to having a smaller number of parallel tracks (for Workshops) grouped around different aspects of the overall theme.

On the Workshops themselves, while significant progress has been made (thanks in main to the MAG) in ensuring they are more interactive and diverse, several were still dominated by overlong PowerPoint presentations and some were (still) comprised of all men.... Some further thought could perhaps be given to the rules the MAG lays down on diversity and the form of sessions.

As referenced above, further thought should also be given to the Opening Session and how to include a more diverse range of “VIPs” in speaking slots including greater representation from the technical community and business.

ICANN; 11/2/2018