IGF Best Practice Forums and the proposed Cooperation Accelerator, a Comparison.
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The United Nations Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation (HLPDC) finds existing digital cooperation arrangements inadequate to deal with complex challenges and calls for more inclusive and active participation, tangible outcomes and follow-up. The Panel identified six gaps[1] in existing mechanisms and arrangements, formulated Recommendations and possible strategies to close them. One of the suggested approaches is the IGF Plus model that builds on the strengths of the IGF[2] and seeks ways to produce actionable outcomes and increase the participation of governments and businesses, especially from small and developing countries. The IGF Plus would comprise of an Advisory Group, Cooperation Accelerator, Policy Incubator and Observatory and Help Desk.

We noticed that some of the innovative ideas in the IGF Plus model, and in particular the proposed Cooperation Accelerator, show similarities with the IGF Best Practice Forums (BPFs). This submission intends to inform the debate on the IGF Plus model by providing some background on the BPF activities. We hope that this enriches the discussion and allows to identify potential synergies and learn from BPF experiences.

IGF Best Practice Forums (BPFs) are part of the IGF's intersessional work programme that was introduced in 2014 with the objective to strengthen the IGF and make it more relevant. The BPFs also respond to the recommendations of the 2012 report of the WG on Improvements to the IGF[3]. BPFs intend to inform internet governance policy debates by drawing on the immense and diverse range of experience and expertise found in the global IGF community to create a resource of best practices and policy recommendations. Since 2014 BPFs have been convened on a variety of topics to discuss best practices and compile output reports in an open and bottom-up process. There have been BPFs on, amongst others, cybersecurity, IPv6, gender and access, local content, online child protection, and IoT, Big Data, AI. A repository of BPF reports is available on the IGF website[4].

The proposed Cooperation Accelerator and existing Best Practice Forums share focus and intended purpose: they are issue-centered and intend to nourish the hands-on discussions and cooperation between partners across stakeholder groups. Comparing both allows to identify synergies and differences, so that the IGF Plus model can build on concrete experiences with issue-focused open discussions on internet policy issues.

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[1] (1) Issues remain low on many national, regional and global political agendas; (2) Not inclusive enough; (3) Considerable overlap; (4) Policies shaped by different areas, while technology increasingly cross-cutting; (5) Lack of reliable data, metrics and evidence; (6) Lack of trust among governments, civil society and the private sector; a lack of humility and understanding of different perspectives. *(HLPDC report p. 22-23)*

[2] "Well-developed infrastructure and procedures, acceptance in stakeholder communities, gender balance in IGF bodies and activities, and a network of 114 national, regional and youth IGFs." *(HLPDC report p.23)*

[3] https://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/a67d65_en.pdf

[4] https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/best-practice-forums-bpfs

A comparison between the BPF Best Practice Forums and proposed Cooperation Accelerator.

Best Practice Forums	Cooperation Accelerator
- Issue-centered best practice sharing to inform internet governance debates, open to all interested stakeholders. - BPF themes can be of any nature - technical or non-technical - and are chosen for their importance to the future of the Internet and related public policy challenges. - BPFs are overseen by the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG). Each year the MAG determines which BPFs are most appropriate. Once chartered, BPFs have the freedom to define their own methodologies, tailored to their theme's specific needs and requirements. - Identify through a bottom-up multistakeholder dialogue tested answers to key policy questions and compile a living resource of best practices to inform policy debates at all levels. - BPFs do not intend to duplicate work already underway elsewhere, rather serve as a matchmaker to form new coalitions by identifying existing initiatives and promoting best practice experiences. - Membership is open and free. All stakeholder groups are invited to participate and share experiences.	- Issue-centered cooperation across a wide range of institutions, organisations and processes. - Identify points of convergence among existing IGF coalitions, and issues around which new coalitions need to be established. - Convene stakeholder-specific coalitions to address the concerns of groups such as governments, businesses, civil society, parliamentarians, elderly people, young people, philanthropy, the media and women. - Facilitate convergences among debates in major digital and policy events and the UN and beyond. - Members selected for their multi-disciplinary experience and expertise. - Membership would include civil society, businesses and governments and representation from major digital events.

Case Study: the Best Practice Forum on Cybersecurity

Since 2014, the IGF has operated a Best Practice Forum on Cybersecurity, each year with a precise but changing focus. This continuity has enabled the BPF to cover a range of cybersecurity issues as well as to build on each year's work.

In 2014-2015, the BPF worked on identifying Best Practices in Regulation and Mitigation of Unsolicited Communications and Establishing Incident Response Teams for Internet Security. Later, the BPF has been focused on cybersecurity - identifying roles and responsibilities and ongoing challenges in 2016, and identifying policy best practices in 2017. In 2018, the Best Practices Forum focused its work on the culture, norms and values in cybersecurity.

In 2019, the BPF continues this work by identifying best practices related to the implementation of the different elements (e.g. principles, policy approaches) contained within various international agreements and initiatives on cybersecurity, including but not limited to the initiatives referenced by the High-Level Panel in its report: *The Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace, The Global Commission on Stability in Cyberspace, The Global Conference on Cyberspace, The Geneva Dialogue on Responsible Behaviour in Cyberspace, The Cybersecurity Tech Accord and Charter of Trust.*[5]

Case Study: the Best Practice Forum on Online Abuse and Gender-Based Violence Against Women

The BPF on Online Abuse and Gender-Based Violence Against Women[6] (IGF2015) considered the increasing effort by different stakeholders at national and global levels to understand and address the problem of online abuse and violence against women. It showed that there are no one-size-fits all solutions, and that further research is needed to investigate the scope of the problem, its underlying causes impact, and how to best respond. The BPF's findings and recommendations reflect a rich diversity of responses from various stakeholders and regions. They were presented at the IGF2015 and further developed in 2016 and have since served as a rich resource for others dealing with this issue, including the United Nations Human Rights Council 's Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences. Her annual report[7], in 2017, focused on online violence and she draw extensively on the BPF's work. The BPF's research and recommendations also informed national policy aimed at dealing with online abuse and non-consensual sharing of intimate images in several countries around the world.[8]

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[5] HLPDC Report, p.20.

[6] https://www.intgovforum.org/cms/documents/best-practice-forums/623-bpf-online-abuse-and-gbv-against-women/file

[7] https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/184/58/PDF/G1818458.pdf?OpenElement

[8] https://www.genderit.org/resources/igf-2015-best-practice-forum-online-abuse-and-gender-based-violence-against-women-report

Other BPFs have proven successful in gathering and involving relevant bodies where policy decisions are made pertaining to the issues discussed or to connect relevant stakeholders. The 2018 BPF on local content, for example, has seen the involvement of various governments, companies and civil society bodies, but also of the main multilateral institutions dealing with the production, or the support, or the legislation related to local contents, such as UNESCO (the UN agency for culture), WIPO (the international body for copyrights and intellectual property) jointly with the world publishers, broadcasters and community media associations. The BPF on IoT, Big Data, AI in 2018 formulated a set of best practice recommendations intended to facilitate a more efficient and effective dialogue on issues related to the use of IoT, Big Data and AI in an internet context.

The IGF has been running Best Practice Forums since 2014. While we had to limit the number of examples in this contribution, we recommend the reader to visit the repository of BPF work on the IGF website to get a full overview of the different topics discussed by BPFs over the past five years:
https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/best-practice-forums-bpfs .

This submission is intended as an informative contribution to the IGF Consultation on the HLPDC report and further discussions at the IGF2019.
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https://www.genderit.org/resources/igf-best-practice-forum-gender-and-access-2016-overcoming-barriers-enable-womens