ICC BASIS – IGF 2018 TAKING STOCK AND LOOKING FORWARD TO 2019

Internet Governance Forum 2018, Paris, France

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As the global business community reflects on the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) held in Paris, France, 12-14 November 2018, we are also thinking about the key areas of improvement to consider in planning the 14th IGF meeting in 2019.

Based on business' participation in past IGFs, the multistakeholder advisory group (MAG), and various other multistakeholder activities, we submit this paper which takes stock of IGF 2018 and provides suggestions for improvements for the years ahead.

A. Taking Stock of 2018 programming, outputs, preparatory process, community intersessional activities and the 13th annual IGF: What worked well? What worked not so well?

Preparatory process

- The professionalism and support of the staff working at the IGF Secretariat was appreciated both on the ground as well as in the run-up to IGF 2018.
- Due to a late announcement of the host country, the preparatory process was shorter than usual, with numerous uncertainties along the way and many important decisions and details left to the last minute (newcomers session, main sessions, lightning sessions, populating the schedule, etc.). This was also paired with several novelties introduced (call for issues, thematic call for workshops, thematic and collaborative main sessions, new reporting process) which fuelled the uncertainty at times and made planning ahead difficult. Efforts should be made to communicate the planning process ahead of time with a clear timeline and guidelines so that prospective participants are aware of the process and well informed about the various opportunities to contribute *(see suggestions in part B below)*.
- The IGF host country website was also launched quite late in the process and contained sparse information.
- It is imperative that IGF booth holders are able to ship material ahead of the event and information about shipping deadline, labeling, specificities of local postal services and expected timeframe of customs and other security measures should be offered in a timely and explicit fashion so that booth holders can plan ahead.

Programming

- The overarching theme of IGF 2018 was *The Internet of Trust.* While the theme was broad enough to include dialogue on major global Internet governance issues, it was chosen with little community input.
- The opportunity for the community to "select" the sub-themes of the IGF through a call for issues was a welcome idea. This aligns well with the bottom-up, open nature of the IGF. The implementation of this idea is still to be worked out, so that the programme can accurately reflect the responses to the call (e.g. to help determine the number and length of various sessions) and that participants are aware of the call with adequate notice to thoughtfully respond *(see suggestions in part B below)*.

- Day Zero is a valuable part of the IGF, with its different status and nature, and the ability it provides for groups to propose formats and sessions which do not necessarily need to conform to the structure of the rest of the IGF week. The absence of Day Zero was felt this year both in terms of logistical preparations and substantive discussions. Nevertheless, to ensure that Day Zero fulfils its potential, there needs to be discussion on the goal of Day Zero and the MAG role in event selection, and also transparency on the events, at least to all MAG members, as part of the IGF programme discussion. With the host government responsible for organizing Day Zero, such a discussion within the MAG could also provide helpful guidance to the host government, which will not be as familiar with the annual IGF meetings.

Main sessions

- Thematic sessions help extend appeal to non-IGF regulars and in particular government and business, where attendance has been lower. It worked well that Main Sessions were oriented to meaningful exchanges on topics of broad interest, especially those that focused on practical examples of applying policy or practices to address challenges and allow for capacity building across the range of discussants and participants.
- Including the various IGF communities and intersessional work (NRIs, CENB, BPFs, DCs) in collaborative Main Sessions also worked well and contributed to a more cohesive and thematic agenda, as well as overall a more collegial atmosphere. The work and outputs of different BPFs and the CENB – Phase IV was well integrated in different main sessions and various workshops, with no need for an allocated Main Session slot for these intersessional activities.
- However, for many sessions (especially those organized in collaboration between various groups) 80 minutes were not enough to elaborate on the discussions. Efforts should be made to allow for sufficient time (e.g. at least 2 hours) for Main Sessions, and - if necessary to achieve this – to reduce the number of Main Sessions.

Workshops

- The workshop proposal and selection process was well organized, in spite of the short timeframe. However, clearer guidelines are needed both for the proposers and evaluators on how the workshop selection process links to the call for issues. Clearer guidelines are also needed on how other sessions (open forums, DC and NRI sessions) fit into the thematic programme, as well as on their evaluation.
- The thematic approach helped reduce the number of workshops on the same topics. However, more can be done to focus the programme and reduce parallel streams.
- Some sessions worked well because they combined people able to give global, policy perspectives with others able to share real working examples of action on the ground to solve problems.
- A number of workshops and other sessions were lacking in balance and diversity in terms of speakers, with one or more stakeholder groups not represented at all in the discussion. Efforts should be made to ensure a more balanced representation of stakeholders among proposers of accepted workshops, as well as among the workshop speakers. An analysis by the IGF secretariat of the data related to speakers in IGF 2018 workshops and sessions could be helpful for the MAG to reflect on how the workshop evaluation process could be adjusted to better address this for IGF 2019. It could also prove helpful to better understand the diversity of participation in other sessions.
- One way to foster a more balanced representation of stakeholders could be to look at the workshop evaluation process. Currently, diversity of speakers (in terms of both
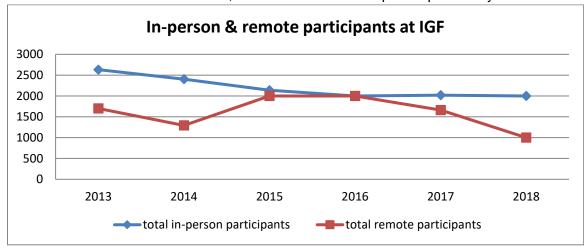
stakeholder groups and geographic region) is given equal weighting to the other three criteria - relevance, content and format. The weighting could be reviewed to give the speaker diversity of a proposal greater weighting than the other criteria.

- Limiting the number of speakers to 5 was introduced as a means to allow for more audience participation. An analysis of sessions by the IGF Secretariat could help assess the impact of this measure. Other effective measures to increase audience participation (e.g. break-out sessions, town hall or campfire formats) should continue to be highlighted and encouraged.
- The workshop rooms provided an open and comfortable setting for discussions. However, on some occasions, rooms were not fit for the more innovative formats (e.g. break-out discussions) or were too small to fit all interested participants.
- Clarity on expectations, form and timeline for submitting the various workshop reports should be communicated well ahead of the event. Enough time should be allowed for the completion of the full (long) workshop reports after the event. Considering that workshops are often organized by multiple contributors, sufficient time should be allocated for submitting reports.

Intersessional work

- The intersessional work on Policy options for Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion – Phase IV, as well as the BPFs on Cybersecurity, Local Content. Gender and Access and on Internet of Things, Big Data & Artificial Intelligence, are strong examples of how the IGF can gather, catalogue, and share valuable tangible outputs without being prescriptive.
- There should be more concerted efforts to archive the outputs of the intersessional work streams and BPF documents in a manner that is accessible and searchable to the lay user who may not be familiar with the IGF. Continued efforts should be made to better communicate and promote these outputs *(see suggestions in part B below)*.
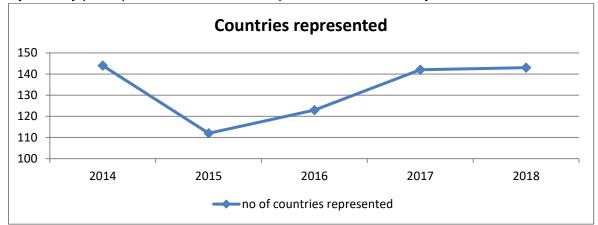
Practicalities and logistics on the ground

- At approximately 2000 onsite delegates participating, the attendance of the event seems to have normalized at this number, but a considerable drop from previous years.

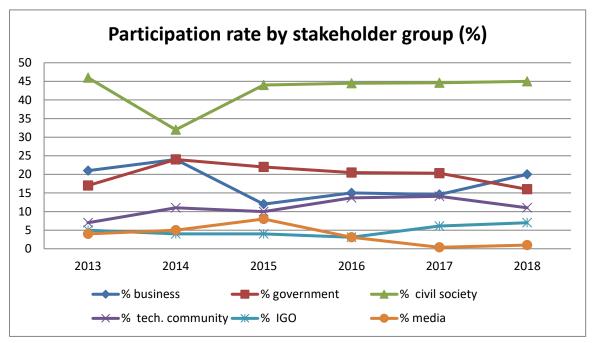**In-person & remote participants at IGF**

- Remote participation continues to fluctuate and has dropped considerably from previous years. Although several remote-participation tools were made available, they neither worked smoothly nor were they synched with each other. It is important that the IGF continues to encourage and support remote participation to improve inclusivity and

diversity.
- By-country participation remains at the improved rate of the last years.

Countries represented

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

no of countries represented

- While participation of business representatives has improved slightly, the participation of government representatives continues to drop. Participation of high-level policymakers drives interest from their counterparts from other regions and stakeholder groups. Efforts should be made to continue the trend started in Paris for the involvement of top-level actors.
- Efforts should be made to avoid organizing the IGF at the same time as other major international Internet-related policy events that draw the same audience.

Participation rate by stakeholder group (%)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018

% business % government % civil society
% tech. community % IGO % media

- The host country made a laudable effort in providing interpretation. It was also appreciated to have "overflow rooms" for the high-interest sessions.
- The lunches and refreshments, while a very limited selection of food was offered, were affordable compared to external prices and their distribution went smoothly, considering the large number of attendees. It was also appreciated to have fresh water and coffee close to the meeting rooms for most of the day.
- The Internet connection at the venue did not keep up with the demand by the number of participants.
- The IGF village was under-equipped. The booths lacked in storage space and technical

equipment.

- Bilateral rooms were well-suited for closed meetings and in-depth conversations; however, they were far too small to accommodate larger delegations. Organizers should clarify with internal staff the rooms reserved for private meetings in the venue, and last-minute room changes should be avoided.
- The IGF messages report has an important role in bridging consecutive IGF cycles and highlighting the various IGF outputs. Efforts should be made to better inform participants on the process of drafting of the messages and their opportunities to contribute. Sharing such information with session participants helps improve the balance in participation, which in turn increases the legitimacy of messages.

B. What suggestions for improvements could be made for 2019? (Please focus on programming, the outputs preparatory processes, community intersessional activities and improvements for the 14th annual meeting and beyond.)

Preparatory process and programming

- There is an increasing need for a clear and easily understandable process, through which the community can contribute to the IGF agenda in a bottom-up fashion.
- Throughout 2018 the WG-MWP worked on a common framework and coherent work plan for the IGF, covering major areas of work as well as intersessional activities with the aim of clarifying processes, highlighting gaps, and serving as a base for assessing resources and capacity needs.
- The [IGF Programme Framework Chart](#) outlines the planning cycle for the IGF in a simple, yet comprehensive, format. It illustrates the agenda and programme-setting process from a "bird's eye" point of view by capturing the main points and junctures of the current process.
- The IGF Programme framework should be used as a base for the preparatory process in 2019 and should be further strengthened through clear measures of success, standards of work, and a critical number of people committed to lead/support the activity across all stakeholder groups. This would require an analysis of required resources and responsibilities, including of the Secretariat and any consultants, to ensure that any initiated work (traditionally part of the IGF or newly proposed) will be successful. There should also be clear mandates of authorization for each intersessional work stream.

Intersessional work

- The increasing number of IGF-related activities throughout the year is creating confusion and can lead to fragmentation. If new initiatives are proposed, without building on past or reaching out to concurrent work on the same or related topics (where available and relevant), then the community becomes increasingly fragmented.
- IGF resources are not as unlimited as the appetite for groups to come together to work on new issues. The MAG should discuss and consider a mechanism to anticipate how to deal with the increased interest in DCs, BPFs, NRIs as well as MAG working groups. These activities all compete for the same limited IGF staff support, and at times stakeholder representatives' support, all of which only stretch so thin.
- A turnover policy should be considered, activities that have reached their goals or have lost the support of the community should be sunsetted to allow resources for new ones.

- There is value in exploring new and innovative ideas, but this should be about quality over quantity – there needs to be a clear focus on the quality and strategic goals of such activities.
- In addition, efforts should be made to ensure that any new activity has not just the interest, but the active support and foreseeable engagement of a critical mass of people from the wider IGF community, and particular attention is paid to stakeholder, regional and gender balance.

Outputs

- There is an increasing need to raise wider awareness of current IGF outputs and support their better marketing.
- Further discussion should be encouraged on what defines success for the IGF, what is meant by tangible outputs and what problem the outputs are intended to address in the field of Internet governance, including within the context of the Tunis Agenda.
- The IGF is already producing a lot of outputs, such as: Chair's Summary, main session and workshop summaries, BPF and CENB output documents, collaborative partnerships, etc.
- At the same time the multistakeholder dialogues at the IGF are themselves valuable outputs; policymakers can gather many insights from the exchange of information and experiences with Internet policy issues that takes place during the IGF. Capturing and promoting them successfully could increase the reach of these conversations beyond the IGF session participants.
- Efforts were made in 2018 to improve the reporting process of the IGF. The following recommendations should be considered to further **support a concise and organized style of reporting from IGF sessions**:
  - Inspired from the concept of the "IGF Messages", 2-3 paragraph short summaries could be considered for each session taking place at IGF (Main Session, Workshop, Open Forum, and DC and BPF session). To support this, time (at least 5 minutes) should be allocated at the end of each session to reflect on the main findings of the session. Questions such as the below could be considered:
    - o What was the objective of the session? Why was the topic discussed?
    - o What were the 3 most compelling elements heard? (e.g. case examples, new issues, new solutions, etc.)
    - o What are the actions / next steps participants in the session are likely to do?
    Following the session, answers should be shared publicly in a timely manner with an opportunity for participants to offer further comments or voice differing opinions. A more comprehensive summary report should follow.
  - The Chair's Summary should cover discussion for all the other sessions (including workshops, open forums, etc.) and should include an executive summary of the short summaries by topic. Reflecting together on all conversations on a topic offers richness and better balance in the summary.
- The IGF Secretariat should develop a **work plan to identify, gather and better market existing outputs** of the IGF. This would roughly follow the steps below:
  - Identify current outputs and outcomes, both written products and success stories of collaboration / impact
  - Organize and cross-reference these by topic, and possibly with tags, so that these can be easily searched
  - Identify potential audiences

- Marketing, outreach and communication
- This work plan should be supported by a timeline, an analysis of required resources and responsibilities, and indicators and measures of success. The Secretariat should be equipped with resources to be able to execute this plan. This was a consensus view held at the IGF Retreat in 2016.
- To **improve the marketing of IGF outputs**, the following should be considered:
  - Pare down intersessional work streams to allow for more concentrated effort and better support for selected work
  - Task the IGF Secretariat (not a recurring MAG Working Group on Outreach and Communication) with outreach efforts and dissemination of existing outputs (policy material, reports, and case studies of successful cooperation/projects that rooted in IGF meetings and discussions).
  - Guest blogs or interviews about IGF success stories.
- The **legitimacy, accountability and balance of IGF outputs** must be held to the highest standards:
  - The balance of stakeholders needs to be maintained in every work stream of the IGF in order not to undermine their legitimacy
  - Outputs of any intersessional work must ensure accurate reflection of all opinions
  - The MAG should consider ways to raise profile of the IGF and strengthen the participation of underrepresented groups and regions and enhance the credibility of IGF work streams by addressing their balance and ensuring representation of regions and stakeholders.

Practicalities and logistics on the ground

- Creating a "study hall" space at the IGF venue that allows for a quieter room with plugs for participants to work in should be considered, especially when security checks make it inconvenient to leave and return to the venue in a timely fashion.

C. How could the IGF respond to the recommendations made by the UN Secretary-General during his speech at the IGF 2018 Opening Ceremony?

- As noted under the section on outputs above, the IGF already produces a lot of valuable and relevant output. It is an increasing need to raise wider awareness of current IGF outputs and support their better marketing (as noted above).
- Further opportunities must be sought to link the IGF to the wider UN sustainable development agenda. In addition, the programme of the annual IGF meeting should include discussion and elements on how each IGF is making progress on the challenges raised in the WSIS+10 Outcome Document (such as increasing developing country participation), and what are the plans to address the remainder by 2025.
- IGF and regional IGF participation show that the awareness and importance of the IGF remains inadequate, especially amongst developing countries. A conscious effort to increase IGF awareness needs to occur through all resources available. The goal is to better enable both developing country participation at the IGF and year-round access to the work product and outcomes of Internet governance discussions, including through the build-out of capacity building and technical initiatives. Stakeholders (particularly developing economies) should be encouraged to engage at the IGF (whether in person or remotely), and also be able to participate in discussions remotely once they leave and

see this exchange of information wherever they may be based, to demonstrate their capabilities, share best practices and measure progress. Remote moderators, remote hubs, linguistic diversity, facilities for people with disabilities and translations must be considered basic and necessary facets to any IGF meeting. Such dynamic engagement and opportunities for wider and year-round participation would firmly establish the IGF as a conference with a serious knowledge agenda. Finally, the knowledge agenda needs to build over time, so IGF programs need to accommodate conversations of different complexity in a way that enhances the value of the IGF across participants of various skills and backgrounds.

- More diversity of subject matter is needed for future IGFs. Other ideas such as engaging communities, organizations, businesses and different sectors that may not be directly involved with Internet governance but either impact it or being impacted by it, may be considered, while discussing structure and programme for future IGFs. For example, the topic of digital economy and jobs should continue to be discussed at the IGF to monitor and evaluate progresses made.

D. How could the IGF respond to President Macron's "call for action" made during his speech at the IGF 2018 Opening Ceremony?

- Since its inception, the IGF has served as a pioneering example of cooperation among stakeholders because it has focused not on the negotiation of text, but instead the sharing of knowledge and ideas. It has had the freedom to serve as an important laboratory for the discussion and dissemination of best practices and capacity-building initiatives that further the WSIS goals of expanded interconnectivity and inclusiveness. The strength of the current distributed, bottom-up Internet governance process is not only in its open and inclusive participation model, and the legitimacy and credibility that the model fosters, but also its flexibility to rapidly adapt to changing technologies and issues. It is important to ensure that any changes and continued improvement to the IGF contribute to enhancing the security, stability, privacy, resiliency, and interoperability of the global Internet, while also ensuring the rule of law and economic and social benefits. The IGF's focus on the exchange of best practices, policy approaches and experiences is its strength, as it maximizes the time all relevant stakeholders spend on substantive exchanges instead of negotiated texts.

- In the past, IGF benefitted from high level representation of a Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General that facilitated advocacy, diplomacy and served as an important ambassador for the IGF. A suitable candidate from the community of experienced and insightful stakeholders should be sought for this position to be renewed to help strengthen and improve the IGF.

E. What other organizations/disciplines should the IGF be collaborating with and how/to what purpose?

- As noted above, the IGF is an important laboratory for sharing, discussion and dissemination of information, projects and ideas. Over the years, the IGF has grown into a 'safe space' where representatives from around the globe and various stakeholder groups engage to improve and build new connections, contribute to the work of others and invite input to their own work in an open, candid, bottom-up and inclusive fashion.

- This speaks to the core of the IGF's mandate and to the value of multistakeholder cooperation. Efforts should be made to preserve this fundamental nature of the IGF and

build on its reputation to invite the participation of all interested actors.

F The Secretary-General set up a High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation (HLPDC) to "identify good examples and propose modalities for working cooperatively across sectors, disciplines and borders to address challenges in the digital age"

1. How can the IGF contribute to the work of the HLPDC to help foster these aims?

- The IGF could make use of its extensive network to promote the HLPDC's calls for input as well as share the work of the HLPDC with the global IGF community.

2. Do you have any specific inputs for the HLPDC in relation to the IGF?

- Well-established processes for cooperation on digital issues have been initiated in the past 15 years through outreach to relevant UN agencies and also relevant multistakeholder and technical organizations, including all stakeholders. There are many examples of cooperation that can be drawn from the initiatives of ICANN, ITU, ISOC, IETF, W3C, GCCS, UNESCO, OECD, WIPO and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, just to name a few. The Internet Governance Forum and its many national and regional initiatives has propagated this kind of cooperation, bringing together different stakeholders—nationally, regionally and globally—to share information and progress on their respective work, address global, regional and local policy matters in an open setting, and among a wide range of organizations and stakeholders as well as producing intersessional output in the forms of best practice material, and policy insights focused on a particular question or challenge. The IGF should continue in this vein and strive to raise better awareness of its discussions and better market their existing outputs from the past 13 years.