

## IGF 2016 Workshop Report Template

Session Title	Assemblies and Associations online: Coping with Challenges
Date	9 December 2016
Time	0900-1030
Session Organizer	Bytes for All and Association for Progressive Communications
Chair/Moderator	Gayatri Khandhadai
Rapporteur/Notetaker	
List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations	Ritu Srivastava (Digital Empowerment Foundation), Haroon Baloch (Bytes for All, Pakistan), Serene Lim (EMPOWER Malaysia), Sheen Handoo (Facebook) and Deji Olukotun (Access Now)
Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positives and negatives of digital spaces for freedom of assemblies and associations (FoAA).</li> <li>- Trends regarding FoAA in Pakistan, India and Malaysia.</li> <li>- Network shutdowns in Pakistan and India and their socio-economic impacts.</li> <li>- Campaigning using social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, etc. and challenges such as role of these platforms for spreading misinformation, trolling, etc.</li> <li>- Security issues regarding online assemblies and associations.</li> <li>- Different ways intermediary companies such as Facebook can help mitigate risks of disinformations vis-a-vis online campaigning and assemblies.</li> </ul>
If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each Presentation	There was a presentation on Bersih 5 rally in Malaysia. The presentation highlighted the strengths of using social media for mobilizing support for physical rallies. However, the organizers and participants of the rally also faced challenges in the form of counter campaigns and spreading disinformation to fail the actual rally.
Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session: (3 paragraphs)	<p>Discussion began with positives of internet and social media as an alternative space for assembling online, forming associations and campaigns. Speakers from Pakistan and India discussed significant case studies from their countries and then the discussion moved forward on actual challenges when mobilizing support online for campaigns or joining associations for common goals.</p> <p>During discussion, one of the common challenges emerged as network shutdowns in countries to restrict people from social media campaigns or disconnecting them from communications and accessing information. India and Pakistan highlighted the reasons of network shutdowns and also discussed socio-economic aspects. Speaker from Access Now also contributed towards the socio-economic aspects and also brought the perspective on network shutdowns from other countries including Gambia, Bahrain, etc. Speaker from Malaysia presented Bersih 5 rally and specifically talked about challenges faced by the organizers.</p>

	<p>Quite a significant number of questions were posed to Facebook speaker during the discussions regarding its role towards rights to freedom of association and of assembly and how it responds to the challenges highlighted by other participants. Facebook representative presented its company's standpoint on abuse of their platform, issue of disinformation, and others. Facebook also encouraged the civil society and other stakeholders to approach them in matters of urgent need and bringing into consideration the serious rights violations, abuse or violation of community rules.</p>
<p>Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/ potential next steps /key takeaways: (3 paragraphs)</p>	<p>One of the participants suggested that tools from the intermediary companies should be given to social media users so that they can decide how to counter threats to online assemblies and associations instead of blocking and censoring content on arbitrary basis.</p>